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A Story of the Great Chief's Last Stand

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The **BORDER WATCH**

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The Candidate

frontispiece

"He saw two warriors, and he lay in the bush while they passed only twenty

yards away." [\[Page 214\]](#)



The
BORDER WATCH
A STORY OF THE GREAT
CHIEF'S LAST STAND

BY
JOSEPH A. ALTSHELER
AUTHOR OF
"THE YOUNG TRAILERS," "THE FREE RANGERS,"
"THE SCOUTS OF THE VALLEY," ETC.

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PREFACE

"The Border Watch" closes the series which began with "The Young Trailers," and which was continued successively in "The Forest Runners," "The Keepers of the Trail," "The Eyes of the Woods," "The Free Rangers," "The Riflemen of the Ohio," and "The Scouts of the Valley." All the eight volumes deal with the fortunes and adventures of two boys, Henry Ware and Paul Cotter, and their friends Shiftless Sol Hyde, Silent Tom Ross and Long Jim Hart, in the early days of Kentucky. The action moves over a wide area, from New Orleans in the South to Lake Superior in the North, and from the Great Plains in the West to the land of the Iroquois in the East.

It has been the aim of the author to present a picture of frontier life, and to show the immense hardships and dangers endured by our people, as they passed through the wilderness from ocean to ocean. So much of it occurred in the shadow of the forest, and so much more of it was taken as a matter of course that we, their descendants, are likely to forget the magnitude of their achievement. The conquest of the North American continent at a vast expense of life and suffering is in reality one of the world's great epics.

The author has sought to verify every statement that touches upon historical events. He has read or examined nearly all the books and pamphlets and many of the magazine articles formerly in the Astor and Lenox, now in the New York Public Library, dealing with Indian wars and customs. In numerous cases, narratives written by observers and participants have been available. He believes that all the border battles are described correctly, and the Indian songs, dances and customs are taken from the relations of witnesses.

But the great mass of material dealing with the frontier furnishes another striking illustration of the old saying that truth is stranger than fiction. No Indian story has ever told of danger and escape more marvelous than those that happened hundreds of times. The Indian character, as revealed in numerous accounts, is also a complex and interesting study. The same Indian was capable of noble actions and of unparalleled cruelty. As a forest warrior he has never been excelled. In the woods, fighting according to his ancient methods, he was the equal alike of Frenchman, Englishman and American, and often their superior. Many of the Indian chiefs were great men. They had the minds of statesmen and

generals, and they prolonged, for generations, a fight that was doomed, from the beginning.

We lost more people in our Indian wars than in all the others combined, except the Civil War. More American soldiers fell at St. Clair's defeat by the Northwestern Indians than in any other battle we had ever fought until Bull Run. The British dead at Braddock's disaster in the American wilderness outnumbered the British dead at Trafalgar nearly two to one. So valiant a race has always appealed to youth, at least, as a fit subject of romance.

The long struggle with the brave and wary red men bred a type of white foresters who became fully their equals in the craft and lore of the wilderness. Such as these stood as a shield between the infant settlements and the fierce tribes, and, in this class, the author has placed his heroes.



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THE BORDER WATCH

CHAPTER I

THE PASSING FLEET

A late sun, red and vivid, cast beams of light over a dark river, flowing slowly. The stream was a full half mile from shore to shore, and the great weight of water moved on in silent majesty. Both banks were lined with heavy forest, dark green by day, but fused now into solid blackness by the approach of night.

The scene was wild and primordial. To an eye looking down it would have seemed that man had never come there, and that this was the dawn of time. The deep waters lapped the silent shore until a gentle sighing sound arose, a sound that may have gone on unheard for ages. Close to the water a file of wild ducks flew like an arrow to the north, and, in a little cove where the current came in shallow waves, a stag bent his head to drink.

The sun lingered in the west and then sank behind the vast wall of forest. The beams of red and gold lasted for a little space on the surface of the river, and then faded into the universal night. Under the great cloak of the dark, the surface of the river showed but dimly, and the rising wind blew through the forest with a chill and uncanny sound.

The ordinary soul would have been appalled by the mighty isolation of the wilderness, yet the river itself was not without the presence of human life. Close to the northern shore, where the shadow of the tall forest lay deepest, floated a long boat, containing five figures that rested easily. Two of the crew were boys, but as tall and strong as men. The other three were somewhat older. The boat carried four pairs of oars, but only one man rowed, and he merely pulled on an oar from time to time to give direction, while the current did the work. His comrades leaned comfortably against the sides of the boat, and with keen eyes, trained to the darkness, watched for a break in the black battlement of the trees.

It was Henry Ware who first saw the opening. It was nearly always he who was the first to see, and he pointed to the place where the dark line made a loop towards the north.

"It's a wide break," he said a moment or two later. "It must be the mouth of the river."

"You're shorely right, Henry," said Shif'less Sol, who sat just behind him, "an' from the looks o' the break thar, it's a good, big river, too. S'pose we pull up in it a spell afore we make a landin'."

"It seems a good idea to me," replied Henry. "What say you, Paul?"

"I'm for it," replied Paul Cotter. "I'd like to see this new river coming down from the north, and it's pretty sure, too, that we'd be safer camping on it for the night than on the Ohio."

Jim Hart had been guiding with a single oar. Now he took the pair in his hands and rowed into the mouth of the tributary stream. The smaller river, smaller only by contrast, poured a dark flood into the Ohio, and, seeing that the current was strong, the others took oars and rowed also, all except Paul, who was at the helm. Driven by powerful arms, the boat went swiftly up the new river. Henry in the prow watched with all the interest that he had for new things, and with all the need for watching that one always had in the great forests of the Ohio Valley.

The banks of this river were higher than those of the Ohio, but were clothed also in dense forests, which, from the surface of the stream no human eye could penetrate in the darkness of the night. They rowed in silence for a full hour, seeing no good place for an anchorage, and then, at a sign from Henry, came to rest on the stream. Shif'less Sol, strong of eye and mind, saw an unusual expression on the face of the leader.

"What is it, Henry?" he whispered.

"I thought I heard the sound of an incautious paddle, one that splashed water, but I'm not sure."

"Ah," said the shiftless one, "then we'll listen a little longer."

The others heard the words also, but, saying nothing, they, too, listened. Very soon all heard the splashing of the single paddle and then the swishing sound of many moved steadily in the waters by strong and practiced hands.

"It's a fleet behind us," said Henry, "and a fleet on this river can mean only Indians. Shall we pull ahead with all our might?"

"No," said Shif'less Sol. "Look how thick the bushes grow at the water's edge. We can run our boat in among them and in all this darkness, the Indians, whether Wyandot, Miami or Shawnee, will not know that we are thar. Besides, curiosity

is gnawin' at me hard. I want to see what's in this Indian fleet."

"So do I," said Silent Tom Ross, speaking for the first time, and the others also gave their assent. The boat shot diagonally across the stream towards the dark mass of bushes, into which it was pushed slowly and without noise by the guiding arms of the rowers. Here it came to rest, completely hidden in the dense covert of leaves and twigs, while its occupants could see anything that passed on the surface of the river.

"They'll come soon," said Henry, as the sound of the paddles grew louder, "and I should judge that they are many."

"Maybe a hundred boats and canoes," said Shif'less Sol. "It's my guess that it's a big war party of some kind or other."

"The allied Indian nations, no doubt," said Henry thoughtfully. "Despite their defeats in the East, they are yet almost supreme here in the valley, and they hang together."

"Which means," said Shif'less Sol, a warlike tone coming into his voice, "that of some big movement is afoot, it's our task to find out what it is an' beat it if we kin."

"Certainly," Henry whispered back. "It's what we've been doing, Sol, for the last two or three years, and we won't stop until the work is done."

The tone of the great youth was low, but it was marked by the resolution that he always showed in times of danger. He and his comrades were on the return journey to Wareville, after taking part in the campaigns of Wyoming and the Chemung, but it was scarcely the thought of any one of the five that they would travel the vast distance without interruption. Henry, as he sat in the boat in the darkness, felt that once more they were on the verge of great events. Used so long to the life of the wilderness and its countless dangers, the sudden throb of his heart told not of fear, but rather of exultation. It was the spirit rising to meet what lay before it. The same strength of soul animated his comrades, but everyone took his resolution in silence.

The boat, hidden deep in the mass of foliage, lay parallel with the current of the stream, and it tipped a little on one side, as the five leaned forward and watched eagerly for the fleet that was coming up the river. The regular and rhythmic sound of oars and paddles grew louder, and then the head of the fleet, trailing

itself like a long serpent, came into view. A great canoe with many men at the paddles appeared first, and behind it, in lines of four, followed the other canoes, at least a hundred in number, bearing perhaps five hundred warriors.

The five thrilled at the sight, which was ominous and full of majesty. The moon was now coming out, and the surface of the dark stream turned to melted silver. But the high banks were still in darkness, and only the savage fleet was thrown into relief.

The paddles rose and fell in unison, and the steady swishing sound was musical. The moonlight deepened and poured its stream of silver over hundreds of savage faces, illuminating the straight black hair, the high cheek bones, and the broad chests, naked, save for the war paint. None of them spoke, but their silence made the passing of this savage array in the night all the more formidable.

Henry's attention was soon caught by a figure in the large boat that led. It was that of a man who did not use the paddle, but who sat near the prow with folded arms. The upper half of his body was so rigidly upright that in another place he might have posed for a figurehead of some old Roman galley. He was of magnificent build. Like the others, he was naked to the waist, and the moonlight showed the great muscles upon his powerful shoulders and chest. The pose of the head expressed pride that nothing could quench.

Henry recognized the man at once. Had he not seen the face, the figure and attitude alone were sufficient to tell him that this was Timmendiquas, the great White Lightning of the Wyandots, returning from the East, where he had helped the Indians in vain, but at the head of a great force, once more in his own country.

Henry put his hand upon that of Shif'less Sol.

"I see," whispered his comrade very low. "It is Timmendiquas, an' whar he comes, big things come, too."

Henry knew in his heart that the shiftless one was right. The coming of Timmendiquas with so large an army meant great events, and it was good fortune that had placed himself and his comrades there that night that they might see. His old feeling of admiration for the chief was as strong as ever, and he felt a certain sympathy, too. Here was a man who had failed despite courage, energy and genius. His help had not been able to save the Iroquois, and his own people might some day meet the same fate.

The long line of the fleet passed on in silence, save for the musical swishing of the paddles. That sound, too, soon died away. Then all the canoes blended together like a long arrow of glittering silver, and the five in the bushes watched the arrow until it faded quite away on the surface of the stream.

Henry and his comrades did not yet come forth from their covert, but they talked frankly.

"What do you think it means?" asked the young leader.

"Another raid on Kentucky," said Tom Ross.

"But not jest yet," said the shrewd and far-seeing Shif'less Sol. "Timmendiquas will go North to gather all the warriors in the valley if he kin. He may even get help in Canada."

"I think so, too," said Paul.

"Pears likely to me," said Long Jim.

"That being the case," said Henry, "I think we ought to follow. Do you agree with me?"

"We do," said the four together, speaking with the greatest emphasis.

The decision made, nothing more was said upon the point, but they remained fully an hour longer in the covert. It would not be wise to follow yet, because a canoe or two might drop behind to serve as a rear guard. Nor was there any need to hurry.

The five were in splendid shape for a new campaign. They had enjoyed a long rest, as they floated down the Ohio, rarely using the oars. They carried a large supply of ammunition and some extra rifles and other weapons, and, used to success, they were ready to dare anything. When they thought the Indian fleet was several miles ahead, they pulled their boat from the covert and followed. But they did not take the middle of the stream. Theirs was not a large force which could move rapidly, fearing nothing. Instead, they clung close to the eastern shore, in the shadow of the bank and trees, and rowed forward at an even pace, which they slackened only at the curves, lest they plunge suddenly into a hostile force.

About midnight they heard faintly the splash of the paddles, and then they drew

in again among the bushes at the bank, where they decided to remain for the rest of the night. Henry was to watch about three hours and Shifless Sol would be on guard afterward. The four wrapped themselves in their blankets, lay down in the bottom of the boat, and were sound asleep in a few minutes. Henry, rifle across his knees, crouched in the stern. Now that he did not have the exercise of the oars, the night felt cold, and he drew his own blankets over his shoulders.

Henry expected no danger, but he watched closely, nevertheless. Nothing could have passed on the stream unnoticed by him, and every sound on the bank above would have attracted his attention at once. Despite the fact that they were about to embark upon a new task attended by many dangers, the boy felt a great peace. In the perilous life of the wilderness he had learned how to enjoy the safety and physical comfort of the moment. He looked down at his comrades and smiled to himself. They were merely dark blurs on the bottom of the boat, sleeping soundly in their blankets. What glorious comrades they were! Surely no one ever had better.

Henry himself did not move for a long time. He leaned against the side of the boat, and the blanket remained drawn up about his neck and shoulders. The rifle across his knee was draped by the same blanket, all except the steel muzzle. Only his face was uncovered, but his eyes never ceased to watch. The wind was blowing lightly through the trees and bushes, and the current of the river murmured beside the boat, all these gentle sounds merging into one note, the song of the forest that he sometimes heard when he alone was awake—he and everything else being still.

Henry's mind was peaceful, imaginative, attentive to all the wonders of the forest, beholding wonders that others could not see, and the song went on, the gentle murmur of the river fusing and melting into the wind among the leaves. While he watched and listened, nothing escaping him, his mind traveled far, down the great rivers, through the many battles in which he had borne his share, and up to those mighty lakes of which he had often heard, but which he had never seen.

The moonlight brightened again, clothing all the forest and river in a veil of silver gauze. It was inexpressibly beautiful to Henry who, like the Indians, beheld with awe and admiration the work of Manitou.

A light sound, not in unison with the note of the forest, came from the bank above. It was very faint, nothing more than the momentary displacement of a

bough, but the crouching figure in the boat moved ever so slightly, and then was still. The sound was repeated once and no more, but Henry's mind ceased to roam afar. The great river that he had seen and the great lakes that he had not seen were forgotten. With all the power of his marvelous gift he was concentrating his faculties upon the point from which the discord had come once, twice and then no more. Eye, ear and something greater—divination, almost—were bent upon it.

He listened several minutes, but the sound did not come a third time. Forest and river were singing together again, but Henry was not satisfied. He rose to his feet, laid the blanket softly in the boat, and then with a glance at the river to see that nothing was passing there, leaped lightly to the land.

The bank rose above him to a height of thirty feet, but the bushes were thick along its face, and the active youth climbed easily and without noise. Before he reached the crest he flattened himself against the earth and listened. He was quite confident that someone had been passing and was, perhaps, very near. He was too good a forester to ignore the event. He heard nothing and then drew himself up cautiously over the edge of the cliff.

He saw before him thick forest, so heavy and dark that the moon did not light it up. An ordinary scout or sentinel would have turned back, satisfied that nothing was to be found, but Henry entered the woods and proceeded carefully in the direction from which the sound had come. He soon saw faint signs of a trail, evidently running parallel with the river, and, used from time to time, by the Indians. Now Henry was satisfied that his senses had not deceived him, and he would discover who had passed. He judged by the difference between the first and second sounds that the journey was leading northward, and he followed along the trail. He had an idea that it would soon lead him to a camp, and he reckoned right, because in a few minutes he saw a red bead of light to his right.

Henry knew that the light betokened a camp-fire, and he was sure that he would find beside it the cause of the noise that he had heard. He approached with care, the woods offering an ample covert. He soon saw that the fire was of good size, and that there were at least a dozen figures around it.

"More warriors," he said to himself, "probably bound for the same place as the fleet."

But as he drew yet nearer he saw that not all the men around the camp-fire were warriors. Three, despite their faces, browned by wind and rain, belonged to the

white race, and in the one nearest to him, Henry, with a leap of the heart, recognized his old enemy, Braxton Wyatt.

Wyatt, like Timmendiquas, had come back to the scene of his earlier exploits and this conjunction confirmed Henry in his belief that some great movement was intended.

Wyatt was on the far side of the fire, where the flames lighted up his face, and Henry was startled by the savagery manifested there. The renegade's face, despite his youth, was worn and lined. His black hair fell in dark locks upon his temples. He still wore the British uniform that he had adopted in the East, but sun and rain had left little of its original color. Wyatt had returned to the West unsuccessful, and Henry knew that he was in his most evil mind.

The short, thick man sitting by Wyatt was Simon Girty, the most famous of all the renegades, and just beyond him was Blackstaffe. The Indians were Shawnees.

The three white men were deep in conversation and now and then they pointed towards the north. Henry would have given much to have heard what they said, but they did not speak loudly enough. He was tempted to take a shot at the villain, Simon Girty. A single bullet would remove a scourge from the border and save hundreds of lives. The bullet sent, he might easily escape in the darkness. But he could not pull the trigger. He could not fire upon anyone from ambush, and watching a little while longer, he crept back through the forest to the boat, which he regained without trouble.

Henry awakened his comrades and told them all that he had seen. They agreed with him that it was of the utmost importance. Wyatt and Girty were, no doubt, cooperating with Timmendiquas, and somewhere to the north the great Wyandot intended to rally his forces for a supreme effort.

"This leaves us without the shadow of a pretext for going on to Wareville," said Henry.

"It shorely does," said Shif'less Sol. "It's now our business to follow the Indians an' the renegades all the way to the Great Lakes ef they go that fur."

"I hope they will," said Paul. "I'd like to see those lakes. They say you can sail on them there for days and days and keep out of sight of land. They're one of the wonders of the world."

"The trail may lead us that far," said Henry. "Who knows! But since the enemy is on both land and water, I think we'll have to hide our boat and take to the forest."

The truth of his words was obvious to them. The renegades or Indians in the woods would certainly see their boat if they continued that method of progress, but on land they could choose their way and hide whenever they wished. Reluctantly they abandoned their boat, which was staunch and strong, but they hid it as well as possible among bushes and reeds. In such a vast wilderness, the chances were twenty to one that it would remain where they had put it until they returned to claim their own. Too wise to burden themselves, they buried all their extra weapons and stores at the base of a great oak, marked well the place, and then, everyone with a blanket and light pack, started forward through the forest. They intended to go ahead of the renegades, observe the anchorage of the boats, and then withdrawing some distance from the river, let Wyatt, Girty and their friends pass them.

Although it was yet several hours until daylight, they resumed their journey along the eastern bank of the stream, Henry leading and Silent Tom Ross bringing up the rear. In this manner they advanced rapidly and just when the first beams of dawn were appearing, they saw the Indian fleet at anchor on the west shore.

They examined them at their leisure from the dense covert of the thickets, and saw that their estimate of five hundred warriors, made the night before, was correct. They also saw Timmendiquas more than once and it was evident that he was in complete command. Respect and attention followed wherever he went. Paint and dress indicated that warriors of all the tribes inhabiting the Ohio Valley were there.

The Indians seemed to be in no hurry, as they lighted fires on the bank, and cooked buffalo and deer meat, which they ate in great quantities. Many, when they had finished their breakfast, lay down on the grass and slept again. Others slept in the larger canoes.

"They are waiting for more of their friends to come up," whispered Henry to his comrades. A few minutes later, Wyatt, Girty and their party hailed the great war band from the east bank. Canoes were sent over for them, and they were taken into the Indian camp, but without much sign of rejoicing.

"We know that Timmendiquas does not like Wyatt," said Henry, "and I don't believe that he really likes any of the renegades, not even Girty."

"Red man ought to stick to red man, an' white man to white," said Shif'less Sol, sententiously. "I think that's the way Timmendiquas looks at it, an' I'd like to stan' ez high ez a white man, ez he does ez a red man."

"I kin smell that cookin' buffler an' venison all the way across the river," said Jim Hart, "an' it's makin' me pow'ful hungry."

"It'll have to be cold meat for us this time, Jim," said Henry.

They had been so engrossed in the spectacle passing before them that they had forgotten food until the savory odors came across the stream and recalled it to Jim Hart's attention. Now they took out strips of dried venison with which they were always provided, and ate it slowly. It was not particularly delicious to the taste, but it furnished sustenance and strength. All the while they were lying in a dense thicket, and the sun was steadily climbing to the zenith, touching the vast green forest with bright gold.

A shout came from a point far down the river. It was faint, but the five in the covert heard it. Someone in the fleet of Timmendiquas sent back an answering cry, a shrill piercing whoop that rose to an extraordinary pitch of intensity, and then sank away gradually in a dying note. Then the first cry came again, not so remote now, and once more it was answered in a similar way from the fleet of Timmendiquas.

"Another fleet or detachment is comm'," said Shif'less Sol, "an' its expected. That's the reason why White Lightnin' has been lingerin' here, ez ef time didn't hev no meanin' at all."

Many of the Indians, and with them Girty, Wyatt and Blackstaffe were looking down the stream. The eyes of the five followed theirs and presently they saw a fleet of thirty or forty canoes emerge into view, welcomed with loud shouts by the men of Timmendiquas. When the re-enforcement was fused into the main fleet, all took their place in line and once more started northward, the five following in the woods on shore.

Henry and his comrades kept up this odd pursuit for a week, curving back and forth, but in the main keeping a northern course. Sometimes they left the river several miles away to the left, and saved distance by making a straight line between curves, but they knew that they would always come back to the stream. Thus it was easy traveling for such capable woodsmen as they. They saw the fleet joined by three more detachments, two by water and one by land. One came

on a small tributary stream flowing from the West, and the total force was now increased to nearly a thousand warriors.

On the sixth night of the parallel pursuit the five discussed it sitting in a thicket.

"We must be drawing near to a village," said Henry.

"I believe with you," said Shif'less Sol, "an' I think it likely that it's a Wyandot town."

"It's probable," said Paul, "and now for what purpose is such a great Indian force gathering? Do they mean to go South against Kentucky? Do they mean to go East against New York and Pennsylvania, or do they mean to go northward to join the British in Canada?"

"That's what we've got to find out," said Long Jim tersely.

"That's just it," said Henry. "We've got to stick to 'em until we learn what they mean to try. Then we must follow again. It's my opinion that they intend to go further northward or they wouldn't be gathering at a point two or three hundred miles above the Ohio."

"Reckon you are right, Henry," said Shif'less Sol. "Ez for me I don't care how fur north this chase takes us, even ef we come right spang up ag'in' the Great Lakes. I want to see them five wonders o' the world that Paul talks about."

"We may go to them," said Henry, "but it seems probable to me that we'll reach a big Wyandot village first."

The Indians resumed their voyage in the usual leisurely fashion the next morning, and the five on shore followed at a convenient distance. They observed that the water of the river was now shallowing fast. The Indian boats were of light draft, but they could not go much further, and the village must be near.

That evening just before sunset long cries were heard in the forest, and those in the boat replied with similar signals. Then the fleet swung to the bank, and all the warriors disembarked. Other warriors came through the woods to meet them, and leaving a guard with the boats the whole army marched away through the forest.

The five were observers of all that passed, and they knew that the Indian village was at hand—perhaps not more than three or four miles away. Still keeping their

distance, they followed. The sun was now gone, and only a band of red light lingered on the horizon in the West. It, too, faded quickly as they marched through the woods, and the night came down, enveloping the forest in darkness. The five were glad that the landing had occurred at such a time, as it made their own pursuit much safer and easier.

The Indians, feeling perfectly safe, carried torches and talked and laughed with great freedom. The five in the covert had both the light and the noise to guide them, and they followed silently.

They passed over a gently rolling country, heavily wooded, and in a half hour they saw lights ahead, but yet at some distance. The lights, though scattered, were numerous, and seemed to extend along an arc of half a mile. The five knew that the Indian village now lay before them.



CHAPTER II

THE SILVER BULLET

The village, the largest belonging to the Wyandots, the smallest, but most warlike of the valley tribes, lay in a warm hollow, and it did not consist of more than a hundred and fifty skin tepees and log cabins. But it was intended to be of a permanent nature, else a part of its houses would not have been of wood. There was also about it a considerable area of cleared land where the squaws raised corn and pumpkins. A fine creek flowed at the eastern edge of the clearing. Henry and his comrades paused, where the line of forest met the open, and watched the progress of the army across the cleared ground. Everybody in the village, it seemed, was coming forward to meet the chief, the warriors first and then the old men, squaws and children, all alive with interest.

Timmendiquas strode ahead, his tall figure seeming taller in the light of the torches. But it was no triumphant return for him. Suddenly he uttered a long quavering cry which was taken up by those who followed him. Then the people in the village joined in the wail, and it came over and over again from the multitude. It was inexpressibly mournful and the dark forest gave it back in weird echoes. The procession poured on in a great horde toward the village, but the cry, full of grief and lament still came back.

"They are mournin' for the warriors lost in the East," said Tom Ross. "I reckon that after Wyomin' an' Chemung, Timmendiquas wasn't able to bring back more than half his men."

"If the Wyandots lost so many in trying to help the Iroquois, won't that fact be likely to break up the big Indian league?" asked Paul.

Tom Ross shook his head, but Henry answered in words:

"No, the Indians, especially the chiefs, are inflamed more than ever by their losses. Moreover, as Timmendiquas has seen how the allied Six Nations themselves could not hold back the white power, he will be all the more anxious to strike us hard in the valley."

"I've a notion," said Shif'less Sol, "that bands o' the Iroquois, 'specially the

Mohawks, may come out here, an' try to do fur Timmendiquas what he tried to do fur them. The savages used to fight ag'in' one another, but I think they are now united ag'in' us, on an' off, all the way from the Atlantic to the Great Plains."

"Guess you're right, Sol," said Long Jim, "but ez fur me, jest now I want to sleep. We had a purty hard march to-day. Besides walkin' we had to be watchin' always to see that our scalps were still on our heads, an' that's a purty wearyin' combination."

"I speak for all, and all are with you," said Paul, so briskly that the others laughed.

"Any snug place that is well hid will do," said Henry, "and as the forest is so thick I don't think it will take us long to find it."

They turned southward, and went at least three miles through heavy woods and dense thickets. All they wanted was a fairly smooth spot with the bushes growing high above them, and, as Henry had predicted, they quickly found it—a small depression well grown with bushes and weeds, but with an open space in the center where some great animal, probably a buffalo had wallowed. They lay down in this dry sandy spot, rolled in their blankets, and felt so secure that they sought sleep without leaving anyone to watch.

Henry was the first to awake. The dawn was cold and he shivered a little when he unrolled himself from his blanket. The sun showed golden in the east, but the west was still dusky. He looked for a moment or two at his four friends, lying as still as if they were dead. Then he stretched his muscles, and beat his arms across his chest to drive away the frost of the morning that had crept into his blood. Shif'less Sol yawned and awoke and the others did likewise, one by one.

"Cold mornin' fur this time o' year," said Shif'less Sol. "Jim, light the fire an' cook breakfast an' the fust thing I want is a good hot cup o' coffee."

"Wish I could light a fire," said Long Jim, "an' then I could give you a cup shore 'nuff. I've got a little pot an' a tin cup inside an' three pounds o' ground coffee in my pack. I brought it from the boat, thinkin' you fellers would want it afore long."

"What do you say, Henry?" asked Shif'less Sol. "Coffee would be pow'ful warmin'. None o' us hez tasted anything but cold vittles for more'n a day now."

Let's take the chances on it."

Henry hesitated but the chill was still in his blood and he yielded. Besides the risk was not great.

"All right," he said; "gather dead wood and we'll be as quick about it as we can."

The wood was ready in a minute. Tom Ross whittled off shavings with his knife. Shif'less Sol set fire to them with flint and steel. In a few minutes something was bubbling inside Jim Hart's coffee pot, and sending out a glorious odor.

Shif'less Sol sniffed the odor.

"I'm growin' younger," he said. "I'm at least two years younger than I wuz when I woke up. I wish to return thanks right now to the old Greek feller who invented fire. What did you say his name was, Paul?"

"Prometheus. He didn't invent fire, Sol, but according to the story he brought it down from the heavens."

"It's all the same," said the shiftless one as he looked attentively at the steaming coffee pot. "I guess it wuz about the most useful trip Promethy ever made when he brought that fire down."

Everyone in turn drank from the cup. They also heated their dried venison over the coals, and, as they ate and drank, they felt fresh strength pouring into every vein. When the pot was empty Jim put it on the ground to cool, and as he scattered the coals of fire with a kick, Henry, who was sitting about a yard away suddenly lay flat and put his ear to the earth.

"Do you hear anything, Henry?" asked Shif'less Sol, who knew the meaning of the action.

"I thought I heard the bark of a dog," replied Henry, "but I was not sure before I put my ear to the ground that it was not imagination. Now I know it's truth. I can hear the barking distinctly, and it is coming this way."

"Some o' them ornery yellow curs hev picked up our trail," said Shif'less Sol, "an' o' course the warriors will follow."

"Which, I take it, means that it is time for us to move from our present abode," said Paul.

Long Jim hastily thrust the coffee pot, not yet cold, and the cup back into his pack, and they went towards the South at a gait that was half a run and half a walk, easy but swift.

"This ain't a flight," said Shif'less Sol. "It's just a masterly retreat. But I'll tell you, boys, I don't like to run away from dogs. It humiliates me to run from a brute, an' an inferior. Hark to their barkin'."

They now heard the baying of the dogs distinctly, a long wailing cry like the howling of hounds. The note of it was most ominous to Paul's sensitive mind. In the mythology that he had read, dogs played a great rôle, nearly always as the enemy of man. There were Cerberus and the others, and flitting visions of them passed through his mind now. He was aware, too, that the reality was not greatly inferior to his fancies. The dogs could follow them anywhere, and the accidental picking-up of their trail might destroy them all.

The five went on in silence, so far as they were concerned, for a long time, but the baying behind them never ceased. It also grew louder, and Henry, glancing hastily back, expected that the dogs would soon come into sight.

"Judging from their barking, the Wyandots must love dogs of uncommon size and fierceness," he said.

"Pears likely to me," said Shif'less Sol. "We're good runners, all five o' us. We've shaken the warriors off, but not the dogs."

"It's just as you say," said Henry. "We can't run on forever, so we must shoot the trailers—that is—the dogs. Listen to them. They are not more than a couple of hundred yards away now."

They crossed a little open space, leaped a brook and then entered the woods again. But at a signal from Henry, they stopped a few yards further on.

"Now, boys," he said, "be ready with your rifles. We must stop these dogs. How many do you think they are, Tom?"

"'Bout four, I reckon."

"Then the moment they come into the open space, Tom, you and Paul and Jim shoot at those on the left, and Sol and I will take the right."

The Indian dogs sprang into the open space and five rifles cracked together.

Three of them—they were four in number, as Tom had said—were killed instantly, but the fourth sprang aside into the bushes, where he remained. The five at once reloaded their rifles as they ran. Now they increased their speed, hoping to shake off their pursuers. Behind them rose a long, fierce howl, like a note of grief and revenge.

"That's the dog we did not kill," said Paul, "and he's going to hang on."

"I've heard tell," said Tom Ross, "that 'cordin' to the Indian belief, the souls o' dead warriors sometimes get into dogs an' other animals, an' it ain't fur me to say that it ain't true. Mebbe it's really a dead Injun, 'stead o' a live dog that's leadin' the warriors on."

Paul shuddered. Tom's weird theory chimed in with his own feelings. The fourth dog, the one that had hid from the bullets, was a phantom, leading the savages on to vengeance for his dead comrades. Now and then he still bayed as he kept the trail, but the fleeing five sought in vain to make him a target for their bullets. Seemingly, he had profited by the death of his comrades, as his body never showed once among the foliage. Search as they would with the sharpest of eyes, none of the five could catch the faintest glimpse of him.

"He's a ghost, shore," said Tom Ross. "No real, ordinary dog would keep under cover that way. I reckon we couldn't kill him if we hit him, 'less we had a silver bullet."

The savages themselves uttered the war cry only two or three times, but it was enough to show that with the aid of the dog they followed relentlessly. The situation of the five had become alarming to the last degree. They had intended to pursue, not to be pursued. Now they were fleeing for their lives, and there would be no escape, unless they could shake off the most terrible of all that followed—the dog. And at least one of their number, Silent Tom Ross, was convinced thoroughly that the dog could not be killed, unless they had the unobtainable—a silver bullet. In moments of danger, superstition can take a strong hold, and Paul too, felt a cold chill at his heart.

Their course now took them through a rolling country, clad heavily in forest, but without much undergrowth, and they made good speed. They came to numerous brooks, and sometimes they waded in them a little distance, but they did not have much confidence in this familiar device. It might shake off the warriors for a while, but not that terrible dog which, directed by the Indians, would run along the bank and pick up the trail again in a few seconds. Yet hope rose once. For a

long time they heard neither bark nor war cry, and they paused under the branches of a great oak. They were not really tired, as they had run at an easy gait, but they were too wise to let pass a chance for rest. Henry was hopeful that in some manner they had shaken off the dog, but there was no such belief in the heart of the silent one. Tom Ross had taken out his hunting knife and with his back to the others was cutting at something. Henry gave him a quick glance, but he did not deem it wise to ask him anything. The next moment, all thought of Tom was put out of his mind by the deep baying of the dog coming down through the forest.

The single sound, rising and swelling after the long silence was uncanny and terrifying. The face of Tom Ross turned absolutely pale through the tan of many years. Henry himself could not repress a shudder.

"We must run for it again," he said. "We could stay and fight, of course, but it's likely that the Indians are in large numbers."

"If we could only shake off the hound," muttered Tom Ross. "Did you pay 'tention to his voice then, Henry? Did you notice how deep it was? I tell you that ain't no common dog."

Henry nodded and they swung once more into flight. But he and Shif'less Sol, the best two marksmen on the border, dropped to the rear.

"We must get a shot at that dog," whispered Henry. "Very likely it's a big wolf hound."

"I think so," said Shif'less Sol, "but I tell you, Henry, I don't like to hear it bayin'. It sounds to me jest ez ef it wuz sayin': 'I've got you! I've got you! I've got you!' Do you reckon there kin be anything in what Tom says?"

"Of course not. Of course not," replied Henry. "Tom's been picking up too much Indian superstition."

At that moment the deep baying note so unlike the ordinary bark of an Indian dog came again, and Henry, despite himself, felt the cold chill at his heart once more. Involuntarily he and the shiftless one glanced at each other, and each read the same in the other's eyes.

"We're bound to get that dog, hound, cur, or whatever he may be!" exclaimed Henry almost angrily.

Shif'less Sol said nothing, but he cast many backward glances at the bushes. Often he saw them move slightly in a direction contrary to the course of the wind, but he could not catch a glimpse of the body that caused them to move. Nor could Henry. Twice more they heard the war cry of the savages, coming apparently from at least a score of throats, and not more than three or four hundred yards away. Henry knew that they were depending entirely upon the dog, and his eagerness for a shot increased. He could not keep his finger away from the trigger. He longed for a shot.

"We must kill that dog," he said to Shif'less Sol; "we can't run on forever."

"No, we can't, but we kin run jest as long as the Injuns kin," returned the shiftless one, "an' while we're runnin' we may get the chance we want at the dog."

The pursuit went on for a long time. The Indians never came into view, but the occasional baying of the hound told the fleeing five that they were still there. It was not an unbroken flight. They stopped now and then for rest, but, when the voice of the hound came near again, they would resume their easy run toward the South. At every stop Tom Ross would turn his back to the others, take out his hunting knife and begin to whittle at something. But when they started again the hunting knife was back in its sheath once more, and Tom's appearance was as usual.

The sun passed slowly up the arch of the heavens. The morning coolness had gone long since from the air, but the foliage of the great forest protected them. Often, when the shade was not so dense they ran over smooth, springy turf, and they were even deliberate enough, as the hours passed, to eat a little food from their packs. Twice they knelt and drank at the brooks.

They made no attempt to conceal their trail, knowing that it was useless, but Henry and Shif'less Sol, their rifles always lying in the hollows of their arms, never failed to seek a glimpse of the relentless hound. It was fully noon when the character of the country began to change slightly. The hills were a little higher and there was more underbrush. Just as they reached a crest Henry looked back. In the far bushes, he saw a long dark form and a pointed gray head with glittering eyes. He knew that it was the great dog, a wolf hound; he was sure now, and, quick as a flash, he raised his rifle and fired at a point directly between the glittering eyes. The dog dropped out of sight and the five ran on.

"Do you think you killed him, Henry?" asked Shif'less Sol breathlessly.

"I don't know; I hope so."

Behind them rose a deep bay, the trailing note of the great dog, but now it seemed more ferocious and uncanny than ever. Shif'less Sol shuddered. Tom Ross' face turned not pale, but actually white, through its many layers of tan.

"Henry," said Shif'less Sol, "I never knowed you to miss at that range afore."

The eyes of the two met again and each asked a question of the other.

"I think I was careless, Sol," said Henry. His voice shook a little.

"I hope so," said Shif'less Sol, whose mind was veering more and more toward the belief of Tom Ross, "but I'd like pow'ful well to put a bullet through that animal myself. Them awful wolf howls o' his hit on my nerves, they do."

The chance of the shiftless one came presently. He, too, saw among the bushes the long dark body, the massive pointed head and the glittering eyes. He fired as quickly as Henry had done. Then came that silence, followed in a few minutes by the deep and sinister baying note of the great hound.

"I reckon I fired too quick, too," said Shif'less Sol. But the hands that grasped his rifle were damp and cold.

"'Tain't no use," said Tom Ross in a tone of absolute conviction. "I've seen you and Henry fire afore at harder targets than that, an' hit 'em every time. You hit this one, too."

"Then why didn't we kill the brute?" exclaimed Henry.

"'Cause lead wuzn't meant to kill him. Your bullets went right through him an' never hurt him."

Henry forced a laugh.

"Pshaw, Tom," he said. "Don't talk such foolishness."

"I never talked solider sense in my life," said Ross.

Henry and Shif'less Sol reloaded their rifles as they ran, and both were deeply troubled. In all their experience of every kind of danger they had met nothing so sinister as this, nothing so likely to turn the courage of a brave man. Twice sharpshooters who never missed had missed a good target. Or could there be anything in the words of Tom Ross?

They left the warriors some distance behind again and paused for another rest, until the terrible hound should once more bring the pursuers near. All five were much shaken, but Tom Ross as usual in these intervals turned his back upon the others, and began to work with his hunting knife. Henry, as he drew deep breaths of fresh air into his lungs, noticed that the sun was obscured. Many clouds were coming up from the southwest, and there was a damp touch in the air. The wind was rising.

"Looks as if a storm was coming," he said. "It ought to help us."

But Tom Ross solemnly shook his head.

"It might throw off the warriors," he said, "but not the dog. Hark, don't you hear him again?"

They did hear. The deep booming note, sinister to the last degree, came clearly to their ears.

"It's time to go ag'in," said Shif'less Sol, with a wry smile. "Seems to me this is about the longest footrace I ever run. Sometimes I like to run, but I like to run only when I like it, and when I don't like it I don't like for anybody to make me do it. But here goes, anyhow. I'll keep on runnin' I don't know whar."

Sol's quaint remarks cheered them a little, and their feet became somewhat lighter. But one among them was thinking with the utmost concentration. Tom Ross, convinced that something was a fact, was preparing to meet it. He would soon be ready. Meanwhile the darkness increased and the wind roared, but there was no rain. The country grew rougher. The underbrush at times was very dense, and one sharp little stony hill succeeded another. The running was hard.

Henry was growing angry. He resented this tenacious pursuit. It had been so unexpected, and the uncanny dog had been so great a weapon against them. He began to feel now that they had run long enough. They must make a stand and the difficult country would help them.

"Boys," he said, "we've run enough. I'm in favor of dropping down behind these rocks and fighting them off. What do you say?"

All were for it, and in a moment they took shelter. The heavy clouds and the forest about them made the air dim, but their eyes were so used to it that they could see anyone who approached them, and they were glad now that they had

decided to put the issue to the test of battle. They lay close together, watching in front and also for a flank movement, but for a while they saw nothing. The hound had ceased to bay, but, after a while, both Henry and Sol saw a rustling among the bushes, and they knew that the savages were at hand.

But of all the watchers at that moment Silent Tom Ross was the keenest. He also occupied himself busily for a minute or so in drawing the bullet from his rifle. Henry did not notice him until this task was almost finished.

"Why, in the name of goodness, Tom," he exclaimed, "are you unloading your rifle at such a time?"

Tom looked up. The veteran scout's eyes shone with grim fire.

"I know what I'm doin'," he said. "Mebbe I'm the only one in this crowd who knows what ought to be did. I'm not unloadin' my rifle, Henry. I'm jest takin' out one bullet an' puttin' in another in its place. See this?"

He held up a small disc that gleamed in the dim light.

"That," said Tom, "is a silver bullet. It's flat an' it ain't shaped like a bullet, but it's a bullet all the same. I've been cuttin' it out uv a silver sixpence, an' now it exactly fits my rifle. You an' Sol—an' I ain't sayin' anything ag'in' your marksmanship—could shoot at that dog all day without hurtin' him, but I'm goin' to kill him with this silver bullet."

"Don't talk foolishness, Tom," said Henry.

"You'll see," said the veteran in a tone of such absolute conviction that the others could not help being impressed. Tom curled himself up behind one rock, and in front of another. Then he watched with the full intensity that the danger and his excitement demanded. He felt that all depended upon him, his own life and the lives of those four comrades so dear to him.

Tom Ross, silent, reserved, fairly poured his soul into his task. Nothing among the bushes and trees in front of them escaped his attention. Once he saw a red feather move, but he knew that it was stuck in the hair of an Indian and he was looking for different game. He became so eager that he flattened his face against the rock and thrust forward the rifle barrel that he might lose no chance however fleeting.

Silent Tom's figure and face were so tense and eager that Henry stopped

watching the bushes a moment or two to look at him. But Tom continued to search for his target. He missed nothing that human eye could see among those bushes, trees and rocks. He saw an eagle feather again, but it did not interest him. Then he heard the baying of a hound, and he quivered from head to foot, but the sound stopped in a moment, and he could not locate the long dark figure for which he looked. But he never ceased to watch, and his eagerness and intensity did not diminish a particle.

The air darkened yet more, and the moan of the wind rose in the forest. But there was no rain. The five behind the rocks scarcely moved, and there was silence in the bushes in front of them. Tom Ross, intent as ever, saw a bush move slightly and then another. His eyes fastened upon the spot. So eager was he that he seemed fairly to double his power of sight. He saw a third bush move, and then a patch of something dark appear where nothing had been before. Tom's heart beat fast. He thought of the comrades so dear to him, and he thought of the silver bullet in his rifle. The dark patch grew a little larger. He quivered all over, but the next instant he was rigid. He was watching while the dark patch still grew. He felt that he would have but a single chance, and that if ever in his life he must seize the passing moment it was now.

Tom was staring so intently that his gaze pierced the shadows, and now he saw the full figure of a huge hound stealing forward among the bushes. He saw the massive pointed head and glittering eyes, and his rifle muzzle shifted until he looked down the barrel upon a spot directly between those cruel eyes. He prayed to the God of the white man and the Manitou of the red man, who are the same, to make him steady of eye and hand in this, their moment of great need. Then he pulled the trigger.

The great dog uttered a fierce howl of pain, leaped high into the air, and fell back among the bushes. But even as he fell Tom saw that he was stiffening into death, and he exclaimed to his comrades:

"It got him! The silver bullet got him! He'll never follow us any more."

"I believe you're right," said Henry, awed for the moment despite his clear and powerful mind, "and since he's dead we'll shake off the warriors. Come, we'll run for it again."

CHAPTER III

THE HOT SPRING

Bending low, they ran again swiftly forward toward the south. A great cry rose behind them, the whoop of the warriors, a yell of rage and disappointment. A dozen shots were fired, but the bullets either flew over their heads or dropped short. The five did not take the trouble to reply. Confidence had returned to them with amazing quickness, and the most confident and joyous of all was Tom Ross.

"I had the big medicine that time," he exclaimed exultantly. "It's lucky I found the silver sixpence in my pocket, or that hound would have had the savages trailing us forever."

Henry was cooler now, but he did not argue with him about it. In fact, none of them ever did. Both he and Sol were now noting the heavens which had become more overcast. The clouds spread from the horizon to the zenith. Not a ray of sunlight showed. The wind was dropping, but far into the southwest the earth sighed.

"It's the rain," said Henry. "Let it come. It and all this blackness will help our escape."

Low thunder muttered along the western horizon. There were three or four flashes of lightning but when the rain came presently with a sweep, both thunder and lightning ceased, and they ran on clothed in a mantle of darkness.

"Let's stay close together," said Henry, "and after awhile we'll turn to the east and bear back toward the village. Nobody on earth can trail us in all this gloom, with the rain, too, washing out every trace of our footsteps."

Henry's judgment was good. Now that the hound was gone they shook off the savages with ease. The rain was coming down in a steady pour, and, as the twilight also was at hand, they were invisible to anyone fifty yards away. Hence their speed dropped to a walk, and, in accordance with their plan, they turned to the right. They walked on through dark woods, and came to a smoother country, troubled little by rocks and underbrush. The night was fully come, and the rain, that was still pouring out of a black sky, was cold. They had paid no attention to

it before except for its concealment, but, as their figures relaxed after long effort, chill struck into the bone. They had kept their rifles dry with their hunting shirts, but now they took their blankets from the packs and wrapped them about their shoulders. The blankets did not bring them warmth. Their soaked clothing chilled them more and more.

They had become inured long since to all kinds of hardships, but one cannot stand everything. Now and then a spurt of hail came with the rain, and it beat in their faces, slipped between the blankets and down their necks, making them shiver. Their weariness after so much exertion made them all susceptible to the rain and cold. Finally Henry called a halt.

"We must find shelter somewhere," he said. "If we don't, we'll be so stiff in the morning we can't walk, and we'll be lucky to escape chills and pneumonia, or something of that kind."

"That's right," said Shif'less Sol. "So we'll jest go into the inn, which ain't more'n a hundred yards further on, git dry clothing, eat a big supper, have a steaming hot drink apiece of something strong an' then crawl in on feather beds with warm dry blankets over us. Oh, I'll sleep good an' long! Don't you worry about that!"

"Solomon Hyde," said Long Jim Hart indignantly, "ef you don't stop talkin' that way I'll hit you over the head with the barrel uv my rifle. I'm cold enough an' wet enough already without you conjurin' up happy dreams an' things that ain't. Them contrasts make me miserabler than ever, an' I'm likely to get wickeder too. I give you fair warning'."

"All right," replied Shif'less Sol resignedly. "I wuz jest tryin' to cheer you up, Jim, but a good man never gits any reward in this world, jest kicks. How I wish that rain would stop! I never knowed such a cold rain afore at this time o' the year."

"We must certainly find some sort of shelter," Henry repeated.

They searched for a long time, hoping for an alcove among the rocks or perhaps a thick cluster of trees, but they found nothing. Several hours passed. The rain grew lighter, and ceased, although the clouds remained, hiding the moon. But the whole forest was soaked. Water dripped from every twig and leaf, and the five steadily grew colder and more miserable. It was nearly midnight when Henry spied the gleam of water among the tree trunks.

"Another spring," he said. "What a delightful thing to see more water. I've been fairly longing for something wet."

"Yes, and the spring has been rained on so much that the steam is rising from it," said Paul.

"That's so," said Jim Hart. "Shore ez you live thar's a mist like a smoke."

But Henry looked more closely and his tone was joyous as he spoke.

"Boys," he said, "I believe we're in luck, great luck. I think that's a hot spring."

"So do I," said Shiftless Sol in the same joyous tone, "an' ef it is a hot spring, an' it ain't too almighty hot, why, we'll all take pleasant hot baths in it, go to bed an' sleep same ez ef we wuz really on them feather beds in that inn that ain't."

Sol approached and put his hand in the water which he found warm, but not too hot.

"It's all that we hoped, boys," he exclaimed joyfully. "So I'm goin' to enjoy these baths of Lucully right away. After my bath I'll wrap myself in my blanket, an' ez the rain hez stopped I'll hang out my clothes to dry."

It was really a hot spring of the kind sometimes found in the West. The water from the base of a hill formed a large pool, with a smooth bottom of stone, and then flowed away in a little brook under the trees.

It was, indeed, a great piece of luck that they should find this hot bath at a time when it was so badly needed. The teeth of both Paul and Sol were chattering, and they were the first to throw off their clothes and spring into the pool.

"Come right in and be b'iled," exclaimed the shiftless one. "Paul has bragged of the baths o' Caracally but this beats 'em."

There were three splashes as the other three hit the water at once. Then they came out, rolled themselves lightly in the warm blankets, and felt the stiffness and soreness, caused by the rain and cold, departing from their bodies. A light wind was blowing, and their clothes, hung on boughs, were beginning already to dry. An extraordinary sense of peace and ease, even of luxury, stole over them all. The contrast with what they had been suffering put them in a physical heaven.

"I didn't think I could ever be so happy, a-layin' 'roun' in the woods wrapped up

in nothin' but a blanket," said Shif'less Sol. "I guess the baths o' Rome that Paul tells about wuz good in their day, which wuz a mighty long time ago, but not needin' 'em ez bad ez we did, mebbe, them Roman fellers didn't enjoy 'em ez much. What do you say to that, Paul, you champion o' the ancient times which hev gone forever?"

The only answer was a long regular breathing. Paul had fallen asleep.

"Good boy," said Shif'less Sol, sympathetically, "I hope he'll enjoy his nap."

"Hope the same fur me," said Long Jim, "'cause I'm goin' to foller him in less than two minutes."

Jim Hart made good his words. Within the prescribed time a snore, not loud nor disagreeable, but gentle and persistent, rose on the night air. One by one the others also fell asleep, all except Henry, who forced himself to keep awake, and who was also pondering the question of Timmendiquas. What were the great chief's plans? What vast scheme had been evolved from the cunning brain of that master Indian? And how were the five—only five—to defeat it, even should they discover its nature?

The light wind blew through all the rest of the night. The foliage became dry, but the earth had been soaked so thoroughly with water that it remained heavy with damp. The night was bright enough for him to observe the faces of his comrades. They were sleeping soundly and everyone was ruddy with health.

"That was certainly a wonderful hot bath," said Henry to himself, as he looked at the pool. He moved a little in his blanket, tested his muscles and found them all flexible. Then he watched until the first tinge of gray appeared in the east, keeping his eyes upon it, until it turned to silver and then to rose and gold, as the bright sun came. The day would be clear and warm, and, after waiting a little longer, he awakened the others.

"I think you'd better dress for breakfast," he said.

Their clothing was now thoroughly dry, and they clothed themselves anew, but breakfast was wholly lacking. They had eaten all the venison, and every man had an aching void.

"The country hez lots o' deer, o' course," said Shif'less Sol, "but jest when you want one most it's pretty shore that you can't find it."

"I'm not so certain about that," said Henry. "When you find a hot spring you are pretty likely to find a mineral spring or two, also, especially one of salt."

"And if it's salt," finished Paul, "we'll see the deer coming there to drink."

"Sound reasonin'," said Tom Ross.

They began the search. About a hundred yards east of the hot spring they found one of sulphur water, and, two hundred yards further, one of salt. Innumerable tracks beside it showed that it was well patronized by the wilderness people, and the five, hiding in a clump of bushes at a point where the wind would not betray them, bided their time. Some small animals came down to drink at the healing salt spring, but the five did not pull a trigger. This was not the game they wanted, and they never killed wantonly. They were waiting for a fine fat deer, and they felt sure that he would come. A great yellow panther padded down to the spring, frightening everything else away and lapped the water greedily, stopping now and then for suspicious looks at the forest. They longed to take a shot at the evil brute, and, under the circumstances, everyone of the five would have pulled the trigger, but now none did so. The panther took his time, but finally he slunk back into the forest, leaving the salt spring to better wilderness people than himself.

At last the sacrifice came, a fat and splendid stag, walking proudly and boldly down to the pool. He sniffed the morning air, but the wind was not blowing from the fire toward him, and, with no feeling of danger, he bent down his regal head to drink. The five felt regret that so noble an animal must give his life for others, but hunger was hunger and in the wilderness there was no other way. By common consent they nodded towards Henry, who was the best shot, and he raised his rifle. It reminded him of the time far back, when, under the tutelage of Tom Ross, he had shot his first stag. But now, although he did not say it to himself or even think of it, he was Tom Ross' master in all the arts of hunting, and in mind as well.

Henry pulled the trigger. The stag leaped high into the air, ran a few yards, fell and was still. They dressed his body quickly, and in a half hour Long Jim Hart, with all the skill and soul of a culinary artist was frying strips of deer meat over the coals that Shif'less Sol had kindled. There was danger of Indians, of course, but they kept a sharp watch, and as they ate, they neither saw nor heard any sign.

"It is pretty sure," said Henry, "that no savage was lingering about when I fired the rifle, because we would have heard something from him by this time."

"You are shorely right," said Shif'less Sol. "Jim, give me another strip. My appetite hez took a fresh hold ez I'm eatin' now with a free mind."

"Here you are, Sol," said Long Jim. "It's a pow'ful pleasure to me to see you eat my cookin'. The health an strength uv a lazy man like you who hez been nourished by my hand is livin' proof that I'm the best cook in the woods."

"We all give you that credit, Jim," said Shif'less Sol contentedly.

After breakfast they took with them as large a supply of the meat as they could carry with convenience and regretfully left the rest to the wolves and panthers. Then they began their journey toward the Wyandot village. Their misadventure and their long flight from the terrible hound had not discouraged them in the least. They would return directly to the storm center and keep watch, as well as they could, upon the movements of Timmendiquas and his allies.

But they chose another and more easterly course now and traveled all day through beautiful sunshine and a dry forest. Their precautions of the night before had served them well, as the rain and cold left no trace of ill, and their spirits rose to heights.

"But thar's one thing we've got to guard ag'in'," said Shif'less Sol. "I don't want to be tracked by any more dogs. Besides bein' dangerous, it gives you a creepy uncomf'table feelin'."

"We'll keep a good watch for them," said Henry.

As they saw no reason for haste, they slept in the woods another night, and the next night thereafter they approached the Indian village. They hung about it a long time, and, at great risk, discovered that a new movement was on foot. Timmendiquas would soon depart for a journey further into the North. With him would go the famous chiefs, Yellow Panther of the Miamis, and Red Eagle of the Shawnees, and the renegades, Simon Girty, Braxton Wyatt and Blackstaffe. They would have a retinue of a hundred warriors, chosen from the different tribes, but with precedence allotted to the Wyandots. These warriors, however, were picked men of the valley nations, splendidly built, tall, lean and full of courage and ferocity. They were all armed with improved rifles, and every man carried a tomahawk and hunting knife. They were also amply supplied with ammunition and provisions.

The five having watched these preparations by night when they could come

close to the village, considered them carefully as they lay in a dense covert. So far they had not been able to discover anything that would indicate the intention of Timmendiquas, except that he would march northward, and there were many guesses.

"I'm thinking that he will go to Detroit," said Henry. "That's the strongest British post in the West. The Indians get their arms and ammunition there, and most of the raids on Kentucky have been made from that point."

"Looks ez likely ez anything to me," said Shif'less Sol, "but I'm guessin' that ef Timmendiquas goes to Detroit he won't stop there. He's a big man an' he may then go westward to raise all the tribes o' the Great Lakes."

"It may be so," said Henry.

CHAPTER IV

THE SEVEN HERALDS

Henry, late the next night, was near the Wyandot village, watching it alone. They had decided to divide their work as the border watch. Part of them would sleep in the covert, while the others would scout about the village. That night it was the turn of Shiftless Sol and himself, but they had separated in order to see more. The shiftless one was now on the other side of the town, perhaps a mile away.

Henry was in a thick clump of bushes that lay to the north of the house and tepees. Dogs might stray that way or they might not. If they did, a rifle shot would silence the first that gave tongue, and he knew that alone he was too swift in flight to be overtaken by any Indian force.

Although past midnight the heavens were a fine silky blue, shot with a myriad of stars, and a full rich moon hanging low. Henry, lying almost flat upon his stomach, with his rifle by his side, was able to see far into the village. He noted that, despite the lateness of the hour, fires were burning there, and that warriors, carrying torches, were passing about. This was unusual. It was always characteristic of his mind not only to see, but to ask where, when and, above all, why? Now he was repeatedly asking why of himself, but while asking he never failed to observe the slightest movement in the village.

Presently he saw Timmendiwas walk from a large lodge and stop by one of the fires. Standing in the rays of the moon, light from above and firelight from his side falling upon him the figure of the chief was like that of some legendary Titan who had fought with the gods. A red blanket hung over his shoulder, and a single red feather rose aloft in the defiant scalp lock.

Henry saw the renegade, Simon Girty, approach, and talk with the chief for a few moments, but he was much too far away to hear what they said. Then six warriors, one of them, by his dress, a sub-chief, came from the lodges and stood before Timmendiwas, where they were joined, an instant later, by the renegade Blackstaffe. The chief took from beneath his blanket four magnificent belts of wampum, two of which he handed to the sub-chief and two to the renegade. Timmendiwas said a few words to every one of them, and, instantly leaving the

village they traveled northward at the swift running walk of the Indian. They passed near Henry in single file, the sub-chief at the head and Blackstaffe in the rear, and he noticed then that they carried supplies as if for a long journey. Their faces were turned toward the Northwest.

Timmendiquas and Girty stood for a moment, watching the men, then turned back and were lost among the lodges. But Henry rose from his covert and, hidden among the bushes, came to a rapid conclusion. He knew the significance of wampum belts and he could guess why these seven men had departed so swiftly. They were heralds of war. They were on their way to the far northwest tribes, in order that they might bring them to the gathering of the savage clans for the invasion of Kentucky.

Henry felt a powerful impulse, an impulse that speedily became a conviction. Every delay and every reduction of force was a help to the white men and white women and children down below the Ohio. A week of time, or the difference of twenty warriors might be their salvation. He must turn back the messengers, and he must do it with his single hand. How he longed for the help of the brave and resourceful Shif'less Sol. But he was a mile away, somewhere in the dark woods and Henry could not delay. The seven heralds were speeding toward the Northwest, at a pace that would soon take them far beyond his reach, unless he followed at once.

Dropping his rifle in the hollow of his arm he swung in behind them. One could not pick up a trail in dense woods at night, but he had observed their general direction, and he followed them so swiftly that within a half hour he saw them, still traveling in Indian file, the chief as before at the head of the line and Blackstaffe at the rear. The moon had now faded a little, and the light over the forest turned from silver to gray. Many of the stars had withdrawn, but on sped the ghostly procession of seven. No, not of seven only, but of eight, because behind them at a distance of two hundred yards always followed a youth of great build, and of wilderness instinct and powers that none of them could equal.

Chaska, the sub-chief, the Shawnee who led, was an eager and zealous man, filled with hatred of the white people who had invaded the hunting grounds of his race. He was anxious to bring as many warriors as he could to their mighty gathering, even if he had to travel as far as the farthest and greatest of the Great Lakes. Moreover he was swift of foot, and he did not spare himself or the others that night. He led them through bushes and weeds and grass and across the little brooks. Always the others followed, and no sound whatever came from the file

of seven which was really the file of eight.

The seven heralds traveled all night and all of the next day, always through forest, and at no time was the eighth figure in the file more than four hundred yards behind them.

The Indian, through centuries of forest life, had gifts of insight and of physical faculties amounting to a sixth sense, yet the keenest among them never suspected, for an instant, that they were eight and not seven. At noon they sat down in the dry grass of a tiny prairie and ate dried deer meat. Henry, in the edge of the woods a quarter of a mile away, also ate dried deer meat. When the seven finished their food and resumed the march the eighth at the same time finished his food and resumed the march. Nothing told the seven that the eighth was there, no voice of the wood, no whisper from Manitou.

The stop had not lasted more than half an hour and the journey led on through great forests, broken only by tiny prairies. Game abounded everywhere, and Henry judged that the Indians, according to the custom among some of the more advanced tribes, had not hunted over it for several seasons, in order that it might have plenty when they came again. Ten or a dozen buffaloes were grazing on nearly every little prairie, splendid deer were in the open and in the woods, but the seven and also the eighth stopped for none of these, although they would have been sorely tempted at any other time.

Their speed was undiminished throughout the afternoon, but Henry knew that they must camp that night. They could not go on forever, and he could secure, too, the rest that he needed. It might also give him the chance to do what he wished to do. At least he would have time to plan.

In the late afternoon the character of the day changed. The sun set in a mackerel sky. A soft wind came moaning out of the Southwest, and drops of rain were borne on its edge. Darkness shut down close and heavy. No moon and no stars came out. The rain fell gently, softly, almost as if it were ashamed, and the voice of the wind was humble and low.

Chaska, Blackstaffe and their men stopped under the interlacing boughs of two giant oaks, and began to collect firewood. Henry, who had been able to come much nearer in the dark, knew then that they would remain there a long time, probably all night, and he was ready to prepare for his own rest. But he did not do anything until the seven had finished their task.

He kept at a safe distance, shifting his position from time to time, until the Indians had gathered all the firewood they needed and were sitting in a group around the heap. Chaska used the flint and steel and Henry saw the fire at last blaze up. The seven warmed their food over the fire and then sat around it in a close and silent circle, with their blankets drawn over their bodies, and their rifles covered up in their laps. Sitting thus, Blackstaffe looked like the others and no one would have known him from an Indian.

Henry had with him, carried usually in a small pack on his back, two blankets, light in weight but of closely woven fiber, shedding rain, and very warm. He crouched in a dense growth of bushes, three or four hundred yards from the Indian fire. Then he put one blanket on the ground, sat upon it, after the Indian fashion, and put the other blanket over his head and shoulders, just as the warriors had done. He locked his hands across his knees, while the barrel of the rifle which rested between his legs protruded over his shoulder and against the blanket. Some of the stronger and heavier bushes behind him supported his weight. He felt perfectly comfortable, and he knew that he would remain so, unless the rain increased greatly, and of that there was no sign.

Henry, though powerful by nature, and inured to great exertions, was tired. The seven, including the eighth, had been traveling at a great pace for more than twenty hours. While the Indians ate their food, warmed over the fire, he ate his cold from his pocket. Then the great figure began to relax. His back rested easily against the bushes. The tenseness and strain were gone from his nerves and muscles. He had not felt so comfortable, so much at peace in a long time, and yet not three hundred yards away burned a fire around which sat seven men, any one of whom would gladly have taken his life.

The clouds moved continually across the sky, blotting out the moon and every star. The soft, light rain fell without ceasing and its faint drip, drip in the woods was musical. It took the last particle of strain and anxiety from Henry's mind and muscles. This voice of the rain was like the voice of his dreams which sometimes sang to him out of the leaves. He would triumph in his present task. He was bound to do so, although he did not yet know the way.

He watched the fire with sleepy eyes. He saw it sink lower and lower. He saw the seven figures sitting around it become dim and then dimmer, until they seemed to merge into one solid circle.

As long as he looked at them he did not see a single figure move, and he knew

that they were asleep. He knew that he too would soon be sleeping and he was willing. But he was resolved not to do so until the darkness was complete, that is, not until the fire had gone entirely out. He watched it until it seemed only a single spark in the night. Then it winked and was gone. At the same time the darkness blotted out the ring of seven figures.

Henry's eyelids drooped and closed. He raised them weakly once or twice, but the delicate voice of the light rain in the forest was so soothing that they stayed down, after the second attempt, and he floated peacefully to unknown shores, hidden as safely as if he were a thousand miles from the seven seated and silent figures.

He awoke about midnight and found himself a little stiff from his crouching position, but dry and rested. The rain was still falling in gentle, persistent fashion. He rolled up the blanket that had lain under him but kept the other around his shoulders. All was dark where the fire and the ring of seven had been, but he knew instinctively that they were there, bent forward with the blankets about their heads and shoulders.

He stole forward until he could see them. He was right. Not one in the circle was missing and not one had moved. Then he passed around them, and, picking his way in the darkness, went ahead. He had a plan, vague somewhat, but one which he might use, if the ground developed as he thought it would. He had noticed that, despite inequalities, the general trend of the earth was downward. The brooks also ran northward, and he believed that a river lay across their path not far ahead.

Now he prayed that the rain would cease and that the clouds would go away so that he might see, and his prayers were answered. A titanic hand dragged all the clouds off to the eastward, and dim grayish light came once more over the dripping forest. He saw forty or fifty yards ahead, and he advanced much faster. The ground continued to drop down, and his belief came true. At a point four or five miles north of the Indian camp he reached a narrow but deep river that he could cross only by swimming. But it was likely a ford could be found near and he looked swiftly for it.

He went a mile down the stream, without finding shallow water, and, then coming back, discovered the ford only a hundred yards above his original point of departure. The water here ran over rocks, and, for a space of ten or fifteen yards, it was not more than four feet deep. The Indians undoubtedly knew of this

ford, and here they would attempt to cross.

He waded to the other side, rolled up the second blanket, crouched behind rocks among dense bushes, ate more cold food, and waited. His rifle lay across his knees, and, at all times, he watched the woods on the far shore. He was the hunter now, the hunter of men, the most dangerous figure in the forest, all of his wonderful five senses attuned to the utmost.

The darkness faded away, as the dawn came up, silver and then gold. Golden light poured down in a torrent on river, forest and hills. Every leaf and stem sprang out clear and sharp in the yellow blaze. The waiting youth never stirred. From his covert in the thicket behind the rocks he saw everything. He saw a bush stir, when there was no wind, and then he saw the face of the Indian chief Chaska, appear beside the bush. After him came the remainder of the seven and they advanced toward the ford.

Henry raised his rifle and aimed at Chaska. He picked a spot on the broad and naked chest, where he could make his bullet strike with absolute certainty. Then he lowered it. He could not fire thus upon an unsuspecting enemy, although he knew that Chaska would have no such scruples about him. Pursing his lips he uttered a loud sharp whistle, a whistle full of warning and menace.

The seven sprang back among the bushes. The eighth on the other side of the river lay quite still for a little while. Then a sudden puff of wind blew aside some of the bushes and disclosed a portion of his cap. Chaska who was the farthest forward of the seven saw the cap and fired. The Indian is not usually a good marksman, and his bullet cut the bushes, but Henry, who now had no scruples, was a sharpshooter beyond compare. Chaska had raised up a little to take aim, and, before the smoke from his own weapon rose, the rifle on the other side of the river cracked. Chaska threw up his hands and died as he would have wished to die, on the field of battle, and with his face to the foe. The others shrank farther back among the bushes, daunted by the deadly shot, and the hidden foe who held the ford.

Henry reloaded quietly, and then lay very close among the bushes. Not only did he watch the forest on the other shore, but all his senses were keenly alert. For a distance of a full half mile none of the Indians could cross the river unseen by him, but, in case they went farther and made the passage he relied upon his ears to warn him of their approach.

For a time nothing stirred. Boughs, bushes and leaves were motionless and the

gold on the surface of the river grew deeper under the rising sun. Blackstaffe, after the fall of Chaska, was now commander of the seven heralds, who were but six, and at his word the Indians too were lying close, for the soul of Blackstaffe, the renegade, was disturbed. The bullet that had slain Chaska had come from the rifle of a sharpshooter. Chaska had exposed himself for only an instant and yet he had been slain. Blackstaffe knew that few could fire with such swift and deadly aim, but, before this, he had come into unpleasantly close contact with some who could. His mind leaped at once to the conclusion that the famous five were in front of him, and he was much afraid.

An hour passed. The beauty of the morning deepened. The river flowed, an untarnished sheet, now of silver, now of gold as the light fell. Henry crept some distance to the right, and then an equal distance to left. He could not hear the movement of any enemy in front of him, and he believed that they were all yet in the bushes on the other side of the river. He returned to his old position and the duel of patience went on. His eyes finally fixed themselves upon a large bush, the leaves of which were moving. He took the pistol from his belt, cocked it, and put it upon the rock in front of him. Then he slowly pushed forward the muzzle of his long and beautiful Kentucky rifle.

It was certainly a duel to the death. No other name described it, and hundreds of such have been fought and forgotten in the great forests of North America. The Indian behind the bush was crafty and cunning, one of the most skillful among the Shawnees. He had marked the spot where an enemy lay, and was rising a little higher for a better look.

Henry had marked him, too, or rather the movement that was the precursor of his coming, and when the Shawnee rose in the bush he raised a little and fired. There was a terrific yell, a figure leaped up convulsively, and then falling, disappeared. Five shots were fired at Henry, or rather at the flame from his rifle, but he merely sank back a little, snatched up the pistol, and sent a second bullet, striking a brown figure which retreated with a cry to the woods. The remainder, Blackstaffe first among them, also sprang to cover.

The renegade and the four remaining Indians, one of whom was severely wounded, conferred as they lay among the trees. Blackstaffe was no coward, yet his heart was as water within him. He was absolutely sure now that the terrible five were before them. Two shots had been fired, but the others were only waiting their chance. His own force was but five now, only four of whom were effective. He was outnumbered, and he did not know what to do. The Indians

would want to carry out the important orders of Timmendiguas, but there was the river, and they did not dare to attempt the crossing.

Henry, in his old position, awaited the result with serene confidence. The seven heralds were now but five, really four, and not only the stars, but the sun, the day, time, circumstance and everything were working for him. He had reloaded his weapons, and he was quite sure now that Blackstaffe and the Indians would stay together. None of them nor any two of them would dare to go far upstream or down stream, cross and attempt to stalk him. Nevertheless he did not relax his vigilance. He was as much the hunter as ever. Every sense was keenly alert, and that superior sense or instinct, which may be the essence and flower of the five was most alert of all.

The duel of patience, which was but a phase of the duel of death, was resumed. On went the sun up the great concave arch of the heavens, pouring its beams upon the beautiful earth, but on either side of the river nothing stirred. The nerves of Blackstaffe, the renegade, were the first to yield to the strain. He began to believe that the five had gone away, and, creeping forward to see, he incautiously exposed one hand. It was only for an instant, but a bullet from the other side of the river cut a furrow all the way across the back of the hand, stinging and burning as if a red hot bar had been laid upon it.

Blackstaffe dropped almost flat upon the ground, and looked at his hand from which the blood was oozing. He knew that it was not hurt seriously, but the wound stung horribly and tears of mingled pain and mortification rose to his eyes. He suggested to the warriors that they go back, but they shook their heads. They feared the wrath of Timmendiguas and the scorn of their comrades. So Blackstaffe waited, but he was without hope. He had been miserably trapped by his belief that the five had gone. They were there, always watching, deadlier sharpshooters than ever.

It was noon now, and a Wyandot, the most zealous of the remaining Indians, lying flat on his stomach, crept almost to the water's edge, where he lay among the grass and reeds. Yet he never crept back again. He stirred the grass and weeds too much, and a bullet, fired by calculation of his movements, and not by any sight of his figure, slew him where he lay.

Then a great and terrible fear seized upon the Indians as well as Blackstaffe. Such deadly shooting as this was beyond their comprehension. The bullets from the rifles of the unseen marksmen were guided by the hand of Manitou. The

Great Spirit had turned his face away from them, and helping their wounded comrade, they fled southward as fast as they could. Blackstaffe, his blazed hand burning like fire, went with them gladly.

In that journey of twenty hours' northward the seven heralds had traveled far from the Wyandot village and it was equally as far back to it. Going northward they had zeal and energy to drive them on, and going southward they had terror and superstition to drive them back. They returned as fast as they had gone, and all the time they felt that the same mysterious and deadly enemy was behind them. Once a bullet, cutting the leaves near them, hastened their footsteps. The renegade wished to abandon the wounded man, but the Indians, more humane, would not allow it.

Henry could have reduced the number of the heralds still further, but his mind rebelled at useless bloodshed and he was satisfied to let terror and superstition do their work. He followed them until they were in sight of the village, guessing the surprise and consternation that their news would cause. Then he turned aside to find his comrades in the covert and to tell them what he had done. They admired, but they were not surprised, knowing him so well.

Meanwhile they waited.

CHAPTER V

THE WYANDOT COUNCIL

Henry and his comrades, spying anew from the woods and seeing the village full of stir, thought Timmendiquas and his warriors would depart that day, but they soon gathered that some important ceremonial was at hand, and would be celebrated first. It reminded Henry of the great gathering of the Iroquois before the advance on Wyoming. He was as eager now as then to enter the village and see the rites, which it was quite evident were going to be held at night. Already the dangers of his adventure with the seven heralds were forgotten and he was ready for new risks.

"If I only had a little paint for my face and body," he said, "I could go into the place without much danger, and I'd learn a lot that would be of use to us."

No one answered, but Shif'less Sol, who had been listening attentively, stole away. The sun was then about an hour high, and, a little after twilight, the shiftless one returned with a package wrapped in a piece of deerskin. He held it aloft, and his face was triumphant.

"What have you been doing, Sol?" exclaimed Henry.

"Me? I've been stealin'. An' I tell you I've been a good thief, too, fur a lazy man. You said you wanted paint, Henry. Well, here it is an' the little brushes an' feathers with which you put it on, too. The people are all driftin' toward the center o' the village, an' without any partic'lar trouble to myself or anybody else I entered an outlyin'—an' fur the time empty—lodge an' took away this vallyble paintin' outfit."

"Good," said Henry with delight. "Now you shall paint me, Sol, and in an hour I'll be among the Wyandots. Let's see the paint."

But Shif'less Sol firmly retained his precious package.

"Takin's are keepings," he said. "These paints are mine, an' I 'low you to make use o' them on one condition only."

"What is that?"

"When I paint you, you paint me, an' then we'll go into this mighty Injun metropolis together. Mebbe you'll need me, Henry, an' I'm goin' with you anyway. You've got to agree to it."

Henry and the shiftless one looked each other squarely in the face. Henry read resolve, and also an anxious affection in the gaze of his comrade.

"All right, Sol," he said, "it's agreed. Now let's see which is the better painter."

While the others stood by and gave advice Sol painted Henry. The great youth bared himself to the skin, and Sol, with a deft hand, laid on the Wyandot colors over chest, shoulders, arms, face and hands. Then Henry painted the shiftless one in the same fashion. They also, but with more difficulty, colored their hair black. It was artistic work, and when all was done the two stood forth in the perfect likeness of two splendid Wyandot warriors.

"I think," said Henry, "that if we keep away from Timmendiquas, Wyatt, Girty and those who know us so well, nobody will suspect us."

"But don't run any unnecessary risks," said Paul anxiously. "You know how hard it will be on us waiting out here in the woods, an' if you were captured it's not likely we could save you."

"We'll take every precaution, Paul," said Henry, "and we'll rejoin you here in the morning."

"All right," said Paul, "we'll wait at this point."

They were in an exceedingly dense part of the forest about two miles from the Indian village, and Tom Ross, the phlegmatic, was already selecting a place for his blanket. The moon was not yet out and the light over the forest was dim, but Paul, Long Jim and Silent Tom could see very distinctly the two magnificent young Wyandots who stood near them, bare to the waist, painted wondrously and armed with rifle, tomahawk and knife.

"Henry," said Long Jim, "ef I didn't see your face I could swear that you wuz Timmendiquas his very self. I see Timmendiquas—his shoulders an' the way he carries himself."

"An' I guess you see somethin' gran' an' wonderful in me, too, don't you, Saplin'?" said Shif'less Sol in his most ingratiating tone.

Long Jim gazed at him in his most scornful manner, before he deigned to reply.

"No, I don't see no great chief in you, Sol Hyde," he replied. "I see nothin' but an ornery Wyandot, who's so lazy he has to be fed by squaws, an' who ef he saw a white man would run so fast he'd never stop until he hit Lake Superior an' got beyond his depth."

Shif'less Sol laughed and held out his hand.

"Put 'er thar," he said. "You wouldn't abuse me ef you didn't like me, an' ef I never come back I guess a tear or two would run down that brown face o' yours."

Long Jim returned in kind the iron grasp of his friend.

"Them words o' yours is mighty near to the truth," he said.

Both Henry and Sol said all their good-byes, and then they slid away through the thickets toward the town. As they came to its edge they saw a multitude of lights, fires burning here and there, and many torches held aloft by women and children. There was also the chatter of hundreds of voices, melting into a pleasant river of sound and the two, not even finding the Indian dogs suspicious, advanced boldly across the maize fields. Henry, remembering his size, which was the chief danger, now stooped and held himself in a shrunken position as much as possible. Thus they came to the town, and they saw that all its inhabitants were converging upon the common in the center.

Both Henry and Sol looked anxiously at the village, which was of a permanent character, containing both single and communal wigwams. The permanent wigwams were of an oblong form, built of poles interwoven with bark. Many were, as Shif'less Sol called them, double-barreled—that is, in two sections, a family to each section, but with a common hall in which the fire was built, each family sitting on its side of the fire. But all these were empty now, as men, women and children had gone to the open space in the center of the village. The communal lodges were much larger, often holding six or seven families, but with entirely distinct partitions for every family. Here in the woods was a rude germ of the modern apartment house.

Henry and Sol drew near to the common, keeping concealed within the shadow of the lodges. The open space was blazing with light from big fires and many squaws carried torches also. Within this space were grouped the guests of the Wyandots, the Shawnees and the Miamis, with their chiefs at their head. They

were painted heavily, and were in the finest attire of the savage, embroidered leggings and moccasins, and red or blue blankets. From every head rose a bright feather twined in the defiant scalp lock. But the Shawnees and Miamis stood motionless, every man resting the stock of his rifle upon the ground and his hands upon the muzzle. They were guests. They were not to take any part in the ceremony, but they were deeply interested in the great rites of an allied and friendly nation, the great little tribe of the Wyandots, the woman-ruled nation, terrible in battle, the bravest of the brave the finest savage fighters the North American continent ever produced, the Mohawks not excepted. And the fact remains that they were ruled by women.

The Wyandot warriors had not yet entered the open, which was a great circular grassy space. But as Henry and Shif'less Sol leaned in the shadow of a lodge, a tall warrior painted in many colors came forth into the light of the fires, and uttered a loud cry, which he repeated twice at short intervals. Meanwhile the torches among the women and children had ceased to waver, and the Shawnees and Miamis stood immovable, their hands resting on the muzzles of their rifles. The great fires blazed up, and cast a deep red light over the whole scene. A minute or so elapsed after the last cry, and Henry and Shif'less Sol noticed the expectant hush.

Then at the far side of the circle appeared the Wyandot warriors, six abreast coming between the lodges. They were naked except for the breech cloth and moccasins, but their bodies were gorgeously painted in many colors. Mighty men were they. Few among them were less than six feet in height, and all were splendidly built for strength, skill and endurance. They held their heads high, too, and their eyes flashed with the haughty pride of those who considered themselves first. Not in vain were the woman-ruled Wyandots the bravest of the brave.

The Wyandot people advanced and waited on the outer rim of the circle in the order of their gentes or clans. Their rank like that of all the leading North American tribes was perfect and was never violated. There were eleven clans with the following names in their language: The Bear, the Deer, the Highland Striped Turtle, the Highland Black Turtle, the Mud Turtle, the Large Smooth Turtle, the Hawk, the Beaver, the Wolf, the Snake, and the Porcupine. The rank of the sachem of the nation was inherent in the clan of the Bear, and the rank of military chief had always belonged hitherto to the clan of the Porcupine, but now the right was about to be waived and for an ample reason.

The Wyandot warriors continued to march steadily into the circle until all were there, and then a deep murmur of approval came from the watching Shawnees and Miamis.

The flower of the Wyandot nation here in its own home was all that wilderness fame had made it. At the head of the first clan, that of the Bear, stood Timmendiquas, and Henry and Shif'less Sol had never seen him appear more commanding. Many tall men were there, but he over-topped them all, and his eyes shone with a deep, bright light, half triumph and half expectancy.

Now all the Wyandots were within the circle, standing as they always camped when on the war path or the hunt. They were arranged in the form of a horseshoe. The head was on the left and the clans ran to the right in this way: The Bear, the Deer, the Highland Striped Turtle, the Highland Black Turtle, the Mud Turtle, the Large Smooth Turtle, the Hawk, the Beaver, the Wolf, the Snake and the Porcupine. These clans were also incorporated into four phratries, or larger divisions. The first phratry included the Bear, the Deer, and the Highland Striped Turtle; the second, the Highland Black Turtle, the Mud Turtle, and the Large Smooth Turtle; the third, the Hawk, the Beaver, and the Wolf, and the fourth, the Snake, and the Porcupine.

Every clan was ruled by a council of five, and of those five, four were women. The fifth, the man, was chosen by the four women from the men of their clan. The four women of the Board of Council had been selected previously by the married women or heads of families of the clans. The wife, not the husband, was the head of the family, nor did he own anything in their home except his clothes and weapons. He was merely a hunter and warrior. All property and rank descended through the female line. The lands of the village which were communal were partitioned for cultivation by the women. The clan council of five was called the Zu-wai-yu-wa, and the lone man was always deferential in the presence of the four women who had elected him. The men councilors, however, had some privilege. When it became necessary to choose the Grand Sachem of the whole nation, they alone did it. But they were compelled to heed the voices of the women who constituted the whole voting population, and who also owned all the property. There was, too, a separate military council of men who chose the military chief. Every clan had a distinctive way of painting the face, and the four women councilors and their man comrade wore on state occasions distinctive chaplets of wild flowers, leaves and grass.

Much of this lore Henry and Shif'less Sol knew already and more they learned

later. Now as they watched the impressive ceremonies they often divined what was to come.

After the horseshoe was formed, forty-four women and eleven men in a compact body advanced to the inside of the circle. The women were mostly middle-aged, and they were better looking than the women of other tribes. Seen in the firelight they had primitive dignity and a wilderness majesty, that was brightened by the savage richness of their dress. They wore their hair in long dark braids, adorned by shells and small red and blue feathers. Their tunics, which fell nearly to the knee, were made of the finest dressed deerskin, fastened at the waist with belts of the same material, dyed red or blue. As they watched, the little beads on their leggings and moccasins tinkled and gave forth the colors of the firelight. The expression of all was one of great gravity and dignity. Here was the real senatorial body of the nation. Though they might not fight nor lead in war, they were the lawmakers of the Wyandots. Great deference was paid to them as they passed.

Henry and Shif'less Sol, flattened in the dark against the side of a tepee, watched everything with eager interest. Henry, a keen observer and quick to draw inferences, had seen other but somewhat similar ceremonies among the Iroquois. Women had taken a part there also and some of them had the rank of chieftainess, but they were not predominant as they were among the Wyandots.

The council of the eleven clans stopped in the center of the circle, and a silence, broken only by the crackling of the fires and the sputtering of the torches, came once more over the great assembly. But a thousand eager faces were turned toward them. The Shawnees and Miamis apparently had not yet moved, still standing in rows, every face an impenetrable bronze mask.

The tall warrior of the clan of the Wolf who had made the signal for the ceremony now came forward again. His name was Atuetes (Long Claws) and he was at once the herald and sheriff of the nation. He superintended the erection of the Council House, and had charge of it afterwards. He called the council which met regularly on the night of the full moon, and at such other times as the Grand Sachem might direct. The present was an unusual meeting summoned for an unusual purpose, and owing to the uncommon interest in it, it was held in the open instead of in the Council House.

Timmendiquas, already by common consent and in action the Grand Sachem of the Wyandots, was now about to be formally invested with the double power of

Grand Sachem and military chief. The clan of the Porcupine in which the military chieftainship was hereditary had willingly yielded it to Timmendiquas, whose surpassing fitness to meet the coming of the white man was so obvious to everybody.

Atuetes, the herald, advanced to the very center of the ring and shouted three times in loud, piercing tones:

"Timmendiquas! Timmendiquas! Timmendiquas!"

Then the whole nation, with their guests the Shawnees and Miamis, uttered the name in one great cry. After that the deep breathless silence came again and the eager brown faces were bent yet further forward. Timmendiquas standing motionless hitherto at the head of his clan, the Bear, now walked forth alone. The shout suddenly rose again, and then died as quickly as before.

Timmendiquas had thrown aside his magnificent blue blanket, and he stood bare to the waist. The totem of the bear tattooed upon his chest shone in the firelight. His figure seemed to grow in height and to broaden. Never before in all the history and legends of the Wyandots had so mighty an honor been conferred upon so young a warrior. It was all the more amazing because his predominance was so great that none challenged it, and other great warriors were there.

Among the famous chiefs who stood with the councilors of the clan were Dewatire (Lean Deer), Shayantsawat (Hard Skull), Harouyu (The Prowler), Tucae (Slow Walker), and Tadino (Always Hungry).

Timmendiquas continued to walk slowly forward to the point, where the long row of the chieftainesses stood. He would not have been human had he not felt exaltation, and an immense pride as he faced the women, with the hundreds and hundreds of admiring eyes looking on. He came presently within a few feet of them and stopped. Then Ayajinta (Spotted Fawn), the tallest and most majestic of the women, stepped forward, holding in both hands a woven chaplet of flowers and grass. The entire circle was now lighted brilliantly by the fires and torches, and Henry and Shifless Sol, although at a distance, saw well.

Ayajinta, holding the chaplet in her outstretched hands, stood directly before Timmendiquas. She was a tall woman, but the chief towered nearly a head above her. Nevertheless her dignity was the equal of his and there was also much admiration in her looks.

"Timmendiquas," she said, in tones so clearly that everyone could hear, "you have proved yourself both a great chief and a mighty warrior. For many moons now you have led the Wyandots on the war trail, and you have also been first among them in the Council House. You have gone with our warriors far toward the rising sun and by the side of the great kindred nation, the Iroquois, you have fought with your warriors against the Long Knives. After victory the Iroquois have seen their houses destroyed, but you and your warriors fought valiantly to defend them.

"We, the women of the Wyandots, chosen to the council by the other women, the heads of the families, look upon you and admire you for your strength, your courage and your wisdom. Seldom does Manitou give so much to a single warrior, and, when he does give, then it is not so much for him as it is for the sake of his tribe."

Ayajinta paused and the multitude uttered a deep "Hah!" which signified interest and approval. But Timmendiquas stood upright, unchanging eyes looking at her from the impenetrable brown mask.

"So," she said, "O Timmendiquas, thou hast been chosen Grand Sachem of the Wyandots, and also the leader of the war chiefs. We give you the double crown. Wear it for your own glory, and yet more for the glory of the Wyandot nation."

Timmendiquas bent his lofty head and she put upon it the great flowery crown. Then as he raised his crowned head and looked proudly around the circle, a tremendous shout burst from the multitude. Once more they cried:

"Timmendiquas! Timmendiquas! Timmendiquas!"

Before the third utterance of the name had died, fifty young girls, the fairest of the tribe, dressed in tanned deerskin adorned with beads and feathers, streamed into the inner circle and began to dance before the great chief. Meanwhile they sang:—

Behold the great Timmendiquas!
Mightiest of great chiefs,
Wisest of all in council,
He leads the warriors to battle,
He teaches the old men wisdom,
Timmendiquas, first of men.

Behold the great Timmendiquas!
As strong as the oak on the mountain,
As cunning as the wolf of the valley,
He has fought beside the great Iroquois,
The Yengees flee at the sound of his name,
Timmendiquas, first of men.

Then they joined hands and circled about him to a tune played by four men on whistles, made from the bones of eagles. The song died, and the girls flitted away so quickly through the outer ring that they were gone like shadows.

Responsive as they were to wilderness life, the scene was making a mighty impression upon Henry and Shif'less Sol. With the firelight about him and the moonlight above him, the figure of Timmendiquas was magnified in every way. Recognized long since as the most redoubtable of red champions, he showed himself more formidable than ever.

The crowd slowly dispersed, but Atuetes of the clan of the Hawk called a military council in the Council House. Timmendiquas, as became his rank, led the way, and the renegades, Simon Girty, Braxton Wyatt, and Moses Blackstaffe were admitted. Inside the Council House, which was hung with skins and which much resembled those of the Iroquois, the chiefs, after being called to order by Atuetes, the herald and sheriff, sat down in a circle, with Timmendiquas a little further forward than the others.

Atuetes took a great trumpet-shaped pipe, lighted it with a coal that was burning in a small fire in a corner, and inhaled two whiffs of smoke. He breathed out the first whiff toward the heavens and the second toward the earth. He handed the pipe to Timmendiquas, who inhaled the smoke until his mouth was filled. Then, turning from left to right, he slowly puffed out the smoke over the heads of all the chiefs. When the circle was complete, he handed the pipe to the next chief on his left, who puffed out the smoke in the same manner. This was done gravely

and in turn by every chief. Then the Grand Sachem, Timmendiquas, announced the great military subject for which they were called together, and they proceeded to discuss it.



CHAPTER VI

THE RUINED VILLAGE

The military council, presided over by Timmendiugas, sat long in the Council House, and about the moment it had concluded its labors, which was some time after midnight, Henry and Shif'less Sol skipped away from the village. Wyandot warriors had passed them several times in the darkness, but they had escaped close notice. Nevertheless, they were glad when they were once more among the trees. The forest had many dangers, but it also offered much shelter.

They rejoined their comrades, slept heavily until daylight, and when they scouted again near the Wyandot village they found that Timmendiugas and his force were gone, probably having started at the dawn and marching swiftly. But they knew that they would have no trouble in finding so large a trail, and as long as they were in proximity of the village they traveled with great care. It was nearly night when they found the broad trail through the woods, leading north slightly by east. All five were now of the belief that the destination of the savages was Detroit, the British post, which, as a depot of supplies and a rallying point for the Indians, served the same purpose as Niagara and Oswego in the East. To Detroit, Wyandots, Shawnees, Miamis, and all the others turned for weapons and ammunition. There went the renegades and there many Kentuckians, who had escaped the tomahawk or the stake, had been taken captive, including such famous men as Boone and Kenton. It was a name that inspired dread and hate on the border, but the five were full of eagerness to see it, and they hoped that the march of Timmendiugas would take them thither.

"I hear they've got big forts thar," said Shif'less Sol, "but ef we don't lose our cunnin', an' I don't think we will, we five kin spy among 'em an' read thar secrets."

"There are many white men at Detroit," said Henry, "and I've no doubt that we can slip in among them without being detected. Tories and renegades who are strangers to the British officers at Detroit must be continually arriving there. In that lies our chance."

Later in the night they approached the Wyandot camp, but they did not dare to

go very close, as they saw that it was everywhere guarded carefully and that but few lights were burning. They slept in the woods two or three miles away, and the next day they followed the trail as before. Thus the northward march went on for several days, the great White Lightning of the Wyandots and his warriors moving swiftly, and Henry and his comrades keeping the same pace six or seven miles in the rear.

They advanced through country that none of the five had ever seen before, but it was a beautiful land that appealed alike to the eye and ear of the forest runner. It was not inferior to Kentucky, and in addition it had many beautiful little lakes. Game, however, was not abundant as here were the villages of the Indian tribes, and the forests were hunted more. But the five found deer and buffalo sufficient for their needs, although they took great risks when they fired. Once the shot was heard by a detachment of the Shawnees who also were after game, and they were trailed for a long time, but when night came they shook them off, and the next morning they followed Timmendiwas, as usual, though at a much greater distance.

Their escape in this instance had been so easy that they took enjoyment from it, but they prudently resolved to retain their present great distance in the rear. The trail could not be lost and the danger would be less. The course that Timmendiwas maintained also led steadily on toward Detroit, and they felt so sure now of his destination that they even debated the advisability of passing ahead of the column, in order to reach the neighborhood of Detroit before him. But they decided finally in the negative, and maintained their safe distance in the rear.

As they continued northward the Indian signs increased. Twice they crossed the trails of Indian hunting parties, and at last they came to a deserted village. Either it had been abandoned because of warfare or to escape an unhealthy location, but the five examined it with great curiosity. Many of the lodges built of either poles or birch bark were still standing, with fragments of useless and abandoned household goods here and there. Paul found in one of the lodges a dried scalp with long straight hair, but, obeying a sensitive impulse he hid it from the others, thrusting it between two folds of the birch bark.

They also found fragments of arrows and broken bows. The path leading down to a fine spring was not yet overgrown with grass, and they inferred from it that the Indians had not been gone many months. There was also an open space showing signs of cultivation. Evidently maize and melons had grown there.

"I wonder why they went away?" said Long Jim to Shif'less Sol. "You've made two guesses—unhealthiness or danger from Injuns. Now this site looks purty good to me, an' the Injun tribes up here are generally friendly with one another."

"Them's only guesses," said Sol, "an' we'll never know why. But I take it that Delawares lived here. This is just about thar country. Mebbe they've gone North to be near Detroit, whar the arms an' supplies are."

"Likely enough," said Henry, "but suppose we populate this village for to-night. It looks as if rain were coming on, and none of us is fond of sleeping out in the wet."

"You're talkin' wisdom," said Shif'less Sol, "an' I think we kin find a place in the big wigwam over thar that looks like a Council House."

He pointed to a rough structure of bark and poles, with a dilapidated roof and walls, but in better state of preservation than any of the wigwams, probably because it had been built stronger. They entered it and found that it originally had a floor of bark, some portions of which remained, and there was enough area of sound roof and walls to shelter them from the rain. They were content and with dry bark beneath them and on all sides of them they disposed themselves for the night.

It yet lacked an hour or so of sunset, but the heavy clouds already created a twilight, and the wind began to moan through the forest, bringing with it a cold rain that made a monotonous and desolate patter on leaves and grass. The comrades were glad enough now of their shelter in the abandoned Council House. They had made at Pittsburg a purchase which conduced greatly to their comfort, that is, a pair of exceedingly light but warm blankets for everyone—something of very high quality. They always slept between these, the under blankets fending off the cold that rose from the ground.

Now they lay, dry and warm against the wall of the old Council House, and listened to the steady drip, drip of the rain on the roof, and through the holes in the roof upon the floor. But it did not reach them. They were not sleepy, and they talked of many things, but as the twilight came on and the thick clouds still hovered, the abandoned village took on a ghostly appearance. Nearly all the wall opposite that against which they lay was gone, and, as it faced the larger part of the village, they could see the ruined wigwams and the skeleton frames that had been used for drying game. Out of the forest came the long lonesome howl of a wolf, some ragged, desolate creature that had not yet found shelter with his kind.

The effect upon everyone was instantaneous and the same. This flight from the Indians and the slaying of the great hound by Tom Ross with his silver bullet came back in vivid colors.

But the howl was not repeated and the steady drip of the cold rain remained unbroken. It gathered finally in little puddles on the floor not far from them, but their own corner remained dry and impervious. They noticed these things little, however, as the mystic and ghostly effect of the village was deepening. Seen through the twilight and the rain it was now but a phantom. Henry's mind, always so sensitive to the things of the forest, repeopled it. From under his drooping lids he saw the warriors coming in from the hunt or the chase, the women tanning skins or curing game, and the little Indian boys practicing with bows and arrows. He felt a sort of sympathy for them in this wild life, a life that he knew so well and that he had lived himself. But he came quickly out of his waking dream, because his acute ear had heard something not normal moving in the forest. He straightened up and his hand slid to the breech of his rifle. He listened for a few minutes and then glanced at Shif'less Sol.

"Someone comes our way," said Henry.

"Yes," said Shif'less Sol, "but it ain't more'n two or three. Thar, you kin hear the footsteps ag'in, an' their bodies brushing ag'in' the wet bushes."

"Three at the utmost," said Henry, "so we'll sit here and wait."

It was not necessary to tell them to be ready with their weapons. That was a matter of course with every borderer in such moments. So the five remained perfectly still in a sitting position, every one with his back pressed against the bark wall, a blanket wrapped around his figure, and a cocked rifle resting upon his knees. They were so quick that in the darkness and falling rain they might have passed for so many Indian mummies, had it not been for the long slender-barreled rifles and their threatening muzzles.

Yet nobody could have been more alert than they. Five pairs of trained ears listened for every sound that rose above the steady drip of the rain, five pairs of eyes, uncommonly keen in their keenness, watched the bushes whence the first faint signals of approach had come. Now they heard more distinctly that brushing of clothing against the bushes, and then a muttered oath or two. Evidently the strangers were white men, perhaps daring hunters who were not afraid to enter the very heart of the Indian country. Nevertheless the hands still remained on their rifles and the muzzles still bore on the point whence the

sounds came.

Three white men, dripping with rain, emerged from the forest. They were clad in garb, half civilized and half that of the hunter. All were well armed and deeply tanned by exposure, but the attention of the five was instantly concentrated upon the first of the strangers, a young man of medium height, but of the most extraordinary ugliness. His skin, even without the tan, would have been very dark. His eyes, narrow and oblique, were almost Oriental in cast and his face was disfigured by a hideous harelip. The whole effect was sinister to the last degree, but Henry and his comrades were fair enough to credit it to a deformity of nature and not to a wicked soul behind. The two with him were a little older. They were short, thickly built, and without anything unusual in their appearance.

The three strangers were dripping with water and when they came into the abandoned village they stood for a few moments talking together. Then their eyes began to roam around in search of shelter.

"They'll be coming this way soon," whispered Henry to Paul, "because it's about the only place large enough to keep three men dry."

"Of course they'll come here," Paul whispered back; "now I wonder who and what they are."

Henry did not reply and the five remained as motionless as ever, five dusky figures in a row, sitting on the bark floor, and leaning against the bark wall. But every sense in them was acutely alive, and they watched the strangers look into one ruined lodge after another. None offered sufficient shelter and gradually they came toward the Council House. Always the man with the harelip and ugly face led. Henry watched him closely. The twilight and the rain did not allow any very clear view of him, just enough to disclose that his face was hideous and sinister. But Henry had a singularly clear mind and he tried to trace the malignant impression to the fact of physical ugliness, unwilling to do injury, even in thought merely, to anyone.

At last the eyes of the three alighted upon the old Council House, and they came forward quickly toward the open end. They were about to enter, but they saw the five figures against the wall and stopped abruptly. The man with the harelip bent forward and gazed at them. Henry soon saw by the expression of his face that he knew they were no mummies. He now thrust his rifle forward and his hand slipped down toward the trigger. Then Henry spoke.

"Come in," he said quickly; "we are white like yourselves, and we claim no exclusive rights to this Council House, which is about the only real shelter left in the Indian town. We are hunters and scouts."

"So are we," said the man with the harelip, speaking grammatically and with a fair degree of courtesy. "We are hardened to the wilderness, but we are thankful for the shelter which you seem to have found before us."

"There is room for all," said Henry. "You will observe the large dry place at the south end. The bark floor there is solid and no matter how the wind blows the rain cannot reach you."

"We'll use it," said the ugly man, and now his teeth began to chatter, "but I confess that I need more than mere shelter. The rain and cold have entered my system, and I shall suffer severely unless we have a fire. Is it not possible to build one here near the center of the Council House? The dry bark will feed it, until it is strong enough to take hold of the wet wood."

"It is the Indian country," said Henry, and yet he pitied him of the harelip.

"I know," replied the man, "I know too that all the tribes are on the war path, and that they are exceedingly bitter against us. My name is Holdsworth, and I am from Connecticut. These are my men, Fowler and Perley, also from the East. We're not altogether hunters, as we have seen service in the Eastern army, and we are now scouting toward Detroit with the intention of carrying back news about the British and Indian power there. But I feel that I must light the fire, despite all Indian danger."

He shook violently and Henry again felt sorry for him. So did the rest of the five. These three had become their comrades for the night, and it would not be fair to prevent the fire that the man so evidently needed.

"We can see that what you say is true," said Henry, "and we'll help you kindle a blaze. These friends of mine are Tom Ross, Jim Hart, Solomon Hyde, and Paul Cotter. My own name is Henry Ware."

He saw the ugly man start a little, and then smile in a way that made his disfigured lip more hideous than ever.

"I've heard the names," said the stranger. "The woods are immense, but there are not many of us, and those of marked qualities soon become known. It seems to me that I've heard you were at Wyoming and the Chemung."

"Yes," said Henry, "we were at both places. But since we're going to have a fire, it's best that we have it as soon as possible."

They fell to work with flint and steel on the dry bark. The two men, Fowler and Perley, had said nothing.

"Not especially bright," said Holdsworth to Henry in a whisper, as he nodded toward them, "but excellent foresters and very useful in the work that I have to do."

"You can't always tell a man by his looks," replied Henry in the same tone.

It was not a difficult matter to light the fire. They scraped off the inside of the bark until they accumulated a little heap of tinder. It was ignited with a few sparks of the flint and steel, and then the bark too caught fire. After that they had nothing to do but feed the flames which grew and grew, casting a luminous red glare in every corner of the old Council House. Then it was so strong that it readily burned the wet bark from the dismantled lodges near by.

The cold rain still came down steadily and the night, thick and dark, had settled over the forest. Henry and his comrades were bound to confess that the fire was a vivid core of cheer and comfort. It thrust out a grateful heat, the high flames danced, and the coals, red and yellow, fell into a great glowing heap. Holdsworth, Fowler and Perley took off nearly all their clothing, dried their bodies, and then their wet garments. Holdsworth ceased to shiver, and while Fowler and Perley still fed the fire, the five resumed their places against the wall, their rifles again lying across their knees, a forest precaution so customary that no one could take exception to it. Apparently they dozed, but they were nevertheless wide awake. Holdsworth and his men re clothed themselves in their dry raiment, and when they finished the task, Henry said:

"We've three kinds of dried meat, venison, bear and buffalo, and you can take your choice, one kind, two kinds, or all kinds."

"I thank you, sir," said Holdsworth, "but we also carry a plentiful supply of provisions in our knapsacks, and we have partaken freely of them. We are now dry, and there is nothing else for us to do but sleep."

"Then we had better put out the fire," said Henry. "As we agreed before, we're in the heart of the Indian country, and we do not wish to send up a beacon that will bring the savages down upon us."

But Holdsworth demurred.

"The Indians themselves would not be abroad on such a night," he said. "There can be no possible danger of an attack by them, and I suggest that we keep it burning. Then we will be all the stronger and warmer in the morning."

Henry was about to say something, but he changed his mind and said something else.

"Let it burn, then," he acquiesced. "The flame is hidden on three sides anyhow and, as you say, the savages themselves will keep under cover now. Perhaps, Mr. Holdsworth, as you have come from the East since we have, you can tell us about our future there."

"Not a great deal," replied the man, "but I fear that we are not prospering greatly. Our armies are weak. Although their country is ruined, war parties under Brant came down from the British forts, and ravaged the Mohawk valley anew. 'Tis said by many that the Americans cannot hold out much longer against the forces of the king."

"Your words coming from a great patriot are discouraging," said Henry.

"It is because I cannot make them otherwise," replied Holdsworth.

Henry, from under the edge of his cap, again examined him critically. Holdsworth and his men were reclining against the bark wall in the second largest dry spot, not more than ten feet away. The man was ugly, extremely ugly beyond a doubt, and in the glow of the firelight he seemed more sinister than ever. Yet the young forest runner tried once more to be fair. He recalled all of Holdsworth's good points. The man had spoken in a tone of sincerity, and he had been courteous. He had not said or done anything offensive. If he was discouraged over the patriot cause, it was because he could not help it.

While Henry studied him, there was a silence for a little space. Meantime the rain increased in volume, but it came straight down, making a steady, droning sound that was not unpleasant. The heavy darkness moved up to the very door of the old Council House, and, despite the fire, the forest beyond was invisible. Holdsworth was still awake, but the two men with him seemed to doze. Shif'less Sol was also watching Holdsworth with keen and anxious eyes, but he left the talk to his young comrade, their acknowledged leader.

"You know," said Henry at length, "that some great movement among the

Indians is on foot."

Holdsworth stirred a little against the bark wall, and it seemed to Henry that a new eagerness came into his eyes. But he replied:

"No, I have not heard of it yet. You are ahead of me there. But the Indians and British at Detroit are always plotting something against us. What particular news do you have?"

"That Timmendiquas, the Wyandot, the greatest of the western chiefs, accompanied by the head chiefs of the Shawnees and Miamis, and a body of chosen warriors is marching to Detroit. We have been following them, and they are now not more than twenty-five or thirty miles ahead of us. I take it that there will be a great council at Detroit, composed of the British, the Tories, the Western Indians with Timmendiquas at their head, and perhaps also the Iroquois and other Eastern Indians with Thayendanegea leading them. The point of attack will be the settlements in Kentucky. If the allied forces are successful the tomahawk and the scalping knife will spare none. Doesn't the prospect fill you with horror, Mr. Holdsworth?"

Holdsworth shaded his face with his hand, and replied slowly:

"It does inspire fear, but perhaps the English and Indian leaders will be merciful. These are great matters of which you tell me, Mr. Ware. I had heard some vague reports, but yours are the first details to reach me. Perhaps if we work together we can obtain information that will be of great service to the settlements."

"Perhaps," said Henry, and then he relapsed into silence. Holdsworth remained silent too and gazed into the fire, but Henry saw that his thoughts were elsewhere. A long time passed and no one spoke. The fire had certainly added much to the warmth and comfort of the old house. They were all tired with long marches, and the steady droning sound of the rain, which could not reach them, was wonderfully soothing. The figures against the bark walls relaxed, and, as far as the human eye could see, they dropped asleep one by one, the five on one side and the three on the other.

The fire, well fed in the beginning, burned for two or three hours, but after awhile it began to smolder, and sent up a long thin column of smoke. The rain came lighter and then ceased entirely. The clouds parted in the center as if they had been slashed across by a sword blade, and then rolled away to left and right. The heavens became a silky blue, and the stars sprang out in sparkling groups.

It was past midnight when Holdsworth moved slightly, like one half awakening from a deep sleep. But his elbow touched the man Fowler, and he said a few words to him in a whisper. Then he sank back into his relaxed position, and apparently was asleep again. Fowler himself did not move for at least ten minutes. Then he arose, slipped out of the Council House, and returned with a great armful of wet leaves, which he put gently upon the fire. Quickly and quietly he sank back into his old position by the wall.

Dense smoke came from the coals and heap of leaves, but it rose in a strong spire and passed out through the broken part of the roof, the great hole there creating a draught. It rose high and in the night, now clear and beautiful, it could be seen afar. Yet all the eight—five on one side and three on the other—seemed to be sound asleep once more.

The column of smoke thickened and rose higher into the sky, and presently the man Fowler was at work again. Rising and stepping, with wonderful lightness for a thick-set heavy man, he spread his open blanket over the smoke, and then quickly drew it away. He repeated the operation at least twenty times and at least twenty great coiling rings of smoke arose, sailing far up into the blue sky, and then drifting away over the forest, until they were lost in the distance.

Fowler folded the blanket again, but he did not resume his place against the wall. Holdsworth and Perley rose lightly and joined him. Then the three gazed intently at the five figures on the other side of the smoke. Not one of them stirred. So far as the three could see, the five were buried in the most profound slumber.

Holdsworth made a signal and the three, their rifles in the hollows of their arms, glided from the Council House and into the forest.

As soon as they were lost in the darkness, Henry Ware sprang to his feet, alive in every nerve and fiber, and tingling with eagerness.

"Up; up, boys!" he cried. "Those three men are Tories or English, and they are coming back with the savages. The rings of smoke made the signal to their friends. But we'll beat them at their own trick."

All were on their feet in an instant—in fact, only Jim Hart and Paul had fallen asleep—and they ran silently into the forest in a direction opposite to that which the three had chosen. But they did not go far. At Henry's whispered signal, they sank down among some dense bushes where they could lie hidden, and yet see all that passed at the Council House. The water from the bushes that they had

moved dropped upon them, but they did not notice it. Nor did they care either that the spire of smoke still rose through the roof of the old Council House. Five pairs of uncommonly keen eyes were watching the forest to see their enemies come forth.

"I saw the fellow make the big smoke," said Shif'less Sol, "but I knowed that you saw, too. So I jest waited till you give the word, Henry."

"I wanted them to go through to the end with it," replied Henry. "If we had stopped the man when he was bringing in the leaves he might have made some sort of excuse, and we should have had no proof at all against them."

"Them's false names they gave o' course."

"Of course. It is likely that the man who called himself Holdsworth is somebody of importance. His manner indicated it. How ugly that harelipped fellow was!"

"How long do you think it will be before they come back?" asked Shif'less Sol.

"Not long. The Indian force could not have been more than a mile or so away, or they would not have relied on smoke signals in the night. It will be only a short wait, Sol, until we see something interesting. Now I wish I knew that harelipped man!"

Henry and his comrades could have slipped away easily in the darkness, but they had no mind to do so. Theirs was a journey of discovery, and, since here was an opportunity to do what they wished, they would not avoid it, no matter how great the risk. So they waited patiently. The forest still dripped water, but they had seldom seen the skies a brighter blue at night. The spire of smoke showed against it sharp and clear, as if it had been day. In the brilliant moonlight the ruined village assumed another ghostly phase. All the rugged outlines of half-fallen tepees were silvered and softened. Henry, with that extraordinary sensitiveness of his to nature and the wilderness, felt again the mysticism and unreality of this place, once inhabited by man and now given back to the forest. In another season or two the last remnant of bark would disappear, the footpaths would be grown up with bushes, and the wild animals would roam there unafraid.

All these thoughts passed like a succession of mental flashes through the mind of the forest dreamer—and a dreamer he was, a poet of the woods—as he waited there for what might be, and what probably would be, a tragedy. But as these

visions flitted past there was no relaxation of his vigilance. It was he who first heard the slight swishing sound of the bushes on the far side of the Council House; it was he who first heard the light tread of an approaching moccasin, and it was he who first saw the ugly harelipped face of a white man appear at the forest edge. Then all saw, and slow, cold anger rose in five breasts at the treacherous trick.

Behind the harelipped man appeared Perley and Fowler, and six savage warriors, armed fully, and coated thickly with war paint. Now Henry knew that the sinister effect of Holdsworth's face was not due wholly to his harelip, and the ugliness of all his features. He was glad in a way because he had not done the man injustice.

The three white men and the six Indians waited a long time at the edge of the woods. They were using both eye and ear to tell if the five in the old Council House slept soundly. The fire now gave forth nothing but smoke, and they could not see clearly into the depths. They must come nearer if they would make sure of their victims. They advanced slowly across the open, their weapons ready. All the idealist was gone from Henry now. They had taken these three men into what was then their house; they had been warmed and dried by their fire, and now they came back to kill. He watched them slip across the open space, and he saw in the moonlight that their faces were murderous, the white as bad as the red.

The band reached the end of the Council House and looked in, uttering low cries of disappointment when they saw nothing there. None of the five ever knew whether they had waited there for the purpose of giving battle to the raiding band, but at this moment Paul moved a little in order to get a better view, and a bush rustled under his incautious moccasin. One of the savages heard it, gave a warning cry, and in an instant the whole party threw themselves flat upon the earth, with the wall of the Council House between themselves and that point in the forest from which the sound had come. Silence and invisibility followed, yet the forest battle was on.



CHAPTER VII

THE TAKING OF HENRY

"I'm sorry my foot slipped," whispered Paul.

"Don't you worry, Paul," Henry whispered back. "We're as anxious to meet them as they are to meet us. If they are willing to stay and have the argument out, we're willing to give them something to think about."

"An' I'd like to get a shot at that harelipped villain," interjected Shif'less Sol. "I'd give him somethin' he wouldn't furgit."

"Suppose we move a little to the right," said Henry. "They've noted the direction from which the sound came, and they may send a bullet into the bushes here."

They crept quietly to the right, a distance of perhaps ten yards; and they soon found the precaution to be a wise one, as a crack came from the forest, and a bullet cut the twigs where they had lately been. Shif'less Sol sent a return bullet at the flash of the rifle and they heard a suppressed cry.

"It doesn't do to be too keerless," said the shiftless one in a contented tone as he reloaded his rifle. "Whoever fired that shot ought to hev known that something would come back to him."

Several more bullets came from the forest, and now they cut the bushes close by, but the comrades lay flat upon the ground and all passed over their heads.

After Shif'less Sol's single shot they did not return the fire for the present, but continued to move slowly to the right. Thus a full half hour passed without a sign from either side. Meanwhile a wind, slowly rising, was blowing so steadily that all the trees and bushes were drying fast.

Neither Henry nor his comrades could now tell just where their enemies were, but they believed that the hostile band had also been circling about the open space in which the ruined village stood. They felt sure that the Indians and the three white men would not go away. The Indians were never keener for scalps than they were that year, and with a force of nearly two to one they would not decline a combat, even if it were not the surprise that they had expected.

"We may stay here until daylight," whispered Henry. "They are now sure we're not going to run away, and with the sunrise they may think that they will have a better chance at us."

"If the daylight finds them here, it will find us too," said Shif'less Sol. They shifted around a little further, and presently another shot was fired from a point opposite them in the forest. Henry sent a bullet in return, but there was nothing to indicate whether it had struck a foe. Then ensued another long silence which was broken at last by a shot from the interior of the old Council House. It was sent at random into the bushes, but the bullet cut the leaves within an inch of Henry's face, and they grew exceedingly cautious. Another bullet soon whistled near them, and they recognized the fact that the Indians who had succeeded in creeping into the Council House had secured an advantage.

But they succeeded in keeping themselves covered sufficiently to escape any wounds, and, turning a thought over in his mind, Henry said:

"Sol, don't you think that this wind which has been blowing for hours has dried things out a good deal?"

"It shorely has," answered Sol.

"And you have noticed, too, Sol, that we are now at a point where the old village touches the forest? You can reach out your hand and put it on that ruined wigwam, can't you?"

"I kin shorely do it, Henry."

"You have noticed also, Sol, that the wind, already pretty fair, is rising, and that it is blowing directly from us against the old Council House in which some of the savages are, and across to the forest at the point where we are certain that the rest of the enemy lie."

"Sounds like good and true reasonin' to me, an eddicated man, Henry."

"Then you and I will get to work with our flint and steel and set this old wigwam afire. It's still high enough to shelter ourselves behind it, and I think we ought to do the task in two or three minutes. Tom, you and Paul and Jim cover us with your rifles."

"Henry, you shorely hev a great head," said Sol, "an' this looks to me like payin' back to a man what belongs to him. That harelipped scoundrel and his fellows

warmed by our fire in the Council House, and now we'll jest give 'em notice that thar's another warmin'."

Lying almost flat upon their faces they worked hard with the flint and steel, and in a minute or two a little spark of light leaped up. It laid hold of the thin, dry bark at the edge of the old wigwam and blazed up with extraordinary rapidity. Then the flames sprang to the next wigwam. It, too, was quickly enveloped, and the bark cracked as they ate into it. Not even the soaking given by the rain offered any effective resistance.

Henry and Shif'less Sol put away their flint and steel and quickly slipped into the bushes whence they looked with admiration at the work of their hands. The lodges were burning far faster than they had expected. All the old Indian village would soon go, and now they watched attentively the Council House where the sharpshooters lay. Meanwhile several shots were fired from the forest without effect and the five merely lay close, biding their time.

The flames made a great leap and caught the Council House. It burned so fast that it seemed to be enveloped all at once, and three men, two red and one white burst from it, rushing toward the forest. Henry and his comrades could easily have shot down all three, but Silent Tom Ross was the only one who pulled a trigger and he picked the white man. At the crack of his rifle the fugitive fell. By the flare of the flames Henry caught a glimpse of his face and saw that it was Perley. He fell just at the edge of the forest, but where the fire would not reach him.

The village was now a mass of flames. The whole open space was lighted up brilliantly, and the sparks flew in myriads. Ashes and burning fragments carried by the wind fell thickly through the forest. The vivid flare penetrated the forest itself and the five men saw their foes crouching in the bushes. They advanced, using all the skill of those to whom the wilderness is second nature and a battle from tree to tree ensued. The five were more than a match for the eight who were now against them. The man who had passed as Fowler was quickly wounded in the shoulder, the harelipped leader himself had his cap shot from his head, and one of the Indians was slain. Then they took to flight, and, after a pursuit of some distance, the five returned toward the village, where the flames were now dying down.

Paul had been flicked across the hand by a bullet and Jim Hart shook two bullets out of his clothing, but they were practically unhurt and it was their object now

to see the man Perley, who had been left at the edge of the forest. By the time they reached the open where the village had stood, the day was fully come. The Council House had fallen in and the poles and fragments of bark smoked on the ground. Nothing was left of the wigwam but ashes which the wind picked up and whirled about. The wounded man lay on his side and it was quite evident that his hurt was mortal, but his look became one of terror when the five came up.

"We do not mean to hurt you," said Henry; "we will make it as easy for you as we can."

"And the others," gasped the man. "You have beaten them in the battle, and they have fled, the Colonel with them."

"Yes," replied Henry, "they are gone, and with them Colonel—?"

The man looked up and smiled faintly. At the edge of death he read Henry's mind. He knew that he wished to obtain the name of the harelipped man and, sincere enemy of his own people though Perley was, he no longer had any objection to telling.

"Prop me up against that tree trunk," he gasped.

Henry did so, and Paul brought some water from the spring in his cap. The man drank and seemed a little stronger.

"You're better to me perhaps than I'd have been to you if it had been the other way round," he said, "an' I might as well tell you that the man with the harelip was Colonel Bird, a British officer, who is most active against your settlements, and who has become a great leader among the Indians. He's arranging now with the people at Detroit to strike you somewhere."

"Then I'm sorry my bullet didn't find him instead of you," said Tom Ross.

"So am I," said the man with a faint attempt at humor.

Paul, who had been trying to remember, suddenly spoke up.

"I heard of that man when we were in the East," he said. "He fell in love with a girl at Oswego or some other of the British posts, and she rejected him because he was so ugly and had a hare lip. Then he seemed to have a sort of madness and ever since he's been leading expeditions of the Indians against our settlements."

"It's true," said Perley, "he's the man that you're talking about and he's mad about

shedding blood. He's drumming up the Indian forces everywhere. His—"

Perley stopped suddenly and coughed. His face became ghastly pale, and then his head fell over sideways on his shoulders.

"He's dead," said Shif'less Sol, "an' I'm sorry, too, Tom, that your bullet didn't hit Colonel Bird 'stead o' him."

"Do you think," asked Paul, "that they are likely to come back and attack us?"

"No," replied Henry, "they've had enough. Besides they can't attack us in broad daylight. Look how open the forest is. We'd be sure to see them long before they could get within rifle shot."

"Then," said Paul, "let's bury Perley before we go on. I don't like to think of a white man lying here in the forest to be devoured by wild beasts, even if he did try to kill us."

Shif'less Sol heartily seconded Paul's suggestion, and soon it was done. They had no spades with which to dig a grave for Perley's body, but they built over him a little cairn of fallen timber, sufficient to protect him from the wolves and bears, and then prepared to march anew.

But they took a last look at the large open space in which the abandoned Indian village had stood. Nothing was left there but ashes and dying coals. Not a fragment of the place was standing. But they felt that it was better for it to be so. If man had left, then the forest should resume its complete sway. The grass and the bushes would now cover it up all the more quickly. Then they shouldered their rifles and went ahead, never looking back once.

The morning was quite cool. It was only the second week in April, the spring having come out early bringing the buds and the foliage with it, but in the variable climate of the great valley they might yet have freezing and snow. They had left Pittsburg in the winter, but they were long on the way, making stops at two or three settlements on the southern shore of the Ohio, and also going on long hunts. At another time they had been stopped two weeks by the great cold which froze the surface of the river from bank to bank. Thus it was the edge of spring and the forests were green, when they turned up the tributary river, and followed in the trail of Timmendiquas.

Now they noticed this morning as they advanced that it was growing quite cold again. They had also come so much further North that the spring was less

advanced than on the Ohio. Before noon a little snow was flying, but they did not mind it. It merely whipped their blood and seemed to give them new strength for their dangerous venture. But Henry was troubled. He was sorry that they had not seen an enemy in the man Bird whose name was to become an evil one on the border. But how were they to know? It is true that he could now, with the aid of the dead man's story recall something about Bird and his love affair, his disappointment which seemed to have given him a perfect mania for bloodshed. But again how were they to know?

They pressed on with increased speed, as they knew that Timmendiguas, owing to their delay at the abandoned village must now be far ahead. The broad trail was found easily, and they also kept a sharp watch for that of Bird and his band which they felt sure would join it soon. But when night came there was no sign of Bird and his men. Doubtless they had taken another course, with another object in view. Henry was greatly perplexed. He feared that Bird meant deep mischief, and he should have liked to have followed him, but the main task was to follow Timmendiguas, and they could not turn aside from it.

They would have traveled all that night, but the loss of sleep the night before, and the strain of the combat compelled them to take rest about the twilight hour. The night winds were sharp with chill, and they missed the bark shelter that the ruined Council House had given them. As they crouched in the bushes with their blankets about them and ate cold venison, they were bound to regret what they had lost.

"Still I like this country," said Jim Hart. "It looks kinder firm an' strong ez ef you could rely on it. Then I want to see the big lakes. We come pretty nigh to one uv them that time we went up the Genesee Valley an' burned the Iroquois towns, but we didn't quite git thar. Cur'us so much fresh water should be put here in a string uv big lakes on our continent."

"And the Canadian *voyageurs* say there are big lakes, too, away up in Canada that no white man has ever seen, but of which they hear from the Indians," said Paul.

"I reckon it's true," said Jim Hart, "'cause this is an almighty big continent, an' an almighty fine one. I ain't s'prised at nothin' now. I didn't believe thar wuz any river ez big ez the Missip, until I saw it, an' thar ain't no tellin' what thar is out beyond the Missip, all the thousands uv miles to the Pacific. I'd shorely like to live a thousand years with you fellers an' tramp 'roun' and see it all. It would be

almighty fine."

"But I wouldn't like to be spendin' all that thousan' years tryin' to keep my scalp on top o' my head," said Shif'less Sol. "It would be pow'ful wearin' on a lazy man like me."

Thus they talked as the twilight deepened into the night. The feel of the North was in them all. Their minds kindled at the thought of the vast lakes that lay beyond and of the great forest, stretching, for all they knew, thousands of miles to the great ocean. The bushes and their blankets protected them from the cold winds, and it was so dark that no enemy could trail them to their lair. Moreover the five were there, intact, and they had the company of one another to cheer.

"I imagine," said Paul, "that Timmendiquas and the officers at Detroit will make this the biggest raid that they have ever yet planned against Kentucky."

"By surprise an' numbers they may win victories here an' thar," said Shif'less Sol, "but they'll never beat us. When people git rooted in the ground you jest can't drive 'em away or kill 'em out. Our people will take root here, too, an' everywhar the Injuns, the British an' the Tories will have to go."

"An' as our people ain't come up here yet, we've got to look out for our scalps before the rootin' season comes," said Tom Ross.

"An' that's as true as Gospel," said Shif'less Sol, thoughtfully.

After that they spoke little more, but they drew and matted the thick bushes over their heads in such manner that the chill winds were turned aside. Beneath were the dry leaves of last year which they had raked up into couches, and thus, every man with a blanket beneath and another above him, they did not care how the wind blew. They were as snug as bears in their lairs, but despite the darkness of the night and the exceeding improbability of anyone finding them both Henry and Tom Ross lay awake and watched. The others slept peacefully, and the two sentinels could hear their easy breathing only a few feet away.

In the night Henry began to grow uneasy. Once or twice he thought he heard cries like the hoot of the owl or the howl of the wolf, but they were so far away that he was uncertain. Both hoot and howl might be a product of the imagination. He was so alive to the wilderness, it was so full of meaning to him that his mind could create sounds when none existed. He whispered to Tom, but Ross, listening as hard as he could, heard nothing but the rustling of the leaves and

twigs before the wind.

Henry was sure now that what he had heard was the product of a too vivid fancy, but a little later he was not so sure. It must be the faint cry of a wolf that he now heard or its echo. He had the keenest ear of them all, and that Tom Ross did not hear the sound, was no proof. A vivid imagination often means a prompt and powerful man of action, and Henry acted at once.

"Tom," he whispered, "I'm going to scout in the distance from which I thought the sounds came. Don't wake the boys; I'll be back before morning."

Tom Ross nodded. He did not believe that Henry had really heard anything, and he would have remonstrated with him, but he knew that it was useless. He merely drew his blanket a little closer, and resolved that one pair of eyes should watch as well as two had watched before.

Henry folded his blankets, put them in his little pack, and in a minute was gone. It was dark, but not so dark that one used to the night could not see. The sounds that he had seemed to hear came from the southwest, and the road in the direction was easy, grown up with forest but comparatively free from undergrowth. He walked swiftly about a mile, then he heard the cry of the wolf again. Now, the last doubt was gone from his mind. It was a real sound, and it was made by Indian calling to Indian.

He corrected his course a little, and went swiftly on. He heard the cry once more, now much nearer, and, in another mile, he saw a glow among the trees. He went nearer and saw detached cones of light. Then he knew that it was a camp fire, and a camp fire built there boldly in that region, so dangerous to the Kentuckian, indicated that it was surely the Indians themselves and their allies. He did not believe that it was the force of Timmendiquas which could only have reached this spot by turning from its course, but he intended to solve the doubt.

The camp was in one of the little prairies so numerous in the old Northwest, and evidently had been pitched there in order to secure room for the fires. Henry concluded at once that it must be a large force, and his eagerness to know increased. As he crept nearer and nearer, he was amazed by the number of the fires. This was a much larger band than the one led by Timmendiquas. He also heard the sound of many voices and of footsteps. From his place among the trees he saw dark figures passing and repassing. He also caught now and then a metallic glitter from something not a rifle or a tomahawk, but which he could not clearly make out in the dark.

This was a formidable force bent upon some great errand, and his curiosity was intense. The instinct that had sent him upon the journey through the woods was not wrong, and he did not mean to go away until he knew for what purpose this army was gathered. He lay upon the ground in the thickest shadow of the woods, and crept forward a little closer. Then he saw that the camp contained at least five hundred warriors. As nearly as he could make out they were mostly Shawnees, probably from the most easterly villages, but there seemed to be a sprinkling of Delawares and Miamis. White men, Tories, Canadians and English, fifty or sixty in number were present also and a few of them were in red uniform.

All the Indians were in war paint, and they sat in great groups around the fires feasting. Evidently the hunters had brought in plenty of game and they were atoning for a fast. They ate prodigiously of buffalo, deer, bear and wild turkey, throwing the bones behind them when they had gnawed them clean. Meanwhile they sang in the Shawnee tongue a wild chant:

To the South we, the great warriors, go
To the far, fair land of Kaintuckee;
We carry death for the Yengees,
Our hands are strong, our hearts are fierce;
None of the white face can escape us.

We cross the river and steal through the woods;
In the night's dark hour the tomahawk falls,
The burning houses send flames to the sky,
The scalps of the Yengees hang at our belts;
None of the white face can escape us.

Henry's heart began to pump heavily. Little specks danced before his eyes. Here was a great war party, one that he had not foreseen, one that was going to march against Kentucky. Evidently this enterprise was distinct from that of Timmendiquas. In his eagerness to see, Henry crept nearer and nearer to the utmost verge of the danger line, lying in a clump of bushes where the warriors were passing, not twenty feet away. Suddenly he started a little, as a new figure came into the light, thrown into distinct relief by the blazing background of the fires.

He recognized at once the harelipped man, Bird, now in the uniform of a Colonel in the King's army. His ugliness was in no whit redeemed by his military attire. But Henry saw that deference was paid him by white men and red men alike, and he had the walk and manner of one who commanded. The youth was sorry now that they had not hunted down this man and slain him. He felt instinctively that he would do great harm to those struggling settlers south of the Ohio.

While Henry waited three loud shouts were heard, uttered at the far end of the camp. Instantly the eating ceased, and all the warriors rose to their feet. Then they moved with one accord toward the point from which the shouts proceeded. Henry knew that someone of importance was coming, and he crept along the edge of the forest to see.

Colonel Bird, several subordinate officers, and some chiefs gathered in front of the mass of warriors and stood expectant. Forth from the forest came a figure more magnificent than any in that group, a great savage, naked to the waist, brilliantly painted, head erect and with the air of a king of men. It was Timmendiquas, and Henry realized, the moment he appeared, that he was not

surprised to see him there. Behind him came Red Eagle and Yellow Panther, Simon Girty, Braxton Wyatt and Blackstaffe. Bird went forward, eager to meet them, and held out his hand in white man's fashion to Timmendiquas. The great Wyandot took it, held it only a moment, and then dropped it, as if the touch were hateful to him. Henry had noticed before that Timmendiquas never seemed to care for the white allies of the Indians, whether English, Canadian or Tory. He used them, but he preferred, if victory were won, that it should be won by men of his own race. The manner of the chief seemed to him to indicate repulsion, but Wyatt, Girty and the others greeted the Colonel with great warmth. They were birds of a feather, and it pleased them to flock together there in the great forest.

Timmendiquas and his chiefs walked toward the larger and central fire, whither Bird and his men showed the way. Then pipes were lighted and smoked by all who were high enough in rank to sit in the Council, while the mass of the warriors gathered at a respectful distance. But the fires were replenished, and they blazed up, filling all the camp with ruddy light. Then Henry found the meaning of the metallic gleam that he had seen from the forest. Near the center of the camp and standing in a row were six cannon, fine, bronze guns of large caliber, their dark muzzles, as if by some sinister chance, pointing toward the South. Then full knowledge came in all its gloomy truth. This was an expedition against Kentucky more formidable than any of the many that had yet gone. It carried a battery of large cannon, and plenty of white gunners to man them. The wooden palisades of the new settlements could not stand five minutes before great guns.

In his eagerness to see more of these hateful cannon, Henry, for the first time in years, forgot his customary caution. He made a bush rustle and he did not notice it. A scouting Indian passed near, and he did not hear him. But the scouting Indian, a Shawnee, alert and suspicious, heard the rustling of the bush. He dropped down, crept near and saw the long figure among the bushes. Then he crept away and signaled to his comrades.

Henry was straining forward for a better view of the cannon, when there was a sudden sound behind him. He drew his body quickly together like a powerful animal about to spring, but before he could reach his feet a half dozen warriors hurled themselves upon him.

He fell under the impact of so great a weight and the rifle which he could not use at close quarters was torn from his hands. The warriors uttered a triumphant

shout which caused all those sitting by the fire to spring to their feet.

Henry was at the very summit of his youthful strength. There was no one in the forest who matched him in either height or muscular strength, save, possibly Timmendiquas, and with a tremendous effort he rose to his feet, the whole yelling pack clinging to him, one on each arm, one at each leg, and two at his shoulders and waist. He hurled loose the one on his right arm and snatched at a pistol in his belt, but quick as a flash, two others loosing their hold elsewhere, seized the arm. Then they pressed all their weight upon him again, seeking to throw him. Evidently they wished to take him a captive. But Henry remained erect despite the immense weight pulling at him. He was bent slightly forward, and, for a few moments, his efforts exactly balanced the strength of the six who sought to pull him down. In that brief space they remained immovable. The sweat broke out on his forehead in great beads. Then with an effort, convulsive and gigantic, he threw them all from him, standing clear for one brief instant. His hand was on the pistol butt, but the yelling pack were back too quick, leaping at him like wolves. He was dragged to his knees, but once more he struggled to his feet, drenched in perspiration, his heart beating loudly as he made his mighty efforts.

In their struggle they came free of the woods, and out into the open where the light from the fires cast a red glow over the tall figure of the white youth, and the six naked and sinewy brown forms that tore at him. The chief and the white men in the camp rushed forward.

Braxton Wyatt cried exultingly: "It is Ware!" and drew his pistol, but Timmendiquas struck down his arm.

"It is not for you to shoot," he said; "let him be taken alive."

Bird was commander in that camp, and the Wyandot was only a visitor there, but the tone of Timmendiquas was so strong and masterful that Bird himself recognized his predominance, and did not resist it.

And there were others among the Indians who looked with admiration upon the tall youth as he made his magnificent struggle for life and liberty. A deep hum ran through the great circle that had formed about the fighters. Excitement, the joy of a supreme sport, showed upon their savage faces. One or two started forward to help the six, but Timmendiquas waved them back. Then the circle pressed a little closer, and other rows of dark faces behind peered over brown shoulders. Henry was scarcely conscious that hundreds looked on. The pulses in

temples and throat were beating heavily, and there was a mist before his eyes. Nobody was present for him, save the six who strove to pull him down. His soul swelled with fierce anger and he hurled off one after another to find them springing back like the rebound of a rubber ball.

His anger increased. These men annoyed him terribly. He was bathed in perspiration and nearly all the clothing was torn from his body, but he still fought against his opponents. The ring had come in closer and closer, and now the savages uttered low cries of admiration as he sent some one of his antagonists spinning. They admired, too, his massive figure, the powerful neck, the white shoulders now bare and the great muscles which bunched up as he put forth supreme efforts.

"Verily, this is a man," said the old chief, Yellow Panther.

Timmendiquas nodded, but he never took his absorbed eyes from the contest. He, too, uttered a low cry as Henry suddenly caught one of the warriors with his fist and sent him like a shot to the earth. But this warrior, a Wyandot, was tough. He sprang up again, the dark blood flowing from his face, but was caught and sent down a second time, to lay where he had fallen, until some of the watchers took him by the legs and dragged him out of the way of the struggle. Henry was rid of one of his opponents for the time, and the five who were left did not dare use their weapons in face of the command from Timmendiquas to take him alive. Yet they rushed in as full of zeal as ever. It may be that they enjoyed the struggle in their savage way, particularly when the prize to be won was so splendid.

Henry's successful blow with his fist reminded him that he might use it again. In the fury of the sudden struggle he had not thought before to fight by this method. A savage had him by the left shoulder. He struck the up-turned face with his right fist and the warrior went down unconscious.

Only four now! The hands of another were seeking his throat. He tore the hands loose, seized the warrior in his arms, and hurled him ten feet away, where he fell with a sprained ankle. A deep cry, and following it, a long-drawn sigh of admiration, came from the crowd.

Only three now! He tripped and threw one so heavily that he could not renew the combat, and the terrible fist sent down the fifth. Once more came that cry and long-drawn sigh from the multitude! A single opponent was left, but he was a powerful fellow, a Wyandot, with long thick arms and a mighty chest. His comrades had been much in his way in the struggle, and, now comparatively

fresh and full of confidence, he closed with his white antagonist.

Henry had time to draw a breath or two, and he summoned his last reserve of will and strength. He grasped the Wyandot as he ran in, pinned his arms to his sides, tripped his feet from under him, and, seizing him by shoulders and waist, lifted him high above his head. He held him poised there for a moment while the multitude gazed, tense and awed. Then, hurling him far out, he turned, faced the Wyandot chief, and said:

"To you, Timmendiwas, I surrender myself."



CHAPTER VIII

THE NORTHWARD MARCH

The great Wyandot chief inclined his head slightly, and received the pistol, hatchet, and knife which Henry drew from his belt. Then he said in the grave Wyandot tongue:

"It is the second time that Ware has become my prisoner, and I am proud. He is truly a great warrior. Never have I seen such a fight as that which he has just made, the strength of one against six, and the one was triumphant."

A murmur of approval from the warriors followed his words. Like the old Greeks, the Indians admired size, symmetry and strength, qualities so necessary to them in their daily lives, and Henry, as he stood there, wet with perspiration and breathing heavily, exemplified all that they considered best in man. Few of these savage warriors had any intention of sparing him. They would have burned him at the stake with delight, and, with equal delight, they would have praised him had he never uttered a groan—it would only be another proof of his greatness.

Braxton Wyatt pressed nearer. There was joy in his evil heart over the capture of his enemy, but it was not unalloyed. He knew the friendship that Timmendiquas bore for Henry, and he feared that through it the prisoner might escape the usual fate of captives. It was his part to prevent any such disaster and he had thought already of a method. He dreaded the power of Timmendiquas, but he was bold and he proposed to dare it nevertheless.

"Will you take the prisoner South with you," he said to Colonel Bird.

"I have surrendered to Timmendiquas," said Henry.

"This is the camp of Colonel Bird," said Wyatt in as mild a tone as he could assume, "and of course anyone taken here is his prisoner."

"That is true," said Simon Girty, whose influence was great among the Indians, particularly the Shawnees.

Timmendiquas said not a word, nor did Henry. Both saw the appeal to the pride

of Bird who pulled his mustache, while his ugly face grew uglier.

"Yes, it is so," he said at last. "The prisoner is mine, since he was taken in my camp."

Then Timmendiquas spoke very quietly, but, underlying every word, was a menace, which Wyatt, Girty and Bird alike felt and heeded.

"The prisoner surrendered to me," he said. "The Wyandot warriors helped in his capture—their bruises prove it. Colonel Bird even now marches south against Kaintuckee, and he has no need of prisoners. The words of Wyatt are nothing. Girty has become one of our chiefs, but it is not for him to judge in this case. When the council is finished and Timmendiquas resumes his march to Detroit, Ware goes with him as a captive, the prize of his warriors."

His fierce eyes roamed around the circle, challenging one by one those who opposed him. Braxton Wyatt's own eyes dropped, and fear was in his soul. He, a renegade, an enemy to his own people could not afford to lose the favor of the Indians. Girty, also, evaded. Full of craft, it was no part of his policy to quarrel with Timmendiquas. Bird alone was disposed to accept the gage. It was intolerable that he, a colonel in the British army, should be spoken to in such a manner by an Indian. He wrinkled his ugly hare lip and said stubbornly:

"The prisoner was taken in my camp, and he is mine."

But Girty said low in his ear:

"Let Timmendiquas have him. It is not well to alienate the Wyandots. We need them in our attack on Kentucky, and already they are dissatisfied with their heavy losses there. We can do nothing for the king without the Indians."

Bird was not without suppleness. He spoke to Timmendiquas, as if he were continuing his former words:

"But I give up my claim to you, White Lightning of the Wyandots. Take the prisoner and do with him as you choose."

Timmendiquas smiled slightly. He understood perfectly. Braxton Wyatt retired, almost sick with rage. Timmendiquas motioned to two of his warriors who bound Henry's arms securely, though not painfully, and led him away to one of the smaller fires. Here he sat down between his guards who adjusted his torn attire, but did not annoy him, and waited while the council went on.

After the glow of physical triumph had passed, Henry felt a deep depression. It seemed to him that he could never forgive himself when so much depended upon him. He had full knowledge that this expedition was marching southward, and now he could send no warning. Had he returned to his comrades with the news, they might have solved the problem by dividing their force. Two could have hurried to Kentucky ahead of Bird's army, and three might have gone to Detroit to watch what preparations were made there. He condemned himself over and over again, and it is only just to say that he did not think then of his personal danger. He thought instead of those whom he might have saved, but who now would probably fall beneath the Indian tomahawk, with no one to warn them.

But he permitted none of his chagrin and grief to show in his face. He would not allow any Indian or renegade to see him in despair or in anything bordering upon it. He merely sat motionless, staring into the fire, his face without expression. Henry had escaped once from the Wyandots. Perhaps it was a feat that could not be repeated a second time—indeed all the chances were against it—but in spite of everything his courage came back. He had far too much strength, vitality and youth to remain in despair, and gradually new resolutions formed almost unconsciously in his mind. Under all circumstances, fate would present at least a bare chance to do what one wished, and courage gradually became confidence.

Then Henry, remembering that there was nothing he could do at present, lay down on his side before the fire. It was not altogether an assumed manner to impress his guard, because he was really very tired, and, now that his nerves were relaxing, he believed he could go to sleep.

He closed his eyes, and, although he opened them now and then, the lids were heavier at every successive opening. He saw the camp dimly, the dark figures of the warriors becoming shadowy now, the murmur of voices sinking to a whisper that could scarcely be heard, and then, in spite of his bound arms and precarious future, he slept.

Henry's two guards, both Wyandots, regarded him with admiration, as he slept peacefully with the low firelight flickering across his tanned face. Great in body, he was also great in mind, and whatever torture the chief, Timmendiwas, intended for him he would endure it magnificently. Braxton Wyatt and Simon Girty also came to look at him, and whispered to each other.

"It would have been better if they had made an end of him in the fight for his capture," said Wyatt.

"That is true," said Girty thoughtfully. "As long as he's alive, he's dangerous. Timmendiquas cannot tie him so tight that there is no possibility of escape, and there are these friends of his whom you have such cause to remember, Braxton."

"I wish they were all tied up as he is," said Wyatt venomously.

Girty laughed softly.

"You show the right spirit, Braxton," he said. "To live among the Indians and fight against one's own white race one must hate well. You need not flush, man. I have found it so myself, and I am older in this business and more experienced than you."

Wyatt choked down words that were leaping to his lips, and presently he and Girty rejoined the white men, who were camped around Bird, their commander. But neither of them felt like sleeping and after a little while there, they went to look at the cannon, six fine guns in a row, constituting together the most formidable weapon that had ever been brought into the western forest. When they looked at them, the spirit of Wyatt and Girty sprang high. They exulted in the prospect of victory. The Kentucky sharpshooters behind their light palisades had been able hitherto to defeat any number of Indians. But what about the big guns? Twelve pound cannon balls would sweep down the palisades like a hurricane among saplings. As there is no zeal like that of the convert, so there is no hate like that of the renegade and they foresaw the easy capture of settlement after settlement by Bird's numerous and irresistible army.

Henry, meanwhile, slept without dreams. It was a splendid tribute to his nerves that he could do so. When he awoke the sun was an hour above the horizon and the camp was active with the preparations of Bird's army to resume its march southward. Timmendiquas stood beside him, and, at his order, one of the Wyandot guards cut the thongs that bound his arms. Henry stretched out his wrists and rubbed them, one after the other, until the impeded circulation was restored. Then he uttered his thanks to the chief.

"I am grateful to you, Timmendiquas," he said, "for insisting last night that I was your prisoner, and should go with you to Detroit. As you have seen, the renegades, Girty and Wyatt do not love me, and whatever I may receive at your hands, it is not as bad as that which they would have incited the warriors to do, had I remained in the power of Bird."

"Neither do I care for Girty or Wyatt," said Timmendiquas, as he smiled slightly,

"but they help us and we need all the allies we can get. So we permit them in our lodges. I may tell you now that they debated last night whether to go South with Bird, or to continue to Detroit with me. They go to Detroit."

"I do not care for their company," said Henry, "but I am glad that they are not going to Kentucky."

"I have also to tell you now, Ware," continued Timmendiwas, "that parties were sent out last night to search for your comrades, the four who are always with you."

Henry moved a little and then looked inquiringly at Timmendiwas. The chief's face expressed nothing.

"They did not find them?" he said.

"No," he replied. "The friends of Ware were wary, but we are proud to have taken the leader. Here is food; you can eat, and then we march."

They brought him an abundance of good food, and fresh water in a gourd, and he ate and drank heartily. The morning had become clear and crisp again, and with it came all the freshness and courage that belong to youth. Time was everything, and certainly nothing would be done to him until they reached Detroit. Moreover, his four comrades would discover why he did not return and they would follow. Even if one were helpless himself, he must never despair with such friends free and near at hand.

After he had eaten, his hands were bound again. He made no resistance, knowing that under the Indian code he had no right to ask anything further of Timmendiwas, and he began the march northward in the center of the Wyandot force. At the same time, Bird and his army resumed their southern advance. Henry heard twigs and dead boughs cracking under the wheels of the cannon, and the sound was a menacing one that he did not forget for a long time. He looked back, but the savage army disappeared with amazing quickness in the forest.

They marched all day without interruption, eating their food as they marched. Timmendiwas was at the head of the column, and he did not speak again with Henry. The renegades, probably fearing the wrath of the chief, also kept away. The country, hilly hitherto, now became level and frequently swampy. Here the travelling was difficult. Often their feet sank in the soft mud above the ankles,

Briars reached out and scratched them, and, in these damp solitudes, the air was dark and heavy. Yet the Indians went on without complaint, and Henry, despite his bound arms, could keep his balance and pace with the rest, stride for stride.

They marched several days and nights without interruption through a comparatively level country, still swampy at times, thickly grown with forest, and with many streams and little lakes. Most of the lakes were dotted with wild fowl, and often they saw deer in the shallow portions. Two or three of the deer were shot, but the Indians devoted little time to the hunting of game, as they were well provided with food.

Henry, who understood both Wyandot and Shawnee, gathered from the talk of those about him that they were at last drawing near to Detroit, the great Northwestern fort of the British and Indians. They would arrive there to-morrow, and they spent that last night by camp fires, the Indians relaxing greatly from their usual taciturnity and caution, and eating as if at a banquet.

Henry sat on a log in the middle of the camp. His arms were unbound and he could eat with the others as much as he chose. Since they were not to burn him or torture him otherwise, they would treat him well for the present. But warriors, Shawnees, Miamis and Wyandots, were all about him. They took good care that such a prisoner should not have a chance to escape. He might overthrow two or three, even four or five, but a score more would be on him at once. Henry knew this well and bore himself more as if he were a member of the band than a captive. It was a part of his policy to appear cheerful and contented. No Indian should surpass him in careless and apparent indifference, but to-night he felt gloomier than at any time since the moments that immediately followed his capture. He had relied upon the faithful four, but days had passed without a sign from them. There had been no chance, of course, for them to rescue him. He had not expected that, but what he had expected was a sign. They were skillful, masters of wilderness knowledge, but accidents might happen—one had happened to him—and they might have fallen into the hands of some other band.

Waiting is a hard test, and Henry's mind, despite his will, began to imagine dire things. Suppose he should never see his comrades again. A thousand mischances could befall, and the neighborhood of Detroit was the most dangerous part of all the Indian country. Besides the villages pitched near, bands were continually passing, either coming to the fort for supplies, or going away, equipped for a fresh raid upon the settlements.

The laughter and talk among the Indians went on for a long time, but Henry, having eaten all that he wanted, sat in silence. Besides the noise of the camp, he heard the usual murmur of the night wind among the trees. He listened to it as one would to a soft low monotone that called and soothed. He had an uncommonly acute ear and his power of singleness and concentration enabled him to listen to the sound that he wished to hear, to the exclusion of all others. The noises in the camp, although they were as great as ever, seemed to die. Instead, he heard the rustling of the young leaves far away, and then another sound came—a faint, whining cry, the far howl of a wolf, so far that it was no more than a whisper, a mere under-note to the wind. It stopped, but, in a moment or two, was repeated. Henry's heart leaped, but his figure never moved; nor was there any change in the expression of his face, which had been dreamy and sad.

But he knew. Just when he wished to hear a voice out of the dark, that voice came. It was the first part of a signal that he and his comrades often used, and as he listened, the second part was completed. He longed to send back a reply, but it was impossible and he knew that it would not be expected. Joy was under the mask of his sad and dreaming face. He rejoiced, not only for himself, but for two other things; because they were safe and because they were near, following zealously and seeking every chance. He looked around at the Indians. None of them had heard the cry of the wolf, and he knew if it had reached them, they would not have taken it for a signal. They were going on with their feasting, but while Henry sat, still silent, Timmendiwas came to him and said:

"To-morrow we reach Detroit, the great post of the soldiers of the king. We go there to confer with the commander, de Peyster, and to receive many rifles and much ammunition. It is likely, as you already know, that we shall march against your people."

"I know it, Timmendiwas," said Henry, "but I would that it were not so. Why could we not dwell in peace in Kentucky, while the Wyandots, the Shawnees, the Miamis and others ranged their vast hunting grounds in the same peace on this side of the Ohio?"

A spark of fire shot from the dark eyes of Timmendiwas.

"Ware," he said, "I like you and I do not believe that your heart contains hatred towards me. Yet, there cannot be any peace between our races. Peace means that you will push us back, always push us back. Have I not been in the East, where the white men are many and where the mighty confederation of the Six Nations,

with their great chief, Thayendanagea, at their head, fight against them in vain? Have I not seen the rich villages of the Indians go up in smoke? The Indians themselves still fight. They strike down many of the Yengees and sometimes they burn a village of the white people, but unless the king prevails in the great war, they will surely lose. Their Aieroski, who is the Manitou of the Wyandots, and your God, merely looks on, and permits the stronger to be the victor."

"Then," said Henry, "why not make peace with us here in the West, lest your tribes meet the same fate?"

The nostrils of Timmendiguas dilated.

"Because in the end we should be eaten up in the same way. Here in the West you are few and your villages are tiny. The seed is not planted so deep that it cannot be uprooted."

Henry sighed.

"I can see the question from your side as well as from mine, White Lightning," he replied. "It seems as you say, that the white men and the red men cannot dwell together. Yet I could wish that we were friends in the field as well as at heart."

Timmendiguas shook his head and replied in a tone tinged with a certain sadness:

"I, too, could wish it, but you were born of one race and I of another. It is our destiny to fight to the end."

He strode away through the camp. Henry watched the tall and splendid figure, with the single small scarlet feather set in the waving scalp lock, and once more he readily acknowledged that he was a forest king, a lofty and mighty spirit, born to rule in the wilderness. Then he took the two blankets which had been left him, enfolded himself between them, and, despite the noises around him, slept soundly all through the night. Early the next morning they began the last stretch of the march to Detroit.

It was with a deep and peculiar interest that they approached Detroit, then a famous British and Indian post, now a great American city. Founded by the French, who lost it to the British, who, in turn, were destined to lose it to the Americans, it has probably sent forth more scalping parties of Indians than any other place on the North American continent. Here the warlike tribes constantly came for rifles, ammunition, blankets and other supplies, and here the agents of

the king incited them with every means in their power to fresh raids on the young settlements in the South. Here the renegades, Girty, Blackstaffe and their kind came to confer, and here Boone, Kenton and other famous borderers had been brought as prisoners.

The Indians in the party of Timmendiquas already showed great jubilation. In return for the war that they had made and should make, they expected large gifts from the king, and with such great chiefs as White Lightning, Red Eagle and Yellow Panther at their head, it was not likely that they would be disappointed.

As they drew near, they passed several Indian camps, containing parties from the Northwest, Sacs, Winnebagoes and others, including even some Chippewas from the far shores of the greatest of all lakes. Many of these looked admiringly at the prisoner whom Timmendiquas had brought, and were sorry that they had not secured such a trophy. At the last of these camps, where they stopped for a little while, a short, thick man approached Henry and regarded him with great curiosity.

The man was as dark as an Indian, but he had a fierce black mustache that curled up at the ends. His hair was black and long and his eyes, too, were black. His dress differed but little from that of a warrior, but his features were unmistakably Caucasian.

"Another renegade," thought Henry, and his detestation was so thorough that he scorned to take further notice of the fellow. But he was conscious that the stranger was eyeing him from head to foot in the most scrutinizing manner, just as one looks at an interesting picture. Henry felt his anger rise, but he still simulated the most profound indifference.

"You are the prisoner of Timmendiquas, *mon petit garcon, mais oui?*"

Henry looked up at the French words and the French accent that he did not understand. But the tone was friendly, and the man, although he might be an enemy, was no renegade.

"Yes," he replied. "I am the prisoner of Timmendiquas, and I am going with him and his men to Detroit. Do you belong in Detroit?"

The man grinned, showing two magnificent rows of strong white teeth.

"I belong to Detroit?" he replied. "Nevoire! I belong to no place. I am ze Frenchman; le Canadien; voyageur, coureur du bois, l'homme of ze wind ovair

ze mountains an' ze plain. I am Pierre Louis Lajeunais, who was born at Trois Rivières in ze Province of Quebec, which is a long way from here."

The twinkle in his eye was infectious. Henry knew that he was a man of good heart and he liked him. Perhaps also he might find here a friend.

"Since you have given me your name," he replied, "I will give you mine. I am Henry Ware, and I am from Kentucky. I was captured by Timmendiquas and his warriors a few days ago. They're taking me to Detroit, but I do not know what they intend to do with me there. I suppose that you, of course, are among our enemies."

No Indian was within hearing then, and Lajeunais replied:

"W'y should I wish you harm? I go to Detroit. I sell furs to ze commandaire for powder and bullets. I travel an' hunt wit' mes amis, ze Indians, but I do not love ze Anglais. When I was a boy, I fight wit' ze great Montcalm at Quebec against Wolfe an' les Anglais. We lose an' ze Bourbon lilies are gone; ze rouge flag of les Anglais take its place. Why should I fight for him who conquers me? I love better ze woods an' ze rivière an' ze lakes where I hunt and fish."

"I am glad that you are no enemy of ours, Mr. Lajeunais," said Henry, "and I am certain that my people are no enemies of the French in Canada. Perhaps we shall meet in Detroit."

"Eet ees likely, mon brav," said Lajeunais, "I come into the town in four days an' I inquire for ze great boy named Ware."

Timmendiquas gave the signal and in another hour they were in Detroit.

CHAPTER IX

AT DETROIT

Henry missed nothing as he went on with the warriors. He saw many lodges of Indians, and some cabins occupied by French-Canadians. In places the forest had been cleared away to make fields for Indian corn, wheat and pumpkins. Many columns of smoke rose in the clear spring air, and directly ahead, where he saw a cluster of such columns, Henry knew the fort to be. Timmendiquas kept straight on, and the walls of the fort came into view.

Detroit was the most formidable fortress that Henry had yet seen. Its walls, recently enlarged, were of oak pickets, rising twenty-five feet above the ground and six inches in diameter at the smaller end. It had bastions at every corner, and four gates, over three of which were built strong blockhouses for observation and defense. The gates faced the four cardinal points of the compass, and it was the one looking towards the south that was without a blockhouse. There was a picket beside every gate. The gates were opened at sunrise and closed at sunset, but the wickets were left open until 9 o'clock at night.

This fortification, so formidable in the wilderness, was armed in a manner fitting its strength. Every blockhouse contained four six-pounders and two batteries of six large guns each, faced the river, which was only forty feet away and with very steep banks. Inside the great palisade were barracks for five hundred men, a brick store, a guard house, a hospital, a governor's house, and many other buildings. At the time of Henry's arrival about four hundred British troops were present, and many hundreds of Indian warriors. The fort was thoroughly stocked with ammunition and other supplies, and there were also many English and Canadian traders both inside and outside the palisade.

The British had begun the erection of another fort, equally powerful, at some distance from the present one, but they were not far advanced with it at that time. The increase in protective measures was due to a message that they had received from the redoubtable George Rogers Clark, the victor of Vincennes and Kaskaskia, the man who delivered the heaviest of all blows against the British, Indian and Tory power in the Northwest. He had said that he was coming to attack them.

Henry asked no questions, but he watched everything with the most intense curiosity. The warriors of Timmendiquas stopped about three hundred yards from the palisade, and, without a word to anyone, began to light their camp fires and erect lodges for their chiefs. Girty, Blackstaffe, and Wyatt went away toward the fort, but Henry knew well that Timmendiquas would not enter until messengers came to receive him. Henry himself sat down by one of the fires and waited as calmly as if he had been one of the band. While he was sitting there, Timmendiquas came to him.

"Ware," he said, "we are now at the great post of the King, and you will be held a prisoner inside. I have treated you as well as I could. Is there anything of which you wish to complain?"

"There is nothing," replied Henry. "Timmendiquas is a chief, great alike of heart and hand."

The Wyandot smiled slightly. It seemed that he was anxious for the good opinion of his most formidable antagonist. Henry noticed, too, that he was in his finest attire. A splendid blue blanket hung from his shoulders, and his leggings and moccasins of the finest tanned deerskin were also blue. Red Eagle and Yellow Panther, who stood not far away, were likewise arrayed in their savage best.

"We are now about to go into the fort," said Timmendiquas, "and you are to go with us, Ware."

Four British officers were approaching. Their leader was a stocky man of middle age in the uniform of a colonel. It would have been apparent to anyone that the Wyandot chief was the leader of the band, and the officers saluted him.

"I am speaking to Timmendiquas, the great White Lightning of the Wyandots, am I not?" he asked.

"I am Timmendiquas of the Wyandots, known in your language as White Lightning," replied the chief gravely.

"I am Colonel William Caldwell of the King's army," said the chief, "and I am sent by Colonel de Peyster, the commandant at Detroit, to bid you welcome, and to ask you and your fellow chiefs to meet him within the walls. My brother officers and I are to be your escort of honor, and we are proud of such a service."

Henry saw at once that Caldwell was a man of abundant experience with the Indians. He knew their intense pride, and he was going to see that Timmendiquas

and the other chiefs were received in a manner befitting their station among their own people.

"It is well," said Timmendiquas. "We will go with you and Ware will go with us."

"Who is Ware?" asked Caldwell, as Henry stood up. At the same time the Englishman's eyes expressed admiration. The height and splendid figure of the youth impressed him.

"Ware, though young, is the greatest of all the white warriors," replied Timmendiquas. "He is my prisoner and I keep him with me until Manitou tells me what I shall do with him."

His tone was final. Caldwell was a clever man, skilled in forest diplomacy. He saw that nothing was to be gained, and that much might be lost by opposing the will of Timmendiquas.

"Of course he comes with you if you wish it, White Lightning," he said. "Now may we go? Colonel de Peyster awaits us to do you honor."

Timmendiquas inclined his head and he, with nine other chiefs, including Yellow Panther and Red Eagle, and with Henry in the center, started toward the fort. The British officers went with Colonel Caldwell, marching by the side of Timmendiquas. They approached the western gate, and, when they were within a few yards of it, a soldier on top of the palisade began to play a military air on a bugle. It was an inspiring tune, mellow and sweet in the clear spring air, and Caldwell looked up proudly. The chiefs said not a word, but Henry knew that they were pleased. Then the great gate was thrown open and they passed between two files of soldiers, who held their rifles at attention. The music of the bugle ceased, the great gate closed behind them, and the Indians and their escort marched on towards an open square, where a corps of honor, with the commander himself at their head, was drawn up to receive them.

Henry's gaze turned at once towards the commander, whose name filled him with horror and detestation. Arent Schuyler de Peyster had succeeded to Hamilton, the "hair buyer," captured by George Rogers Clark and sent in chains to Virginia. He had shown great activity in arming and inciting the Indians against the settlers in Kentucky, and Henry hated him all the more because he was an American and not an Englishman. He could not understand how an American, Tory though he might be, could send his own people to fire and the

stake, and doom women and little children to a horrible death.

Arent Schuyler de Peyster, born in the city of New York, was now a man of middle years, strongly built, haughty in manner, proud of his family and of his rank in the army of the King. He was confident that the royal arms would triumph ultimately, and, meanwhile he was doing his best to curb the young settlements beyond the Ohio, and to prevent the rebel extension to the West. Now the expedition of Bird had gone forth from Detroit against Kentucky and he was anxious to send another and greater one which should have as its core the Wyandots, the bravest and most daring of all the western tribes. He had never seen Timmendiquas before, but he was familiar with his name, and, after a single glance, it was impossible to mistake him. His roving eye also saw the tall white youth, and, for the present, he wondered, but his mind soon turned to his welcome to the warlike chief.

A salute of four guns was fired from one of the batteries in the bastion. Then Colonel de Peyster greeted Timmendiquas and after him, the other chiefs one by one. He complimented them all upon their bravery and their loyalty to the King, their great white father across the ocean. He rejoiced to hear of their great deeds against the rebels, and promised them splendid rewards for the new deeds they would achieve. Then, saying that they had marched far and must be hungry and tired, he invited them to a feast which he had prepared, having been warned by a runner of their coming.

Timmendiquas, Red Eagle, and Yellow Panther heard him in silence and without a change of countenance, but the eyes of the other chiefs sparkled. They loved blankets of brilliant colors, beads, and the many gaudy trinkets that were sold or given away at the post. New rifles and fresh ammunition, also, would be acceptable, and, in order to deserve them in increasing quantities, they resolved that the next quest for scalps should be most zealous.

Having finished his address, which had been studied carefully, de Peyster nodded toward Henry.

"A new recruit, I suppose," he said. "One who has seen the light. Truly, he is of an admirable figure, and might do great service in our cause. But he bears no arms."

Henry himself answered before Timmendiquas could say a word, and he answered all the more promptly, because he knew that the renegades, Girty, Wyatt and Blackstaffe had drawn near and were listening.

"I am no recruit," he said. "I don't want to die, but I'd sooner do it than make war upon my own people as you and your friends are doing, Colonel de Peyster, and be responsible for the murder of women and children, as you and your friends are. I was at Wyoming and I saw the terrible deeds done there. I am no renegade and I never can be one."

The face of the well-fed Colonel flushed an apoplectic purple, and Braxton Wyatt thrust his hand to the butt of the pistol in his belt, but Girty, inured to everything, laughed and said:

"Don't take it so hard, young man."

"Then tell us who you are!" exclaimed Colonel de Peyster angrily.

Now it was Timmendiquas who replied.

"He is my prisoner," he said. "He is the most valiant of all the Kentuckians. We took him after a great struggle in which he overthrew many of our young men. I have brought him as a present to you at Detroit."

Did the words of Timmendiquas contain some subtle irony? De Peyster looked at him sharply, but the coppery face of the great chief expressed nothing. Then the diplomacy which he was compelled to practice incessantly with his red allies came to his aid.

"I accept the present," he replied, "because he is obviously a fine specimen of the *genus* rebel, and we may be able to put him to use. May I ask your name, young sir?"

"Ware—Henry Ware."

"Very well, Master Ware, since you are here with us, you can join in the little banquet that we have prepared, and see what a happy family the King's officers and the great chiefs make."

Now it was de Peyster who was ironical. The words of Henry about renegades and Wyoming and the slaying of women and children had stung him, but he would not show the sting to a boy; instead, he would let him see how small and weak the Kentuckians were, and how the King's men and the tribes would be able to encompass their complete destruction.

"Timmendiquas has given you to me as my prisoner," he said, "but for an hour or

two you shall be my guest."

Henry bowed. He was not at all averse. His was an inquiring mind, and if de Peyster had anything of importance to show, he wished to see it.

"Lead the way, Catesby," said the commandant to a young officer, evidently an aide.

Catesby proceeded to a large house near the north end of the court. Colonel de Peyster and Timmendiquas, side by side, followed him. The others came in a group.

Catesby led them into a great room, evidently intended as a public banquet hall, as it had a long and wide table running down its center. But several large windows were opened wide and Henry conjectured that this effect—half out of doors—was created purposely. Thus it would be a place where the Indian chiefs could be entertained without feeling shut in.

Colonel de Peyster evidently had prepared well. Huge metal dishes held bear meat, buffalo meat and venison, beef and fish. Bread and all the other articles of frontier food were abundant. Four soldiers stood by as waiters. De Peyster sat at the head of the table with Timmendiquas on his right and Simon Girty on his left. Henry had a seat almost at the foot, and directly across the table from him was the frowning face of Braxton Wyatt. Colonel Caldwell sat at the foot of the table and several other British or Tory officers also were present. The food was served bountifully, and, as the chiefs had come a long distance and were hungry, they ate with sharp appetites. Many of them, scorning knives and forks, cracked the bones with their hands. For a long time the Indians preserved the calm of the woods, but Colonel de Peyster was bland and beaming. He talked of the success of the King's army and of the Indian armies. He told how the settlements had been destroyed throughout Western New York and Pennsylvania, and he told how those of Kentucky would soon share the same fate. A singular spirit seemed to possess him. The Americans, patriots or rebels, as they were variously called, always hated the Tories more bitterly than they hated the English, and this hatred was returned in full measure.

Now it seemed to Henry that de Peyster intended his remarks largely for him. He would justify himself to the captive youth, and at the same time show him the power of the allied Indians, Tories, and English. He talked quite freely of the great expedition of Bird and of the cannon that he carried with him.

"I don't think that your palisades will stand before heavy cannon balls, will they, Ware?"

"I fear not," replied Henry, "and it is likely that many of our people will suffer, but you must bear in mind, Colonel de Peyster, that whenever a man falls in Kentucky another comes to take his place. We are fighting for the land on which we stand, and you are fighting for an alien ruler, thousands of miles away. No matter how many defeats we may suffer, we shall win in the end."

De Peyster frowned.

"You do not know the strength of Britain," he said, "nor do you know the power of the warriors. You say that you were at Wyoming. Well, you have seen what we could do."

Girty broke into a sneering laugh at Henry and then seconded the words of his chief.

"All we want is union and organization," he said. "Soon our own troops and the red warriors will form one army along the whole line of the war. The rebel cause is already sinking in the East, and in another year the King will be triumphant everywhere."

Girty was a crafty man, something of a forest statesman. He had given the Indians much help on many occasions and they usually deferred to him. Now he turned to them.

"When Colonel Bird achieves his victories south of the Ohio, as he is sure to do," he said, "and when Timmendiquas and his great force marches to destroy all that is left, then you, O chiefs, will have back your hunting grounds for your villages and your people. The deer and the buffalo will be as numerous as ever. Fire will destroy the houses and the forests will grow where they have been. Their cornfields will disappear, and not a single one of the Yengees will be found in your great forests beyond the Beautiful River."

The nostrils of the chiefs dilated. A savage fire, the desire for scalps, began to sparkle in the dark eyes of the wilderness children. At this crucial moment of excitement Colonel de Peyster caused cups to be brought and wine to be passed. All drank, except Henry and the great chief, the White Lightning of the Wyandots. De Peyster himself felt the effect of the strong liquor, and Girty and Wyatt did not seek to hide it.

"There is fire in your veins, my children," exclaimed de Peyster. "You will fight for the King. You will clear the woods of the rebels, and he will send you great rewards. As a proof of what he will do he gives you many presents now."

He made a signal and the soldiers began to bring in gifts for the chiefs, gifts that seemed to them beautiful and of great value. There were silver-mounted rifles for Timmendiwas, Red Eagle, Yellow Panther, and also for another Shawnee chief of uncommon ferocity, Moluntha. Their eyes sparkled as they received them, and all uttered thanks except Timmendiwas, who still did not say a word. Then came knives, hatchets, blankets—always of bright colors—beads and many little mirrors. The Indians were excited with the wine and the variety and splendor of the presents. A young chief, Yahnundasis, a Shawnee, sprang from the table and burst into a triumphant chant:

The great chief beyond the seas
Sends us the rifle and the knife;
He bids us destroy the hated Yengees,
And the day of our wrath has come.

We search the forest for white scalps;
The cannon, the great guns will help us,
Not a foe in Kentucky will be left,
None can escape the rage of the warriors.

He sang other verses in the Shawnee tongue, and all the while he was growing more excited with his chant and leapings. He drew his tomahawk and swung it in a glittering circle above his head. The red and black paint upon his face, moistened by his own perspiration, dripped slowly upon his shoulders. He was a wild and terrible figure, a true exponent of primitive savagery, but no one interfered with him. In the minds of the renegades he awoke corresponding emotions.

Caldwell at the foot of the table looked inquiringly at de Peyster at the head of it, but de Peyster raised neither hand nor voice to stay dance and song. It may be that the wine and the intoxication of so wild a scene had gone to his own head. He listened attentively to the song, and watched the feet of the dancer, while he drummed upon the table with his forefingers. One of the chiefs took from his robe a small whistle made of the bone of an eagle, and began to blow upon it a shrill monotonous tune. This inflamed the dancer still further, and he grew wilder and wilder. The note of the whistle, while varying but little, was fierce, piercing, and abundant. It thrilled the blood of red men and white, all save Timmendiquas, who sat, face and figure alike unmoving.

Yahnundasis now began to gaze steadily at Henry. However he gyrated, he did not take his eyes from those of the captive youth. Henry's blood chilled, and for a moment stopped its circulation. Then it flowed in its wonted tide, but he understood. Yahnundasis was seeing red. Like the Malay he was amuck. At any moment he might throw the glittering hatchet at the prisoner. Henry recognized the imminence of his danger, but he steeled his nerves. He saw, too, that much depended upon himself, upon the power of the spirit that radiated from his eyes. Hence, he, too, looked steadily into the eyes of Yahnundasis. He poured all his nervous strength and force into the gaze.

He felt that he was holding the dancing chief in a sort of a spell by the power of a spirit greater than that of Yahnundasis. Yet it could not last; in a minute or two the chief must break the charm, and then, unless someone interfered, he would cast the tomahawk. Obviously the interference should come from de Peyster. But would he do it? Henry did not dare take his eyes from those of Yahnundasis in order to look at the Tory Colonel.

The savage now was maddened completely with his song, the dance, and the wine that he had drunk. Faster and faster whirled the hatchet, but with his powerful gaze deep into the eyes of the other, Henry still sought to restrain the hand that would hurl the deadly weapon. It became a pain, both physical and mental, to strain so. He wanted to look aside, to see the others, and to know why they did not stop so wild a scene. He was conscious of a great silence, save for the singing and dancing of the Indian and the beating of his own heart. He felt convinced now that no one was going to interfere, and his hand stole towards one of the large knives that had been used for cutting meat.

The voice of Yahnundasis rose to a shriek and he leaped like a snake-dancer. Henry felt sure that the tomahawk was going to come, but while he yet stared at the savage he caught a glimpse of a tall, splendidly arrayed figure springing suddenly upright. It was Timmendiquas and he, too, drew a tomahawk. Then with startling quickness he struck Yahnundasis with the flat of the blade. Yahnundasis fell as if he had been slain. The tomahawk flew wildly from his hand, and dark blood from his broken crown mingled with the red and black paint on his face. Timmendiquas stood up, holding his own tomahawk threateningly, an angry look darting from his eyes.

"Take him away," he said, indicating Yahnundasis, in a contemptuous tone. "Tomorrow let him nurse his bruised head and reflect that it is not well to be a fool. It is not meet that a warrior, even be he a chief, should threaten a prisoner, when we come to a feast to talk of great things."

As a murmur of assent came from the chiefs about him, he resumed his seat in dignified silence. Henry said nothing, nor did he allow his countenance to change, but deep in his heart he felt that he owed another debt to the Wyandot chieftain. De Peyster and Caldwell exchanged glances. Both knew that they had allowed the affair to go too far, but both alike resented the stern rebuke contained in the words of Timmendiquas. Yet each glance said the same, that it was wise to dissimulate and take no offense.

"You have spoken well, as usual, Timmendiquas," said Colonel de Peyster. "Now as you and the other chiefs are rested after your long march we will talk at once of the great things that we have in mind, since time is of value. Colonel Bird with the cannon has gone against Kentucky. As I have already said we wish to send another force which will seek out and destroy every station, no matter how small, and which will not even leave a single lone cabin unburned. Colonel Caldwell will command the white men, but you, Timmendiquas, and the allied tribes will have the greater task and the greater glory. The King will equip you amply for the work. He will present a rifle, much ammunition and a fine blanket to every warrior who goes. Rifles, blankets and ammunition are all in our storehouses here in Detroit, and they will be distributed the moment the expedition starts."

The renegades clapped their hands. Most of the chiefs uttered cries of approval and shook their tomahawks in exultation, but Timmendiquas remained silent.

"Does it not appeal to you, Timmendiquas?" said de Peyster. "You have been the most zealous of all the chiefs. You have led great attacks against the settlers, and you have been most eager in battle."

Timmendiquas rose very deliberately and speaking in Wyandot, which nearly all present understood, he said:

"What the Colonel of the King says is true. I have fought many times with the Kentuckians, and they are brave men. Sometimes we have beaten them, and sometimes they have beaten us. They have great warriors, Clark, Boone, Kenton, Harrod and the tall youth who sits here, my captive. Let not the colonel of the King forget that with Clark at their head they crossed the Ohio, took Vincennes and Kaskaskia and him who was then the commander of Detroit, Hamilton, now held prisoner in a far land beyond the mountains."

De Peyster's face flushed darkly, and the other white men moved uneasily.

"The things you tell are true, Timmendiquas," said de Peyster, "but what bearing do they have upon our expedition?"

"I wish to speak of many things," resumed the chief. "I am for war to the end against those who have invaded our hunting grounds. But let not Colonel de Peyster and Caldwell and Girty forget that the villages of the Indians lie between Kaintuckee and Detroit."

"What of it?" said de Peyster. "The Kentuckians reduced so low will not dare to come against them."

"That we do not know," said Timmendiquas. "When we destroy the men in Kaintuckee others come to take their places. It is the duty of the Wyandots and all the allied tribes to look into the future. Listen, O Colonel of the King. I was at Wyoming in the East when the Indians and their white friends won a great victory. Never before had I seen such a taking of scalps. There was much joy and feasting, dancing and singing. It was the Iroquois, the great Six Nations who won the victory, and they thought that their Aieroski, who is our Manitou, would never forsake them. They swept the whole valley of Wyoming and many other valleys. They left the country as bare as my hand. But it was not the end."

Timmendiquas seemed to grow in stature, and he looked fiercely into the eyes of the English officers. Despite themselves de Peyster and Caldwell quailed.

"It was not the end," continued Timmendiquas, and his tone was severe and accusing. "The Iroquois had destroyed the rear of the Yengees and great were the thanks of the King's men. The mighty Thayendanega, the Mohawk, was called the first of all warriors, but the great chief of the Long Knives far away in the East did not forget. By and by a great army came against the Iroquois. Where were the King's men then? Few came to help. Thayendanega had to fight his battle almost alone. He was beaten, his army was scattered like sand before the wind, and the army of the Long Knives trod out the Iroquois country. Their great villages went up in flames, their Council Houses were destroyed, the orchards that had been planted by their grandfathers were cut down, their fields were deserted, the whole Iroquois country was ruined, and the Six Nations, never before conquered, now huddle by the British posts at Niagara and Oswego for shelter."

"It is a great misfortune, but the brave Iroquois will repair it," said de Peyster. "Why do you tell of it, Timmendiquas?"

"For this reason," replied the chief. "The Iroquois would not have been without a country, if the King's men had helped them as they had helped the King's men. Shall we, in the West, the Wyandots, the Shawnees, the Miamis and the others meet the same fate? Shall we go against Kaintuckee, destroy the settlements there, and then, when an avenging army comes against our villages, lose our country, because the King's men who should help us are far away, as the Iroquois lost theirs?"

He folded his arms across his broad chest and, stern and accusing, awaited the answer. De Peyster quailed again, but he quickly recovered. He was a flexible man skilled in diplomacy, and he saw that he must promise, promise much and promise it in convincing tones. He noticed moreover the deep murmur of approval that the chiefs gave to the words of White Lightning. Then he in turn rose also and assuming his most imposing manner said:

"On behalf of the King, Timmendiguas, I promise you the help of his full strength. It is not likely that the Kentuckians will ever be able to come against your villages, but if they do I will march forth with all my force to your help. Nay, I will send East for others, to Niagara and Oswego and to Canada. It shall never be said of us that we deserted the tribes in their hour of need, if such an hour should come. I myself would gladly march now against these intruders if my duty did not hold me here."

He looked around the table and his eye encountered Caldwell's. The officer instantly saw his cue and springing to his feet he cried:

"What our brave commander says is true, Timmendiguas. I myself and some of our best men, we will fight beside you."

Now the chiefs murmured approval of the words of de Peyster and Caldwell, as they had approved those of Timmendiguas. The great Wyandot himself seemed to be convinced, and said that it was well. Henry had listened to it all in silence, but now de Peyster turned his attention to him.

"I think that we have given enough of our hospitality to this prisoner," he said, "and since you have turned him over to me, Timmendiguas, I will send him to a place which will hold him for a while."

Henry rose at once.

"I am willing to go," he said. "I thank you for your food and drink, but I think I shall feel more at home in any prison that you may have than here among those who are planning the destruction of my people."

Girty was about to speak, but de Peyster waved his hand, and the words stopped unsaid.

"Take him to the jail, Holderness," he said to one of the younger officers. "He can wait there. We shall have plenty of time to decide concerning his fate."

Henry walked by the side of the officer across the court. Holderness was quite young, ruddy, and evidently not long in America. He looked with admiration at Henry's height and magnificent shoulders.

"You are from that far land they call Kaintuckee?" he said.

"Yes."

"One of the best of the countries belonging to the Indians?"

"It is a good country, but I do not know that it ever belonged to the Indians. No doubt they have hunted there and fought there for hundreds of years, but so far as I know, they've never lived there."

"Then it belongs to the King," said Holderness.

Henry smiled. He rather liked this ingenuous young man who was not much older than himself.

"A country like Kentucky," he replied, "belongs to those who can hold it. Once the French King claimed it, but how could he enforce a claim to a country separated from him by thousands of miles of sea and wilderness? Now the English King makes the same claim, and perhaps he has a better chance, but still that chance is not good enough."

The young officer sighed a little.

"I'm sorry we have to fight you," he said. "I've heard ugly tales since I came about the savages and the white men, too."

"You're likely to hear more," said Henry. "But this I take it is our jail."

"It is. I'll go in and see that you're as comfortable as possible."



CHAPTER X

THE LETTER OF THE FOUR

The building into which Henry was taken was built of brick and rough stone, two stories in height, massive and very strong. The door which closed the entrance was of thick oak, with heavy crosspieces, and the two rows of small windows, one above the other, were fortified with iron bars, so close together that a man could not pass between. Henry's quick eye noticed it all, as they entered between the British guards at the door. The house inside was divided into several rooms, none containing more than a rude pallet bed, a small pine table, a tin pitcher, a cup of water, and a pine stool.

Henry followed Holderness into one of these rooms, and promptly sat on the pine stool by the window. Holderness looked at him with a mixture of admiration and pity.

"I'm sorry, old chap," he said, "that I have to lock you up here. Come now, do be reasonable. These rebels are bound to lose, and, if you can't join us, take a parole and go somewhere into Canada until all the trouble is over."

Henry laughed lightly, but his heart warmed again toward young Holderness who had come from some easy and sheltered spot in England, and who knew nothing of the wilderness and its hardships and terrors.

"Don't you be sorry for me," he said. "As for this room, it's better than anything that I've been used to for years. And so far as giving a parole and going into Canada, I wouldn't dream of such a thing. It would interfere with my plans. I'm going back into the South to fight against your people and the Indians."

"But you're a prisoner!"

"For the present, yes, but I shall not remain so."

"You can't escape."

"I always escape. It's true I was never before in so strong a prison, but I shall go. I am willing to tell you, Lieutenant Holderness, because others will tell you anyhow, that I have outside four very faithful and skillful friends. Nothing would

induce them to desert me, and among us we will secure my escape."

Into the look of mingled admiration and pity with which Holderness had regarded Henry crept a touch of defiance.

"You're deucedly confident, old chap," he said. "You don't seem to think that we amount to much here, and yet Colonel de Peyster has undoubtedly saved you from the Indians. You should be grateful to him for that much."

Henry laughed. This ingenuous youth now amused him.

"What makes you think it was Colonel de Peyster or any other English or Tory officer who saved me from the Indians? Well, it wasn't. If Colonel Bird and your other white friends had had their way when I was taken I should have been burned at the stake long before this. It was the Wyandot chief, Timmendiwas, known in our language as White Lightning, who saved me."

The young officer's red face flushed deeper red.

"I knew that we had been charged with such cruelties," he said, "but I had hoped that they were not true. Now, I must leave you here, and, upon my soul, I do not wish you any harm."

He went out and Henry felt a heavy key turn in the lock. A minute or two after he had gone the prisoner tried the door, and found that it was made of heavy oak, with strong crosspieces of the same material. He exerted all his great strength, and, as he expected, he could not shake it. Then he went back to the pine stool, which he drew up near a barred window, and sitting there watched as well as he could what was passing in the great court.

Henry had too much natural wisdom and experience to beat his head uselessly against bars. He would remain quiet, preserving the strength of both body and mind, until the time for action came. Meanwhile he was using his eyes. He saw some of the chiefs pass, always accompanied by white officers. But he saw officers alone, and now and then women, both red and white. He also saw the swarthy faces of woods runners, and among them, one whose face and figure were familiar, that same Pierre Louis Lajeunais, whom he had met outside the fort.

Lajeunais carried his rifle on one shoulder and a pack of furs on the other. It was a heavy pack, probably beaver skins, but he moved easily, and Henry saw that he was very strong. Henry regarded him thoughtfully. This man had been friendly,

he had access to the fort, and he might be induced to give him aid. He did not see just then how Lajeunais could be of help to him, but he stored the idea in the back of his head, ready for use if there should be occasion.

He presently saw Timmendiquas go by with Colonel de Peyster on one side of him and Colonel Caldwell on the other. Henry smiled. Evidently they were paying assiduous court to the Wyandot, and well they might. Without the aid of the powerful Indian tribes the British at Detroit could do nothing. In a few moments they were gone and then the twilight began to come over the great western post. From his window Henry caught a view of a distant reach of the broad river, glittering gold in the western sun. It came ultimately from one great lake and would empty into another. Paul's words returned to him. Those mysterious and mighty great lakes! would he live to see them with his comrades? Once in his early captivity with the Indians he had wandered to the shores of the farthest and greatest of them all, and he remembered the awe with which he had looked upon the vast expanse of waters like the sea itself. He wished to go there again. Hundreds of stories and legends about the mighty chain had come from the Indians and this view of the river that flowed from the upper group stirred again all his old curiosity. Then he remembered his position and with a low laugh resumed his seat on the pine stool.

Yet he watched the advance of the night. It seemed that the vast wilderness was coming down on Detroit and would blot it out completely, fortress, soldiers, village and all. In a little while the darkness covered everything save a few flickering lights here and there. Henry sat at the window a while, gazing absently at the lights. But his mind was away with his comrades, Paul, Shifless Sol, Long Jim and Silent Tom, the faithful four with whom he had passed through a world of dangers. Where were they now? He had no doubt that they were near Detroit. It was no idle boast that he made to Colonel de Peyster when he said they would help rescue him. He awaited the result with absolute confidence. He was in truth so lacking in nervous apprehension that when he lay down on the rude pallet he was asleep in two minutes.

He was awakened the next morning by Lieutenant Holderness who informed him that in the daytime, for the present at least, he would be allowed the liberty of the court. He could also eat outside.

"I'm grateful," said Henry. "I wish to thank Colonel de Peyster, or whoever the man may be who has given me this much liberty."

"It is Colonel de Peyster, of course," said the ruddy one.

But Henry shrewdly suspected that his modicum of liberty was due to Timmendiquas, or rather the fear of de Peyster that he would offend Timmendiquas, and weaken the league, if he ill treated the prisoner.

Henry went outside and bathed his face at a water barrel. Then at the invitation of Holderness he joined some soldiers and Canadian Frenchmen who were cooking breakfast together beside a great fire. They made room readily at the lieutenant's request and Henry began to eat. He noticed across the fire the brown face of Lajeunais, and he nodded in a friendly manner. Lajeunais nodded in return and his black eyes twinkled. Henry thought that he saw some significance in the twinkle, but when he looked again Lajeunais was busy with his own breakfast. Then the incident passed out of his mind and he quickly found himself on good terms with both soldiers and woods runners.

"You give your parole," said Lajeunais, "an' go North wiz me on the great huntin' an' trappin'. We will go North, North, North, beyon' the Great Lakes, an' to other lakes almost as great, a thousan', two thousan' miles beyon' the home of white men to trap the silver fox, the pine marten an' the other furs which bring much gold. Ah, le bon Dieu, but it is gran'! an' you have ze great figure an' ze great strength to stan' ze great cold. Then come wiz me. Ze great lakes an' woods of ze far North is better zan to fret your life out here in ze prison. You come?"

He spoke entreatingly, but Henry smiled and replied in a tone full of good humor:

"It's a tempting offer, and it's very kind of you, Monsieur Lajeunais, but I cannot accept it. Neither am I going to fret my life out within these walls. I'm going to escape."

All the soldiers and woods runners laughed together except Lajeunais. Henry's calm assurance seemed a great joke to them, but the Frenchman watched him shrewdly. He was familiar with men of the woods, and it seemed to him that the great youth was not boasting, merely stating a fact.

"Confidence is ze gran' thing," he said, "but these walls are high an' the ears are many."

While Henry sat there with the men, Colonel de Peyster passed. The commander was in an especially good humor that morning. He was convinced that his

negotiations with the Indian were going well. He had sworn to Timmendiquas again that if the Western tribes would fight for the King, the King would help them in return should their villages be attacked. More presents had been distributed judiciously among the chiefs. The renegades also were at work. All of Girty's influence, and it was large, had been brought to bear in favor of the invasion, and it seemed to de Peyster that everything was now settled. He saw Henry sitting by the fire, gave him an ironical look, and, as he passed, sang clearly enough for the captive to hear a song of his own composition. He called it "The Drill Sergeant," written to the tune of "The Happy Beggars," and the first verse ran:

Come, stand well to your order,
Make not the least false motion;
 Eyes to the right,
 Thumb, muzzle height;
Lads, you have the true notion.
 Here and there,
 Everywhere
That the King's boys may be found,
 Fight and die,
 Be the cry,
'Ere in battle to give ground.

De Peyster was not only a soldier, but being born in New York and having grown up there he prided himself upon being a man of the world with accomplishments literary and otherwise. The privilege of humming one's own poetry is great and exalting, and the commander's spirits, already high, rose yet higher. The destruction of Kentucky was not only going to be accomplished, it was in fact accomplished already. He would extirpate the impudent settlers west of the mountains, and, when the King's authority was reestablished everywhere and the time came for rewards, he would ask and receive a great one.

As Colonel de Peyster walked toward the western gate a Tory soldier, with bruises and excitement upon his face, and a torn uniform upon his body, hurried toward him, accompanied by Lieutenant Holderness.

"This is Private Doran, sir," said Holderness, "and he has an important letter for you."

Colonel de Peyster looked critically at Private Doran.

"You seem to have been manhandled," he said.

"I was set upon by a band of cutthroats," said Private Doran, the memory of his wrongs becoming very bitter, "and they commanded me upon pain of death to deliver this letter to you."

He held out a dirty sheet of folded paper.

Colonel de Peyster felt instinctively that it was something that was going to be of great interest, and, before he opened it, he tapped it with a thoughtful forefinger.

"Where did you get this?"

"About five o'clock this morning," replied Private Doran with hesitation and in an apologetic tone, "I was on guard on the western side of the village, near the woods. I was watching as well as I could with my eyes open, and listening too, but I neither heard nor saw anything when four men suddenly threw themselves upon me. I fought, but how could I overcome four? I suffered many bruises, as you can see. I thought they were going to kill me, but they bound me, and then the youngest of 'em wrote this note which they told me to give to you, saying that they would send a rifle bullet through my head some dark night, if I disobeyed 'em, and I believe, sir, they would do it."

"Report to your sergeant," said de Peyster, and Private Doran gladly went away. Then the commander opened the letter and as he read it his face turned a deep red with anger. He read it over again to see that he made no mistake, but the deep red of anger remained.

"What do you think of such impertinence as this, Holderness?" he exclaimed, and then he read:

"To Colonel Arent Schuyler de Peyster, Commander of the King's forces at Detroit:

"Sir:

"You have a prisoner in your fort, one Henry Ware, our comrade. We warn you that if he is subjected to any ill-treatment whatever, you and your men shall suffer punishment. This is not an idle threat. We are able to make good our promises.

"SOLOMON HYDE.

"PAUL COTTER.

"THOMAS ROSS.

"JAMES HART."

"It's impertinence and mummery," repeated de Peyster, "I'll have that man Doran tied to a cannon and lashed on his bare back!"

But Lieutenant Holderness was young and impressionable.

"It's impertinent, of course, Colonel," he said, "and it sounds wild, too, but I believe the signers of this paper mean what they say. Wouldn't it be a good idea to treat this prisoner well, and set such a good watch that we can capture his friends, too? They'll be hanging about."

"I don't know," said de Peyster. "No, I think I have a better plan. Suppose we answer the letter of these fellows. I have had no intention of treating Ware badly. I expected to exchange him or use him profitably as a hostage, but I'll tell his friends that we are going to subject him to severe punishment, and then we'll draw them into our net, too."

"I've heard from Girty and Wyatt that they do wonderful things," said Holderness. "Suppose they should rescue Ware after all?"

De Peyster laughed incredulously.

"Take him away from us!" he said. "Why, he's as safely caged here as if he were in a stone prison in England. Just to show him what I think of their threat I'll let him read this letter."

He approached Henry, who was still sitting by the fire and handed him the sheet of paper.

"A letter from some friends of yours; the four most delightful humorists that

these woods can furnish, I take it."

Henry thrilled with delight when he read the paper, but he did not permit his face to show his joy. Like de Peyster he read it over twice, and then he handed it back to the Colonel.

"Well," said de Peyster, "what do you think of it?"

"It speaks for itself," replied Henry. "They mean exactly what they say."

De Peyster chose to adopt a light, ironical tone.

"Do you mean to tell me, my good fellow," he asked, "that four beggarly rebels, hiding for their lives in the wilderness, can punish me for anything that I may do to you?"

"I do not merely tell you so, I know it."

"Very well; it is a game, a play and we shall see what comes of it. I am going to send an answer to their letter, but I shall not tell you the nature of that answer, or what comes of it."

"I've no doubt that I'll learn in time," said Henry quietly.

The boy's calmness annoyed de Peyster, and he left him abruptly, followed by Holderness. While his temper was still warm, he wrote a letter to the four stating that Henry Ware would be delivered to the savages for them to do with as they chose,—the implication being torture and death—and that unless the four gave Detroit a very wide berth they would soon be treated in the same way. Then he called the miserable Doran before him, and told him, when he took the late watch again the next night, to hook the letter on the twig of a tree near where he had been attacked before, and then watch and see what would occur. Doran promised strictly to obey, and, since he was not called upon to fight the terrific four, some of his apprehension disappeared.

Henry meanwhile had left the fire beside which he had eaten breakfast, and—though closely guarded—strolled about the great enclosure. He felt an uncommon lightness of heart. It was almost as if he were the jailer and not the jailed. That letter from his four comrades was a message to him as well as to de Peyster. He knew that the soldiers of de Peyster and the Indians would make every effort to take them, but the woods about Detroit were dense and they would be on guard every second. There was no certainty, either, that all the

French-Canadians were warmly attached to the King's cause. Why should they be? Why should they fight so zealously for the country that had conquered them not many years before? He saw once more in the afternoon the square, strong figure of Lajeunais, crossing the court. When the Frenchman noticed him he stopped and came back, smiling and showing his great white teeth.

"Ah, mon brav," he said, "doesn't the great North yet call to you?"

"No," replied Henry, with an answering smile. "As I told you, I am going to escape."

"You may," said Lajeunais, suddenly lowering his voice. "I met one of your friends in the forest. I cannot help, but I will not hinder. C'est une pitie that a garcon so gran' an' magnificent as you should pine an' die within prison walls."

Then he was gone before Henry could thank him. Toward nightfall he was notified that he must return to his prison and now he felt the full weight of confinement when the heavy walls closed about him. But Holderness came with the soldier who brought his supper and remained to talk. Henry saw that Holderness, not long from England, was lonesome and did not like his work. It was true also that the young Englishman was appalled by the wilderness, not in the sense of physical fear, but the endless dark forest filled him with the feeling of desolation as it has many another man. He had found in Henry, prisoner though he was, the most congenial soul, that he had yet met in the woods. As he lingered while Henry ate the hard-tack and coffee, it was evident that he wanted to talk.

"These friends of yours," he said. "They promise wonderful things. Do you really think they will rescue you, or did you merely say so to impress Colonel de Peyster? I ask, as man to man, and forgetting for the time that we are on opposing sides."

Henry liked him. Here, undoubtedly, was an honest and truthful heart. He was sorry that they were official enemies, but he was glad that it did not keep them from being real friends.

"I meant it just as I said it," he replied. "My friends will keep their words. If I am harmed some of your people here at Detroit will suffer. This no doubt sounds amazing to you, but strange things occur out here in the woods."

"I'm very curious to see," said Holderness. "Colonel de Peyster has sent them a

message, telling them in effect that no attention will be paid to their warning, and that he will do with you as he chooses."

"I am curious about it too," said Henry, "and if there is nothing in your duty forbidding it, I ask you to let me know the result."

"I think it's likely that I can tell if there is anything to be told. Well, good night to you, Mr. Ware. I wish you a pleasant sleep."

"Thank you. I always sleep well."

The night was no exception to Henry's statement, but he was awake early the next morning. Colonel de Peyster also rose early, because he wished to hear quickly from Private Doran. But Private Doran did not come at the usual hour of reporting from duty, nor did he return the next hour, nor at any hour. De Peyster, furious with anger, sent a detachment which found his letter gone and another there. It said that as proof of their power they had taken his sentinel and they warned him again not to harm the prisoner.

De Peyster raged for several reasons. It hurt his personal pride, and it injured his prestige with the Indians. Timmendiquas was still troublesome. He was demanding further guarantees that the King's officers help the Indians with many men and with cannon, in case a return attack should be delivered against their villages, and the White Lightning of the Wyandots was not a chief with whom one could trifle.

Timmendiquas had returned to the camp of his warriors outside the walls and de Peyster at once visited him there. He found the chief in a fine lodge of buffalo skin that the Wyandots had erected for him, polishing the beautiful new rifle that had been presented to him as coming from the King. He looked up when he saw de Peyster enter, and his smile showed the faintest trace of irony. But he laid aside the rifle and arose with the courtesy befitting a red chief who was about to receive a white one.

"Be seated, Timmendiquas," said de Peyster with as gracious a manner as he could summon. "I have come to consult with you about a matter of importance. It seems to me that you alone are of sufficient judgment and experience to give me advice in this case."

Timmendiquas bowed gravely.

De Peyster then told him of the threatening letter from the four, and of the

disappearance of Private Doran. The nostrils of Timmendiquas dilated.

"They are great warriors," he said, "but the white youth, Ware, whom you hold, is the greatest of them all. It was well done."

De Peyster frowned. In his praise of the woodsmen Timmendiquas seemed to reflect upon the skill of his own troops. But he persisted in his plan to flatter and to appeal to the pride of Timmendiquas.

"White Lightning," he said, "you know the forest as the bird knows its nest. What would you advise me to do?"

The soothing words appealed to Timmendiquas and he replied:

"I will send some of my warriors to trail them from the spot where your man was taken, and do you send soldiers also to take them when they are found. It is my business to make war upon these rangers from Kentucky, and I will help you all I can."

De Peyster, who felt that his honor was involved, left the lodge much more hopeful. It was intolerable that he, a soldier and a poet, should be insulted in such a manner by four wild woodsmen, and he selected ten good men who, following two Wyandot trailers, would certainly avenge him.

Henry heard the details of Private Doran's misadventure from Lieutenant Holderness, who did not fail to do it full justice.

"I should not have believed it," said the young Englishman, "if the facts were not so clear. Private Doran is not a small man. He must weigh at least one hundred and eighty, but he is gone as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up."

Henry smiled and pretended to take it lightly. At heart he was hugely delighted at this new proof of the prowess of his friends.

"I told you what they were," he said. "They are keeping their promises, are they not?"

"So far they have, but they will reach the end very soon. The Chief Timmendiquas, the tall one, who thinks he is as good as the King of England, has furnished two Wyandot trailers—they say the beggars can come pretty near following the trail left by the flight of a bird through the air—and they will take

a detachment of ten good men against these four friends of yours."

The prisoner's eyes sparkled. It did not seem to Holderness that he was at all cast down as he should be.

"Shif'less Sol will lead them a glorious chase," said Henry. "The Wyandots are fine trailers, but they are no better than he, maybe not as good, and no detachment of heavy-footed soldiers can surprise him in the woods."

"But if overtaken they will certainly be defeated. All of them will be slain or captured," said Holderness. "There can be no doubt of it."

"It is to be seen," said Henry, "and we must wait patiently for the result."

Henry was allowed to go in the court again that day. He knew that strong influences were working for his good treatment, and with the impossibility of escape in broad daylight under scores of watchful eyes there was no reason why he should be confined in the big jail. He hoped to see Timmendiquas there, but the chief still stayed outside with his Wyandot warriors. Instead he met another who was not so welcome. As he turned a corner of a large log building he came face to face with Braxton Wyatt. Henry turned abruptly away, indicating that he would avoid the young renegade as he would a snake. But Wyatt called to him:

"Henry, I've got a few words to say to you. You know that you and I were boys together down there in Wareville, and if I've done you any harm it seems that the score is about even between us. I've helped to make war on the rebels in the East. I had gathered together a fine band there. I was leader of it and a man of importance, but that band was destroyed and you were the chief instrument of its destruction."

"Why do you say all this?" asked Henry shortly.

"To show you that I am in the right, and that I am now a Loyalist not for profit, but in face of the fact that I suffer for it."

Henry looked at him in amazement. Why should Braxton Wyatt say these things to him whom he hated most? Then he suddenly knew the reason. Deep down in the heart of everyone, no matter how perverted he may become, is some desire for the good opinion of others. The renegade was seeking to justify himself in the eyes of the youth who had been for a while a childhood comrade. He felt a sort of pity, but he knew that nothing good could come of any further talk between Braxton Wyatt and himself.

"Of course you are entitled to your opinion, Braxton," he said, "but it can never be mine. Your hands are red with the blood of your people, our people, and there can never be any friendship between us."

He saw the angry light coming into Wyatt's eyes, and he turned away. He felt that under the circumstances he could not quarrel with him, and he knew that if they were in the forest again they would be as bitter enemies as ever. It was a relief to him to meet Holderness and another young officer, Desmond, also a recent arrival from England, and quite as ignorant as Holderness of wilderness ways and warfare. He found them fair and generous opponents and, in his heart, he absolved them from blame for the terrible consequences following upon the British alliance with the Indians.

They took Henry on the entire inside circuit of the walls, and he, as well as they, was specially interested in the outlook over the river. A platform four feet wide was built against the palisade the same distance from the top. It was reached at intervals by flights of narrow steps, and here in case of attack the riflemen would crouch and fire from their hidden breastwork. Close by and under the high bank flowed the river, a broad, deep stream, bearing the discharge from those mighty inland seas, the upper chain of the Great Lakes. The current of the river, deep, blue and placid and the forests beyond, massive, dark, and green, made Henry realize how bitter it was to be a prisoner. Here separated from him by only a few feet was freedom, the great forest with its sparkling waters that he loved. In spite of himself, he sighed, and both Holderness and Desmond, understanding, were silent.

Near them was a sort of trestle work that ran out toward the river, although it did not reach it by many feet.

"What is that?" asked Henry, as he looked at it curiously.

"It was intended to be a pier or wharf for loading or unloading boats," replied Holderness. "They tell me that Colonel Hamilton started it, in the belief that it would be useful in an emergency, but when Colonel de Peyster succeeded to the command he stopped the work there, thinking that it might be of as much service to an enemy as to a friend."

Henry took little more notice of the unfinished pier, and they descended from the platform to the ground, their attention being attracted by a noise at the most distant gate. When they took a second look at the cause of the tumult, they hurried forward.



CHAPTER XI

THE CRY FROM THE FOREST

The spectacle that met the eyes of Henry and his English friends was one likely to excite curiosity and interest. The party of ten soldiers and two Wyandots that had gone forth to take the youth's four comrades was returning, but they brought with them no prisoners, nor any trophies from the slain. Instead, one of the Wyandots carried an arm in a rude sling, one soldier was missing, and four others bore wounds.

Henry laughed inwardly, and it was a laugh full of satisfaction and triumph. The party had found the four, but his prevision had not failed him. Shiftless Sol and the others were on watch. They had been found, because they permitted themselves to be found, and evidently they had fought with all the advantage of ambush and skill. He felt instinctively that they had not suffered any serious harm.

"They do not bring your friends," said Holderness.

"No," said Henry, "nor do they bring back all of themselves. I do not wish to boast, gentlemen, but I warned you that my comrades would be hard to take."

Henry saw Colonel de Peyster join the group and he saw, too, that his face expressed much chagrin. So, not wishing to exult openly, he deemed it wise to turn aside.

"If you don't mind," he said to the young officers, "I'm willing to go into my cell, and, if you care to tell me later about what has happened, you know I shall be glad to hear it."

"It might be advisable," said Holderness, and accordingly they locked him in, where he waited patiently. He heard the noise of many voices outside, but those to whom the voices belonged did not come within the range of his window, and he waited, alive with curiosity. He did not hear until nearly night, when Holderness came in with the soldier who brought him his supper. Holderness seemed somewhat chagrined at the discomfiture of de Peyster's party, and he sat a little while in silence. Henry, knowing that the young Englishman must have a

certain feeling for his own, waited until he should choose to speak.

"I'm bound to confess, old chap," said Holderness at last, "that you were right all the way through. I didn't believe you, but you knew your own friends. It was a facer for us and, 'pon my word, I don't see how they did it. The Wyandots, it seems, found the trail very soon, and it led a long distance through the woods until they came to a deep creek. Our men could wade the creek by holding their rifles and muskets above their heads, which they undertook to do, but a man standing in water up to his neck is not ready for a fight. At that point fire was opened upon them, and they were compelled to beat as hasty a retreat as they could. You must admit, Mr. Ware, that they were taken at a disadvantage."

"I admit it freely enough," said Henry. "It's a dangerous thing to try to cross a deep stream in the face of a bold enemy who knows how to shoot. And of course it was an ambush, too. That is what one has to beware of in these woods."

"It's a truth that I'm learning every day," said Holderness, who left, wishing the prisoner, since he would not give a parole and go into Canada, a speedy exchange with the Americans for some British captive of importance. Henry was not sorry to be left alone as he was trying to fathom through their characters the plan of his comrades. Paul would seek speedy action, Jim Hart would agree with him, but the crafty Shif'less Sol, with a patience equaling that of any Indian, would risk nothing, until the time was ripe, and he would be seconded by the cautious temperament of Silent Tom. Undoubtedly Shif'less Sol would have his way. It behooved him also to show extreme patience; a quality that he had learned long since, and he disposed himself comfortably on his pallet for his night's rest.

The second exploit of his comrades had encouraged him wonderfully. He was not talking folly, when he had said to more than one that he would escape. The five had become long since a beautiful machine that worked with great precision and power, and it was their first principles that, when one was in trouble, all the rest should risk everything for him.

He fell asleep, but awoke some time before midnight. A bright moon was shining in at his window and the little village within the walls was very quiet and peaceful. He turned over and closed his eyes in order that he might go to sleep again, but he was restless and sleep would not come. Then he got up and stood by the window, looking at the part of the court that lay within range. Nothing stirred. There were sentinels, of course, but they did not pass over the area

commanded by his window. The silence was very deep, but presently he heard a sound very faint and very distant. It was the weird cry of the owl that goes so far on a still night. No wilderness note could have been more characteristic, but it was repeated a certain number of times and with certain intonations, and a little shiver ran down Henry's back. He knew that cry. It was the signal. His friends were speaking to him, while others slept, sending a voice across the woods and waters, telling him that they were there to help.

Then, a strange, capricious idea occurred to him. He would reply. The second window on the side of the river, too narrow for a man to pass through, was open, and putting his face to it, he sent back the answering cry, the long, weird, wailing note. He waited a little and again he heard a voice from the far shore of the river, the exact rejoinder to his own, and he knew that the four out there understood. The chain of communication had been established. Now he went back to his pallet, fell asleep with ease, and slept peacefully until morning.

The next day, superstition assailed the French-Canadians in the village, and many of the Indians. A second private who had a late beat near the forest had been carried off. There were signs of a struggle. No blood had been shed, but Private Myers had vanished as completely as his predecessor. To many of the people who sat about the lodges or cabins it seemed uncanny, but it filled the heart of de Peyster with rage. He visited Timmendiwas a second time in his lodge of skins and spoke with some heat.

"You have great warriors," he said, "men who can trail anything through the forest. Why is it that they cannot find this petty little band of marauders, only four?"

"They did find them," returned Timmendiwas gravely; "they took your soldiers, but your soldiers returned without them. Now they hold two of your men captive, but it is no fault of the Wyandots or their brethren of the allied tribes. We wait here in peace, while the other presents that you have promised us come from Niagara."

De Peyster bit his lip. He had rashly promised more and greater gifts for which he would have to send to Niagara, and Timmendiwas had announced calmly that the warriors would remain at Detroit until they came. This had made another long delay and de Peyster raged internally, although he strove to hide it. Now he made the same effort at self-command, and replied pacifically:

"I keep all my promises, Timmendiwas, and yet I confess to you that this affair

annoys me greatly. As a malignant rebel and one of the most troublesome of our enemies, I would subject Ware to close confinement, but two of my men are in the power of his friends, and they can take revenge."

"De Peyster speaks wisely," said Timmendiquas. "It is well to choose one's time when to strike."

Getting no satisfaction there, de Peyster returned to the court, where he saw Henry walking back and forth very placidly. The sight filled him with rage. This prisoner had caused him too much annoyance, and he had no business to look so contented. He began to attribute the delay in the negotiations to Henry. He, or at least his comrades, were making him appear ignorant and foolish before the chiefs. He could not refrain from a burst of anger. Striding up to Henry he put his hand violently upon his shoulder. The great youth was surprised but he calmly lifted the hand away and said:

"What do you wish, Colonel de Peyster?"

"I wish many things, but what I especially don't wish just now is to see you walking about here, apparently as free as ourselves!"

"I am in your hands," said Henry.

"You can stay in the prison," said de Peyster. "You'll be out of the way and you'll be much safer there."

"You're in command here."

"I know it," said de Peyster grimly, "and into the prison you go."

Henry accordingly was placed in close confinement, where he remained for days without seeing anybody except the soldier who brought him his food and water, and from whom he could obtain no news at all. But he would make no complaint to this soldier, although the imprisonment was terribly irksome. He had been an entire week within walls. Such a thing had never happened before in his life, and often he felt as if he were choking. It seemed also at times that the great body which made him remarkable was shrinking. He knew that it was only the effect of imagination, but it preyed upon him, and he understood now how one could wither away from mere loneliness and inaction.

His mind traveled over the countless scenes of tense activity that had been crowded into the last three or four years of his life. He had been many times in

great and imminent danger, but it was always better than lying here between four walls that seemed to come closer every day. He recalled the deep woods, the trees that he loved, the sparkling waters, lakes, rivers and brooks; he recalled the pursuit of the big game, the deer and the buffalo; he recalled the faces of his comrades, how they jested with one another and fought side by side, and once more he understood what a terrible thing it is for a man to have his comings and goings limited to a space a few feet square. But he resolved that he would not complain, that he would ask no favor of de Peyster or Caldwell or any of them.

Once he saw Braxton Wyatt come to a window and gaze in. The look of the renegade was full of unholy triumph, and Henry knew that he was there for the special purpose of exultation. He sat calm and motionless while the renegade stared at him. Wyatt remained at the window a full half hour, seeking some sign of suffering, or at least an acknowledgment of his presence, but he obtained neither, and he went on, leaving the silent figure full of rage.

On the tenth day Holderness came in with the soldier. Henry knew by his face that he had something to say, but he waited for the lieutenant to speak first. Holderness fidgeted and did not approach the real subject for a little while. He spoke with sympathy of Henry's imprisonment and remarked on the loss of his tan.

"It's hard to be shut up like this, I know," he said, "but it is the fortune of war. Now I suppose if I were taken by the Americans they would do to me what Colonel de Peyster has done to you."

"I don't know," replied Henry, truthfully.

"Neither do I, but we'll suppose it, because I think it's likely. Now I'm willing to tell you, that we're going to let you out again. Some of us rather admire your courage and the fact that you have made no complaint. In addition there has been another letter from those impudent friends of yours."

"Ah!" said Henry, and now he showed great interest.

"Yes, another letter. It came yesterday. It seems that there must be some collusion—with the French-Canadians, I suppose. Woodsmen, I'm sure, do not usually carry around with them paper on which to write notes. Nor could they have known that you were locked up in here unless someone told them. But to come back to the point. Those impudent rascals say in their letter that they have heard of your close imprisonment and that they are retaliating on Privates Doran

and Myers."

Henry turned his face away a little to hide a smile. He knew that none of his comrades would torture anybody.

"They have drawn quite a dreadful picture, 'pon honor," continued Lieutenant Holderness, "and most of us have been moved by the sufferings of Doran and Myers. We have interceded with Colonel de Peyster, we have sought to convince him that your confinement within these four walls is useless anyhow, and he has acceded to our request. To-morrow you go outside and walk upon the grass, which I believe will feel good to your feet."

"Lieutenant Holderness, I thank you," said Henry in such a tone of emphatic gratitude that Holderness flushed with pleasure.

"I have learned," continued Henry, "what a wonderful thing it is to walk on a little grass and to breathe air that I haven't breathed before."

"I understand," said Lieutenant Holderness, looking at the narrow walls, "and by Jove, I'm hoping that your people will never capture me."

"If they do, and they lock you up and I'm there, I shall do my best to get you out into the air, even as you have done it for me."

"By Jove, I think you would," said Holderness.

The hands of the two official enemies met in a hearty clasp. They were young and generous. The delights of life even as a prisoner now came in a swelling tide upon Henry. He had not known before that air could be so pure and keen, such a delight and such a source of strength to the lungs. The figure that had seemed to shrink within the narrow walls suddenly expanded and felt capable of anything. Strength flowed back in renewed volume into every muscle. Before him beyond the walls curved the dark green world, vital, intense, full of everything that he loved. It was there that he meant to go, and his confidence that he would escape rose higher than ever.

A swart figure passed him and a low voice said in his ear: "Watch the river! Always watch the river!"

It was Lajeunais who had spoken, and already he was twenty feet away, taking no notice of either Henry or Holderness, hurrying upon some errand, connected with his business of trapping and trading. But Henry knew that his words were

full of meaning. Doubtless he had communicated in some manner with the four, and they were using him as a messenger. It looked probable. Lajeunais, like many of his race, had no love for the conquerors. He had given the word to watch the river, and Henry meant to do so as well as he could.

He waited some time in order to arouse no suspicion, and then he suggested to Holderness that they walk again upon the platform of the palisade. The lieutenant consented willingly enough, and presently they stood there, looking far up and down the river and across at the forests of Canada. There were canoes upon the stream, most of them small, containing a single occupant, but all of these occupants were Indians. Some of the savages had come from the shores of the Northern waters. Chippewas or Blackfeet, who were armed with bows and arrows and whose blankets were of skins. But they had heard of Detroit, and they brought furs. They would go back with bright blankets and rifles or muskets. Henry watched them with interest. He was trying to read some significance for him into this river and its passengers. But if the text was there it was unintelligible. He saw only the great shining current, breaking now and then into crumbling little waves under the gentle wind, and the Indian canoes, with their silent occupants reflected vividly upon its surface, like pictures in a burnished mirror. Again he strained with eye and mind. He examined every canoe. He forced his brain to construct ingenious theories that might mean something, but all came to naught.

"Strange people," said Holderness, who thought that Henry was watching the Indians with a curiosity like his own, merely that of one who sees an alien race.

"Yes, they're strange," replied Henry. "We must always consider the difference. In some things like the knowledge of nature and the wilderness, they are an old, old race far advanced. In most others they are but little children. Once I was a captive among them for a long time."

"Tell me about it," said Holderness eagerly.

Henry was willing for a double reason. He had no objection to telling about his captivity, and he wished to keep Holderness there on the palisade, where he could watch the river. While his eyes watched his tongue told a good tale. He had the power of description, because he felt intensely what he was saying. He told of the great forests and rivers of the West, of the vast plains beyond, of the huge buffalo herds that were a day in passing, and of the terrible storms that sometimes came thundering out of the endless depths of the plains. Holderness

listened without interruption, and at the end he drew a long breath.

"Ah! that was to have lived!" he said. "One could never forget such a life, such adventures, but it would take a frame of steel to stand it!"

"I suppose one must be born to it," said Henry. "I've known no life but that of the wilderness, but my friend Paul, who has read books, often tells me of the world of cities beyond."

"Wouldn't you like to go there?" asked Holderness.

"To see it, yes, perhaps," replied Henry thoughtfully, "but not to stay long. I've nothing against people. I've some of the best friends that a man ever had, and we have great men in Kentucky, too, Boone, Kenton, Harrod, Logan, and the others, but think what a glorious thing it is to roam hundreds of miles just as you please, to enter regions that you've never seen before, to find new rivers, and new lakes, and to feel that with your rifle you can always defend yourself—that suits me. I suppose the time will come when such a life can't be lived, but it can be lived now and I'm happy that this is my time."

Holderness was quiet. He still felt the spell of the wilderness that Henry had cast over him, but, after a moment or two, it began to pass. His nature was wholly different. In his veins flowed the blood of generations that had lived in the soft and protected English lands, and the vast forests and the silence, brave man though he was, inspired him with awe.

Henry, meanwhile, still watched the passing canoes. The last of them was now far down the river, and he and Holderness looked at it, while it became a dot on the water, and then, like the others, sank from sight. Then he and his English friend walked out from the palisade upon the unfinished pier, and watched the twilight come over the great forest. This setting of the sun and the slow red light falling over the branches of the trees always appealed to Henry, but it impressed Holderness, not yet used to it, with the sense of mystery and awe.

"I think," said he, "that it is the silence which affects me most. When I stand here and look upon that unbroken forest I seem face to face with a primeval world into which man has not yet come. One in fancy almost could see the mammoth or great sabre tooth tiger drinking at the far edge of the river."

"You can see a deer drinking," said Henry, pointing with a long forefinger. Holderness was less keen-eyed, but he was able at length to make out the figure

of the animal. The two watched, but soon the deepening twilight hid the graceful form, and then darkness fell over the stream which now flowed in a slow gray current. Behind them they heard the usual noises in the fort, but nothing came from the great forest in front of them.

"Still the same silence," said Holderness. "It grows more uncanny."

The last words had scarcely left his lips when out of that forest came a low and long wailing cry, inexpressibly sad, and yet with a decisive touch of ferocity. It sounded as if the first life, lonely and fierce, had just entered this primitive world. Holderness shivered, without knowing just why.

"It is the cry of a wolf," said Henry, "perhaps that of some outcast from the pack. He is probably both hungry and lonesome, and he is telling the world about it. Hark to him again!"

Henry was leaning forward, listening, and young Holderness did not notice his intense eagerness. The cry was repeated, and the wolf gave it inflections like a scale in music.

"It is almost musical," said Holderness. "That wolf must be singing a kind of song."

"He is," said Henry, "and, as you notice, it is almost a human sound. It is one of the easiest of the animal cries to imitate. It did not take me long to learn to do it."

"Can you really repeat that cry?" asked Holderness with incredulity.

Henry laughed lightly.

"I can repeat it so clearly that you cannot tell the difference," he said. "All the money I have is one silver shilling and I'll wager it with you that I succeed, you yourself to be the judge."

"Done," said Holderness, "and I must say that you show a spirit of confidence when you let me, one of the wagerers, decide."

Henry crouched a little on the timbers, almost in the manner of a wolf, and then there came forth not three feet from Holderness a long whining cry so fierce and sibilant that, despite his natural bravery, a convulsive shudder swept over the young lieutenant. The cry, although the whining note was never lost, rose and swelled until it swept over the river and penetrated into the great Canadian

forest. Then it died slowly, but that ferocious under note remained in it to the last.

"By Jove!" was all that Holderness could say, but, in an instant, the cry rose again beside him, and now it had many modulations and inflections. It expressed hunger, anger and loneliness. It was an almost human cry, and, for a moment, Holderness felt an awe of the strange youth beside him. When the last variation of the cry was gone and the echo had died away, the lieutenant gravely took a shining shilling from his pocket and handed it to Henry.

"You win with ease," he said. "Listen, you do it so well that the real wolf himself is fooled."

An answering cry came from the wolf in the Canadian woods, and then the deep silence fell again over forest and river.

"Yes, I fooled him," said Henry carelessly, as he put the shilling in his pocket. "I told you it was one of the easiest of the animal cries to imitate."

But he was compelled to turn his face away again in order that Holderness might not see his shining eyes. They were there, the faithful four. Doubtless they had signaled many times before, but they had never given up hope, they had persisted until the answering cry came.

"Shall we go in?" he said to Holderness.

"I'm willing," replied the lieutenant. "You mustn't think any the less of me, will you, if I confess that I am still a little bit afraid of the wilderness at night? I've never been used to it, and to-night in particular that wolf's howl makes it all the more uncanny to me."

The night had come on, uncommonly chill for the period of the year, and Henry also was willing to go. But when he returned to his little room it seemed littler than ever. This was not a fit place to be a home for a human being. The air lay heavy on his lungs, and he felt that he no longer had the patience to wait. The signal of his comrades had set every pulse in his veins to leaping.

But he forced himself to sit down calmly and think it over. Lajeunais had told him to watch the river; he had watched and from that point the first sign had come. Then Lajeunais beyond a doubt meant him well, and he must watch there whenever he could, because, at any time, a second sign might come.

The next day and several days thereafter he was held in prison by order of Colonel de Peyster. The commander seemed to be in a vacillating mood. Now he was despondent, and then he had spells of courage and energy. Henry heard through Holderness that the negotiations with Timmendiquas were not yet concluded, but that they were growing more favorable. A fresh supply of presents, numerous and costly, had arrived from Niagara. The Shawnees and Miamis were eager to go at once against Kentucky. Only the Wyandots still demurred, demanding oaths from the King's commanders at Montreal and Quebec that all the tribes should be aided in case of a return attack by the Kentuckians.

"But I think that in a week or so—two weeks at the furthest—Timmendiquas will be on the march," said Holderness. "A few of our soldiers will go with them and the whole party will be nominally under the command of Colonel William Caldwell, but Timmendiquas, of course, will be the real leader."

"Are you going with them?" asked Henry.

"No, I remain here."

"I am very glad of that."

"Why?"

"Because you do not really know what an Indian raid is."

Henry's tone was so significant that Holderness flushed deeply, but he remained silent. In a little while he left, and Henry was again a prey to most dismal thoughts. Bird, with his army and his cannon, doubtless had reached Kentucky by this time and was doing destruction. Timmendiquas would surely start very soon—he believed the words of Holderness—and perhaps not a single settlement would escape him. It was a most terrible fate to be laid by the heels at such a time. Before, he had always had the power to struggle.



CHAPTER XII

THE CANOE ON THE RIVER

Two more weeks passed and de Peyster's conduct in regard to Henry was regulated again by fits and starts. Sometimes he was allowed to walk in the great court within the palisade. On the fourth night he heard the signal cry once more from the Canadian woods. Now, as on the first night, it was the voice of the owl, and he answered it from the window.

On the sixth day he was allowed to go outside, and, as before, Holderness was his escort. He noticed at once an unusual bustle and all the signs of extensive preparations. Many Indians of the various tribes were passing, and from the large brick building, used as a storehouse of arms and ammunition, they were receiving supplies. Despite their usual reserve all of them showed expectancy and delight and Henry knew at once that the great expedition under Timmendiquas, Caldwell and Girty was about to depart. If he had not known, there was one at hand who took a pleasure in enlightening him. Braxton Wyatt, in a royal uniform, stood at his elbow and said:

"Sorry to bid you good-by, Henry, because the stay at Detroit has been pleasant, but we go to-morrow, and I don't think much will be left of Kentucky when we get through. Pity that you should have to spend the time here while it is all going on. Timmendiquas himself leads us and you know what a man he is."

Lieutenant Holderness, who was with Henry, eyed Wyatt with strong disfavor.

"I do not think it fitting, Captain Wyatt, that you should speak in such a manner to a prisoner," he said.

But Wyatt, at home in the woods and sure of his place, had all the advantage. He rejoined insolently:

"You must realize, Lieutenant Holderness, that war in the American woods is somewhat different from war in the open fields of Europe. Moreover, as a lieutenant it is hardly your place to rebuke a captain."

Holderness flushed deeply and was about to speak, but Henry put his hand on his

arm.

"Don't pay any attention to him, Lieutenant," he said. "He's a sort of mad dog, ready to bite anything that gets in his way. Come on, let's take another look at the river."

Holderness hesitated a moment, and then went with Henry. Wyatt's face was black with anger, but he did not dare to follow them and create a scene. While they were in the court the tumult was increased by an unexpected arrival at the western gate. Private Doran, unarmed, his hands bound behind him, his eyes bandaged, but otherwise undamaged, had suddenly appeared in the village, and was at once taken to the fort. Now, surrounded by a curious crowd, he seemed to be dazed, and to be frightened also. Henry saw at once that his fear was of his officers, and that it had not been caused by any suffering in captivity. In truth, Private Doran looked very well, having suffered no diminution of either girth or ruddiness. His fears in regard to his officers were justified, as he was taken at once before Colonel de Peyster, who examined him with the greatest severity.

But Private Doran's apprehensions gave him ready and clear answers. He had been taken, it was true, but it was by men of superhuman skill and intelligence. Then, blindfolded and arms bound, he had been driven away in the woods. How far he traveled he did not know, but when a camp was made it was in a dense forest. Nor did he have any idea in what direction it lay from Detroit. He was joined there by Private Myers who had been abducted in the same way. Their four captors had told them that they were held as hostages, and had many terrible threats, but they had not really suffered anything. One man called Shif'less Sol by the others had been menacing them with strange punishments of which they had never heard before, but with the juice of some herb he cured Private Myers of a bruise that he had received in the struggle when he was captured.

This examination was held in public in the court and Henry heard it all. He smiled at the mention of Shif'less Sol, knowing his flow of language, and his genuine aversion to all forms of cruelty. Finally, according to the continuation of Doran's tale, they had decided that the hostages were no longer necessary. Evidently they believed their friend had suffered no ill treatment, or some important movement was pending. Accordingly he was blindfolded, his arms bound, and he was led away in the night by the two men called Long Jim and Silent Tom. They left him toward morning, saying that the other captive would be delivered on the day following. When curs began to snap at his ankles he knew that he was near the village outside Detroit, and he shouted for help. The

rest told itself.

Doran, after a severe rating, was sent about his business. Henry was very thoughtful. Private Doran had not told of crossing any river and hence the camp of his comrades must be on this side of the Detroit. But all the signals had come from the far shore. Doubtless Shif'less Sol had crossed over there to utter the cries and they must possess a boat, a supposition that chimed in well with the warning to him to watch the river. Reflection only deepened his conviction, and he resolved if possible to avoid the anger of de Peyster, as to be shut up again might ruin everything. He felt that the time to act, although he did not know just how and where, was coming soon.

A strong watch was set about both fort and village in order to trap the four the following night, when they came to deliver Private Myers. Both Girty and Blackstaffe told Colonel de Peyster that the forest runners would keep their promise, and the commander was exceedingly anxious to take the impudent rovers who had annoyed him so much. Henry heard something of it from Holderness and, for a moment, he felt apprehension, but he recalled all the skill and craft of his comrades. They would never walk into a trap.

The night turned quite dark with fleeting showers of rain. There was no moon and the stars were hidden. But about two hours before daylight there was a great outcry, and the sentinels, running to the spot, found a white man blindfolded and hands bound, tied in a thicket of briars. It was Private Myers, and his tale was practically the same as that of Private Doran. He had been led in the night, he knew not whither. Then, one of his captors, which one he could not say, as he was blindfolded, gave him a little push and he neither saw nor heard them any more. He had tried to come in the direction in which he thought Detroit lay, but he had become tangled among the briars, and then he had shouted at the top of his voice.

Colonel de Peyster was deeply disgusted. He addressed stern reproofs to the wretched private, who was not to blame, and bade him join his comrade in disgrace. The best Indian trackers were sent to seek the trail of the forest runners, which they found and followed only to end against the wide and deep river. The Indian trailers concurred in Henry's belief that the four had secured a boat, and they felt that it was useless to search on the other side.

Henry heard of it all very early, and that day during his hours of liberty in the court he kept a close watch on the river, but nothing occurred. Evidently the hour

had not come for his friends to make whatever attempt they had in mind. He was convinced of it when from the palisade he saw that de Peyster had instituted a patrol on the river. Several Indian canoes, containing warriors, were constantly moving up and down. Henry's heart sank at the sight. He had felt sure all the time that his line of escape lay that way. Meanwhile Timmendiquas, the renegades and their powerful force were marching southward to destroy what Bird had left. He was seized with a terrible impatience that became a real torture. He learned that the patrol on the river had been established as a guard against the dreaded George Rogers Clark, who had made the threats against Detroit. Clark was so crafty that he might circle above the town and come down by the river, but in a week or so the alarm passed.

Henry spent the period of alarm in his prison, but when de Peyster's fears relaxed he was allowed the liberty of the court again. Neither Holderness nor Desmond was visible and he walked back and forth for a long time. He had grown thinner during his imprisonment, and much of the tan was gone from his face, but he did not feel any decrease of strength. As he walked he tested his muscles, and rejoiced that they were still flexible and powerful like woven wire. That morning he heard the call of the wolf from the Canadian shore, but he did not dare reply. A half hour later Colonel de Peyster himself accosted him.

"Well," said the commander in a tone of irony, "I see, young Mr. Ware, that you have not yet escaped."

"Not yet," replied Henry, "but I shall certainly do so."

Colonel de Peyster laughed. He was in great good humor with himself. Why should he not be? He had smoothed away the doubts of Timmendiquas and now that formidable chieftain was gone with a great force against Kentucky. The settlements would be destroyed, men, women and children, and de Peyster would have the credit of it.

"You are surely a confident youth," he said. "This boast of yours was made some time ago, and I do not see that you have made any progress. I'm afraid that you're a great talker and a small performer."

Henry was stung by his words, but he did not show any chagrin.

"I'm going to escape," he said, "and it will not be long, now, until I do so."

Colonel de Peyster laughed again and more loudly than before.

"Well, that's a proper spirit," he said, "and when you've gone you shall tell your friends that on the whole I have not treated you badly."

"I make no complaint," said Henry.

"And now, to show my generous feeling toward you," continued de Peyster, in whom the spirit of humor was growing, "you shall have luncheon with me in honor of your coming escape."

"I'm willing," said Henry, adapting himself to his mood. A life such as his and wonderful natural perception had endowed him with a sort of sixth sense. He began to have a premonition that what de Peyster intended as a joke would be the truth, and it made him all the more willing to join in what the commander intended should be a mockery.

De Peyster led the way to the room in which the first banquet with the Indian chiefs had been held, but now only Henry and he were present, except a soldier who brought food from the kitchen and who waited upon them.

"Sit down, Mr. Ware," said de Peyster with a flourish of both hand and voice. Henry quietly took the seat indicated on the opposite side of the table, and then the commander took his own also, while the attendant brought the food and drink. Henry saw that de Peyster was in an uncommon mood, and he resolved to humor it to the full.

"I regret more than ever that you're not one of us, my young friend," said the commander, surveying his prisoner's splendid proportions. "Expert as you are in the woods, you could soon rise to high command."

"Having started in on one side," said Henry lightly, "I cannot change to the other."

"Wyatt, who I understand was a youthful comrade of yours, has done it."

"Pray do not ask me to imitate any example furnished by Braxton Wyatt."

Colonel de Peyster laughed again.

"He is not an attractive youth, I confess," he said, "but you would count for much more than Braxton Wyatt with us."

"I shall never count at all," replied Henry. "I am for my own people always."

Colonel de Peyster, the Tory, flushed, but he continued:

"Think of the rewards under the King. This is a vast and fertile continent, and those who hold it for him will surely receive vast estates. Any one of us may be as great a feudal lord as Sir William Johnson has been."

"If you triumph," said Henry, although he spoke purposely in a light tone.

"There is no 'if'; we are bound to succeed, and now, sir, as we have eaten we shall drink to your escape."

The attendant poured two glasses of wine and Colonel de Peyster raised his, looking for a minute or two at the little bubbles as they broke.

"Here's to your escape," he said, casting an ironical glance over the edge.

"Here's to my escape," said Henry, meeting his gaze firmly and earnestly.

Then they drank.

"Upon my word, I believe that you mean what you say."

"Certainly."

De Peyster looked curiously at Henry.

"Come," he said, "we'll go outside. I think I'll keep my own eye on you for a little while."

When they emerged from the house a long plaintive howl came from the Canadian forest. A sort of shiver, as if he were looking into the future, ran through Henry's veins. All his premonitions were coming true.

"Did you hear that wolf?" asked de Peyster. "It is but a wilderness after all, and this is merely a point in it like a lighthouse in the sea. Come, we'll walk that way; it's about the only view we have."

Again that strange quiver ran through Henry's veins. Colonel de Peyster himself was leading exactly where the captive wished to go.

"I have often noticed you walking on the palisade with Lieutenant Holderness," said Colonel de Peyster; "now you can go there with me."

"I thank you for the invitation," said Henry, as the two climbed up one of the

little ladders and stood side by side on the palisade. "Does not this view of the great river and the limitless forest beyond appeal to you, Colonel?"

"At times," replied Colonel de Peyster in a somewhat discontented tone. "It is the edge of a magnificent empire that we see before us, and I like the active service that I have been able to do for the King, but there are times when I wish that I could be back in New York, where I was born, and which the royal troops occupy. It is a trim city, with wealth and fashion, and one can enjoy life there. Now I wonder if that is one of the Indians whom I have had on watch on the river."

A light canoe containing a single warrior put out from the farther shore, where evidently it had been lying among the dense foliage on the bank. No particular purpose seemed to animate the warrior who sat in it. Both Colonel de Peyster and Henry could see that he was a powerful fellow, evidently a Wyandot. With easy, apparently careless strokes of the paddle, he brought his canoe in a diagonal course to a point near the middle of the stream. Then he began to play with the canoe, sending it hither and thither in long, gliding reaches, or bringing it up with a sharp jerk that would have caused it to overturn in hands less skillful. But so keen was the judgment and so delicate the touch of the warrior that it never once shipped water.

"Wonderful fellows, those Indians," said Colonel de Peyster. "How they do handle a canoe! It is almost like magic! I verily believe the fellow is showing off for our benefit."

"Maybe," said Henry.

"And it is a good show, too. Ah, I thought he would go that time; but look how quickly and delicately he righted himself. Such skill is truly marvelous!"

"It is," said Henry, who was watching the canoe and its occupant with an interest even greater than that of de Peyster. Up at the far corner of the palisade a sentinel was walking back and forth, his rifle on his shoulder, and at the other end another was doing likewise. Three or four officers off duty had also mounted the palisade and were watching the Indian's exhibition of skill.

Suddenly the warrior turned the canoe in toward the palisade at the point where the unfinished pier ran out toward the river. Raising himself on the canoe he uttered the long weird cry of the wolf, the same that had come more than once from the depths of the Canadian woods.

Then an extraordinary thing occurred. De Peyster was standing on the platform nearest the unfinished pier. Henry suddenly seized him by the shoulders, thrust him down as if he were shot, ran along the platform and down the unfinished pier at his utmost speed. De Peyster was on his feet in an instant, and both sentinels on the alert, raised their rifles to take aim.

Henry did not check his speed for a second. A marvelous power, born of great strength and a great spirit, infused his whole frame. He rushed to the end of the pier, and concentrating his whole strength in one mighty effort, he leaped.

Never before had Detroit seen such a leap. The long body shot outward, the arms thrown parallel with the head, pointing toward the water. It was many feet from the head of the unfinished pier to the river, a leap that seemed superhuman, but Henry had the advantage of the run down the incline and the bracing of every nerve for the supreme effort. After he sprang, and for the few brief moments that he was cutting the air, he was scarcely conscious of what was passing, but he heard the crack of a rifle, and a bullet whizzing by him zip-zipped upon the surface of the water. One of the sentinels, exceeding alert, had fired instantly, but the other, finger on trigger, waited. Colonel de Peyster also drew a pistol and waited. Low cries, half of admiration, came from most of those on the battlements. The warrior in the canoe shot his little craft nearer in shore and then dropped gently over the far side. The canoe moved slowly down stream but its recent occupant was invisible.

Henry, flying like an arrow taking its downward slope, fell into the deep water. The tremendous leap was accomplished. He was dazed for a few moments and he was conscious of nothing except that his body was cutting through the current of the river. Then strength and memory came back, and he knew that the marksmen were watching. Turning slightly on his side he swam down stream but bearing toward the farther shore as fast as he could. The crack of that rifle shot, by some sort of mental reproduction roared in his ears, and the waters sang there also, but he was swimming for his life, and he still swam, while head and chest seemed ready to burst. Suddenly he saw a dark shape above him and at first he thought it was some huge fish. Then he saw that it was the body of a man hanging from another dark shape that seemed to rest upon the surface of the river.

Light came to him in an instant. It was the warrior in the canoe who had given him the signal. It could be none other than the incomparable Shif'less Sol. He shot upward, panting for air, and rose directly by the man and the canoe.

"Keep your head low, Henry," exclaimed the undoubted voice of the shiftless one. "So long as they can't see us behind the canoe they can't take certain aim, and we've more than a chance."

Henry held lightly to the side of the canoe and panted.

"That wuz shorely a mighty jump o' yourn," continued Shif'less Sol. "I don't think anybody else could hev done it, an' you come true ez a bullet when I give the signal. We've won, Henry! We've won ag'in' all the odds. Look out! Duck! that second fellow's goin' to shoot!"

The second sentinel had fired with good aim, so far as the canoe was concerned, as his bullet went through the upper part of it, but he could catch only glimpses of the figures behind it, and they were untouched. Colonel de Peyster also fired his pistol, but the bullet fell short. Two or three others on the battlements had rifles and they also took shots, without avail. The canoe was going very fast now, and always it bore steadily toward the further shore.

Henry felt the great tension relax. Glancing over the canoe he saw figures running up and down the palisade, but he knew that they were out of range. Blessed freedom! Once more before him lay the wilderness that he loved, and in which he was free to roam as he pleased. He had told de Peyster that he would escape and he had kept his word. He looked now at Shif'less Sol, his faithful comrade, and, despite himself, he laughed. The water had washed most of the paint off the face of the shiftless one, leaving only stripes and bars.

"Sol," he said, "you're the best and smartest friend a man ever had, but just now you don't look like either an Indian or a white man."

"O' course not," replied Shif'less Sol readily, "an' fur the minute I ain't either. I'm a water dog, trampin' 'roun' in the Detroit River, an' enjoyin' myself. Ain't you happy, too, Henry?"

"I was never more so in my life," replied Henry emphatically, "and I can say, too, that this is about the finest swim I ever took. Are the others all right, Sol?"

"They shorely are. They're settin' over thar in the bushes waitin' for our boy Henry, who hez been out late, to come back home. I reckon, too, that they've seen everything that hez happened, includin' that everlastin' mighty big jump o' yourn."

"When a fellow jumps for his life he is apt to jump well," said Henry.

"I know I would," said Shif'less Sol. "Look, Henry, we're goin' to be pursued."

Henry glanced back toward the palisade, and saw troops and Indians at the water's edge, jumping into two boats. The Indians were especially quick, and, in a few moments, a boat under the influence of many paddles, shot far out into the stream. The Detroit is a wide river, and Henry glanced anxiously at the farther shore. Shif'less Sol noticed the look and he said:

"Tom an' Jim an' Paul haven't forgot how to shoot. Besides, my rifle is lyin' in the canoe, an' ez them fellers are comin' within range I think I'll give 'em a hint."

Henry held the boat steady with one hand and maintained their diagonal course toward the farther shore. Sol lifted his rifle from the canoe, and holding it across the gunwale with a single arm took aim and fired. One of the paddlers in the pursuing boat sprang up convulsively, then fell over the side and disappeared. But the boat came steadily on, the paddlers probably knowing that it would be a matter of great difficulty for the marksman to reload while in the water. The second boat containing the soldiers was also now coming fast.

But the shiftless one made no attempt to reload. He took another look at the Canadian shore and said to Henry:

"Both o' them boats will soon be in the range o' three fellers who are settin' on somethin' that don't move, an' who won't miss when they shoot."

He put his unloaded rifle back in the canoe, and the two, still keeping the little boat between them and their pursuers, swam with all their might. But the big boats filled with rowers or paddlers were gaining fast, when a crack came from the Canadian shore, and a warrior fell in the boat. A second shot wounded another in the shoulder. The boat hesitated, and when a third bullet found a mark, it stopped. The second boat stopped also. Henry and Sol made another great spurt, and in ten seconds their feet touched the earth.

"Quick, in here among the bushes!" cried the voice of Tom Ross.

Shif'less Sol, first taking his rifle from it, gave the canoe a push that sent it floating with the current, then he and Henry ran through the shallow water and up among the bushes and trees, just as bullets fired from both boats fell in the water behind them. Strong hands grasped Henry's and again the same strong hands pounded him on the back. Paul, Long Jim and Silent Tom welcomed him jubilantly.

"We thought it a risky scheme, but it's gone through," said Paul.

"So it has," said Shif'less Sol, "an' now we won't waste any time waitin' here for Injuns, Tories an' British to come an' take us."

He led the way into the deep forest, which closed completely about them after the first three or four steps, and Henry followed. Little streams of water ran from them as if they were young water gods, but Henry thought only of that most precious of all gifts, his recovered freedom, and, drawing deep breaths of delight, ran at Shif'less Sol's heels. Paul was just behind him, Long Jim followed Paul, and Tom Ross covered the rear.

Thus they continued for a long time. They had little fear of pursuit by the soldiers, but they knew the Indians might pick up the trail and follow. Yet it would be a hard thing to do, as Shif'less Sol led across brooks and through thickets and deep wood. He did not stop for a full hour, when they all sat down on fallen logs, and drew deep breaths. Henry did not notice until then that Long Jim carried an extra rifle. Shif'less Sol observed Henry's glance and he laughed with quiet satisfaction.

"It's fur you, Henry," he said. "We took it from one o' them soldiers we captured. He had no business with a good Kentucky rifle, which must hev been took from some o' our own people, an' so we saved it fur you. Paul has a double-barreled pistol fur you which we got from a Frenchman, Tom has an extra hatchet an' knife, an' among us we hev plenty o' ammunition fur both rifle an' pistol."

They passed over the complete equipment and again Henry rejoiced. He had not only escaped, but once more he was fully armed, ready to dare anything, and able to do anything.

"What a good lot of fellows you are!" he said to his comrades.

"But we couldn't hev done anything ef you hadn't been such a terrible long jumper," said Shif'less Sol with a grin.

"Do you hear any sounds of pursuit?" asked Paul.

None could detect anything, and Tom went back a little space on their trail, returning in a few minutes with the news that there were no indications of a hostile presence. Hence they rested a while longer and the clothing of Henry and Shif'less Sol dried in the sunshine. When they renewed their flight they proceeded at ease, all the while through a densely wooded country, and Paul

gave Henry a brief account of the doings of the four.

"We could tell by the signs just how you were captured," he said, "and we followed close. We came to the very walls of Detroit and we secretly made friends with some of the French in the town."

"There was one Pierre Louis Lajeunais, was there not?"

"Yes, and he was the most valuable. We took the two sentinels, because we did not know what de Peyster would do with you, and, as we wrote, we wanted hostages against ill-treatment. When we found at last that you were to be held only as a prisoner we sent them back, and, for the rest, we trusted to luck, skill and the chance that you might see the warrior in the canoe on the river and understand."

"Fortune seemed to favor us through everything," said Henry, "and now I suppose we had better keep on until we are absolutely sure the Indians will not pick up our trail and give us a fight. As you boys probably know, we have no time to waste."

"We know," said Paul. "Kentucky is calling to us and we are going there as fast as we can."

The night found them far from Detroit. When the twilight turned into the night they were in woods so dense that it seemed as if man had never been there before. There was no turf under the close, spreading branches, but the ground was densely covered with the fallen leaves of last year. Everywhere they lay, a soft, dry carpet, and the five sank down upon them luxuriously.

"Here we rest," said Paul.

"Yes, here we rest, all except one who will watch," said Shif'less Sol, who for the present was in command. "Now we'll eat a little, an' then I think sleep will be the most welcome thing in the world to us."

Nobody said no, and the dried venison was brought from their packs. They also gave further proofs of their foresight for Henry by producing a pair of fine blankets from Tom's roll.

"It was Lajeunais who got those for us," said Tom. "That wuz shorely a fine Frenchman. I hope that some day I'll go huntin' an' trappin' with him."

It was arranged that Tom should keep the first watch and Jim the second, and the others disposed themselves in silence between their blankets. It was summer now, but the nights were cool and they were very snug within the blankets.

Henry, as he relaxed mentally and physically, felt a deep sense of gratitude. It seemed to him in this life of his in the wilderness, engaged in a cause surrounded by dangers, that a protecting hand was constantly stretched out in his behalf. He saw through a narrow opening in the leaves the blue sky and the great stars sailing high. The intense feeling, half religious and half poetic, that often swayed woodsmen, both red and white, stirred him now. Surely there was a divinity in the skies, the God of the white man, the Aieroski of the Mohawk, the Manitou of the Wyandot, one and the same! Never would he despair when that mighty hand could stretch itself forth from the infinite and save him. Thinking thus, he fell asleep and slept peacefully all through the night.



CHAPTER XIII

ON THE GREAT LAKE

When Henry awoke at dawn, all the weariness from his great efforts was gone, and he looked upon a world full of beauty. The unbroken forest of deep green bore a luminous tint, light and golden, from the early sunshine. Free of body and soul, it was the brilliant world that he had known so long, and he was ready once more for any task that might lie before them. Long Jim had already prepared breakfast, and he turned a benevolent gaze upon Henry.

"Ain't it fine," he said, "to have all the family reunited ag'in?"

"It certainly is," said Henry joyously, "and you surely stuck by the missing member in masterly fashion."

"Wa'al, you've stuck by us jest ez hard many a time," said Long Jim meditatively. "Paul, what wuz the name uv the feller that stuck by the other feller, the only big one, that got away from Troy after the Greeks rode into the town inside a hoss?"

"You're thinking of the faithful Achates, Jim," replied Paul, "and Æneas was the name of the big one to whom he was faithful."

"Yes, that's the feller. Henry, you're our Æneas, an' I'm an Achates; Paul's another, Tom's another and Sol's another. Uv course we couldn't go away without our Æneas, an' while I'm talkin' I want to say, Paul, that the tale about the takin' uv Troy is the tallest hoss story ever told. Ef it wuzn't writ in the books I wouldn't believe it. Think uv your fightin' off a hull army fur ten years or so, an' then draggin' that army into your town inside a wooden hoss. It can't be so. I've knowed some pow'ful liars myself, but the tribe must hev gone down hill a lot since the days uv them ancients."

Paul merely laughed and took another bite out of his venison steak.

"Anyway, Henry," said Shif'less Sol, "ef you've been Æneas you're goin' to be the wandering 'Lysses fur a while, an' we're goin' to be fightin' Greeks, sailin' right along with you."

"What do you mean?" asked Henry in astonishment.

"Tell him, Paul," said the shiftless one. "Saplin' hez cooked so well, an' I'm so busy eatin' I can't spare time fur talk."

"We felt sure we'd rescue Henry," said Paul, "and we arranged everything so we could get back South as fast as we could. Knowing that the woods were full of warriors and that we didn't want to be interrupted in our travels, we took a big boat one night from Detroit—I suppose we stole it, but you have a right to steal from an enemy in war—and carried it off down the river, hiding it among thick bushes at the mouth of a creek, where we're sure it's now resting securely, say five or six miles from this spot. We also gathered a lot of stores, food and such things, and put them on the boat. It was another risk, but we took that also, and I'm confident that our good genius will save the boat and stores for us. If they're there waiting for us all right we're going down the river and then across Lake Erie. It will save us a lot of time."

"Fine! fine!" exclaimed Henry with enthusiasm. "You've done well. It will be a lot easier and faster for us going so far by boat."

"An' we'll see one uv the big lakes, too," said Long Jim.

"We shorely will," said Shif'less Sol.

In a few minutes they were on the march again, and found the boat undisturbed at the mouth of the creek. It was a stout craft with a sail, and lockers for stores. Doubtless Colonel de Peyster had attributed its disappearance to some of his own Indians who could not always be trusted, but in the press of military preparations he had found no time to seek it.

"Now," said Shif'less Sol, "we'll take to the river. We may meet enemies thar, but it won't be ez long a trip ez the one we took down the Missip. Besides, ef we do meet enemies they ain't likely to be in big force ez most all the warriors seem to be drawed off fur the expeditions ag'inst Kentucky."

"At any rate we'll risk it, as we have risked many other things," said Henry.

The five embarked, and set sail fearlessly upon the river. Nevertheless, they did not neglect caution. They kept close to the Canadian shore, where they were in the shadow of the dense forest, and at least three were always on the watch with ready rifles across their knees. Yet they saw no enemy. This was the heart of the Indian country and the canoes of the warlike Northwestern tribes often floated on these waters, but to-day the five had the river to themselves. Peace was

everywhere. Birds sang in the neighboring woods. Now and then a fish leaped from the water and sank back in a mass of bubbles. The broad river was a sheet of gold, and then a sheet of silver as the sun shifted.

Henry appreciated all this rest and ease. He admired still more the foresight and daring of his comrades which enabled them to travel in such a luxurious way and so far. He examined carefully the weapons they had secured for him and saw that they were all of the first class. He also opened the various lockers and found them filled with venison, jerked buffalo meat, such luxuries as bread and coffee, and large quantities of powder and lead.

"We found part of these in the boat," said Paul, "and it was your friend Lajeunais, who helped us to get the remainder. We do not go to sea unprovided."

"You've all done so well," said Henry lazily, "that I'm not going to bother myself about anything."

He put his double blankets under his head as a pillow and lay back luxuriously. Their good boat moved steadily on, the sail doing the work, while one of their number steered.

"I hope the wind will continue to blow," said Jim Hart, gazing admiringly at Henry, "'cause ef it don't we'll then hev to git our oars an' row. An' it would spoil the purtiest picture uv a lazy feller I ever saw. Why, I never saw Shif'less Sol hisself look lazier or happier."

Henry laughed. He knew that Jim Hart would have died in his defense.

"I am lazy, Jim," he admitted. "I never felt so lazy in my life before. I like to lie here and look at the river and the country."

"It's a fine big river," said Shif'less Sol, "but we can't see much of the country because of the trees, which shoot up so thick an' close on either bank, but I've heard that it ain't really a river, jest the stream o' water pourin' out o' them mighty lakes to the north into them lakes to the south, which ain't so mighty as the others, but which are mighty anyhow."

"It's true," said Paul. "All of this is lake water which runs through the other lakes, too, and then out by a tremendous big river, hundreds of miles to the Atlantic Ocean."

"When God made this chain uv lakes an' rivers he done one uv his biggest an'

finest jobs," said Tom Ross reverentially.

They moved on their course slowly but steadily. Once they saw a canoe near the further shore, containing a lone occupant.

"It's a squaw," said Shif'less Sol, "an' she's pulled in near the land so she kin jump an' run ef we make for her."

"Like ez not she thinks we're hunters or French from the fort," said Long Jim.

"At any rate, we'll soon leave her far behind," said Henry.

The breeze stiffened and she quickly dropped out of sight. Nor did they see any other human being that day. At night they anchored close inshore, among bushes and reeds, where they remained undisturbed until the morning. The remainder of the journey down the river passed in the same peace and ease, and then Paul, who was in the prow, caught a glimpse of a broad expanse which looked silvery white in the distance.

"The lake! the lake!" he cried eagerly.

They swept triumphantly over the last reach of the river and out upon the broad bosom of Lake Erie. In their earlier voyage down the Mississippi they had learned how to use a sail, and now when they were about a mile from land they took in the sail and looked about them.

The great inland fresh water seas of North America aroused the greatest interest, even awe, among the earlier explorers, and there was not one among the five who did not look with eager eyes upon the ocean of waters. They were better informed, too, than the average woodsman concerning the size and shape of this mighty chain.

"You look west and you look south an' you don't see nothin' but water," said Long Jim.

"And they say that the whole grand chain is fifteen hundred miles long," said Paul, "and that Lake Superior reaches a width of three hundred miles."

"It's a lot o' water," said Shif'less Sol, trailing his hand over the side, "an' while I'd like to explore it, I guess that the sooner we cross it the better it will be for what we're tryin' to do."

"You're right," said Henry. "We'll set the sail again and tack as fast as we can to

the south."

The sail was set, and the boat, heeling over under a good breeze, moved rapidly. Paul and Henry watched with pleasure the white water foaming away on either side of the prow, and Long Jim also watched the trailing wake at the stern. Used to rivers but not to lakes, they did not really appreciate what dangers might await them on the bosom of Erie. Meanwhile the lake presented to them a most smiling surface. The waters rippling before the wind lay blue under a blue sky. The wind with its touch of damp was fresh and inspiring. Behind them the shore, with its great wall of green, sank lower and lower, until at last it passed out of sight. Long Jim, who sat in the stern watching, then spoke.

"Boys," he said, "fur the fust time in the life uv any uv us thar ain't no land. Look to the east an' look to the west, look to the north an' look to the south an' thar ain't nothin' but water. The world uv land hez left us."

There was a certain awe in Jim's tone that impressed them as they looked and saw that he spoke the truth. Their world was now one of water, and they felt how small was the boat that lay between them and the tremendous power of the lake.

It was now somewhat past midday and the sun was uncommonly bright. The wind began to die, and the little waves no longer chased one another over the surface of the lake. No air gathered in the sail and presently the boat stopped.

"Now wouldn't this make you mad?" exclaimed Shif'less Sol. "We can't move at all unless we git out the oars an' row, an' a lazy man like me ain't fond o' rowin' seventy or eighty miles across a big lake."

Nor was the prospect pleasant to any of them. A little while ago they were moving swiftly at ease; now they rocked slightly in the swell, but did not go forward an inch. Hopeful that the wind would soon rise again they did not yet take to the oars. Meanwhile it was growing warmer. The reflection of the sun upon the water was dazzling, and they spread the sail again, not to catch the wind but as an awning to protect them from the burning rays.

They also used the interval for food and drink, and as the wind still did not rise they were thinking of taking to the oars as a last resort when Henry called their attention to the southwest.

"See that black spot down there," he said. "It seems to be only a few inches either way, but it doesn't look natural."

"I'd call it a cloud," said Tom Ross judicially.

"An' clouds ain't what we're wantin' jest now," said Jim Hart.

Henry rose from his luxurious reclining position and gazed long and with great care at the black spot. He knew as well as Jim Hart that it was a cloud and he saw that it was growing. But a few inches across the horizon before, it stretched to feet and then to yards. Meanwhile not a breath of air stirred, the deep waters were waveless and the air hung hot and heavy about them. Henry had heard that dangerous storms came up very fast on the great lakes, and, although with no experience as a sailor except on rivers, he believed that one would soon be upon them.

"Boys," he said, "look how that cloud grows. I believe we're in for a big wind and storm. We'd better take down our mast, make everything tight and strong, and get ready with the oars."

All at once Henry resumed command, and the others instantly accepted it as the most natural and proper thing in the world. The mast was unshipped, it and the sail were lashed down, everything that was loose was put in the lockers, or was tied securely. Meanwhile the cloud grew with amazing rapidity. While the east and north were yet full of blazing light the south and west were darkening. A draught of cold wind came. The waters, motionless hitherto, suddenly heaved convulsively. Low thunder rolled, and the lightning flashed across the troubled waters. The five felt awe. They were familiar with great storms, but never before had they been in one with no land in sight. The little boat, which alone lay between them and the depths of the lake, became smaller and smaller. But the five, although they felt more tremors than when going into battle, sat with their oars in the thwarts, ready to fight as best they could the storm which would soon rush down upon them.

The cold wind came in raw gusts, and there was rain on its edge which cut like hail. The boat rose and fell with the increasing waves. Henry took the helm, and, with the others at the oars, strove to keep the boat as steady as possible. With the usual foresight of borderers, they had already covered up their rifles, pistols and ammunition. Even on the water they would not neglect this precaution. Now the darkness spread to the entire heavens, the thunder crashed heavily, like invisible batteries firing, the lightning flared two or three times, showing the surface of the lake far and wide tinted a ghastly gray, and then, with a shriek and a roar, the wind struck them.

The boat heeled over so far on its side that Henry thought at first they were gone, but after hanging for a moment or two, seemingly undecided, it righted itself, and the five uttered simultaneous sighs of relief. Yet the boat had shipped water which Paul began to bail out with his cap, while the others strove at the oars, seeking to meet and ride the waves which followed one another swiftly. The rain meanwhile was driving hard, and they were drenched, but they had no time to think of such things. Every effort was bent towards keeping afloat the boat, which was rushing before the wind they knew not whither.

"There's a pail in that little locker," shouted Henry to Paul, "you can do better with that than with your cap."

Paul opened the locker, and took out the pail. Then with great difficulty he closed the locker again, and set to work keeping the boat clear of water. He made much better progress with the pail, but now and then wind, rain and the rocking of the boat together threw him to his knees. His comrades were working full as hard. They made up for lack of experience with strength, intuitive quickness and courage. Often the boat seemed to be submerged by the crest of a great wave, but every time it emerged right side up with the industrious Paul still bailing.

Meantime the wind kept up a continuous screaming, almost like that of a wild animal, a fearful sound which got upon the nerves of them all. Except when the lightning flared they were surrounded by a darkness like that of night. Suddenly Tom Ross shouted in a voice that could be heard above the whistling of the wind:

"Jim, you're seein' the Great Lakes at last!"

Then he bent grimly to his oar.

Luckily the boat they had taken was a strong one, built partly for the storms which sometimes drive with such force across Erie, the shallowest of the five Great Lakes, and with the aid of the strong arms at the helm and oars she managed to ride every wave and swell. But it was a long time before the wind began to abate and they were half dead with exhaustion. Moreover they were covered with bruises where they had been hurled against the sides of the boat, and now and then they were almost blinded by the water dashing into their faces. Shif'less Sol afterward said that he felt as if some strong-armed man were slapping his cheek every minute or two.

Yet hope began to return. They had kept afloat so long that they felt sure of

keeping afloat all the time. There came a moment when the water from the lake ceased to enter the boat, although the rain still drenched them. The darkness lightened somewhat and Henry looked anxiously about them. He was trying to reckon in what direction they had come, but there was nothing that would enable him to tell. He saw nothing but the waste of waters. He knew that the wind had changed its course and they might now be driving back toward Detroit. He longed for light that might show them whence they had come.

Now the storm, after declining, suddenly acquired new strength. The darkness closed in again thicker than ever and the hearts of the five sank. They were so tired that they felt they could not repel a second attack. Yet they summoned their courage anew and strove even more desperately than before. Another hour passed and Henry, who was looking ahead, suddenly saw a dark mass. He recognized it instantly and gave the sharp cry:

"Land!"

The three who were straining at the oars looked up, and Paul in his surprise let drop his tin pail. Henry had made no mistake. They could see that it was land despite the darkness and the driving rain. There was a low shore, with trees growing almost to the water's edge, and they thought at first that it was the western coast of the lake, but as they swiftly drove nearer Henry saw water both to right and left, and he knew that it was a little island. If they kept a straight course they would strike upon it, but with such violence that shipwreck was inevitable. Strong and agile as they were they might possibly escape with their lives.

"Boys!" cried Henry, above the shouting of the wind, "we must make that island or we'll surely be lost in the storm!"

"It's so!" Shifless Sol shouted back, "but how are we to do it?"

"Paul, you take the helm," said Henry, "and steer to the left of the island. The wind is blowing straight ahead and if we can come in behind the land we may strike a little stretch of comparatively smooth water."

Paul took the helm and Henry seized a pair of oars. Paul could steer well, but Henry's strength would be needed now. On they drove, the rain beating hard on their backs, and the surf from the lake also driving into the boat. Paul steered steadily and the four bent powerfully on the oars, driving the boat in a wide curve to the left, where it would avoid possible rocks and shoals.

Yet it was hard to bring the boat even diagonally against the wind. The waves turned it on its side and it trembled violently. The four labored at the oars until every pulse in their temples throbbed. Now the low shore and the green forest were coming very near, and Henry glanced at them from time to time. He was afraid that the wind and the waves would bring them back again and dash them upon the island, despite all their efforts. But the boat shot past fifty yards to the left, ran for a quarter of a mile along the edge of a low green island, and then with a mighty effort they brought it in behind the land.

Here in a little space where the wind was beating itself to pieces against the trees in front of it, the sea was comparatively calm, and Paul deftly swung the boat about. His sharp eyes noticed a little cove, and, the four at the oars pulled for it with all their might. A minute, two minutes and they were in the cove and in safety. They had entered it by a channel not more than a dozen feet wide, and Paul's steering had been delicate and beautiful. Now the four drew in their oars and they swung in waters as quiet as those of a pond ruffled only by a little breeze. It was an inlet not more than twenty yards across and it was sheltered about by mighty trees. The rain still poured upon them, but there was no longer any danger of shipwreck.

The momentum had carried the boat to the far edge of the pool, and Henry sprang out. His muscles were so stiff and sore that, for a moment or two, he reeled, but he seized a bough and held fast. Then Tom tossed him a rope from the locker and in a minute the boat was secured head and stern to the trees. Then they stood upon land, wet but solid land, and in every heart was devout thankfulness.

"The land for me every time," said Long Jim. "I like to feel something under my feet that I don't sink into. Ef an accident happens on land, thar you are, but ef an accident happens on the water, whar are you?"

"What I need most is a pair o' kid gloves," said Shif'less Sol. "I've got purty tough hands, but I think them oars hez took all the skin off the inside o' 'em."

"What we all need most," said Henry, "is shelter. We are soaked through and through, and we are stiff with bruises and exertion. Suppose we bail out the boat and try to use the sail as a sort of roof or cover."

They were wedged in so closely among the trees that together with the boughs and the mast, which they set in place again, they managed to fasten the sail in such a manner that it caught most of the rain as it drove towards them. Everyone

also gave up one of his pair of blankets for the same purpose, and then they were protected fairly. Still fearing colds and stiffness of the muscles they took off all their wet clothing and rubbed their bodies long and thoroughly. While they were at this work the rain decreased, and after a while ceased. The wind still blew and they heard branches crashing down from the trees, but none fell over them. They did not re clothe themselves but hung their soaked garments on boughs, and then everyone wrapped himself about with the dry blanket that he had left from his pair, the other still doing duty as a rain shield. Although the air was quite cool after the heavy rain, the blankets protected them and they began to feel a pleasant warmth. Their spirits indeed were improved so much that they could jest.

"One would scarcely expect to see five Roman senators in their togas cast away on this little island in Lake Erie," said Paul, "but here we are."

Long Jim with his bare legs as far as his knees protruding from his blanket was prowling among the lockers.

"What's the noble senator lookin' fur?" asked Shif'less Sol.

"I'm lookin' fur somethin' to help you an' all uv us," replied Long Jim, "while you're settin' thar lazy an' wuthless. We didn't search this boat very well when we took it, hevin' other pow'ful important matters on hand, but them that owned it wuz men uv sense. Lots uv useful things are hid away in these little lockers. Ah, look at this! Shorely it's industry an' enterprise that gits the rewards!"

He drew triumphantly from the corner of a locker an iron coffee pot and a large package of ground coffee.

"Now I've got the coffee an' the coffee pot," he said, "an' ef the rest uv you hev got sense enough to build a fire I'll hev you feelin' like kings ten minutes after that fire is built. Thar are two pewter cups in that locker also, so nothin' is lackin'."

"You've certainly done your part, Jim," said Henry, "an' now we'll try to do ours, although it won't be any easy job."

They had not been woodsmen all their lives for nothing. The ground under the trees was covered more than a foot deep with leaves, the accumulation of many years. It is difficult for water to penetrate all the way through such a carpet, and turning them over they found here and there some leaves fairly dry, which they

put in a heap. They also cut off all the wet outside from some dead boughs with their strong hunting knives, and then shaved off dry splinters which they put with the leaves.

The four gathered in a group about the little heap, looking very odd in their blankets, with their bare ankles and shoulders projecting, and Henry began work with the flint and steel. After many efforts he set fire to the finer of the splinters, and then the flames spread to the leaves and larger pieces of wood. They had succeeded, and as Shif'less Sol fed the fire, he said triumphantly to Long Jim:

"Now, Jim, everything's ready fur you. Bring on your coffee an' b'il it. I want fourteen cups myself."

Jim set to work at once, showing with pride his skill in such a task. The flames were not permitted to rise high, but they burned rapidly, making a fine bed of coals, and within ten minutes the coffee was ready. Then they drank, warming themselves through and through, and receiving new life. They also warmed some of the deer and buffalo steaks over the coals, and ate real bread from the lockers.

"All things must come to an end," said Shif'less Sol, with a sigh, when he could eat no more. "It's on sech 'casions ez this that I realize it. I wish I wuz ez hungry ez I wuz a little while ago, an' could eat all over ag'in."

"We've been in big luck," said Henry. "If it hadn't been for this little island I believe we would have been wrecked. It's true, too, that we'll have to go around in our blankets for a while yet, because I don't believe those clothes of ours will dry before morning."

"Suits me," said Jim Hart, as with proverbial caution he put out the fire after finishing cooking. "I wouldn't mind goin' 'roun' in a blanket in summer. Injuns do it an' they find it pow'ful healthy. Now the wind is dyin' an' the clouds are passin' away, but it's goin' to be dark anyhow. Jedgin' from the looks uv things the night is right here."

The wind undoubtedly was sinking fast. The great storm was blowing itself away as rapidly as it had blown up. The trees ceased to shake and moan, and looking down the channel whence they had entered, the five saw that the high waves no longer rolled across the surface of the lake. In a few minutes more the last breath of the wind whistled off to eastward. A cold twilight fell over the little isle of safety and the great lake, of whose rage they had been such vivid

witnesses.



CHAPTER XIV

A TIMELY RESCUE

Jim Hart sat down in the boat, drew his legs up under his blanket, shivered as he took a long look down the channel at the cold gray lake, and said:

"Boys, you know how I wanted to see one of the great lakes; well, I hev saw, an' hevin' saw I think the look will last me a long time. I think Injuns wuz right when they put pow'ful spirits on these lakes, ready to make an end of anybody that come foolin' with thar region. The land fur me hereafter. Why, I wuz so skeered an' I had to work so hard I didn't hev time to git seasick."

"But we have to go on the lake again, Jim," said Henry. "This is an island."

Jim sighed.

Henry looked at the dense forest that enclosed the cove, and he thought once of exploring the islet even if it were in the night, but the woods were so thick and they still dripped so heavily with the rain, although the latter had ceased some time ago, that he resolved to remain by the boat. Besides it was only an islet anyway, and there was no probability that it was inhabited.

"I think," he said, "that we'd better fasten our clothes so tightly that they won't blow away, and sleep in the boat. Two will keep watch, and as I have had the most rest I'll be sentinel until about one in the morning, and then Tom can take my place."

The agreement was quickly made. They took down the sail and the wet blankets, spread them out to dry, while the four, disposing themselves as best they could, quickly went to sleep. Henry sat in the prow, rifle across his knees, and thought that, despite dangers passed and dangers to come, Providence had been very kind to them.

The darkness thinned by and by and a fine moon came out. Beads of water still stood upon the leaves and boughs, and the moonshine turned them to silver. The bit of forest seemed to sparkle and in the blue heavens the great stars sprang out in clusters. The contrast between the night and the day was startling. Now

everything seemed to breathe of peace, and of peace only. A light wind rose and then the silver beads disappeared from leaf and bough. But it was a friendly wind and it sang most pleasantly among the trees. Under its influence the garments of the five would dry fast, and as Henry looked at them and then down at his comrades, wrapped in their "togas" he felt an inclination to laugh. But this desire to laugh was only proof of his mental relaxation, of the ease and confidence that he felt after great dangers passed.

Certainly his comrades were sleeping well. Not one of them moved, and he saw the blankets across their chests rising and falling with regularity. Once he stepped out of the boat and walked down to the entrance of the channel, whence he looked out upon the surface of the lake. Save for the islet he saw land nowhere, north, south, east or west. The great lake stretched away before them apparently as vast as the sea, not gray now, but running away in little liquid waves of silver in the moonlight. Henry felt its majesty as he had already felt its might. He had never before appreciated so keenly the power of nature and the elements. Chance alone had put in their way this little island that had saved their lives.

He walked slowly back and resumed his place in the boat. That fine drying wind was still singing among the trees, making the leaves rustle softly together and filling Henry's mind with good thoughts. But these gave way after a while to feelings of suspicion. His was an exceedingly sensitive temperament. It often seemed to the others—and the wilderness begets such beliefs—that he received warnings through the air itself. He could not tell why his nerves were affected in this manner, but he resolved that he would not relax his vigilance a particle, and when the time came for him to awaken Tom Ross he decided to continue on guard with him.

"'Tain't wuth while, Henry," remonstrated Ross. "Nothin's goin' to happen here on an islan' that ain't got no people but ourselves on it."

"Tom," replied Henry, "I've got a feeling that I'd like to explore this island."

"Mornin' will be time enough."

"No, I think I'll do it now. I ought to go all over it in an hour. Don't take me for an Indian when I'm coming back and shoot at me."

"I'd never mistake a Roman senator in his togy for an Injun," replied Tom Ross grinning.

Henry looked at his clothes, but despite the drying wind they were still wet.

"I'll have to go as a Roman after all," he said.

He fastened the blanket tightly about his body in the Indian fashion, secured his belt with pistol, tomahawk and knife around his waist, and then, rifle in hand, he stepped from the boat into the forest.

"Watch good, Tom," he said. "I may be gone some time."

"You'll find nothin'."

"Maybe so; maybe not."

The woods through which Henry now passed were yet wet, and every time he touched a bough or a sapling showers of little drops fell upon him. The patch of forest was dense and the trees large. The trees also grew straight upward, and Henry concluded at once that he would find a little distance ahead a ridge that sheltered this portion of the island from the cruel north and northwest winds.

His belief was verified as the rise began within three hundred yards. It ascended rather abruptly, having a total height of seventy or eighty feet, and seeming to cross the island from east to west. Standing under the shadow of a great oak Henry looked down upon the northern half of the island, which was quite different in its characteristics from the southern half. A portion of it was covered with dwarfed vegetation, but the rest was bare rock and sand. There were two or three inlets or landing places on the low shore. As the moonlight was now good, Henry saw all over this portion of the island, but he could not detect any sign of human habitation.

"I suppose Tom is right," he said to himself, "and that there is nothing to be seen."

But he had no idea of going back without exploring thoroughly, and he descended the slope toward the north. The way led for a little distance among the shrub bushes from which the raindrops still fell upon him as he passed, and then he came into an open space almost circular in shape and perhaps thirty yards in diameter. Almost in the center of the rock a spring spouted and flowed away through a narrow channel to the lake. On the far side of the spring rose four upright stakes in a row about six feet apart. Henry wondered what they meant and he approached cautiously, knowing that they had been put there by human hands.

Some drifting clouds now passed and the moonlight shone with a sudden burst of splendor. Henry was close to the stakes and suddenly he shuddered in every vein. They were about as high as a man's head, firmly fastened in the ground, and all of them were blackened and charred somewhat by fire, although their strength was not impaired. At the base of every one lay hideous relics. Henry shivered again. He knew. Here Indians brought their captives and burned them to death, partly for the sake of their own vengeance and partly to propitiate the mighty spirits that had their abode in the depths of the great lakes. He was sure that his comrades and he had landed upon a sacrificial island, and he resolved that they should depart at the very first light in the morning.

This island which had seemed so fine and beautiful to him suddenly became ghastly and repellent, but his second thought told him that they had nothing to fear at present. It was not inhabited. The warriors merely came here for the burnings, and then it was quite likely that they departed at once.

Henry examined further. On the bushes beyond the stakes he found amulets and charms of bone or wood, evidently hung there to ward off evil spirits, and among these bushes he saw more bones of victims. Then he noticed two paths leading away from the place, each to a small inlet, where the boats landed. Calculating by the moon and stars he could now obtain a general idea of the direction in which they had come and he was sure that the nearest part of the mainland lay to the west. He saw a dark line there, and he could not tell whether it was the shore or a low bank of mist.

Then he made a diligent exploration of all this part of the island, assuring himself further that it had never been occupied permanently. He saw at one place the ruins of a temporary brush shelter, used probably during a period of storm like that of the night before, and on the beach he found the shattered remains of a large canoe. Henry looked down at the broken canoe thoughtfully. It may have been wrecked while on its way with a victim for the stake, and if the warriors had perished it might have been due to the wrath of the Great Spirit.

He walked slowly back over the ridge through the forest and down to the boat. Tom saw him coming but said nothing until he stepped into the boat beside him.

"You stayed a long time," he said, "but I see you've brought nothing back with you."

"It's true that I've brought nothing with me, but I've found a lot."

"What did you find, Henry?"

"I found many bones, the bones of human beings."

"Men's bones?"

"Yes. I'm sure that it is an island to which Indiana come to burn their prisoners, and although none are here now—I've looked it all over—I don't like it. There's something uncanny about it."

"An' yet it's a pretty little islan', too," said Tom Ross, thoughtfully, "an' mighty glad we wuz to see it yes'day, when we wuz druv before that howlin' an' roarin' storm, with but one chance in a hundred uv livin'."

"That's so," said Henry. "We owe the island a debt of gratitude if others don't. I've no doubt that if it were not for this little piece of land we should have been drowned. Still, the sooner we get away the better. How have the others been getting on, Tom?"

"Sleepin' ez reg'lar an' steady ez clocks. It's wuth while to see fellers snoozin' away so happy."

Henry smiled. The three, as they lay in the boat, breathing deeply and unconscious of everything, were certainly a picture of rest.

"How long do you calculate it is to daylight?" asked Henry.

"Not more'n two hours, an' it's goin' to come bright an' clear, an' with a steady wind that will take us to the south."

"That's good, and I think that you and I, Tom, ought to be getting ready. This drying wind has been blowing for a long time, and our clothes should be in condition again. Anyway I'm going to see."

He took down the garments from the bushes, and found that all were quite dry. Then he and Tom re clothed themselves and laid the apparel for the other three by their sides, ready for them when they should awake. Tom puckered up his lips and blew out a deep breath of pleasure.

"It may be mighty fine to be a Roman senator in a togy," he said, "but not in these parts. Give me my good old huntin' shirt an' leggings. Besides, I feel a sight more respectable."

Shortly, it was dawn, and the three sleepers awoke, glad to have their clothes dry again, and interested greatly in Henry's exploration of the island.

"Jim, you do a little more cooking," said Henry, "and Sol, Tom and I will go over to the other end of the island again. When we come back we'll hoist our sail, have breakfast, and be off."

They followed the path that Henry had taken during the night, leaving Paul and Jim busy with the cooking utensils. The little patch of forest was now entirely dry, and a great sun was rising from the eastern waters, tingeing the deep green of the trees with luminous gold. The lake was once more as smooth and peaceful as if no storm had ever passed over its surface.

They stopped at the crest of the transverse ridge and saw in the west the dark line, the nature of which Henry had been unable to decipher by moonlight. Now they saw that it was land, and they saw, too, another sight that startled them. Two large canoes were approaching the island swiftly, and they were already so near that Henry and Shif'less Sol could see the features of their occupants. Neither of the boats had a sail. Both were propelled wholly by paddlers—six paddlers to each canoe—stalwart, painted Indians, bare of shoulders and chest. But in the center of the first canoe sat a man with arms bound.

"It's a victim whom they are bringing for the stake and the sacrifice," said Henry.

"He must be from some tribe in the far North," said Shif'less Sol, "'cause all the Indian nations in the valley are allied."

"He is not from any tribe at all," said Henry. "The prisoner is a white man."

"A white man!" exclaimed Shif'less Sol, "an' you an' me, Henry, know that most o' the prisoners who are brought to these parts are captured in Kentucky."

"It's so, and I don't think we ought to go away in such a hurry."

"Meanin' we might be o' help?"

"Meaning we might be of help."

Henry watched the boats a minute or two longer, and saw that they were coming directly for one of the little inlets on the north end of the island. Moreover, they were coming fast under the long sweep of the paddles swung by brown and sinewy arms.

"Tom," he said to Ross, "you go back for Paul. Tell Jim to have the sail up and ready for us when we come, and meanwhile to guard the boat. That's a white man and they intend to burn him as a sacrifice to Manitou or the spirits of the lake. We've got to rescue him."

The others nodded assent and Tom hurried away after Paul, while Henry and Sol continued to watch the oncoming boats. They crept down the slope to the very fringe of the trees and lay close there, although they had little fear of discovery, unless it was caused by their own lack of caution.

The boats reached the inlet, and, for a few moments, they were hidden from the two watchers, by the bushes and rocks, but they heard the Indians talking, and Henry was confirmed in his opinion that they did not dream of any presence besides their own on the island. At length they emerged into view again, the prisoner walking between two warriors in front, and Henry gave a start of horror.

"Sol," he said in a whisper, "don't you recognize that gray head?"

"I think I do."

"Don't you know that tall, slender figure?"

"I'm shore I do."

"Tom, that can be nobody but Mr. Silas Pennypacker, to whom Paul and I went to school in Kentucky."

"It's the teacher, ez shore ez you're born."

Henry's thrill of horror came again. Mr. Pennypacker lived at Wareville, the home of his own family and Paul's. What had happened? There was the expedition of the harelipped Bird with his powerful force and with cannon! Could it be possible that he had swept Wareville away and that the teacher had been given to the Indians for sacrifice? A terrible anger seized him and Shif'less Sol, by his side, was swayed by the same emotion.

"It is he, Sol! It is he!" he whispered in intense excitement.

"Yes, Henry," replied the shiftless one, "it's the teacher."

"Do you think his presence here means Wareville has been destroyed by Bird?"

"I'm hopin' that it doesn't, Henry."

Shif'less Sol spoke steadily, but Henry could read the fear in his mind, and the reply made his own fears all the stronger.

"They are going to sacrifice that good old man, Sol," he said.

"They mean to do it, but people sometimes mean to do things that they don't do."

They remained in silence until Tom returned with Paul, who was excited greatly when he learned that Mr. Pennypacker was there a prisoner.

"Lie perfectly still, all of you, until the time comes," said Henry. "We've got to save him, and we can only do it by means of a surprise and a rush."

The Indians and their prisoner were now not more than a hundred yards away, having come into the center of the open circle used for the sacrifice, and they stood there a little while talking. Mr. Pennypacker's arms were bound, but he held himself erect. His face was turned toward the South, his home, and it seemed to Henry and Paul—although it was fancy, the distance being too great to see—that his expression was rapt and noble as if he already saw beyond this life into the future. They loved and respected him. Paul had been his favorite pupil, and now tears came into the eyes of the boy as he watched. The old man certainly had seen the stakes, and doubtless he had surmised their purpose.

"What's your plan, Henry?" whispered Shif'less Sol.

"I think they're going to eat. Probably they've been rowing all the morning and are tired and hungry. They mean after that to go ahead with their main purpose, but we'll take 'em while they're eating. I hate to fire on anybody from ambush, but it's got to be done. There's no other way. We'll all lie close together here, and when the time comes to fire, I'll give the word."

The Indians sat on the ground after their fashion and began to eat cold food. Apparently they paid little attention to their prisoner, who stood near, and to whom they offered nothing. Why should he eat? He would never be hungry again. Nor need they watch him closely now. They had left a man with each of the boats, and even if he should run he could not escape them on the island.

Henry and Paul saw Mr. Pennypacker walk forward a few steps and look intently at the posts. Then he bowed his gray head and stood quite still. Both believed that he was praying. Water again rose in Paul's eyes and Henry's too were damp.

"Boys," whispered Henry, "I think the time has come. Take aim. We'll pick the four on the left, Sol the first on the end, the second for me, Tom the third and Paul the fourth. Now, boys, cock your rifles, and take aim, the best aim that you ever took in your life, and when I say 'Fire!' pull the trigger."

Every man from the covert did as he was directed. When Henry looked down the sights and picked out the right place on the broad chest of a warrior, he shuddered a little. He repeated to himself that he did not like it, this firing from ambush, but there was the old man, whom they loved, doomed to torture and the sacrifice. His heart hardened like flint and he cried "Fire!"

Four rifles flashed in the thicket. Two warriors fell without a sound. Two more leaped away, wounded, and all the others sprang to their feet with cries of surprise and alarm.

"Up and at 'em!" cried Henry in a tremendous voice. "Cut them to pieces!"

Drawing their pistols they rushed into the open space and charged upon the warriors, firing as they came.

The Indians were Wyandots, men who knew little of fear, but the surprise and the deadly nature of the attack was too much for them. Perhaps superstition also mingled with their emotions. Doubtless the spirits of the lake were angry with them for some cause, and the best thing they could do was to leave it as soon as they could. But one as he ran did not forget to poise his hatchet for a cast at the prisoner. The Reverend Silas Pennypacker would have seen his last sun that day had not Henry noticed the movement and quickly fired his pistol at the uplifted hand. The bullet pierced the Indian's palm, the tomahawk was dashed from his hand, and with a howl of pain he sped after the others who were flying for the boats.

Henry and his comrades did not pursue. They knew that they must act with all speed, as the Wyandots would quickly recover from their panic, and come back in a force that was still two to one. A single sweep of his knife and his old schoolmaster's arms were free. Then he shouted in the dazed man's ears:

"Come, Mr. Pennypacker, we must run for it! Don't you see who we are? Here's Paul Cotter, and I'm Henry Ware, and these are Sol Hyde and Tom Ross! We've got a boat on the other side of the island and the sooner we get there the better!"

He snatched up a rifle, powder horn and bullet pouch from one of the fallen warriors and thrust them in the old man's hands. Mr. Pennypacker was still staring at them in a dazed manner, but at last the light broke through.

"Oh, my boys! my brave boys!" he cried. "It is really you, and you have saved me at the eleventh hour! I had given up all hope, but lo! the miracle is done!"

Henry took him by the arm, and obeying the impulse he ran with them through the wood. Already Henry heard shouts which indicated to him that the Wyandots had turned, and, despite his anxiety about Wareville, he asked nothing of Mr. Pennypacker for the present.

"You lead the way, Paul," he cried. "Jim, of course, has the boat ready with the

sail up and the oars in place. We'll be out on the lake in a few minutes, Mr. Pennypacker. There, do you hear that? The Wyandots are now in full pursuit!"

A long piercing cry came from the woods behind them. It was the Wyandot leader encouraging his warriors. Henry knew that they would come fast, and Mr. Pennypacker, old and not used to the ways of the wilderness, could go but slowly. Although Long Jim was sure to be ready, the embarkation would be dangerous. It was evident that Mr. Pennypacker, extremely gaunt and thin, was exhausted already by a long march and other hardships. Now he labored heavily, drawing long breaths.

"Those fellows will be on us in a minute or two, Sol," Henry whispered to the shiftless one, "unless we burn their faces."

"I reckon we're able to do the burnin'," replied Shif'less Sol.

Henry, Tom and Sol dropped to a walk, and in a few moments stopped altogether. Paul, with Mr. Pennypacker by his side, kept on for the boat as fast as the old man's strength would allow. Henry caught a glimpse of a figure running low in the thicket and fired. A cry came back, but he could not tell whether the wound was mortal. Shif'less Sol fired with a similar result. Two or three bullets were sent back at them, but none touched. Then the three, keeping themselves hidden resumed their flight. They reckoned that the check to the Wyandots would give Paul, with Mr. Pennypacker, time to reach the boat before the warriors could come within range of the latter.

The three now ran very swiftly, and, in a few minutes, were at the edge of the inlet, where the boat lay, just in time to see Paul pick up the old schoolmaster, who had fallen with exhaustion, and lift him into the boat. The three sprang in after them.

"We'll watch with the rifles, Sol," exclaimed Henry. "The rest of you row until we're outside, when the sail can do most of the pulling."

It was quick work now and skillful. Mr. Pennypacker, scarcely able to draw a breath, lay like a log in the bottom of the boat, but in less than a half minute after the three leaped on board they were gliding down the inlet. Before they reached the open lake the Indians appeared among the trees and began to shout and fire. But they were in such haste that nothing was struck except the boat, which did not mind. Silent Tom, who had restrained his fire, now sent a bullet that struck the mark and the warriors rushed to cover. Then they were out of the inlet, the

fine wind filled the sail, and away they sped toward the south.

The warriors appeared at the edge of the water while the boat's crew were still within range, but when Henry and the shiftless one raised their rifles they shrank back. They had tested already the quality of their foes, and they did not like it. When they reappeared from the shelter of the trees the boat was out of range. Nevertheless they fired two or three shots that splattered on the water, waved their tomahawks and shouted in anger. Shif'less Sol stood up in the boat and shouted back at them:

"Keep cool, my red brethren, keep cool! We have escaped and you see that we have! So do not waste good bullets which you may need another time! And above all keep your tempers! Wise men always do! Farewell!"

It is not likely that they understood the words of the shiftless one, but certainly the derisive gestures that he made as he sat down were not lost upon them.

"Sol, can't you ever be serious?" said Henry to his comrade.

"Be serious? O' course I kin at the right time," replied the shiftless one, "but what's the use o' bein' serious now? Haven't we rescued ourselves an' the schoolmaster, too? Ain't we in a boat with a sail that kin leave the two boats o' them warriors far behind, an' ain't we got a bee-yu-ti-ful day to sail over a bee-yu-ti-ful lake? So what's the use o' bein' serious? The time fur that wuz ten minutes ago."

It was evident that the Wyandots considered pursuit useless or that they feared the Kentucky rifles, as they gathered in a group on the beach and watched the flying boat recede.

"Didn't I tell you it wuzn't wuth while to be serious now, Henry?" said Shif'less Sol. "We're hevin' the easiest kind o' a time an' them warriors standin' thar on the shore look too funny for anything. I wish I could see their faces. I know they would look jest like the faces o' wolves, when somethin' good had slipped from between their teeth."

Paul and Henry were busy reviving Mr. Pennypacker. They threw fresh water from the lake over his face and poured more down his throat. As they worked with him they noted his emaciated figure. He was only a skeleton, and his fainting even in so short a flight was no cause for wonder. Gradually he revived, coughed and sat up.

"I fell," he said. "It was because I was so weak. What has happened? Are we not moving?"

His eyes were yet dim, and he was not more than half conscious.

"You are with us, your friends. You remember?" said Henry. "We rescued you at the place of the stakes, and we all got away unhurt. We are in a boat now sailing over Lake Erie."

"And I saved you a rifle and ammunition," said Paul. "Here they are, ready for you when you land."

Mr. Pennypacker's dim eyes cleared, and he gazed at the two youths in wonder and affection.

"It is a miracle—a miracle!" he said. Then he added, after a moment's pause: "To escape thus after all the terrible things that I have seen!"

Henry shivered a little, and then he asked the fateful questions.

"And what of Wareville, Mr. Pennypacker? Has it been destroyed? Do Paul's people and mine still live? Have they been taken away as captives? Why were you a prisoner?"

The questions came fast, then they stopped suddenly, and he and Paul waited with white faces for the answers.

"Wareville is not destroyed," replied Mr. Pennypacker. "An English officer named Bird, a harelipped man, came with a great force of Indians, some white men and cannon. They easily took Martin's and Ruddle's stations and all the people in them, but they did not go against Wareville and other places. I think they feared the power of the gathering Kentuckians. I was at Martin's Station on a visit to an old friend when I was captured with the others. Bird and his army then retreated North with the prisoners, more than three hundred in number, mostly women and children."

The old man paused a moment and put his hands over his face.

"I have seen many terrible things," he resumed, "and I cannot forget them. They said that we would be taken to Detroit and be held as prisoners there, but it has been a long and terrible march, many hundreds of miles through the wilderness, and the weak ones—they were many—could not stand it. They died in the

wilderness, often under the Indian tomahawk, and I think that less than half of them will reach Detroit."

The old schoolmaster paused, his voice choked with emotion, and every one of the five muttered something deep and wrathful under his breath.

"I did the best I could," he resumed. "I helped whenever they let me, but the hardships were so great and they permitted us so little rest that I wasted away. I had no more than the strength of a little child. At last the warriors whom you saw took me from the others and turned to the east. We went through the woods until we came to the great lake. A terrible storm came up, but when it died we embarked in two boats and went to the island on which you found me. I did not know the purpose for which I was intended until I saw the stakes with those ghastly relics about them. Then I made up my mind to bear it as best I could."

"You were to be made a burnt offering to the spirits of the lakes," said Henry. "Thank God we came in time. We go now to warn of another and greater expedition, led by Timmendiquas, the famous chief of the Wyandots."



CHAPTER XV

THE PAGES OF A BOOK

None of the five knew how far they were down the lake, but they were able to guide their course by the sun, and, keeping the low bank of forest far beyond gunshot on their right, they moved before a favoring wind. The schoolmaster regained his strength fast. He was old, but a temperate life in the open air reënforced by plenty of exercise, had kept him wiry and strong. Now he sat up and listened to the long tale of the adventures of the five, whom he had not seen for many months previous to their great journey to New Orleans.

"You have done well—you have done more than well," he said. "You have performed magnificent deeds. It is a beautiful land for which we fight, and, although our enemies are many and terrible and we suffer much, we shall surely triumph in the end. Bird with his cannon was compelled to go back. He could have battered down the palisade walls of any of the stations, but he feared the gathering of the white hunters and fighters. Above all he feared the coming of George Rogers Clark, the shield of the border."

Henry's heart throbbed at the name of Clark, renowned victor of Vincennes and Kaskaskia.

"Clark!" he exclaimed. "Is he in Kentucky?"

"There or to the northward. It is said that he is gathering a force to attack the Indian villages."

"If it could only be true!" said Paul.

The others echoed the wish.

Henry remained silent, but for a long time he was very thoughtful. The news that Wareville was untouched by the raid had relieved him immensely, and he was very hopeful also that George Rogers Clark was coming again to the rescue. The name of Clark was one with which to conjure. It would draw all the best men of the border and moreover it would cause Timmendiquas, Caldwell and their great force to turn aside. Once more hope was in the ascendant. Meanwhile, the

sparkling breeze blew them southward, and the eyes of all grew brighter. Fresh life poured into the veins of the schoolmaster, and he sat up, looking with pleasure at the rippling surface of the lake.

"It reminds me in a way of the time when we fled from the place of the giant bones," he said, "and I hope and believe that our flight will end as happily."

"That looks like a long time ago, Mr. Pennypacker," said Tom Ross, "an' we hev traveled a mighty lot since. I reckon that we've been to places that I never heard uv until Paul told about 'em, Troy and Rome an' Alexander—"

"Tom," broke in Shif'less Sol, "you're gettin' mixed. Troy's dead, an' we may hev got close to Rome, but we never did ackshally reach the town. An' ez fur Alexander, that wuz a man an' not a city."

"It don't make no difference," replied Tom, not at all abashed. "What do all them old names amount to anyhow? Like ez not the people that lived in 'em got mixed about 'em themselves."

Mr. Pennypacker smiled.

"It doesn't make any difference about Rome and Troy," he said. "You've been all the way down to New Orleans and you've fought in the East with the Continental troops. Your adventures have been fully as wonderful as those of Ulysses, and you have traveled a greater distance."

They sailed on all through the day, still seeing that low shore almost like a cloud bank on their right, but nothing save water ahead of them. Henry was sure that it was not above sixty miles across the lake, but he calculated that they had been blown about a great deal in the storm, and for all they knew the island might have been far out of their course.

It was evident that they could not reach the south shore before dusk, and they turned in toward the land. Shif'less Sol hailed the turning of the boat's course with delight.

"Boats are all right fur travelin'," he said, "when the wind's blowin' an' you've a sail. A lazy man like me never wants nothin' better, but when the night comes on an' you need to sleep, I want the land. I never feel the land heavin' an' pitchin' under me, an' it gives me more of a safe an' home feelin'."

"Watch, everybody, for a landing place," said Henry, "and Paul, you steer."

The green shore began to rise, showing a long unbroken wall of forest, but the dusk was coming too, and all of them were anxious to make land. Presently, they were only three or four hundred yards from the coast and they skimmed rapidly along it, looking for an anchorage. It was full night before Henry's sharp eyes saw the mouth of a creek almost hidden by tall grass, and, taking down the sail, they pulled the boat into it. They tied their craft securely to a tree, and the night passed without alarm.

They resumed the voyage early the next morning, and that day reached the southern coast of the lake. Here they reluctantly left the boat. They might have found a river emptying into the lake down which they could have gone a hundred or more miles further, but they were not sufficiently acquainted with this part of the country to spend their time in hunting for it. They drew their good little craft as far as they could among the weeds and bushes that grew at the water's edge.

"That's two good boats we've got hid on the water ways," said Shif'less Sol, "besides a half dozen canoes scattered here an' thar, an' mebbe we'll find 'em an' use 'em some day."

"This cost us nothin'," said Jim Hart, "so I reckon we ain't got any right to grieve, 'cause we're givin' up what we never paid fur."

They took out of the boat all the supplies that they could conveniently carry, and then started toward the southwest. The course to Kentucky now led through the heart of the Indian country. Between them and the Ohio lay the great Indian villages of Chillicothe, Piqua and many others, and the journey in any event would be dangerous. But the presence of the old schoolmaster was likely to make it more so, since he could not travel with any approach to the speed and skill of the others. Yet no one thought, for a moment, of blaming him. They were happy to have rescued him, and, moreover, he had brought them the good news that Wareville was untouched by the Bird invasion. Yet speed was vital. The scattered stations must be warned against the second and greater expedition under Caldwell and Timmendiquas. Mr. Pennypacker himself perceived the fact and he urged them to go on and leave him. He felt sure that with a rifle and plenty of ammunition he could reach Wareville in safety.

"You can give me a lot of food," he said, "and doubtless I shall be able to shoot some game. Now go ahead and leave me. Many lives may depend upon it."

They only laughed, but Shif'less Sol and Henry, who had been whispering

together, announced a plan.

"This here expedition is goin' to split," said the shiftless one. "Henry is the fastest runner an' the best woodsman of us all. I hate to admit that he's better than me, but he is, an' he's goin' on ahead. Now you needn't say anything, Mr. Pennypacker, about your makin' trouble, 'cause you don't. We'd make Henry run on afore, even ef you wuzn't with us. That boy needs trainin' down, an' we intend to see that he gits the trainin'."

There was nothing more to be said and the rest was done very quietly and quickly. A brief farewell, a handshake for everyone, and he was gone.

Henry had never been in finer physical condition, and the feeling of responsibility seemed to strengthen him also in both body and mind. In one way he was sorry to leave his comrades and in another he was glad. Alone he would travel faster, and in the wilderness he never feared the loneliness and the silence. A sense, dead or atrophied in the ordinary human being, came out more strongly in him. It seemed to be a sort of divination or prescience, as if messages reached him through the air, like the modern wireless.

He went southward at a long walk half a run for an hour or two before he stopped. Then he stood on the crest of a little hill and saw the deep woods all about him. There was no sign of his comrades whom he had left far behind, nor was there any indication of human life save himself. Yet he had seldom seen anything that appealed to him more than this bit of the wilderness. The trees, oak, beech and elm, were magnificent. Great coiling grape vines now and then connected a cluster of trees, but there was little undergrowth. Overhead, birds chattered and sang among the leaves, and far up in the sky a pair of eagles were speeding like black specks toward the lake. Henry inhaled deep breaths. The odors of the woods came to him and were sweet in his nostrils. All the wilderness filled him with delight. A black bear passed and climbed a tree in search of honey. Two deer came in sight, but the human odor reached them and they fled swiftly away, although they were in no danger from Henry.

Then he, too, resumed his journey, and sped swiftly toward the south through the unbroken forest. He came after a while to marshy country, half choked with fallen wood from old storms. He showed his wonderful agility and strength. He leaped rapidly from one fallen log to another and his speed was scarcely diminished. Now and then he saw wide black pools, and once he crossed a deep creek on a fallen tree. Night found him yet in this marshy region, but he was not

sorry as he had left no trail behind, and, after looking around some time, he found a little oasis of dry land with a mighty oak tree growing in the center. Here he felt absolutely secure, and, making his supper of dried venison, he lay down under the boughs of the oak, with one blanket beneath him and another above him and was soon in a deep and dreamless sleep.

He awoke about midnight to find a gorgeous parade of the moon and all the stars, and he lay for a while watching them through the leaves of the oak. Powerful are nature and habit, and Henry's life was in accordance with both. Lying alone at midnight on that little knoll in the midst of a great marsh in the country of wary and cruel enemies, he was thankful that it had been given to him to be there, and that his lot had been cast among the conditions that surrounded him.

He heard a slight noise to the left of him, but he knew that it was only another hungry bear stealing about. There was a light splash in the pool at the foot of the knoll, but it was only a large fish leaping up and making a noise as it fell back. Far to the south something gleamed fitfully among the trees, but it was only marsh fire. None of these things disturbed him, and knowing that the wilderness was at peace he laid his head back on the turf and fell asleep again. At break of day he was up and away, and until afternoon he sped toward the south in the long running walk which frontiersmen and Indians could maintain for hours with ease. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon, he stopped as suddenly as if he had come to a river's brink. He had struck a great trail, not a path made by three or four persons but by hundreds. He could see their road a hundred yards wide. Here so many feet had trodden that the grass was yet thinner than elsewhere; there lay the bones of deer, eaten clean and thrown away. Further on was a feather trimmed and dyed that had fallen from a scalp lock, and beyond that, a blanket discarded as too old and ragged lay rotting.

These were signs that spoke to Henry as plainly as if the words themselves were uttered. A great wilderness army had passed that way and for a while he was in doubt. Was it the force of Bird coming back to the North? But it was undoubtedly a trail several weeks old. Everything indicated it. The bones had been bleached by the sun, the feather was beaten partly into the earth by rain, and the tattered old blanket had been pawed and torn still further by wolves. But none of these things told what army it might be. He hunted, instead, for some low place that might have been soft and marshy when the warriors passed, and which, when it dried, would preserve the outline of a footstep. He advanced a full mile, following the broad trail which was like an open road to him until he

came to such a place. Then he kneeled and examined it critically. In a half dozen places he saw held in the hard earth the outline of footsteps. They would have been traces of footsteps to most people and nothing more, but he knew that every one of them pointed to the south. A mile further on and in another low place he had full verification of that, which, in fact, he already knew. Here the prints were numerous. Chance had brought him upon the trail of Timmendiguas, and he resolved, for the present, to follow it.

Henry came to this determination because it was extremely important to know the location and plans of the invading army. More news of an attack would not be nearly so valuable as the time and place at which the attack was to be delivered. The course seemed plain to him and he followed the broad trail with speed and ardor, noting all along the indications that the army took no care to conceal itself or hide its trail. Why should it? There was nothing in these woods powerful enough to meet the Anglo-Indian combination.

For four days and for a part of every night he followed without a break. He saw the trail grow fresher, and he judged that he was moving at least twice as fast as the army. He could see where English or Tory boots had crushed down the grass and he saw also the lighter imprints of moccasins. He passed numerous camps marked by ashes, bones of deer, buffalo, bear and smaller animals, and fragments of old worn-out garments, such as an army casts away as it goes along. He read in these things unlimited confidence on the part of both Indians and white men.

An unusually large camp had been made at one place and some bark shelters had been thrown up. Henry inferred that the army had spent two or three days here, and he could account for the fact only on the ground that some division of counsels had occurred. Perhaps the weather had been stormy meanwhile, and the bark shelters had been constructed for the officers and chiefs.

He spent a night in this camp and used one of the shelters, as it began to rain heavily just after dark. It was a little place, but it kept him dry and he watched with interest as the wind and rain drove across the opening and through the forest. He was as close and snug as a bear in its lair, but the storm was heavy with thunder and vivid with lightning. The lightning was uncommonly bright. Frequently the wet boughs and trees stood out in the glare like so much carving, and Henry was forced to shut his dazzled eyes. But he was neither lonely nor afraid. He recognized the tremendous power of nature, but it seemed to him that he had his part here, and the whole was to him a majestic and beautiful

panorama.

Henry remembered the fight that he and his comrades had had at the deserted village, and he found some similarity in his present situation, but he did not anticipate the coming of another enemy, and, secure in the belief, he slept while the storm still blew. When morning came, the rain had ceased. He replenished his food supplies with a deer that he had shot by the way and he cooked a little on one of the heaps of stones that the Indians had used for the same purpose. When he had eaten he glanced at the other bark shelters and he saw the name of Braxton Wyatt cut on one of them. Henry shuddered with aversion. He had seen so much of death and torture done on the border that he could not understand how Simon Girty, Braxton Wyatt and their like could do such deeds upon their own countrymen. But he felt that the day was coming fast when many of them would be punished.

He began the great trail anew upon turf, now soft and springy from the rain, and, refreshed by the long night's sleep in the bark shelter, he went rapidly. Eight or ten miles beyond the camp the trail made an abrupt curve to the eastward. Perhaps they were coming to some large river of which the Indian scouts knew and the turn was made in order to reach a ford, but he followed it another hour and there was no river. The nature of the country also indicated that no great stream could be at hand, and Henry believed that it signified a change of plan, a belief strengthened by a continuation of the trail toward the east as he followed it hour by hour. What did it mean? Undoubtedly it was something of great significance to his enterprise, but now he grew more wary. Since the course of the army was changed bands of Indians might be loitering behind, and he must take every precaution lest he run into one of them. He noticed from time to time small trails coming into the larger one, and he inferred that they were hunting parties sent off from the main body and now returning.

The trail maintained the change and still bore toward the east. It had been obliterated to some extent by the rains, but it was as wide as ever, and Henry knew that no division had taken place. But he was yet convinced that some subject of great importance had been debated at the place of the long camp. On the following day he saw two warriors, and he lay in the bush while they passed only twenty yards away, close enough for him to see that they were Miamis. They were proceeding leisurely, perhaps on a hunting expedition, and it was well for them that they did not search at this point for any enemy. The most formidable figure on all the border lay in the thicket with both rifle and pistol ready. Henry heard them talking, but he had no wish for an encounter even with

the advantage of ambush and surprise on his side. He was concerned with far more important business.

The two Indians looked at the broad trail, but evidently they knew all about it, as it did not claim more than a half minute's attention. Then they went northward, and when Henry was sure that they were a mile or two away, he resumed his pursuit, a single man following an army. Now all his wonderful skill and knowledge and developed power of intuition came into play. Soon he passed the point where the trail had been made fainter by the latest rains, and now it became to his eyes broad and deep. He came to a place where many fires had been built obviously for cooking, and the ashes of the largest fires were near the center of the camp. A half circle of unburned logs lay around these ashes. As the logs were not sunk in the ground at all they had evidently been drawn there recently, and Henry, sitting down on one of them, began to study the problem.

On the other side of the ashes where no logs lay were slight traces in the earth. It seemed to him that they had been made by heels, and he also saw at one place a pinch of brown ashes unlike the white ashes left by the fire. He went over, knelt down and smelled of the brown pinch. The odor was faint, very faint, but it was enough to tell him that it had been made by tobacco. A pipe had been smoked here, not to soothe the mind or body, but for a political purpose. At once his knowledge and vivid imagination reconstructed the whole scene. An important council had been held. The logs had been drawn up as seats for the British and Tory officers. Opposite them on the bare ground the chiefs, after their custom, had sat in Turkish fashion, and the pipe had been passed from one to another until the circle was complete. It must have been a most vital question or they would not have smoked the pipe. He came back to the logs and found in one of them a cut recently made. Someone had been indulging in the western custom of whittling with a strong clasp knife and he had no doubt that it was Braxton Wyatt who had cut his name with the same knife on the bark shelter. It would take one whittling casually a long time to make so deep a cut. Then they had debated there for two or three hours. This meant that the leaders were in doubt. Perhaps Timmendiquas and Caldwell had disagreed. If it could only be true! Then the little stations would have time to renew their breath and strength before another great attack could be made.

He sat on the log and concentrated his mind with great intensity upon the problem. He believed that the master mind in the council had been that of Timmendiquas. He also had inspired the change of route and perhaps Caldwell, Girty and Wyatt had tried to turn him back. Doubtless the course of

Timmendiquas had been inspired by news from the South. Would the trail turn again?

He renewed the eager pursuit. He followed for a full day, but it still ran toward the east, and was growing fresher much faster than before. He argued from this fact that the speed of the army had slackened greatly. On the day after that, although the course of the main body was unchanged he saw where a considerable band had left it and gone northward. What did this mean? The band could not have numbered less than fifty. It must be making for some one of the great Indian towns, Chillicothe or Piqua. Once more the reader of the wilderness page translated. They had received news from the South, and it was not such as they wished. The Indian towns had been threatened by something, and the band had gone to protect or help them.

Shortly before nightfall he noticed another trail made by perhaps twenty warriors coming from the south and joining that of the main body. The briars and grass were tangled considerably, and, as he looked closely, his eyes caught a tint of red on the earth. It was only a spot, and once more the wilderness reader read what was printed in his book. This band had brought wounded men with it, and the tribes were not fighting among themselves. They had encountered the Kentuckians, hunters perhaps, or a larger force maybe, and they had not escaped without damage. Henry exulted, not because blood had been shed, but because some prowling band intent upon scalps had met a check.

He followed the ruddy trail until it emerged into the broader one and then to a point beside it, where a cluster of huge oaks flung a pleasant shade. Here the wounds of the warriors had been bandaged, as fragments of deerskin lay about. One of them had certainly suffered a broken arm or leg, because pieces of stout twigs with which they had made splints lay under one of the trees.

The next day he turned another page in his book, and read about the great feast the army had held. He reached one of the little prairies so common in that region. Not many days before it had been a great berry field, but now it was trampled, and stripped. Seven or eight hundred warriors had eaten of the berries and they had also eaten of much solid food. At the far edge of the prairie just within the shade of the forest he found the skeletons of three buffaloes and several deer, probably shot by the hunters on that very prairie. A brook of fine clear water flowed by, and both banks were lined with footsteps. Here the warriors after eating heavily had come to drink. Many of the trees near by contained the marks of hatchet strokes, and Henry read easily that the warriors

had practiced there with their tomahawks, perhaps for prizes offered by their white leaders. Cut in the soft bark of a beech he read the words "Braxton Wyatt." So he had been at work with the clasp knife again, and Henry inferred that the young renegade was worried and nervous or he would not have such uneasy hands.

Most of the heavier footprints, those that turned out, were on one side of the camp and Henry read from this the fact that the English and Tories had drawn somewhat apart, and that the differences between them and the Indians had become greater. He concentrated his mind again upon the problem, and at length drew his conclusion from what he had read.

The doubts of Timmendiquas concerning his allies were growing stronger, so Henry construed. The great Wyandot chief had been induced with difficulty to believe that the soldiers of the British king would repay their red allies, and would defend the Indian villages if a large force from Kentucky were sent against them. The indications that such a force was moving or would move must be growing stronger. Doubtless the original turn to the eastward had been in order to deflect the attack against the settlements on the upper Ohio, most probably against Fort Henry. Now it was likely that the second plan had been abandoned for a third. What would that third be?

He slept that night in a dense covert about half a mile from the camp, and he was awakened once by the howling of wolves. He knew that they were prowling about the deserted camp in search of remnants of food, and he felt sure that others also were following close behind the Indian army, in order to obtain what they might leave at future camps. Perhaps they might trail him too, but he had his rifle and pistol and, unafraid, he went to sleep again.

The broad trail led the next day to a river which Henry reached about noon. It was fordable, but the army had not crossed. It had stopped abruptly at the brink and then had marched almost due north. Henry read this chapter easily and he read it joyfully. The dissatisfaction among the Indian chiefs had reached a climax, and the river, no real obstacle in itself, had served as the straw to turn them into a new course. Timmendiquas had boldly led the way northward and from Kentucky. He, Red Eagle, Yellow Panther and the rest were going to the Indian villages, and Caldwell and the other white men were forced either to go with them or return to Detroit. He followed the trail for a day and a half, saw it swing in toward the west, and theory became certainty. The army was marching toward Chillicothe and Piqua.

After this last great turn Henry studied the trail with the utmost care. He had read much there, but he intended to read every word that it said. He noticed that the division, the British and Tories on one side and the Indians on the other, continued, and he was quite sure now that he would soon come upon some important development.

He found the next day that for which he was looking. The army had camped in another of the little prairies, and the Indians had held a great dance. The earth, trampled heavily over a regulated space, showed it clearly. Most of the white men had stayed in one group on the right. Here were the deep traces of military boot heels such as the officers might wear.

Again his vivid imagination and power of mental projection into the dark reconstructed the whole scene. The Indians, Wyandots, Shawnees, Miamis and the others, had danced wildly, whirling their tomahawks about their heads, their naked bodies painted in many colors, their eyes glaring with the intoxication of the dance. Timmendiquas and the other chiefs had stood here looking on; over there, on the right, Caldwell and his officers had stood, and few words had passed between officers and chiefs.

"Now the division will become more complete," said Henry to himself, as he followed the trail anew into the forest, and he was so sure of it that he felt no surprise when, within a mile, it split abruptly. The greater trail continued to the west, the smaller turned abruptly to the north, and this was the one that contained the imprints of the military boot heels. Once more he read his text with ease. Timmendiquas and Caldwell had parted company. The English and Tories were returning to Detroit. Timmendiquas, hot with wrath because his white allies would not help him, was going on with the warriors to the defense of their villages.

Without beholding with his own eyes a single act of this army he had watched the growth of the quarrel between red and white and he had been a witness to its culmination. But all these movements had been influenced by some power of which he knew nothing. It was his business to discover the nature of this power, and he would follow the Indian trail a little while longer.

Henry had not suffered for food. Despite the passage of the Indian army the country was so full of game that he was able to shoot what he wished almost when he wished, but he felt that he was now coming so near to the main body that he could not risk a shot which might be heard by outlying hunters or

skirmishers. He also redoubled his care and rarely showed himself on the main trail, keeping to the woods at the side, where he would be hidden, an easy matter, as except for the little prairies the country was covered with exceedingly heavy forest.

The second day after the parting of the two forces he saw smoke ahead, and he believed that it was made by the rear guard. It was a thin column rising above the trees, but the foliage was so heavy and the underbrush so dense that he was compelled to approach very close before he saw that the fire was not made by Indians, but by a group of white men, Simon Girty, Blackstaffe, Quarles, Braxton Wyatt and others, about a dozen in all. They had cooked their noonday meal at a small fire and were eating it apparently in perfect confidence of security. The renegades sat in the dense forest. Underbrush grew thickly to the very logs on which they were sitting, and, as Henry heard the continuous murmur of their voices, he resolved to learn what they were saying. He might discover then the nature of the menace that had broken up or deferred the great invasion. He knew well the great danger of such an attempt but he was fully resolved to make it.

Lying down in the bushes and grass he drew himself slowly forward. His approach was like that of a wild animal stalking its prey. He lay very close to the earth and made no sound that was audible a yard away, pulling himself on, foot by foot. Yet his patience conquered, and presently he lay in the thickest of the undergrowth not far from the renegades, and he could hear everything they said. Girty was speaking, and his words soon showed that he was in no pleasant mood.

"Caldwell and the other English were too stiff," he said. "I don't like Timmendiquas because he doesn't like me, but the English oughtn't to forget that an alliance is for the sake of the two parties to it. They should have come with Timmendiquas and his friends to their villages to help them."

"And all our pretty plans are broken up," said Braxton Wyatt viciously. "If we had only gone on and struck before they could recover from Bird's blows we might have swept Kentucky clean of every station."

"Timmendiquas was right," said Girty. "We have to beware of that fellow at the Falls. He's dangerous. His is a great name. The Kentucky riflemen will come to the call of the man who took Kaskaskia and Vincennes."

The prone figure in the bushes started. He was reading further into this most

interesting of all volumes. What could the "Falls" mean but the Falls of the Ohio at the brand new settlement of Louisville, and the victor of Vincennes and Kaskaskia was none other than the great George Rogers Clark, the sword of the border. He understood. Clark's name was the menace that had turned back Timmendiguas. Undoubtedly the hero was gathering a new force and would give back Bird's blows. Timmendiguas wished to protect his own, but the English had returned to Detroit. The prone figure in the bushes rejoiced without noise.

"What will be the result of it all?" asked Blackstaffe, his tone showing anxiety.

Girty—most detested name in American history, next to that of Benedict Arnold—considered. The side of his face was turned to Henry, and the bold youth wished that they were standing in the open, face to face, arms in hand. But he was compelled to lie still and wait. Nor could he foresee that Girty, although he was not destined to fall in battle, should lose everything, become an exile, go blind and that no man should know when he met death or where his body lay. The renegade at length replied:

"It means that we cannot now destroy Kentucky without a supreme effort. Despite all that we do, despite all our sieges and ambuscades, new men continually come over the mountains. Every month makes them stronger, and yet only this man Clark and a few like him have saved them so far. If Caldwell and a British force would make a campaign with us, we might yet crush Clark and whatever army he may gather. We may even do it without Caldwell. In this vast wilderness which the Indians know so well it is almost impossible for a white army to escape ambush. I am, for that reason, in favor of going on and joining Timmendiguas. I want a share in the victory that our side will win at the Indian towns. I am sure that the triumph will be ours."

"It seems the best policy to me," said Braxton Wyatt. "Timmendiguas does not like me any more than he does you, but the Indians appreciate our help. I suppose we'd better follow at once."

"Take it easy," said Girty. "There's no hurry. We can overtake Timmendiguas in a day, and we are quite sure that there are no Kentuckians in the woods. Besides, it will take Clark a considerable time to assemble a large force at the Falls, and weeks more to march through the forest. You will have a good chance then, Braxton, to show your skill as a forest leader. With a dozen good men hanging on his flank you ought to cause Mr. Clark much vexation."

"It could be done," replied Wyatt, "but there are not many white men out here

fighting on our side. In the East the Tories are numerous, and I had a fine band there, but it was destroyed in that last fight at the big Indian town."

"Your old playmate, Henry Ware, had something to do with that, did he not?" asked Girty, not without a touch of sarcasm.

"He did," replied Wyatt venomously, "and it's a good thing that he's now a prisoner at Detroit. He and those friends of his could be both the eyes and ears of Clark. It would have been better if Timmendiquas had let the Indians make an end to him. Only in that manner could we be sure that he would always be out of the way."

"I guess you're right," said Girty.

The prone figure in the bushes laughed silently, a laugh that did not cause the movement of a single muscle, but which nevertheless was full of heartfelt enjoyment. What would Wyatt and Girty have thought if they had known that the one of whom they were talking, whom they deemed a prisoner held securely at Detroit, was lying within ten feet of them, as free as air and with weapons of power?

Henry had heard enough and he began to creep away, merely reversing the process by which he had come. It was a harder task than the first, but he achieved it deftly, and after thirty yards he rose to his feet, screening himself behind the trunk of an oak. He could still see the renegades, and the faint murmur of their voices yet reached him. That old temptation to rid the earth of one of these men who did so much harm came back to him, but knowing that he had other work to do he resisted it, and, passing in a wide circle about them, followed swiftly on the trail of Timmendiquas.

He saw the Indian camp that night, pitched in a valley. Numerous fires were burning and discipline was relaxed somewhat, but so many warriors were about that there was no opportunity to come near. He did not wish, however, to make any further examination. Merely to satisfy himself that the army had made no further change in its course was enough. After lingering a half hour or so he turned to the north and traveled rapidly a long time, having now effected a complete circuit since he left his comrades. It was his purpose now to rejoin them, which he did not believe would prove a very difficult task. Shif'less Sol, the leader in his absence, was to come with the party down the bank of the Scioto, unless they found Indians in the way. Their speed would be that of the slowest of their number, Mr. Pennypacker, and he calculated that he would meet

them in about three days.

Bearing in toward the right he soon struck the banks of the Scioto and followed the stream northward all the next day. He saw several Indian canoes upon the river, but he was so completely hidden by the dense foliage on the bank that he was safe from observation. It was not a war party, the Indians were merely fishing. Some of the occupants of the boats were squaws. It was a pleasant and peaceful occupation, and for a few moments Henry envied them, but quickly dismissing such thoughts he proceeded northward again at the old running walk.

On the afternoon of the second day Henry lay in the bushes and uttered their old signal, the cry of the wolf repeated with certain variations, and as unmistakable as are the telegrapher's dots and dashes of to-day. There was no answer. He had expected none. It was yet too soon, according to his calculations, but he would not risk their passing him through an unexpected burst of speed. All that afternoon and the next morning he repeated the signal at every half hour. Still the same silence. Nothing stirred in the great woods, but the leaves and bushes swaying before the wind. Several times he examined the Scioto, but he saw no more Indians.

About noon of the third day when he uttered the signal an answer, very faint, came from a point far to the west. At first he was not sure of the variations, the sound had traveled such a great distance, but having gone in that direction a quarter of a mile, he repeated it. Then it came back, clear and unmistakable. Once more he read his book with ease. Shif'less Sol and the others were near by and they would await him. His pulse leaped with delight. He would be with these brave comrades again and he would bring them good news.

He advanced another two or three hundred yards and repeated the cry. The answer instantly came from a point very near at hand. Then he pressed boldly through the bushes and Shif'less Sol walked forward to meet him followed by the others, all gaunt with travel, but strong and well.



CHAPTER XVI

THE RIVER FIGHT

Henry shook hands with them all in turn and they sat down under the shade of an oak. Mr. Pennypacker looked him over slowly and rather quizzically.

"Henry," he said, "I scarcely realize that you were a pupil of mine. Here in the wilderness I see that you are the teacher and that I am a pretty poor and limping sort of pupil."

"You can teach us all many and useful things," said Henry modestly.

"What did you learn, Henry?" asked Paul.

Henry told the tale in brief, concise words, and the others expressed pleasure at his news.

"And so Clark is coming," said the schoolmaster thoughtfully. "It is wonderful what the energy and directing mind of one man can do. That name alone is enough to change the nature of a whole campaign. 'Tis lucky that we have this Cæsar of the backwoods to defend us. What is your plan now, Henry?"

Mr. Pennypacker, like the others, instinctively looked upon Henry as the leader.

"We'll go straight to the Falls of the Ohio," replied Henry. "It will take us two or three weeks to get there, and we'll have to live mostly on our rifles, but that's where we're needed. Clark will want all the men he can get."

"I am old," said the schoolmaster, "and it has not been my business hitherto to fight, but in this great crisis of Kentucky I shall try to do my part. I too shall offer my services to George Rogers Clark."

"He'll be glad to get you," said Tom Ross.

After the brief rest they began the long journey from what is now the middle part of the state of Ohio to the Falls of the Ohio and the new settlement of Louisville there. It was an arduous undertaking, particularly for the schoolmaster, as it led all the way through woods frequented by alert Indians, and, besides deep rivers there were innumerable creeks, which they could cross only by swimming.

Bearing this in mind Henry's thoughts returned to the first boat which they had hidden in the bushes lining the banks of one of the Ohio's tributaries. As the whole country was now swarming with the warriors the passage down the Ohio would undoubtedly be more dangerous than the path through the woods, but the boat and the river would save a vast expenditure of strength. Henry laid the two plans before the others.

"What do you say, Sol?" he asked.

"I'm fur the boat an' the river," replied the shiftless one. "I'd rather be rowed by Jim Hart than walk five hundred miles."

"And you, Paul?"

"I say take to the boat. We may have to fight. We've held them off on the water before and I'm sure we can do it again."

"And you, Tom?"

"The boat."

"And you, Jim?"

"The boat, an' make Sol thar do his share uv the work."

"What do you say, Mr. Pennypacker?"

"I'm not a forester, and as all of you are for the boat, so am I."

"That seems to make it unanimous, and in an hour we'll start for our hidden navy. It's at the edge of the next big river east of the Scioto and we ought to steer a pretty straight course for it."

They traveled at a good pace. Mr. Pennypacker, while not a woodsman, was a good walker, and, despite his age, proved himself tough and enduring. They crossed Indian trails several times, but did not come into contact with any of the warriors. They swam three or four deep creeks, but in four days they came to the river not many miles above the place at which they had hidden the boat. Then they descended the stream and approached the point with some anxiety.

"Suppose the boat isn't there," said Paul; "suppose the Indians have found it."

"We ain't supposing'," said Shif'less Sol. "We're shore it's thar."

They waded among the bushes growing at the water's edge and the shiftless one, who was in advance, uttered a suppressed cry of pleasure.

"Here it is, jest ez we left it," he said.

The boat had been untouched, but Henry knew all the time the chances were in favor of their finding it so. With the keenest delight, they pulled it out into the stream and looked it over. They had made of it a cache and they had left in it many valuable articles which they would need. Among these were four extra rifles, two fine fowling pieces, a large supply of powder and lead, axes and hatchets, and extra clothing and blankets. They had stocked the boat well on leaving Pittsburgh, and now it was like retaking a great treasure. Shiftless Sol climbed aboard and with a deep sigh of pleasure reclined against the side.

"Now, Saplin'," he said, "I'll go to sleep while you row me down to Louisville."

"We'll do most of our traveling by night," said Henry, "and as we'll have the current with us I don't think that you or Jim, Sol, will have to work yourselves to death."

After their examination of the boat to see that everything was all right, they pulled it back into the bushes, not intending to start until the dark set in. There was a considerable supply of salted food, coffee and tea on board, but Henry and Sol killed two deer farther up the river bank which they quickly cleaned and dressed. They now thought themselves provisioned for the trip to the Falls of the Ohio, and they carried, in addition, fishing tackle which they could use at any time.

They pulled clear of the bushes about 8 o'clock in the evening and rowed down the river. But as the stream was bank full and running fast, they did not have to make any great effort. Toward midnight when they reached some of the wider parts of the river they set the sail and went ahead at a swifter pace. Henry calculated that they could reach the Ohio slightly after dawn, but as the night was uncommonly clear, with the promise of a very brilliant day to follow, they furled their sails at least two hours before sunrise, and, finding another shallow cove, drew their boat into it among the bushes.

"Now for a sleep," said Henry. "Tom and I will keep watch until noon and then Sol and Paul will take our places. At night we will start again."

"And where does my watch come, pray?" asked Mr. Pennypacker.

"We want you to help us to-night," replied Henry. "We'll need your knowledge of the sail and the oars."

"Very well," replied the unsuspecting schoolmaster. "It is understood that I do extra work to-night, because I do not watch to-day."

Henry, when he turned his face away, smiled a little. It was understood among them all that they were to spare the schoolmaster as much as possible, and to do so, they used various little devices. Theirs was a good roomy boat and those who were to sleep first disposed themselves comfortably, while Henry sat in the prow and Tom in the stern, both silent and apparently listless, but watching with eyes and ears alike. The dawn came, and, as they had foreseen, it was a bright, hot day. It was so close among the bushes that the sleepers stirred restlessly and beads of perspiration stood on the faces of the watchers. Not a breath of air stirred either in the woods or on the river. Henry was glad when it was their turn to sleep, and when he awoke, night had come with its cool shadows and a wind also that dispelled the breathless heat.

Then they pulled out of the bushes and floated again with the stream, but they did not hoist their sail. The air after the close heat of the day was charged with electricity, and they looked for a storm. It came about 11 o'clock, chiefly as a display of thunder and lightning. The flashes of electricity dazzled them and continued without a break for almost an hour. The roar of the thunder was like the unbroken discharges of great batteries, but both wind and rain were light. Several times the lightning struck with a tremendous crash in the woods about them, but the boat glided on untouched. About midnight they came out into the flood of the Ohio, and, setting their sail, they steered down the center of the stream.

All of them felt great relief, now that they were on the wide Ohio. On the narrower tributary they might have been fired upon from either shore, but the Ohio was a half mile and sometimes a full mile from bank to bank. As long as they kept in the middle of the stream they were practically safe from the bullets of ambushed Indians.

They took turns at sleeping, but it was not necessary now to use the oars. The wind was still strong, and the sail carried them at great speed down the river. They felt safe and comfortable, but it was a wild and weird scene upon which they looked. The banks of the Ohio here were high and clothed in dense forest which, in the glare of the lightning, looked like gigantic black walls on either

shore. The surface of the river itself was tinted under the blaze as if with fire, and often it ran in red waves before the wind. The darkness was intense, but the flashes of lightning were so vivid that they easily saw their way.

"We're going back on our old path now, Paul," said Henry. "You remember how we came up the river with Adam Colfax, fought the fleet of Timmendiquas, and helped save the fort?"

"I couldn't well forget it," replied Paul. "Why, I can see it all again, just as if it happened only yesterday, but I'm mighty glad that Timmendiquas is not here now with a fleet."

"Will we tie up to the bank by day as we did on the other river?" asked Mr. Pennypacker.

"Not on the Ohio," replied Henry. "As white immigrants are now coming down it, Indians infest both shores, so we'll keep straight ahead in the middle of the stream. We may be attacked there, but perhaps we can either whip or get away from anything that the Indians now have on the river."

While they talked Shif'less Sol looked carefully to their armament. He saw that all the extra rifles and pistols were loaded and that they lay handy. But he had little to say and the others, after the plan had been arranged, were silent. The wind became irregular. Now and then gusts of it lashed the surface of the giant stream, but toward morning it settled into a fair breeze. The thunder and lightning ceased by that time, and there was promise of a good day.

The promise was fulfilled and they floated peacefully on until afternoon. Then shots were fired at them from the northern bank, but the bullets spattered the water a full fifty yards short. Henry and Sol, who had the keenest eyes, could make out the outlines of Indians on the shore, but they were not troubled.

"I'm sure it's just a small hunting party," said Henry, "and they can do us no harm. Their bullets can't reach us, and you can't run along the banks of a great river and keep up with a boat in the stream."

"That's true," said Shif'less Sol, "an' I think I'll tell 'em so. I always like to hurt the feelin's of a bloodthirsty savage that's lookin' fur my scalp."

He opened his mouth to its widest extent and gave utterance to a most extraordinary cry, the like of which had perhaps never before been heard in those woods. It rose in a series of curves and undulations. It had in it something of the

howl of the wolf and also the human note. It was essentially challenging and contemptuous. Anybody who heard it was bound to take it as a personal insult, and it became most effective when it died away in a growling, spitting noise, like the defiance of an angry cat. Henry fairly jumped in his seat when he heard it.

"Sol," he exclaimed, "what under the sun do you mean?"

The mouth of the shiftless one opened again, but this time in a wide grin of delight.

"I wuz jest tellin' them Injuns that I didn't like 'em," he replied. "Do you reckon they understood?"

"I think they did," replied Henry with emphasis.

"That bein' so, I'll tell 'em ag'in. Look out, here she comes!"

Again the mouth of Shif'less Sol swung wide, and again he uttered that fearful yell of defiance, abuse, contempt and loathing, a yell so powerful that it came back in repeated echoes without any loss of character. The Indians on the bank, stung by it, uttered a fierce shout and fired another volley, but the bullets fell further short than ever. Shif'less Sol smiled in deep content.

"See how I'm makin' 'em waste good ammunition," he said. "I learned that trick from Paul's tales o' them old Greeks an' Trojans. As fur ez I could make out when a Greek an' Trojan come out to fight one another, each feller would try to talk the other into throwin' his spear fust, an' afore he wuz close enough to take good aim. All them old heroes done a heap o' talkin' an' gen'ally they expected to get somethin' out o' it."

"Undoubtedly the Greeks and Trojans had thrilling war cries," said Mr. Pennypacker, "but I doubt, Mr. Hyde, whether they ever had any as weird as yours."

"Which shows that I'm jest a leetle ahead o' any o' them old fellers," said Shif'less Sol in tones of deep satisfaction.

The boat, moving swiftly before the wind, soon left the Indians on the northern bank far behind, and once more they were at peace with the wilderness. The river was now very beautiful. It had not yet taken on the muddy tint characteristic of its lower reaches, the high and sloping banks were covered with beautiful forest, and coming from north and south they saw the mouths of creeks

and rivers pouring the waters of great regions into the vast main stream. Henry, as captain of the boat, regarded these mouths with a particularly wary and suspicious eye. Such as they formed the best ambush for Indian canoes watching to pounce upon the immigrant boats coming down the Ohio. Whenever he saw the entrance of a tributary he always had the boat steered in toward the opposite shore, while all except the steersman sat with their rifles across their knees until the dangerous locality was passed safely.

They anchored a little after nightfall. The current was very gentle and fortunately their anchor would hold near the middle of the stream. Henry wished to give rest to a part of his crew and he knew also that in the night they would pass the mouth of the Licking, opposite the site of Cincinnati, a favorite place of ambush for the Indian boats. All the indications pointed to some dark hours ahead, and that was just the kind they needed for running such a gauntlet.

This time it was he and Tom Ross who watched while the others slept, and some hours after dark they saw fitful lights on the northern shore, appearing and reappearing at three or four points. They believed them to be signals, but they could not read them.

"Of course there are warriors in those woods," said Henry. "Timmendiquas, knowing that Clark has gathered or is gathering his forces at the Falls, will send his best scouts to watch him. They may have seen us, and they may be telling their friends on the south side of the river that we are here."

"Mebbe so," said Tom Ross.

Changing their plans they took up the anchor and the boat, driven by wind and current, moved on at good speed. Tom steered and Henry sat near him, watching both shores. The others, stowed here and there, slept soundly. The lights flickered on the northern shore for a few minutes, and then a curve of the stream shut them out. The night itself was bright, a full moon and many stars turning the whole broad surface of the river to silver, and making distinct any object that might appear upon it. Henry would have preferred a dark and cloudy night for the passage by the mouth of the Licking, but since they did not have it they must go on anyhow.

They sailed quietly with the current for several hours, and the night showed no signs of darkening. Once Henry thought he saw a light on the southern shore, but it was gone so quickly that keen-eyed as he was he could not tell whether it was reality or merely fancy.

"Did you see it, Tom?" he asked.

"I did, or at least I thought I did."

"Then, since we both saw it, it must have been reality, and it indicates to my mind that Indians are on the south as well as on the north bank. Maybe they have seen us here."

"Mebbe."

"Which renders it more likely that they may be on watch at the mouth of the Licking for anything that passes."

"Mebbe."

"According to my calculation we'll be there in another hour. What do you think?"

"I say one hour, too."

"And we'll let the boys sleep on until we see danger, if danger comes."

"That's what I'd do," replied Tom, casting a glance at the sleeping figures.

No word was spoken again for a long time, but, as they approached the dangerous mouth, Tom steered the boat further and further toward the northern bank. Both remembered the shores here from their passage up the Ohio, and Henry knew that the gap in the wall of trees on the south betokened the mouth of the Licking. Tom steadily bore in toward the northern bank until he was not more than thirty yards from the trees. The moon and the stars meanwhile, instead of favoring them, seemed to grow brighter. The river was a great moving sheet of silver, and the boat stood out upon it black and upright.

Henry, with his eyes upon the black wall, saw two dots appear there and then two more, and he knew at once their full significance. The ambush had been laid, not for them in particular, but for any boat that might pass.

"Tom," he said, "the Indian canoes are coming. Keep straight on down the river. I'll wake the others."

The remaining four aroused, took their rifles and gazed at the black dots which had now increased from four to six, and which were taking the shape of long canoes with at least half a dozen paddlers in every one. Two of the canoes carried sails which indicated to Henry the presence of renegades.

"In a fight at close quarters they'd be too strong for us," said Henry. "That force must include at least forty warriors, but we can run our boat against the northern shore and escape into the woods. Are you in favor of our doing that?"

"No," they answered with one accord.

Henry laughed.

"I knew your answer before I asked the question," he said, "and as we are not going to escape into the woods we must prepare for a river race and a battle. I think we could leave them behind without much trouble, if it were not for those two boats with the sails."

"Let 'em come," said Shif'less Sol. "We've got plenty of rifles an' we can hit at longer range than they can."

"Still, it's our business to avoid a fight if possible," said Henry. "George Rogers Clark wants whole men to fight, not patients to nurse. Tom, you keep on steering and all the rest of us will take a hand at the oars."

The boat shot forward under the new impetus, but behind them the six canoes, particularly the two on which sails had been fitted, were coming fast. The night was so bright that they could see the warriors painted and naked to the waist sending their paddles in great sweeps through the water. It was evident also that they had enough extra men to work in relays, which gave them a great advantage.

"It's to be a long chase," said Henry, "but I'm thinking that they'll overtake us unless we interfere with them in some rude manner."

"Meaning these?" said Shif'less Sol, patting one of the rifles.

"Meaning those," said Henry; "and it's lucky that we're so well provided. Those boats are not led by ordinary warriors. See how they're using every advantage."

They're spreading out exactly as Indian pursuers do on land, in order that some portion of their force may profit by any turn or twist of ours."

It was so. The pursuing fleet was spreading out like a fan, two boats following near the northern shore, two near the southern and two in the center. Evidently they intended neglecting no precaution to secure what many of them must already have regarded as a certain prize. Mr. Pennypacker regarded them with dilated eyes.

"A formidable force," he said, "and I judge by their actions that they will prove tenacious."

"Shorely," said Shif'less Sol, as he tapped the rifle again, "but you must rec'lect, Mr. Pennypacker, that we've oncommon good rifles an' some o' us are oncommon good shots. It might prove better fur 'em ef they didn't come so fast. Henry, kin you make out any white faces in them two boats in the center?"

"It's pretty far to tell color, but a figure in the right-hand boat, sitting close to the mast, looks to me mightily like that of Braxton Wyatt."

"I had just formed the same notion. That's the reason I asked, an' ef I ain't mistook, Simon Girty's in the other boat. Oh, Henry, do you think I kin git a shot at him?"

"I doubt it," replied Henry. "Girty is cunning and rarely exposes himself. There, they are firing, but it's too soon."

Several shots were discharged from the leading boats, but they fell far short. Evidently they were intended as threats, but, besides Henry's comment, the pursued took no notice of them. Then the savages, for the first time, uttered their war cry, but the fugitives did not answer.

"Ef they mean by that yell that they've got us," said Shif'less Sol, "then they might ez well yell ag'in."

"Still, I think they're gaining upon us somewhat," said Henry, "and it may be necessary before long to give them a hint or two."

Now it was his turn to tap the rifle significantly, and Henry with a calculating eye measured the distance between their own and the leading boat. He saw that the warriors were gaining. It was a slow gain, but in time it would bring them within easy rifle shot. The fleeing boat carried many supplies which weighed her

down to a certain extent, but the pursuing boats carried nothing except the pursuers themselves. Henry raised his rifle a little and looked again at the distance.

"A little too fur yet, Henry," said Shif'less Sol.

"I think so, too," said Henry. "We'd best wait until we're absolutely sure."

A cry broke from Paul.

"Look ahead!" he cried. "We've enemies on both sides!"

The alarming news was true. Two large boats loaded with warriors had shot out from the northern bank four or five hundred yards ahead, and were coming directly into the path of the fugitives. A yell full of malice and triumph burst from the savages in the pursuing canoes, and those in the canoes ahead answered it with equal malice and triumph. The fate of the fugitives seemed to be sealed, but the five had been in many a close place before, and no thought of despair entered their minds. Henry at once formed the plan and as usual they acted with swift decision and boldness. Tom was now steering and Henry cried to him:

"Shelter yourself and go straight ahead. Lie low, the rest of you fire at those before us!"

Their boat went swiftly on. The two ahead of them drew directly into their path, but veered a little to one side, when they saw with what speed the other boat was approaching. They also began to fire, but the six, sheltered well, heard the bullets patter upon the wooden sides and they bided their time. Henry, peeping over, marked the boat on the right and saw a face which he knew to be that of a white man. In an instant he recognized the renegade Quarles and rage rose within him. Without the aid of the renegades, more ruthless than the red men themselves, the Indians could never have accomplished so much on the border. He raised his rifle a little and now he cocked it. Shif'less Sol glanced up and saw the red fire in his eye.

"What is it, Henry?" he asked.

"The renegade Quarles is in the boat on the right. As we have to run a gauntlet here, and there will be some shooting, I mean that one of the renegades shall never trouble us any more."

"I'm sorry it's not Girty or Wyatt," said the shiftless one, "but since it ain't either

o' them it might ez well be Quarles. He might be missed, but he wouldn't be mourned."

The boat, with Tom Ross steering, kept straight ahead with undiminished speed, the wind filling out the sail. The Indians in the two boats before them fired again, but the bullets as before thudded upon the wooden sides.

But Henry, crouching now with his cocked rifle, saw his opportunity. Quarles, raising himself up in the canoe, had fired and he was just taking his rifle from his shoulder. Henry fired directly at the tanned forehead of this wicked man, who had so often shed the blood of his own people, and the bullet crashed through the brain. The renegade half rose, and then fell from the boat into the stream, which hid his body forever. A cry of rage and fear came from the Indians and the next moment four other marksmen, two from the right and two from the left, fired into the opposing canoes. The schoolmaster also fired, although he was not sure that he hit any foe; but it was a terrible volley nevertheless. The two Indian boats contained both dead and wounded. Paddles were dropped into the water and floated out of reach. Moreover, Tom Ross, when his cunning eye saw the confusion, steered his own boat in such a manner that it struck the canoe on the right a glancing blow, sidewiping it, as it were.

Tom and his comrades were staggered by the impact, but their boat, uninjured, quickly righted itself and went on. The Indian canoe was smashed in and sank, leaving its living occupants struggling in the water, while the other canoe was compelled to turn and pick them up.

"Well done, Mr. Ross!" called Mr. Pennypacker. "That was a happy thought. You struck them as the old Roman galleys with their beaks struck their antagonists, and you have swept them from our path."

"That's true, Mr. Pennypacker," said Shif'less Sol, "but don't you go to stickin' your head up too much. Thar, didn't I tell you! Ef many more bullets like that come, you'd git a nice hair cut an' no charge."

A bullet had clipped a gray lock from the top of the schoolmaster's head, but flattening himself on the bottom of the boat he did not give the Indians a second shot. Meanwhile Henry and the others were sending bullets into the crews of the boats behind them. They did not get a chance at Girty and Wyatt, who were evidently concealing themselves from these foes, whom they knew to be such deadly sharpshooters, but they were making havoc among the warriors. It was a fire so deadly that all the canoes stopped and let the boat pass out of range. The

little band sent back their own shout, taunting and triumphant, and then, laying aside their rifles, they took up the oars again. They sped forward and as the night darkened the Indian canoes sank quickly out of sight.

"I think we'll have the right of way now to the Falls," said Henry.



CHAPTER XVII

THE ROAD TO WAREVILLE

Henry made no mistake when he predicted that they would have the right of way to the Falls. Days passed and the broad river bore them peacefully onward, the wind blowing into ripples its yellow surface which the sunshine turned into deep gold. The woods still formed a solid bank of dark green on either shore, and they knew that warriors might be lurking in them, but they kept to the middle of the current, and the Ohio was so wide that they were fairly safe from sharpshooters. In addition to the caution, habitual to borderers, they usually kept pretty well sheltered behind the stout sides of their boat.

"Tain't no use takin' foolish risks," said Shif'less Sol wisely. "A bullet that you ain't lookin' fur will hurt jest ez bad ez one that you're expectin', an' the surprise gives a lot o' pain, too."

Hence they always anchored at night, far out in the water, put out all lights, and never failed to keep watch. Several times they detected signs of their wary enemy. Once they saw flames twinkling on the northern shore, and twice they heard signal cries in the southern woods. But the warriors did not make any nearer demonstration, and they went on, content to leave alone when they were left alone.

All were eager to see the new settlement at the Falls, of which reports had come to them through the woods, and they were particularly anxious to find it a tower of strength against the fresh Indian invasion. Their news concerning it was not yet definite, but they heard that the first blockhouse was built on an island. Hence every heart beat a little faster when they saw the low outline of a wooden island rising from the bosom of the Ohio.

"According to all we've heard," said Henry, "that should be the place."

"It shorely is," said Shif'less Sol, "an' besides I see smoke risin' among them trees."

"Yes, and I see smoke rising on the southern shore also," said Henry.

"Which may mean that they've made a second settlement, one on the mainland," said Paul.

As they drew nearer Henry sent a long quavering cry, the halloo of the woodsman, across the waters, and an answering cry came from the edge of the island. Then a boat containing two white men, clad in deerskin, put out and approached the five cautiously. Henry and Paul stood up to show that they were white and friends, and the boat then came swiftly.

"Who are you?" called one of the men.

Henry replied, giving their identity briefly, and the man said:

"My name is Charles Curd, and this is Henry Palmer. We live at Louisville and we are on the watch for friends and enemies alike. We're glad to know that you're the former."

They escorted the five back to the island, and curious people came down to the beach to see the forest runners land. Henry and his comrades for their part were no less curious and soon they were inspecting this little settlement which for protection had been cast in a spot surrounded by the waters of the Ohio. They saw Corn Island, a low stretch of soil, somewhat sandy but originally covered with heavy forest, now partly cleared away. Yet the ax had left sycamores ten feet through and one hundred feet high.

The whole area of the island was only forty-three acres, but it already contained several fields in which fine corn and pumpkins were raised. On a slight rise was built the blockhouse in the form of an Egyptian cross, the blockhouse proper forming the body of the cross, while the cabins of the settlers constituted the arms. In addition to the sycamores, great cottonwoods had grown here, but nearly all of them had been cut down, and then had been split into rails and boards. Back of the field and at the western edge of the river, was a magnificent growth of cane, rising to a height of more than twenty feet.

This little settlement, destined to be one of the great cities of the West, had been founded by George Rogers Clark only two or three years before, and he had founded it in spite of himself. Starting from Redstone on the Monongahela with one hundred and fifty militia for the conquest of the Illinois country he had been accompanied by twenty pioneer families who absolutely refused to be turned back. Finding that they were bound to go with him Clark gave them his protection, but they stopped at Corn Island in the Ohio and there built their

blockhouse. Now it was a most important frontier post, a stronghold against the Indians.

Before they ate of the food offered to them Henry looked inquiringly at the smoke on the southern shore. Curd said with some pride:

"We're growing here. We spread to the mainland in a year. Part of our people have moved over there, and some new ones have come from Virginia. On the island and the mainland together, we've now got pretty nearly two hundred people and we've named our town Louisville in honor of King Louis of France who is helping us in the East. We've got history, too, or rather it was made before we came here. An old chief, whom the whites called Tobacco, told George Rogers Clark that the Alligewi, which is their name for the Mound Builders, made their last stand here against the Shawnees, Miamis and other Indians who now roam in this region. A great battle occurred on an island at the Falls and the Mound Builders were exterminated. As for myself, I know nothing about it, but it's what Tobacco said."

Paul's curiosity was aroused instantly and he made a mental note to investigate the story, when he found an opportunity, but he was never able to get any further than the Indian legend which most likely had a basis of truth. For the present, he and his comrades were content with the welcome which the people on Corn Island gave them, a welcome full of warmth and good cheer. Their hosts put before them water cooled in gourds, cakes of Indian meal, pies of pumpkin, all kinds of game, and beef and pork besides. While they ate and drank Henry, who as usual was spokesman, told what had occurred at Detroit, further details of the successful advance of the Indians and English under Bird, of which they had already heard, and the much greater but postponed scheme of destruction planned by Timmendiquas, de Peyster, Girty and their associates. Curd, Palmer and the others paled a little under their tan as they listened, but their courage came back swiftly.

"At any rate," said Curd, "we've got a man to lead us against them, a man who strikes fast, sure and hard, George Rogers Clark, the hero of Vincennes and Kaskaskia, the greatest leader in all the West."

"Why, is he here?" exclaimed Henry in surprise. "I thought he was farther East."

"You'll see him inside of half an hour. He was at the other blockhouse on the southern shore, and we sent up a signal that strangers were here. There he comes now."

A boat had put out from the southern bank. It contained three men, two of whom were rowing, while the third sat upright in a military fashion. All his body beneath his shoulders was hidden by the boat's sides, but his coat was of the Continental buff and blue, while a border cap of raccoon skin crowned his round head. Such incongruous attire detracted nothing from the man's dignity and presence. Henry saw that his face was open, his gaze direct, and that he was quite young. He was looking straight toward the five who had come with their new friends down to the river's edge, and, when he sprang lightly upon the sand, he gave them a military salute. They returned it in like manner, while they looked with intense curiosity at the famous leader of the border forces. Clark turned to Henry, whose figure and bearing indicated the chief.

"You come from the North, from the depths of the Indian country, I take it," he said.

"From the very heart of it," replied the youth. "I was a prisoner at Detroit, and my comrades were near by outside the walls. We have also seen Bird returning from his raid with his prisoners and we know that Timmendiquas, de Peyster, Girty, Caldwell, and the others are going to make a supreme effort to destroy every settlement west of the Alleghanies. A great force under Timmendiquas, Caldwell and Girty came part of the way but turned back, partly, I think, because of divisions among themselves and partly because they heard of your projected advance. But it will come again."

The shoulders in the military coat seemed to stiffen and the eyes under the raccoon skin cap flashed.

"I did want to go back to Virginia," said Clark, "but I'm glad that I'm here. Mr. Ware, young as you are, you've seen a lot of forest work, I take it, and so I ask you what is the best way to meet an attack?"

"To attack first."

"Good! good! That was my plan! Report spoke true! We'll strike first. We'll show these officers and chiefs that we're not the men to sit idly and wait for our foe. We'll go to meet him. Nay more, we'll find him in his home and destroy him. Doesn't that appeal to you, my lads?"

"It does," said five voices, emphatic and all together, and then Henry added, speaking he knew for his comrades as well as himself:

"Colonel Clark, we wish to volunteer for the campaign that we know you have planned. Besides the work that we have done here in the West, we have seen service in the East. We were at Wyoming when the terrible massacre occurred, and we were with General Sullivan when he destroyed the Iroquois power. But, sir, I wish to say that we do best in an independent capacity, as scouts, skirmishers, in fact as a sort of vanguard."

Clark laughed and clapped a sinewy hand upon Henry's shoulder.

"I see," he said. "You wish to go with me to war, but you wish at the same time to be your own masters. It might be an unreasonable request from some people, but, judging from what I see of you and what I have heard of you and your comrades, it is just the thing. You are to watch as well as fight for me. Were you not the eyes of the fleet that Adam Colfax brought up the Ohio?"

Henry blushed and hesitated, but Clark exclaimed heartily:

"Nay, do not be too modest, my lad! We are far apart here in the woods, but news spreads, nevertheless, and I remember sitting one afternoon and listening to an old friend, Major George Augustus Braithwaite, tell a tale of gallant deeds by river and forest, and how a fort and fleet were saved largely through the efforts of five forest runners, two of whom were yet boys. Major Braithwaite gave me detailed descriptions of the five, and they answer so exactly to the appearance of you and your comrades that I am convinced you are the same. Since you are so modest, I will tell you to your face that I'd rather have you five than fifty ordinary men. Now, young sir, blush again and make the most of it!"

Henry did blush, and said that the Colonel gave them far too much credit, but at heart he, like the other four, felt a great swell of pride. Their deeds in behalf of the border were recognized by the great leader, and surely it was legitimate to feel that one had not toiled and fought in vain for one's people.

A few minutes later they sat down with Clark and some of the others under the boughs of the big sycamore, and gave a detailed account of their adventures, including all that they had seen from the time they had left for New Orleans until the present moment.

"A great tale! a great tale!" said Clark, meditatively, "and I wish to add, Mr. Ware, an illuminating one also. It throws light upon forest councils and forest plans. Besides your service in battle, you bring us news that shows us how to meet our enemy and nothing could be of greater value. Now, I wish to say to you

that it will take us many weeks to collect the needful force, and that will give you two lads ample time, if you wish, to visit your home in Wareville, taking with you the worthy schoolmaster whom you have rescued so happily."

Henry and Paul decided at once to accept the suggestion. Both felt the great pulses leap at mention of Wareville and home. They had not seen their people for nearly two years, although they had sent word several times that they were well. Now they felt an overwhelming desire to see once again their parents and the neat little village by the river, enclosed within its strong palisades. Yet they delayed a few days longer to attend to necessary preliminaries of the coming campaign. Among other things they went the following morning to see the overflow settlement on the south shore, now but a year old.

This seed of a great city was yet faint and small. The previous winter had been a terrible one for the immigrants. The Ohio had been covered with thick ice from shore to shore. Most of their horses and cattle had frozen to death. Nevertheless they had no thought of going away, and there were many things to encourage the brave. They had a good harbor on the river at the mouth of a fine creek, that they named Beargrass, and back of them was a magnificent forest of gum, buckeye, cherry, sycamore, maple and giant poplars. It had been proved that the soil was extremely fertile, and they were too staunch to give up so fair a place. They also had a strong fort overlooking the river, and, with Clark among them, they were ready to defy any Indian force that might come.

But the time passed quickly, and Henry and Paul and the schoolmaster were ready for the last stage of their journey, deciding, in order that they might save their strength, to risk once more the dangers of the water passage. They would go in a canoe until they came to the mouth of the river that flowed by Wareville and then row up the current of the latter until they reached home. Shiftless Sol, Jim and Tom were going to remain with Clark until their return. But these three gave them hand-clasps of steel when they departed.

"Don't you get trapped by wanderin' Indians, Henry," said the shiftless one. "We couldn't get along very well without you fellers. Do most o' your rowin' at night an' lay by under overhangin' boughs in the day. You know more'n I do, Henry, but I'm so anxious about you I can't keep from givin' advice."

"Don't any of you do too much talkin'," said Silent Tom. "Injuns hear pow'ful well, an' many a feller hez been caught in an ambush, an' hez lost his scalp jest 'cause he would go along sayin' idle words that told the Injuns whar he wuz,

when he might hev walked away safe without thar ever knowin' he wuz within a thousand miles uv them."

"An' be mighty particular about your cookin'," said Long Jim. "Many a good man hez fell sick an' died, jest 'cause his grub wuzn't fixed eggzackly right. An' when you light your fires fur ven'son an' buffalo steaks be shore thar ain't too much smoke. More than once smoke hez brought the savages down on people. Cookin' here in the woods is not cookin' only, it's also a delicate an' bee-yu-ti-ful art that saves men's lives when it's done right, by not leadin' Shawnees, Wyandots an' other ferocious warriors down upon 'em."

Henry promised every one of the three to follow his advice religiously, and there was moisture in his and Paul's eyes when they caught the last view of them standing upon the bank and waving farewell. The next instant they were hidden by a curve of the shore, and then Henry said:

"It's almost like losing one's right arm to leave those three behind. I don't feel complete without them."

"Nor do I," said Paul. "I believe they were giving us all that advice partly to hide their emotion."

"Undoubtedly they were," said Mr. Pennypacker in a judicial tone, "and I wish to add that I do not know three finer characters, somewhat eccentric perhaps, but with hearts in the right place, and with sound heads on strong shoulders. They are like some ancient classic figures of whom I have read, and they are fortunate, too, to live in the right time and right place for them."

They made a safe passage over a stretch of the Ohio and then turned up the tributary river, rowing mostly, as Shif'less Sol had suggested, by night, and hiding their canoe and themselves by day. It was not difficult to find a covert as the banks along the smaller river were nearly always overhung by dense foliage, and often thick cane and bushes grew well into the water's edge. Here they would stop when the sun was brightest, and sometimes the heat was so great that not refuge from danger alone made them glad to lie by when the golden rays came vertically. Then they would make themselves as comfortable as possible in the boat and bearing Silent Tom's injunction in mind, talk in very low tones, if they talked at all. But oftenest two of them slept while the third watched.

They had been three days upon the tributary when it was Henry who happened to be watching. Both Paul and the teacher slumbered very soundly. Paul lay at the

stern of the boat and Mr. Pennypacker in the middle. Henry was in the prow, sitting at ease with his rifle across his knees. The boat was amid a tall growth of canes, the stalks and blades rising a full ten feet above their heads, and hiding them completely. Henry had been watching the surface of the river, but at last the action grew wholly mechanical. Had anything appeared there he would have seen it, but his thoughts were elsewhere. His whole life, since he had arrived, a boy of fifteen, in the Kentucky wilderness, was passing before him in a series of pictures, vivid and wonderful, standing out like reality itself. He was in a sort of twilight midway between the daylight and a dream, and it seemed to him once more that Providence had kept a special watch over his comrades and himself. How else could they have escaped so many dangers? How else could fortune have turned to their side, when the last chance seemed gone? No skill, even when it seemed almost superhuman, could have dragged them back from the pit of death. He felt with all the power of conviction that a great mission had been given to them, and that they had been spared again and again that they might complete it.

While he yet watched and saw, he visited a misty world. The wind had risen and out of the dense foliage above him came its song upon the stalks and blades of the cane. A low note at first, it swelled into triumph, and it sounded clearly in his ear, bar on bar. He did not have the power to move, as he listened then to the hidden voice. His blood leaped and a deep sense of awe, and of the power of the unknown swept over him. But he was not afraid. Rather he shared in the triumph that was expressed so clearly in the mystic song.

The note swelled, touched upon its highest note and then died slowly away in fall after fall, until it came in a soft echo and then the echo itself was still. Henry returned to the world of reality with every sense vivid and alert. He heard the wind blowing in the cane and nothing more. The surface of the river rippled lightly in the breeze, but neither friend nor enemy passed there. The stream was as lonely and desolate as if man had never come. He shook himself a little, but the spiritual exaltation, born of the song and the misty region that he had visited, remained.

"A sign, a prophecy!" he murmured. His heart swelled. The new task would be achieved as the others had been. It did not matter whether he had heard or had dreamed. His confidence in the result was absolute. He sat a long time looking out upon the water, but never moving. Anyone observing him would have concluded after a while that he was no human being, merely an image. It would not have seemed possible that any living organism could have remained as still

as a stone so many hours.

When the sun showed that it was well past noon, Paul awoke. He glanced at Henry, who nodded. The nod meant that all was well. By and by Mr. Pennypacker, also, awoke and then Henry in his turn went to sleep so easily and readily that it seemed a mere matter of will. The schoolmaster glanced at him and whispered to Paul:

"A great youth, Paul! Truly a great youth! It is far from old Greece to this forest of Kaintuckee, but he makes me think of the mighty heroes who are enshrined in the ancient legends and stories."

"That thought has come to me, too," Paul whispered back. "I like to picture him as Hector, but Hector with a better fate. I don't think Henry was born for any untimely end."

"No, that could not be," said the schoolmaster with conviction.

Then they relapsed into silence and just about the time the first shadow betokened the coming twilight Paul heard a faint gurgling sound which he was sure was made by oars. He touched the schoolmaster and whispered to him to listen. Then he pulled Henry's shoulder slightly, and instantly the great youth sat up, wide awake.

"Someone is near," whispered Paul. "Listen!"

Henry bent his head close to the water and distinctly heard the swishing of paddles, coming in the direction that they had followed in the night. It was a deliberate sound and Henry inferred at once that those who approached were in no hurry and feared no enemy. Then he drew the second inference that it was Indians. White men would know that danger was always about them in these woods.

"We have nothing to do but lie here and see them as they pass," he whispered to his companions. "We are really as safe among these dense canes as if we were a hundred miles away, provided we make no noise."

There was no danger that any of them would make a noise. They lay so still that their boat never moved a hair and not even the wariest savage on the river would have thought that one of their most formidable enemies and two of his friends lay hidden in the canes so near.

"Look!" whispered Henry. "There is Braxton Wyatt!"

Henry and Paul were eager enough to see but the schoolmaster was perhaps the most eager of all. This was something new in his experience. He had heard much of Braxton Wyatt, the renegade, once a pupil of his, and he did not understand how one of white blood and training could turn aside to join the Indians, and to become a more ruthless enemy of his own people than the savages themselves. Yet there could be no doubt of its truth, and now that he saw Wyatt he understood. Evil passions make an evil face. Braxton Wyatt's jaw was now heavy and projecting, his eyes were dark and lowering, and his cheek bones seemed to have become high like those of the warriors with whom he lived. The good Mr. Pennypacker shuddered. He had lived long and he could read the hearts of men. He knew now that Braxton Wyatt, despite his youth, was lost beyond redemption to honor and truth. The schoolmaster shuddered again.

The boat—a large one—contained besides Wyatt a white man, obviously a renegade, and six sturdy Shawnee warriors who were wielding the paddles. The warriors were quite naked, save for the breechcloth, and their broad shoulders and chests were painted with many hideous decorations. Their rifles lay beside them. Braxton Wyatt's manner showed that he was the leader and Henry had no doubt that this was a party of scouts come to spy upon Wareville. It was wholly likely that Braxton Wyatt, who knew the place so thoroughly, should undertake such an errand.

Henry was right. Timmendiquas, de Peyster and Girty as leaders of the allied forces preparing for invasion in case Clark could not gather a sufficient force for attack, were neglecting no precaution. They had sent forth small parties to examine into the condition of every station in Kentucky. These parties were not to make any demonstration, lest the settlers be put on their guard, but, after obtaining their information, were to retire as silently as they had come. Braxton Wyatt had promptly secured command of the little force sent toward Wareville, taking with him as lieutenant a young renegade, a kindred spirit named Early.

Strange emotions agitated Wyatt when he started. He had a desire to see once more the place where he had been a boy with other boys of his own white race, and where he might yet have been with his own kind, if a soul naturally turning to malice had not sent him off to the savages. Because he was now an outcast, although of his own making, he hated his earlier associates all the more. He sought somehow to blame them for it. They had never appreciated him enough. Had they put him forward and given him his due, he would not now be making

war upon them. Foolish and blind, they must suffer the consequences of their own stupidity. When Wareville was taken, he might induce the Indians to spare a few, but there were certainly some who should not be spared. His brow was black and his thoughts were blacker. It may be that Henry read them, because his hand slid gently forward to the hammer of his rifle. But his will checked the hand before it could cock the weapon, and he shook his head impatiently.

"Not now," he said in the softest of whispers, "but we must follow that boat. It is going toward Wareville and that is our way. Since we have seen him it is for us to deal with Wyatt before he can do more mischief."

Paul nodded, and even the soul of the good schoolmaster stirred with warlike ardor. He was not a child of the forest. He knew little of ambush and the trail, but he was ready to spend his strength and blood for the good of his own people. So he too nodded, and then waited for their young leader to act.

Braxton Wyatt passed on southward and up the stream of the river. There was no song among the leaves for him, but his heart was still full of cruel passions. He did not dream that a boat containing the one whom he hated most had lain in the cane within twenty yards of him. He was thinking instead of Wareville and of the way in which he would spy out every weak place there. He and Early had become great friends, and now he told his second much about the village.

"Wareville is strong," he said, "and they have many excellent riflemen. We were repulsed there once, when we made an attack in force, and we must take it by surprise. Once we are inside the palisade everything will soon be over. I hope that we will catch Ware and his comrades there when we catch the others."

"He seems hard to hold," said Early. "That escape of his from Detroit was a daring and skillful thing. I could hardly believe it when we heard of it at the Ohio. You're bound to admit that, Braxton."

"I admit it readily enough," said Wyatt. "Oh, he's brave and cunning and strong. He would not be so much worth taking if he were not all those things!"

Early glanced at the face of his leader.

"You do dislike him, that's sure!" he said.

"You make no mistake when you say so," replied Wyatt. "There are not many of us here in the woods, and somehow he and I seem to have been always in opposition in the last two or three years. I think, however, that a new campaign

will end in overwhelming victory for us, and Kaintuckee will become a complete wilderness again."

The stalwart Shawnees paddled on all that afternoon without stopping or complaining once. It was a brilliant day in early summer, all golden sunshine, but not too warm. The river flowed in curve after curve, and its surface was always illumined by the bright rays save where the unbroken forest hung in a green shadow over either edge. Scarlet tanagers darted like flashes of flame from tree to tree, and from low boughs a bird now and then poured forth a full measure of song. Braxton Wyatt had never looked upon a more peaceful wilderness, but before the sun began to set he was afflicted with a strange disquiet. An expert woodsman with an instinct for the sounds and stirrings of the forest, he began to have a belief that they were not alone on the river. He heard nothing and saw nothing, yet he felt in a vague, misty way that they were followed. He tried to put aside the thought as foolish, but it became so strong that at last he gave a signal to stop.

"What is it?" asked Early, as the paddles ceased to sigh through the water.

"I thought I heard something behind us," replied Wyatt, although he had heard nothing, "and you know we cannot afford to be seen here by any white scout or hunter."

The Indians listened intently with their trained ears and then shook their heads. There was no sound behind them, save the soft flowing of the river, as it lapped against either bank.

"I hear nothing," said Early.

"Nor do I," admitted Wyatt, "yet I could have sworn a few minutes ago that we were being followed. Instinct is sometimes a good guide in the forest."

"Then I suggest," said Early, "that we turn back for a few miles. We can float with the current close up to the bank under the overhanging boughs, and, if hunters or scouts are following us, they'll soon wish they were somewhere else."

He laughed and Braxton Wyatt joined him in his savage mirth.

"Your idea is a good one," said Wyatt, "and we may catch a mouse or two in our trap."

He gave another signal and the Shawnees turned the boat about, permitting it to

float back with the stream, but as Early had suggested, keeping it in the shadow. Despite his experience and the lack of proof that anyone else was near, Wyatt's heart began to beat fast. Suppose the game was really there, and it should prove to be of the kind that he wanted most to take! This would be indeed a triumph worth while, and he would neglect no precaution to achieve it. They had gone back about a mile now, and he signaled to the warriors to swing the boat yet a little closer to the bank. He still heard no sound, but the belief was once more strong upon him that the quarry was there. They drifted slowly and yet there was nothing. His eye alighted upon a great mass of bushes growing in the shallow water at the edge of the river. He told the paddlers to push the boat among them until it should be completely hidden and then he waited.

But time passed and nothing came. The sun dropped lower. The yellow light on the water turned to red, and the forest flamed under the setting sun. A light breeze sprang up and the foliage rustled under its touch. Braxton Wyatt, from his covert among the bushes, watched with anger gnawing at his heart. He had been wrong or whoever it was that followed had been too wary. He was crafty and had laid his trap well, but others were crafty, too, and would turn from the door of an open trap.

The sun sank further. The red in the west deepened but gray shadows were creeping over the east and the surface of the river began to darken. Nothing had come. Nothing was coming. Braxton Wyatt said reluctantly to himself that his instinct had been wrong. He gave the word to pull the boat from the canes, and to proceed up the stream again. He was annoyed. He had laid a useless trap and he had made himself look cheap before the Indians. So he said nothing for a long time, but allowed his anger to simmer. When it was fully dark they tied up the boat and camped on shore, in the bushes near the water.

Wyatt was too cautious to permit a fire, and they ate cold food in the darkness. After a while, all slept but two of the Shawnees who kept watch. Wyatt's slumbers were uneasy. About midnight he awoke, and he was oppressed by the same presentiment that had made him turn back the boat. He heard nothing and saw nothing save his own men, but his instinct was at work once more, and it told him that his party was watched. He lay in dark woods in a vast wilderness, but he felt in every bone that near them was an alien presence.

Wyatt raised himself upon his arm and looked at the two red sentinels. Not a muscle of either had stirred. They were so much carven bronze. Their rifles lay across their knees and they stared fixedly at the forest. But he knew that their

eyes and ears were of the keenest and that but little could escape their attention. Yet they had not discovered the presence. He rose finally to his feet. The Indians heard the faint noise that he made and glanced at him. But he was their commander and they said nothing, resuming in an instant their watch of the forest.

Wyatt did not take his rifle. Instead, he kept his hand on the hilt of a fine double-barreled pistol in his belt. After some hesitation he walked to the river and looked at the boat. It was still there, tied securely. No one had meddled with it. The moon was obscured and the surface of the river looked black. No object upon it could be seen far away. He listened attentively and heard nothing. But he could not rid himself of the belief that they had been followed, that even now a foe was near. He walked back to the little camp and looked at Early who was sleeping soundly. He was impatient with himself because he could not do likewise, and then, shrugging his shoulders, he went further into the forest.

The trees grew closely where Wyatt stood and there were bushes everywhere. His concealment was good and he leaned against the trunk of a huge oak to listen. He could not see fifteen feet away, but he did not believe that any human being could pass near and escape his hearing. He stood thus in the darkness for a full ten minutes, and then he was quite sure that he did hear a sound as of a heavy body moving slightly. It was not instinct or prescience, the product of a vivid fancy, but a reality. He had been too long in the woods to mistake the fact. Something was stalking something else and undoubtedly the stalker was a man.

What was the unknown stalking? Suddenly a cold sweat broke out on Braxton Wyatt's face. It was he who was being stalked and he was now beyond the sight of his own sentinels. He was, for the moment, alone in the midnight woods, and he was afraid. Braxton Wyatt was not naturally a coward, and he had been hardened in the school of forest warfare, but superstitious terrors assailed him now. He was sorry that he had left the camp. His curiosity had been too great. If he wished to explore the woods, why had he not brought some of the Indians with him?

He called upon his courage, a courage that had seldom failed him, but it would not come now. He heard the stalker moving again in the bushes, not fifteen yards away, and the hand on the pistol belt became wet. He glanced up but there was no moon and clouds hid the sky. Only ear could tell when the danger was about to fall, and then it would be too late.

He made a supreme effort, put his will in control of his paralyzed limbs, and wrenched himself away. He almost ran to the camp. Then bringing his pride to his aid he dropped to a walk, and stepped back into the circle of the camp. But he was barely able to restrain a cry of relief as the chill passed from his backbone. Angry and humiliated, he awakened four of the Shawnees and sent them into the woods in search of a foe. Early was aroused by the voices and sat up, rubbing his eyes.

"What is it, Braxton?" he asked. "Are we about to be attacked?"

"No," replied Wyatt, calming himself with a violent effort, "but I am convinced that there is someone in the bushes watching us. I know that I heard the noise of footsteps and I only hope that our Shawnees will run afoul of him."

"If he's there they'll get him," said Early confidently.

"I don't know," said Braxton Wyatt.

The Indians came back presently, and one of them spoke to Wyatt, who went with them into the bushes. The moon had come out a little and, by its faint light, they showed him traces of footsteps. The imprints were ever so light, but experienced trailers could not doubt that human beings had passed. The renegade felt at the same time a certain relief and a certain alarm, relief to know that he had not been a mere prey to foolish fears, and alarm because they had been stalked by some spy so skillful and wary that they could not follow him. The Indians had endeavored to pursue the trail, but after a rod or so it was lost among the bushes.

Wyatt, apprehensive lest his mission should fail, doubled the watch and then sought sleep. He did not find it for a long time, but toward morning he fell into a troubled slumber from which he was awakened by Early about an hour after the sun had appeared above the eastern forest.

"We must be moving," said Early, "if we're going to spy out that Wareville of yours and tell our people how to get in."

"You're right," said Wyatt, "but we must watch behind us now as well as before. It is certain that we are followed and I'm afraid that we're followed by an enemy most dangerous."

Neglecting no precaution, he ordered a warrior to follow along the bank about two miles in the rear. An Indian in the deep brush could not be seen and the

renegade's savage heart thrilled at the thought that after all he might be setting a trap into which his enemy would walk. Then his boat moved forward, more slowly now, and hugging the bank more closely than ever. Wyatt knew the way well. He had been several times along this river, a fine broad stream. He meant to leave the boat and take to the forest when within twenty miles of Wareville, but, before doing so, he hoped to achieve a victory which would console him for many defeats.

The warrior left behind for purposes of ambush was to rejoin them at noon, but at the appointed hour he did not come. Nor did he come at one o'clock or at two. He never came, and after Wyatt had raged with disappointment and apprehension until the middle of the afternoon he sent back a second warrior to see what had become of him. The second warrior was the best trailer and scout in the band, a Shawnee with a great reputation among his fellows, but when the night arrived neither he nor the other warrior arrived with it. They waited long for both. Three of the Indians in a group went back, but they discovered no sign. They returned full of superstitious terror which quickly communicated itself to the others and Wyatt and Early, despite their white blood, felt it also.

A most vigilant watch was kept that night. No fire was lighted and nobody slept. The renegade still hoped that the two missing warriors would return, but they did not do so. The other Indians began to believe that the evil spirit had taken them, and they were sorry that they had come upon such an errand. They wished to go back down the stream and beyond the Ohio. Near morning a warrior saw something moving in the bushes and fired at it. The shot was returned quick as a flash, and the warrior, who would fire no more, fell at the feet of the others and lay still. Wyatt and his men threw themselves upon their faces, and, after a long wait, searched the bushes, but found nothing.

Now the Indians approached the point of rebellion. It was against the will of Manitou that they should prosper on their errand. The loss of three comrades was the gravest of warnings and they should turn back. But Wyatt rebuked them angrily. He did not mean to be beaten in such a way by an enemy who remained in hiding. The bullet had shown that it was an earthly foe, and, as far as Manitou was concerned, he always awarded the victory to courage, skill and luck. The Indians went forward reluctantly.

The next night they tied up again by the wooded bank. Wyatt wanted two of the warriors to remain in the boat, but they refused absolutely to do so. Despite all that he could say their superstitious fears were strong upon them, and they meant

to stay close to their comrades upon the solid earth. Dreading too severe a test of his authority the renegade consented, and all of them, except the guards, lay down among the bushes near the shore. It was a fine summer night, not very dark, and Wyatt did not believe a foe could come near them without being seen. He felt more confidence, but again he was sleepless. He closed his eyes and sought slumber by every device that he knew, but it would not come. At last he made a circuit with Early and two of the Indians in the forest about the camp, but saw and heard nothing. Returning, he lay down on his blanket and once more wooed sleep with shut eyes.

Sleep still refused obstinately to come, and in ten minutes the renegade reopened his eyes. His glance wandered idly over the recumbent Indians who were sound asleep, and then to those who watched. It passed from them to the river and the black blur of the boat lying upon the water about twenty yards away. Then it passed on and after a while came back again to the boat.

Braxton Wyatt knew that optical illusions were common, especially in the obscurity of night. One could look so long at a motionless object that it seemed to move. That was why the boat, tied securely to low boughs, did that curious trick of apparently gliding over the surface of the river. Wyatt laughed at himself. In the faint light, brain was superior to eye. He would not allow himself to be deceived, and the quality of mind that saved him from delusions gave him pride. He did not have a very good view of the boat from the point where he lay, but he saw enough of it to know that when he looked again it would be lying exactly where it had been all the time, despite that illusory trick of movement. So, to show the superiority of will over fancy, he kept his eyes shut a longer time than usual, and when he opened them once more he looked directly at the boat. Surely the shifting light was playing him new tricks. Apparently it was much farther out in the stream and was drifting with the current.

Wyatt reproved himself as an unsteady fool. His nerves were shaken, and in order to restore his calmness he closed his eyes once more. But the eyes would not stay shut. Will was compelled to yield at last to impulse and the lids came apart. He was somewhat angry at himself. He did not wish to look at the boat again, and repeat those foolish illusions, but he did so nevertheless.

Braxton Wyatt sprang to his feet with a cry of alarm and warning. It was no trick of fancy. He saw with eyes that did not lie a boat out in the middle of the stream and every moment going faster with the current. The power that propelled it was unseen, but Wyatt knew it to be there.

"Fire! Fire!" he shouted to his men. "Somebody is carrying off our boat!"

Rifles flashed and bullets made the water spout. Two struck the boat itself, but it moved on with increasing swiftness. Wyatt, Early and the Indians dashed to the water's edge, but a sharp crack came from the further shore, and Early fell forward directly into the river. Wyatt and the Indians shrank back into the bushes where they lay hidden. But the renegade, with a sort of frightened fascination, watched the water pulling at the body of his slain comrade, until it was carried away by the current and floated out of sight. The boat, meanwhile, moved on until it, too, passed a curve, and was lost from view.

Wyatt recovered his courage and presence of mind, but he sought in vain to urge the Shawnees in pursuit. Superstition held them in a firm grasp. It was true that Early had been slain by a bullet, but a mystic power was taking the boat away. The hand of Manitou was against them and they would return to the country north of the Ohio. They started at once, and Wyatt, raging, was compelled to go with them, since he did not dare to go southward alone.



CHAPTER XVIII

THE SHADOWY FIGURE

After Braxton Wyatt and the Indians had fled, their canoe proceeded steadily up the stream. Henry Ware, with his head only projecting, and sheltered fully by the boat, swam on. He heard neither shots nor the sound of men running through the bushes along the bank in pursuit. Nor did he expect to hear either. He had calculated well the power of hidden danger and superstition, and, confident of complete victory, he finally steered the boat toward the farther shore, bringing it under the overhanging boughs, about a mile from the point where Braxton Wyatt's canoe had been. As the prow struck the soft soil and he rose from the water, Paul came forward to meet him. Paul carried in his hands a rifle that he had just reloaded.

"It was a success, Henry, more thorough even than we had hoped," Paul said.

"Yes," replied Henry as he stood up, a dripping water god. "Fortune was surely good to us. I have not been pursued, and I know it is because the Indians did not dare to follow. They will certainly flee as fast as they can to their own country, and meanwhile we are the gainer by one fine big boat, which I think is not empty."

"No, it is not," said Mr. Pennypacker, appearing from the bushes, "but I will never again enter into such another enterprise. It may suit young foresters like you two, but it is not for me, an old man and a schoolmaster."

"Still, we have turned back a scouting party which might have carried dangerous information," said Henry, "and I propose that we now look and see what is in our new boat."

The spoils were richer than they had expected. They found two extra rifles of good make, a large quantity of powder and bullets, some blankets and much food.

"We can use all these things," said Henry, "and we'll go to Wareville in this big canoe, tying our own little one behind. When we get there we'll contribute the rifles and other things to the general store."

"Where they may be welcome enough," said Mr. Pennypacker. "Well, you lads achieved this deed, while I filled the rôle of spectator and well-wisher. I am very glad, however, that you have secured this boat. It is a great improvement upon our own small one."

The schoolmaster was a fine paddler, and he insisted that Henry and Paul rest, while he showed his skill. He was anxious, he said, to do his own part in the return, and this offered him the only chance. Henry and Paul acquiesced and he paddled stoutly on for a long time. But before morning he gave in, and the lads relieved him. Paul had slept for an hour or two, but Henry had remained wide awake.

The river now flowed very slowly, and with but little opposition from the current, they were able to make good time. Both were full of eager anticipation. By the following night they ought to reach Wareville, the snug home of theirs that they had not seen in so long a time.

"I wonder if they will know us," said Henry.

"Not at first sight. Of that I am sure," replied Paul. "It seems to me, Henry, that you have grown at least six inches since we were last at Wareville."

"You haven't been any sluggard yourself, Paul, so far as growth is concerned. They may or may not know us, but I feel quite certain that they won't believe everything we tell them, although every word will be gospel truth."

"No, it's not likely, and yet sooner or later we can bring the witnesses. I suppose they'll find it hardest to believe about Wyoming. I wish myself that it wasn't true."

Paul shuddered at the black memory.

"But we've already struck back for it," said Henry. "It caused the destruction of the Iroquois power."

Then both were silent. The schoolmaster, lying on a roll of the captured blankets, slept soundly. His breathing was steady and rhythmic, and the two youths glanced at him.

"At any rate we're bringing him back," said Paul. "They'll be glad to see him at Wareville. I've no doubt they gave him up for dead long ago."

The day came with a splendid sun shining on the green world. The spring had been very rainy, and the summer thus far had rejoiced in frequent showers. Hence no brown had yet appeared in the foliage, and the world looked fresh and young. Although they were now approaching Wareville the forest was unbroken, and no sound of civilization came to their ears. Henry told Paul, who was very tired, to go to sleep as he could paddle the boat alone. Paul lay down on the blankets beside the schoolmaster, and in a couple of minutes was off to slumberland.

Henry paddled on. Before him was a long reach of the river almost without current and the prow cut the still water, leaving behind it a long trailing wake of liquid gold. Henry had never seen a finer sun. Beneath it forest and river were vivid and intense. Birds of many kinds chattered and sang in the boughs. Battle and danger seemed far away. Peace and beauty were to attend their coming home and he was glad. His strong arms swept the paddle through the water for a long time. The action was purely mechanical. His muscles were so thoroughly trained and hardened that he was not conscious of action. He was watching instead for the first sign of Wareville's presence, and a little before noon he saw it, a thin spire of smoke rising high, until it stopped like the point of a spearhead against the sky. He knew at once that it hung over Wareville, and his heart throbbed. He loved the great wilderness with an intensity that few men felt for their own acres, but he had been away a long time, a time, moreover, so crowded with events that it seemed far greater than reality.

He did not yet awaken Paul and the schoolmaster, but, putting more power in his arms, he sent the boat on more swiftly. When he turned a point where a little peninsula, covered with forest, jutted into the river, he let the paddle swing idly for a minute or two and listened. A steady thudding sound, as regular as the beat of a drum, though slower, came to his ears. It was the woodsman's ax, and, for a moment, Henry flinched as if he himself lay beneath the blade. That ax was eating into his beloved forest, and a hundred more axes were doing the same. Then he recovered himself. The hundred axes might eat on, the hundred might become a thousand, and the thousand ten thousand, but they could eat only the edge of his wilderness which stretched away thousands of miles in every direction. The trees, and with them the deer and the bear, would be there long beyond his time, though he might live to be a hundred, and beyond that of the generation after. He took comfort in the thought, and once more felt deep content.

It was not solely as a hunter and scout that Henry loved the wilderness. Forest

and river and lake touched far deeper springs in his nature. They were for him full of beauty and majesty. Green forest in spring and red forest in autumn alike appealed to him. Brooks, rivers and lakes were alive. When duty did not call he could sit perfectly motionless for hours, happy to see the wilderness and to feel that it was all about him.

He swung the paddle again, and the boat moved leisurely forward. The ring of the ax grew louder, and he heard others to the right and to the left. Presently something struck with a crash and, in spite of all his reasoning with himself, Henry sighed. A great tree cut through by the ax had fallen. Many others had gone in the same way, and many more would follow. The spire of smoke was attended now by smaller spires and Wareville could not be more than three miles away. He awakened Paul and the schoolmaster.

"We shall be at home in less than an hour," he said. "Listen to the axes!"

Paul glanced quickly at him. His fine and sensitive mind understood at once the inflection in Henry's voice, and he sympathized.

"But they are our own people," he said, "and they are making homes which we must help to defend."

"A stronghold in the wilderness, where man, woman and child may be safe from wild beast and savage," said the schoolmaster oracularly. "Ah, boys—boys! how much do I owe you! Truly I thought I should never see this comfortable little village again, and here I am, sound and whole, returning in triumph upon a captured vessel."

They saw at the right a cleared field, in which the young corn was growing amid the stumps, and on the left was the sheen of wheat also amid the stumps. Mr. Pennypacker rubbed his hands delightedly, but Henry was silent. Yet the feeling was brief with the youth. Thoughts of his people quickly crowded it out, and he swung the paddle more swiftly. The other two, who were now helping him, did likewise, and the boat doubled its pace. Through the thinned forest appeared the brown walls of a palisade, and Henry, putting a hand in the shape of a trumpet to his lips, uttered a long, mellow cry that the forest gave back in many echoes. Faces appeared on the palisade and three or four men, rifle on shoulder, approached the bank of the river. They did not know either Henry or Paul, but one of them exclaimed:

"Ef that ain't Mr. Pennypacker riz right up from the dead then I'm a ghost

myself!"

"It is Mr. Pennypacker," said the schoolmaster joyfully, "and I'm no more of a ghost than you are. I've come back from captivity, bringing with me two of those who saved me, young citizens of this village, Henry Ware and Paul Cotter."

They turned the head of the boat to the bank and the whole population poured forth to meet them. Henry and Paul were greeted half with laughter and half with tears by their parents—border stoicism was compelled to melt away at this moment—and then they blushed at the words that were said about them. Their stature and strength attracted the attention of everybody. The borderers could not fail to note the ease and grace of their movements, the lightness with which they walked, and the dexterity with which they pulled the big boat upon the bank. It was evident that these two youths were far above the average of their kind, that naturally of a high quality they had been trained in a school that brought forth every merit. Henry towered above his own father, who no longer looked upon him as one to whom he should give tasks and reproofs. And the admiration with which they were regarded increased when the schoolmaster told how he had been rescued by them and their comrades.

Henry sat that night in his father's house, and told long and true tales of their great wanderings and of danger and escape on land and water. He and Paul had eaten hugely, there was no escape, and he felt that he must sit quiet for a while. He was loth to talk of himself, but there was no escape from that either, and his story was so vivid, so full that it fairly told itself. As he spoke of the great journey and its myriad events between New Orleans and the Great Lakes, the crowd in the big room thickened. No one was willing to lose a word of the magic tale, and it was past midnight when he lay down on the blankets and sought sleep.

The next day and the next were passed in further welcome, but when Henry sought the blankets the third night he became conscious that the first flush of the return was over. The weather had turned very hot—it was now July—and the walls and ceiling of the room seemed to press upon him and suffocate him. He drew deep and long breaths, but there was not air enough to fill a chest that had long been used to the illimitable outside. It was very still in the room. He longed to hear the boughs of trees waving over him. He felt that only such a sound or the trickle of running water could soothe him to sleep. Yet he would make another effort. He closed his eyes and for a half hour lay motionless. Then, angry, he opened them again, as wide awake as ever. He listened, but he could

hear no sound in either the house or the village.

Henry Ware rose to his feet, slipped on his clothing, and went to the window. He looked forth upon a sleeping village. The houses, built of solid logs, stood in ordered rows, gray and silent. Nothing stirred anywhere. He took his rifle from the hooks, and leaped lightly out of the window. Then he slipped cautiously among the houses, scaled the palisade and darted into the forest.

He lay down by the side of a cold spring about a mile from the village. The bank of turf was soft and cool, and the little stream ran over the pebbles with a faint sighing sound. The thick leaves that hung overhead rustled beneath the south wind, and played a pleasant tune. Henry felt a great throb of joy. His chest expanded and the blood leaped in every vein. He threw himself down upon the bank and grasped the turf with both hands. It seemed to him that like Antæus of old he felt strength flowing back into his body through every finger tip. He could breathe here easily and naturally. What a wonderful thing the forest was! How its beauty shone in the moonlight! The trees silvered with mist stood in long rows, and the friendly boughs and leaves, moving before the wind, never ceased to sing their friendly song to him.

Deep peace came over him. Lying on his side and soothed by the forest and flowing water his eyelids drooped of their own accord. Presently he slept, breathing deeply and regularly, and drawing the fresh air into his veins. But he awoke before daylight and reëntered the village and his father's house without being seen by anyone. To the questions of his parents he said that he had slept well, and he ate his breakfast with an appetite that he had not known since he came within the palisade.

The news that Henry and Paul had brought of the great invasion threatened by an allied Indian and British force disturbed Wareville. Yet the settlers felt much safer when they learned that the redoubtable George Rogers Clark intended a counterstroke. More than twenty of the most stalwart colonists volunteered to go to Louisville and join Clark for the blow. Henry told his father that he and Paul would return with them.

"I suppose it is your nature," said Mr. Ware, "but do you not think, Henry, that you have already suffered enough hardship and danger for the sake of the border?"

"No, Father, I do not," replied Henry. "Not as long as hardship and danger are to be suffered. And I know, too, that it is my nature. I shall live all my life in the

forest."

Mr. Ware said nothing more. He knew that words were useless. That question had been threshed out between them long ago. But he gave him an affectionate farewell, and, a week after their arrival in Wareville, Henry and Paul departed again for the North, the whole population of Wareville waving them good-by as they embarked upon the river.

But the two youths were far from being alone. A score of strong men, mostly young, were with them in four boats, and they carried an ample supply of arms and ammunition. Mr. Pennypacker wanted to go back with them, but he was dissuaded from undertaking the task.

"Perhaps it is best that I stay in Wareville," he said regretfully. "I am really a man of peace and not of war, although war has looked for me more than once."

Their boats now had oars instead of paddles, and with the current in their favor they moved rapidly toward the north. They also had a favoring breeze behind them and Henry and Paul, who were in the first boat, felt their hearts swell with the prospect of action. They were so habituated now to an eventful life that a week of rest seemed a long time to them. Already they were pining to be with George Rogers Clark on the great expedition.

"How many men do you think Colonel Clark will be able to gather?" asked Ethan Burke, one of the stoutest of the Wareville contingent.

"I don't know, but his name is something to conjure with," replied Henry. "He ought to get together six or seven hundred at least, and that many men, experienced in the woods, will make a formidable force."

They rowed down the river for three or four days, stopping at intervals to beat up the woods for marauding Indian bands. They found no traces of an enemy. Henry surmised that the experience of Braxton Wyatt's party had been a warning, and that possibly also the chiefs had learned of Clark's plan. The news that he was coming would alone suffice to put an end for the time to the Indian raids.

The voyage continued in unbroken peace until they entered the Ohio. Here they were assailed by a summer storm of great severity and one of the boats, struck by lightning, narrowly escaped sinking. A rower was knocked senseless, but nobody was seriously injured, and by great efforts, they got the boat into

condition to resume the journey.

The little fleet came to the Falls, and turned in to the southern shore, where the main settlement of Louisville now stood. Several spires of smoke rose, and they knew that no Indian disaster had befallen. As they drew nearer they saw many boats along the bank, far more than the inhabitants of a little village could use.

"A big force has gathered already," said Henry. "Ah, see there!"

A boat shot out from the mass and came rapidly toward them.

"Don't you know them?" said Henry to Paul.

"My eyes may be dim from old age," replied Paul, "and perhaps I only guess, but I should say that the one nearest us is a shiftless character whom I used to know in my youth, a man who, despite his general worthlessness and incapacity, had a certain humorous and attractive quality of mind that endeared him to his friends."

"I am of the opinion that you are right," said Henry, looking under his hand, "and the second, I think, is a voluble person named Thomas Ross, who has talked a wide circle of acquaintances nearly to death."

"Even so, and the third is a long thin fellow, one James Hart, noted for his aversion to the delicacies of the table and his dismissal of cookery as a triviality unworthy of the consideration of a serious man. Am I right, Mr. Ware?"

"You are right, Mr. Cotter. Hey you, Sol, how have you been?"

His voice rose in a mellow peal across the waters, and three shouts simultaneous and joyous came back.

"Hey, Henry!" cried Shif'less Sol in a voice that could have been heard a mile. "We're mighty glad to see you, an' we're mighty glad that you've brought such good company with you."

In a few more moments their boat was alongside and there was a mighty shaking of hands. The three knew all the Wareville men and Shif'less Sol said the reënforcement would be very welcome.

"But we've got an army already," he said. "You just come and see it."

As they tied their boats to the bank Henry noticed many tents along the sloping shore. One larger than the rest was surmounted by the new flag of the United States.

"That's Colonel Clark's tent," said Shif'less Sol, noticing the direction of his eyes, "but the Colonel won't sleep in a tent many more nights. We start soon up the Ohio and all these are to be left behind."

Henry was received that very day in the Colonel's tent. Clark, apt to grow sluggish and careless in idleness, was now all energy and keenness. The confidence of the borderer in him was not misplaced. Henry left his comrades behind when he was summoned to the Colonel's presence, but when he entered the big tent he saw others there whom he knew. A tall man, much bronzed by weather, blue of eyes and gentle of manner, greeted him warmly.

"It's pleasant to see you again, young Mr. Ware," he said, "an' it's still more pleasant to know that we're to serve together under Colonel Clark."

Daniel Boone, as gentle of speech as a woman, held out his hand and Henry fairly blushed with pride as he grasped it. Another man, darkened by weather like Boone, was Abe Thomas, also a celebrated scout, and there were yet others whose names were household words all along the border.

"Sit down, Mr. Ware, sit down," said Colonel Clark genially. "We're to hold a council of war, and we felt that it would not be complete without you."

Henry experienced another throb of gratified pride, but as he was much the youngest present he spoke only when he was addressed directly. The debate was long and earnest. Colonel Clark had assembled between six and seven hundred good men, and he intended to go with this force up the Ohio to the mouth of the Licking. There they would be joined by another force under Colonel Benjamin Logan coming down the Licking. The united army after camping on the north shore of the Ohio, on the site of the present city of Cincinnati, would march straight for the Indian country. Boone, Henry Ware and other accomplished scouts would go ahead and guard against ambush. It was dark when the council ended, and when they prepared to leave, Clark said in his most sanguine tones:

"If we do not strike a blow that will pay back Bird's and with interest then I'm not fit to lead. Our Indian friends will find that though they may destroy a village or two of ours their own villages will have to pay for it. And this great invasion that they've been planning will have to wait for another time."

"We'll strike, and you're the man to lead us," said the others.

It was night now and they stepped forth into the darkness. Henry passed among the tents toward the edge of the woods where his comrades were camped, and he saw a tall figure moving in the shadow of the trees. He would not have looked twice at the figure had not something familiar about it attracted his attention. It was the height, the breadth of the shoulders, and a certain haughty poise of the head that struck him all at once with the intensity of conviction. His friends had left him, going their respective ways, but Henry immediately darted toward the shadow.

The tall and dusky figure melted away immediately among the trees, but the young forest runner pursued at his utmost speed. He did not doubt. It was no figment of fancy. It was the great chief himself spying with incredible daring upon his enemies. If he were permitted to escape, the advance of Clark would be surrounded with numberless dangers. The fertile brain and the invincible spirit of the great Wyandot would plant an ambush at every turn. The thought made Henry increase his speed.

The figure flitted away among the oaks and beeches. Henry might have called for help earlier, but he was now too far away for anyone to hear, and, confident in his own strength and skill, he pressed on. The shadow was running eastward,

and the way grew rough. Yet he did not lose sight of it flitting there among the trees. There was no swifter runner than he, but the distance between them did not decrease. It seemed to him that it remained always the same.

"Stop or I shoot," he cried.

The shadow did not stop and, raising his rifle, he fired. The figure never wavered for an instant, but continued its rapid and even flight, until it reached the crest of a little hill. There it suddenly turned about, leveled a rifle and fired in its turn. The bullet burned Henry's cheek and for a moment he hesitated, but only for a moment. Reloading his own rifle he continued the pursuit, the figure running steadily eastward, the gap between them remaining the same.

The fugitive reached Beargrass Creek, darted swiftly through the water, climbed the opposite bank and was again among the trees. Henry crossed also and hung on with tenacity. He knew that Timmendiquas had probably reloaded also, but in the excitement and rush of the moment, he did not think of another return bullet. When he did recall the fact, as the chase lengthened, he felt sure that the chief would not stop to fight at close quarters. He could not afford to risk his life in an encounter with a single person, when he was the very keystone of the great Indian campaign.

The chase still led northward through the deep woods that ran down to the shore of the Ohio. Strive as he would Henry could not gain. He did not forget that Timmendiquas had twice saved his life, but he in return had spared that of Timmendiquas, and now greater things were at stake than the feeling that one brave soul has for another. The light grew worse in the shadow of the giant trees and only at times could he see the flitting figure distinctly. At last was he able to secure what he considered a good aim, and he pulled the trigger a second time.

Henry was an unerring marksman, perhaps the finest on all the border. The target at that moment was good, a shaft of clear moonlight falling directly upon the broad chest, and yet the bullet clipped a bush three feet away. Henry was conscious that, at the supreme instant when his finger pressed the trigger, he had been shaken by a sudden emotion. The muzzle of the rifle which bore directly upon the body of the chief had shifted just a little, and he was not surprised when the bullet went wide.

Timmendiquas stopped, raised his own rifle, but fired straight up into the air. Then uttering a long whoop which the night gave back in clear echoes, he rushed directly to the river, and sprang far out into the dark waters. Henry was too

astonished to move for a few moments. Then he, too, ran to the bank. He saw far out a dark head moving swiftly toward the northern shore. He might have reloaded, and even yet he might have taken a third shot with tolerable accuracy, but he made no effort to do so. He stood there, silent and motionless, watching the black head grow smaller and smaller until at last it was lost in the darkness that hung over the northern bank. But though hidden now he knew that the great chief had reached the far shore. In fancy he could see him as he walked into the woods, the glistening drops falling from his tall figure. Timmendiquas and he must fight on opposing sides, but real enemies they could never be. He felt that they were sure to meet again in conflict, and this would be the great decisive struggle. Timmendiquas himself knew that it was so, or he would not have come to look with his own eyes upon the force of Clark.

Henry walked slowly back toward the little settlement. He waded the waters of Beargrass Creek, and soon saw the log cabins again. He and his comrades, when the ground was not wet, slept in neither a cabin nor a tent, but spread their blankets on the turf under a mighty beech. The four were already waiting for him there, and, in the darkness, they did not notice any unusual expression on Henry's face. He sat down beside them and said quietly:

"I have just seen Timmendiquas."

"What!" exclaimed four voices together.

"I have just seen Timmendiquas. Moreover, I fired twice at him and he fired once at me. All three bullets missed."

Then Shif'less Sol, experienced and wise, raised himself up on his blanket, looked at Henry, and said in a tone of conviction:

"Henry Ware, you an' Timmendiquas together might miss with one bullet, but miss with three is impossible. I believe that you've seen him ez you say so, but I don't believe that you two missed three times."

"We fired three times, as I said, and I should add that Timmendiquas fired a fourth time also, but he must have been aiming at a star, as he pointed his rifle straight upward."

"Ah!" said four voices together again, but now the four understood.

"I think," said Henry, "that he came to see for himself what Colonel Clark is doing. Now he is gone with the facts. I came here merely to tell you first, and I

leave at once to tell the Colonel next."

He found Colonel Clark still in the council tent, but alone and poring over a rude map. A burning wick in a basin of tallow scarcely dispelled the darkness, but Henry could see that the commander's face was knit and anxious. He turned expectantly to the youth.

"You have some news of importance or you would not come back at this hour," he said.

"I have," replied Henry. "When I left this tent I passed through the edge of the woods and I saw a figure there. It was that of an Indian, a chief whom I have seen before. It was Timmendiquas, the great Wyandot, the bravest, wisest and most daring of all the Western chiefs. I pursued him, fired at him, but missed. It was evidently not his object to fight anyone here. He sprang into the Ohio, swam to the northern shore, and no doubt is now on his way to his own people."

Colonel Clark gazed thoughtfully at the flickering candle and did not speak for a long time.

"I am glad you saw him," he said finally. "We know now that the allied tribes will be on their guard. They may meet us in force many days before we reach the Indian towns. Timmendiquas is a born leader, energetic and wary. Well, well hasten our own departure, and try to strike before they're ready. What do you say to that, my lad?"

"My opinion is worth little, but I would say that we ought to strike as soon as we can."

"I don't think a man among us will take any other view. We can leave with seven hundred men now, and we'll meet Logan with three hundred more at the mouth of the Licking. Then we shall have the largest white force ever gathered in the West, and it will be strange if we do not pay some of the debt we owe to the Indians and their allies. I wish, Mr. Ware, that you and your friends would march with Boone on the southern bank of the river. It is only a wish, however, as I have agreed that you should choose your own method of helping us."

"It is just what we should wish most to do," said Henry, "and we shall be with Mr. Boone when he crosses to the other side."

Henry walked back to the big beech and found his comrades yet wide awake and glad to hear that they would march in thirty-six hours.

"We'll be back in the thick of it," said Shif'less Sol, "an' I'm thinkin', Henry, that we'll have all we kin do."

"No doubt," said Henry.



CHAPTER XIX

A HERALD BY WATER

The start from Louisville was made and the great expedition began among the cheers of the women and children of the little place and from the men who were left behind. Most of the army were in boats which also carried great quantities of arms, ammunition and food. All of the little settlements buried in the deep woods of Kentucky, though exposed at any time to sudden and terrible raids, had sent volunteers. They took the risk nevertheless, and dispatched their best to the redoubtable hero, George Rogers Clark. Few people have ever given more supreme examples of dauntless courage and self-sacrifice than these borderers. Tiny outposts only, they never failed to respond to the cry for help. There was scarcely a family which did not lose someone under the Indian tomahawk, but their courage never faltered, though for nearly twenty years no man was safe a single hour from savage ambush. They stood fast and endured everything.

Henry, Paul and their comrades were not in the boats, but were with Daniel Boone who led a party of the best scouts on the southern shore. It was not only their business to find their enemy if he should be there, but to clear him out, unless he were in too great force, and it was a task that required supreme skill and caution. Throughout its whole course dense forests grew along the Ohio, and an ambush might be planted anywhere. The foliage was still thick and heavy on the trees, as it was not yet August, and one seldom saw more than a hundred yards ahead.

The boats, keeping near the southern shore where their flank was protected by Boone's scouts, started, the sunlight streaming down upon them and the water flashing from their oars. The scouts had already gone on ahead, and the five were among the foremost. In a few minutes the last sign of the new settlement disappeared and they were in the wilderness. At Boone's orders the scouts formed in small bodies, covering at least two miles from the river. The five formed one of these little groups, and they began their work with zeal and skill. No enemy in the underbrush could have escaped their notice, but the whole day passed without a sign of a foe. When night came on they saw the boats draw into a cove on the southern bank, and, after a conference with Boone, they spread their blankets again under the trees, the watch not falling to their share until the

following night. Having eaten from the food which they carried in knapsacks they looked contentedly at the river.

"Well, this will be twice that we have gone up the Ohio, once on the water, and once on the shore," said Paul. "But as before we have Timmendiquas to face."

"That's so," said Shif'less Sol, "but I'm thinkin' that nothin' much will happen, until we get up toward the mouth of the Lickin'. It's been only two nights since Timmendiquas hisself was spyin' us out, an' afore he strikes he's got to go back to his main force."

"Mebbe so an' mebbe not," said Tom Ross. "My eyes ain't so bad and this bein' a good place to look from I think I see a canoe over thar right under the fur shore uv the Ohio. Jest look along thar, Henry, whar the bank kinder rises up."

The point that Tom indicated was at least a mile away, but Henry agreed with him that a shape resembling a canoe lay close to the bank. Shif'less Sol and the others inclined to the same belief.

"If so, it's a scout boat watching us," said Paul, "and Timmendiquas himself may be in it."

Henry shook his head.

"It isn't likely," he said. "Timmendiquas knows all that he wants to know, and is now going northeastward as fast as he can. But his warriors are there. Look! You can see beyond a doubt now that it is a canoe, and it's going up the river at full speed."

The canoe shot from the shadow of the bank. Apparently it contained three or four Indians, and they had strong arms. So it sped over the water and against the current at a great rate.

"They've seen all they want to see to-night," said Henry, "but that canoe and maybe others will be watching us all the way."

A half hour later a light appeared in the northern woods and then another much further on. Doubtless the chain was continued by more, too far away for them to see. The men in the main camp saw them also, and understood. Every foot of their advance would be watched until the Indian army grew strong enough, when it would be attacked. Yet their zeal and courage rose the higher. They begged Clark to start again at dawn that no time might be lost. Boone joined the five

under the tree.

"You saw the lights, didn't you, boys?" he said.

"We saw them," replied Henry, "and we know what they mean. Don't you think, Mr. Boone, that for a while the most dangerous part of the work will fall on you?"

"Upon those with me an' myself," replied Boone in his gentle manner, "but all of us are used to it."

For two successive nights they saw the fiery signals on the northern shore, carrying the news into the deep woods that the Kentucky army was advancing. But they were not molested by any skirmishers. Not a single shot was fired. The fact was contrary to the custom of Indian warfare, and Henry saw in it the wisdom and restraint of Timmendiquas. Indians generally attack on impulse and without system, but now they were wasting nothing in useless skirmishing. Not until all the warriors were gathered, and the time was ripe would Timmendiquas attempt the blow.

It gave the little white army a peculiar feeling. The men knew all the time that they were being watched, yet they saw no human being save themselves. Boone's scouts found the trail of Indians several times, but never an Indian himself. Yet they continued their patient scouting. They did not intend that the army should fall into an ambush through any fault of theirs. Thus they proceeded day after day, slowly up the river, replenishing their supplies with game which was abundant everywhere.

They came to the wide and deep mouth of the Kentucky, a splendid stream flowing from the Alleghany Mountains, and thence across the heart of Kentucky into the Ohio. Henry thought that its passage might be disputed, and the five, Boone, Thomas and some others crossed cautiously in one of the larger boats. They watched to see anything unusual stir in the thickets on the farther shore of the Kentucky, but no warrior was there. Timmendiquas was not yet ready, and now the land portion of the army was also on the further shore, and the march still went on uninterrupted. Paul began to believe that Timmendiquas was not able to bring the warriors to the Ohio; that they would stand on the defensive at their own villages. But Henry was of another opinion, and he soon told it.

"Timmendiquas would never have come down to Louisville to look us over," he said, "if he meant merely to act on the defensive at places two or three hundred

miles away. No, Paul, we'll hear from him while we're still on the river, and I think it will be before Logan will join us."

Boone and Thomas took the same view, and now the scouting party doubled its vigilance.

"To-morrow morning," said Boone, "we'll come to the Licking. There are always more Indians along that river than any other in Kentucky and I wish Logan and his men were already with us."

The face of the great frontiersman clouded.

"The Indians have been too peaceful an' easy," he resumed. "Not a shot has been fired since we left Louisville an' now we're nearly to Tuentahahewaghta (the site of Cincinnati, that is, the landing or place where the road leads to the river). It means that Timmendiquas has been massing his warriors for a great stroke."

Reasoning from the circumstances and his knowledge of Indian nature, Henry believed that Daniel Boone was right, yet he had confidence in the result. Seven hundred trained borderers were not easily beaten, even if Logan and the other three hundred should not come. Yet he and Boone and all the band knew that the watch that night must miss nothing. The boats, as usual, were drawn up on the southern shore, too far away to be reached by rifle shots from the northern banks. The men were camped on a low wooded hill within a ring of at least fifty sentinels. The Licking, a narrow but deep stream, was not more than five miles ahead. Clark would have gone on to its mouth, had he not deemed it unwise to march at night in such a dangerous country. The night itself was black with heavy, low clouds, and the need to lie still in a strong position was obvious.

Boone spread out his scouts in advance. The five, staying together as usual, and now acting independently, advanced through the woods near the Ohio. It was one of the hottest of July nights, and nature was restless and uneasy. The low clouds increased in number, and continually grew larger until they fused into one, and covered the heavens with a black blanket from horizon to horizon. From a point far off in the southwest came the low but menacing mutter of thunder. At distant intervals, lightning would cut the sky in a swift, vivid stroke. The black woods would stand out in every detail for a moment, and they would catch glimpses of the river's surface turned to fiery red. Then the night closed down again, thicker and darker than ever, and any object twenty yards before them would become only a part of the black blur. A light wind moaned among the trees, weirdly and without stopping.

"It's a bad night for Colonel Clark's army," said Shif'less Sol. "Thar ain't any use o' our tryin' to hide the fact from one another, 'cause we all know it."

"That's so, Sol," said Long Jim Hart, "but we've got to watch all the better 'cause of it. I've knowed you a long time, Solomon Hyde, an' you're a lazy, shiftless, ornery, contrary critter, but somehow or other the bigger the danger the better you be, an' I think that's what's happenin' now."

If it had not been so dark Long Jim would have seen Shif'less Sol's pleased grin. Moreover the words of Jim Hart were true. The spirit of the shiftless one, great borderer that he was, rose to the crisis, but he said nothing. The little group continued to advance, keeping a couple of hundred yards or so from the bank of the Ohio, and stopping every ten or twelve minutes to listen. On such a night ears were of more use than eyes.

The forest grew more dense as they advanced. It consisted chiefly of heavy beech and oak, with scattered underbrush of spice wood and pawpaw. It was the underbrush particularly that annoyed, since it offered the best hiding for a foe in ambush. Henry prayed for the moon and the stars, but both moon and stars remained on the other side of impenetrable clouds. It was only by the occasional flashes of lightning that they saw clearly and then it was but a fleeting glimpse. But it was uncommonly vivid lightning. They noticed that it always touched both forest and river with red fire, and the weird moaning of the wind, crying like a dirge, never ceased. It greatly affected the nerves of Paul, the most sensitive of the five, but the others, too, were affected by it.

Henry turned his attention for a while from the forest to the river. He sought to see by the flashes of lightning if anything moved there, and, when they were about half way to the mouth of the Licking, he believed that he caught sight of something in the shape of a canoe, hovering near the farther shore. He asked them all to watch at the point he indicated until the next flash of lightning came. It was a full minute until the electric blade cut the heavens once more, but they were all watching and there was the dark shape. When the five compared opinions they were sure that it was moving slowly northward.

"It's significant," said Henry. "Daniel Boone isn't often mistaken, and the warriors are drawing in. We'll be fighting before dawn, boys."

"An' it's for us to find out when an' whar the attack will come," said Shif'less Sol.

"We're certainly going to try," said Henry. "Hark! What was that?"

"Injuns walkin' an' talkin'," said Tom Ross.

Henry listened, and he felt sure that Ross was right. Under his leadership they darted into a dense clump of pawpaws and lay motionless, thankful that such good shelter was close at hand. The footsteps, light, but now heard distinctly, drew nearer.

Henry had a sure instinct about those who were coming. He saw Braxton Wyatt, Blackstaffe, and at least twenty warriors emerge into view. The night was still as dark as ever, but the band was so near that the hidden five could see the features of every man. Henry knew by their paint that the warriors belonged to different tribes. Wyandots, Miamis, Shawnees, and Delawares were represented. Wyatt and Blackstaffe were talking. Henry gathered from the scattered words he heard that Blackstaffe doubted the wisdom of an attack, but Wyatt was eager for it.

"I was at Wyoming," said the younger renegade with a vicious snap of his teeth, "and it was the rush there that did it. We enveloped them on both front and flank and rushed in with such force that we beat them down in a few minutes. Nor did many have a chance to escape."

"But they were mostly old men and boys," said Blackstaffe, "and they had little experience in fighting the tribes. Clark has a bigger force here, and they are all borderers. You know how these Kentuckians can use the rifle."

Wyatt made a reply, but Henry could not hear it as the two renegades and the warriors passed on in the underbrush. But he did hear the click of a gun lock and he quickly pushed down the hand of Shiftless Sol.

"Not now! not now, Sol!" he whispered. "Wyatt and Blackstaffe deserve death many times over, but if you fire they'd all be on us in a whoop, and then we'd be of no further use."

"You're right, Henry," said the shiftless one, "but my blood was mighty hot for a minute."

The band disappeared, turning off toward the south, and the five, feeling that they had now gone far enough, returned to the camp. On the way they met Boone and the remainder of the scouts. Henry told what they had seen and heard and the great frontiersman agreed with them that the attack was at hand.

"You saw the war paint of four nations," he said, "an' that proves that a great force is here. I tell you I wish I knew about Logan, an' the men that are comin'

down the Lickin'."

It was now nearly midnight and they found Colonel Clark sitting under a tree at the eastern edge of the camp. He listened with the greatest attention to every detail that they could give him, and then his jaw seemed to stiffen.

"You have done well, lads," he said. "There is nothing more dangerous than the calling of a scout in the Indian wars, but not one of you has ever shirked it. You have warned us and now we are willing for Timmendiquas and Girty to attack whenever they choose."

Many of the men were asleep, but Clark did not awaken them. He knew fully the value of rest, and they were borderers who would spring to their feet at the first alarm, alive in every sense and muscle. But at least a third of his force was on guard. No attack was feared on the water. Nevertheless many of the men were there with the boats. It was, however, the semicircle through the forest about the camp that was made thick and strong. Throughout its whole course the frontiersmen stood close together and keen eyes and trained ears noted everything that passed in the forest.

Henry and his four comrades were at the point of the segment nearest to the confluence of the Ohio and the Licking. Here they sat upon the ground in a close group in the underbrush, speaking but rarely, while time passed slowly. The character of the night had not changed. The solemn wind never ceased to moan among the trees, and far off in the west the thunder yet muttered. The strokes of lightning were far between, but as before they cast a blood red tinge over forest and river. The five were some hundreds of yards beyond the camp, and they could see nothing then, although they heard now and then the rattle of arms and a word or two from the officers. Once they heard the sound of heavy wheels, and they knew that the cannon had been wheeled into position. Clark had even been able to secure light artillery for his great expedition.

"Do you think them big guns will be of any use?" asked Shif'less Sol.

"Not at night," replied Henry, "but in the daytime if we come to close quarters they'll certainly say something worth hearing."

It was now nearly half way between midnight and morning when the vitality is lowest. Paul, as he lay among the pawpaws, was growing very sleepy. He had not moved for so long a time and the night was so warm that his eyes had an almost invincible tendency to close, but his will did not permit it. Despite the

long silence he had no doubt that the attack would come. So he looked eagerly into the forest every time the lightning flashed, and always he strained his ears that he might hear, if anything was to be heard.

The melancholy wind died, and the air became close, hot and heavy. The leaves ceased to move, and there was no stir in the bushes, but Henry thought that he heard a faint sound. He made a warning gesture to his companions, and they, too, seemed to hear the same noise. All of Paul's sleepiness disappeared. He sat up, every nerve and muscle attuned for the crisis. Henry and he, at almost the same moment, saw the bushes move in front of them. Then they saw the bronze faces with the scalp lock above them, peering forth. The five sat perfectly silent for a few moments and more bronze faces appeared. The gaze of one of the Indians wandered toward the clump of pawpaws, and he saw there one of the five who had now risen a little higher than the rest to look. He knew that it was a white face, and, firing instantly at it, he uttered the long and thrilling war whoop. It was the opening cry of the battle.

The five at once returned the fire and with deadly effect. Two of the warriors fell, and the rest leaped back, still shouting their war cry, which was taken up and repeated in volume at a hundred points. Far above the forest it swelled, a terrible wolfish cry, fiercest of all on its dying note. From river and deep woods came the echo, and the warriors in multitudes rushed forward upon the camp.

Henry and his comrades when they discharged their rifles ran back toward the main force, reloading as they ran. The air was filled with terrible cries and behind them dark forms swarmed forward, running and bounding. From trees and underbrush came a hail of rifle bullets that whistled around the five, but which luckily did nothing save to clip their clothing and to sing an unpleasant song in their ears. Yet they had never run faster, not from fear, but because it was the proper thing to do. They had uncovered the enemy and their work as scouts was over.

They were back on the camp and among the frontiersmen, in less than a minute. Now they wheeled about, and, with rifles loaded freshly, faced the foe who pressed forward in a great horde, yelling and firing. Well it was for the white army that it was composed of veteran borderers. The sight was appalling to the last degree. The defenders were ringed around by flashes of fire, and hundreds of hideous forms leaped as if in the war dance, brandishing their tomahawks. But Colonel Clark was everywhere among his men, shouting to them to stand fast, not to be frightened by the war whoop, and that now was the time to win a

victory. Boone, Abe Thomas and the five gave him great help.

The riflemen stood firm in their semicircle, each end of it resting upon the river. Most of them threw themselves upon the ground, and, while the bullets whistled over their heads, poured forth an answering fire that sent many a warrior to explore the great hereafter. Yet the tribes pressed in with uncommon courage, charging like white men, while their great chiefs Timmendiquas, Red Eagle, Black Panther, Moluntha, Captain Pipe and the others led them on. They rushed directly into the faces of the borderers, leaping forward in hundreds, shouting the war whoop and now and then cutting down a foe. The darkness was still heavy and close, but it was lit up by the incessant flashes of the rifles. The smoke from the firing, with no breeze to drive it away, hung low in a dense bank that stung the mouths and nostrils of the combatants.

"Keep low, Paul! Keep low!" cried Henry, dragging his young comrade down among some spicewood bushes. "If you are bound to stick your head up like that it will be stopping a tomahawk soon."

Paul did not have to wait for the truth of Henry's words, as a shining blade whizzed directly where his head had been, and, passing on, imbedded itself in the trunk of a mighty beech. Paul shuddered. It seemed to him that he felt a hot wind from the tomahawk as it flew by. In his zeal and excitement he had forgotten the danger for a moment or two, and once more Henry had saved his life.

"I wish it would grow lighter," muttered Shif'less Sol. "It's hard to tell your friends from your enemies on a black night like this, and we'll be all mixed up soon."

"We five at least must keep close together," said Henry.

A fierce yell of victory came from the southern side of the camp, a yell that was poured from Indian throats, and every one of the five felt apprehension. Could their line be driven in? Driven in it was! Fifty Wyandots and as many Shawnees under Moluntha, the most daring of their war chiefs, crashed suddenly against the weakest part of the half circle. Firing a heavy volley they had rushed in with the tomahawk, and the defenders, meeting them with clubbed rifles, were driven back by the fury of the attack and the weight of numbers. There was a confused and terrible medley of shouts and cries, of thudding tomahawks and rifle butts, of crashing brushwood and falling bodies. It was all in the hot dark, until the lightning suddenly flared with terrifying brightness. Then it disclosed the

strained faces of white and red, the sweat standing out on tanned brows, and the bushes torn and trampled in the wild struggle. The red blaze passed and the night shot down in its place as thick and dark as ever. Neither red men nor white were able to drive back the others. In this bank of darkness the cries increased, and the cloud of smoke grew steadily.

It was not only well that these men were tried woodsmen, but it was equally well that they were led by a great wilderness chief. George Rogers Clark saw at once the point of extreme danger, and, summoning his best men, he rushed to the rescue. The five heard the call. Knowing its urgency, they left the spicewood and swept down with the helping band. Another flash of lightning showed where friends and foe fought face to face with tomahawk and clubbed rifle, and then Clark and the new force were upon the warriors. Paul, carried away by excitement, was shouting:

"Give it to 'em! Give it to 'em! Drive 'em back!"

But he did not know that he was uttering a word. He saw the high cheek bones and close-set eyes, and then he felt the shock as they struck the hostile line. Steel and clubbed rifle only were used first. They did not dare fire at such close quarters as friend and foe were mingled closely, but the warriors were pushed back by the new weight hurled upon them, and then the woodsmen, waiting until the next flash of lightning, sent in a volley that drove the Indians to the cover of the forest. The attack at that point had failed, and the white line was yet complete.

Once more the five threw themselves down gasping among the bushes, reloaded their rifles and waited. In front of them was silence. The enemy there had melted away without a sound, and he too lay hidden, but from left and right the firing and the shouting came with undiminished violence. Henry, also, at the same time heard in all the terrible uproar the distant and low muttering of the thunder, like a menacing under-note, more awful than the firing itself. The smoke reached them where they lay. It was floating now all through the forest, and not only stung the nostrils of the defenders, but heated their brains and made them more anxious for the combat.

"We were just in time," said Shif'less Sol. "Ef Colonel Clark hadn't led a hundred or so o' us on the run to this place the warriors would hev been right in the middle o' the camp, smashin' us to pieces. How they fight!"

"Their chiefs think this army must be destroyed and they're risking everything,"

said Henry. "Girty must be here, too, urging them on, although he's not likely to expose his own body much."

"But he's a real gen'ral an' a pow'ful help to the Injuns," said Tom Ross.

Clark's summons came again. The sound on the flank indicated that the line was being driven in at another point to the eastward, and the "chosen hundred," as the shiftless one called them, were hurled against the assailants, who were here mostly Miamis and Delawares. The Indians were driven back in turn, and the circle again curved over the ground that the defenders had held in the beginning. Jim Hart and Tom Ross were wounded slightly, but they hid their scratches from the rest, and went on with their part. A third attack in force at a third point was repulsed in the same manner, but only after the most desperate fighting. Each side suffered a heavy loss, but the Indians, nevertheless, were repulsed and the defenders once again lay down among the bushes, their pulses beating fast.

Then ensued the fiery ring. The white circle was complete, but the Indians formed another and greater one facing it. The warriors no longer tried to rush the camp, but flat on their stomachs among the bushes they crept silently forward, and fired at every white man who exposed a head or an arm or a hand.

They seemed to have eyes that pierced the dark, and, knowing where the target lay, they had an advantage over the defenders who could not tell from what point the next shot would come.

It was a sort of warfare, annoying and dangerous in the extreme, and Clark became alarmed. It got upon the nerves of the men. They were compelled to lie there and await this foe who stung and stung. He sought eagerly by the flashes of lightning to discover where they clustered in the greatest numbers, but they hugged the earth so close that he saw nothing, even when the lightning was so vivid that it cast a blood red tinge over both trees and bushes. He called Boone, Henry, Thomas and others, the best of the scouts, to him.

"We must clear those Indians out of the woods," he said, "or they will pick away at us until nothing is left to pick at. A charge with our best men will drive them off. What do you say, Mr. Boone?"

Daniel Boone shook his head, and his face expressed strong disapproval.

"We'd lose too many men, Colonel," he replied. "They're in greater numbers than we are, an' we drove them back when they charged. Now if we charged they'd

shoot us to pieces before we got where we wanted to go."

"I suppose you're right," said Clark. "In fact, I know you are. Yes, we have to wait, but it's hard. Many of our men have been hit, and they can't stand this sort of thing forever."

"Suppose you send forward a hundred of the best woodsmen and sharpshooters," said Boone. "They can creep among the bushes an' maybe they can worry the Indians as much as the Indians are worrying us."

Colonel Clark considered. They were standing then near the center of the camp, and, from that point they could see through the foliage the dusky surface of the water, and when they looked in the other direction they saw puffs of fire as the rifles were discharged in the undergrowth.

"It's risky," he said at last, "but I don't see anything else for us to do. Be sure that you choose the best men, Mr. Boone."

Daniel Boone rapidly told off a hundred, all great marksmen and cautious woodsmen. Henry, Paul, Shif'less Sol, Long Jim and Tom Ross were among the first whom he chose. Then while the defenders increased their fire on the eastern side, he and his hundred, hugging the ground, began to creep toward the south. It was slow work for so large a body, and they had to be exceedingly careful. Boone wished to effect a surprise and to strike the foe so hard that he would be thrown into a panic. But Henry and Paul were glad to be moving. They had something now to which they could look forward. The two kept side by side, paying little attention to the firing which went on in unbroken volume on their left.

Boone moved toward a slight elevation about a hundred yards away. He believed that it was occupied by a small Indian force which his gallant hundred could easily brush aside, if they ever came into close contact. Amid so much confusion and darkness he could reach the desired place unless they were revealed by the lightning. There was not another flash until they were more than half way and then the hundred lay so low among the bushes that they remained hidden.

"We're beatin' the savages at their own game," said Shif'less Sol. "They are always bent on stalkin' us, but they don't 'pear to know now that we're stalkin' them. Keep your eye skinned, Henry; we don't want to run into 'em afore we expect it."

"I'm watching," replied Henry in the same tone, "but I don't think I'll have to watch much longer. In two or three minutes more they'll see us or we'll see them."

Fifty yards more and another red flash of lightning came. Henry saw a feathered head projecting over a log. At the same time the owner of the feathered head saw him, fired and leaped to his feet. Henry fired in return, and the next instant he and his comrades were upon the skirmishers, clearing them out of the bushes and sending them in headlong flight. They had been so long in the darkness now that their eyes had grown used to it, and they could see the fleeing forms. They sent a decimating volley after them, and then dropped down on the ridge that they had won. They meant to hold it, and they were fortunate enough to find there many fallen trees swept down by a tornado.

"We've cut their line," said Boone, "an' we must keep it cut. I've sent a messenger to tell Colonel Clark that we've taken the place, an' since we've broke their front they'll be mighty good men, Indians and renegades, if they're ever able to join it together again."

The warriors returned in great force to the attack. They appreciated the value of the position, but the sharpshooters fired from the shelter of the logs.

The five, following their long custom, kept close together, and when they threw themselves down behind the logs they took a rapid accounting. Paul was the only one who had escaped unhurt. A tomahawk, thrown at short range, had struck Henry on the side of the head, but only with the flat of the blade. His fur cap and thick hair saved him, but the force of the blow had made him reel for a minute, and a whole constellation of stars had danced before his eyes. Now his head still rung a little, but the pain was passing, and all his faculties were perfectly clear and keen. A bullet had nicked Tom Ross's wrist, but, cutting a piece of buckskin from his shirt, he tied it up well and gave it no further attention. Jim Hart and Shif'less Sol had received new scratches, but they were not advertising them.

They lay panting for a few minutes among the fallen trees, and all around them they heard the low words of the gallant hundred; though there were not really a hundred now. Boone was so near that Henry could see the outline of the great forest-fighter's figure.

"Well, we succeeded, did we not, Colonel Boone?" he said, giving him a title that had been conferred upon him a year or two before.

"We have so far," replied Boone, guardedly, "and this is a strong position. We couldn't have taken it if we hadn't been helped by surprise. I believe they'll make an effort to drive us out of this place. Timmendiugas and Girty know the need of it. Come with me, Mr. Ware, and see that all our men are ready."

Henry, very proud to serve as the lieutenant of such a man, rose from his log and the two went among the men. Everyone was ready with loaded weapons. Many had wounds, but they had tied them up, and, rejoicing now in their log fortifications, they waited with impatience the Indian onset. Henry returned to his place. A red flare of lightning showed his eager comrades all about him, their tanned faces, set and lean, every man watching the forest. But after the lightning, the night, heavy with clouds, swept down again, and it seemed to Henry that it was darker than ever. He longed for the dawn. With the daylight disclosing the enemy, and helping their own aim, their log fortress would be impregnable. Elsewhere the battle seemed to be dying. The shots came in irregular clusters, and the war whoop was heard only at intervals. Directly in front of them the silence was absolute and Henry's rapid mind divined the reason for all these things. Girty and Timmendiugas were assembling their main force there and they, too, would rely upon surprise and the irresistible rush of a great mass. He crawled over to Boone and told him his belief. Boone nodded.

"I think you are right," he said, "an' right now I'll send a messenger back to Colonel Clark to be ready with help. The attack will come soon, because inside of an hour you'll see dawn peeping over the eastern trees."

Henry crawled back to his comrades and lay down with them, waiting through that terrible period of suspense. Strain their ears as they would, they could hear nothing in front. If Timmendiugas and Girty were gathering their men there, they were doing it with the utmost skill and secrecy. Yet the watch was never relaxed for an instant. Every finger remained on the trigger and every figure was taut for instant action.

A half hour had passed. In another half hour the day would come, and they must fight when eyes could see. The lightning had ceased, but the wind was moaning its dirge among the leaves, and then to Henry's ears came the sound of a soft tread, of moccasined feet touching the earth ever so lightly.

"They are coming! They are coming!" he cried in a sharp, intense whisper, and the next instant the terrible war whoop, the fiercest of all human sounds, was poured from the hundreds of throats, and dusky figures seemed to rise from the

earth directly in front of them, rushing upon them, seeking to close with the tomahawk before they could take aim with their rifles in the darkness. But these were chosen men, ready and wonderfully quick. Their rifles leaped to their shoulders and then they flashed all together, so close that few could miss. The front of the Indian mass was blown away, but the others were carried on by the impetus of their charge, and a confused, deadly struggle took place once more, now among the logs. Henry, wielding his clubbed rifle again, was sure that he heard the powerful voice of Timmendiquas urging on the warriors, but he was not able to see the tall figure of the great Wyandot chieftain.

"Why don't the help from Colonel Clark come?" panted Shif'less Sol. "If you don't get help when you want it, it needn't come at all."

But help was near. With a great shout more than two hundred men rushed to the rescue. Yet it was hard in the darkness to tell friend from enemy, and, taking advantage of it, the warriors yet held a place among the fallen trees. Now, as if by mutual consent, there was a lull in the battle, and there occurred something that both had forgotten in the fierce passions of the struggle. The dawn came. The sharp rays of the sun pierced the clouds of darkness and smoke, and disclosed the face of the combatants to one another.

Then the battle swelled afresh, and as the light swung higher and higher, showing all the forest, the Indian horde was driven back, giving ground at first slowly. Suddenly a powerful voice shouted a command and all the warriors who yet stood, disappeared among the trees, melting away as if they had been ghosts. They sent back no war cry, not another shot was fired, and the rising sun looked down upon a battlefield that was still, absolutely still. The wounded, stoics, both red and white, suppressed their groans, and Henry, looking from the shelter of the fallen tree, was awed as he had never been before by Indian combat.

The day was of uncommon splendor. The sun shot down sheaves of red gold, and lighted up all the forest, disclosing the dead, lying often in singular positions, and the wounded, seeking in silence to bind their wounds. The smoke, drifting about in coils and eddies, rose slowly above the trees and over everything was that menacing silence.

"If it were not for those men out there," said Paul, "it would all be like a dream, a nightmare, driven away by the day."

"It's no dream," said Henry; "we've repulsed the Indians twice, but they're going to try to hold us here. They'll surround us with hundreds of sharpshooters, and

every man who tries to go a hundred yards from the rest of us will get a bullet. I wish I knew where Logan's force is or what has become of it."

"That's a mighty important thing to us," said Boone, "an' it'll grow more important every hour. I guess Logan has been attacked too, but he and Clark have got to unite or this campaign can't go on."

Henry said nothing but he was very thoughtful. A plan was forming already in his mind. Yet it was one that compelled waiting. The day deepened and the Indian force was silent and invisible. The inexperienced would have thought that it was gone, but these borderers knew well enough that it was lying there in the deep woods not a quarter of a mile away, and as eager as ever for their destruction. Colonel Clark reënforced the detachment among the fallen trees, recognizing the great strength of the position, and he spoke many words of praise.

"I'll send food to you," he said, "and meat and drink in plenty. After a night such as we have had refresh yourselves as much as you can."

They had an abundance of stores in the boats, and the men were not stinted. Nor did they confine themselves to cold food. Fires were lighted in the woods nearest to the river, and they cooked beef, venison, pork and buffalo meat. Coffee was boiled in great cans of sheet iron, and breakfast was served first to the gallant hundred.

Shif'less Sol, as he lay behind his tree, murmured words of great content. "It's a black night that don't end," he said, "an' I like fur mine to end jest this way. Provided I don't get hurt bad I'm willin' to fight my way to hot coffee an' rich buff'ler steak. This coffee makes me feel good right down to my toes, though I will say that there is a long-legged ornery creatur that kin make it even better than this. Hey, thar, Saplin'!"

Long Jim Hart's mouth opened in a chasm of a grin.

"I confess," he said, "I'm a purty good cook, ef I do tell it myself. But what are we goin' to do now, Henry?"

"That's for Colonel Clark to say, and I don't think he'll say anything just yet."

"Nice day," said Tom Ross, looking about approvingly.

All the others laughed, yet Tom told the truth. The clouds were gone and the air

had turned cooler. The forest looked splendid in its foliage, and off to the south they could see wild flowers.

"Nothin' goin' to happen for some time," said Shif'less Sol, "an' me bein' a lazy man an' proud o' the fact, I think I'll go to sleep."

Nobody said anything against it, and stretching himself out among the bushes which shaded his face, he was sleeping peacefully in a few minutes. Paul looked at him, and the impression which the slumbering man made upon him was so strong that his own eyelids drooped.

"You go to sleep, too," said Henry. "You'll have nothing to do for hours, and sleep will bring back your strength."

Paul had eaten a heavy breakfast, and he needed nothing more than Henry's words. He lay down by the side of his comrade, and soon he too was slumbering as soundly as Shif'less Sol. Several hours passed. The sun moved on in its regular course toward the zenith. Paul and the shiftless one still slept. Toward the eastern end of the camp someone ventured a little distance from the others, and received a bullet in his shoulder. A scout fired at the figure of an Indian that he saw for a moment leaping from one tree to another, but he could not tell whether he hit anything. At the other end of the camp there were occasional shots, but Paul and the shiftless one slept on.

Henry glanced at the sleepers now and then and was pleased to see that they rested so well. He suggested to Jim Hart that he join them, and Jim promptly traveled to the same blissful country. Henry himself did not care to go to sleep. He was still meditating. All this sharpshooting by the two sides meant nothing. It was more an expression of restlessness than of any serious purpose, and he paid it no attention. Silent Tom noticed the corrugation of his brow, and he said:

"Thinkin' hard, Henry?"

"Yes; that is, I'm trying," replied Henry.

Tom, his curiosity satisfied, relapsed into silence. He, too, cared little for the casual shots, but he was convinced that Henry had a plan which he would reveal in good time.

The sniping went on all day long. Not a great deal of damage was done but it was sufficient to show to Colonel Clark that his men must lie close in camp. If the white army assumed the offensive, the great Indian force from the shelter of

trees and bushes would annihilate it. And throughout the day he was tormented by fears about Logan. That leader was coming up the Licking with only three or four hundred men, and already they might have been destroyed. If so, he must forego the expedition against Chillicothe and the other Indian towns. It was a terrible dilemma, and the heart of the stout leader sank. Now and then he went along the semicircle, but he found that the Indians were always on watch. If a head were exposed, somebody sent a bullet at it. More than once he considered the need of a charge, but the deep woods forbade it. He was a man of great courage and many resources, but as he sat under the beech tree he could think of nothing to do.

The day—one of many alarms and scattered firing—drew to its close. The setting sun tinted river and woods with red, and Colonel Clark, still sitting under his tree and ransacking every corner of his brain, could not yet see a way. While he sat there, Henry Ware came to him, and taking off his hat, announced that he wished to make a proposition.

"Well, Henry, my lad," said the Colonel, kindly, "what is it that you have to say? As for me, I confess I don't know what to do."

"Somebody must go down the Licking and communicate with Colonel Logan," replied the youth. "I feel sure that he has not come up yet, and that he has not been in contact with the Indians. If his force could break through and join us, we could drive the Indians out of our path."

"Your argument is good as far as it goes," said Colonel Clark somewhat sadly, "but how are we to communicate with Logan? We are surrounded by a ring of fire. Not a man of ours dare go a hundred yards from camp. What way is there to reach Logan?"

"By water."

"By water? What do you mean?"

"Down the Ohio and up the Licking."

Colonel Clark stared at Henry.

"That's an easy thing to talk about," he said, "but who's going down the Ohio and then up the Licking for Logan?"

"I—with your permission."

Colonel Clark stared still harder, and his eyes widened a little with appreciation, but he shook his head.

"It's a patriotic and daring thing for you to propose, my boy," he said, "but it is impossible. You could never reach the mouth of the Licking even, and yours is too valuable a life to be thrown away in a wild attempt."

But Henry was not daunted. He had thought over his plan long and well, and he believed that he could succeed.

"I have been along the Ohio before, and I have also been down the Licking," he said. "The night promises to be cloudy and dark like last night and I feel sure that I can get through. I have thought out everything, and I wish to try. Say that you are willing for me to go, Colonel."

Colonel Clark hesitated. He had formed a strong liking for the tall youth before him, and he did not wish to see his life wasted, but the great earnestness of Henry's manner impressed him. The youth's quiet tone expressed conviction, and expressed it so strongly that Colonel Clark, in his turn, felt it.

"What is your plan?" he asked.

"When the night reaches its darkest I will start with a little raft, only four or five planks fastened together. I do not want a canoe. I want something that blends with the surface of the water. I'll swim, pushing it before me until I am tired, and then I'll rest upon it. Then I'll swim again."

"Do you really think you can get through?" asked the Colonel.

"I'm sure of it."

Colonel Clark paced back and forth for a minute or two.

"It looks terribly dangerous," he said at last, "but from all I have heard you've done some wonderful things, and if you can reach Logan in time, it will relieve us from this coil."

"I can do it! I can do it!" said Henry eagerly.

Colonel Clark looked at him long and scrutinizingly. He noted his height, his powerful figure, the wonderful elasticity that showed with every step he took, and his firm and resourceful gaze.

"Well, go," he said, "and God be with you."

"I shall start the moment full darkness comes," said Henry.

"But we must arrange a signal in case you get through to Logan," said Colonel Clark. "He has a twelve pound bronze gun. I know positively that he left Lexington with it. Now if he approaches, have him fire a shot. We will reply with two shots from our guns, you answer with another from yours, and the signal will be complete. Then Logan is to attack the Indian ring from the outside with all his might, and, at the same moment and at the same point, we will attack from the inside with all of ours. Then, in truth, it will be strange if we do not win the victory."

Henry returned to his comrades and told them the plan. They were loth to see him go, but they knew that attempts to dissuade him would be useless. Nevertheless, Shifless Sol had an amendment.

"Let me go with you, Henry," he said. "Two are better than one."

"No," replied Henry, "I must go alone, Sol. In this case the smaller the party the less likely it is to be seen. I'll try, and then if I fail, it will be your time."

The night, as Henry had foreseen, was cloudy and dark. The moon and stars were hidden again, and two hundred yards from shore the surface of the river blended into the general blur. His little raft was made all ready. Four broad planks from the wagons had been nailed securely together with cross-strips. Upon them he laid his rifle and pistols—all in holsters—ammunition secured from the wet, and food and his clothing in tight bundles. He himself was bare, save for a waist cloth and belt, but in the belt he carried a hatchet and his long hunting knife.

Only his four comrades, Colonel Clark and Boone were present when he started. Every one of the six in turn, wrung his hand. But the four who had known him longest and best were the most confident that he would reach Logan and achieve his task.

Henry slipped silently into the water, and, pushing his raft before him, was gone like a wraith. He did not look back, knowing that for the present he must watch in front if he made the perilous passage. The boats belonging to the army were ranged toward the shore, but he was soon beyond them. Then he turned toward the bank, intending to keep deep in its shadows, and also in the shade of the

overhanging boughs.

The Indians had no fleet, but beyond a doubt they were well provided with canoes which would cruise on both rivers beyond the range of rifle shot, and keep a vigilant watch for messengers from either Clark or Logan. Hence Henry moved very slowly for a while, eagerly searching the darkness for any sign of his vigilant foe. He rested one arm upon his little raft, and with the other he wielded a small paddle which sent him along easily.

As it nears Cincinnati the Ohio narrows and deepens, and the banks rise more abruptly. Henry kept close to the southern shore, his body often touching the soft earth. Fortunately the bushes grew thickly, even on the steep cliff, to the water's edge. When he had gone three or four hundred yards he pulled in among them and lay still awhile. He heard the sound of distant shots and he knew that the Indians were still sniping the camp. The curve of the Ohio hid the boats of his friends, and before him the river seemed to be deserted. Yet he was sure that the Indian canoes were on watch. They might be hovering within fifty yards of him.

He listened for the noise of paddles, but no such sound came, and pushing his tiny craft from the coil of bushes, he set out once more upon the Ohio. Still hearing and seeing nothing, he went a little faster. Henry was a powerful swimmer, and the raft, small as it was, gave him ample support. Meanwhile, he sought sedulously to avoid any noise, knowing that only an incautious splash made by his paddle would almost certainly be heard by an Indian ear.

Presently he saw on the northern bank a light, and then another light farther up the stream. Probably the Indians were signaling to one another, but it did not matter to him, and he swam on towards the mouth of the Licking, now about a half mile away. Another hundred yards and he quickly and silently drew in to the bank again, pushing the raft far back, until it, as well as himself, was hidden wholly. He had heard the distant sounds of paddles coming in his direction, and soon two Indian canoes in file came in sight. Each canoe contained two warriors. Henry inferred from the way in which they scrutinized the river and the bank, that they were sentinels. Well for him that the bushes grew thick and high. The penetrating Indian eyes passed unsuspecting over his hiding place, and went on, dropping slowly down the river to a point where they could watch the white boats. A hundred yards in that darkness was sufficient to put them out of sight, and Henry again pushed boldly into the stream.

The young blockade runner now had a theory that the sentinel boats of the

Indians would keep close in to the shore. That would be their natural procedure, and to avoid them he swam boldly far out into the river. Near the middle of the current he paddled once more up stream. Only his head showed above the surface and the raft was so low that no one was likely to notice it. The wisdom of his movement soon showed as he made out three more canoes near the Kentucky shore, obviously on watch. Toward the north, at a point not more than seventy or eighty yards away he saw another canoe containing three warriors and apparently stationary. Others might be further ahead, but the darkness was too great for him to tell. Clearly, there was no passage except in the middle of the stream, the very point that he had chosen.

Many a stout heart would have turned back, but pride commanded Henry to go on. Fortunately, the water lying long under the summer heat was very warm, and one could stay in it indefinitely, without fear of chill. While he deliberated a little, he sank down until he could breathe only through his nostrils, keeping one hand upon the raft. Then he began to swim slowly with his feet and the other hand and all the while he kept his eyes upon the stationary boat containing the three warriors. By dint of staring at them so long they began to appear clear and sharp in the darkness. Two were middle-aged, and one young. He judged them to be Wyandots, and they had an anchor as they did not use the paddles to offset the current. Undoubtedly they were sentinels, as their gaze made a continuous circle about them. Henry knew, too, that they were using ears as well as eyes and that nobody could hear better than the Wyandots.

He decreased his pace, merely creeping through the water, and at the same time he swung back a little toward the southern shore and away from the Wyandots in the canoe. But the movement was a brief one. To the right of him he saw two more canoes and he knew that they formed a part of the chain of sentinels stretched by Timmendiquas across the river. It was obvious to Henry that the Wyandot leader was fully aware of the advance of Logan, and was resolved to prevent the passage of any messenger between him and Clark.

Henry paused again, still clinging to his little raft, and holding his place in the current with a slight motion of his feet. Then he advanced more slowly than ever, choosing a point which he thought was exactly half way between the Wyandots and the other canoes, but he feared the Wyandots most. Twenty yards, and he stopped. One of the Wyandot warriors seemed to have seen something. He was looking fixedly in Henry's direction. Boughs and stumps of every sort often floated down the Ohio. He might have caught a glimpse of Henry's head. He would take it for a small stump, but he would not stop to surmise.

Holding the planks with but one hand, Henry dived about two feet beneath the surface and swam silently but powerfully up the stream. He swam until his head seemed to swell and the water roared in his ears. He swam until his heart pounded from exhaustion and then he rose slowly to the surface, not knowing whether or not he would rise among his enemies.

No one greeted him with a shot or blow as he came up, and, when his eyes cleared themselves of water, he saw the Wyandot canoe cruising about sixty or seventy yards down the stream, obviously looking for the dark spot that one of them had seen upon the surface of the river. They might look in his direction, but he believed that he was too far away to be noticed. Still, he could not tell, and one with less command of himself would have swam desperately away. Henry, instead, remained perfectly still, sunk in the water up to his nostrils, one hand only yet clinging to the raft. The Wyandots turned southward, joined their brethren from the Kentucky shore and talked earnestly with them. Henry used the opportunity to swim about a hundred yards further up the stream, and then, when the canoes separated, he remained perfectly still again. In the foggy darkness he feared most the Indian ear which could detect at once any sound out of the common. But the Wyandot canoe returned to its old place and remained stationary there. Evidently the warriors were convinced that they had seen only a stump.

Henry now swam boldly and swiftly, still remaining in the middle of the stream. He saw several lights in the woods on the southern shore, not those of signals, but probably the luminous glow from camp fires as they burned with a steady blaze. The Indians were on watch, and the faint sound of two or three rifle shots showed that the night did not keep them from buzzing and stinging about Colonel Clark's force. Yet Henry's pulse leaped in throat and temple. He had passed one formidable obstacle and it was a good omen. The stars in their courses were fighting for him, and he would triumph over the others as they came.

But he checked his speed, thinking that the Indian canoes would be thick around the mouth of the Licking, and presently he became conscious of a great weariness. He had been in the water a long time and one could not dive and swim forever. His arms and legs ached and he felt a soreness in his chest. It was too dangerous to pull in to the bank at that point, and he tried a delicate experiment. He sought to crawl upon his little raft and lie there flat upon his back, a task demanding the skill of an acrobat.

Three or four times Henry was within an inch of overturning his frail craft with the precious freight, but he persisted, and by skillfully balancing himself and the raft too he succeeded at last. Then he was compelled to lie perfectly still, with his arms outstretched and his feet in the water. He was flat upon his back and he could look at only the heavens, which offered to his view nothing—no bright stars and shining moon, only lowering clouds. If an enemy appeared, he must depend upon his ear to give warning. But the physical difficulty of his position did not keep him from feeling a delightful sense of rest. The soreness left his chest, the ache disappeared from his arms and legs, and he drew the fresh air into his lungs in deep and easy breaths. An occasional kick of his feet kept the raft from floating down stream, and, for a while, he lay there, studying the clouds, and wondering how long it would be until the twinkle of a star would break through them. He heard the sound of both paddles and oars, the first to the north and the other to the south. But his experienced ear told him that each was at least two hundred yards away, which was too far for anyone to see him stretched out upon his boards. So he rested on and waited for his ears to tell him whether the sounds were coming any nearer. The boat with the oars passed out of hearing and the sound of the oars became fainter and fainter. Henry's heart ticked a note of thankfulness. He would not be disturbed for the present, and he continued his study of the low clouds, while the strength flowed back into every part of his body.

It occurred to him presently that he could steer as well as propel his float with his feet. So he set to work, threshing the water very slowly and carefully, and turning his head towards the mouth of the Licking. Occasionally he heard the sounds of both oars and paddles, but he judged very accurately that those who wielded them were not near enough to see him. He was thankful that the night was not broken like the one before with flashes of lightning which would infallibly have disclosed him to the enemy.

After a half hour of this work, he felt a strange current of water against his feet, and at first he was puzzled, but the solution came in a few minutes. He was opposite the mouth of the Licking, and he had come into contact with the stream before it was fully merged into the Ohio. What should he do next? The cordon across the Licking, a much narrower river, would be harder to pass than that on the Ohio.

But he was rested fully now, and, sliding off his boards into the water, he took a long survey of his situation. No break had yet occurred in the clouds, and this was a supreme good fortune. To the east, he dimly saw two boats, and to the south, the high black bank. No lights were visible there, but he saw them further down the shore, where it was likely that the majority of the warriors were gathered. Henry resolved to make directly for the angle of land between the mouth of the Licking and the Ohio, and he swam toward it with swift, powerful strokes, pushing his raft before him.

He calculated that at this angle of land he would be between the two Indian cordons, and there, if anywhere, he could find the way to Logan. He reached the point, found it well covered with bushes, and drew the little raft into concealment. Then he climbed cautiously to the top and looked long in every direction, seeking to trace the precise alignment of the Indian force. He saw lights in the woods directly to the south and along the shore of the Licking. The way there was closed and he knew that the watch would be all the more vigilant in order to intercept the coming of Logan. He could not pass on land. Hence, he must pass on water.

There were yet many long hours before daylight, and he did not hasten. Although the water was warm he had been in it a long time and he took every precaution to maintain his physical powers. He did not dress, but he rubbed thoroughly every part of his body that he could reach. Then he flexed and tensed his muscles until he had thrown off every chance of chill, after which he lowered himself into the water, and pushed out with his raft once more.

He turned the angle of land and entered the Licking, a narrow, deep, and muddy stream, lined there, like all the other rivers of that region, with high and thick forests. Ahead of him, he saw in the stream a half dozen boats with warriors, yet he continued his course towards the cordon, keeping his float very close to the western banks. It is said that fortune favors the daring, and Henry had often proved the truth of it. Once more the saying held good. Clouds heavier and

thicker than any of the others floated up and plunged river and shores into deeper obscurity. Henry believed that if he could avoid all noise, he might, by hugging the bank, get by.

He went in so close to the shore that he could wade, but finding that he was likely to become tangled among bushes and vines, thus making sounds which the warriors would not fail to hear, he returned to deeper water. Now the most critical moment of the river gauntlet was approaching. He saw about one hundred yards before him, and directly across his course, a boat containing two warriors. The space between this boat and the western shore was not more than thirty yards. Could he pass them, unseen? The chances were against it, but he resolved to try.

Swimming silently, he approached the opening. He had sunk deep in the water again, with only one hand on the float, and there was yet nothing from the boat to indicate that the two warriors had either seen or heard him. Despite all his experience, his heart beat very fast, and his hand on the float trembled. But he had no thought of going back. Now he was almost parallel with the boat. Now, he was parallel, and the watchful eye of one of the warriors caught a glimpse of the darker object on the surface of the dark water. He stared a moment in surprise, and then with a yell of warning to his comrade, raised his rifle and fired at the swimming head.

Henry had seen the upraised rifle, and diving instantly, he swam with all his might up stream. As he went down, he heard the bullet go zip upon the water. Knowing that he could not save his little craft, he had loosed his hold upon it and swam under water as long as he could. Yet those boards and the packages upon them saved his life. They were the only things that the warriors now saw, and all rowed straight towards the raft. Meanwhile, Henry rose in the bushes at the edge of the bank and took long and deep breaths, while they examined his rifle and clothing. Before they had finished, he dived into the deep water once more, and was again swimming swiftly against the current of the Licking.

CHAPTER XX

THE COUNTER-STROKE

Colonel Benjamin Logan was standing in a small opening near the banks of the Licking about five miles south of its junction with the Ohio. Dawn had just come but it had been a troubled night. The country around him was beautiful, a primeval wilderness with deep fertile soil and splendid forest. His company, too, was good—several hundred stalwart men from Lexington, Boonesborough, Harrod's Station and several other settlements in the country, destined to become so famous as the Bluegrass region of Kentucky. Yet, as has been said, the night was uneasy and he saw no decrease of worry.

Colonel Logan was a man of stout nerves, seldom troubled by insomnia, but he had not slept. His scouts had told him that there were Indians in the forest ahead. One or two incautious explorers had been wounded by bullets fired from hidden places. He and the best men with him had felt that they were surrounded by an invisible enemy, and just at the time that he needed knowledge, it was hardest to achieve it. It was important for him to move on, highly important because he wanted to effect a junction for a great purpose with George Rogers Clark, a very famous border leader. Yet he could learn nothing of Clark. He did not receive any news from him, nor could he send any to him. Every scout who tried it was driven back, and after suffering agonies of doubt through that long and ominous night, the brave leader and skillful borderer had concluded that the most powerful Indian force ever sent to Kentucky was in front of him. His men had brought rumors that it was led by the renowned Wyandot chief, Timmendiquas, with Red Eagle, Black Panther, Moluntha, Captain Pipe and the renegade Girty as his lieutenants.

Colonel Logan, brave man that he was, was justified when he felt many fears. His force was not great, and, surrounded, it might be overwhelmed and cut off. For the border to lose three or four hundred of its best men would be fatal. Either he must retreat or he must effect a junction with Clark of whose location he knew nothing. A more terrible choice has seldom been presented to a man. Harrod, Kenton and other famous scouts stood with him and shared his perplexity.

"What shall we do, gentlemen?" he asked.

There was no answer save the sound of a rifle shot from the woods in front of them.

"I don't blame you for not answering," said the Colonel moodily, "because I don't know of anything you can say. Listen to those shots! We may be fighting for our lives before noon, but, by all the powers, I won't go back. We can't do it! Now in the name of all that's wonderful what is that?"

Every pair of eyes was turned toward the muddy surface of the Licking, where a white body floated easily. As they looked the body came to the bank, raised itself up in the shape of a human being and stepped ashore, leaving a trail of water on the turf. It was the figure of a youth, tall and powerful beyond his kind and bare to the waist. He came straight toward Logan.

"Now, who under the sun are you and what do you want!" exclaimed the startled Colonel.

"My name is Henry Ware," replied the youth in a pleasant voice, "and what I want is first a blanket and after that some clothes, but meanwhile I tell you that I am a messenger from Colonel Clark whom you wish to join."

"A messenger from Colonel Clark?" exclaimed Logan. "How do we know this?"

"Simon Kenton there knows me well and he can vouch for me; can't you Simon?" continued the youth in the same pleasant voice.

"And so I can!" exclaimed Kenton, springing forward and warmly grasping the outstretched hand. "I didn't know you at first, Henry, which is natural, because it ain't your habit to wander around in the daytime with nothing on but a waist band."

"But how is it that you came up the Licking," persisted Colonel Logan, still suspicious. "Is Colonel Clark in the habit of sending unclothed messengers up rivers?"

"I came that way," replied Henry, "because all the others are closed. I've been swimming nearly all night or rather floating, because I had a little raft to help me. I came up the Ohio and then up the Licking. I ran the Indian gauntlet on both rivers. At the gauntlet on the Licking I lost my raft which carried my rifle, clothes and ammunition. However here I am pretty wet and somewhat tired, but

as far as I know, sound."

"You can rely on every word he says, Colonel," exclaimed Simon Kenton.

"I do believe him absolutely," said Colonel Logan, "and here, Mr. Ware, is my blanket. Wear it until we get your clothes. And now what of Clark?"

"He is only about six miles away with seven hundred veterans. He was attacked night before last by Timmendiquas, Girty and all the power of the allied tribes, but we drove them off. Colonel Clark and his men are in an impregnable position, and they await only your coming to beat the whole Indian force. He has sent me to tell you so."

Colonel Logan fairly sprang up in his joy.

"Only six miles away!" he exclaimed. "Then we'll soon be with him. Young sir, you shall have the best clothes and the best rifle the camp can furnish, for yours has been a daring mission and a successful one. How on earth did you ever do it?"

"I think luck helped me," replied Henry modestly.

"Luck? Nonsense! Luck can't carry a man through such an ordeal as that. No, sir; it was skill and courage and strength. Now here is breakfast, and while you eat, your new clothes and your new rifle shall be brought to you."

Colonel Logan was as good as his word. When Henry finished his breakfast and discarded the blanket he arrayed himself in a beautifully tanned and fringed suit of deerskin, and ran his hand lovingly along the long slender barrel of a silver-mounted rifle, the handsomest weapon he had ever seen.

"It is yours," said Colonel Logan, "in place of the one that you have lost, and you shall have also double-barreled pistols. And now as we are about to advance, we shall have to call upon you to be our guide."

Henry responded willingly. He was fully rested, and at such a moment he had not thought of sleep. Preceded by scouts, Logan's force advanced cautiously through the woods near the Licking. About a score of shots were fired at them, but, after the shots, the Indian skirmishers fell back on their main force. When they had gone about two miles Logan stopped his men, and ordered a twelve-pound cannon of which they were very proud to be brought forward.

It was rolled into a little open space, loaded only with blank cartridges and fired. Doubtless many of the men wondered why it was discharged seemingly at random into the forest, because Colonel Logan had talked only with Henry Ware, Simon Kenton and a few others. But the sound of the shot rolled in a deep boom through the woods.

"Will he hear?" asked Colonel Logan.

"He'll hear," replied Simon Kenton with confidence. "The sound will travel far through this still air. It will reach him."

They waited with the most intense anxiety one minute, two minutes, and out of the woods in the north came the rolling report in reply. A half minute more and then came the second sound just like the first.

"The signal! They answer! They answer!" exclaimed Colonel Logan joyously. "Now to make it complete."

When the last echo of the second shot in the north had died, the twelve-pounder was fired again. Then it was reloaded, but not with blank cartridges, and the word to advance was given. Now the men pressed forward with increased eagerness, but they still took wilderness precaution. Trees and hillocks were used for shelter, and from the trees and hillocks in front of them the Indian skirmishers poured a heavy fire. Logan's men replied and the forest was alive with the sounds of battle. Bullets cut twigs and bushes, and the white man's shout replied to the red man's war whoop. The cannon was brought up, and fired cartridges and then grape shot at the point where the enemy's force seemed to be thickest. The Indians gave way before this terrifying fire, and Logan's men followed them. But the Colonel always kept a heavy force on either flank to guard against ambush, and Henry was continually by his side to guide. They went a full mile and then Henry, who was listening, exclaimed joyfully:

"They're coming to meet us! Don't you hear their fire?"

Above the crash of his own combat Colonel Logan heard the distant thudding of cannon, and, as he listened, that thudding came nearer. These were certainly the guns of Clark, and he was as joyous as Henry. Their coöperation was now complete, and the courage and daring of one youth had made it possible. His own force pushed forward faster, and soon they could hear the rifles of the heavier battle in the north.

"We've got 'em! We've got 'em!" shouted Simon Kenton. "They are caught between the two jaws of a vice, and the bravest Indians that ever lived can never stand that."

Logan ordered his men to spread out in a longer and thinner line, although he kept at least fifty of his best about the cannon to prevent any attempt at capture. The twelve-pounder may not have done much execution upon an enemy who fought chiefly from shelter, but he knew that its effect was terrifying, and he did not mean to lose the gun. His precaution was taken well, as a picked band of Wyandots, Shawnees and Miamis, springing suddenly from the undergrowth, made a determined charge to the very muzzle of the cannon. There was close fighting, hand to hand, the shock of white bodies against red, the flash of exploding powder and the glitter of steel, but the red band was at last driven back, although not without loss to the defenders. The struggle had been so desperate that Colonel Logan drew more men about the cannon, and then pressed on again. The firing to the north was growing louder, indicating that Clark, too, was pushing his way through the forest. The two forces were now not much more than a mile apart, and Simon Kenton shouted that the battle would cease inside of five minutes.

Kenton was a prophet. Almost at the very moment predicted by him the Indian fire stopped with a suddenness that seemed miraculous. Every dusky flitting form vanished. No more jets of flame arose, the smoke floated idly about as if it had been made by bush fires, and Logan's men found that nobody was before them. There was something weird and uncanny about it. The sudden disappearance of so strong and numerous an enemy seemed to partake of magic. But Henry understood well. Always a shrewd general, Timmendiquas, seeing that the battle was lost, and that he might soon be caught in an unescapable trap, had ordered the warriors to give up the fight, and slip away through the woods.

Pressing forward with fiery zeal and energy, Clark and Logan met in the forest and grasped hands. The two forces fused at the same time and raised a tremendous cheer. They had beaten the allied tribes once more, and had formed the union which they believed would make them invincible. A thousand foresters, skilled in every wile and strategy of Indian war were indeed a formidable force, and they had a thorough right to rejoice, as they stood there in the wilderness greeting one another after a signal triumph. Save for the fallen, there was no longer a sign of the warriors. All their wounded had been taken away with them.

"I heard your cannon shot, just when I was beginning to give up hope," said Colonel Clark to Colonel Logan.

"And you don't know how welcome your reply was," replied Logan, "but it was all due to a great boy named Henry Ware."

"So he got through?"

"Yes, he did. He arrived clothed only in a waist band, and the first we saw of him was his head emerging from the muddy waters of the Licking. He swam, floated and dived all night long until he got to us. He was chased by canoes, and shot at by warriors, but nothing could stop him, and without him we couldn't have done anything, because there was no other way for us to hear a word from you."

"Ah, there he is now. But I see that he is clothed and armed."

Henry had appeared just then with his comrades, looking among the bushes to see if any savage yet lay there in ambush, and the two Colonels seized upon him. They could not call him by complimentary names enough, and they told him that he alone had made the victory possible. Henry, blushing, got away from them as quickly as he could, and rejoined his friends.

"That shorely was a great swim of yours, Henry," said Shif'less Sol, "an' you're pow'ful lucky that the water was warm."

"My little raft helped me a lot," rejoined Henry, "and I'm mighty sorry I lost it, although Colonel Logan has given me the best rifle I ever saw. I wonder what will be our next movement."

Colonel Clark, who was now in command of the whole force, the other officers coöperating with him and obeying him loyally, deemed it wise to spend the day in rest. The men had gone through long hours of waiting, watching and fighting and their strength must be restored. Scouts reported that the Indians had crossed the Licking and then the Ohio, and were retreating apparently toward Chillicothe, their greatest town. Some wanted Colonel Clark to follow them at once and strike another blow, but he was too wise. The Indian facility for retreat was always great. They could scatter in the forest in such a way that it was impossible to find them, but if rashly followed they could unite as readily and draw their foe into a deadly ambush. Clark, a master of border warfare, who was never tricked by them, let them go and bided his time. He ordered many fires to be lighted and food in abundance to be served. The spirits of the men rose to the

highest pitch. Even the wounded rejoiced.

After eating, Henry found that he needed sleep. He did not feel the strain and anxiety of the long night and of the morning battle, until it was all over. Then his whole system relaxed, and, throwing himself down on the turf, he went sound asleep. When he awoke the twilight was coming and Paul and Shif'less Sol sat near him.

"We had to guard you most of the time, Henry," said Shif'less Sol, "'cause you're a sort of curiosity. Fellers hev kep' comin' here to see the lad what swam the hull len'th o' the Ohio an' then the hull len'th o' the Lickin', most o' the time with his head under water, an' we had to keep 'em from wakin' you. We'd let 'em look at you, but we wouldn't let 'em speak or breathe loud. You wuz sleepin' so purty that we could not bear to hev you waked up."

Henry laughed.

"Quit making fun of me, Sol," he said, "and tell me what's happened since I've been asleep."

"Nothin' much. The Indians are still retreatin' through the woods across the Ohio an' Colonel Clark shows his good hoss sense by not follerin' 'em, ez some o' our hot heads want him to do. Wouldn't Timmendiquas like to draw us into an ambush,—say in some valley in the thick o' the forest with a couple o' thousand warriors behind the trees an' on the ridges all aroun' us. Oh, wouldn't he? An' what would be left of us after it wuz all over? I ask you that, Henry."

"Mighty little, I'm afraid."

"Next to nothin', I know. I tell you Henry our Colonel Clark is a real gin'ral. He's the kind I like to foller, an' we ain't goin' to see no sich sight ez the one we saw at Wyomin'."

"I'm sure we won't," said Henry. "Now have any of you slept to-day?"

"All o' us hev took naps, not long but mighty deep an' comfortin'. So we're ready fur anythin' from a fight to a foot race, whichever 'pears to be the better fur us."

"Where are Paul and Tom and Jim?"

"Cruisin' about in their restless, foolish way. I told 'em to sit right down on the groun' and keep still an' enjoy theirselves while they could, but my wise words

wuz wasted. Henry, sometimes I think that only lazy men like me hev good sense."

The missing three appeared a minute or two later and were received by the shiftless one with the objurgations due to what he considered misspent energy.

"I'm for a scout to-night," said Henry. "Are all of you with me?"

Three answered at once:

"Of course."

But Shif'less Sol groaned.

"Think o' going out after dark when you might lay here an' snooze comf'ably," he said; "but sence you fellers are so foolish an' headstrong you'll need some good sens'ble man to take keer o' you."

"Thank you, Sol," said Henry, with much gravity. "Now that we have your reluctant consent we need only to ask Colonel Clark."

Colonel Clark had no objection. In fact, he would not question any act of the five, whom he knew to be free lances of incomparable skill and knowledge in the wilderness.

"You know better than I what to do," he said, smiling, "and as for you, Mr. Ware, you have already done more than your share in this campaign."

They left shortly after dark. The united camp was pitched at the junction of the Ohio and Licking, but along the bank of the larger river. Most of the boats were tied to the shore, and they had a heavy guard. There was also a strong patrol across the mouth of the Licking, and all the way to the northern bank of the Ohio.

The five embarked in a large boat with four oarsmen and they lay at ease while they were pulled across the broad stream. Behind them they saw the numerous lights of the camp, twinkling in the woods. Clark meant that his men should be cheerful, and light ministers to good spirits. Ahead of him there was no break in the dark line of forest, but they approached it without apprehension, assured by other scouts that the Indian retreat had not ceased.

They were landed on the northern bank and stating to the boatmen that they would be back in the morning, they plunged into the woods. There was some

moonlight, and in a short time they picked up the trail of the main Indian force. They followed it until midnight and found that it maintained a steady course toward Chillicothe. Henry was satisfied that Timmendiquas meant to fall back on the town, and make a stand there where he could hope for victory, but he was not sure that smaller bands would not lurk in Clark's path, and try to cut up and weaken his force as it advanced. Hence, he left the great trail and turned to the right. In a mile or so they heard sounds and peering through the woods saw Braxton Wyatt, Blackstaffe and about a dozen Shawnee warriors sitting about a small fire. Paul incautiously stepped upon a dead bough which cracked beneath his weight, and the Indians at once leaped up, rifle in hand. They fired several shots into the bushes whence the sound had come, but the five had already taken shelter, and they sent bullets in return. Rifles cracked sharply and jets of smoke arose.

A combat did not enter into Henry's calculation. It was one thing that he wished especially to avoid, but neither he nor any other of the five could bear to make a hasty retreat before Braxton Wyatt. They held their ground, and sent in a fire so rapid and accurate that Wyatt and Blackstaffe thought they were attacked by a force larger than their own, and, fearing to be trapped, finally retreated. The result appealed irresistibly to Shif'less Sol's sense of humor.

"Ef they hadn't run, we would," he said. "Jest think how often that's the case. Many a feller gits beat 'cause he don't wait for the other to beat hisself."

They were all buoyant over the affair, and they followed some distance, until they saw that Wyatt and Blackstaffe had changed their course in order to join the main band, when they started back to Clark, having seen all they wished. They arrived at the river about daylight, and were ordered to the southern shore where they made a report that was greatly satisfactory to the commander. Clark passed his whole force over the Ohio the next day and then built a small fort on the site of Cincinnati, placing in it all the surplus stores and ammunition.

Several days were spent here, and, throughout that time, Henry and his comrades scouted far and wide, going as far as thirty miles beyond the fort. But the woods were bare of Indians, and Henry was confirmed in his belief that Timmendiquas, after the failure at the mouth of the Licking, was concentrating everything on Chillicothe, expecting to resist to the utmost.

"Thar's bound to be a pow'ful big battle at that town," said Shif'less Sol.

"I think so, too," said Henry, "and we've got to guard against walking into any

trap. I wish I knew what thought is lying just now in the back of the head of Timmendiguas."

"We'll soon know, 'cause it won't take us many days to git to Chillicothe," said Tom Ross.

The army took up its march the next day, going straight toward Chillicothe. It was the most formidable white force that had yet appeared in the western woods, and every man in it was full of confidence. It was not only an army, but it marched in the shape and fashion of one. The borderers, used to their own way, yielded readily to the tact and great name of Clark. The first division under Clark's own command, with the artillery, military stores and baggage in the center, led; Logan, who ranked next to Clark, commanded the rear.

The men walked in four lines, with a space of forty yards between every two lines. On each flank was a band of veteran scouts and skirmishers. In front of the white army, but never out of sight, marched a strong detachment of skilled woodsmen and marksmen. In the rear and at a similar distance, came another such band.

Clark also took further precautions against surprise and confusion. He issued an order that in case of attack in front the vanguard was to stand fast while the two lines on the right of the artillery were to wheel to the right, and the two on the left were to wheel to the left. Then the cannon and the whole line were to advance at the double quick to the support of the vanguard. If they were attacked from behind, the vanguard was to stand fast, and the whole proceeding was to be reversed. If they were attacked on either flank, the two lines on that flank and the artillery were to stand where they were, while the other two lines wheeled and formed, one on the van and the other on the rear. The men had been drilled repeatedly in their movements, and they executed them with skill. It now remained to be seen whether they would do as much under the influence of surprise and a heavy fire. Everyone believed they would stand against any form of attack.

The commanders seemed to think of all things, and the training of the army excited the admiration of Henry and his comrades. They felt that it would be very hard to catch such a force in a trap, or, if it should be caught, there was nothing in the wilderness to hold it there. The five were not in the line. In fact, they kept ahead of the vanguard itself, but they often came back to make their reports to Clark. It was now the beginning of August, and the heat was great in

the woods. The men were compelled to rest in the middle of the day and they drank thirstily from every brook they passed.

Clark expected that they would be annoyed by the Indian skirmishers, but the first day passed, and then the second and not a shot was fired. The five and the other scouts assured him that no warriors were near, but he did not like the silence. Bowman and a strong force had attacked Chillicothe the year before, but had been repulsed. Undoubtedly it would now have a still stronger defense and he wondered what could be the plan of Timmendiquas. A border leader, in a land covered with great forests was compelled to guard every moment against the cunning and stratagem of a foe who lived by cunning and stratagem.

The second night a council was held, and Henry and all his comrades were summoned to it. Would or would not the Indians fight before the white force reached Chillicothe? The country was rough and presented many good places for defense. Colonel Clark asked the question, and he looked anxiously around at the little group. Daniel Boone spoke first. He believed that no resistance would be offered until they reached Chillicothe. Simon Kenton and Abe Thomas shared his opinion. Henry stood modestly in the background and waited until Colonel Clark put the question. Then he replied with a proposition:

"I think that Colonel Boone is right," he said, "but I and four others have been associated a long time in work of this kind. We are used to the forest, and we can move faster in it. Let us go ahead. We will see what is being prepared at Chillicothe, and we will report to you."

"But the risk to you five?"

"We're ready to take it. Everybody in the army is taking it."

Henry's plan was so promising that he soon had his way. He and the others were to start immediately.

"Go, my boy, and God bless you," said Colonel Clark. "We want all the information you can bring, but don't take excessive risks."

Henry gave his promise, left the council, and in five minutes he and his comrades were deep in the forest, and beyond the sight of their own camp fires. The weather was now clear and there was a good moon and many stars. Far to the right of them rose the hoot of an owl, but it was a real owl and they paid no attention to it.

"Jest what are you figurin' on, Henry?" asked Shif'less Sol.

"I think that if we travel hard all of to-night," replied Henry, "and then take it easy to-morrow that we can reach Chillicothe early to-morrow night. We ought to learn there in a few hours all that we want to know, and we can be back with the army on the following day."

None of the five had ever been at Chillicothe, but all of them knew very well its location. It was the largest Indian village in the Ohio River Valley, and many a foray had gone from it. They knew that the forest ran continuously from where they were almost to its edge, and they believed that they could approach without great difficulty. After a consultation they settled upon the exact point toward which they would go, and then, Henry leading the way, they sped onward in a silent file. Hour after hour they traveled without speaking. The moon was out, but they kept to the deepest parts of the forest and its rays rarely reached them. They used the long running walk of the frontiersman and their toughened muscles seemed never to tire. Every one of them breathed regularly and easily, but the miles dropped fast behind them. They leaped little brooks, and twice they waded creeks, in one of which the water went far past their knees, but their buckskin trousers dried upon them as they ran on. The moon went behind floating clouds, and then came back again but it made no difference to them. They went on at the same swift, even pace, and it was nearly morning when Henry gave the signal to stop.

He saw a place that he thought would suit them for their informal camp, a dense thicket of bushes and vines on a hill, a thicket that even in the daylight would be impervious to the keenest eyes.

"Suppose we crawl in here and rest awhile," he said. "We mustn't break ourselves down."

"Looks all right," said Tom Ross.

They crept into the dense covert, and all went to sleep except Henry and Ross who lay down without closing their eyes, theirs being the turn to watch. Henry saw the sun rise and gild the forest that seemed to be without human being save themselves. Beyond the thicket in which they lay there was not much underbrush and as Henry watched on all sides for a long time he was sure that no Indian had come near. He was confirmed in this opinion by two deer that appeared amid the oak openings and nibbled at the turf. They were a fine sight, a stag and doe each of splendid size, and they moved fearlessly about among the trees. Henry

admired them and he had no desire whatever to harm them. Instead, they were now friends of his, telling him by their presence that the savages were absent.

Henry judged that they were now about two-thirds of the way to Chillicothe, and, shortly before noon, he and Tom awakened the others and resumed their journey, but in the brilliant light of the afternoon they advanced much more slowly. Theirs was a mission of great importance and discovery alone would ruin it. They kept to the thicket, and the stony places where they would leave no trail, and once, when a brook flowed in their direction, they waded in its watery bed for two or three miles. But the intensity of their purpose and the concentration of their faculties upon it did not keep them from noticing the magnificence of the country. Everywhere the soil was deep and dark, and, springing from it, was the noblest of forests. It was well watered, too, with an abundance of creeks and brooks, and now and then a little lake. Further on were large rivers. Henry did not wonder that the Indians fought so bitterly against trespassers upon their ancient hunting grounds.

The twilight of the second night came, and, lying in the thicket, the five ate and drank a little, while the twilight turned into dark. Then they prepared their plans. They did not believe that Chillicothe was more than three miles ahead, and the Indians, knowing that the army could not come up for two days yet, were not likely to be keeping a very strict watch. They meant to penetrate to the town in the night. But they waited a long time, until they believed most of the children and squaws would be asleep, and then they advanced again.

Their surmise was correct. In a half hour they were on the outskirts of Chillicothe, the great Indian town. It was surrounded by fields of maize and pumpkin, but it seemed to the five to consist of several hundred lodges and modern houses. As they made this reckoning they stood at the edge of a large corn field that stretched between them and the town. The stalks of corn were higher than a man's head, and the leaves had begun to turn brown under the August sun.

"We must go nearer," said Henry, "and it seems to me that this corn field offers a way of approach. The corn will hide us until we come to the very edge of the town."

The others agreed, and they set off across the field. After they entered it they could see nothing but the corn itself. The dying stalks rustled mournfully above their heads, as they advanced between the rows, but no sounds came from the

town. It was about three hundred yards across the field, and when they reached its far edge they saw several lights which came from Chillicothe itself. They paused, while still in the corn, and, lying upon the ground, they got a good view of the big village.

Chillicothe seemed to run a long distance from north to south, but Henry at once noticed among the buildings, obviously of a permanent character, many tepees such as the Indians erect only for a night or two. His logical mind immediately drew the inference. Chillicothe was full of strange warriors. The Wyandots, Shawnees, Miamis, Delawares, Ottawas, Illinois, all were there and the circumstance indicated that they would not try to lay an ambush for Clark, but would await him at Chillicothe. He whispered to his comrades and they agreed with him.

"Can you see how far this corn field runs down to the right?" he asked Tom Ross.

"'Bout two hundred yards, I reckon."

"Then let's drop down its edge and see if the new tepees are scattered everywhere through the town."

The trip revealed an abundance of the temporary lodges and farther down they saw signs of an embankment freshly made. But this breastwork of earth did not extend far. Evidently it had been left incomplete.

"What do you make of that, Henry?" asked Ross.

"That the Indians are in a state of indecision," replied Henry promptly. "They intended to fortify and fight us here, and now they are thinking that maybe they won't. If they had made up their minds thoroughly they would have gone on with the earthwork."

"That certainly sounds reasonable," said Paul, "but if they don't fight here where will they fight? I can't believe that Timmendiquas will abandon the Indian towns without resistance and flee to the woods."

"They have another big town farther on—Piqua they call it. It may be more defensible than Chillicothe, and, if so, they might decide to concentrate there. But we can be sure of one thing. They have not yet left Chillicothe. It is for us to discover within the next few hours just what they mean to do."

At the lower end of the corn field they found a garden of tall pea and bean vines which they entered. This field projected into the village and when they reached its end they saw a great increase of lights and heard the hum of voices. Peeping from their precarious covert they beheld the dusky figures of warriors in large numbers, and they surmised that some sort of a council was in progress.

Henry was eager to know what was being said at this council, but for a long time he could think of no way. At last he noticed a small wooden building adjoining the garden, the door of which stood half open, revealing ears of corn from the preceding season lying in a heap upon the floor. He resolved to enter this rude corncrib knowing it would contain many apertures, and see and hear what was being done. He told the others his plan. They tried to dissuade him from it but he persisted, being sure that he would succeed.

"I'm bound to take the risk," he said. "We must find out what the Indians intend to do."

"Then if you're bent on throwin' away your life," said Shif'less Sol, "I'm goin' in with you."

"No," said Henry firmly. "One is enough, and it is enough to risk one. But if you fellows wish, lie here behind the vines, and, if I have to make a run for it, you can cover me with your fire."

The four at last agreed to this compromise, although they were loth to see Henry go. Every one of them made up his mind to stand by their leader to the last. Henry left the shelter of the vines, but he lay down almost flat, and crept across the narrow open space to the corncrib. When he saw that no one was looking he darted inside, and cautiously pushed the door shut.

As he expected, there were plenty of cracks between the timbers and also a small open window at one end. The ears of corn were heaped high at the window, and, pushing himself down among them until he was hidden to the shoulders, he looked out.



CHAPTER XXI

THE BATTLE OF PIQUA

The window, doubtless intended merely for letting in air, was very small, but Henry had a fine view of a wide open space, evidently the central court of the village. It was grassy and shady, with large oak and beech trees. About fifteen yards from the corncrib burned a fire, meant for light rather than heat, as the night was warm. Around it were gathered about fifty men, of whom six or seven were white, although they were tanned by exposure almost to the darkness of Indians.

Henry knew a number of them well. Upon a slightly raised seat sat Timmendiquas, the famous White Lightning of the Wyandots. He wore only the waist cloth, and the great muscles of his chest and arms were revealed by the firelight. His head was thrown back as if in defiance, and above it rose a single red feather twined in the scalp lock. Just beyond Timmendiquas sat Moluntha, the Shawnee; Captain Pipe and Captain White Eyes, the Delawares; Yellow Panther, the Miami, and Red Eagle, the Shawnee. Beyond them were Simon Girty, Braxton Wyatt, Moses Blackstaffe and the other renegades. There was also a Mohawk chief at the head of a small detachment sent by Thayendanegea. All the chiefs were in war paint tattooed to the last note of Indian art.

Henry knew from the number of chiefs present and the gravity of their faces that this was a council of great importance. He heard at first only the rumble of their voices, but when he had become used to the place, and had listened attentively he was able to discern the words. Timmendiquas, true to his brave and fierce nature, was urging the allied chiefs to stay and fight Clark for Chillicothe. In the East before the battle on the Chemung, he had been in a sense a visitor, and he had deferred to the great Iroquois, Thayendanegea, but here he was first, the natural leader, and he spoke with impassioned fervor. As Henry looked he rose, and swinging a great tomahawk to give emphasis to his words, he said:

"The one who retreats does not find favor with Manitou. It is he who stays and fights. It is true that we were defeated in the battle across from Tuentahahewaghta (the site of Cincinnati), but with great warriors a defeat is merely the beginning of the way that leads to victory in the end. This is the

greatest town of our race in all the valley of Ohezuhyeandawa (the Ohio), and shall we give it up, merely because Clark comes against it with a thousand men? Bowman came last year, but you beat him off and killed many of his men. The soldiers of the king have failed us as we feared. The promises of de Peyster and Caldwell have not been kept, but we can win without them!"

He paused and swung the great war tomahawk. The firelight tinted red the glittering blade, and it made a circle of light as he whirled it about his head. A murmur ran around the circle, and swelled into a chorus of approval. These were the words that appealed to the hearts of the warlike tribes, but Simon Girty, crafty, politic and far-seeing, arose.

"Your words are those of a brave man and a great leader, Timmendiqual," he said, speaking in Shawnee, "but there are many things that the chiefs must consider. When the white men are slain, others come from the East to take their places; when our warriors fall their lodges stay empty and we are always fewer than before. You were across the mountains, Timmendiqual, with the chief of the Iroquois, Thayendanagea, and so was my friend who sits here by my side. The Iroquois fought there on the Chemung River, and brave though they were, they could not stand against the Yengees and their cannon. They were scattered and their country was destroyed. It would have been better had they fallen back, fighting wherever they could lay a good ambush.

"Now Kentucky comes against us in great force. It is not such an army as that which Bowman led. They are all trained, even as our own, to the forest and its ways. This army, as it marches, looks before and behind, and to right and to left. It will not stick its head in a trap, and when its cannon thunder against your Chillicothe, smashing down your houses and your lodges, what will you do? Clark, who leads the men from Kentucky, has beaten our allies, the British, at Vincennes and Kaskaskia. Hamilton, the governor at Detroit before de Peyster, was captured by him, and the Yengees held him a prisoner in Virginia. This Clark is cunning like the fox, and has teeth like the wolf. He is the winner of victories, and the men from Kentucky are ready to fight around him to the last."

Another murmur came from the circle and it also indicated approval of Girty's words. Always greatly influenced by oratory, the opinion of the chiefs now swung to the latest speaker. Timmendiqual flashed a look of scorn at Girty and at some of the chiefs near him.

"I know that Girty thinks much and is wise," he said. "He is faithful to us, too,

because he dare not go back to his own white people, who would tear him to pieces."

Timmendiquas paused a moment for his taunt to take effect, and looked directly at the renegade. Girty winced, but he had great self-control, and he replied calmly:

"What you say is true, Timmendiquas, and no one knows it better than I. The whites would surely tear me in pieces if they could catch me, because my deeds in behalf of the Indians, whom I have chosen to be my brethren, are known to all men."

Girty had replied well, and the older and more cautious chiefs gave him another murmur of approval. Timmendiquas flashed him a second glance of contempt and hate, but the renegade endured it firmly.

"What, then, do you say for us to do, Girty?" asked the Wyandot chief.

"As the enemy comes near Chillicothe fall back to Piqua. It is only twelve miles away, yet not all the warriors of Piqua are here ready to help us. But they will wait for us if we come to them, and then we shall be in stronger force to fight Clark. And Piqua is better suited to defense than Chillicothe. The enemy cannot come upon the town without receiving from us a hidden fire."

Girty spoke on, and to the listening youth he seemed to speak plausibly. Certainly many of the chiefs thought so, as more than once they nodded and murmured their approval. Timmendiquas replied, and several of the younger chiefs supported him, but Henry believed that the burden of opinion was shifting the other way. The tribes were probably shaken by the defeat at the mouth of the Licking, and the name of Clark was dreaded most of all.

Indians love to talk, and the debate went on for a long time, but at last it was decided, much against the will of Timmendiquas, that if they could not catch Clark in an ambush they would abandon Chillicothe and retreat toward Piqua. The decisive argument was the fact that they could gather at Piqua a much larger force than at Chillicothe. The advance of Clark had been more rapid than was expected. They would not only have all the Piqua men with them, but many more warriors from distant villages who had not yet arrived.

The fire was now permitted to die down, the crowd broke up and the chiefs walked away to their lodgings. Henry left the little place from which he had been

peeping, drew himself from the corn and prepared to open the door. Before he had pulled it back more than an inch he stopped and remained perfectly still. Two warriors were standing outside within three feet of him. They were Miamis, and they were talking in low tones which he could not understand. He waited patiently for them to pass on, but presently one of them glanced at the door. He may have been the owner of the crib, and he noticed that the door was shut or nearly shut, when it had been left open. He stepped forward and gave it a push, sending it against the youth who stood on the other side.

The Miami uttered an exclamation, but Henry acted promptly. He did not wish to fire a shot and bring hundreds of warriors down upon himself and his friends, but he sprang out of the door with such violence that he struck the first Miami with his shoulder and knocked him senseless. The second warrior, startled by this terrifying apparition, was about to utter a cry of alarm, but Henry seized him by the throat with both hands, compressed it and threw him from him as far as he could. Then he sprang among the vines, where he was joined by his comrades, and, bending low, they rushed for the corn field and its protection.

The second Miami was the first to recover. He sprang to his feet and opened his mouth to let forth the war cry. It did not come. Instead an acute pain shot along his throat. He did not know how powerful were the hands that had constricted him there. Nevertheless he persisted and at the fourth trial the war cry came, sending its signal of alarm all through the village. Warriors poured out of the dark, and led by the Miamis they dashed through the garden in eager pursuit.

The five were already in the field, running down among the corn rows. Over them waved the highest blades of the corn, still rustling dryly in the wind.

"We are as good runners ez they are," said Shif'less Sol. "An' they can't see us here in the corn, but ain't that a pack o' them on our heels. Listen to that yelp."

The war cry came from hundreds of throats, and behind them they heard the patter of many feet on the soft earth of the field, but they were not in despair. Not far beyond lay the woods, and they had full faith that they would reach their cover in time. The rows of corn guided them in a perfectly straight line, and the number of their pursuers were of no avail. They reached the woods in a few minutes, and, although the warriors then caught dim glimpses of them, and fired a few shots, no bullets struck near, and they were soon hidden among the trees and thickets. But they were too wise to stop merely because they were out of sight. They continued at good speed for a long time on the return journey to

Clark.

Henry's comrades asked him no questions, knowing that when they stopped he would tell them everything, unasked. But they saw that he was in an excellent humor, and so they inferred that he brought valuable information from Chillicothe.

"I call it luck," said Shif'less Sol, "that when you have to run for your life you can at the same time run the way you want to go."

"Yes, it's our lucky night," said Henry.

Stopping occasionally to listen for pursuit, they ran about four hours, and then took a long rest by the side of a cool little brook from which they drank deeply. Then Henry told what he had heard.

"It's not their intention to fight at Chillicothe," he said. "Timmendiquas, of course, wanted to make a stand, but Girty and the older chiefs prevented him and decided on Piqua. It's likely, I think, that the authority of White Lightning has been weakened by their defeat at the mouth of the Licking."

Then he related every word that he had been able to catch.

"This is mighty important," said Paul, "and Colonel Clark will surely be glad to hear your news."

After a rest of one hour they pushed on at great speed and they did not stop the next day until they saw Colonel Clark's vanguard. Clark himself was at the front and with him were Boone, Kenton and Thomas. The face of the Colonel became eager when he saw the five emerge from the undergrowth.

"Anything to tell?" he asked briefly.

When Henry related what he had heard from the window of the corncrib, the Colonel uttered short but earnest words of thanks, and put his hand upon the lad's shoulder.

"Once more we are in great debt to you, young sir," he said. "You brought our forces together at the Licking, and now you guide our main campaign. This news that the savages will not defend Chillicothe will give our men great encouragement. Already they will see the enemy fleeing before them."

Colonel Clark was a good prophet. The men cheered when they heard that the

Indian force was likely to abandon Chillicothe and they were anxious to press forward at increased speed, but the leader would not permit, nor would he allow them to disarrange their marching order in the slightest. He had never been defeated by the Indians, because he had never given them a chance to trap and surprise him, and he did not mean to do so now.

"Plenty of time, boys—plenty of time," he said, soothingly. "Before we finish this campaign you'll get all the fighting you want. Don't forget that."

That night, which was to be the last before reaching Chillicothe, he doubled the guard. Except the five, who had fully earned the right to sleep, the very best of the scouts and sharpshooters were on watch. Skirmishers were thrown far out among the bushes, and no matter how dark the night might be, no considerable Indian force could ever get near enough for surprise. Boone, Kenton, Thomas and others heard signals, the hoots of owls and the howls of wolves, but they continued their watch undisturbed. So long as a thousand good men were there in the wilderness in a heavy square, bristling with rifles and artillery, they did not care how many signals the savages made to one another.

Morning came, bright and hot. It was the sixth of August, the month when the great heats that sometimes hang over the Ohio River Valley usually reach their uttermost.

This promised to be such a day. After the bright dawn the atmosphere became thick and heavy. Sweat stood on every face. Exertion was an effort. Yet the men felt no abatement of zeal. In three or four hours more, they would reach Chillicothe unless the enemy gave battle first. Nevertheless little was said. The veteran frontiersmen knew the valor of their enemy, and his wonderful skill as a forest fighter. This was no festival to which they were going. Many of them would never return to Kentucky.

They marched about three miles. It was noon now, and the sun from its vantage point in the center of the heavens poured down a flood of burning rays upon them. Colonel Clark, with his usual patience, made the men halt for a few minutes and take food. Their formation had never been broken for a moment. No matter from what side the attack came the whole army could face it inside of two minutes.

The five with Boone, Kenton and Thomas were just ahead of the vanguard, and Colonel Clark who was now on horseback rode up to them.

"How far would you say it is to Chillicothe?" he asked Henry.

"We should be there in an hour."

Colonel Clark looked at his watch.

"One o'clock in the afternoon," he said. "That will give us plenty of time for a battle, if they choose to offer it to us, but it looks as if we would receive no such offer. All that you have said, young sir, is coming to pass."

They were following the broad trail left by the Indian army on its retreat, but not a single warrior appeared to oppose them. There were no sounds in the woods save those made by themselves. No bark of dog or signal of savage came from the village which was now just beyond a thin veil of forest.

Colonel Clark's iron self-control yielded a little. He allowed the men to hasten somewhat, and they came all at once into the corn field which Henry and his friends had entered. They saw, beyond, the walls and roofs of Chillicothe. Colonel Clark instantly ordered a halt. A field of waving corn could hold a thousand hidden warriors, but Boone, Henry and the others were already in the corn and announced that nobody was there. Then the army with a great shout advanced on the run, the wheels of the cannon grinding down the corn.

In five minutes they were at Chillicothe, and then they saw flames leaping from the highest houses. The town was on fire and all its people had fled. The broad trail, littered with fragments, showed that they had gone towards Piqua. But the army, still kept in battle order, did not follow yet. It watched the burning of Chillicothe and helped it along. The soldiers, with the cannon in the center, were drawn up just on the outside of the town, and, under order of the officers, many of them seized torches and lighted tepee and wigwam. The dry corn in the fields and everything else that would burn was set on fire. What would not burn was trampled to a pulp beneath the feet of men and horses.

Meanwhile the flames spread to every part of the village, united and fused into one vast conflagration. The sight thrilled and awed even Henry, Paul, and the others who had seen similar things in the Iroquois country. But there were not many in that army of white men who felt pity. This was Chillicothe, the greatest of the Western Indian towns. Some of them had been held prisoners there. Others had seen their friends tortured to death at this very place. The wives and children of many had been taken away to Chillicothe and no one had ever seen or heard of them again. Here the great Indian forays started and the very name of

Chillicothe was hateful to the white men who had come from beyond the Ohio to destroy it and the warriors who lived there. They were glad to see it burning. They rejoiced when wigwams and Council House crashed down in blazing timbers. It pleased them to see the corn and beans and all the Indian stores destroyed, because then the warriors must hunt in the forest for food, and would have no time to hunt in the Kentucky woods for white scalps.

The five stayed on the side of the town somewhat away from the conflagration. The heat was tremendous. It was a big town and the flames rose in an enormous red tower waving under the wind, and roaring as they ate into fresh food. Light tepees were licked up in an instant. Sparks flew in myriads and red coals were carried by the wind. Orchards and fields were swept away with the rest by the fiery blast. A great pall of ashes began to settle over the country surrounding the town.

"I've never seen anything before on the same scale," said Paul, "and it will certainly be a terrible blow to the Indians."

"But it will not break either their spirit or their power," said Henry. "To do that we've got to beat them in battle, and they'll be waiting for us at Piqua."

The fire burned all the afternoon, but when the twilight came the town was wholly consumed. Not a house or tepee was left standing. Over a wide area there was nothing but a mass of burning coals, which glowed and cast a bright light against the coming dark. Clouds of smoke gathered, but the wind blew them off to the eastward and the site of Chillicothe was yet almost as light as day. On the outward edges of this mass of coals the men cooked their suppers.

The night advanced. Again it was very hot and close, with but little wind stirring. All about them it was still as light as day. For more than a mile the embers, yet red and glowing, lay, and in the orchards tree trunks smoldered casting out alternate flame and smoke. Save for those melancholy ruins everything was swept bare. At the edge of the woods an Indian dog poked his nose at the sky and howled dismally. It affected the nerves of Henry and Paul, who walked across the corn fields and chased him away with stones.

"I'm sorry," said Paul, looking back at the wide range of ruin, "that these things have to be done, even in war."

"So am I, Paul," said Henry, "but think how many bands have gone forth from this place to do destruction upon our people. We have to fight such a foe with the

weapons that we can use."

They did not stay long at the edge of the woods, knowing that Indian sharpshooters might be lurking there, but went back to their friends and the army. The men having eaten amply and having looked upon the destruction of Chillicothe were in joyous mood, but their leader did not permit them to relax caution a particle. Too often the borderers, thinking victory won, permitted themselves to fall into disorder, when their victory was turned into defeat by the shrewd foe. Now the men spread their blankets far enough away from the woods to be safe from sharpshooters hidden there. The guard was made of unusual strength, and gunners were always at the cannon in case of a night attack.

The five were not on duty that night, in view of what they had done already, and they spread their blankets near the edge of the corn field, across which they had run at such good speed. The coals still glowed. Far off they heard the howling of wolves.

"Is there any danger of a night attack?" asked Paul.

"I don't think so," replied Henry. "Of course the Indians have spies in the woods and they will report that it is impossible to surprise us."

It was a long time before Henry could go to sleep. The great events through which he had been crowded upon his mind. He had seen the Iroquois win and then he had seen them destroyed. The western tribes had won victories too and now a great commander was striking at their very heart. Their capital lay in ruins, and, unless Timmendiquas could defeat the white men in battle, when they marched on Piqua, then the western tribes also would receive a blow from which they could never recover. Despite himself, he was sorry for Timmendiquas. Nevertheless he was loyal in every fiber to his own people.

The howling of the wolves came nearer. They would find little for their teeth among these ruins, but they knew somehow that destruction had been done, and instinct called them to the place. It was an unpleasant sound and it made Henry shiver a little. It made him think of what was to come for the Indians. Even savages, in the fierce winters of the North, would suffer for lost Chillicothe. Wooden houses and lodges could not be replaced in a day. While the great beds of coals were still glowing he fell asleep, but he was up with the others at dawn.

It was one of the most somber days that Henry had ever seen. The heat, close, heavy and thick, like a mist, endured, but the sun did not shine. The whole circle

of the sky was covered with gray clouds. Everything was sullen and ugly. Some timbers in the vast ruin of Chillicothe yet burned and showed red edges, but it would be impossible to conceive of a more desolate heap. Piles of ashes and dead coals were everywhere. The fires that were soon lighted served the double purpose of cooking and of making cheer. But while they ate, the skies grew perceptibly darker. No ray of the sun broke anywhere through the steel-colored atmosphere.

Colonel Clark became anxious. He had intended to start early for Piqua, but storms in the woods must be reckoned with, as one reckons with an enemy. He delayed and sent forward a scouting party of fifteen men under Boone, who, of course, included the five in the fifteen. Boone, owing to his captivity among the Indians, knew something about the country, and he led them straight toward Piqua. As Piqua and Chillicothe, two large Indian towns, were only twelve miles apart, there was an Indian road or broad trail between them, and they followed it for some distance.

The road showed the haste with which the inhabitants of Chillicothe had fled. Here and there were feathers which had fallen from the scalp locks of the men or the braids of the women. Now they came to a gourd, or a rude iron skillet bought at a British post.

After four or five miles Boone deemed it wiser to turn into the thick woods. The Indians with such a formidable force only twelve miles away would certainly have out sentries and skirmishers, and his cautious movement was just in time, as less than three hundred yards further on they were fired upon from the bushes. They replied with a few shots, but it was not Boone's intention to precipitate a real skirmish. He merely wished to know if the Indians were on guard, and, in a few minutes, he drew off his men and retired.

They were followed by derisive yells which said plainly enough that, in the opinion of the Indians, they were afraid. Some of the younger men wanted to go back, but Boone remained firm in purpose and tranquil in mind.

"Let 'em yell at us all they want to," he said in his peculiarly gentle voice. "We can stand it, and we'll see how they can stand the battle to-day or to-morrow when the army comes up."

They were back at the camp about two hours after noon, and reported that the Indians had sentinels and skirmishers on the way to Piqua. But Clark thought they could be brushed aside, and as the clouds had lightened somewhat, they

started at four o'clock. Good humor was restored at once to the men. They were moving now and in a few hours they might bring the campaign to a head, if the Indians only stood. Some believed that they would not stand even at Piqua.

The order of march that had been preserved all the way from the mouth of the Licking remained unbroken. Colonel Clark led, Colonel Logan commanded the rear guard, the soldiers were in four lines, ready to wheel in any direction, and the cannon were in the center. They followed the Indian road, but ahead of all were Henry and his comrades, always searching the woods for a sight of some flitting Indian figure. Henry did not believe there would be any skirmishes before they reached Piqua, but he was not among those who did not think the Indians would make a stand there. He knew Timmendiquas too well. The Wyandot leader had yielded, when the majority of the chiefs favored Piqua instead of Chillicothe, but now he would certainly hold them to the agreement. The trail led on unceasingly, but the brightening of the skies was deceptive. The clouds soon closed in again, heavier and blacker than ever. Although it was only mid-afternoon it became almost as dark as night. Then the lightning began to play in swift flashes, so bright that the men were dazzled, and the thunder cracked and roared in tremendous volume.

"If I live through the campaign," said Paul, "I shall certainly remember it by this storm, if by nothing else."

The thunder was so great that he was compelled fairly to shriek out his words. Save when the lightning flashed he could see only the head of the army. Presently both thunder and lightning ceased, the wind set up a vast moaning and then the rain came. Colonel Clark and his officers were already at work, instructing the men to put up as many tents as possible, and, under any circumstances to keep their arms and powder dry. Here again discipline and experience told, as the orders were obeyed to the last detail.

The five sheltered themselves as well as they could under the trees and they felt that Paul's words about the storm were true. Certainly they could never forget it. The bottom had dropped out of the clouds, and all the rain, stowed for months, was pouring down in a few hours. They soon abandoned any attempt to protect themselves, and devoted all their care to their ammunition.

For more than two hours the rain fell in seemingly solid sheets. Then it ceased abruptly, and the late afternoon sun broke out, tingeing the forest with gold. Yet every bush and tree still ran water. Pools and often little lakes stood in the

valleys. The earth was soaked deep. The precious ammunition and most of the stores were dry, but every man whether in a tent or not was wet to the skin.

It was obvious that they could not go on and attack Piqua at once, as they would arrive far in the night, and the most skilled of the borderers were ordered to try their cunning at lighting fires. Patience and persistence had their reward. The bark was stripped from fallen trees, and dry splinters were cut from it. When these were lighted with flint and steel the problem was solved. Heat triumphed over wet, and soon twenty glorious fires were blazing in the forest. The men were allowed to dry their clothes in relays, each relay baring itself and holding its clothes before the fire until the last touch of damp was gone.

All the time a vigilant watch was kept in the woods. Indians might attack when their enemy was depressed by storm and wet, but nothing to disturb the peace of the drying army occurred. Wolves howled again far away but they were still prowling among the ruins of Chillicothe, seeking unburned portions of venison or other meat. After the storm the close oppressive heat disappeared. A fresh and cool wind blew. Out came the moon and stars and they shone in a silky blue. The leaves and grass began to dry. The five lay down within range of the fires. Shif'less Sol made himself very comfortable on his blanket.

"I don't want anybody to bother me now," he said, "'cause I'm goin' to sleep all through the night. No Injuns will be roun' here disturbin' me, an' I don't want no white man to try it either."

The shiftless one knew what he was talking about, as there was no alarm in the night and early the next morning the army began its march again. But Henry was sure there would be a fierce fight at Piqua.

They still followed the Indian road, and now went a little faster, although never breaking their old formation for a single instant. Yet every heart throbbed. They would soon be at Piqua, face to face with the allied forces led by their best chiefs. It was likely that their fire would burst from their undergrowth at any moment. But the scouts still reported nothing. Most of the morning was gone and they came to a broad but shallow stream. It was Mad River, and Piqua was not more than a mile up its stream.

"Surely they will fight us here," was the thought of Clark. He halted his army and the scouts crossed the stream at many points. They beat up the woods and found no enemy, although Piqua was so near. Then the order to march was given again, and the whole army plunged into the stream. The heavy wheels of the

cannon grated on the bottom, but they were still kept in the very center of the force. Clark never abated his resolve to protect these guns at all hazards from capture. But the cannon passed safely, and then came Logan with the rear guard. It, too, crossed and the commander drew a mighty breath of relief.

"How far away is Piqua now?" he asked of a man who had once been a prisoner there.

"Not more than a mile," he replied. "Soon you can see the smoke from it rising above the trees."

"Ah, I see it now. Then they have not set their town on fire, and they are not running away. We shall have a battle."

The news was quickly passed throughout the army, and eagerness began to show. The men wanted to be led on at once. It was nearly noon, and grass and foliage were dry again. There was not a cloud in the heavens, and the sun was a golden circle in a solid blue dome.

"Finest day for a fight I ever saw," said Tom Ross.

Paul laughed but it was a nervous laugh, coming from high tension. He was not afraid, but he knew they were going into battle. They passed into the forest and beyond in an open space they saw the houses, wigwams and tepees of Piqua scattered along Mad River. Just before them was a sort of prairie covered with weeds as high as a man's head. Henry threw himself flat upon the ground and peered in among the weeds.

"Back! back!" he cried in a tremendous voice. "The warriors are here!"

His sharp eyes had caught glimpses of hundreds of forms lying among the weeds. The whole army recoiled, and then a sheet of flame burst from the field, followed by the fierce war whoop of the Indians. The bullets sung in swarms like bees over his head, but knowing that all would fire at once after the Indian custom, he leaped to his feet, and ran to the shelter of the forest before they could reload and deliver the second volley.

"Here's a tree, Henry," said Shif'less Sol; "a lot of officers wanted it, but I've saved it for you."

But it was good-natured banter. There was not a sign of panic in the army. The men at once formed themselves into line of battle, according to their instructions, and opened a terrible fire upon the weeds in which the warriors lay concealed. Hundreds of bullets swept every part of the cover, and then the cannon sent in round shot and grape, cutting down weeds and warriors together, and driving the savage force in flight to shelter.

But Timmendiquas, who had chosen the position, had reckoned well. The field was not only covered with high weeds, but the portion near the town was intersected with deep gullies. The warriors fell back in good order and sought refuge in these gullies which would hold hundreds. Here bullets, cannon balls and grape shot alike passed over their heads, and suffering but little loss, they sent back a storm of their own bullets.

The army advanced to the edge of the woods, and was ready to charge across them but Colonel Clark hesitated. Before they could reach the gullies his men might be cut in pieces by a protected foe. The five, Boone, and many other of the best frontiersmen had already sought the shelter of stones or little hillocks, and were firing at every head that appeared above the edge of the gullies. Before the smoke became too dense Henry saw beyond the gullies that Piqua was a large town, larger than they had supposed. It would perhaps be impossible for the army to envelop it. In fact, it was built in the French-Canadian style and ran three miles up and down Mad River.

Henry heard the fierce war whoop rising again and again above the firing which was now an unbroken crash. He also heard another and shriller note, and he knew it was the shouting that came from the vast swarm of squaws and children in Piqua. The yell of the Indians also took on a triumphant tone. It seemed that

the beginning of the battle was in their front, and the ambushed warriors in the gullies were strengthened by other forces on their right and left that crept forward and opened a heavy fire from cover. Along a range of more than a mile there was a steady flash of firing, and it seemed impossible for any force to advance into it and live.

Fortunate, again fortunate, and thrice fortunate were the frontiersmen who were veterans, also! The cannon were sheltered in the wood and the men were made to lie down. The great guns still thundered across the field, but the riflemen held their fire, while the Indian shout of triumph swelled higher and higher. In this terrible moment when many another commander would have lost his head, the staunch heart of Clark never faltered. He hastily called his leading officers and scouts, and while the battle flamed before them, he gave his orders behind a screen of bushes. He bade Colonel Logan, assisted by Colonel Floyd and Colonel Harrod, to take four hundred men, circle to the east of the town as quickly as he could, and attack with all his might. After giving a little time for the circuit, Clark, with the artillery, would march straight across the field in the face of the main Indian force. He gave Henry and his comrades their choice as to which body with which they would march.

"We go with you and the artillery across the field," replied Henry at once.

"I thought so," said Clark with a smile.

The five lay down at the edge of the forest. Full of experience, they knew that it was not worth while now to be sending bullets toward the gullies. They knew, also, that the charge in which they were about to take part would offer as much danger as anything they had ever met. It is likely that every one of them thought of Wareville, and their kin, but they said nothing.

A few men in front maintained the fire in order to keep the Indians across the field busy, but the great majority, lying quiet, waited to hear the rifles of Logan and the four hundred. Meanwhile this flanking force emerged from the woods, and having now become the left wing of the American army, sought to rush the town. It was immediately assailed by a powerful Indian force, and a furious battle followed. One side of it was exposed to another field from which Indians sent in bullets in showers. Nevertheless the men, encouraged by Logan, Floyd, and Harrod, drove straight toward Piqua. The Indians in front of them were led by Girty, Braxton Wyatt, Blackstaffe and Moluntha, the Shawnee, and they fought alike from open and covert, offering the most desperate resistance. The

four hundred were compelled now and then to yield a few yards, but always they gained it back, and more. Slowly the town came nearer, and now Logan's men heard to their right a welcome crash that told them Clark was advancing.

As soon as Clark heard the sound of Logan's battle, he gave the signal to his men to attack. In front of them, much of the smoke had lifted, and they could see the field now, with most of its weeds cut away. Beyond was a strip of woods, and on the other side of the woods but already visible through the bushes, lay the long town.

"Now for it!" cried Henry to his comrades who were close about him.

"Forward!" shouted Clark, and with a tremendous shout the men charged into the field, the artillery drawn as always in the center and blazing the way. From the gullies came the answering fire in shower after shower of bullets. Henry heard them thudding upon human bodies, and he heard the low cries of men as they fell, but the smoke and the odor of gunpowder were in his nostrils, and his head was hot. Everything was red before him, and he had a furious desire to reach the gullies and rush in among the Indians. It was only two hundred yards across the field, but already the smoke was gathering in dense clouds, split apart now and then by the discharges of the cannon. Behind them the charging men left a trail of dead and dying. Henry took a hasty look to see if his comrades were still upon their feet. Two were on one side of him and two on the other. There was a patch of red on Jim Hart's shoulder and another on Tom Ross's, but they did not seem to amount to anything.

Half way across the field the column staggered for a moment under the heavy fire which never slackened for an instant, but it recovered itself quickly and went on. The smoke lifted and Henry saw Timmendiquas at the edge of the nearest gully, a splendid figure stalking up and down, obviously giving orders. He had expected to find him there. He knew that wherever the battle was thickest Timmendiquas would be. Then the smoke drifted down again, and his head grew hotter than ever. The firing increased in rapidity and volume, both before them and on their left. The crash of the second battle moved on with them. Even in those rushing moments Henry knew that the left flank under Logan was forcing its way forward, and his heart gave a leap of joy. If the two commands ever united in the village they might crush everything. So eager did he become that he began to shout: "On! On!" without knowing it.

They were nearing the gullies now and once more Henry saw Timmendiquas

who seemed to be shouting to his men. It was a fleeting glimpse but so vivid and intense that Henry never forgot it. The great Wyandot chief was a very war god. His eyes flamed and fiercely brandishing his great tomahawk, he shouted to the warriors to stand.

The left flank under Logan and the larger force under Clark were now almost in touch. The American line of battle was a mile long and everywhere they were faced by a foe superior in numbers. Despite the cannon, always terrifying to them, the Indians stood firm, and behind them thousands of women and children urged them on to the conflict. They knew, too, the greatness of the crisis. The war that they had carried so often to the white settlements in Kentucky was now brought to them. One of their great towns, Chillicothe, was already destroyed. Should Piqua, the other, share the same fate? Timmendiwas, the greatest of the leaders, the bravest of men said no, and they sought to equal his courage. No Indian chief that day shirked anything; yet the white foe always advanced, and the boom of the cannon sounded in their ears like the crack of doom. Some of the balls now passed over the fields through the strip of woods and smashed into the houses of the town. The shouting of the women became shriller.

Nearer and nearer came the white enemy. The great barrels and wheels of the cannon loomed terribly through the smoke. The blasts of fire from their muzzles were like strokes of lightning. The Indians in the first gully began to leap out and dart back. Henry saw the dusky figures giving way and he shouted, still unconsciously,—“On! On! They're running! They're running!” Others had seen the same movement, and a roar of triumph passed up and down the white line, thinned now by the rifle fire, but no longer in doubt of victory.

They rushed upon the gullies, they cleaned out the first and second and third and all; they helped the cannon across, and now the contact between the two forces was perfect. They bore down upon the town, but they encountered a new obstacle. Rallied by Timmendiwas and others the warriors filled the strip of woods between the fields and Piqua. They lay down in the undergrowth, they hid behind every tree, and shouting their war cries, they refused to give another step. But Clark, the astute, would not permit any diminution in the zeal of his men, now carried to the highest pitch by seeming victory. He knew the danger of allowing the fire of battle to grow cold.

He ordered a rifle fire of unparalleled rapidity to be poured into the wood, and then the cannon were loaded and discharged at the same spot as fast as possible. Not an Indian could show his head. Boughs and twigs rattled down upon them.

Saplings cut through at the base by cannon shot fell with a crash. Although Timmendiquas, Moluntha, Captain Pipe and others raged up and down, the warriors began to lose spirit. It was soon told among them that Girty and all the other renegades had ceased fighting and had retired to the town. Girty was a white man but he was wise; he was faithful to the Indians; he had proved it many times, and if he gave up the battle it must be lost. Never had the Indians fought better than they had fought that day but it seemed to them that the face of Manitou was turned from them.

While they doubted, while the moment of gloom was present, Clark with his whole united force rushed into the wood, drove every warrior before him, followed them into Piqua, and the Indian host was beaten.



CHAPTER XXII

THE LAST STAND

Every one of the five felt an immense exhilaration as they drove the Indians back into the town. They were not cruel. They did not wish to exult over a defeated enemy, but they had witnessed the terrible suffering of the border, and they knew from the testimony of their own eyes what awful cruelties a savage enemy in triumph could inflict. Now Clark and the Kentuckians had struck directly at the heart of the Indian power in the West. Chillicothe was destroyed and Piqua was taken. The arms and ammunition sent to them by the power, seated in Canada, had not availed them.

Henry did not know until much later that it was the cunning and crafty Girty who had given up first. He had suddenly announced to those near him that Piqua could not be defended against the American army. Then he had precipitately retreated to the other side of the town followed by Braxton Wyatt, Blackstaffe and all the renegades. The Indians were shaken by this retreat because they had great confidence in Girty. The Delawares gave up, then the Ottawas and Illinois, the Wyandots, Shawnees, Miamis and the little detachment of Mohawks, as usual, stood to the bitter last. At the very edge of the village the great war chiefs, Yellow Panther, the Miami, and Red Eagle, the Shawnee, fell almost side by side, and went to the happy hunting grounds together. Moluntha, the other famous Shawnee chief, received two wounds, but lived to secure a momentary revenge at the great Indian victory of the Blue Licks, two years later. Timmendiquas would have died in the defense, but a half dozen of his faithful warriors fairly dragged him beyond the range of the Kentucky rifles.

Yet Timmendiquas, although the Kentuckians were in the town, did not cease to fight. He and a hundred of the warriors threw themselves into the strongest of the houses, those built of timber, and opened a dangerous fire from doors and windows. The woodsmen were ordered to charge and to take every house by assault, no matter what the loss, but Clark, always resourceful, sternly ordered a halt.

"You forget our cannon," he said. "Logan, do you, Floyd and Harrod keep the riflemen back, and we'll drive the enemy out of these houses without losing a

single man on our side."

"Thar speaks wisdom," said Shif'less Sol to the other. "Now in all the excitement I had clean forgot that we could blow them houses to pieces, but the Colonel didn't forget it."

"No, he didn't," replied Henry. "Stand back and we'll see the fun. A lot of destruction will be done soon."

The twilight had not yet come, although the sun was slowly dimming in the East. A great cloud of smoke from the firing hung over Piqua and the bordering fields that had witnessed so fierce a combat. The smoke and the burned gunpowder made a bitter odor. Flashes of firing from the strong houses, and from ambushed Indians here and there pierced the smoke. Then came a tremendous report and a twelve-pound cannon ball smashed through a wooden house. Another and another and it was demolished. The defenders fled for their lives. Every other house that could be used for shelter was served in the same way. The last ambushed foe was swept from his covert, and when the twilight fell Piqua, throughout its whole length of three miles along Mad River, was held by the Kentuckians.

The Indian women and children had fled already to the forest, and there they were slowly followed by the warriors, their hearts filled with rage and despair. Beaten on ground of their own choosing, and not even able to bring away their dead, they saw their power crumbling. Fierce words passed between Timmendiquas and Simon Girty. The Wyandot chieftain upbraided the renegade. He charged him with giving up too soon, but Girty, suave and diplomatic, said, after his first wrath was over, that he had not yielded until it was obvious that they were beaten. Instead of a fruitless defense it was better to save their warriors for another campaign. They could yet regain all that they had lost. There was some truth in Girty's words. Blue Lick and St. Clair's terrible defeat were yet to come, but Clark's blow had destroyed the very nerve-center of the Indian confederacy. The Kentuckians had shown that not only could they fight successfully on the defensive, but they could also cross the Ohio and shatter the Indian power on its own chosen ground. Neither the valor of the warriors, nor the great aid that they received from their white allies could save them from ultimate defeat.

Henry, Paul, the officers, and many others felt these things as the night came down, and as they roamed through Piqua, now deserted by the enemy. Paul and

Jim Hart went in one direction to look at the big Council House, but Henry, the shiftless one, and Tom Ross remained with Colonel Clark.

"We've won a great victory, though we've lost many good men," said the Colonel, "and now we must consign Piqua to the fate that Chillicothe has just suffered. It's a pity, but if we leave this nest, the hornets will be back in it as soon as we leave it, snug and warm, and with a convenient base for raiding across the Ohio."

"We'll have to give it to the flames," said Colonel Logan.

The other Colonels nodded. First they gathered up all the dead, whether red or white and buried them. At Henry's instance the two old chiefs, Yellow Panther, the Miami, and Red Eagle, the Shawnee, were laid side by side in the same grave. Then he fixed a board at their head upon which he cut this inscription:

In this grave Lie
Yellow Panther, the Miami,
And Red Eagle, the Shawnee;
They were great Chiefs,
And died fighting
For Their People.

Not a white man disturbed the epitaph. But as soon as the last of the fallen were buried, and the soldiers had eaten and refreshed themselves, the torch was set to Piqua, even as it had been set to Chillicothe. In an hour the town was a huge mass of flames, three miles long, and lighting up the neighboring forest for many miles. The Indian refugees, thousands of them, from both towns saw it, and they knew to the full how terrible was the blow that had been inflicted upon them. Timmendiquas sought to rally the warriors for a daring attack upon an enemy who, flushed with victory, might not be very cautious, but they would not make the attempt. Timmendiquas then saw that it would take time to restore their shaken courage and he desisted.

Henry, Shif'less Sol and Tom Ross watched the fire for a long time, while the soldiers destroyed all the orchards, gardens and crops. They saw the flames reach their highest until the country around them was as bright as day, and then they saw them sink until nothing was left but darkness made luminous by the coals. The great village was gone.

"I think we'd better get Paul and Jim and go to sleep," said Henry.

"So do I," said Shif'less Sol, and they looked around for the two. But they were not found easily.

"Ought to have stayed with us," said Tom Ross.

"An' they'd have saved a lazy man a lot of trouble, lookin' through this big place fur 'em," said Shif'less Sol.

Tom and Jim became still harder to find. The three hunted everywhere. They hunted an hour. They hunted two hours, and there was not a sign of their two comrades. They asked many about them and nobody could tell a word. It was nearly midnight when they stopped and looked at one another in dismay.

"They are not in the camp—that is sure," said Henry.

"And they've got too much sense to go out in the woods," said Sol.

"Which means that they've been took," said Tom Ross.

Tom's words carried conviction, sudden and appalling, to all three. Paul and Jim Hart, going about the burning town, had been seized by some lurking party and carried off, or—they would not admit to themselves the dreadful alternative—but they hoped they had been merely taken away, which they deemed likely, as hostages would be of great value to the Indians now. The three sat down on a log at the northern edge of the town. They saw little now but the river, and the clouds of smoke rising from it.

"We'll never desert Paul and Jim," said Shif'less Sol. "Now what is the fust thing fur us to do?"

"We've got to find this trail, and the trail of those who took them," replied Henry. "The army, of course, cannot follow all through the northern woods in order to rescue two persons, and it's not fitted for such a task anyhow. We three will do it, won't we?"

"Ez shore ez the sun rises an' sets," said Shif'less Sol.

"I reckon we will," said Tom Ross.

"And we must start upon the road this minute," said Henry. "Come, we'll see Colonel Clark and tell him that we have to go."

They found the commander about a mile away, encamped as near the burned

town as the heat would allow. Logan, Floyd, Harrod, Boone, Thomas, and others were with him. They were talking together earnestly, but when Henry approached and saluted, Colonel Clark greeted him pleasantly.

"Why, it's young Mr. Ware!" he exclaimed, "the lad to whom we owe so much. And I see two of your comrades with you. Where are the other two?"

"That is why we have come, Colonel Clark," Henry replied. "We do not know where the other two are, but we fear that they have been taken by the retreating Indians. The campaign, I suppose, is over. We wish therefore to resign from the army, follow and rescue our comrades if we can."

Colonel Clark sprang to his feet.

"Two of your friends taken, and we to desert you after what you have done for us!" he exclaimed. "That cannot be. The army must march to their rescue!"

The other officers raised their voices in affirmation. Henry and his friends bowed. All three were affected deeply. But Henry said:

"Colonel Clark, you can't know how much we thank you for such an offer, but we three must go alone. If the army followed into the woods, and pressed the Indians closely, they would put their prisoners to death the very first thing. They always do it. In a case like this, only silence and speed can succeed. We must follow alone."

Daniel Boone spoke up in his gentle, but singularly impressive tones.

"The boy is right, Colonel Clark," he said. "If the job can be done it is these three alone who can do it."

"I suppose you are right," said Colonel Clark regretfully, "but it does hurt me to see you leave us, unhelped. When do you wish to go?"

"Now," replied Henry.

Colonel Clark held out his hand. There were actual tears in his eyes. He shook hands with the three, one by one, and all the others did the same. Boone and Kenton went with them a little distance into the woods.

"Now, lads," said Boone, "don't ever forget to be careful. You got to get your friends back by stealth and cunnin'. Keep out of a fight unless the time comes when everything depends on it. Then if you've got to fight, fight with all your

might."

The three thanked him. Last hand-clasps were given and then Boone and Kenton heard for a brief second or two only faint and dying footfalls in the forest. They went back quietly to camp ready for the return with the army to Kentucky, but the three were already deep in the forest, and far beyond the area of light.

"I'm thinkin'," said Ross, "that the Indians hev crossed the river. It's likely that they'd want to keep the water between themselves an' us."

"Looks like good argument to me," said Tom Ross.

Henry being of the same opinion, they decided to cross Mad River also, and approach as nearly as they could to the chief body of the Indians. It was probable that many bands were wandering about and they would be in great danger from them, but it was their business to follow the advice of Daniel Boone and avoid them. They exercised now their greatest skill and patience. At a distance of eight or ten miles from Piqua they found two Indian camps, but, after a thorough examination, they became satisfied that Paul and Jim were not in either of them. Just before daylight they found a valley in which a great mass of warriors, women and children were huddled. Evidently this was the chief point of retreat, and creeping as near as they could, they saw Timmendiquas, Moluntha, Girty and Braxton Wyatt passing about the camp.

The three lay close in the bushes and they observed Wyatt intently. Two or three times he passed between them and a camp fire, and they studied his face.

"Doesn't look like that of one who has lost," whispered Henry.

"No, it don't," said Shif'less Sol. "O' course he don't mourn much about the Indians, an' I reckon he's got somethin' to make him happy."

"And what he's got is Paul an' Jim," said Tom Ross.

"No doubt you're right," said Henry. "I think it likely that they were trapped by a band under Braxton Wyatt, and that they are his especial prisoners. Look! There they are now, by the tree!"

Some shifting of the Indians gave a distant view of the two prisoners bound securely and leaning against a tree. Wyatt passed by, and looked upon them with an air of possession. They were sure now that it was he who had taken them, and, drawing further back into the forest, they waited patiently for the next move

in the great game of life and death.

Indian scouts several times passed within a few yards of them, but they knew that the minds of these men were upon the army not upon them. They were scouting to see whether Clark would follow them into the forest and, when they became certain about noon that he would not do so, they gathered their own numbers together and started northward to the villages of their brethren.

Henry, Shiftless Sol and Tom Ross followed closely enough to know what was going on, but not so closely that they would walk into a trap. Fortunately the country was heavily wooded with evergreen and there was still an abundance of leaves on the trees. Fortified by such a long experience as theirs it was not difficult to keep under cover, and when the tribes went into camp that night, the three pursuers were not a quarter of a mile away.

The three hung around the camp half the night, but they saw no chance to rescue their comrades. The crowd about them was too great. They followed in the same way the next day, and continued thus a week. Henry began to feel sure now that Paul and Jim were in no immediate danger of death, and he ascribed the fact to the influence of Timmendiquas. Even if they were Wyatt's own prisoners, he would not dare to go directly contrary to the wishes of the great Wyandot chieftain.

Now a change occurred, the motive of which baffled the three for a while. Timmendiquas, Braxton Wyatt, about twenty warriors, and the two prisoners, leaving the main body of the Indians, turned toward the Northwest, following a course which would lead them around the lower curve of Lake Michigan. The three sitting among the bushes debated it a long time.

"I think," said Henry, "that Timmendiquas is making a last desperate effort to lead a great force against us. He is going into the far Northwest to see if he can bring down the Sacs and Foxes, and even the Ojibways, Chippewas, and Sioux to help against us."

"Then why do they take Paul and Jim along?" asked the shiftless one.

"As trophies to impress the distant Indians or maybe as a sacrifice. Braxton Wyatt goes, too, because they are his prisoners."

"It may be so," said Tom Ross. "The more I think about it, the more I think you're right. Anyhow it'll give us a better chance to get at Jim and Paul."

"But we've got to play the Injuns' own game," said Shif'less Sol. "We must follow them a long time without lettin' them know we're on their track. Then they'll begin to go easy and won't keep much guard."

Shif'less Sol was undoubtedly right, and for many days they followed this band deep into the Northwestern woods. August passed, September came. Whenever the wind blew, the dead leaves fell fast, and there was a crisp touch in the air. The nights became so cool that they were compelled to sleep between the two blankets that everyone carried at his back. They were thoroughly convinced now that Timmendiquas was in search of help in the far Northwest, and that Paul and Jim would be offered as trophies or bribes. Several times the Indians stopped at small villages, and, after a brief and hospitable stay, passed on. It became evident, too, that neither Timmendiquas nor Wyatt thought any longer of possible pursuit. Both knew how the five would stand by one another but it had been so long since the battle at Piqua, and they had traveled so many hundreds of miles from the burned town that pursuit now seemed out of the question. So they traveled at ease, through an extremely fertile and beautiful region, onward and onward until they began to near the shores of the greatest of all lakes, Superior.

The cold in the air increased but the three pursuers did not mind it. They were inured to every hardship of the wilderness, and the colder it grew the more pleasant was the fresh air to the lungs. They felt strong enough for any task. Now that the guard was relaxed somewhat they hoped for a chance to save Paul and Jim, but none came. Three separate nights they went near enough to see them by the camp fire, but they could not approach any closer. Henry surmised that they would soon reach a large village of the Chippewas, and then their chances would decrease again. The attempt must be made soon.

It was now late October and all the forests were dyed the varied and beautiful colors of an American autumn. The camp of Timmendiquas was pitched on a beautiful stream that ran a few miles further on into an equally beautiful little lake. Food had become scarce and that morning he had sent most of the warriors on a hunting expedition. He sat with Braxton Wyatt and only two warriors by the side of the small camp fire. The two prisoners were there also, their arms bound, but not in a manner to hurt. Motives of policy had compelled Timmendiquas and Wyatt to be seeming friends, but the heart of the great chief was full of bitterness. He had not wanted to bring Wyatt with him and yet it had been necessary to do so. Wyatt had taken the two prisoners who were intended as offerings to the Northwestern tribes, and, under tribal law, they belonged to him, until they were willingly given to others. His presence would also convince the

Ojibways, Chippewas and others that white men, too, were on their side. Yet nothing could make Timmendiquas like Wyatt. It seemed unnatural to him for a man to fight against his own race, and he knew the young renegade to be treacherous and cruel.

They were sitting in silence. Wyatt spoke once or twice to Timmendiquas, but the chieftain made no reply. Timmendiquas stared into the fire, and planned how he would bring down the Northwestern tribes. The two warriors were as still as statues. Paul and Long Jim were leaning against the fallen tree, and Braxton Wyatt's eyes wandered over them. He sneered at Paul, but the boy took no notice. Wyatt had often tried to annoy the two prisoners on the march, but he was afraid to go very far because of Timmendiquas. Yet he remembered with great satisfaction how he had trapped them that night after the battle of Piqua, when they wandered too near the edge of the forest.

His eyes passed from them, wandering around the circle, and came back to them again. Did he see Long Jim start? Did he see a flash of intelligence appear in the eyes of the hunter? Could he have heard something? He looked again. Long Jim Hart's face expressed nothing. Braxton Wyatt felt that he was growing nervous, and the next instant he sprang to his feet with a shout of alarm. Three figures sprang from the undergrowth and, with leveled weapons, commanded the four unbound men who sat by the fire to throw up their hands. Up went the hands of the four, and Timmendiquas smiled sadly.

"Your patience has been greater than ours," he said, "and the reward that you are about to take belongs to you."

"We could fire upon you, Timmendiquas," said Henry, "and for the moment the advantage is ours, but even if we should win the victory, in the end some of us would fall. Those who are bound, and for whom we have come, would surely be slain. Then, I say to you, mighty chief, give us our friends, promise that you will forbid pursuit, and we go."

Timmendiquas stood up and his face bore a singular look of dignity and kindness.

"You speak fairly," he said, "and I wish, Ware, that we could be friends in peace. Cut the bonds of the prisoners."

He spoke to the two warriors, but at that moment some demon leaped up in the soul of Braxton Wyatt. "I will do it," he said. But his rage and disappointment

were so great that they nearly blinded him. He snatched out his knife and rushed at Paul Cotter, but the blade was turned toward the bound boy's throat, and not toward the thongs.

Henry uttered a cry and sprang forward, but the great war tomahawk of Timmendiquas left his hand, and flew through the air so swiftly that the eye saw only a flash. The glittering edge struck the head of Braxton Wyatt, and he fell, cloven to the chin. He was dead before he touched the ground.

"We keep faith," said Timmendiquas.

The five bade the great Wyandot chieftain farewell and ten minutes later were on their return journey. They knew that they were safe from any pursuit by the band of Timmendiquas. They returned to Wareville and they fought always with distinction throughout the border wars. They were at the Blue Licks that dreadful day when Timmendiquas and Moluntha, Caldwell and Girty, who finally came, with the Wyandots and Shawnees destroyed more than half of the Kentucky force. Strangely enough they went with Clark from the mouth of the Licking just two years after the first expedition, again with a thousand riflemen against Piqua which had been rebuilt, and they destroyed it, as before, in revenge for Blue Licks.

Years later they were in the terrible slaughter of St. Clair's army, and they were with Wayne when he inflicted the crushing and final defeat upon the allied tribes at the Fallen Timbers. After the peace all the five, every one of whom lived to a very great age, became the fast friends of Timmendiquas, famous war chief of the Wyandots, the nation that knew no fear.

THE END

Transcriber's Notes:

Page 59, "tattoed" corrected to "tattooed". (bear tattooed upon his chest)

Page 69, removed duplicate "to". (large enough to keep three men)

page 77, a comma is presumed as text is unclear. (Fowler, and six savage)

Page 84 and 97, spelling "hare lip" retained. Elsewhere in text it is spelled "harelip". (a hare lip. Then he)(wrinkled his ugly hare lip)

Page 90, "dear" corrected to "deer". (of buffalo, deer, bear)

Page 97, retained comma although question mark probably more appropriate. (South with you," he said)

Page 100, and Page 156, "Kentucy" corrected to "Kentucky". (prospect of victory. The Kentucky) (doubtless had reached Kentucky)

Page 130, inserted missing period. (watched him shrewdly.)

Page 163, a colon is presumed as original is unclear. (flushed, but he continued:)

Page 196, a character named "Tom" is addressed in dialogue. Context shows it should be the character "Sol" instead. Original text retained. ("Tom, that can be)

Page 240, unusual word "sidewiping" retained. Author possibly meant "sideswiping". (a glancing blow, sidewiping it)

Page 241, a comma is presumed as text is unclear. (come to them through the woods,)

Page 271, "house" corrected to "houses". (houses, built of solid logs, stood in ordered rows)

Page 279, inserted missing period. (toward the little settlement.)

Page 293 and 317, "Black Panther" (name of a chief) probably refers to "Yellow Panther", a name which occurs more frequently in the text. Original text retained.

Page 295, "menancing" corrected to "menacing". (like a menacing under-note)

Page 313, inserted missing period. (sound of oars became fainter and fainter.)

Page 335, removed duplicate "the". (cracks between the timbers)

Page 353, inserted missing period. (the army to envelop it.)

Page 365, a dialogue attributed to character "Ross" should probably be "Sol" since in the next paragraph "Tom Ross" answers. However the original text has been retained. (said Ross, "that the Indians hev crossed)

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