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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OLD MAN SAVARIN, AND OTHER STORIES  
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**OFF-HAND STORIES**  
**OLD MAN SAVARIN**  
**And Other Stories**

**BY**  
**EDWARD WILLIAM THOMSON**

**TORONTO:**

**WILLIAM BRIGGS, WESLEY BUILDINGS.**

C. W. COATES, MONTREAL, QUE.      S. F. HUESTIS, HALIFAX, N.S.

**1895.**

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## OLD MAN SAVARIN.

[Pg 7]

Old Ma'ame Paradis had caught seventeen small doré, four suckers, and eleven channel-catfish before she used up all the worms in her tomato-can. Therefore she was in a cheerful and loquacious humor when I came along and offered her some of my bait.

"Merci; non, M'sieu. Dat's 'nuff fishin' for me. I got too old now for fish too much. You like me make you present of six or seven doré? Yes? All right. Then you make me present of one quarter dollar."

When this transaction was completed, the old lady got out her short black clay pipe, and filled it with *tabac blanc*.

"Ver' good smell for scare mosquitoes," said she. "Sit down, M'sieu. For sure I like to be here, me, for see the river when she's like this." [Pg 8]

Indeed the scene was more than picturesque. Her fishing-platform extended twenty feet from the rocky shore of the great Rataplan Rapid of the Ottawa, which, beginning to tumble a mile to the westward, poured a roaring torrent half a mile wide into the broader, calm brown reach below. Noble elms towered on the shores. Between their trunks we could see many whitewashed cabins, whose doors of blue or green or red scarcely disclosed their colors in that light.

The sinking sun, which already touched the river, seemed somehow the source of the vast stream that flowed radiantly from its blaze. Through the glamour of the evening mist and the maze of June flies we could see a dozen men scooping for fish from platforms like that of Ma'ame Paradis.

Each scooper lifted a great hoop-net set on a handle some fifteen feet long, threw it easily up stream, and swept it on edge with the current to the full length of his reach. Then it was drawn out and at once thrown upward again, if no capture had been made. In case he had taken fish, he came to the inshore edge of his platform, and upset the net's contents into a pool separated from the main rapid by an improvised wall of stones. [Pg 9]

"I'm too old for scoop some now," said Ma'ame Paradis, with a sigh.

"You were never strong enough to scoop, surely," said I.

"No, eh? All right, M'sieu. Then you hain't nev' hear 'bout the time Old Man Savarin was caught up with. No, eh? Well, I'll tol' you 'bout that." And this was her story as she told it to me.

---

"Der was fun dose time. Nobody ain't nev' catch up with dat old rascal any other time since I'll know him first. Me, I'll be only fifteen den. Dat's long time 'go, eh? Well, for sure, I ain't so old like what I'll look. But Old Man Savarin was old already. He's old, old, old, when he's only thirty; an' *mean—baptême!* If de old Nick ain' got de hottest place for dat old stingy—yes, for sure! [Pg 10]

"You'll see up dere where Frawce Seguin is scoop? Dat's the Laroque platform by right. Me, I was a Laroque. My fader was use for scoop dere, an' my gran'fader—the Laroques scoop dere all de time since ever dere was some Rapid Rataplan. Den Old Man Savarin he's buyed the land up dere from Felix Ladoucier, an' he's told my fader, 'You can't scoop no more wisout you pay me rent.'

"'Rent!' my fader say. '*Saprie!* Dat's my fader's platform for scoop fish! You ask anybody.'

"'Oh, I'll know all 'bout dat,' Old Man Savarin is say. 'Ladoucier let you scoop front of his land, for

Ladoucier one big fool. De lan's mine now, an' de fishin' right is mine. You can't scoop dere wisout you pay me rent.'

""*Baptême!* I'll show you 'bout dat,' my fader say.

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"Next mawny he is go for scoop same like always. Den Old Man Savarin is fetch my fader up before de magistrate. De magistrate make my fader pay nine shillin'!

""Mebbe dat's learn you one lesson,' Old Man Savarin is say.

"My fader swear pretty good, but my moder say: 'Well, Narcisse, dere hain' no use for take it out in *malediction*. De nine shillin' is paid. You scoop more fish—dat's the way.'

"So my fader he is go out early, early nex' mawny. He's scoop, he's scoop. He's catch plenty fish before Old Man Savarin come.

""You ain't got 'nuff yet for fishin' on my land, eh? Come out of dat,' Old Man Savarin is say.

""*Saprie!* Ain' I pay nine shillin' for fish here?' my fader say.

""*Oui*—you pay nine shillin' for fish here *wisout* my leave. But you ain't pay nothin' for fish here *wis* my leave. You is goin' up before de magistrate some more.'

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"So he is fetch my fader up anoder time. An' de magistrate make my fader pay twelve shillin' more!

""Well, I s'pose I can go fish on my fader's platform now,' my fader is say.

"Old Man Savarin was laugh. 'Your honor, dis man tink he don't have for pay me no rent, because you'll make him pay two fines for trespass on my land.'

"So de magistrate told my fader he hain't got no more right for go on his own platform than he was at the start. My fader is ver' angry. He's cry, he's tear his shirt; but Old Man Savarin only say, 'I guess I learn you one good lesson, Narcisse.'

"De whole village ain't told de old rascal how much dey was angry 'bout dat, for Old Man Savarin is got dem all in debt at his big store. He is grin, grin, and told everybody how he learn my fader two good lesson. An' he is told my fader: 'You see what I'll be goin' for do wis you if ever you go on my land again wisout you pay me rent.'

[Pg 13]

""How much you want?' my fader say.

""Half de fish you catch.'

""*Monjee!* Never!'

""Five dollar a year, den.'

""*Saprie*, no. Dat's too much.'

""All right. Keep off my lan', if you hain't want anoder lesson.'

""You's a tief,' my fader say.

""Hermidas, make up Narcisse Laroque bill,' de old rascal say to his clerk. 'If he hain't pay dat bill to-morrow, I sue him.'

"So my fader is scare mos' to death. Only my moder she's say, '*I'll* pay dat bill, me.'

"So she's take the money she's saved up long time for make my weddin' when it come. An' she's paid de bill. So den my fader hain't scare no more, an' he is shake his fist good under Old Man Savarin's ugly nose. But dat old rascal only laugh an' say, 'Narcisse, you like to be fined some more, eh?'

""*Tort Dieu*. You rob me of my place for fish, but I'll take my platform anyhow,' my fader is say.

[Pg 14]

""Yes, eh? All right—if you can get him wisout go on my land. But you go on my land, and see if I don't learn you anoder lesson,' Old Savarin is say.

"So my fader is rob of his platform, too. Nex' ting we hear, Frawce Seguin has rent dat platform for five dollar a year.

"Den de big fun begin. My fader an Frawce is cousin. All de time before den dey was good friend. But my fader he is go to Frawce Seguin's place an' he is told him, 'Frawce, I'll goin' lick you so hard you can't nev' scoop on my platform.'

"Frawce only laugh. Den Old Man Savarin come up de hill.

""Fetch him up to de magistrate an' learn him anoder lesson,' he is say to Frawce.

""What for?' Frawce say.

""For try to scare you.'

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""He hain't hurt me none.'

""But he's say he will lick you.'

"Dat's only because he's vex,' Frawce say.

"*Baptême! Non!*" my fader say. 'I'll be goin' for lick you good, Frawce.'

"For sure?' Frawce say.

"*Saprie!* Yes; for sure.'

"Well, dat's all right den, Narcisse. When you goin' for lick me?'

"First time I'll get drunk. I'll be goin' for get drunk dis same day.'

"All right, Narcisse. If you goin' get drunk for lick me, I'll be goin' get drunk for lick you—*Canadien* hain't nev' fool 'nuff for fight, M'sieu, only if dey is got drunk.

"Well, my fader he's go on old Marceau's hotel, an' he's drink all day. Frawce Seguin he's go cross de road on Joe Maufraud's hotel, an' *he's* drink all day. When de night come, dey's bose stand out in front of de two hotel for fight.

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"Dey's bose yell an' yell for make de oder feller scare bad before dey begin. Hermidas Laronde an' Jawunny Leroi dey's hold my fader for fear he's go 'cross de road for keel Frawce Seguin dead. Pierre Seguin an' Magloire Sauve is hold Frawce for fear he's come 'cross de road for keel my fader dead. And dose men fight dat way 'cross de road, till dey hain't hardly able for stand up no more.

"My fader he's tear his shirt and he's yell, 'Let me at him!' Frawce he's tear his shirt and he's yell, 'Let me at him!' But de men hain't goin' for let dem loose, for fear one is strike de oder ver' hard. De whole village is shiver 'bout dat offle fight—yes, seh, shiver bad!

"Well, dey's fight like dat for more as four hours, till dey hain't able for yell no more, an' dey hain't got no money left for buy wheeskey for de crowd. Den Marceau and Joe Maufraud tol' dem bose it was a shame for two cousins to fight so bad. An' my fader he's say he's ver' sorry dat he lick Frawce so hard, and dey's bose sorry. So dey's kiss one anoder good—only all their close is tore to pieces.

[Pg 17]

"An' what you tink 'bout Old Man Savarin? Old Man Savarin is just stand in front of his store all de time, an' he's say: 'I'll tink I'll fetch him *bose* hup to de magistrate, an' I'll learn him *bose* a lesson.'

"Me, I'll be only fifteen, but I hain't scare 'bout dat fight same like my moder is scare. No more is Alphonsine Seguin scare. She's seventeen, an' she wait for de fight to be all over. Den she take her fader home, same like I'll take my fader home for bed. Dat's after twelve o'clock of night.

"Nex' mawny early my fader he's groaned and he's groaned: 'Ah—ugh—I'm sick, sick, me. I'll be goin' for die dis time, for sure.'

"You get up an' scoop some fish,' my moder she's say, angry. 'Den you hain't be sick no more.'

"Ach—ugh—I'll hain't be able. Oh, I'll be so sick. An' I hain' got no place for scoop fish now no more. Frawce Seguin has rob my platform.'

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"Take de nex' one lower down,' my moder she's say.

"Dat's Jawunny Leroi's.'

"All right for dat. Jawunny he's hire for run timber to-day.'

"Ugh—I'll not be able for get up. Send for M'sieu le Curé—I'll be goin' for die for sure.'

"*Mis re*, but dat's no *man!* Dat's a drunk pig,' my moder she's say, angry. 'Sick, eh? Lazy, lazy—dat's so. An' dere hain't no fish for de little chilluns, an' it's Friday mawny.' So my moder she's begin for cry.

"Well, M'sieu, I'll make de rest short; for de sun is all gone now. What you tink I do dat mawny? I take de big scoop-net an' I'll come up here for see if I'll be able for scoop some fish on Jawunny Leroi's platform. Only dere hain't nev' much fish dere.

"Pretty quick I'll look up and I'll see Alphonsine Seguin scoop, scoop on my fader's old platform. Alphonsine's fader is sick, sick, same like my fader, an' all de Seguin boys is too little for scoop, same like my brudders is too little. So dere Alphonsine she's scoop, scoop for breakfas'.

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"What you tink I'll see some more? I'll see Old Man Savarin. He's watchin' from de corner of de cedar bush, an' I'll know ver' good what he's watch for. He's watch for catch my fader go on his own platform. He's want for learn my fader anoder lesson. *Saprie!* dat's make me ver' angry, M'sieu!

"Alphonsine she's scoop, scoop plenty fish. I'll not be scoop none. Dat's make me more angry. I'll look up where Alphonsine is, an' I'll talk to myself:—

"Dat's my fader's platform,' I'll be say. 'Dat's my fader's fish what you catch, Alphonsine. You hain't nev' be my cousin no more. It is mean, mean for Frawce Seguin to rent my fader's platform for please dat old rascal Savarin.' Mebby I'll not be so angry at Alphonsine, M'sieu, if I was able for catch some fish; but I hain't able—I don't catch none.

[Pg 20]

"Well, M'sieu, dat's de way for long time—half-hour mebbly. Den I'll hear Alphonsine yell good. I'll look up de river some more. She's try for lift her net. She's try hard, hard, but she hain't able. De net is down in de rapid, an' she's only able for hang on to de hannle. Den I'll know she's got one big sturgeon, an' he's so big she can't pull him up.

"*Monjee!* what I care 'bout dat! I'll laugh me. Den I'll laugh good some more, for I'll want Alphonsine for see how I'll laugh big. And I'll talk to myself:—

"'Dat's good for dose Seguins,' I'll say. 'De big sturgeon will pull away de net. Den Alphonsine she will lose her fader's scoop wis de sturgeon. Dat's good 'nuff for dose Seguins! Take my fader platform, eh?'

"For sure, I'll want for go an' help Alphonsine all de same—she's my cousin, an' I'll want for see de sturgeon, me. But I'll only just laugh, laugh. *Non, M'sieu;* dere was not one man out on any of de oder platform dat mawny for to help Alphonsine. Dey was all sleep ver' late, for dey was all out ver' late for see de offle fight I told you 'bout.

[Pg 21]

"Well, pretty quick, what you tink? I'll see Old Man Savarin goin' to my fader's platform. He's take hold for help Alphonsine an' dey's bose pull, and pretty quick de big sturgeon is up on de platform. I'll be more angry as before.

"Oh, *tort Dieu!* What you tink come den? Why, dat Old Man Savarin is want for take de sturgeon!

"First dey hain't speak so I can hear, for de Rapid is too loud. But pretty quick dey's bose angry, and I hear dem talk.

"'Dat's my fish,' Old Man Savarin is say. 'Didn't I save him? Wasn't you goin' for lose him, for sure?'

"Me—I'll laugh good. Dass *such* an old rascal.

"'You get off dis platform, quick!' Alphonsine she's say.

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"'Give me my sturgeon,' he's say.

"'Dat's a lie—it hain't your sturgeon. It's *my* sturgeon,' she's yell.

"'I'll learn you one lesson 'bout dat,' he's say.

"Well, M'sieu, Alphonsine she's pull back de fish just when Old Man Savarin is make one grab. An' when she's pull back, she's step to one side, an' de old rascal he is, grab at de fish, an' de heft of de sturgeon is make him fall on his face, so he's tumble in de Rapid when Alphonsine let go de sturgeon. So dere's Old Man Savarin floating in de river—and *me!* I'll don't care eef he's drown one bit!

"One time he is on his back, one time he is on his face, one time he is all under de water. For sure he's goin' for be draw into de *culbute* an' get drown' dead, if I'll not be able for scoop him when he's go by my platform. I'll want for laugh, but I'll be too much scare.

"Well, M'sieu, I'll pick up my fader's scoop and I'll stand out on de edge of de platform. De water is run so fast, I'm mos' 'fraid de old man is boun' for pull me in when I'll scoop him. But I'll not mind for dat, I'll throw de scoop an' catch him; an' for sure, he's hold on good.

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"So dere's de old rascal in de scoop, but when I'll get him safe, I hain't able for pull him in one bit. I'll only be able for hold on an' laugh, laugh—he's look *ver'* queer! All I can do is to hold him dere so he can't go down de *culbute*. I'll can't pull him up if I'll want to.

"De old man is scare ver' bad. But pretty quick he's got hold of de cross-bar of de hoop, an' he's got his ugly old head up good.

"'Pull me in,' he say, ver' angry.

"'I'll hain't be able,' I'll say.

"Jus' den Alphonsine she come 'long, an' she's laugh so she can't hardly hold on wis me to de hannle. I was laugh good some more. When de old villain see us have fun, he's yell: 'I'll learn you bose one lesson for this. Pull me ashore!'

[Pg 24]

"'Oh! you's learn, us bose one lesson, M'sieu Savarin, eh?' Alphonsine she's say. 'Well, den, us bose will learn M'sieu Savarin one lesson first. Pull him up a little,' she's say to me.

"So we pull him up, an' den Alphonsine she's say to me: 'Let out de hannle, quick!—and he's under de water some more. When we stop de net, he's got hees head up pretty quick.

"'*Monjee!* I'll be drown' if you don't pull me out,' he's mos' *cry*.

"'Ver' well—if you's drown, your family be ver' glad,' Alphonsine she's say. 'Den they's got all your money for spend quick, quick.'

"M'sieu, dat scare him offle. He's begin for cry like one baby.

"'Save me out,' he's say. 'I'll give you anything I've got.'

"'How much?' Alphonsine she's say.

[Pg 25]

"He's tink, and he's say, 'Quarter dollar.'

"Alphonsine an' me is laugh, laugh.

"Save me,' he's cry some more. 'I hain't fit for die dis mawny.'

"You hain' fit for live no mawny,' Alphonsine she's say. 'One quarter dollar, eh? Where's my sturgeon?'

"He's got away when, I fall in,' he's say.

"How much you goin' give me for lose my big sturgeon?' she's ask.

"How much you'll want, Alphonsine?'

"Two dollare.'

"Dat's too much for one sturgeon,' he's say. For all he was not feel fit for die, he was more 'fraid for pay out his money.

"Let him down some more,' Alphonsine she's say.

"Oh. *misère, misère!* I'll pay de two dollare,' he's say when his head come up some more.

"Ver' well, den,' Alphonsine she's say; 'I'll be willin' for save you, *me*. But you hain't scooped by *me*. You's in Marie's net. I'll only come for help Marie. You's her sturgeon;' an' Alphonsine she's laugh an' laugh. [Pg 26]

"I didn't lose no sturgeon for Marie,' he's say.

"No, eh?" I'll say mysef. 'But you's steal my fader's platform. You's take his fishin' place. You's got him fined two times. You's make my moder pay his bill wis *my* weddin' money. What you goin' pay for all dat? You tink I'll be goin' for mos' kill mysef pullin' you out for noting? When you ever do someting for anybody for noting, eh, M'sieu Savarin?'

"How much you want?' he's say.

"Ten dollare for de platform, dat's all.'

"Never—dat's robbery,' he's say, an' he's begin to cry like *ver'* li'll baby.

"Pull him hup, Marie, an' give him some more,' Alphonsine she's say.

"But de old rascal is so scare 'bout dat, dat he's say he's pay right off. So we's pull him up near to de platform, only we hain't big 'nuff fool for let him out of de net till he's take out his purse an' pay de twelve dollare. [Pg 27]

"*Monjee*, M'sieu! If ever you see one angry old rascal! He not even stop for say: 'T'ank you for save me from be drown' dead in the *culbute!* He's run for his house an' he's put on dry clo'es, an' he's go up to de magistrate first ting for learn me an' Alphonsine one big lesson.

"But de magistrate hain' ver' bad magistrate. He's only laugh an' he's say:—

"M'sieu Savarin, de whole river will be laugh at you for let two young girl take eet out of smart man like you like dat. Hain't you tink your life worth twelve dollare? Didn't dey save you from de *culbute?* *Monjee!* I'll tink de whole river not laugh so ver' bad if you pay dose young girl one hunder dollare for save you so kind.'

"One hunder dollare!' he's mos' cry. 'Hain't you goin' to learn dose girl one lesson for take advantage of me dat way?' [Pg 28]

"Didn't you pay dose girl yoursef? Didn't you took out your purse yoursef? Yes, eh? Well, den, I'll goin' for learn you one lesson yoursef, M'sieu Savarin.' de magistrate is say. 'Dose two young girl is ver' wicked, eh? Yes, dat's so. But for why? Hain't dey just do to you what you been doin' ever since you was in beesness? Don' I know? You hain' never yet got advantage of nobody wisout you rob him all you can, an' dose wicked young girl only act just like you give dem a lesson all your life.'

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"An' de best fun was de whole river *did* laugh at M'sieu Savarin. An' my fader and Frawce Seguin is laugh most of all, till he's catch hup wis bosed of dem anoder time. You come for see me some more, an' I'll tol' you 'bout dat."

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## THE PRIVILEGE OF THE LIMITS.

[Pg 29]

"Yes, indeed, my grandfather wass once in jail," said old Mrs. McTavish, of the county of Glengarry, in Ontario, Canada; "but that wass for debt, and he wass a ferry honest man whateffer, and he would not broke his promise—no, not for all the money in Canada. If you will listen to me, I will tell chust exactly the true story about that debt, to show you what an honest

man my grandfather wass.

"One time Tougal Stewart, him that wass the poy's grandfather that keeps the same store in Cornwall to this day, sold a plough to my grandfather, and my grandfather said he would pay half the plough in October, and the other half whateffer time he felt able to pay the money. Yes, indeed, that wass the very promise my grandfather gave.

"So he wass at Tougal Stewart's store on the first of October early in the morning before the shutters wass taken off, and he paid half chust exactly to keep his word. Then the crop wass ferry pad next year, and the year after that one of his horses wass killed py lightning, and the next year his brother, that wass not rich and had a big family, died, and do you think wass my grandfather to let the family be disgraced without a good funeral? No, indeed. So my grandfather paid for the funeral, and there wass at it plenty of meat and drink for eferypody, as wass the right Hielan' custom those days; and after the funeral my grandfather did not feel chust exactly able to pay the other half for the plough that year either.

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"So, then, Tougal Stewart met my grandfather in Cornwall next day after the funeral, and asked him if he had some money to spare.

"'Wass you in need of help, Mr. Stewart?' says my grandfather, kindly. 'For if it's in any want you are, Tougal,' says my grandfather, 'I will sell the coat off my back, if there is no other way to lend you a loan;' for that wass always the way of my grandfather with all his friends, and a bigger-hearted man there never wass in all Glengarry, or in Stormont, or in Dundas, moreofer.

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"'In want!' says Tougal—'in want, Mr. McTavish!' says he, very high. 'Would you wish to insult a gentleman, and him of the name of Stewart, that's the name of princes of the world?' he said, so he did.

"Seeing Tougal had his temper up, my grandfather spoke softly, being a quiet, peaceable man, and in wonder what he had said to offend Tougal.

"'Mr. Stewart,' says my grandfather, 'it wass not in my mind to anger you whatefer. Only I thought, from your asking me if I had some money, that you might be looking for a wee bit of a loan, as many a gentleman has to do at times, and no shame to him at all,' said my grandfather.

"'A loan?' says Tougal, sneering. 'A loan, is it? Where's your memory, Mr. McTavish? Are you not owing me half the price of the plough you've had these three years?'

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"'And wass you asking me for money for the other half of the plough?' says my grandfather, very astonished.

"'Just that,' says Tougal.

"'Have you no shame or honor in you?' says my grandfather, firing up. 'How could I feel able to pay that now, and me chust yesterday been giving my poor brother a funeral fit for the McTavishes' own grand-nephew, that wass as good chentleman's plood as any Stewart in Glengarry. You saw the expense I wass at, for there you wass, and I thank you for the politeness of coming, Mr. Stewart,' says my grandfather, ending mild, for the anger would never stay in him more than a minute, so kind wass the nature he had.

"'If you can spend money on a funeral like that, you can pay me for my plough,' says Stewart; for with buying and selling he wass become a poor creature, and the heart of a Hielan'man wass half gone out of him, for all he wass so proud of his name of monarchs and kings.

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"My grandfather had a mind to strike him down on the spot, so he often said; but he thought of the time when he hit Hamish Cochrane in anger, and he minded the penances the priest put on him for breaking the silly man's jaw with that blow, so he smothered the heat that wass in him, and turned away in scorn. With that Tougal Stewart went to court, and sued my grandfather, puir mean creature.

"You might think that Judge Jones—him that wass judge in Cornwall before Judge Jarvis that's dead—would do justice. But no, he made it the law that my grandfather must pay at once, though Tougal Stewart could not deny what the bargain wass.

"'Your Honor,' says my grandfather, 'I said I'd pay when I felt able. And do I feel able now? No, I do not,' says he. 'It's a disgrace to Tougal Stewart to ask me, and himself telling you what the bargain wass,' said my grandfather. But Judge Jones said that he must pay, for all that he did not feel able.

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"'I will nefer pay one copper till I feel able,' says my grandfather; 'but I'll keep my Hielan' promise to my dying day, as I always done,' says he.

"And with that the old judge laughed, and said he would have to give judgment. And so he did; and after that Tougal Stewart got out an execution. But not the worth of a handful of oatmeal could the bailiff lay hands on, because my grandfather had chust exactly taken the precaution to give a bill of sale on his gear to his neighbor, Alexander Frazer, that could be trusted to do what wass right after the law play wass over.

"The whole settlement had great contempt for Tougal Stewart's conduct; but he wass a headstrong body, and once he begun to do wrong against my grandfather, he held on, for all that his trade fell away; and finally he had my grandfather arrested for debt, though you'll

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understand, sir, that he was owing Stewart nothing that he ought to pay when he didn't feel able.

"In those times prisoners for debt was taken to jail in Cornwall, and if they had friends to give bail that they would not go beyond the posts that was around the sixteen acres nearest the jail walls, the prisoners could go where they liked on that ground. This was called 'the privilege of the limits.' The limits, you'll understand, wass marked by cedar posts painted white about the size of hitching-posts.

"The whole settlement was ready to go bail for my grandfather if he wanted it, and for the health of him he needed to be in the open air, and so he gave Tuncan-Macdonnell of the Greenfields, and Æneas Macdonald of the Sandfields, for his bail, and he promised, on his Hielan' word of honor, not to go beyond the posts. With that he went where he pleased, only taking care that he never put even the toe of his foot beyond a post, for all that some prisoners of the limits would chump ofer them and back again, or maybe swing round them, holding by their hands.

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"Efery day the neighbors would go into Cornwall to give my grandfather the good word, and they would offer to pay Tougal Stewart for the other half of the plough, only that vexed my grandfather, for he was too proud to borrow, and, of course, every day he felt less and less able to pay on account of him having to hire a man to be doing the spring ploughing and seeding and making the kale-yard.

"All this time, you'll mind, Tougal Stewart had to pay five shillings a week for my grandfather's keep, the law being so that if the debtor swore he had not five pound's worth of property to his name, then the creditor had to pay the five shillings, and, of course, my grandfather had nothing to his name after he gave the bill of sale to Alexander Frazer. A great diversion it was to my grandfather to be reckoning up that if he lived as long as his father, that was hale and strong at ninety-six, Tougal would need to pay five or six hundred pounds for him, and there was only two pound five shillings to be paid on the plough.

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"So it was like that all summer, my grandfather keeping heartsome, with the neighbors coming in so steady to bring him the news of the settlement. There he would sit, just inside one of the posts, for to pass his jokes, and tell what he wished the family to be doing next. This way it might have kept going on for forty years, only it came about that my grandfather's youngest child—him that was my father—fell sick, and seemed like to die.

"Well, when my grandfather heard that bad news, he wass in a terrible way, to be sure, for he would be longing to hold the child in his arms, so that his heart was sore and like to break. Eat he could not, sleep he could not: all night he would be groaning, and all day he would be walking around by the posts, wishing that he had not passed his Hielan' word of honor not to go beyond a post; for he thought how he could have broken out like a chentleman, and gone to see his sick child, if he had stayed inside the jail wall. So it went on three days and three nights pefore the wise thought came into my grandfather's head to show him how he need not go beyond the posts to see his little sick poy. With that he went straight to one of the white cedar posts, and pulled it up out of the hole, and started for home, taking great care to carry it in his hands pefore him, so he would not be beyond it one bit.

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"My grandfather wass not half a mile out of Cornwall, which was only a little place in those days, when two of the turnkeys came after him.

"'Stop, Mr. McTavish,' says the turnkeys.

"'What for would I stop?' says my grandfather.

"'You have broke your bail,' says they.

"'It's a lie for you,' says my grandfather, for his temper flared up for anybody to say he would broke his bail. 'Am I beyond the post?' says my grandfather.

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"With that they run in on him, only that he knocked the two of them over with the post, and went on rejoicing, like an honest man should, at keeping his word and overcoming them that would slander his good name. The only thing pesides thoughts of the child that troubled him was questioning whether he had been strictly right in turning round for to use the post to defend himself in such a way that it was nearer the jail than what he wass. But when he remembered how the jailer never complained of prisoners of the limits chumping ofer the posts, if so they chumped back again in a moment, the trouble went out of his mind.

"Pretty soon after that he met Tuncan Macdonnell of Greenfields, coming into Cornwall with the wagon.

"'And how is this, Glengatchie?' says Tuncan. 'For you were never the man to broke your bail.'

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"Glengatchie, you'll understand, sir, is the name of my grandfather's farm.

"'Never fear, Greenfields,' says my grandfather, 'for I'm not beyond the post.'

"So Greenfields looked at the post, and he looked at my grandfather, and he scratched his head a wee, and he seen it was so; and then he fell into a great admiration entirely.

"'Get in with me, Glengatchie—it's proud I'll be to carry you home;' and he turned his team around. My grandfather did so, taking great care to keep the post in front of him all the time; and that way he reached home. Out comes my grandmother running to embrace him; but she had to



throw her arms around the post and my grandfather's neck at the same time, he was that strict to be within his promise. Pefore going ben the house, he went to the back end of the kale-yard which was farthest from the jail, and there he stuck the post; and then he went back to see his sick child, while all the neighbors that came round was glad to see what a wise thought the saints had put into his mind to save his bail and his promise.

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"So there he stayed a week till my father got well. Of course the constables came after my grandfather, but the settlement would not let the creatures come within a mile of Glengatchie. You might think, sir, that my grandfather would have stayed with his wife and weans, seeing the post was all the time in the kale-yard, and him careful not to go beyond it; but he was putting the settlement to a great deal of trouble day and night to keep the constables off, and he was fearful that they might take the post away, if ever they got to Glengatchie, and give him the name of false, that no McTavish ever had. So Tuncan Greenfields and Æneas Sandfield drove my grandfather back to the jail, him with the post behind him in the wagon, so as he would be between it and the jail. Of course Tougal Stewart tried his best to have the bail declared forfeited; but old Judge Jones only laughed, and said my grandfather was a Hielan' gentleman, with a very nice sense of honor, and that was chust exactly the truth.

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"How did my grandfather get free in the end? Oh, then, that was because of Tougal Stewart being careless—him that thought he knew so much of the law. The law was, you will mind, that Tougal had to pay five shillings a week for keeping my grandfather in the limits. The money wass to be paid efery Monday, and it was to be paid in lawful money of Canada, too. Well, would you belief that Tougal paid in four shillings in silver one Monday, and one shilling in coppers, for he took up the collection in church the day pefore, and it wass not till Tougal had gone away that the jailer saw that one of the coppers was a Brock copper,—a medal, you will understand, made at General Brock's death, and not lawful money of Canada at all. With that the jailer came out to my grandfather.

"'Mr. McTavish,' says he, taking off his hat, 'you are a free man, and I'm glad of it.' Then he told him what Tougal had done.

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"'I hope you will not have any hard feelings toward me, Mr. McTavish,' said the jailer; and a decent man he wass, for all that there wass not a drop of Hielan' blood in him. 'I hope you will not think hard of me for not being hospitable to you, sir,' says he; 'but it's against the rules and regulations for the jailer to be offering the best he can command to the prisoners. Now that you are free, Mr. McTavish,' says the jailer, 'I would be a proud man if Mr. McTavish of Glengatchie would do me the honor of taking supper with me this night. I will be asking your leave to invite some of the gentlemen of the place, if you will say the word, Mr. McTavish,' says he.

"Well, my grandfather could never bear malice, the kind man he was, and he seen how bad the jailer felt, so he consented, and a great company came in, to be sure, to celebrate the occasion.

"Did my grandfather pay the balance on the plough? What for should you suspicion, sir, that my grandfather would refuse his honest debt? Of course he paid for the plough, for the crop was good that fall.

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"'I would be paying you the other half of the plough now, Mr. Stewart,' says my grandfather, coming in when the store was full.

"'Hoich, but you are the honest McTavish!' says Tougal, sneering.

"But my grandfather made no answer to the creature, for he thought it would be unkind to mention how Tougal had paid out six pounds four shillings and eleven pence to keep him in on account of a debt of two pound five that never was due till it was paid."

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## McGRATH'S BAD NIGHT.

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"Come then, childer," said Mrs. McGrath, and took the big iron pot off. They crowded around her, nine of them, the eldest not more than thirteen, the youngest just big enough to hold out his yellow crockery bowl.

"The youngest first," remarked Mrs. McGrath, and ladled out a portion of the boiled corn-meal to each of the deplorable boys and girls. Before they reached the stools from which they had sprung up, or squatted again on the rough floor, they all burned their mouths in tasting the mush too eagerly. Then there they sat, blowing into their bowls, glaring into them, lifting their loaded iron spoons occasionally to taste cautiously, till the mush had somewhat cooled.

Then, *gobble-de-gobble-de-gobble*, it was all gone! Though they had neither sugar, nor milk, nor butter to it, they found it a remarkably excellent sample of mush, and wished only that, in quantity, it had been something more.

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Peter McGrath sat close beside the cooking-stove, holding Number Ten, a girl-baby, who was asleep, and rocking Number Eleven, who was trying to wake up, in the low, unpainted cradle. He never took his eyes off Number Eleven; he could not bear to look around and see the nine devouring the corn-meal so hungrily. Perhaps McGrath could not, and certainly he would not,—he was so obstinate,—have told why he felt so reproached by the scene. He had felt very guilty for

many weeks.

Twenty, yes, a hundred times a day he looked in a dazed way at his big hands, and they reproached him, too, that they had no work.

"Where is our smooth, broad-axe handle?" asked the fingers, "and why do not the wide chips fly?"

He was ashamed, too, every time he rose up, so tall and strong, with nothing to do, and eleven children and his wife next door to starvation; but if he had been asked to describe his feelings, he would merely have growled out angrily something against old John Pontiac. [Pg 47]

"You'll take your sup now, Peter?" asked Mrs. McGrath, offering him the biggest of the yellow bowls. He looked up then, first at her forlorn face, then at the pot. Number Nine was diligently scraping off some streaks of mush that had run down the outside; Numbers Eight, Seven, Six, and Five were looking respectfully into the pot; Numbers Four, Three, Two, and One were watching the pot, the steaming bowl, and their father at the same time. Peter McGrath was very hungry.

"Yourself had better eat, Mary Ann," he said. "I'll be having mine after it's cooler."

Mrs. McGrath dipped more than a third of the bowlful back into the pot, and ate the rest with much satisfaction. The numerals watched her anxiously but resignedly.

"Sure it'll be cold entirely, Peter dear," she said, "and the warmth is so comforting. Give me little Norah now, the darlint! and be after eating your supper." [Pg 48]

She had ladled out the last spoonful of mush, and the pot was being scraped inside earnestly by Nine, Eight, Seven, and Six. Peter took the bowl, and looked at his children.

The earlier numbers were observing him with peculiar sympathy, putting themselves in his place, as it were, possessing the bowl in imagination; the others now moved their spoons absent-mindedly around in the pot, brought them empty to their mouths, mechanically, now and again, sucked them more or less, and still stared steadily at their father.

His inner walls felt glued together, yet indescribably hollow; the smell of the mush went up into his nostrils, and pungently provoked his palate and throat. He was famishing.

"Troth, then, Mary Ann," he said, "there's no hunger in me to-night. Sure, I wish the childer wouldn't leave me the trouble of eating it. Come, then, all of ye!" [Pg 49]

The nine came promptly to his call. There were just twenty-two large spoonfuls in the bowl; each child received two; the remaining four went to the four youngest. Then the bowl was skilfully scraped by Number Nine, after which Number Seven took it, whirled a cup of water artfully round its interior, and with this put a fine finish on his meal.

Peter McGrath then searched thoughtfully in his trousers pockets, turning their corners up, getting pinches of tobacco dust out of their remotest recesses; he put his blouse pocket through a similar process. He found no pockets in his well-patched overcoat when he took it down, but he pursued the dust into its lining, and separated it carefully from little dabs of wool. Then he put the collection into an extremely old black clay pipe, lifted a coal in with his fingers, and took his supper.

It would be absurd to assert that, on this continent, a strong man could be so poor as Peter, unless he had done something very wrong or very foolish. Peter McGrath was, in truth, out of work because he had committed an outrage on economics. He had been guilty of the enormous error of misunderstanding, and trying to set at naught in his own person, the immutable law of supply and demand. [Pg 50]

Fancying that a first-class hewer in a timber shanty had an inalienable right to receive at least thirty dollars a month, when the demand was only strong enough to yield him twenty-two dollars a month, Peter had refused to engage at the beginning of the winter.

"Now, Mr. McGrath, you're making a mistake," said his usual employer, old John Pontiac. "I'm offering you the best wages going, mind that. There's mighty little squared timber coming out this winter."

"I'm ready and willing to work, boss, but I'm fit to arn thirty dollars, surely."

"So you are, so you are, in good times, neighbor, and I'd be glad if men's wages were forty. That could only be with trade active, and a fine season for all of us; but I couldn't take out a raft this winter, and pay what you ask." [Pg 51]

"I'd work extra hard. I'm not afeard of work."

"Not you, Peter. There never was a lazy bone in your body. Don't I know that well? But look, now: if I was to pay you thirty, I should have to pay all the other hewers thirty; and that's not all. Scorers and teamsters and road-cutters are used to getting wages in proportion to hewers. Why, it would cost me a thousand dollars a month to give you thirty! Go along, now, that's a good fellow, and tell your wife that you've hired with me."

But Peter did not go back. "I'm bound to have my rights, so I am," he said sulkily to Mary Ann when he reached the cabin. "The old boss is getting too hard like, and set on money. Twenty-two

dollars! No! I'll go in to Stambrook and hire."

Mary Ann knew that she might as well try to convince a saw-log that its proper course was upstream, as to protest against Peter's obstinacy. Moreover, she did think the offered wages very low, and had some hope he might better himself; but when he came back from Stambrook, she saw trouble ahead. He did not tell her that there, where his merits were not known, he had been offered only twenty dollars, but she surmised his disappointment.

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"You'd better be after seeing the boss again, maybe, Peter dear," she said timidly.

"Not a step," he answered. "The boss'll be after me in a few days, you'll see." But there he was mistaken, for all the gangs were full.

After that Peter McGrath tramped far and wide, to many a backwoods hamlet, looking vainly for a job at any wages. The season was the worst ever known on the river, and before January the shanties were discharging men, so threatening was the outlook for lumbermen, and so glutted with timber the markets of the world.

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Peter's conscience accused him every hour, but he was too stubborn to go back to John Pontiac. Indeed, he soon got it into his stupid head that the old boss was responsible for his misfortunes, and he consequently came to hate Mr. Pontiac very bitterly.

After supping on his pipeful of tobacco-dust, Peter sat, straight-backed, leaning elbows on knees and chin on hands, wondering what on earth was to become of them all next day. For a man out of work there was not a dollar of credit at the little village store; and work! why, there was only one kind of work at which money could be earned in that district in the winter.

When his wife took Number Eleven's cradle into the other room, she heard him, through the thin partition of upright boards, panted over with newspapers, moving round in the dim red flickering fire-light from the stove-grating.

The children were all asleep, or pretending it; Number Ten in the big straw bed, where she lay always between her parents; Number Eleven in her cradle beside; Nine crosswise at the foot; Eight, Seven, Six, Five, and Four in the other bed; One, Two, and Three curled up, without taking off their miserable garments, on the "locks" of straw beside the kitchen stove.

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Mary Ann knew very well what Peter was moving round for. She heard him groan, so low that he did not know he groaned, when he lifted off the cover of the meal barrel, and could feel nothing whatever therein. She had actually beaten the meal out of the cracks to make that last pot of mush. He knew that all the fish he had salted down in the summer were gone, that the flour was all out, that the last morsel of the pig had been eaten up long ago; but he went to each of the barrels as though he could not realize that there was really nothing left. There were four of those low groans.

"O God, help him! do help him! please do!" she kept saying to herself. Somehow, all her sufferings and the children's were light to her, in comparison, as she listened to that big, taciturn man groan, and him sore with the hunger.

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When at last she came out, Peter was not there. He had gone out silently, so silently that she wondered, and was scared. She opened the door very softly, and there he was, leaning on the rail fence between their little rocky plot and the great river. She closed the door softly, and sat down.

There was a wide steaming space in the river, where the current ran too swiftly for any ice to form. Peter gazed on it for a long while. The mist had a friendly look; he was soon reminded of the steam from an immense bowl of mush! It vexed him. He looked up at the moon. The moon was certainly mocking him; dashing through light clouds, then jumping into a wide, clear space, where it soon became motionless, and mocked him steadily.

He had never known old John Pontiac to jeer any one, but there was his face in that moon,—Peter made it out quite clearly. He looked up the road to where he could see, on the hill half a mile distant, the shimmer of John Pontiac's big tin-roofed house. He thought he could make out the outlines of all the buildings,—he knew them so well,—the big barn, the stable, the smoke-house, the store-house for shanty supplies.

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Pork barrels, flour barrels, herring kegs, syrup kegs, sides of frozen beef, hams and flitches of bacon in the smoke-house, bags of beans, chests of tea,—he had a vision of them all! Teamsters going off to the woods daily with provisions, the supply apparently inexhaustible.

And John Pontiac had refused to pay him fair wages!

Peter in exasperation shook his big fist at the moon; it mocked him worse than ever. Then out went his gaze to the space of mist; it was still more painfully like mush steam. His pigsty was empty, except of snow; it made him think again of the empty barrels in the cabin.

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The children empty too, or would be to-morrow,—as empty as he felt that minute. How dumbly the elder ones would reproach him! and what would comfort the younger ones crying with hunger?

Peter looked again up the hill, through the walls of the store-house. He was dreadfully hungry.

"John! John!" Mrs. Pontiac jogged her husband. "John, wake up! there's somebody trying to get into the smoke-house."

"Eh—ugh—ah! I'm 'sleep—ugh." He relapsed again.

"John! John! wake up! There *is* somebody!"

"What—ugh—eh—what you say?"

"There's somebody getting into the smoke-house."

"Well, there's not much there."

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"There's ever so much bacon and ham. Then there's the store-house open."

"Oh, I guess there's nobody."

"But there is, I'm sure. You must get up!"

They both got up and looked out of the window. The snow-drifts, the paths through them, the store-house, the smoke-house, and the other white-washed out-buildings could be seen as clearly as in broad day. The smoke-house door was open!

Old John Pontiac was one of the kindest souls that ever inhabited a body, but this was a little too much. Still he was sorry for the man, no matter who, in that smoke-house,—some Indian probably. He must be caught and dealt with firmly; but he did not want the man to be too much hurt.

He put on his clothes and sallied forth. He reached the smoke-house; there was no one in it; there was a gap, though, where two long flitches of bacon *had* been!

John Pontiac's wife saw him go over to the store-house, the door of which was open too. He looked in, then stopped, and started back as if in horror. Two flitches tied together with a rope were on the floor, and inside was a man filling a bag with flour from a barrel.

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"Well, well! this is a terrible thing," said old John Pontiac to himself, shrinking around a corner. "Peter McGrath! Oh, my! oh, my!"

He became hot all over, as if he had done something disgraceful himself. There was nobody that he respected more than that pigheaded Peter. What to do? He must punish him of course; but how? Jail—for him with eleven children! "Oh, my! oh, my!" Old John wished he had not been awakened to see this terrible downfall.

"It will never do to let him go off with it," he said to himself after a little reflection. "I'll put him so that he'll know better another time."

Peter McGrath, as he entered the store-house had felt that bacon heavier than the heaviest end of the biggest stick of timber he had ever helped to cant. He felt guilty, sneaking, disgraced; he felt that the literal Devil had first tempted him near the house, then all suddenly—with his own hunger pangs and thoughts of his starving family—swept him into the smoke-house to steal. But he had consented to do it; he had said he would take flour too,—and he would, he was so obstinate! And withal, he hated old John Pontiac worse than ever; for now he accused him of being the cause of his coming to this.

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Then all of a sudden he met the face of Pontiac looking in at the door.

Peter sprang back; he saw Stambrook jail—he saw his eleven children and his wife—he felt himself a detected felon, and that was worst of all.

"Well, Peter, you'd ought to have come right in," were the words that came to his ears, in John Pontiac's heartiest voice. "The missis would have been glad to see you. We did go to bed a bit early, but there wouldn't have been any harm in an old neighbor like you waking us up. Not a word of that—hold on! listen to me. It would be a pity if old friends like you and me, Peter, couldn't help one another to a trifling loan of provisions without making a fuss over it." And old John, taking up the scoop, went on filling the bag as if that were a matter of course.

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Peter did not speak; he could not.

"I was going round to your place to-morrow," resumed John, cheerfully, "to see if I couldn't hire you again. There's a job of hewing for you in the Conlonge shanty,—a man gone off sick. But I can't give more 'n twenty-two, or say twenty-three, seeing you're an old neighbor. What do you say?"

Peter still said nothing; he was choking.

"You had better have a bit of something more than bacon and flour, Peter," he went on, "and I'll give you a hand to carry the truck home. I guess your wife won't mind seeing me with you; then she'll know that you've taken a job with me again, you see. Come along and give me a hand to hitch the mare up. I'll drive you down."

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"Ah—ah—Boss—Boss!" spoke Peter then, with terrible gasps between. "Boss—O my God, Mr. Pontiac—I can't never look you in the face again!"

"Peter McGrath—old neighbor,"—and John Pontiac laid his hand on the shaking shoulder,—"

guess I know all about it; I guess I do. Sometimes a man is driven he don't know how. Now we will say no more about it. I'll load up, and you come right along with me. And mind, I'll do the talking to your wife."

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Mary Ann McGrath was in a terrible frame of mind. What had become of Peter?

She had gone out to look down the road, and had been recalled by Number Eleven's crying. Number Ten then chimed in; Nine, too, awoke, and determined to resume his privileges as an infant. One after another they got up and huddled around her—craving, craving—all but the three eldest, who had been well practised in the stoical philosophy by the gradual decrease of their rations. But these bounced up suddenly at the sound of a grand jangle of bells.

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Could it be? Mr. Pontiac they had no doubt about; but was that real bacon that he laid on the kitchen table? Then a side of beef, a can of tea; next a bag of flour, and again an actual keg of sirup. Why, this was almost incredible! And, last, he came in with an immense round loaf of bread! The children gathered about it; old John almost sickened with sorrow for them, and hurrying out his jackknife, passed big hunks around.

"Well, now, Mrs. McGrath," he said during these operations, "I don't hardly take it kindly of you and Peter not to have come up to an old neighbor's house before this for a bit of a loan. It's well I met Peter to-night. Maybe he'd never have told me your troubles—not but what I blame myself for not suspecting how it was a bit sooner. I just made him take a little loan for the present. No, no; don't be talking like that! Charity! tut! tut! it's just an advance of wages. I've got a job for Peter; he'll be on pay to-morrow again."

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At that Mary Ann burst out crying again. "Oh, God bless you, Mr. Pontiac! it's a kind man you are! May the saints be about your bed!"

With that she ran out to Peter, who still stood by the sleigh; she put the baby in his arms, and clinging to her husband's shoulder, cried more and more.

And what did obstinate Peter McGrath do? Why, he cried, too, with gasps and groans that seemed almost to kill him.

"Go in," he said; "go in, Mary Ann—go in—and kiss—the feet of him. Yes—and the boards—he stands on. You don't know what he's done—for me. It's broke I am—the bad heart of me—broke entirely—with the goodness of him. May the heavens be his bed!"

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"Now, Mrs. McGrath," cried old John, "never you mind Peter; he's a bit light-headed to-night. Come away in and get a bite for him. I'd like a dish of tea myself before I go home." Didn't that touch on her Irish hospitality bring her in quickly!

"Mind you this, Peter," said the old man, going out then, "don't you be troubling your wife with any little secrets about to-night; that's between you and me. That's all I ask of you."

Thus it comes about that to this day, when Peter McGrath's fifteen children have helped him to become a very prosperous farmer, his wife does not quite understand the depth of worship with which he speaks of old John Pontiac.

Mrs. Pontiac never knew the story of the night.

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"Never mind who it was, Jane," John said, turning out the light, on returning to bed, "except this,—it was a neighbor in sore trouble."

"Stealing—and you helped him! Well, John, such a man as you are!"

"Jane, I don't ever rightly know what kind of a man I might be, suppose hunger was cruel on me, and on you, and all of us! Let us bless God that he's saved us from the terriblest temptations, and thank him most especially when he inclines our hearts—inclines our hearts—that's all."

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## GREAT GODFREY'S LAMENT.

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"Hark to Angus! Man, his heart will be sore the night! In five years I have not heard him playing 'Great Godfrey's Lament,'" said old Alexander McTavish, as with him I was sitting of a June evening, at sundown, under a wide apple-tree of his orchard-lawn.

When the sweet song-sparrows of the Ottawa valley had ceased their plaintive strains, Angus McNeil began on his violin. This night, instead of "Tullochgorum" or "Roy's Wife" or "The March of the McNeils," or any merry strathspey, he crept into an unusual movement, and from a distance came the notes of an exceeding strange strain blent with the meditative murmur of the Rataplan Rapids.

I am not well enough acquainted with musical terms to tell the method of that composition in which the wail of a Highland coronach seemed mingled with such mournful crooning as I had heard often from Indian voyageurs north of Lake Superior. Perhaps that fancy sprang from my

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knowledge that Angus McNeil's father had been a younger son of the chief of the McNeil clan, and his mother a daughter of the greatest man of the Cree nation.

"Ay, but Angus is wae," sighed old McTavish. "What will he be seeing the now? It was the night before his wife died that he played yon last. Come, we will go up the road. He does be liking to see the people gather to listen."

We walked, maybe three hundred yards, and stood leaning against the ruined picket-fence that surrounds the great stone house built by Hector McNeil, the father of Angus, when he retired from his position as one of the "Big Bourgeois" of the famous Northwest Fur Trading Company.

The huge square structure of four stories and a basement is divided, above the ground floor, into eight suites, some of four, and some of five rooms. In these suites the fur-trader, whose ideas were all patriarchal, had designed that he and his Indian wife, with his seven sons and their future families, should live to the end of his days and theirs. That was a dream at the time when his boys were all under nine years old, and Godfrey little more than a baby in arms.

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The ground-floor is divided by a hall twenty-five feet wide into two long chambers, one intended to serve as a dining-hall for the multitude of descendants that Hector expected to see round his old age, the other as a withdrawing-room for himself and his wife, or for festive occasions. In this mansion Angus McNeil now dwelt alone.

He sat out that evening on a balcony at the rear of the hall, whence he could overlook the McTavish place and the hamlet that extends a quarter of a mile further down the Ottawa's north shore. His right side was toward the large group of French-Canadian people who had gathered to hear him play. Though he was sitting, I could make out that his was a gigantic figure.

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"Ay—it will be just exactly 'Great Godfrey's Lament,'" McTavish whispered. "Weel do I mind him playing yon many's the night after Godfrey was laid in the mools. Then he played it no more till before his ain wife died. What is he seeing now? Man, it's weel kenned he has the second sight at times. Maybe he sees the pit digging for himself. He's the last of them."

"Who was Great Godfrey?" I asked, rather loudly.

Angus McNeil instantly cut short the "Lament," rose from his chair, and faced us.

"Aleck McTavish, who have you with you?" he called imperiously.

"My young cousin from the city, Mr. McNeil," said McTavish, with deference.

"Bring him in. I wish to spoke with you, Aleck McTavish. The young man that is not acquaint with the name of Great Godfrey McNeil can come with you. I will be at the great door."

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"It's strange-like," said McTavish, as we went to the upper gate. "He has not asked me inside for near five years. I'm feared his wits is disordered, by his way of speaking. Mind what you say. Great Godfrey was most like a god to Angus."

When Angus McNeil met us at the front door I saw he was verily a giant. Indeed, he was a wee bit more than six and a half feet tall when he stood up straight. Now he was stooped a little, not with age, but with consumption,—the disease most fatal to men of mixed white and Indian blood. His face was dark brown, his features of the Indian cast, but his black hair had not the Indian lankness. It curled tightly round his grand head.

Without a word he beckoned us on into the vast withdrawing room. Without a word he seated himself beside a large oaken centre-table, and motioned us to sit opposite.

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Before he broke silence, I saw that the windows of that great chamber were hung with faded red damask; that the heads of many a bull moose, buck, bear, and wolf grinned among guns and swords and claymores from its walls; that charred logs, fully fifteen feet long, remained in the fireplace from the last winter's burning; that there were three dim portraits in oil over the mantel; that the room contained much frayed furniture, once sumptuous of red velvet; and that many skins of wild beasts lay strewn over a hard-wood floor whose edges still retained their polish and faintly gleamed in rays from the red west.

That light was enough to show that two of the oil paintings must be those of Hector McNeil and his Indian wife. Between these hung one of a singularly handsome youth with yellow hair.

"Here my father lay dead," cried Angus McNeil, suddenly striking the table. He stared at us silently for many seconds, then again struck the table with the side of his clenched fist. "He lay here dead on this table—yes! It was Godfrey that straked him out all alone on this table. You mind Great Godfrey, Aleck McTavish."

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"Well I do, Mr. McNeil; and your mother yonder,—a grand lady she was." McTavish spoke with curious humility, seeming wishful, I thought, to comfort McNeil's sorrow by exciting his pride.

"Ay—they'll tell hereafter that she was just exactly a squaw," cried the big man, angrily. "But grand she was, and a great lady, and a proud. Oh, man, man! but they were proud, my father and my Indian mother. And Godfrey was the pride of the hearts of them both. No wonder; but it was sore on the rest of us after they took him apart from our ways."

Aleck McTavish spoke not a word, and big Angus, after a long pause, went on as if almost unconscious of our presence:—

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"White was Godfrey, and rosy of the cheek like my father; and the blue eyes of him would match the sky when you'll be seeing it up through a blazing maple on a clear day of October. Tall, and straight and grand was Godfrey, my brother. What was the thing Godfrey could not do? The songs of him hushed the singing-birds on the tree, and the fiddle he would play to take the soul out of your body. There was no white one among us till he was born.

"The rest of us all were just Indians—ay, Indians, Aleck McTavish. Brown we were, and the desire of us was all for the woods and the river. Godfrey had white sense like my father, and often we saw the same look in his eyes. My God, but we feared our father!"

Angus paused to cough. After the fit he sat silent for some minutes. The voice of the great rapid seemed to fill the room. When he spoke again, he stared past our seat with fixed, dilated eyes, as if tranced by a vision. [Pg 75]

"Godfrey, Godfrey—you hear! Godfrey, the six of us would go over the falls and not think twice of it, if it would please you, when you were little. Oich, the joy we had in the white skin of you, and the fine ways, till my father and mother saw we were just making an Indian of you, like ourselves! So they took you away; ay, and many's the day the six of us went to the woods and the river, missing you sore. It's then you began to look on us with that look that we could not see was different from the look we feared in the blue eyes of our father. Oh, but we feared him, Godfrey! And the time went by, and we feared and we hated you that seemed lifted up above your Indian brothers!"

"Oich, the masters they got to teach him!" said Angus, addressing himself again to my cousin. "In the Latin and the Greek they trained him. History books he read, and stories in song. Ay, and the manners of Godfrey! Well might the whole pride of my father and mother be on their one white son. A grand young gentleman was Godfrey,—Great Godfrey we called him, when he was eighteen. [Pg 76]

"The fine, rich people that would come up in bateaux from Montreal to visit my father had the smile and the kind word for Godfrey; but they looked upon us with the eyes of the white man for the Indian. And that look we were more and more sure was growing harder in Godfrey's eyes. So we looked back at him with the eyes of the wolf that stares at the bull moose, and is fierce to pull him down, but dares not try, for the moose is too great and lordly.

"Mind you, Aleck McTavish, for all we hated Godfrey when we thought he would be looking at us like strange Indians—for all that, yet we were proud of him that he was our own brother. Well, we minded how he was all like one with us when he was little; and in the calm looks of him, and the white skin, and the yellow hair, and the grandeur of him, we had pride, do you understand? Ay, and in the strength of him we were glad. Would we not sit still and pleased when it was the talk how he could run quicker than the best, and jump higher than his head—ay, would we! Man, there was none could compare in strength with Great Godfrey, the youngest of us all! [Pg 77]

"He and my father and mother more and more lived by themselves in this room. Yonder room across the hall was left to us six Indians. No manners, no learning had we; we were no fit company for Godfrey. My mother was like she was wilder with love of Godfrey the more he grew and the grander, and never a word for days and weeks together did she give to us. It was Godfrey this, and Godfrey that, and all her thought was Godfrey!

"Most of all we hated him when she was lying dead here on this table. We six in the other room could hear Godfrey and my father groan and sigh. We would step softly to the door and listen to them kissing her that was dead,—them white, and she Indian like ourselves,—and us not daring to go in for the fear of the eyes of our father. So the soreness was in our hearts so cruel hard that we would not go in till the last, for all their asking. My God, my God, Aleck McTavish, if you saw her! she seemed smiling like at Godfrey, and she looked like him then, for all she was brown as November oak-leaves, and he white that day as the froth on the rapid. [Pg 78]

"That put us farther from Godfrey than before. And farther yet we were from him after, when he and my father would be walking up and down, up and down, arm in arm, up and down the lawn in the evenings. They would be talking about books, and the great McNeils in Scotland. The six of us knew we were McNeils, for all we were Indians, and we would listen to the talk of the great pride and the great deeds of the McNeils that was our own kin. We would be drinking the whiskey if we had it, and saying: 'Godfrey to be the only McNeil! Godfrey to take all the pride of the name of us!' Oh, man, man! but we hated Godfrey sore." [Pg 79]

Big Angus paused long, and I seemed to see clearly the two fair-haired, tall men walking arm in arm on the lawn in the twilight, as if unconscious or careless of being watched and overheard by six sore-hearted kinsmen.

"You'll mind when my father was thrown from his horse and carried into this room, Aleck McTavish? Ay, well you do. But you nor no other living man but me knows what came about the night that he died.

"Godfrey was alone with him. The six of us were in yon room. Drink we had, but cautious we were with it, for there was a deed to be done that would need all our senses. We sat in a row on the floor—we were Indians—it was our wigwam—we sat on the floor to be against the ways of them two. Godfrey was in here across the hall from us; alone he was with our white father. He would be chief over us by the will, no doubt,—and if Godfrey lived through that night it would be strange. [Pg 80]

"We were cautious with the whiskey, I told you before. Not a sound could we hear of Godfrey or of my father. Only the rapid, calling and calling,—I mind it well that night. Ay, and well I mind the striking of the great clock,—tick, tick, tick, tick, tick,—I listened and I dreamed on it till I doubted but it was the beating of my father's heart.

"Ten o'clock was gone by, and eleven was near. How many of us sat sleeping I know not; but I woke up with a start, and there was Great Godfrey, with a candle in his hand, looking down strange at us, and us looking up strange at him.

"'He is dead,' Godfrey said.

"We said nothing.

"'Father died two hours ago,' Godfrey said.

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"We said nothing.

"'Our father is white,—he is very white,' Godfrey said, and he trembled. 'Our mother was brown when she was dead.'

"Godfrey's voice was wild.

"'Come, brothers, and see how white is our father,' Godfrey said.

"No one of us moved.

"'Won't you come? In God's name, come,' said Godfrey. 'Oich—but it is very strange! I have looked in his face so long that now I do not know him for my father. He is like no kin to me, lying there. I am alone, alone.'

"Godfrey wailed in a manner. It made me ashamed to hear his voice like that—him that looked like my father that was always silent as a sword—him that was the true McNeil.

"'You look at me, and your eyes are the eyes of my mother,' says Godfrey, staring wilder. 'What are you doing here, all so still? Drinking the whiskey? I am the same as you. I am your brother. I will sit with you, and if you drink the whiskey, I will drink the whiskey, too.'

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"Aleck McTavish! with that he sat down on the floor in the dirt and litter beside Donald, that was oldest of us all.

"'Give me the bottle,' he said. 'I am as much Indian as you, brothers. What you do I will do, as I did when I was little, long ago.'

"To see him sit down in his best,—all his learning and his grand manners as if forgotten,—man, it was like as if our father himself was turned Indian, and was low in the dirt!

"What was in the heart of Donald I don't know, but he lifted the bottle and smashed it down on the floor.

"'God in heaven! what's to become of the McNeils! You that was the credit of the family, Godfrey!' says Donald with a groan.

"At that Great Godfrey jumped to his feet like he was come awake.

"'You're fitter to be the head of the McNeils than I am, Donald,' says he; and with that the tears broke out of his eyes, and he cast himself into Donald's arms. Well, with that we all began to cry as if our hearts would break. I threw myself down on the floor at Godfrey's feet, and put my arms round his knees the same as I'd lift him up when he was little. There I cried, and we all cried around him, and after a bit I said:—

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"'Brothers, this was what was in the mind of Godfrey. He was all alone in yonder. We are his brothers, and his heart warmed to us, and he said to himself, it was better to be like us than to be alone, and he thought if he came and sat down and drank the whiskey with us, he would be our brother again, and not be any more alone.'

"'Ay, Angus, Angus, but how did you know that?' says Godfrey, crying; and he put his arms round my neck, and lifted me up till we were breast to breast. With that we all put our arms some way round one another and Godfrey, and there we stood sighing and swaying and sobbing a long time, and no man saying a word.

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"'Oh, man, Godfrey dear, but our father is gone, and who can talk with you now about the Latin, and the history books, and the great McNeils—and our mother that's gone?' says Donald; and the thought of it was such pity that our hearts seemed like to break.

"But Godfrey said: 'We will talk together like brothers. If it shames you for me to be like you, then I will teach you all they taught me, and we will all be like our white father.'

"So we all agreed to have it so, if he would tell us what to do. After that we came in here with Godfrey, and we stood looking at my father's white face. Godfrey all alone had straked him out on this table, with the silver-pieces on the eyes that we had feared. But the silver we did not fear. Maybe you will not understand it, Aleck McTavish, but our father never seemed such close kin to us as when we would look at him dead, and at Godfrey, that was the picture of him, living and kind.

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"After that you know what happened yourself."

"Well I do, Mr. McNeil. It was Great Godfrey that was the father to you all," said my cousin.

"Just that, Aleck McTavish. All that he had was ours to use as we would,—his land, money, horses, this room, his learning. Some of us could learn one thing and some of us could learn another, and some could learn nothing, not even how to behave. What I could learn was the playing of the fiddle. Many's the hour Godfrey would play with me while the rest were all happy around.

"In great content we lived like brothers, and proud to see Godfrey as white and fine, and grand as the best gentleman that ever came up to visit him out of Montreal. Ay, in great content we lived all together till the consumption came on Donald, and he was gone. Then it came and came back, and came back again, till Hector was gone, and Ranald was gone, and in ten years' time only Godfrey and I were left. Then both of us married, as you know. But our children died as fast as they were born, almost,—for the curse seemed on us. Then his wife died, and Godfrey sighed and sighed ever after that.

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"One night I was sleeping with the door of my room open, so I could hear if Godfrey needed my help. The cough was on him then. Out of a dream of him looking at my father's white face I woke and went to his bed. He was not there at all.

"My heart went cold with fear, for I heard the rapid very clear, like the nights they all died. Then I heard the music begin down stairs, here in this chamber where they were all laid out dead,—right here on this table where I will soon lie like the rest. I leave it to you to see it done, Aleck McTavish, for you are a Highlandman by blood. It was that I wanted to say to you when I called you in. I have seen myself in my coffin three nights. Nay, say nothing; you will see.

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"Hearing the music that night, down I came softly. Here sat Godfrey, and the kindest look was on his face that ever I saw. He had his fiddle in his hand, and he played about all our lives.

"He played about how we all came down from the North in the big canoe with my father and mother, when we were little children and him a baby. He played of the rapids we passed over, and of the rustling of the poplar-trees and the purr of the pines. He played till the river you hear now was in the fiddle, with the sound of our paddles, and the fish jumping for flies. He played about the long winters when we were young, so that the snow of those winters seemed falling again. The ringing of our skates on the ice I could hear in the fiddle. He played through all our lives when we were young and going in the woods yonder together—and then it was the sore lament began!

"It was like as if he played how they kept him away from his brothers, and him at his books thinking of them in the woods, and him hearing the partridges' drumming, and the squirrels' chatter, and all the little birds singing and singing. Oich, man, but there's no words for the sadness of it!"

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Old Angus ceased to speak as he took his violin from the table and struck into the middle of "Great Godfrey's Lament." As he played, his wide eyes looked past us, and the tears streamed down his brown cheeks. When the woful strain ended, he said, staring past us: "Ay, Godfrey, you were always our brother."

Then he put his face down in his big brown hands, and we left him without another word.

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## THE RED-HEADED WINDEGO.

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Big Baptiste Seguin, on snow-shoes nearly six feet long, strode mightily out of the forest, and gazed across the treeless valley ahead.

"Hooraw! No choppin' for two mile!" he shouted.

"Hooraw! Bully! Hi-yi!" yelled the axemen, Pierre, "Jawunny," and "Frawce," two hundred yards behind. Their cries were taken up by the two chain-bearers still farther back.

"Is it a lake, Baptiste?" cried Tom Dunscombe, the young surveyor, as he hurried forward through balsams that edged the woods and concealed the open space from those among the trees.

"No, seh; only a beaver meddy."

"Clean?"

"Clean! Yessch! Clean 's your face. Hain't no tree for two mile if de line is go right."

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"Good! We shall make seven miles to-day," said Tom, as he came forward with immense strides, carrying a compass and Jacob's-staff. Behind him the axemen slashed along, striking white slivers from the pink and scaly columns of red pines that shot up a hundred and twenty feet without a branch. If any underbrush grew there, it was beneath the eight-feet-deep February snow, so that one could see far away down a multitude of vaulted, converging aisles.

Our young surveyor took no thought of the beauty and majesty of the forest he was leaving. His

thoughts and those of his men were set solely on getting ahead; for all hands had been promised double pay for their whole winter, in case they should succeed in running a line round the disputed Moose Lake timber berth before the tenth of April.

Their success would secure the claim of their employer, Old Dan McEachran, whereas their failure would submit him perhaps to the loss of the limit, and certainly to a costly lawsuit with "Old Rory" Carmichael, another potentate of the Upper Ottawa. [Pg 91]

At least six weeks more of fair snow-shoeing would be needed to "blaze" out the limit, even if the unknown country before them should turn out to be less broken by cedar swamps and high precipices than they feared. A few days' thaw with rain would make slush of the eight feet of snow, and compel the party either to keep in camp, or risk *mal de raquette*,—strain of legs by heavy snow-shoeing. So they were in great haste to make the best of fine weather.

Tom thrust his Jacob's-staff into the snow, set the compass sights to the right bearing, looked through them, and stood by to let Big Baptiste get a course along the line ahead. Baptiste's duty was to walk straight for some selected object far away on the line. In woodland the axemen "blazed" trees on both sides of his snow-shoe track. [Pg 92]

Baptiste was as expert at his job as any Indian, and indeed he looked as if he had a streak of Iroquois in his veins. So did "Frawce," "Jawunny," and all their comrades of the party.

"The three pines will do," said Tom, as Baptiste crouched.

"Good luck to-day for sure!" cried Baptiste, rising with his eyes fixed on three pines in the foreground of the distant timbered ridge. He saw that the line did indeed run clear of trees for two miles along one side of the long, narrow beaver meadow or swale.

Baptiste drew a deep breath, and grinned agreeably at Tom Dunscombe.

"De boys will look like dey's all got de double pay in dey's pocket when dey's see *dis* open," said Baptiste, and started for the three pines as straight as a bee.

Tom waited to get from the chainmen the distance to the edge of the wood. They came on the heels of the axemen, and all capered on their snow-shoes to see so long a space free from cutting. [Pg 93]

It was now two o'clock; they had marched with forty pound or "light" packs since daylight, lurching on cold pork and hard-tack as they worked; they had slept cold for weeks on brush under an open tent pitched over a hole in the snow; they must live this life of hardship and huge work for six weeks longer, but they hoped to get twice their usual eighty-cents-a-day pay, and so their hearts were light and jolly.

But Big Baptiste, now two hundred yards in advance, swinging along in full view of the party, stopped with a scared cry. They saw him look to the left and to the right, and over his shoulder behind, like a man who expects mortal attack from a near but unknown quarter.

"What's the matter?" shouted Tom.

Baptiste went forward a few steps, hesitated, stopped, turned, and fairly ran back toward the party. As he came he continually turned his head from side to side as if expecting to see some dreadful thing following. [Pg 94]

The men behind Tom stopped. Their faces were blanched. They looked, too, from side to side.

"Halt, Mr. Tom, halt! Oh, *monjee*, M'sieu, stop!" said Jawunny.

Tom looked round at his men, amazed at their faces of mysterious terror.

"What on earth has happened?" cried he.

Instead of answering, the men simply pointed to Big Baptiste, who was soon within twenty yards.

"What is the trouble, Baptiste?" asked Tom.

Baptiste's face was the hue of death. As he spoke he shuddered:—

"*Monjee*, Mr. Tom, we'll got for stop de job!"

"Stop the job! Are you crazy?"

"If you'll not b'lieve what I told, den you go'n' see for you'se'f."

"What is it?" [Pg 95]

"De track, seh."

"What track? Wolves?"

"If it was only wolfs!"

"Confound you! can't you say what it is?"

"Eet's de—It ain't safe for told its name out loud, for dass de way it come—if it's call by its name!"

"Windego, eh?" said Tom, laughing.

"I'll know its track jus' as quick 's I see it."

"Do you mean you have seen a Windego track?"

"*Monjee*, seh, *don't* say its name! Let us go back," said Jawunny. "Baptiste was at Madores' shanty with us when it took Hermidas Dubois."

"Yesseh. That's de way I'll come for know de track soon 's I see it," said Baptiste. "Before den I mos' don' b'lieve dere was any of it. But ain't it take Hermidas Dubois only last New Year's?"

"That was all nonsense about Dubois. I'll bet it was a joke to scare you all."

"Who 's kill a man for a joke?" said Baptiste.

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"Did you see Hermidas Dubois killed? Did you see him dead? No! I heard all about it. All you know is that he went away on New Year's morning, when the rest of the men were too scared to leave the shanty, because some one said there was a Windego track outside."

"Hermidas never come back!"

"I'll bet he went away home. You'll find him at Saint Agathe in the spring. You can't be such fools as to believe in Windegos."

"Don't you say dat name some more!" yelled Big Baptiste, now fierce with fright. "Hain't I just seen de track? I'm go'n' back, me, if I don't get a copper of pay for de whole winter!"

"Wait a little now, Baptiste," said Tom, alarmed lest his party should desert him and the job. "I'll soon find out what's at the bottom of the track."

"Dere's blood at de bottom—I seen it!" said Baptiste.

"Well, you wait till I go and see it."

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"No! I go back, me," said Baptiste, and started up the slope with the others at his heels.

"Halt! Stop there! Halt, you fools! Don't you understand that if there was any such monster it would as easily catch you in one place as another?"

The men went on. Tom took another tone.

"Boys, look here! I say, are you going to desert me like cowards?"

"Hain't goin' for desert you, Mr. Tom, no seh!" said Baptiste, halting. "Honly I'll hain' go for cross de track." They all faced round.

Tom was acquainted with a considerable number of Windego superstitions.

"There's no danger unless it's a fresh track," he said. "Perhaps it's an old one."

"Fresh made dis mornin'," said Baptiste.

"Well, wait till I go and see it. You're all right, you know, if you don't cross it. Isn't that the idea?"

"No, seh. Mr. Humphreys told Madore 'bout dat. Eef somebody cross de track and don't never come back, *den* de magic ain't in de track no more. But it's watchin', watchin' all round to catch somebody what cross its track; and if nobody don't cross its track and get caught, den de—de *Ting* mebby get crazy mad, and nobody don' know what it's goin' for do. Kill every person, mebby."

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Tom mused over this information. These men had all been in Madore's shanty; Madore was under Red Dick Humphreys; Red Dick was Rory Carmichael's head foreman; he had sworn to stop the survey by hook or by crook, and this vow had been made after Tom had hired his gang from among those scared away from Madore's shanty. Tom thought he began to understand the situation.

"Just wait a bit, boys," he said, and started.

"You ain't surely go'n' to cross de track?" cried Baptiste.

"Not now, anyway," said Tom. "But wait till I see it."

When he reached the mysterious track it surprised him so greatly that he easily forgave Baptiste's fears.

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If a giant having ill-shaped feet as long as Tom's snow-shoes had passed by in moccasins, the main features of the indentations might have been produced. But the marks were no deeper in the snow than if the huge moccasins had been worn by an ordinary man. They were about five and a half feet apart from centres, a stride that no human legs could take at a walking pace.

Moreover, there were on the snow none of the dragging marks of striding; the gigantic feet had apparently been lifted straight up clear of the snow, and put straight down.

Strangest of all, at the front of each print were five narrow holes which suggested that the mysterious creature had travelled with bare, claw-like toes. An irregular drip or squirt of blood went along the middle of the indentations! Nevertheless, the whole thing seemed of human devising.

This track, Tom reflected, was consistent with the Indian superstition that Windegos are monsters who take on or relinquish the human form, and vary their size at pleasure. He perceived that he must bring the maker of those tracks promptly to book, or suffer his men to desert the survey, and cost him his whole winter's work, besides making him a laughingstock in the settlements.

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The young fellow made his decision instantly. After feeling for his match-box and sheath-knife, he took his hatchet from his sash, and called to the men.

"Go into camp and wait for me!"

Then he set off alongside of the mysterious track at his best pace. It came out of a tangle of alders to the west, and went into such another tangle about a quarter of a mile to the east. Tom went east. The men watched him with horror.

"He's got crazy, looking at de track," said Big Baptiste, "for that's the way,—one is enchanted,—he must follow."

"He was a good boss," said Jawunny, sadly.

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As the young fellow disappeared in the alders the men looked at one another with a certain shame. Not a sound except the sigh of pines from the neighboring forest was heard. Though the sun was sinking in clear blue, the aspect of the wilderness, gray and white and severe, touched the impressionable men with deeper melancholy. They felt lonely, masterless, mean.

"He was a good boss," said Jawunny again.

"*Tort Dieu!*" cried Baptiste, leaping to his feet. "It's a shame to desert the young boss. I don't care; the Windego can only kill me. I'm going to help Mr. Tom."

"Me also," said Jawunny.

Then all wished to go. But after some parley it was agreed that the others should wait for the portageurs, who were likely to be two miles behind, and make camp for the night.

Soon Baptiste and Jawunny, each with his axe, started diagonally across the swale, and entered the alders on Tom's track.

It took them twenty yards through the alders, to the edge of a warm spring or marsh about fifty yards wide. This open, shallow water was completely encircled by alders that came down to its very edge. Tom's snow-shoe track joined the track of the mysterious monster for the first time on the edge—and there both vanished!

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Baptiste and Jawunny looked at the place with the wildest terror, and without even thinking to search the deeply indented opposite edges of the little pool for a reappearance of the tracks, fled back to the party. It was just as Red Dick Humphreys had said; just as they had always heard. Tom, like Hermidas Dubois, appeared to have vanished from existence the moment he stepped on the Windego track!

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The dimness of early evening was in the red-pine forest through which Tom's party had passed early in the afternoon, and the belated portageurs were tramping along the line. A man with a red head had been long crouching in some cedar bushes to the east of the "blazed" cutting. When he had watched the portageurs pass out of sight, he stepped over upon their track, and followed it a short distance.

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A few minutes later a young fellow, over six feet high, who strongly resembled Tom Dunscombe, followed the red-headed man.

The stranger, suddenly catching sight of a flame far away ahead on the edge of the beaver meadow, stopped and fairly hugged himself.

"Camped, by jiminy! I knowed I'd fetch 'em," was the only remark he made.

"I wish Big Baptiste could see that Windego laugh," thought Tom Dunscombe, concealed behind a tree.

After reflecting a few moments, the red-headed man, a wiry little fellow, went forward till he came to where an old pine had recently fallen across the track. There he kicked off his snow-shoes, picked them up, ran along the trunk, jumped into the snow from among the branches, put on his snow-shoes, and started northwestward. His new track could not be seen from the survey line.

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But Tom had beheld and understood the purpose of the manœuvre. He made straight for the head of the fallen tree, got on the stranger's tracks and cautiously followed them, keeping far enough behind to be out of hearing or sight.

The red-headed stranger went toward the wood out of which the mysterious track of the morning had come. When he had reached the little brush-camp in which he had slept the previous night, he made a small fire, put a small tin pot on it, boiled some tea, broiled a venison steak, ate his

supper, had several good laughs, took a long smoke, rolled himself round and round in his blanket, and went to sleep.

Hours passed before Tom ventured to crawl forward and peer into the brush camp. The red-headed man was lying on his face, as is the custom of many woodsmen. His capuchin cap covered his red head.

Tom Dunscombe took off his own long sash. When the red-headed man woke up he found that some one was on his back, holding his head firmly down. [Pg 105]

Unable to extricate his arms or legs from his blankets, the red-headed man began to utter fearful threats. Tom said not one word, but diligently wound his sash round his prisoner's head, shoulders, and arms.

He then rose, took the red-headed man's own "tump-line," a leather strap about twelve feet long, which tapered from the middle to both ends, tied this firmly round the angry live mummy, and left him lying on his face.

Then, collecting his prisoner's axe, snow-shoes, provisions, and tin pail, Tom started with them back along the Windego track for camp.

Big Baptiste and his comrades had supped too full of fears to go to sleep. They had built an enormous fire, because Windegos are reported, in Indian circles, to share with wild beasts the dread of flames and brands. Tom stole quietly to within fifty yards of the camp, and suddenly shouted in unearthly fashion. The men sprang up, quaking. [Pg 106]

"It's the Windego!" screamed Jawunny.

"You silly fools!" said Tom, coming forward. "Don't you know my voice? Am I a Windego?"

"It's the Windego, for sure; it's took the shape of Mr. Tom, after eatin' him," cried Big Baptiste.

Tom laughed so uproariously at this, that the other men scouted the idea, though it was quite in keeping with their information concerning Windegos' habits.

Then Tom came in and gave a full and particular account of the Windego's pursuit, capture, and present predicament.

"But how'd he make de track?" they asked.

"He had two big old snow-shoes, stuffed with spruce tips underneath, and covered with dressed deerskin. He had cut off the back ends of them. You shall see them to-morrow. I found them down yonder where he had left them after crossing the warm spring. He had five bits of sharp round wood going down in front of them. He must have stood on them one after the other, and lifted the back one every time with the pole he carried. I've got that, too. The blood was from a deer he had run down and killed in the snow. He carried the blood in his tin pail, and sprinkled it behind him. He must have run out our line long ago with a compass, so he knew where it would go. But come, let us go and see if it's Red Dick Humphreys." [Pg 107]

Red Dick proved to be the prisoner. He had become quite philosophic while waiting for his captor to come back. When unbound he grinned pleasantly, and remarked:—

"You're Mr. Dunscombe, eh? Well, you're a smart young feller, Mr. Dunscombe. There ain't another man on the Ottaway that could 'a' done that trick on me. Old Dan McEachran will make your fortun' for this, and I don't begrudge it. You're a man—that's so. If ever I hear any feller saying to the contrayry he's got to lick Red Dick Humphreys." [Pg 108]

And he told them the particulars of his practical joke in making a Windego track round Madore's shanty.

"Hermidas Dubois?—oh, he's all right," said Red Dick. "He's at home at St. Agathe. Man, he helped me to fix up that Windego track at Madore's; but, by criminy! the look of it scared him so he wouldn't cross it himself. It was a holy terror!"

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## THE SHINING CROSS OF RIGAUD.

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### I.

When Mini was a fortnight old his mother wrapped her head and shoulders in her ragged shawl, snatched him from the family litter of straw, and, with a volley of cautionary objurgations to his ten brothers and sisters, strode angrily forth into the raw November weather. She went down the hill to the edge of the broad, dark Ottawa, where thin slices of ice were swashing together. There sat a hopeless-looking little man at the clumsy oars of a flat-bottomed boat.

"The little one's feet are out," said the man.

"So much the better! For what was another sent us?" cried Mini's mother.

"But the little one must be baptized," said the father, with mild expostulation.

"Give him to me, then," and the man took off his own ragged coat. Beneath it he had nothing except an equally ragged guernsey, and the wind was keen. The woman surrendered the child carelessly, and drawing her shawl closer, sat frowning moodily in the stern. Mini's father wrapped him in the wretched garment, carefully laid the infant on the pea-straw at his feet, and rowed wearily away. [Pg 110]

They took him to the gray church on the farther shore, whose tall cross glittered coldly in the wintry sun. There Madame Lajeunesse, the skilful washerwoman, angry to be taken so long from her tubs, and Bonhomme Hamel, who never did anything but fish for *barbotes*, met them. These highly respectable connections of Mini's mother had a disdain for her inferior social status, and easily made it understood that nothing but a Christian duty would have brought them out. Where else, indeed, could the friendless infant have found sponsors? It was disgraceful, they remarked, that the custom of baptism at three days old should have been violated. While they answered for Mini's spiritual development he was quiet, neither crying nor smiling till the old priest crossed his brow. Then he smiled, and that, Bonhomme Hamel remarked, was a blessed sign. [Pg 111]

"Now he's sure of heaven when he does die!" cried Mini's mother, getting home again, and tossed him down on the straw, for a conclusion to her sentence.

But the child lived, as if by miracle. Hunger, cold, dirt, abuse, still left him a feeble vitality. At six years old his big dark eyes wore so sad a look that mothers of merry children often stopped to sigh over him, frightening the child, for he did not understand sympathy. So unresponsive and dumb was he that they called him half-witted. Three babies younger than he had died by then, and the fourth was little Angélique. They said she would be very like Mini, and there was reason why in her wretched infancy. Mini's was the only love she ever knew. When she saw the sunny sky his weak arms carried her, and many a night he drew over her the largest part of his deplorable coverings. She, too, was strangely silent. For days long they lay together on the straw, quietly suffering what they had known from the beginning. It was something near starvation. [Pg 112]

When Mini was eight years old his mother sent him one day to beg food from Madame Leclair, whose servant she had been long ago.

"It's Lucile's Mini," said Madame, taking him to the door of the cosy sitting-room, where Monsieur sat at *solitaire*.

"*Mon Dieu*, did one ever see such a child!" cried the retired notary. "For the love of Heaven, feed him well, Marie, before you let him go!"

But Mini could scarcely eat. He trembled at the sight of so much food, and chose a crust as the only thing familiar.

"Eat, my poor child. Have no fear," said Madame.

"But Angélique," said he. [Pg 113]

"Angélique? Is it the baby?"

"Yes, Madame, if I might have something for her."

"Poor little loving boy," said Madame, tears in her kind eyes. But Mini did not cry; he had known so many things so much sadder.

When Mini reached home his mother seized the basket. Her wretched children crowded around. There were broken bread and meat in plenty. "Here—here—and here!" She distributed crusts, and chose a well-fleshed bone for her own teeth. Angélique could not walk, and did not cry, so got nothing. Mini, however, went to her with the tin pail before his mother noticed it.

"Bring that back!" she shouted.

"Quick, baby!" cried Mini, holding it that Angélique might drink. But the baby was not quick enough. Her mother seized the pail and tasted; the milk was still almost warm. "Good," said she, reaching for her shawl.

"For the love of God, mother!" cried Mini, "Madame said it was for Angélique." He knew too well what new milk would trade for. The woman laughed and flung on her shawl. [Pg 114]

"Only a little, then; only a cupful," cried Mini, clutching her, struggling weakly to restrain her. "Only a little cupful for Angélique."

"Give her bread!" She struck him so that he reeled, and left the cabin. *Then* Mini cried, but not for the blow.

He placed a soft piece of bread and a thin shred of meat in Angélique's thin little hand, but she could not eat, she was so weak. The elder children sat quietly devouring their food, each ravenously eying that of the others. But there was so much that when the father came he also could eat. He, too, offered Angélique bread. Then Mini lifted his hand which held hers and showed beneath the food she had refused.

"If she had milk!" said the boy.

"My God, if I could get some," groaned the man, and stopped as a shuffling and tumbling was heard at the door. [Pg 115]

"She is very drunk," said the man, without amazement. He helped her in, and, too far gone to abuse them, she soon lay heavily breathing near the child she had murdered.

Mini woke in the pale morning thinking Angélique very cold in his arms, and, behold, she was free from all the suffering forever. So he *could* not cry, though the mother wept when she awoke, and shrieked at his tearlessness as hardhearted.

Little Angélique had been rowed across the great river for the last time; night was come again, and Mini thought he *must* die; it could not be that he should be made to live without Angélique! Then a wondrous thing seemed to happen. Little Angélique had come back. He could not doubt it next morning, for, with the slowly lessening glow from the last brands of fire had not her face appeared?—then her form?—and lo! she was closely held in the arms of the mild Mother whom Mini knew from her image in the church, only she smiled more sweetly now in the hut. Little Angélique had learned to smile, too, which was most wonderful of all to Mini. In their heavenly looks was a meaning of which he felt almost aware; a mysterious happiness was coming close and closer; with the sense of ineffable touches near his brow, the boy dreamed. Nothing more did Mini know till his mother's voice woke him in the morning. He sprang up with a cry of "Angélique," and gazed round upon the familiar squalor.

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## II.

From the summit of Rigaud Mountain a mighty cross flashes sunlight all over the great plain of Vaudreuil. The devout *habitant*, ascending from vale to hill-top in the county of Deux Montagnes, bends to the sign he sees across the forest leagues away. Far off on the brown Ottawa, beyond the Cascades of Carillon and the Chute à Blondeau, the keen-eyed *voyageur* catches its gleam, and, for gladness to be nearing the familiar mountain, more cheerily raises the *chanson* he loves. Near St. Placide the early ploughman—while yet mist wreathes the fields and before the native Rossignol has fairly begun his plaintive flourishes—watches the high cross of Rigaud for the first glint that shall tell him of the yet unrisen sun. The wayfarer marks his progress by the bearing of that great cross, the hunter looks to it for an unfailing landmark, the weatherwise farmer prognosticates from its appearances. The old watch it dwindle from sight at evening with long thoughts of the well-beloved vanished, who sighed to its vanishing through vanished years; the dying turn to its beckoning radiance; happy is the maiden for whose bridal it wears brightness; blessed is the child thought to be that holds out tiny hands for the glittering cross as for a star. Even to the most worldly it often seems flinging beams of heaven, and to all who love its shining that is a dark day when it yields no reflection of immortal meaning.

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To Mini the Cross of Rigaud had as yet been no more than an indistinct glimmering, so far from it did he live and so dulled was he by his sufferings. It promised him no immortal joys, for how was he to conceive of heaven except as a cessation of weariness, starvation, and pain? Not till Angélique had come, in the vision did he gain certainty that in heaven she would smile on him always from the mild Mother's arms. As days and weeks passed without that dream's return, his imagination was ever the more possessed by it. Though the boy looked frailer than ever, people often remarked with amazement how his eyes wore some unspeakable happiness.

Now it happened that one sunny day after rain Mini became aware that his eyes were fixed on the Cross of Rigaud. He could not make out its form distinctly, but it appeared to thrill toward him. Under his intent watching the misty cross seemed gradually to become the centre of such a light as had enwrapped the figures of his dream. While he gazed, expecting his vision of the night to appear in broad day on the far summit, the light extended, changed, rose aloft, assumed clear tints, and shifted quickly to a great rainbow encircling the hill.

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Mini believed it a token to him. That Angélique had been there by the cross the little dreamer doubted not, and the transfiguration to that arch of glory had some meaning that his soul yearned to apprehend. The cross drew his thoughts miraculously; for days thereafter he dwelt with its shining; more and more it was borne in on him that he could always see dimly the outline of little Angélique's face there; sometimes, staring very steadily for minutes together, he could even believe that she beckoned and smiled.

"Is Angélique really there, father?" he asked one day, looking toward the hill-top.

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"Yes, there," answered his father, thinking the boy meant heaven.

"I will go to her, then," said Mini to his heart.

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Birds were not stirring when Mini stepped from the dark cabin into gray dawn, with firm resolve to join Angélique on the summit. The Ottawa, with whose flow he went toward Rigaud, was solemnly shrouded in motionless mist, which began to roll slowly during the first hour of his journey. Lifting, drifting, clinging, ever thinner and more pervaded by sunlight, it was drawn away so that the unruffled flood reflected a sky all blue when he had been two hours on the road. But Mini took no note of the river's beauty. His eyes were fixed on the cloudy hill-top, beyond which the sun was climbing. As yet he could see nothing of the cross, nor of his vision; yet the world had never seemed so glad, nor his heart so light with joy. *Habitants*, in their rattling *calèches*, were amazed by the glow in the face of a boy so ragged and forlorn. Some told afterward how they had half doubted the reality of his rags; for might not one, if very pure at

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heart, have been privileged to see such garments of apparent meanness change to raiment of angelic texture? Such things had been, it was said, and certainly the boy's face was a marvel.

His look was ever upward to where fibrous clouds shifted slowly, or packed to level bands of mist half concealing Rigaud Hill, as the sun wheeled higher, till at last, in mid-sky, it flung rays that trembled on the cross, and gradually revealed the holy sign outlined in upright and arms. Mini shivered with an awe of expectation; but no nimbus was disclosed which his imagination could shape to glorious significance. Yet he went rapturously onward, firm in the belief that up there he must see Angélique face to face.

As he journeyed the cross gradually lessened in height by disappearance behind the nearer trees, till only a spot of light was left, which suddenly was blotted out too. Mini drew a deep breath, and became conscious of the greatness of the hill,—a towering mass of brown rock, half hidden by sombre pines and the delicate greenery of birch and poplar. But soon, because the cross *was* hidden, he could figure it all the more gloriously, and entertain all the more luminously the belief that there were heavenly presences awaiting him. He pressed on with all his speed, and began to ascend the mountain early in the afternoon.

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"Higher," said the women gathering pearly-bloomed blueberries on the steep hillside. "Higher," said the path, ever leading the tired boy upward from plateau to plateau,—"higher, to the vision and the radiant space about the shining cross!"

Faint with hunger, worn with fatigue, in the half-trance of physical exhaustion, Mini still dragged himself upward through the afternoon. At last he knew he stood on the summit level very near the cross. There the child, awed by the imminence of what he had sought, halted to control the rapturous, fearful trembling of his heart. Would not the heavens surely open? What words would Angélique first say? Then again he went swiftly forward through the trees to the edge of the little cleared space. There he stood dazed.

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The cross was revealed to him at a few yards' distance. With woful disillusionment Mini threw himself face downward on the rock, and wept hopelessly, sorely; wept and wept, till his sobs became fainter than the up-borne long notes of a hermit-thrush far below on the edge of the plain.

A tall mast, with a shorter at right angles, both covered by tin roofing-plates, held on by nails whence rust had run in streaks,—that was the shining Cross of Rigaud! Fragments of newspaper, crusts of bread, empty tin cans, broken bottles, the relics of many picnics scattered widely about the foot of the cross; rude initial letters cut deeply into its butt where the tin had been torn away;—these had Mini seen.

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The boy ceased to move. Shadows stole slowly lengthening over the Vaudreuil champaign; the sun swooned down in a glamour of painted clouds; dusk covered from sight the yellows and browns and greens of the August fields; birds stilled with the deepening night; Rigaud Mountain loomed from the plain, a dark long mass under a flying and waning moon; stars came out from the deep spaces overhead, and still Mini lay where he had wept.

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## LITTLE BAPTISTE.

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### A STORY OF THE OTTAWA RIVER.

Ma'ame Baptiste Larocque peered again into her cupboard and her flour barrel, as though she might have been mistaken in her inspection twenty minutes earlier.

"No, there is nothing, nothing at all!" said she to her old mother-in-law. "And no more trust at the store. Monsieur Conolly was too cross when I went for corn-meal yesterday. For sure, Baptiste stays very long at the shanty this year."

"Fear nothing, Delima," answered the bright-eyed old woman. "The good God will send a breakfast for the little ones, and for us. In seventy years I do not know Him to fail once, my daughter. Baptiste may be back to-morrow, and with more money for staying so long. No, no; fear not, Delima! *Le bon Dieu* manages all for the best."

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"That is true; for so I have heard always," answered Delima, with conviction; "but sometimes *le bon Dieu* requires one's inside to pray very loud. Certainly I trust, like you, *Memere*; but it would be pleasant if He would send the food the day before."

"Ah, you are too anxious, like little Baptiste here," and the old woman glanced at the boy sitting by the cradle. "Young folks did not talk so when I was little. Then we did not think there was danger in trusting *Monsieur le Curé* when he told us to take no heed of the morrow. But now! to hear them talk, one might think they had never heard of *le bon Dieu*. The young people think too much, for sure. Trust in the good God, I say. Breakfast and dinner and supper too we shall all have to-morrow."

"Yes, *Memere*," replied the boy, who was called little Baptiste to distinguish him from his father. "*Le bon Dieu* will send an excellent breakfast, sure enough, if I get up very early, and find some good *doré* (pickerel) and catfish on the night-line. But if I did not bait the hooks, what then? Well,

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I hope there will be more to-morrow than this morning, anyway."

"There were enough," said the old woman, severely. "Have we not had plenty all day, Delima?"

Delima made no answer. She was in doubt about the plenty which her mother-in-law spoke of. She wondered whether small André and Odillon and Toinette, whose heavy breathing she could hear through the thin partition, would have been sleeping so peacefully had little Baptiste not divided his share among them at supper-time, with the excuse that he did not feel very well?

Delima was young yet,—though little Baptiste was such a big boy,—and would have rested fully on the positively expressed trust of her mother-in-law, in spite of the empty flour barrel, if she had not suspected little Baptiste of sitting there hungry. [Pg 128]

However, he was such a strange boy, she soon reflected, that perhaps going empty did not make him feel bad! Little Baptiste was so decided in his ways, made what in others would have been sacrifices so much as a matter of course, and was so much disgusted on being offered credit or sympathy in consequence, that his mother, not being able to understand him, was not a little afraid of him.

He was not very formidable in appearance, however, that clumsy boy of fourteen or so, whose big freckled, good face was now bent over the cradle where *la petite* Seraphine lay smiling in her sleep, with soft little fingers clutched round his rough one.

"For sure," said Delima, observing the baby's smile, "the good angels are very near. I wonder what they are telling her?"

"Something about her father, of course; for so I have always heard it is when the infants smile in sleep," answered the old woman. [Pg 129]

Little Baptiste rose impatiently and went into the sleeping-room. Often the simplicity and sentimentality of his mother and grandmother gave him strange pangs at heart; they seemed to be the children, while he felt very old. They were always looking for wonderful things to happen, and expecting the saints and *le bon Dieu* to help the family out of difficulties that little Baptiste saw no way of overcoming without the work which was then so hard to get. His mother's remark about the angels talking to little Seraphine pained him so much that he would have cried had he not felt compelled to be very much of a man during his father's absence.

If he had been asked to name the spirit hovering about, he would have mentioned a very wicked one as personified in John Conolly, the village storekeeper, the vampire of the little hamlet a quarter of a mile distant. Conolly owned the tavern too, and a sawmill up river, and altogether was a very rich, powerful, and dreadful person in little Baptiste's view. Worst of all, he practically owned the cabin and lot of the Larocques, for he had made big Baptiste give him a bill of sale of the place as security for groceries to be advanced to the family while its head was away in the shanty; and that afternoon Conolly had said to little Baptiste that the credit had been exhausted, and more. [Pg 130]

"No; you can't get any pork," said the storekeeper. "Don't your mother know that, after me sending her away when she wanted corn-meal yesterday? Tell her she don't get another cent's worth here."

"For why not? My fader always he pay," said the indignant boy, trying to talk English.

"Yes, indeed! Well, he ain't paid this time. How do I know what's happened to him, as he ain't back from the shanty? Tell you what: I'm going to turn you all out if your mother don't pay rent in advance for the shanty to-morrow,—four dollars a month."

"What you talkin' so for? We doan' goin pay no rent for our own house!" [Pg 131]

"You doan' goin' to own no house," answered Conolly, mimicking the boy. "The house is mine any time I like to say so. If the store bill ain't paid to-night, out you go to-morrow, or else pay rent. Tell your mother that for me. Mosey off now. '*Marche, donc!*' There's no other way."

Little Baptiste had not told his mother of this terrible threat, for what was the use? She had no money. He knew that she would begin weeping and wailing, with small André and Odillon as a puzzled, excited chorus, with Toinette and Seraphine adding those baby cries that made little Baptiste want to cry himself; with his grandmother steadily advising, in the din, that patient trust in *le bon Dieu* which he could not always entertain, though he felt very wretched that he could not.

Moreover, he desired to spare his mother and grandmother as long as possible. "Let them have their good night's sleep," said he to himself, with such thoughtfulness and pity as a merchant might feel in concealing imminent bankruptcy from his family. He knew there was but one chance remaining,—that his father might come home during the night or next morning, with his winter's wages. [Pg 132]

Big Baptiste had "gone up" for Rewbell the jobber; had gone in November, to make logs in the distant Petawawa woods, and now the month was May. The "very magnificent" pig he had salted down before going away had been eaten long ago. My! what a time it seemed now to little Baptiste since that pig-killing! How good the *boudin* (the blood-puddings) had been, and the liver and tender bits, and what a joyful time they had had! The barrelful of salted pike and catfish was all gone too,—which made the fact that fish were not biting well this year very sad indeed.

Now on top of all these troubles this new danger of being turned out on the roadside! For where are they to get four dollars, or two, or one even, to stave Conolly off? Certainly his father was away too long; but surely, surely, thought the boy, he would get back in time to save his home! Then he remembered with horror, and a feeling of being disloyal to his father for remembering, that terrible day, three years before, when big Baptiste had come back from his winter's work drunk, and without a dollar, having been robbed while on a spree in Ottawa. If that were the reason of his father's delay now, ah, then there would be no hope, unless *le bon Dieu* should indeed work a miracle for them!

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While the boy thought over the situation with fear, his grandmother went to her bed, and soon afterward Delima took the little Seraphine's cradle into the sleeping-room. That left little Baptiste so lonely that he could not sit still; nor did he see any use of going to lie awake in bed by André and Odillon.

So he left the cabin softly, and reaching the river with a few steps, pushed off his flat-bottomed boat, and was carried smartly up stream by the shore eddy. It soon gave him to the current, and then he drifted idly down under the bright moon, listening to the roar of the long rapid, near the foot of which their cabin stood. Then he took to his oars, and rowed to the end of his night-line, tied to the wharf. He had an unusual fear that it might be gone, but found it all right, stretched taut; a slender rope, four hundred feet long, floated here and there far away in the darkness by flat cedar sticks,—a rope carrying short bits of line, and forty hooks, all loaded with excellent fat, wriggling worms.

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That day little Baptiste had taken much trouble with his night-line; he was proud of the plentiful bait, and now, as he felt the tightened rope with his fingers, he told himself that his well-filled hooks *must* attract plenty of fish,—perhaps a sturgeon! Wouldn't that be grand? A big sturgeon of seventy-five pounds!

He pondered the Ottawa statement that "there are seven kinds of meat on the head of a sturgeon," and, enumerating the kinds, fell into a conviction that one sturgeon at least would surely come to his line. Had not three been caught in one night by Pierre Mallette, who had no sort of claim, who was too lazy to bait more than half his hooks, altogether too wicked to receive any special favors from *le bon Dieu*?

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Little Baptiste rowed home, entered the cabin softly, and stripped for bed, almost happy in guessing what the big fish would probably weigh.

Putting his arms around little André, he tried to go to sleep; but the threats of Conolly came to him with new force, and he lay awake, with a heavy dread in his heart.

How long he had been lying thus he did not know, when a heavy step came upon the plank outside the door.

"Father's home!" cried little Baptiste, springing to the floor as the door opened.

"Baptiste! my own Baptiste!" cried Delima, putting her arms around her husband as he stood over her.

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"Did I not say," said the old woman, seizing her son's hand, "that the good God would send help in time?"

Little Baptiste lit the lamp. Then they saw something in the father's face that startled them all. He had not spoken, and now they perceived that he was haggard, pale, wild-eyed.

"The good God!" cried big Baptiste, and knelt by the bed, and bowed his head on his arms, and wept so loudly that little André and Odillon, wakening, joined his cry. "*Le bon Dieu* has forgotten us! For all my winter's work I have not one dollar! The concern is failed. Rewbell paid not one cent of wages, but ran away, and the timber has been seized."

Oh, the heartbreak! Oh, poor Delima! poor children! and poor little Baptiste, with the threats of Conolly rending his heart!

"I have walked all day," said the father, "and eaten not a thing. Give me something, Delima."

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"O holy angels!" cried the poor woman, breaking into a wild weeping. "O Baptiste, Baptiste, my poor man! There is nothing; not a scrap; not any flour, not meal, not grease even; not a pinch of tea!" but still she searched frantically about the rooms.

"Never mind," said big Baptiste then, holding her in his strong arms. "I am not so hungry as tired, Delima, and I can sleep."

The old woman, who had been swaying to and fro in her chair of rushes, rose now, and laid her aged hands on the broad shoulders of the man.

"My son Baptiste," she said, "you must not say that God has forgotten us, for He has not forgotten us. The hunger is hard to bear, I know,—hard, hard to bear; but great plenty will be sent in answer to our prayers. And it is hard, hard to lose thy long winter's work; but be patient, my son, and thankful, yes, thankful for all thou hast."

"Behold, Delima is well and strong. See the little Baptiste, how much a man! Yes, that is right; kiss the little André and Odillon; and see! how sweetly Toinette sleeps! All strong and well, son Baptiste! Were one gone, think what thou wouldst have lost! But instead, be thankful, for behold,

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another has been given,—the little Seraphine here, that thou hast not before seen!"

Big, rough, soft-hearted Baptiste knelt by the cradle, and kissed the babe gently.

"It is true, *Memere*," he answered, "and I thank *le bon Dieu* for his goodness to me."

But little Baptiste, lying wide awake for hours afterwards, was not thankful. He could not see that matters could be much worse. A big hard lump was in his throat as he thought of his father's hunger, and the home-coming so different from what they had fondly counted on. Great slow tears came into the boy's eyes, and he wiped them away, ashamed even in the dark to have been guilty of such weakness.

In the gray dawn little Baptiste suddenly awoke, with the sensation of having slept on his post. How heavy his heart was! Why? He sat dazed with indefinite sorrow. Ah, now he remembered! Conolly threatening to turn them out! and his father back penniless! No breakfast! Well, we must see about that. [Pg 139]

Very quietly he rose, put on his patched clothes, and went out. Heavy mist covered the face of the river, and somehow the rapid seemed stilled to a deep, pervasive murmur. As he pushed his boat off, the morning fog was chillier than frost about him; but his heart got lighter as he rowed toward his night-line, and he became even eager for the pleasure of handling his fish. He made up his mind not to be much disappointed if there were no sturgeon, but could not quite believe there would be none; surely it was reasonable to expect *one*, perhaps two—why not three?—among the catfish and *doré*.

How very taut and heavy the rope felt as he raised it over his gunwales, and letting the bow swing up stream, began pulling in the line hand over hand! He had heard of cases where every hook had its fish; such a thing might happen again surely! Yard after yard of rope he passed slowly over the boat, and down into the water it sank on his track. [Pg 140]

Now a knot on the line told him he was nearing the first hook; he watched for the quiver and struggle of the fish,—probably a big one, for there he had put a tremendous bait on and spat on it for luck, moreover. What? the short line hung down from the rope, and the baited hook rose clear of the water!

Baptiste instantly made up his mind that that hook had been placed a little too far in-shore; he remembered thinking so before; the next hook was in about the right place!

Hand over hand, ah! the second hook, too! Still baited, the big worm very livid! It must be thus because that worm was pushed up the shank of the hook in such a queer way: he had been rather pleased when he gave the bait that particular twist, and now was surprised at himself; why, any one could see it was a thing to scare fish! [Pg 141]

Hand over hand to the third,—the hook was naked of bait! Well, that was more satisfactory; it showed they had been biting, and, after all, this was just about the beginning of the right place.

Hand over hand; *now* the splashing will begin, thought little Baptiste, and out came the fourth hook with its livid worm! He held the rope in his hand without drawing it in for a few moments, but could see no reasonable objection to that last worm. His heart sank a little, but pshaw! only four hooks out of forty were up yet! wait till the eddy behind the shoal was reached, then great things would be seen. Maybe the fish had not been lying in that first bit of current.

Hand over hand again, now! yes, certainly, *there* is the right swirl! What? a *losch*, that unclean semi-lizard! The boy tore it off and flung it indignantly into the river. However, there was good luck in a *losch*; that was well known. [Pg 142]

But the next hook, and the next, and next, and next came up baited and fishless. He pulled hand over hand quickly—not a fish! and he must have gone over half the line! Little Baptiste stopped, with his heart like lead and his arms trembling. It was terrible! Not a fish, and his father had no supper, and there was no credit at the store. Poor little Baptiste!

Again he hauled hand over hand—one hook, two, three—oh! ho! Glorious! What a delightful sheer downward the rope took! Surely the big sturgeon at last, trying to stay down on the bottom with the hook! But Baptiste would show that fish his mistake. He pulled, pulled, stood up to pull; there was a sort of shake, a sudden give of the rope, and little Baptiste tumbled over backward as he jerked his line up from under the big stone!

Then he heard the shutters clattering as Conolly's clerk took them off the store window; at half-past five to the minute that was always done. Soon big Baptiste would be up, that was certain. Again the boy began hauling in line: baited hook! baited hook! naked hook! baited hook!—such was still the tale. [Pg 143]

"Surely, surely," implored little Baptiste, silently, "I shall find some fish!" Up! up! only four remained! The boy broke down. Could it be? Had he not somehow skipped many hooks? Could it be that there was to be no breakfast for the children? Naked hook again! Oh, for some fish! anything! three, two!

"Oh, send just one for my father!—my poor, hungry father!" cried little Baptiste, and drew up his last hook. It came full baited, and the line was out of the water clear away to his outer buoy!

He let go the rope and drifted down the river, crying as though his heart would break. All the [Pg 144]

good hooks useless! all the labor thrown away! all his self-confidence come to naught!

Up rose the great sun; from around the kneeling boy drifted the last of the morning mists; bright beams touched his bowed head tenderly. He lifted his face and looked up the rapid. Then he jumped to his feet with sudden wonder; a great joy lit up his countenance.

Far up the river a low, broad, white patch appeared on the sharp sky-line made by the level dark summit of the long slope of tumbling water. On this white patch stood many figures of swaying men black against the clear morning sky, and little Baptiste saw instantly that an attempt was being made to "run" a "band" of deals, or many cribs lashed together, instead of single cribs as had been done the day before.

The broad strip of white changed its form slowly, dipped over the slope, drew out like a wide ribbon, and soon showed a distinct slant across the mighty volume of the deep raft-channel. When little Baptiste, acquainted as he was with every current, eddy, and shoal in the rapid, saw that slant, he knew that his first impression of what was about to happen had been correct. The pilot of the band *had* allowed it to drift too far north before reaching the rapid's head.

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Now the front cribs, instead of following the curve of the channel, had taken slower water, while the rear cribs, impelled by the rush under them, swung the band slowly across the current. All along the front the standing men swayed back and forth, plying sweeps full forty feet long, attempting to swing into channel again, with their strokes dashing the dark rollers before the band into wide splashes of white. On the rear cribs another crew pulled in the contrary direction; about the middle of the band stood the pilot, urging his gangs with gestures to greater efforts.

Suddenly he made a new motion; the gang behind drew in their oars and ran hastily forward to double the force in front. But they came too late! Hardly had the doubled bow crew taken a stroke when all drew in their oars and ran back to be out of danger. Next moment the front cribs struck the "hog's-back" shoal.

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Then the long broad band curved downward in the centre, the rear cribs swung into the shallows on the opposite side of the raft-channel, there was a great straining and crashing, the men in front huddled together, watching the wreck anxiously, and the band went speedily to pieces. Soon a fringe of single planks came down stream, then cribs and pieces of cribs; half the band was drifting with the currents, and half was "hung up" on the rocks among the breakers.

Launching the big red flat-bottomed bow boat, twenty of the raftsmen came with wild speed down the river, and as there had been no rush to get aboard, little Baptiste knew that the cribs on which the men stood were so hard aground that no lives were in danger. It meant much to him; it meant that he was instantly at liberty to gather in *money!* money, in sums that loomed to gigantic figures before his imagination.

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He knew that there was an important reason for hurrying the deals to Quebec, else the great risk of running a band at that season would not have been undertaken; and he knew that hard cash would be paid down as salvage for all planks brought ashore, and thus secured from drifting far and wide over the lake-like expanse below the rapid's foot. Little Baptiste plunged his oars in and made for a clump of deals floating in the eddy near his own shore. As he rushed along, the raftsmen's boat crossed his bows, going to the main raft below for ropes and material to secure the cribs coming down intact.

"Good boy!" shouted the foreman to Baptiste. "Ten cents for every deal you fetch ashore above the raft!" Ten cents! he had expected but five! What a harvest!

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Striking his pike-pole into the clump of deals,—"fifty at least," said joyful Baptiste,—he soon secured them to his boat, and then pulled, pulled, pulled, till the blood rushed to his head, and his arms ached, before he landed his wealth.

"Father!" cried he, bursting breathlessly into the sleeping household. "Come quick! I can't get it up without you."

"Big sturgeon?" cried the shantyman, jumping into his trousers.

"Oh, but we shall have a good fish breakfast!" cried Delima.

"Did I not say the blessed *le bon Dieu* would send plenty fish?" observed *Memere*.

"Not a fish!" cried little Baptiste, with recovered breath. "But look! look!" and he flung open the door. The eddy was now white with planks.

"Ten cents for each!" cried the boy. "The foreman told me."

"Ten cents!" shouted his father. "*Baptême!* it's my winter's wages!"

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And the old grandmother! And Delima? Why, they just put their arms round each other and cried for joy.

"And yet there's no breakfast," said Delima, starting up. "And they will work hard, hard."

At that instant who should reach the door but Monsieur Conolly! He was a man who respected cash wherever he found it, and already the two Baptistes had a fine show ashore.

"Ma'ame Larocque," said Conolly, politely, putting in his head, "of course you know I was only

joking yesterday. You can get anything you want at the store."

What a breakfast they did have, to be sure! the Baptistes eating while they worked. Back and forward they dashed till late afternoon, driving ringed spikes into the deals, running light ropes through the rings, and, when a good string had thus been made, going ashore to haul in. At that hauling *Delima* and *Memere*, even little André and Odillon gave a hand. [Pg 150]

Everybody in the little hamlet made money that day, but the Larocques twice as much as any other family, because they had an eddy and a low shore. With the help of the people "the big *Bourgeois*" who owned the broken raft got it away that evening, and saved his fat contract after all.

"Did I not say so?" said "*Memere*," at night, for the hundredth time. "Did I not say so? Yes, indeed, *le bon Dieu* watches over us all."

"Yes, indeed, grandmother," echoed little Baptiste, thinking of his failure on the night-line. "We may take as much trouble as we like, but it's no use unless *le bon Dieu* helps us. Only—I don't know what de big *Bourgeois* say about that—his raft was all broke up so bad."

"Ah, *oui*," said *Memere*, looking puzzled for but a moment. "But he didn't put his trust in *le bon Dieu*; that's it, for sure. Besides, maybe *le bon Dieu* want to teach him a lesson; he'll not try for run a whole band of deals next time. You see that was a tempting of Providence; and then—the big *Bourgeois* is a Protestant." [Pg 151]

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## THE RIDE BY NIGHT.

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Mr. Adam Baines is a little Gray about the temples, but still looks so young that few could suppose him to have served in the Civil War. Indeed, he was in the army less than a year. How he went out of it he told me in some such words as these:—

An orderly from the direction of Meade's headquarters galloped into our parade ground, and straight for the man on guard before the colonel's tent. That was pretty late in the afternoon of a bright March day in 1865, but the parade ground was all red mud with shallow pools. I remember well how the hind hoofs of the orderly's galloper threw away great chunks of earth as he splashed diagonally across the open.

His rider never slowed till he brought his horse to its haunches before the sentry. There he flung himself off instantly, caught up his sabre, and ran through the middle opening of the high screen of sapling pines stuck on end, side by side, all around the acre or so occupied by the officers' quarters. [Pg 153]

The day, though sunny, was not warm, and nearly all the men of my regiment were in their huts when that galloping was heard. Then they hurried out like bees from rows of hives, ran up the lanes between the lines of huts, and collected, each company separately, on the edge of the parade ground opposite the officers' quarters.

You see we had a notion that the orderly had brought the word to break camp. For five months the Army of the Potomac had been in winter quarters, and for weeks nothing more exciting than vidette duty had broken the monotony of our brigade. We understood that Sheridan had received command of all Grant's cavalry, but did not know but the orderly had rushed from Sheridan himself. Yet we awaited the man's re-appearance with intense curiosity. [Pg 154]

Soon, instead of the orderly, out ran our first lieutenant, a small, wiry, long-haired man named Miller. He was in undress uniform,—just a blouse and trousers,—and bare-headed. Though he wore low shoes, he dashed through mud and water toward us, plainly in a great hurry.

"Sergeant Kennedy, I want ten men at once—mounted," Miller said. "Choose the ten best able for a long ride, and give them the best horses in the company. You understand,—no matter whose the ten best horses are, give 'em to the ten best riders."

"I understand, sir," said Kennedy.

By this time half the company had started for the stables, for fully half considered themselves among the best riders. The lieutenant laughed at their eagerness.

"Halt, boys!" he cried. "Sergeant, I'll pick out four myself. Come yourself, and bring Corporal Crowfoot, Private Bader, and Private Absalom Gray." [Pg 155]

Crowfoot, Bader, and Gray had been running for the stables with the rest. Now these three old soldiers grinned and walked, as much as to say, "We needn't hurry; we're picked anyhow;" while the others hurried on. I remained near Kennedy, for I was so young and green a soldier that I supposed I had no chance to go.

"Hurry up! parade as soon as possible. One day's rations; light marching order—no blankets—fetch over-coats and ponchos," said Miller, turning; "and in choosing your men, favor light weights."

That was, no doubt, the remark which brought me in. I was lanky, light, bred among horses, and

one of the best in the regiment had fallen to my lot. Kennedy wheeled, and his eye fell on me.

"Saddle up, Adam, boy," said he; "I guess you'll do."

Lieutenant Miller ran back to his quarters, his long hair flying wide. When he reappeared fifteen minutes later, we were trotting across the parade ground to meet him. He was mounted, not on his own charger, but on the colonel's famous thorough-bred bay. Then we knew a hard ride must be in prospect. [Pg 156]

"What! one of the boys?" cried Miller, as he saw me. "He's too young."

"He's very light, sir; tough as hickory. I guess he'll do," said Kennedy.

"Well, no time to change now. Follow me! But, hang it, you've got your carbines! Oh, I forgot! Keep pistols only! throw down your sabres and carbines—anywhere—never mind the mud!"

As we still hesitated to throw down our clean guns, he shouted: "Down with them—anywhere! Now, boys, after me, by twos! Trot—gallop!"

Away we went, not a man jack of us knew for where or what. The colonel and officers, standing grouped before regimental headquarters, volleyed a cheer at us. It was taken up by the whole regiment; it was taken up by the brigade; it was repeated by regiment after regiment of infantry as we galloped through the great camp toward the left front of the army. The speed at which Miller led over a rough corduroy road was extraordinary, and all the men suspected some desperate enterprise afoot. [Pg 157]

Red and brazen was the set of the sun. I remember it well, after we got clear of the forts, clear of the breastworks, clear of the reserves, down the long slope and across the wide ford of Grimthorpe's Creek, never drawing rein.

The lieutenant led by ten yards or so. He had ordered each two to take as much distance from the other two in advance; but we rode so fast that the water from the heels of his horse and from the heels of each two splashed into the faces of the following men.

From the ford we loped up a hill, and passed the most advanced infantry pickets, who laughed and chaffed us, asking us for locks of our hair, and if our mothers knew we were out, and promising to report our last words faithfully to the folks at home. [Pg 158]

Soon we turned to the left again, swept close by several cavalry videttes, and knew then that we were bound for a ride through a country that might or might not be within Lee's outer lines, at that time extended so thinly in many places that his pickets were far out of touch with one another. To this day I do not know precisely where we went, nor precisely what for. Soldiers are seldom informed of the meaning of their movements.

What I do know is what we did while I was in the ride. As we were approaching dense pine woods the lieutenant turned in his saddle, slacked pace a little, and shouted, "Boys, bunch up near me!"

He screwed round in his saddle so far that we could all see and hear, and said:—

"Boys, the order is to follow this road as fast as we can till our horses drop, or else the Johnnies drop us, or else we drop upon three brigades of our own infantry. I guess they've got astray somehow; but I don't know myself what the trouble is. Our orders are plain. The brigades are supposed to be somewhere on this road. I guess we shall do a big thing if we reach those men to-night. All we've got to do is to ride and deliver this despatch to the general in command. You all understand?" [Pg 159]

"Yes, sir! Yes, sir! Yes, sir!"

"It's necessary you all should. Hark, now! We are not likely to strike the enemy in force, but we are likely to run up against small parties. Now, Kennedy, if they down me, you are to stop just long enough to grab the despatch from my breast; then away you go,—always on the main road. If they down you after you've got the paper, the man who can grab it first is to take it and hurry forward. So on right to the last man. If they down him, and he's got his senses when he falls, he's to tear the paper up, and scatter it as widely as he can. You all understand?" [Pg 160]

"Yes, sir! Yes, sir!"

"All right, then. String out again!"

He touched the big bay with the spur, and shot quickly ahead.

With the long rest of the winter our horses were in prime spirits, though mostly a little too fleshy for perfect condition. I had cared well for my horse; he was fast and sound in wind and limb. I was certainly the lightest rider of the eleven.

I was still thinking of the probability that I should get further on the way than any comrade except the lieutenant, or perhaps Crowfoot and Bader, whose horses were in great shape; I was thinking myself likely to win promotion before morning, when a cry came out of the darkness ahead. The words of the challenge I was not able to catch, but I heard Miller shout, "Forward, boys!"

We shook out more speed just as a rifle spat its long flash at us from about a hundred yards ahead. For one moment I plainly saw the Southerner's figure. Kennedy reeled beside me, flung [Pg 161]

up his hands with a scream, and fell. His horse stopped at once. In a moment the lieutenant had ridden the sentry down.

Then from the right side of the road a party, who must have been lying round the camp-fire that we faintly saw in among the pines, let fly at us. They had surely been surprised in their sleep. I clearly saw them as their guns flashed.

"Forward! Don't shoot! Ride on," shouted Miller. "Bushwhackers! Thank God, not mounted! Any of you make out horses with them?"

"No, sir! No, sir!"

"Who yelled? who went down?"

"Kennedy, sir," I cried.

"Too bad! Any one else?"

"No, sir."

"All safe?"

"I'm touched in my right arm; but it's nothing," I said. The twinge was slight, and in the fleshy place in front of my shoulder. I could not make out that I was losing blood, and the pain from the hurt was scarcely perceptible. [Pg 162]

"Good boy! Keep up, Adam!" called the lieutenant with a kind tone. I remember my delight that he spoke my front name. On we flew.

Possibly the shots had been heard by the party half a mile further on, for they greeted us with a volley. A horse coughed hard and pitched down behind me. His rider yelled as he fell. Then two more shots came: Crowfoot reeled in front of me, and somehow checked his horse. I saw him no more. Next moment we were upon the group with our pistols.

"Forward, men! Don't stop to fight!" roared Miller, as he got clear. A rifle was fired so close to my head that the flame burned my back hair, and my ears rang for half an hour or more. My bay leaped high and dashed down a man. In a few seconds I was fairly out of the scrimmage. [Pg 163]

How many of my comrades had gone down I knew not, nor beside whom I was riding. Suddenly our horses plunged into a hole; his stumbled, the man pitched forward, and was left behind. Then I heard a shot, the clatter of another falling horse, the angry yell of another thrown rider.

On we went,—the relics of us. Now we rushed out of the pine forest into broad moonlight, and I saw two riders between me and the lieutenant,—one man almost at my shoulder and another galloping ten yards behind. Very gradually this man dropped to the rear. We had lost five men already, and still the night was young.

Bader and Absalom Gray were nearest me. Neither spoke a word till we struck upon a space of sandy road. Then I could hear, far behind the rear man, a sound of galloping on the hard highway.

"They're after us, lieutenant!" shouted Bader. [Pg 164]

"Many?" He slacked speed, and we listened attentively.

"Only one," cried Miller. "He's coming fast."

The pursuer gained so rapidly that we looked to our pistols again. Then Absalom Gray cried:

"It's only a horse!"

In a few moments the great gray of fallen Corporal Crowfoot overtook us, went ahead, and slacked speed by the lieutenant.

"Good! He'll be fresh when the rest go down!" shouted Miller. "Let the last man mount the gray!"

By this time we had begun to think ourselves clear of the enemy, and doomed to race on till the horses should fall.

Suddenly the hoofs of Crowfoot's gray and the lieutenant's bay thundered upon a plank road whose hollow noise, when we all reached it, should have been heard far. It took us through wide orchard lands into a low-lying mist by the banks of a great marsh, till we passed through that fog, strode heavily up a slope, and saw the shimmer of roofs under the moon. Straight, through the main street we pounded along. [Pg 165]

Whether it was wholly deserted I know not, but not a human being was in the streets, nor any face visible at the black windows. Not even a dog barked. I noticed no living thing except some turkeys roosting on a fence, and a white cat that sprang upon the pillar of a gateway and thence to a tree.

Some of the houses seemed to have been ruined by a cannonade. I suppose it was one of the places almost destroyed in Willoughby's recent raid. Here we thundered, expecting ambush and conflict every moment, while the loneliness of the street imposed on me such a sense as might come of galloping through a long cemetery of the dead.

Out of the village we went off the planks again upon sand. I began to suspect that I was losing a good deal of blood. My brain was on fire with whirling thoughts and wonder where all was to end. Out of this daze I came, in amazement to find that we were quickly overtaking our lieutenant's thoroughbred. [Pg 166]

Had he been hit in the fray, and bled to weakness? I only know that, still galloping while we gained, the famous horse lurched forward, almost turned a somersault, and fell on his rider.

"Stop—the paper!" shouted Bader.

We drew rein, turned, dismounted, and found Miller's left leg under the big bay's shoulder. The horse was quite dead, the rider's long hair lay on the sand, his face was white under the moon!

We stopped long enough to extricate him, and he came to his senses just as we made out that his left leg was broken.

"Forward!" he groaned. "What in thunder are you stopped for? Oh, the despatch! Here! away you go! Good-bye."

In attending to Miller we had forgotten the rider who had been long gradually dropping behind. Now as we galloped away,—Bader, Absalom Gray, myself, and Crowfoot's riderless horse,—I looked behind for that comrade; but he was not to be seen or heard. We three were left of the eleven. [Pg 167]

From the loss of so many comrades the importance of our mission seemed huge. With the speed, the noise, the deaths, the strangeness of the gallop through that forsaken village, the wonder how all would end, the increasing belief that thousands of lives depended on our success, and the longing to win, my brain was wild. A raging desire to be first held me, and I galloped as if in a dream.

Bader led; the riderless gray thundered beside him; Absalom rode stirrup to stirrup with me. He was a veteran of the whole war. Where it was that his sorrel rolled over I do not remember at all, though I perfectly remember how Absalom sprang up, staggered, shouted, "My foot is sprained!" and fell as I turned to look at him and went racing on. [Pg 168]

Then I heard above the sound of our hoofs the voice of the veteran of the war. Down as he was, his spirit was unbroken. In the favorite song of the army his voice rose clear and gay and piercing:—

"Hurrah for the Union!  
Hurrah, boys, hurrah!  
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom!"

We turned our heads and cheered him as we flew, for there was something indescribably inspiring in the gallant and cheerful lilt of the fallen man. It was as if he flung us, from the grief of utter defeat, a soul unconquerable; and I felt the life in me strengthened by the tone.

Old Bader and I for it! He led by a hundred yards, and Crowfoot's gray kept his stride. Was I gaining on them? How was it that I could see his figure outlined more clearly against the horizon? Surely dawn was not coming on!

No; I looked round on a world of naked peach-orchards, and corn-fields ragged with last year's stalks, all dimly lit by a moon that showed far from midnight; and that faint light on the horizon was not in the east, but in the west. The truth flashed on me,—I was looking at such an illumination of the sky as would be caused by the camp-fires of an army. [Pg 169]

"The missing brigade!" I shouted.

"Or a Southern division!" Bader cried. "Come on!"

"Come on!" I was certainly gaining on him, but very slowly. Before the nose of my bay was beyond the tail of his roan, the wide illuminations had become more distinct; and still not a vidette, not a picket, not a sound of the proximity of an army.

Bader and I now rode side by side, and Crowfoot's gray easily kept the pace. My horse was in plain distress, but Bader's was nearly done.

"Take the paper, Adam," he said; "my roan won't go much further. Good-bye, youngster. Away you go!" and I drew now quickly ahead. [Pg 170]

Still Bader rode on behind me. In a few minutes he was considerably behind. Perhaps the sense of being alone increased my feeling of weakness. Was I going to reel out of the saddle? Had I lost so much blood as that? Still I could hear Bader riding on. I turned to look at him. Already he was scarcely visible. Soon he dropped out of sight; but still I heard the laborious pounding of his desperate horse.

My bay was gasping horribly. How far was that faintly yellow sky ahead? It might be two, it might be five miles. Were Union or Southern soldiers beneath it? Could it be conceived that no troops of the enemy were between me and it?

Never mind; my orders were clear. I rode straight on, and I was still riding straight on, marking no increase in the distress of my bay, when he stopped as if shot, staggered, fell on his knees,



tried to rise, rolled to his side, groaned and lay.

I was so weak I could not clear myself. I remember my right spur catching in my saddle-cloth as I tried to free my foot; then I pitched forward and fell. Not yet senseless, I clutched at my breast for the despatch, meaning to tear it to pieces; but there my brain failed, and in full view of the goal of the night I lay unconscious.

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When I came to, I rose on my left elbow, and looked around. Near my feet my poor bay lay, stone dead. Crowfoot's gray!—where was Crowfoot's gray? It flashed on me that I might mount the fresh horse and ride on. But where was the gray? As I peered round I heard faintly the sound of a galloper. Was he coming my way? No; faintly and more faintly I heard the hoofs.

Had the gray gone on then, without the despatch? I clutched at my breast. My coat was unbuttoned—the paper was gone!

Well, sir, I cheered. My God! but it was comforting to hear those far-away hoofs, and know that Bader must have come up, taken the papers, and mounted Crowfoot's gray, still good for a ten-mile ride! The despatch was gone forward; we had not all fallen in vain; maybe the brigades would be saved!

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How purely the stars shone! When I stifled my groaning they seemed to tell me of a great peace to come. How still was the night! and I thought of the silence of the multitudes who had died for the Union.

Now the galloping had quite died away. There was not a sound,—a slight breeze blew, but there were no leaves to rustle. I put my head down on the neck of my dead horse. Extreme fatigue was benumbing the pain of my now swelling arm; perhaps sleep was near, perhaps I was swooning.

But a sound came that somewhat revived me. Far, low, joyful, it crept on the air. I sat up, wide awake. The sound, at first faint, died as the little breeze fell, then grew in the lull, and came ever more clearly as the wind arose. It was a sound never to be forgotten,—the sound of the distant cheering of thousands of men.

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Then I knew that Bader had galloped into the Union lines, delivered the despatch, and told a story which had quickly passed through wakeful brigades.

Bader I never saw again, nor Lieutenant Miller, nor any man with whom I rode that night. When I came to my senses I was in hospital at City Point. Thence I went home invalided. No surgeon, no nurse, no soldier at the hospital could tell me of my regiment, or how or why I was where I was. All they could tell me was that Richmond was taken, the army far away in pursuit of Lee, and a rumor flying that the great commander of the South had surrendered near Appomattox Court House.

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## "DRAFTED."

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Harry Wallbridge, awaking with a sense of some alarming sound, listened intently in the darkness, seeing overhead the canvas roof faintly outlined, the darker stretch of its ridge-pole, its two thin slanting rafters, and the gable ends of the winter hut. He could not hear the small, fine drizzle from an atmosphere surcharged with water, nor anything but the drip from canvas to trench, the rustling of hay bunched beneath his head, the regular breathing of his "buddy," Corporal Bader, and the stamping of horses in stables. But when a soldier in a neighboring tent called indistinguishably in the accents of nightmare, Bader's breathing quieted, and in the lull Harry fancied the soaked air weighted faintly with steady picket-firing. A month with the 53d Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteer Cavalry had not quite disabused the young recruit of his schoolboy belief that the men of the Army of the Potomac must live constantly within sound of the out-posts.

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Harry sat up to hearken better, and then concluded that he had mistaken for musketry the crackle of haystacks under his poncho sheet. Beneath him the round poles of his bed sagged as he drew up his knees and gathered about his shoulders the gray blanket damp from the spray of heavy rain against the canvas earlier in the night. Soon, with slow dawn's approach, he could make out the dull white of his carbine and sabre against the mud-plastered chimney. In that drear dimness the boy shivered, with a sense of misery rather than from cold, and yearned as only sleepy youth can for the ease of a true bed and dry warm swooning to slumber. He was sustained by no mature sense that this too would pass; it was with a certain bodily despair that he felt chafed and compressed by his rough garments, and pitied himself, thinking how his mother would cry if she could see him crouched so wretchedly that wet March morning, pressed all the more into loneliness by the regular breathing of veteran Bader in the indifference of deep sleep.

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Harry's vision of his mother coming into his room, shading her candle with her hand to see if he were asleep, passed away as a small gust came, shaking the canvas, for he was instantly alert with a certainty that the breeze had borne a strong rolling of musketry.

"Bader, Bader!" he said. "Bader!"

"Can't you shut up, you Wallbridge?" came Orderly Sergeant Gravely's sharp tones from the next tent.

"What's wrong with you, Harry, boy?" asked Bader, turning.

"I thought I heard heavy firing closer than the picket lines; twice now I've thought I heard it."

"Oh, I guess not, Harry. The Johnnies won't come out no such night as this. Keep quiet, or you'll have the sergeant on top of you. Better lie down and try to sleep, buddy; the bugles will call morning soon now." [Pg 177]

Again Harry fell to his reverie of home, and his vision became that of the special evening on which his boyish wish to go to the war had, for the family's sake, become resolve. He saw his mother's spectacled and lamp-lit face as she, leaning to the table, read in the familiar Bible; little Fred and Mary, also facing the table's central lamp, bent sleepy heads over their school-books; the father sat in the rocking-chair, with his right hand on the paper he had laid down, and gazed gloomily at the coals fallen below the front doors of the wood-burning stove. Harry dreamed himself back in his own chair, looking askance, and feeling sure his father was inwardly groaning over the absence of Jack, the eldest son. Then nine o'clock struck, and Fred and Mary began to put their books away in preparation for bed.

"Wait a little, children," Mrs. Wallbridge said, serene in tone from her devotional reading. "Father wants that I should tell you something. You mustn't feel bad about it. It's that we may soon go out West. Your Uncle Ezra is doing well in Minnesota. Aunt Elvira says so in her letter that came to-day." [Pg 178]

"It's this way, children," said Mr. Wallbridge, ready to explain, now that the subject was opened. "Since ever your brother Jack went away South, the store expenses have been too heavy. It's near five years now he's been gone. There's a sheaf of notes coming due the third of next month; twice they've been renewed, and the Philadelphia men say they'll close me up this time sure. If I had eight hundred dollars—but it's no use talking; we'll just have to let them take what we've got. Times have been bad right along around here, anyhow, with new competition, and so many farmers gone to the war, and more gone West. If Jack had stopped to home—but I've had to pay two clerks to do his work, and then they don't take any interest in the business. Mind, I'm not blaming Jack, poor fellow,—he'd a right to go where he'd get more'n his keep, and be able to lay up something for himself,—but what's become of him, God knows; and such a smart, good boy as he was! He'd got fond of New Orleans,—I guess some nice girl there, maybe, was the reason; and there he'd stay after the war began, and now it's two years and more since we've heard from him. Dead, maybe, or maybe they'd put him in jail, for he said he'd never join the Confederates, nor fight against them either—he felt that way—North and South was all the same to him. And so he's gone; and I don't see my way now at all. Ma, if it wasn't for my lame leg, I'd take the bounty. It'd be *something* for you and the children after the store's gone." [Pg 179]

"Sho, pa! don't talk that way! You're too down-hearted. It'll all come right, with the Lord's help," said Harry's mother. How clearly he, in the damp cold tent, could see her kind looks as she pushed up her spectacles and beamed on her husband; how distinctly, in the still dim dawn, he heard her soothing tones! [Pg 180]

It was that evening's talk which had sent Harry, so young, to the front. Three village boys, little older than he, had already contrived to enlist. Every time he saw the Flag drooping, he thought shame of himself to be absent from the ranks of its upholders; and now, just as he was believing himself big and old enough to serve, he conceived that duty to his parents distinctly enjoined him to go. So in the night, without leave-taking or consent of his parents, he departed. The combined Federal, State, and city bounties offered at Philadelphia amounted to nine hundred dollars cash that dreadful winter before Richmond fell, and Harry sent the money home triumphantly in time to pay his father's notes and save the store.

While the young soldier thought it all over, carbine and sabre came out more and more distinctly outlined above the mud-plastered fireplace. The drizzle had ceased, the drip into the trench was almost finished, intense stillness ruled; Harry half expected to hear cocks crow from out such silence. [Pg 181]

Listening for them, his dreamy mind brooded over both hosts, in a vision even as wide as the vast spread of the Republic in which they lay as two huddles of miserable men. For what were they all about him this woful, wet night? they all fain, as he, for home and industry and comfort. What delusion held them? How could it be that they could not all march away and separate, and the cruel war be over? Harry caught his breath at the idea,—it seemed so natural, simple, easy, and good a solution. Becoming absorbed in the fancy, tired of listening, and soothed by the silence, he was falling asleep as he sat, when a heavy weight seemed to fall, far away. Another—another—the fourth had the rumble of distant thunder, and seemed followed by a concussion of the air.

"Hey—Big Guns! What's up toward City Point?" cried Bader, sitting up. "I tell you they're at it. It can't be so far away as Butler. What? On the left too! That was toward Hatcher's Run! Harry, the rebs are out in earnest! I guess you did hear the pickets trying to stop 'em. What a morning! Ha—Fort Hell! see that!" [Pg 182]

The outside world was dimly lighted up for a moment. In the intensified darkness that followed Bader's voice was drowned by the crash of a great gun from the neighboring fort. *Flash, crash—flash, crash—flash, crash* succeeded rapidly. Then the intervals of Fort Hell's fire lengthened to

the regular periods for loading, and between her roars were heard the sullen boom of more distant guns, while through all the tumult ran a fierce undertone,—the infernal hurrying of musketry along the immediate front.

"The Johnnies must have got in close somehow," cried Bader. "Hey, Sergeant?"

"Yes," shouted Gravely. "Scooped up the pickets and supports too in the rain, I guess. Turn out, boys, turn out! there'll be a wild day. Kid! Where's the Kid? Kid Sylvester!" [Pg 183]

"Here! All right, Barney; I'll be out in two shakes," shouted the bugler.

"Hurry, then! I can hear the Colonel shouting already. Man, listen to that!"—as four of Fort Hell's guns crashed almost simultaneously. "Brownie! Greasy Cook! O Brownie!"

"Here!" shouted the cook.

"Get your fire started right away, and see what salt horse and biscuit you can scare up. Maybe we'll have time for a snack."

"Turn out, Company K!" shouted Lieutenant Bradley, running down from the officers' quarters. "Where's the commissary sergeant? There?—all right—give out feed right away! Get your oats, men, and feed instantly! We may have time. Hullo! here's the General's orderly."

As the trooper galloped, in a mud-storm, across the parade ground, a group of officers ran out behind the Colonel from the screen of pine saplings about Regimental Headquarters. The orderly gave the Colonel but a word, and, wheeling, was off again as "Boot and saddle" blared from the buglers, who had now assembled on parade. [Pg 184]

"But leave the bits out—let your horses feed!" cried the Lieutenant, running down again. "We're not to march till further orders."

Beyond the screen of pines Harry could see the tall canvas ridges of the officers' cabins lighted up. Now all the tents of the regiment, row behind row, were faintly luminous, and the renewed drizzle of the dawn was a little lightened in every direction by the canvas-hidden candles of infantry regiments, the glare of numerous fires already started, and sparks showering up from the cook-houses of company after company.

Soon in the cloudy sky the cannonade rolled about in broad day, which was still so gray that long wide flashes of flame could be seen to spring far out before every report from the guns of Fort Hell, and in the haze but few of the rebel shells shrieking along their high curve could be clearly seen bursting over Hancock's cheering men. Indistinguishably blent were the sounds of hosts on the move, field-guns pounding to the front, troops shouting, the clink and rattle of metal, officers calling, bugles blaring, drums rolling, mules screaming,—all heard as a running accompaniment to the cannon heavily punctuating the multitudinous din. [Pg 185]

"Fwat sinse in the ould man bodderin' us?" grumbled Corporal Kennedy, a tall Fenian dragoon from the British army. "Sure, ain't it as plain as the sun—and faith the same's not plain this dirty mornin'—that there's no work for cavalry the day, barrin' it's escortin' the doughboys' prisoners, if they take any?—bad 'cess to the job. Sure it's an infantry fight, and must be, wid the field-guns helpin', and the siege pieces boomin' away over the throops in the mud betwist our own breastworks and the inner line of our forts. [Pg 186]

"Oh, by this and by that," the corporal grumbled on, "ould Lee's not the gintleman I tuk him for at all, at all,—discomfordin' us in the rain,—and yesterday an illigant day for fightin'. Couldn't he wait, like the dacint ould boy he's reported, for a dhry mornin', instead av turnin' his byes out in the shlush and destroyin' me chanst av breakfast? It's spring chickens I'd ordhered."

"You may get up to spring-chicken country soon, now," said Bader. "I'm thinking this is near the end; it's the last assault that Lee will ever deliver."

"Faith, I dunno," said the corporal; "that's what we've been saying sinst last fall, but the shtay of them Johnnies bates Banagher and the prophets. Hoo—ow! by the powers! did you hear them yell? Fwat? The saints be wid us! who'd 'a' thought it possible? Byes! Bader! Harry! luk at the Johnnies swarmin' up the face of Hell!" [Pg 187]

Off there Harry could dimly see, rising over the near horizon made by tents, a stragglng rush of men up the steep slope, while the rebel yell came shrill from a multitude behind on the level ground that was hidden from the place occupied by the cavalry regiment. In the next moment the force mounting Fort Hell's slope fell away, some lying where shot down, some rolling, some running and stumbling in heaps; then a tremendous musketry and field-gun fire growled to and fro under the heavy smoke round and about and out in front of the embrasures, which had never ceased their regular discharge over the heads of the fort's defenders and immediate assailants.

Suddenly Harry noted a slackening of the battle; it gradually but soon dropped away to nothing, and now no sound of small-arms in any direction was heard in the lengthening intervals of reports from the siege pieces far and near.

"And so that's the end of it," said Kennedy. "Sure it was hot work for a while! Faix, I thought onct the doughboys was nappin' too long, and ould Hell would be bullyin' away at ourselves. Now, thin, can we have a bite in paice? I'll shtart wid a few sausages, Brownie, and you may send in the shpring chickens wid some oyshters the second coorse. No! Oh, by the powers, 'tis too mane [Pg 188]

to lose a breakfast like that!" and Corporal Kennedy shook his fist at the group of buglers calling the regiment to parade.

In ten minutes the Fifty-third had formed in column of companies. "Old Jimmy," their Colonel, had galloped down at them and once along their front; then the command, forming fours from the right front, moved off at a trot through the mud in long procession.

"Didn't I know it?" said Kennedy; "it's escortin' the doughboys' prisoners, that's all we're good for this outrageous day. Oh, wirra, wirrasthru! Police duty! and this calls itself a cavalry rigiment. Mounted Police duty,—escortin' doughboys' prisoners! Faix, I might as well be wid Her Majesty's dhragoons, thrampin' down the flesh and blood of me in poor ould Oireland. Begor, Harry, me bhy, it's a mane job to be setting you at, and this the first day ye're mounted to save the Union!"

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"Stop coddin' the boy, Corporal," said Bader, angrily. "You can't think how an American boy feels about this war."

"An Amerikin!—an Amerikin, is it? Let me instruct ye thin, Misther Bader, that I'm as good an Amerikin as the next man. Och, be jabers, me that's been in the color you see ever since the Prisident first called for men! It was for a three months' dance he axed us first. Me, that's re-enlishted twice, don't know the feelin's of an Amerikin! What am I here for? Not poverty! sure I'd enough of that before ever I seen Ameriky! What am I wallop in' through the mud for this mornin'?"

"It's your trade, Kennedy," said Bader, with disgust.

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"Be damned to you, man!" said the corporal, sternly. "When I touched fut in New York, didn't I swear that I'd never dhraw sword more, barrin' it was agin the ould red tyrant and oprissor of me country? Wasn't I glad to be dhrevin' me own hack next year in Philamedink like a gintleman? Oh, the paice and the indipindence of it! But what cud I do when the country that tuk me and was good to me wanted an ould dhragoon? An Amerikin, ye say! Faith, the heart of me is Amerikin, if I'm a bog throtter by the tongue. Mind that now, me bould man!"

Harry heard without heeding as the horses splattered on. Still wavered in his ears the sounds of the dawn; still he saw the ghostlike forms of Americans in gray tumbling back from their rush against the sacred flag that had drooped so sadly over the smoke; and still, far away beyond all this puddled and cumbered ground the dreamy boy saw millions of white American faces, all haggard for news of the armies—some looking South, some North, yearning for the Peace that had so long ago been the boon of the Nation.

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Now the regiment was upon the red clay of the dead fight, and brought to halt in open columns. After a little they moved off again in fours, and, dropping into single file, surrounded some thousands of disarmed men, the remnant of the desperate brigades that Lee had flung through the night across three lines of breastworks at the great fort they had so nearly stormed. Poor drenched, shivering Johnnies! there they stood, not a few of them in blue overcoats, but mostly in butternut, generally tattered; some barefoot, some with feet bound in ragged sections of blanket, many with toes and skin showing through crazy boots lashed on with strips of cotton or with cord; many stoutly on foot, streaming blood from head wounds.

Some lay groaning in the mud, while their comrades helped Union surgeons to bind or amputate. Here and there groups huddled together in earnest talk, or listened to comrades gesticulating and storming as they recounted incidents of the long charge. But far the greater number faced outward, at gaze upon the cavalry guard, and, silently munching thick flat cakes of corn-bread, stared into the faces of the horsemen. Harry Wallbridge, brought to the halt, faced half-round in the saddle, and looked with quick beatings of pity far and wide over the disorderly crowd of weather-worn men.

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"It's a Louisiana brigade," said Bader.

"Fifty-three, P. V. V. C.," spoke a prisoner, as if in reply, reading the letters about the little crossed brass sabres on the Union hats. "Say, you men from Pennsylvania?"

"Yes, Johnny; we come down to wake up Dixie."

"I reckon we got the start at wakin' you this mornin'," drawled the Southerner. "But say,—there's one of our boys lyin' dyin' over yonder; his folks lives in Pennsylvania. Mebbe some of you 'ud know 'em."

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"What's his name?" asked Bader.

"Wallbridge—Johnny Wallbridge."

"Why, Harry—hold on!—you ain't the only Wallbridges there is. What's up?" cried Bader, as the boy half reeled, half clambered from his saddle.

"Hold on, Harry!" cried Corporal Kennedy.

"Halt there, Wallbridge!" shouted Sergeant Gravely.

"Stop that man!" roared Lieutenant Bradley.

But, calling, "He's my brother!" Harry, catching up his sabre as he ran, followed the Southerner, who had instantly divined the situation. The forlorn prisoners made ready for them, and

closing in behind, stretched in solid array about the scene.

"It's not Jack," said the boy; but something in the look of the dying man drew him on to kneel in the mud. "Is it *you*, Jack? Oh, now I know you! Jack, I'm Harry! don't you know me? I'm Harry—your brother Harry." [Pg 194]

The Southern soldier stared rigidly at the boy, seeming to grow paler with the recollections that he struggled for.

"*What's your name?*" he asked very faintly.

"Harry Wallbridge—I'm your brother."

"Harry Wallbridge! Why, I'm *John* Wallbridge. Did you say Harry? *Not Harry!*" he shrieked hoarsely. "No; Harry's only a little fellow!" He paused, and looked meditatively into the boy's eyes. "It's nearly five years I've been gone,—he was near twelve then. Boys," lifting his head painfully and casting his look slowly round upon his comrades, "I know him by the eyes; yes, he's my brother! Let me speak to him alone—stand back a bit," and at once the men pushed backward into the form of a wide circle.

"Put down your head, Harry. Kiss me! Kiss me again!—how's mother? Ah, I was afraid she might be dead—don't tell her I'm dead, Harry." He groaned with the pain of the groin wound. "Closer, Harry; I've got to tell you this first—maybe it's all I've time to tell. Say, Harry,"—he began to gasp,—*"they didn't ought to have killed me, the Union soldiers didn't. I never fired—high enough—all these years. They drafted me, Harry—tell mother that—down in New Orleans—and I—couldn't get away. Ai—ai! how it hurts! I must die soon 's I can tell you. I wanted to come home—and help father—how's poor father, Harry? Doing well now? Oh. I'm glad of that—and the baby? there's a new baby! Ah, yes, I'll never see it, Harry."* [Pg 195]

His eyes closed, the pain seemed to leave him, and he lay almost smiling happily as his brother's tears fell on his muddy and blood-clotted face. As if from a trance his eyes opened, and he spoke anxiously but calmly.

"You'll be sure to tell them I was drafted—conscripted, you understand. And I never fired at any of us—of you—tell all the boys *that*." Again the flame of life went down, and again flickered up in pain. [Pg 196]

"Harry—you'll stay by father—and help him, won't you? This cruel war—is almost over. Don't cry. Kiss me. Say—do you remember—the old times we had—fishing? Kiss me again, Harry—brother in blue—you're on—*my* side. Oh I wish—I had time—to tell you. Come close—put your arms around—my neck—it's old times—again." And now the wound tortured him for a while beyond speech. "You're with me, aren't you, Harry?"

"Well, there's this," he gasped on, "about my chums—they've been as good and kind—marching, us, all wet and cold together—and it wasn't their fault. If they had known—how I wanted—to be shot—for the Union! It was so hard—to be—on the wrong side! But—"

He lifted his head and stared wildly at his brother, screamed rapidly, as if summoning all his life for the effort to explain, "Drafted, *drafted, drafted*—Harry, tell mother and father *that*. I was *drafted*. O God, O God, what suffering! Both sides—I was on both sides all the time. I loved them all, North and South, all,—but the Union most. O God, it was so hard!" [Pg 197]

His head fell back, his eyes closed, and Harry thought it was the end. But once more Jack opened his blue eyes, and slowly said in a steady, clear, anxious voice, "Mind you tell them I never fired high enough!" Then he lay still in Harry's arms, breathing fainter and fainter till no motion was on his lips, nor in his heart, nor any tremor in the hands that lay in the hand of his brother in blue.

"Come, Harry," said Bader, stooping tenderly to the boy, "the order is to march. He's past helping now. It's no use; you must leave him here to God. Come, boy, the head of the column is moving already."

Mounting his horse, Harry looked across to Jack's form. For the first time in two years the famous Louisiana brigade trudged on without their unwilling comrade. There he lay, alone, in the Union lines, under the rain, his marching done, a figure of eternal peace; while Harry, looking backward till he could no longer distinguish his brother from the clay of the field, rode dumbly on and on beside the downcast procession of men in gray. [Pg 198]

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## A TURKEY APIECE.

Not long ago I was searching files of New York papers for 1864, when my eye caught the headline, "Thanksgiving Dinner for the Army." I had shared that feast. The words brought me a vision of a cavalry brigade in winter quarters before Petersburg; of the three-miles-distant and dim steeples of the besieged city; of rows and rows of canvas-covered huts sheltering the infantry corps that stretched interminably away toward the Army of the James. I fancied I could hear again the great guns of "Fort Hell" infrequently punctuating the far-away picket-firing. [Pg 199]

Rain, rain, and rain! How it fell on red Virginia that November of '64! How it wore away alertness! The infantry-men—whom we used to call "doughboys," for there was always a pretended feud between the riders and the trudgers—often seemed going to sleep in the night in their rain-filled holes far beyond the breastworks, each with its little mound of earth thrown up toward the beleaguered town. Their night-firing would slacken almost to cessation for many minutes together. But after the b-o-o-oom of a great gun it became brisker usually; often so much so as to suggest that some of Lee's ragged brigades, their march silenced by the rain, had pierced our fore-front again, and were "gobbling up" our boys on picket, and flinging up new rifle-pits on the acres reclaimed for a night and a day for the tottering Confederacy.

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Sometimes the *crack-a-rac-a-rack* would die down to a slow fire of dropping shots, and the forts seemed sleeping; and patter, patter, patter on the veteran canvas we heard the rain, rain, rain, not unlike the roll of steady musketry very far away.

I think I sit again beside Charley Wilson, my sick "buddy," and hear his uneven breathing through all the stamping of the rows of wet horses on their corduroy floor roofed with leaky pine brush.

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That *squ-ush, squ-ush* is the sound of the stable-guard's boots as he paces slowly through the mud, to and fro, with the rain rattling on his glazed poncho and streaming corded hat. Sometimes he stops to listen to a frantic brawling of the wagon-train mules, sometimes to the reviving picket-firing. It crackles up to animation for causes that we can but guess; then dies down, never to silence, but warns, warns, as the distant glow of the sky above a volcano warns of the huge waiting forces that give it forth.

I think I hear Barney Donahoe pulling our latch-string that November night when we first heard of the great Thanksgiving dinner that was being collected in New York for the army.

"Byes, did yez hear phwat Sergeant Cunningham was tellin' av the Thanksgivin' turkeys that's comin'?"

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"Come in out of the rain, Barney," says Charley, feebly.

"Faith, I wish I dar', but it's meself is on shtable-guard. Bedad, it's a rale fire ye've got. Divil a better has ould Jimmy himself (our colonel). Ye've heard tell of the turkeys, then, and the pois?"

"Yes. Bully for the folks at home!" says Charley. "The notion of turkey next Thursday has done me good already. I was thinking I'd go to hospital to-morrow, but now I guess I won't."

"Hoshpital! Kape clear av the hoshpital, Char-les, dear. Sure, they'd cut a man's leg off behind the ears av him for to cure him av indigestion."

"Is it going to rain all night, Barney?"

"It is, bad 'cess to it; and to-morrow and the day after, I'm thinkin'. The blackness av night is outside; be jabers! you could cut it like turf with a shpade! If it wasn't for the ould fort flamin' out wanst in a whoile, I'd be thinkin' I'd never an oi in my head, barrin' the fires in the tints far an' near gives a bit of dimness to the dark. Phwat time is it?"

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"Quarter to twelve, Barney."

"Troth, then, the relief will be soon coming. I must be thramping the mud av Virginia to save the Union. Good-night, byes. I come to give yez the good word. Kape your heart light an' aisy, Charles, dear. D'ye moind the turkeys and the pois? Faith, it's meself that has the taste for thim dainties!"

"I don't believe I'll be able to eat a mite of the Thanksgiving," says Charley, as we hear Barney *squ-ush* away; "but just to see the brown on a real old brown home turkey will do me a heap of good."

"You'll be all right by Thursday, Charley, I guess; won't you? It's only Sunday night now."

Of course I cannot remember the very words of that talk in the night, so many years ago. But the coming of Barney I recollect well, and the general drift of what was said.

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Charley turned on his bed of hay-covered poles, and I put my hand under his gray blanket to feel if his legs were well covered by the long overcoat he lay in. Then I tucked the blanket well in about his feet and shoulders, pulled his poncho again to its full length over him, and sat on a cracker-box looking at our fire for a long time, while the rain spattered through the canvas in spray.

My "buddy" Charley, the most popular boy of Company I, was of my own age,—seventeen,—though the rolls gave us a year more each, by way of compliance with the law of enlistment. From a Pennsylvania farm in the hills he came forth to the field early in that black fall of '64, strong, tall, and merry, fit to ride for the nation's life,—a mighty wielder of an axe, "bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade."

We were "the kids" to Company I. To "buddy" with Charley I gave up my share of the hut I had helped to build as old Bader's "pard." Then the "kids" set about the construction of a new residence, which stood farther from the parade ground than any hut in the row except the big cabin of "old Brownie," the "greasy cook," who called us to "bean—oh!" with so resonant a shout, and majestically served out our rations of pork, "salt horse," coffee long-boiled and sickeningly sweet, hardtack, and the daily loaf of a singularly despondent-looking bread.

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My "buddy" and I slept on opposite sides of our winter residence. The bedsteads were made of poles laid lengthwise and lifted about two feet from the ground. These were covered thinly with hay from the bales that were regularly delivered for horse-fodder. There was a space of about two feet between bedsteads, and under them we kept our saddles and saddlecloths.

Our floor was of earth, with a few flour-barrel staves and cracker-box sides laid down for rugs. We had each an easy-chair in the form of a cracker-box, besides a stout soap-box for guests. Our carbines and sabres hung crossed on pegs over the mantel-piece, above our Bibles and the precious daguerreotypes of the dear folks at home. When we happened to have enough wood for a bright fire, we felt much snuggler than you might suppose. [Pg 206]

Before ever that dark November began, Charley had been suffering from one of those wasting diseases that so often clung to and carried off the strongest men of both armies. Sharing the soldiers' inveterate prejudice against hospitals attended by young doctors, who, the men believed, were addicted to much surgery for the sake of practice, my poor "buddy" strove to do his regular duties. He paraded with the sick before the regimental doctor as seldom as possible. He was favored by the sergeants and helped in every way by the men, and so continued to stay with the company at that wet season when drill and parades were impracticable. [Pg 207]

The idea of a Thanksgiving dinner for half a million men by sea and land fascinated Charley's imagination, and cheered him mightily. But I could not see that his strength increased, as he often alleged.

"Ned, you bet I'll be on hand when them turkeys are served out," he would say. "You won't need to carry my Thanksgiving dinner up from Brownie's. Say, ain't it bully for the folks at home to be giving us a Thanksgiving like this? Turkeys, sausages, mince-pies! They say there's going to be apples and celery for all hands!"

"S'pose you'll be able to eat, Charley?"

"Able! Of course I'll be able! I'll be just as spry as you be on Thanksgiving. See if I don't carry my own turkey all right. Yes, by gum, if it weighs twenty pounds!"

"There won't be a turkey apiece."

"No, eh? Well, that's what I figure on. Half a turkey, anyhow. Got to be; besides chickens, hams, sausages, and all that kind of fixin's. You heard what Bill Sylvester's girl wrote from Philamadink-a-daisy-oh? No, eh? Well, he come in a-purpose to read me the letter. Says there's going to be three or four hundred thousand turkeys, besides them fixin's! Sherman's boys can't get any; they're marched too far away, out of reach. The Shenandoah boys'll get some, and Butler's crowd, and us chaps, and the blockading squadrons. Bill's girl says so. We'll get the whole lot between us. Four hundred thousand turkeys! Of course there'll be a turkey apiece; there's got to be, if there's any sense in arithmetic. Oh, I'll be choosin' between breast-meat and hind-legs on Thanksgiving,—you bet your sweet life on that!" [Pg 208]

This expectation that there would be a turkey a-piece was not shared by Company I; but no one denied it in Charley's hearing. The boy held it as sick people often do fantastic notions, and all fell into the humor of strengthening the reasoning on which he went. [Pg 209]

It was clear that no appetite for turkey moved my poor "buddy," but that his brain was busy with the "whole-turkey-a-piece" idea as one significant of the immense liberality of the folks at home, and their absorbing interest in the army.

"Where's there any nation that ever was that would get to work and fix up four hundred thousand turkeys for the boys?" he often remarked, with ecstatic patriotism.

I have often wondered why "Bill Sylvester's girl" gave that flourishing account of the preparations for our Thanksgiving dinner. It was only on searching the newspaper files recently that I surmised her sources of information. Newspapers seldom reached our regiment until they were several weeks old, and then they were not much read, at least by me. Now I know how enthusiastic the papers of November, '64, were on the great feast for the army.

For instance, on the morning of that Thanksgiving day, the 24th of November, the New York Tribune said editorially:— [Pg 210]

"Forty thousand turkeys, eighty thousand turkeys, one hundred and sixty thousand turkeys, nobody knows how many turkeys have been sent to our soldiers. Such masses of breast-meat and such mountains of stuffing; drumsticks enough to fit out three or four Grand Armies, a perfect promontory of pope's noses, a mighty aggregate of wings. The gifts of their lordships to the supper which Grangousier spread to welcome Gargantua were nothing to those which our good people at home send to their friends in the field; and no doubt every soldier, if his dinner does not set him thinking too intently of that home, will prove himself a valiant trencherman."

Across the vast encampment before Petersburg a biting wind blew that Thanksgiving day. It came through every cranny of our hut; it bellied the canvas on one side and tightened it on the other; it pressed flat down the smoke from a hundred thousand mud chimneys, and swept away so quickly the little coals which fell on the canvas that they had not time to burn through. [Pg 211]

When I went out towards noon, for perhaps the twentieth time that day, to learn whether our commissary wagons had returned from City Point with the turkeys, the muddy parade ground was dotted with groups of shivering men, all looking anxiously for the feast's arrival. Officers frequently came out, to exchange a few cheery words with their men, from the tall, close hedge of withering pines stuck on end that enclosed the officers' quarters on the opposite side of the parade ground.

No turkeys at twelve o'clock! None at one! Two, three, four, five o'clock passed by, and still nothing had been heard of our absent wagons. Charley was too weak to get out that day, but he cheerfully scouted the idea that a turkey for each man would not arrive sooner or later.

The rest of us dined and supped on "commissary." It was not good commissary either, for Brownie, the "greasy cook," had gone on leave to visit a "doughboy" cousin of the Sixth Corps. [Pg 212]

"You'll have turkey for dinner, boys," he had said, on serving out breakfast. "If you're wanting coffee, Tom can make it." Thus we had to dine and sup on the amateur productions of the cook's mate.

A multitude of woful rumors concerning the absent turkeys flew round that evening. The "Johnnies," we heard, had raided round the army, and captured the fowls! Butler's colored troops had got all the turkeys, and had been feeding on fowl for two days! The officers had "gobbled" the whole consignment for their own use! The whole story of the Thanksgiving dinner was a newspaper hoax! Nothing was too incredible for men so bitterly disappointed.

Brownie returned before "lights out" sounded, and reported facetiously that the "doughboys" he had visited were feeding full of turkey and all manner of fixings. There were so many wagons waiting at City Point that the roads round there were blocked for miles. We could not fail to get our turkeys to-morrow. With this expectation we went, pretty happy, to bed. [Pg 213]

"There'll be a turkey apiece, you'll see, Ned," said Charley, in a confident, weak voice, as I turned in. "We'll all have a bully Thanksgiving to-morrow."

The morrow broke as bleak as the preceding day, and without a sign of turkey for our brigade. But about twelve o'clock a great shouting came from the parade ground.

"The turkeys have come!" cried Charley, trying to rise. "Never mind picking out a big one for me; any one will do. I don't believe I can eat a bite, but I want to see it. My! ain't it kind of the folks at home!"

I ran out and found his surmise as to the return of the wagons correct. They were filing into the enclosure around the quartermaster's tent. Nothing but an order that the men should keep to company quarters prevented the whole regiment helping to unload the delicacies of the season. [Pg 214]

Soon foraging parties went from each company to the quartermaster's enclosure. Company I sent six men. They returned, grinning, in about half an hour, with one box on one man's shoulders.

It was carried to Sergeant Cunningham's cabin, the nearest to the parade ground, the most distant from that of "the kids," in which Charley lay waiting. We crowded round the hut with some sinking of enthusiasm. There was no cover on the box except a bit of cotton in which some of the consignment had probably been wrapped. Brownie whisked this off, and those nearest Cunningham's door saw disclosed—two small turkeys, a chicken, four rather disorganized pies, two handsome bologna sausages, and six very red apples.

We were nearly seventy men. The comical side of the case struck the boys instantly. Their disappointment was so extreme as to be absurd. There might be two ounces of feast to each, if the whole were equally shared. [Pg 215]

All hands laughed; not a man swore. The idea of an equal distribution seemed to have no place in that company. One proposed that all should toss up for the lot. Another suggested drawing lots; a third that we should set the Thanksgiving dinner at one end of the parade ground and run a race for it, "grab who can."

At this Barney Donahoe spoke up.

"Begorra, yez can race for wan turkey av yez loike. But the other wan is goin' to Char-les Wilson!"

There was not a dissenting voice. Charley was altogether the most popular member of Company I, and every man knew how he had clung to the turkey apiece idea.

"Never let on a word," said Sergeant Cunningham. "He'll think there's a turkey for every man!"

The biggest bird, the least demoralized pie, a bologna sausage, and the whole six apples were placed in the cloth that had covered the box. I was told to carry the display to my poor "buddy." [Pg 216]

As I marched down the row of tents a tremendous yelling arose from the crowd round Cunningham's tent. I turned to look behind. Some man with a riotous impulse had seized the box and flung its contents in the air over the thickest of the crowd. Next moment the turkey was seized by half a dozen hands. As many more helped to tear it to pieces. Barney Donahoe ran past me with a leg, and two laughing men after him. Those who secured larger portions took a bite as quickly as possible, and yielded the rest to clutching hands. The bologna sausage was shared in like fashion, but I never heard of any one who got a taste of the pies.



"Here's your turkey, Charley," said I, entering with my burden.

"Where's yours, Ned?"

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"I've got my turkey all right enough at Cunningham's tent."

"Didn't I tell you there'd be a turkey apiece?" he cried gleefully, as I unrolled the lot. "And sausages, apples, a whole pie—oh, *say*, ain't they bully folks up home!"

"They are," said I. "I believe we'd have had a bigger Thanksgiving yet if it wasn't such a trouble getting it distributed."

"You'd better believe it! They'd do anything in the world for the army," he said, lying back.

"Can't you eat a bite, buddy?"

"No; I'm not a mite hungry. But I'll look at it. It won't spoil before to-morrow. Then you can share it all out among the boys."

Looking at the turkey, the sick lad fell asleep. Barney Donahoe softly opened our door, stooped his head under the lintel, and gazed a few moments at the quiet face turned to the Thanksgiving turkey. Man after man followed to gaze on the company's favorite, and on the fowl which, they knew, tangibly symbolized to him the immense love of the nation for the flower of its manhood in the field. Indeed, the people had forwarded an enormous Thanksgiving feast; but it was impossible to distribute it evenly, and we were one of the regiments that came short.

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Grotesque, that scene was? Group after group of hungry, dirty soldiers, gazing solemnly, lovingly, at a lone brown turkey and a pallid sleeping boy! Yes, very grotesque. But Charley had his Thanksgiving dinner, and the men of Company I, perhaps, enjoyed a profounder satisfaction than if they had feasted more materially.

I never saw Charley after that Thanksgiving day. Before the afternoon was half gone the doctor sent an ambulance for him, and insisted that he should go to City Point. By Christmas his wasted body had lain for three weeks in the red Virginia soil.

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## GRANDPAPA'S WOLF STORY.

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"Tell us a story, grandpapa."

"One that will last all the evening, chickens?"

"Yes, grandpapa, darling," said Jenny, while Jimmy clapped hands.

"What about?" said the old lumber king.

"About when you were a boy."

"When I was a boy," said the old gentleman, taking Jenny on his knee and putting his arm round Jimmy, "the boys and girls were as fond of stories as they are now. Once when I was a boy I said to my grandfather, 'Tell me a story, grandpa,' and he replied, 'When I was a boy the boys were as fond of stories as they are now; for once when I was a boy I said to my grandfather, "Tell me a story, grandpa,—""

"Why, it seems to go on just the same story, grandpapa," said Jenny.

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"That's not the end of it, Jenny, dear," said grandpapa.

"No-o?" said Jenny, dubiously.

Jimmy said nothing. He lived with his grandfather, and knew his ways. Jenny came on visits only, and was not well enough acquainted with the old gentleman to know that he would soon tire of the old joke, and reward patient children by a good story.

"Shall I go on with the story, Jenny?" said grandpapa.

"Oh, yes, grandpapa!"

"Well, then, when *that* grandpa was a boy, he said to *his* grandfather, 'Tell me a story, grandpapa,' and his grandfather replied—"

Jenny soon listened with a demure smile of attention.

"Do you like this story, dear?" said grandpapa, after pursuing the repetition for some minutes longer.

"I shall, grandpapa, darling. It must be very good when you come to the grandfather that told it. I like to think of all my grandfathers, and great, great, great, greater, greatest, great, great-grandpapas all telling the same story."

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"Yes, it's a genuine family story, Jenny, and you're a little witch." The old gentleman kissed her. "Well, where was I? Oh, now I remember! And *that* grandpapa said to his grandfather, 'Tell me a

story, grandpapa,' and his grandpapa replied, 'When I was a young fellow—'

"Now it's beginning!" cried Jimmy, clapping his hands, and shifting to an easier attitude by the old man's easy-chair.

Grandpapa looked comically at Jimmy, and said, "His grandfather replied, 'When I was a young fellow—'"

The faces of the children became woful again.

"One rainy day I took my revolver—"

"Revolver! Grandpapa!" cried Jenny.

"Yes, dear."

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"An American revolver, grandpapa?"

"Certainly, dear."

"And did he tell the story in English?"

"Yes, pet."

"But, grandpapa, *darling*, that grandpapa was seventy-three grandpapas back!"

"About that, my dear."

"I kept count, grandpapa."

"And don't you like good old-fashioned stories, Jenny?"

"Oh, yes, grandpapa, but *revolvers*—and *Americans*—and the *English* language! Why, it was more than twenty-two hundred years ago, grandpapa, *darling*!"

"Ha! ha! You never thought of that, Jimmy! Oh, you've been at school, Miss Bright-eyes! Kiss me, you little rogue. Now listen!

"When *I* was a young fellow—"

"You yourself, grandpapa?"

"Yes, Jenny."

"I'm so glad it was you yourself! I like my *own* grandpapa's stories best of all."

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"Thank you, my dear. After that I must be *very* entertaining. Yes, I'll tell my best story of all—and Jimmy has never heard it. Well, when I was a young fellow of seventeen I was clerk in a lumber shanty on the Sheboiobonzhe-gunpashageshickawigamog River."

"How did you *ever* learn that name, grandpapa, *darling*?" cried Jenny.

"Oh, I could learn things in those days. Remembering it is the difficulty, dear—see if it isn't. I'll give you a nice new ten-dollar bill if you tell me that name to-morrow."

Jenny bent her brows and tried so hard to recall the syllables that she almost lost part of the story. Grandpapa went steadily on:—

"One day in February, when it was too rainy for the men to work, and just rainy enough to go deer-shooting if you hadn't had fresh meat for five months, I took to the woods with my gun, revolver, hatchet, and dinner. All the fore part of the day I failed to get a shot, though I saw many deer on the hemlock ridges of Sheboi—that's the way it begins, Jenny, and Sheboi we called it."

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"But late in the afternoon I killed a buck. I cut off a haunch, lifted the carcass into the low boughs of a spruce, and started for camp, six miles away, across snowy hills and frozen lakes. The snow-shoeing was heavy, and I feared I should not get in before dark. The Sheboi country was infested with wolves—"

"Bully! It's a wolf story!" said Jimmy. Jenny shuddered with delight.

"As I went along you may be sure I never thought my grandchildren would be pleased to have me in danger of being eaten up by wolves."

Jenny looked shocked at the imputation. Grandpapa watched her with twinkling eyes. When she saw he was joking, she cried: "But you weren't eaten, grandpapa. You were too brave."

"Ah, I hadn't thought of that. Perhaps I'd better not tell the story. You'll have a worse opinion of my courage, my dear."

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"Of course you *had* to run from *wolves*, grandpapa!" said the little girl.

"I'll bet grandpapa didn't run then, miss," said Jimmy. "I'll bet he shot them with his gun."

"He couldn't—could you, grandpapa? There were too many. Of course grandpapa *had* to run. That wasn't being cowardly. It was just—just—*running*."

"No, Jenny, I didn't run a yard."

"Didn't I tell you?" cried Jimmy. "Grandpapa shot them with his gun."

"You're mistaken, Jimmy."

"Then you must—No, for you're here—you weren't eaten up?" said wondering Jenny.

"No, dear, I wasn't eaten up."

"Oh, I know! The wolves didn't come!" cried Jimmy, who remembered one of his grandpapa's stories as having ended in that unhappy way.

"Oh, but they did, Jimmy!"

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"Why, grandpapa, what *did* you do?"

"I climbed into a hollow tree."

"*Of course!*" said both children.

"Now I'm going to tell you a true wolf story, and that's what few grandpapas can do out of their own experience.

"I was resting on the shore of a lake, with my snow-shoes off to ease my sore toes, when I saw a pack of wolves trotting lazily toward me on the snow that covered the ice. I was sure they had not seen me. Right at my elbow was a big hollow pine. It had an opening down to the ground, a good deal like the door of a sentry-box.

"There was a smaller opening about thirty feet higher up. I had looked up and seen this before I saw the wolves. Then I rose, stood for a moment in the hollow, and climbed up by my feet, knees, hands, and elbows till I thought my feet were well above the top of the opening. Dead wood and dust fell as I ascended, but I hoped the wolves had not heard me."

"Did they, grandpapa?"

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"Perhaps not at first, Jenny. But maybe they got a scent of the deer-meat I was carrying. At any rate, they were soon snapping and snarling over it and my snow-shoes. *Gobble-de-gobble, yip, yap, snap, growl, snarl, gobble*—the meat was all gone in a moment, like little Red Riding Hood."

"Why, grandpapa! The wolf didn't eat little Red Riding Hood. The boy came in time—don't you remember?"

"Perhaps you never read *my* Red Riding Hood, Jenny," said the old gentleman, laughing. "At any rate, the wolves lunched at my expense; yet I hoped they wouldn't be polite enough to look round for their host. But they did inquire for me—not very politely, I must say. They seemed in bad humor—perhaps there hadn't been enough lunch to go round."

"The greedy things! A whole haunch of venison!" cried Jenny.

"Ah, but I had provided no currant jelly with it, and of course they were vexed. If you ever give a dinner-party to wolves, don't forget the currant jelly, Jenny. How they yelled for it—*Cur-r-r-rant-jell-yell-yell-elly-yell!* That's the way they went.

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"And they also said, *Yow-yow—there's-yow—no—desser-r-rt—either—yow-yow!* Perhaps they wanted me to explain. At any rate, they put their heads into the opening—how many at once I don't know, for I could not see down; and then they screamed for me. It was an uncomfortably close scream, chickens. My feet must have been nearer them than I thought, for one fellow's nose touched my moccasin as he jumped."

"O grandpapa! If he had caught your foot!"

"But he didn't, Jenny, dear. He caught something worse. When he tumbled back he must have fallen on the other fellows, for there was a great snapping and snarling and yelping all at once.

"Meantime I tried to go up out of reach. It was easy enough; but with every fresh hold I took with shoulders, elbows, hands, and feet, the dead old wood crumbled and broke away, so that thick dust filled the hollow tree.

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"I was afraid I should be suffocated. But up I worked till at last I got to the upper hole and stuck out my head for fresh air. There I was, pretty comfortable for a little while, and I easily supported my weight by bending my back, thrusting with my feet, and holding on the edge of the hole by my hands.

"After getting breath I gave my attention to the wolves. They did not catch sight of me for a few moments. Some stood looking much interested at the lower opening, as terriers do at the hole where a rat has disappeared.

"Dust still came from the hole to the open air. Some wolves sneezed; others sat and squealed with annoyance, as Bruno does when you close the door on him at dinner-time. They were disgusted at my concealment. Of course you have a pretty good idea of what they said, Jenny."

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"No, grandpapa. The horrid, cruel things! What did they say?"

"Well, of course wolf talk is rude, even savage, and dreadfully profane. As near as I could make out, one fellow screamed, 'Shame, boy, taking an unfair advantage of poor starving wolves!' It

seemed as if another fellow yelled, 'You young coward!' A third cried, 'Oh, yes, you think you're safe, do you?' A fourth, 'Yow—yow—but we can wait till you come down!'"

Grandpapa mimicked the wolfish voices and looks so effectively that Jenny was rather alarmed.

"One old fellow seemed to suggest that they should go away and look for more venison for supper, while he kept watch on me. At that there was a general howl of derision. They seemed to me to be telling the old fellow that they were just as fond of boy as he, and that they understood his little game.

"The old chap evidently tried to explain, but they grinned with all their teeth as he turned from one to another. You must not suppose, chickens, that wolves have no sense of humor. Yet, poor things—"

"Poor things! Why, grandpapa!"

"Yes, Jenny; so lean and hungry, you know. Then one of them suddenly caught sight of my head, and didn't he yell! 'There he is—look up the tree!' cried Mr. Wolf.

"For a few moments they were silent. Then they sprang all at once, absurdly anxious to get nearer to me, twenty-five feet or so above their reach. On falling, they tumbled into several heaps of mouths and legs and tails. After scuffling and separating, they gazed up at me with silent longing. I should have been very popular for a few minutes had I gone down."

Jenny shuddered, and then nestled closer to her grandfather.

"Don't be afraid, Jenny. They didn't eat me—not that time. After a few moments' staring I became very impolite. 'Boo-oo!' said I. 'Yah-ha-ha!' said I. 'You be shot!' I cried. They resented it. Even wolves love to be gently addressed. [Pg 232]

"They began yelling, snarling, and howling at me worse than politicians at a sarcastic member of the opposite party. I imitated them. Nevertheless, I was beginning to be frightened. The weather was turning cold, night was coming on, and I didn't like the prospect of staying till morning.

"All of a sudden I began laughing. I had till then forgotten my pistol and pocketful of cartridges. There were seventeen nice wolves—"

"Nice! Why, grandpa!"

"They seemed *very* nice wolves when I recollected the county bounty of six dollars for a wolf's head. Also, their skins would fetch two dollars apiece. 'Why,' said I, 'my dear wolves, you're worth one hundred and thirty-six dollars.'

"'Don't you wish you may get it!' said they, sneering.

"'You're worth one hundred and thirty-six dollars,' I repeated, 'and yet you want to sponge on a poor boy for a free supper! Shame!'" [Pg 233]

"Did you say it out loud, grandpapa?"

"Well—no, Jenny. It's a thing I might have said, you know; but I didn't exactly think of it at the time. I was feeling for my pistol. Just as I tugged it out of its case at my waist, my knees, arms, and all lost their hold, and down I fell."

"Grandpapa, *dear!*" Jenny nervously clutched him.

"I didn't fall far, pet. But the dust! Talk of sweeping floors! The whole inside of the tree below me, borne down by my weight, had fallen in chunks and dust. There I was, gasping for breath, and the hole eight feet above my head. The lower entrance was of course blocked up by the rotten wood."

"And they couldn't get at you?"

"No, Jimmy; but I was in a dreadful situation. At first I did not fully realize it. Choking for air, my throat filled with particles of dry rot, I tried to climb up again. But the hollow had become too large. Nothing but a round shell of sound wood, a few inches thick, was left around me. With feet, hands, elbows, and back, I strove to ascend as before. But I could not. I was stuck fast! [Pg 234]

"When I pushed with my feet I could only press my back against the other side of the enlarged hole. I was horrified. Indeed, I thought the tree would be my coffin. There I stood, breathing with difficulty even when I breathed through my capuchin, which I took off of my blanket overcoat. And there, I said to myself, I was doomed to stand till my knees should give way and my head fall forward, and some day, after many years, the old tree would blow down, and out would fall my white and r-rattling bo-o-nes."

"Don't—*please*, grandpapa!" Jenny was trying to keep from crying.

"In spite of my vision of my own skull and cross-bones," went on grandpapa, solemnly, "I was too young to despair wholly. I was at first more annoyed than desperate. To be trapped so, to die in a hole when I might have shot a couple of wolves and split the heads of one or two more with my hatchet before they could have had boy for supper—this thought made me very angry. And that brought me to thinking of my hatchet. [Pg 235]

"It was, I remembered, beneath my feet at the bottom of the lower opening. If I could get hold of

it, I might use it to chop a hole through my prison wall.

"But to burrow down was clearly impossible. Nevertheless, I knelt to feel the punky stuff under my feet. The absurdity of trying to work down a hole without having, like a squirrel, any place to throw out the material, was plain.

"But something more cheerful occurred to me. As I knelt, an object at my back touched my heels. It was the brass point of my hunting-knife sheath. Instantly I sprang to my feet, thrust my revolver back into its case, drew the stout knife, and drove the blade into the shell of pine.

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"In two minutes I had scooped the blade through. In five minutes I had my face at a small hole that gave me fresh air. In half an hour I had hacked out a space big enough to put my shoulders through.

"The wolves, when they saw me again, were delighted. As for me, I was much pleased to see them, and said so. At the compliment they licked their jaws. They thought I was coming down, but I had something important to do first.

"I drew my pistol. It was a big old-fashioned Colt's revolver. With the first round of seven shots I killed three, and wounded another badly."

"Then the rest jumped on them and ate them all up, didn't they, grandpapa?"

"No, Jimmy, I'm glad to say they didn't. Wolves in Russian stories do, but American wolves are not cannibalistic; for this is a civilized country, you know.

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"These wolves didn't even notice their fallen friends. They devoted their attention wholly to me, and I assure you, chickens, that I was much gratified at that.

"I loaded again. It was a good deal of trouble in those days, when revolvers wore caps. I aimed very carefully, and killed four more. The other ten then ran away—at least some did; three could drag themselves but slowly.

"After loading again I dropped down, and started for camp. Next morning we came back and got ten skins, after looking up the three wounded."

"And you got only eighty dollars, instead of one hundred and thirty-six, grandpapa," said Jimmy, ruefully.

"Well, Jimmy, that was better than furnishing the pack with raw boy for supper."

"Is that all, grandpapa?"

"Yes, Jenny, dear."

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"Do tell us another story."

"Not to-night, chickens. Not to-night. Grandpapa is old and sleepy. Good night, dears; and if you begin to dream of wolves, be sure you change the subject."

Grandpapa walked slowly up stairs.

"Can *you* make different dreams come, Jimmy?" said Jenny.

"You goose! Grandpapa was pretending."

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## THE WATERLOO VETERAN.

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Is Waterloo a dead word to you? the name of a plain of battle, no more? Or do you see, on a space of rising ground, the little long-coated man with marble features, and unquenchable eyes that pierce through rolling smoke to where the relics of the old Guard of France stagger and rally and reach fiercely again up the hill of St. Jean toward the squares, set, torn, red, re-formed, stubborn, mangled, victorious beneath the unflinching will of him behind there,—the Iron Duke of England?

Or is your interest in the fight literary? and do you see in a pause of the conflict Major O'Dowd sitting on the carcass of Pyramus refreshing himself from that case-bottle of sound brandy? George Osborne lying yonder, all his fopperies ended, with a bullet through his heart? Rawdon Crawley riding stolidly behind General Tufto along the front of the shattered regiment where Captain Dobbins stands heartsick for poor Emily?

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Or maybe the struggle arranges itself in your vision around one figure not named in history or fiction,—that of your grandfather, or his father, or some old dead soldier of the great wars whose blood you exult to inherit, or some grim veteran whom you saw tottering to the roll-call beyond when the Queen was young and you were a little boy.

For me the shadows of the battle are so grouped round old John Locke that the historians, story-tellers, and painters may never quite persuade me that he was not the centre and real hero of the action. The French cuirassiers in my thought-pictures charge again and again vainly against old John; he it is who breaks the New Guard; upon the ground that he defends the Emperor's eyes are fixed all day long. It is John who occasionally glances at the sky with wonder if Blucher has

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failed them. Upon Shaw the Lifeguardsman, and John, the Duke plainly most relies, and the words that Wellington actually speaks when the time comes for advance are, "Up, John, and at them!"

How fate drifted the old veteran of Waterloo into our little Canadian Lake Erie village I never knew. Drifted him? No; he ever marched as if under the orders of his commander. Tall, thin, white-haired, close-shaven, and always in knee-breeches and long stockings, his was an antique and martial figure. "Fresh white-fish" was his cry, which he delivered as if calling all the village to fall in for drill.

So impressive was his demeanor that he dignified his occupation. For years after he disappeared, the peddling of white-fish by horse and cart was regarded in that district as peculiarly respectable. It was a glorious trade when old John Locke held the steelyards and served out the glittering fish with an air of distributing ammunition for a long day's combat.

I believe I noticed, on the first day I saw him, how he tapped his left breast with a proud gesture when he had done with a lot of customers and was about to march again at the head of his horse. That restored him from trade to his soldiership—he had saluted his Waterloo medal! There beneath his threadbare old blue coat it lay, always felt by the heart of the hero.

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"Why doesn't he wear it outside?" I once asked.

"He used to," said my father, "till Hiram Beaman, the druggist, asked him what he'd 'take for the bit of pewter.'"

"What did old John say, sir?"

"'Take for the bit of pewter!' said he, looking hard at Beaman with scorn. 'I've took better men's lives nor ever yours was for to get it, and I'd sell my own for it as quick as ever I offered it before.'

"'More fool you,' said Beaman.

"'You're nowt,' said old John, very calm and cold, 'you're nowt but walking dirt.' From that day forth he would never sell Beaman a fish; he wouldn't touch his money."

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It must have been late in 1854 or early in 1855 that I first saw the famous medal. Going home from school on a bright winter afternoon, I met old John walking very erect, without his usual fish-supply. A dull round white spot was clasped on the left breast of his coat.

"Mr. Locke," said the small boy, staring with admiration, "is that your glorious Waterloo medal?"

"You're a good little lad!" He stooped to let me see the noble pewter. "War's declared against Rooshia, and now it's right to show it. The old regiment's sailed, and my only son is with the colors."

Then he took me by the hand and led me into the village store, where the lawyer read aloud the news from the paper that the veteran gave him. In those days there was no railway within fifty miles of us. It had chanced that some fisherman brought old John a later paper than any previously received in the village.

"Ay, but the Duke is gone," said he, shaking his white head, "and it's curious to be fighting on the same side with another Boney."

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All that winter and the next, all the long summer between, old John displayed his medal. When the report of Alma came, his remarks on the French failure to get into the fight were severe. "What was they *ever*, at best, without Boney?" he would inquire. But a letter from his son after Inkermann changed all that.

"Half of us was killed, and the rest of us clean tired with fighting," wrote Corporal Locke. "What with a bullet through the flesh of my right leg, and the fatigue of using the bayonet so long, I was like to drop. The Russians was coming on again as if there was no end to them, when strange drums came sounding in the mist behind us. With that we closed up and faced half-round, thinking they had outflanked us and the day was gone, so there was nothing more to do but make out to die hard, like the sons of Waterloo men. You would have been pleased to see the looks of what was left of the old regiment, father. Then all of a sudden a French column came up the rise out of the mist, screaming, '*Vive l'Empereur!*' their drums beating the charge. We gave them room, for we were too dead tired to go first. On they went like mad at the Russians, so that was the end of a hard morning's work. I was down,—fainted with loss of blood,—but I will soon be fit for duty again. When I came to myself there was a Frenchman pouring brandy down my throat, and talking in his gibberish as kind as any Christian. Never a word will I say agin them red-legged French again."

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"Show me the man that would!" growled old John. "It was never in them French to act cowardly. Didn't they beat all the world, and even stand up many's the day agen ourselves and the Duke? They didn't beat,—it wouldn't be in reason,—but they tried brave enough, and what more'd you ask of mortal men?"

With the ending of the Crimean War our village was illuminated. Rows of tallow candles in every window, fireworks in a vacant field, and a torchlight procession! Old John marched at its head in full regimentals, straight as a ramrod, the hero of the night. His son had been promoted for

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bravery on the field. After John came a dozen gray militiamen of Queenston Heights, Lundy's Lane, and Chippewa; next some forty volunteers of '37. And we boys of the U. E. Loyalist settlement cheered and cheered, thrilled with an intense vague knowledge that the old army of Wellington kept ghostly step with John, while aerial trumpets and drums pealed and beat with rejoicing at the fresh glory of the race and the union of English-speaking men unconsciously celebrated and symbolized by the little rustic parade.

After that the old man again wore his medal concealed. The Chinese War of 1857 was too contemptible to celebrate by displaying his badge of Waterloo.

Then came the dreadful tale of the Sepoy mutiny—Meerut, Delhi, Cawnpore! After the tale of Nana Sahib's massacre of women and children was read to old John he never smiled, I think. Week after week, month after month, as hideous tidings poured steadily in, his face became more haggard, gray, and dreadful. The feeling that he was too old for use seemed to shame him. He no longer carried his head high, as of yore. That his son was not marching behind Havelock with the avenging army seemed to cut our veteran sorely. Sergeant Locke had sailed with the old regiment to join Outram in Persia before the Sepoys broke loose. It was at this time that old John was first heard to say, "I'm 'feared something's gone wrong with my heart." [Pg 247]

Months went by before we learned that the troops for Persia had been stopped on their way and thrown into India against the mutineers. At that news old John marched into the village with a prouder air than he had worn for many a day. His medal was again on his breast.

It was but the next month, I think, that the village lawyer stood reading aloud the account of the capture of a great Sepoy fort. The veteran entered the post-office, and all made way for him. The reading went on:— [Pg 248]

"The blowing open of the Northern Gate was the grandest personal exploit of the attack. It was performed by native sappers, covered by the fire of two regiments, and headed by Lieutenants Holder and Dacre, Sergeants Green, Carmody, Macpherson, and Locke."

The lawyer paused. Every eye turned to the face of the old Waterloo soldier. He straightened up to keener attention, threw out his chest, and tapped the glorious medal in salute of the names of the brave.

"God be praised, my son was there!" he said. "Read on."

"Sergeant Carmody, while laying the powder, was killed, and the native havildar wounded. The powder having been laid, the advance party slipped down into the ditch to allow the firing party, under Lieutenant Dacre, to do its duty. While trying to fire the charge he was shot through one arm and leg. He sank, but handed the match to Sergeant Macpherson, who was at once shot dead. Sergeant Locke, already wounded severely in the shoulder, then seized the match, and succeeded in firing the train. He fell at that moment, literally riddled with bullets." [Pg 249]

"Read on," said old John, in a deeper voice. All forbore to look twice upon his face.

"Others of the party were falling, when the mighty gate was blown to fragments, and the waiting regiments of infantry, under Colonel Campbell, rushed into the breach."

There was a long silence in the post-office, till old John spoke once more.

"The Lord God be thanked for all his dealings with us! My son, Sergeant Locke, died well for England, Queen, and Duty."

Nervously fingering the treasure on his breast, the old soldier wheeled about, and marched proudly straight down the middle of the village street to his lonely cabin. [Pg 250]

The villagers never saw him in life again. Next day he did not appear. All refrained from intruding on his mourning. But in the evening, when the Episcopalian minister heard of his parishioner's loss, he walked to old John's home.

There, stretched upon his straw bed, he lay in his antique regimentals, stiffer than At Attention, all his medals fastened below that of Waterloo above his quiet heart. His right hand lay on an open Bible, and his face wore an expression as of looking for ever and ever upon Sergeant Locke and the Great Commander who takes back unto Him the heroes He fashions to sweeten the world.

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## JOHN BEDELL, U. E. LOYALIST. [A]

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"A renegade! A rebel against his king! A black-hearted traitor! You dare to tell me that you love George Winthrop! Son of canting, lying Ezra Winthrop! By the Eternal, I'll shoot him on sight if he comes this side!"

While old John Bedell was speaking, he tore and flung away a letter, reached for his long rifle on its pins above the chimney-place, dashed its butt angrily to the floor, and poured powder into his palm. [Pg 252]

"For Heaven's sake, father! You would not! You could not! The war is over. It would be murder!"

cried Ruth Bedell, sobbing.

"Wouldn't I?" He poured the powder in. "Yes, by gracious, quicker'n I'd kill a rattlesnake!" He placed the round bullet on the little square of greased rag at the muzzle of his rifle. "A rank traitor—bone and blood of those who drove out loyal men!"—he crowded the tight lead home, dashed the ramrod into place, looked to the flint. "Rest there,—wake up for George Winthrop!" and the fierce old man replaced rifle and powder-horn on their pegs.

Bedell's hatred for the foes who had beaten down King George's cause, and imposed the alternative of confiscation or the oath of allegiance on the vanquished, was considered intense, even by his brother Loyalists of the Niagara frontier.

"The Squire kind o' sees his boys' blood when the sky's red," said they in explanation. But Bedell was so much an enthusiast that he could almost rejoice because his three stark sons had gained the prize of death in battle. He was too brave to hate the fighting-men he had so often confronted; but he abhorred the politicians, especially the intimate civic enemies on whom he had poured scorn before the armed struggle began. More than any he hated Ezra Winthrop, the lawyer, arch-revolutionist of their native town, who had never used a weapon but his tongue. And now his Ruth, the beloved and only child left to his exiled age, had confessed her love for Ezra Winthrop's son! They had been boy and girl, pretty maiden and bright stripling together, without the Squire suspecting—he could not, even now, conceive clearly so wild a thing as their affection! The confession burned in his heart like veritable fire,—a raging anguish of mingled loathing and love. He stood now gazing at Ruth dumbly, his hands clenched, head sometimes mechanically quivering, anger, hate, love, grief, tumultuous in his soul. [Pg 253]

Ruth glanced up—her father seemed about to speak—she bowed again, shuddering as though the coming words might kill. Still there was silence,—a long silence. Bedell stood motionless, poised, breathing hard—the silence oppressed the girl—each moment her terror increased—expectant attention became suffering that demanded his voice—and still was silence—save for the dull roar of Niagara that more and more pervaded the air. The torture of waiting for the words—a curse against her, she feared—overwore Ruth's endurance. She looked up suddenly, and John Bedell saw in hers the beloved eyes of his dead wife, shrinking with intolerable fear. He groaned heavily, flung up his hands despairingly, and strode out toward the river.

How crafty smooth the green Niagara sweeps toward the plunge beneath that perpetual white cloud above the Falls! From Bedell's clearing below Navy Island, two miles above the Falls, he could see the swaying and rolling of the mist, ever rushing up to expand and overhang. The terrible stream had a profound fascination for him, with its racing eddies eating at the shore; its long weeds, visible through the clear water, trailing close down to the bottom; its inexorable, eternal, onward pouring. Because it was so mighty and so threatening, he rejoiced grimly in the awful river. To float, watching cracks and ledges of its flat bottom-rock drift quickly upward; to bend to his oars only when white crests of the rapids yelled for his life; to win escape by sheer strength from points so low down that he sometimes doubted but the greedy forces had been tempted too long; to stake his life, watching tree-tops for a sign that he could yet save it, was the dreadful pastime by which Bedell often quelled passionate promptings to revenge his exile. "The Falls is bound to get the Squire, some day," said the banished settlers. But the Squire's skiff was clean built as a pickerel, and his old arms iron-strong. Now when he had gone forth from the beloved child, who seemed to him so traitorous to his love and all loyalty, he went instinctively to spend his rage upon the river. [Pg 254]

Ruth Bedell, gazing at the loaded rifle, shuddered, not with dread only, but a sense of having been treacherous to her father. She had not told him all the truth. George Winthrop himself, having made his way secretly through the forest from Lake Ontario, had given her his own letter asking leave from the Squire to visit his newly made cabin. From the moment of arrival her lover had implored her to fly with him. But filial love was strong in Ruth to give hope that her father would yield to the yet stronger affection freshened in her heart. Believing their union might be permitted, she had pledged herself to escape with her lover if it were forbidden. Now he waited by the hickory wood for a signal to conceal himself or come forward. [Pg 255]

When Ruth saw her father far down the river, she stepped to the flagstaff he had raised before building the cabin—his first duty being to hoist the Union Jack! It was the largest flag he could procure; he could see it flying defiantly all day long; at night he could hear its glorious folds whipping in the wind; the hot old Loyalist loved to fancy his foeman cursing at it from the other side, nearly three miles away. Ruth hauled the flag down a little, then ran it up to the mast-head again.

At that, a tall young fellow came springing into the clearing, jumping exultantly over brush-heaps and tree-trunks, his queue wagging, his eyes bright, glad, under his three-cornered hat. Joying that her father had yielded, he ran forward till he saw Ruth's tears.

"What, sweetheart!—crying? It was the signal to come on," cried he.

"Yes; to see you sooner, George. Father is out yonder. But no, he will never, never consent." [Pg 256]

"Then you will come with me, love," he said, taking her hands.

"No, no; I dare not," sobbed Ruth. "Father would overtake us. He swears to shoot you on sight! Go, George! Escape while you can! Oh, if he should find you here!"



"But, darling love, we need not fear. We can escape easily. I know the forest path. But—" Then he thought how weak her pace.

"We might cross here before he could come up!" cried Winthrop, looking toward where the Squire's boat was now a distant blotch.

"No, no," wailed Ruth, yet yielding to his embrace. "This is the last time I shall see you forever and forever. Go, dear,—good-bye, my love, my love."

But he clasped her in his strong arms, kissing, imploring, cheering her,—and how should true love choose hopeless renunciation?

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Tempting, defying, regaining his lost ground, drifting down again, trying hard to tire out and subdue his heart-pangs, Bedell dallied with death more closely than ever. He had let his skiff drift far down toward the Falls. Often he could see the wide smooth curve where the green volume first lapses vastly on a lazy slope, to shoulder up below as a huge calm billow, before pitching into the madness of waves whose confusion of tossing and tortured crests hurries to the abyss. The afternoon grew toward evening before he pulled steadily home, crawling away from the roarers against the cruel green, watching the ominous cloud with some such grim humor as if under observation by an overpowering but baffled enemy. [Pg 259]

Approaching his landing, a shout drew Bedell's glance ashore to a group of men excitedly gesticulating. They seemed motioning him to watch the American shore. Turning, he saw a boat in midstream, where no craft then on the river, except his own skiff, could be safe, unless manned by several good men. Only two oars were flashing. Bedell could make out two figures indistinctly. It was clear they were doomed,—though still a full mile above the point whence he had come, they were much farther out than he when near the rapids. Yet one life might be saved! Instantly Bedell's bow turned outward, and cheers flung to him from ashore. [Pg 260]

At that moment he looked to his own landing-place, and saw that his larger boat was gone. Turning again, he angrily recognized it, but kept right on—he must try to rescue even a thief. He wondered Ruth had not prevented the theft, but had no suspicion of the truth. Always he had refused to let her go out upon the river—mortally fearing it for *her*.

Thrusting his skiff mightily forward,—often it glanced, half-whirled by up-whelming and spreading spaces of water,—the old Loyalist's heart was quit of his pangs, and sore only with certainty that he must abandon one human soul to death. By the time that he could reach the larger boat his would be too near the rapids for escape with three! [Pg 261]

When George Winthrop saw Bedell in pursuit, he bent to his ash-blades more strongly, and Ruth, trembling to remember her father's threats, urged her lover to speed. They feared the pursuer only, quite unconscious that they were in the remorseless grasp of the river. Ruth had so often seen her father far lower down than they had yet drifted that she did not realize the truth, and George, a stranger in the Niagara district, was unaware of the length of the cataracts above the Falls. He was also deceived by the stream's treacherous smoothness, and instead of half-upward, pulled straight across, as if certainly able to land anywhere he might touch the American shore.

Bedell looked over his shoulder often. When he distinguished a woman, he put on more force, but slackened soon—the pull home would tax his endurance, he reflected. In some sort it was a relief to know that one *was* a woman; he had been anticipating trouble with two men equally bent on being saved. That the man would abandon himself bravely, the Squire took as a matter of course. For a while he thought of pulling with the woman to the American shore, more easily to be gained from the point where the rescue must occur. But he rejected the plan, confident he could win back, for he had sworn never to set foot on that soil unless in war. Had it been possible to save both, he would have been forced to disregard that vow; but the Squire knew that it was impossible for him to reach the New York Shore with two passengers—two would overload his boat beyond escape. Man or woman—one must go over the Falls. [Pg 262]

Having carefully studied landmarks for his position, Bedell turned to look again at the doomed boat, and a well-known ribbon caught his attention! The old man dropped his oars, confused with horror. "My God, my God! it's Ruth!" he cried, and the whole truth came with another look, for he had not forgotten George Winthrop. [Pg 263]

"Your father stops, Ruth. Perhaps he is in pain," said George to the quaking girl.

She looked back. "What can it be?" she cried, filial love returning overmasteringly.

"Perhaps he is only tired." George affected carelessness,—his first wish was to secure his bride,—and pulled hard away to get all advantage from Bedell's halt.

"Tired! He is in danger of the Falls, then!" screamed Ruth. "Stop! Turn! Back to him!"

Winthrop instantly prepared to obey. "Yes, darling," he said, "we must not think of ourselves. We must go back to save him!" Yet his was a sore groan at turning; what Duty ordered was so hard,—he must give up his love for the sake of his enemy.

But while Winthrop was still pulling round, the old Loyalist resumed rowing, with a more rapid stroke that soon brought him alongside.

In those moments of waiting, all Bedell's life, his personal hatreds, his loves, his sorrows, had been reviewed before his soul. He had seen again his sons, the slain in battle, in the pride of their young might; and the gentle eyes of Ruth had pleaded with him beneath his dead wife's brow. Into those beloved, unforgotten, visionary eyes he looked with an encouraging, strengthening gaze,—now that the deed to be done was as clear before him as the face of Almighty God. In accepting it the darker passions that had swayed his stormy life fell suddenly away from their hold on his soul. How trivial had been old disputes! how good at heart old well-known civic enemies! how poor seemed hate! how mean and poor seemed all but Love and Loyalty!

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Resolution and deep peace had come upon the man.

The lovers wondered at his look. No wrath was there. The old eyes were calm and cheerful, a gentle smile flickered about his lips. Only that he was very pale, Ruth would have been wholly glad for the happy change.

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"Forgive me, father," she cried, as he laid hand on their boat.

"I do, my child," he answered. "Come now without an instant's delay to me."

"Oh, father, if you would let us be happy!" cried Ruth, heart-torn by two loves.

"Dear, you shall be happy. I was wrong, child; I did not understand how you loved him. But come! You hesitate! Winthrop, my son, you are in some danger. Into this boat instantly! both of you! Take the oars, George. Kiss me, dear, my Ruth, once more. Good-bye, my little girl. Winthrop, be good to her. And may God bless you both forever!"

As the old Squire spoke, he stepped into the larger boat, instantly releasing the skiff. His imperative gentleness had secured his object without loss of time, and the boats were apart with Winthrop's readiness to pull.

"Now row! Row for her life to yonder shore! Bow well up! Away, or the Falls will have her!" shouted Bedell.

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"But you!" cried Winthrop, bending for his stroke. Yet he did not comprehend Bedell's meaning. Till the last the old man had spoken without strong excitement. Dread of the river was not on George; his bliss was supreme in his thought, and he took the Squire's order for one of exaggerated alarm.

"Row, I say, with all your strength!" cried Bedell, with a flash of anger that sent the young fellow away instantly. "Row! Concern yourself not for me. I am going home. Row! for her life, Winthrop! God will deliver you yet. Good-bye, children. Remember always my blessing is freely given you."

"God bless and keep you forever, father!" cried Ruth, from the distance, as her lover pulled away.

They landed, conscious of having passed a swift current, indeed, but quite unthinking of the price paid for their safety. Looking back on the darkling river, they saw nothing of the old man.

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"Poor father!" sighed Ruth, "how kind he was! I'm sore-hearted for thinking of him at home, so lonely."

Left alone in the clumsy boat, Bedell stretched with the long, heavy oars for his own shore, making appearance of strong exertion. But when he no longer feared that his children might turn back with sudden understanding, and vainly, to his aid, he dragged the boat slowly, watching her swift drift down—down toward the towering mist. Then as he gazed at the cloud, rising in two distinct volumes, came a thought spurring the Loyalist spirit in an instant. He was not yet out of American water! Thereafter he pulled steadily, powerfully, noting landmarks anxiously, studying currents, considering always their trend to or from his own shore. Half an hour had gone when he again dropped into slower motion. Then he could see Goat Island's upper end between him and the mist of the American Fall.

Now the old man gave himself up to intense curiosity, looking over into the water with fascinated inquiry. He had never been so far down the river. Darting beside their shadows, deep in the clear flood, were now larger fishes than he had ever taken, and all moved up as if hurrying to escape. How fast the long trailing, swaying, single weeds, and the crevices in flat rock whence they so strangely grew, went up stream and away as if drawn backward. The sameness of the bottom to that higher up interested him—where then *did* the current begin to sweep clean? He should certainly know that soon, he thought, without a touch of fear, having utterly accepted death when he determined it were base to carry his weary old life a little longer, and let Ruth's young love die. Now the Falls' heavy monotone was overborne by terrible sounds—a mingled clashing, shrieking, groaning, and rumbling, as of great boulders churned in their beds.

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Bedell was nearing the first long sloop downward at the rapids' head when those watching him from the high bank below the Chippewa River's mouth saw him put his boat stern with the current and cease rowing entirely, facing fairly the up-rushing mist to which he was being hurried. Then they observed him stooping, as if writing, for a time. Something flashed in his hands, and then he knelt with head bowed down. Kneeling, they prayed, too.

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Now he was almost on the brink of the cascades. Then he arose, and, glancing backward to his home, caught sight of his friends on the high shore. Calmly he waved a farewell. What then? Thrice round he flung his hat, with a gesture they knew full well. Some had seen that exultant waving in front of ranks of battle. As clearly as though the roar of waters had not drowned his

ringing voice, they knew that old John Bedell, at the poise of death, cheered thrice, "Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah for the King!"

They found his body a week afterward, floating with the heaving water in the gorge below the Falls. Though beaten almost out of recognition, portions of clothing still adhered to it, and in a waistcoat pocket they found the old Loyalist's metal snuff-box, with this inscription scratched by knife-point on the cover: "God be praised, I die in British waters! JOHN BEDELL."

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### FOOTNOTES:

- [A] The United Empire Loyalists were American Tories who forsook their homes and property after the Revolution in order to live in Canada under the British Flag. It is impossible to understand Canadian feeling for the Crown at the present day without understanding the U. E. Loyalist spirit, which, though Canadians are not now unfriendly to the United States, is still the most important political force in the Dominion, and holds it firmly in allegiance to the Queen.

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## VERBITZSKY'S STRATAGEM.

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What had Alexander Verbitzsky and I done that the secret service of our father, the Czar, should dog us for five months, and in the end drive us to Siberia, whence we have, by the goodness of God, escaped from Holy Russia, our mother? They called us Nihilists—as if all Nihilists were of one way of thinking!

We did not belong to the Terrorists,—the section that believes in killing the tyrant or his agents in hope that the hearts of the mighty may be shaken as Pharaoh's was in Egypt long ago. No; we were two students of nineteen years old, belonging to the section of "peasantists," or of Peaceful Education. Its members solemnly devote all their lives to teaching the poor people to read, think, save, avoid *vodka*, and seek quietly for such liberty with order as here in America all enjoy. Was that work a crime in Verbitzsky and me?

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Was it a crime for us to steal to the freight-shed of the Moscow and St. Petersburg Railway that night in December two years ago? We sat in the superintendent's dark office, and talked to the eight trainmen that were brought in by the guard of the eastern gate, who had belonged to all the sections, but was no longer "active."

We were there to prevent a crime. At the risk of our lives, we two went to save the Czar of all the Russias, though well we knew that Dmitry Nolenki, chief of the secret police, had offered a reward on our capture.

Boris Kojukhov and the other seven trainmen who came with him had been chosen, with ten others who were not Nihilists, to operate the train that was to bear His Imperial Majesty next day to St. Petersburg. Now Boris was one of the Section of Terror, and most terrible was his scheme. Kojukhov was not really his name I may tell you. Little did the Czar's railway agents suspect that Boris was a noble, and brother to the gentle girl that had been sent to Siberia. No wonder the heart of Boris was hot and his brain partly crazed when he learned of Zina's death in the starvation strike at the Olek Mines.

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Verbitzsky was cousin to Zina and Boris, and as his young head was a wise one, Boris wished to consult him. We both went, hoping to persuade him out of the crime he meditated.

"No," said Boris, "my mind is made up. I may never have such another chance. I will fling these two bombs under the foremost car at the middle of the Volga Bridge. The tyrant and his staff shall all plunge with us down to death in the river."

"The bombs—have you them here?" asked Verbitzsky in the dark.

"I have them in my hands," said Boris, tapping them lightly together. "I have carried them in my inner clothing for a week. They give me warmth at my heart as I think how they shall free Holy Russia."

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There was a stir of dismay in the dark office. The comrades, though willing to risk death at the Volga Bridge, were horrified by Kojukhov's tapping of the iron bombs together, and all rose in fear of their explosion, all except Verbitzsky and me.

"For God's sake, be more careful, Boris!" said my friend.

"Oh, you're afraid, too?" said Kojukhov. "Pah! you cowards of the Peace Section!" He tapped the bombs together again.

"I *am* afraid," said Verbitzsky. "Why should I die for your reckless folly? Will any good happen if you explode the bombs here? You will but destroy all of us, and our friends the watchmen, and the freight-sheds containing the property of many worthy people."

"You are a fool, Verbitzsky!" said his cousin. "Come here. Whisper."

Something Boris then whispered in my comrade's ear. When Verbitzsky spoke again his voice seemed calmer. [Pg 275]

"Let me feel the shape," he said.

"Here," said Boris, as if handing something to Verbitzsky.

At that moment the outer door of the freight-shed resounded with a heavy blow. The next blow, as from a heavy maul, pounded the door open.

"The police!" shouted Boris. "They must have dogged you, Alexander, for they don't suspect me." He dashed out of the dark office into the great dark shed.

As we all ran forth, glancing at the main door about seventy feet distant, we saw a squad of police outlined against the moonlit sky beyond the great open space of railway yard. My eyes were dazzled by a headlight that one of them carried. By that lamp they must have seen us clearly; for as we started to run away down the long shed they opened fire, and I stumbled over Boris Kojukhov, as he fell with a shriek.

Rising, I dodged aside, thinking to avoid bullets, and then dashed against a bale of wool, one of a long row. Clambering over it, I dropped beside a man crouching on the other side. [Pg 276]

"Michael, is it you?" whispered Verbitzsky.

"Yes. We're lost, of course?"

"No. Keep still. Let them pass."

The police ran past us down the middle aisle left between high walls of wool bales. They did not notice the narrow side lane in which we were crouching.

"Come. I know a way out," said Verbitzsky. "I was all over here this morning, looking round, in case we should be surprised to-night."

"What's this?" I whispered, groping, and touching something in his hand.

"Kojukhov's bombs. I have them both. Come. Ah, poor Boris, he's with Zina now!"

The bomb was a section of iron pipe about two inches in diameter and eighteen inches long. Its ends were closed with iron caps. Filled with nitroglycerine, such pipes are terrible shells, which explode by concussion. I was amazed to think of the recklessness of Boris in tapping them together. [Pg 277]

"Put them down, Verbitzsky!" I whispered, as we groped our way between high walls of bales.

"No, no, they're weapons!" he whispered. "We may need them."

"Then for the love of the saints, be careful!"

"Don't be afraid," he said, as we neared a small side door.

Meantime, we heard the police run after the Terrorists, who brought up against the great door at the south end. As they tore away the bar and opened the door they shouted with dismay. They had been confronted by another squad of police! For a few moments a confusion of sounds came to us, all somewhat muffled by passing up and over the high walls of baled wool.

"Boris! Where are you?" cried one.

"He's killed!" cried another. [Pg 278]

"Oh, if we had the bombs!"

"He gave them to Verbitzsky."

"Verbitzsky, where are you? Throw them! Let us all die together!"

"Yes, it's death to be taken!"

Then we heard shots, blows, and shrieks, all in confusion. After a little there was clatter of grounded arms, and then no sound but the heavy breathing of men who had been struggling hard. That silence was a bad thing for Verbitzsky and me, because the police heard the opening of the small side door through which Alexander next moment led. In a moment we dashed out into the clear night, over the tracks, toward the Petrovsky Gardens.

As we reached the railway yard the police ran round their end of the wool-shed in pursuit—ten of them. The others stayed with the prisoners.

"Don't fire! Don't shoot!" cried a voice we knew well,—the voice of Dmitry Nolenki, chief of the secret police.

"One of them is Verbitzsky!" he cried to his men. "The conspirator I've been after for four months. A hundred roubles for him who first seizes him! He must be taken alive!" [Pg 279]

That offer, I suppose, was what pushed them to such eagerness that they all soon felt themselves at our mercy. And that offer was what caused them to follow so silently, lest other police should overhear a tumult and run to head us off.

Verbitzsky, though encumbered by the bombs, kept the lead, for he was a very swift runner. I followed close at his heels. We could hear nothing in the great walled-in railway yard except the clack of feet on gravel, and sometimes on the network of steel tracks that shone silvery as the hard snow under the round moon.

My comrade ran like a man who knows exactly where he means to go. Indeed, he had already determined to follow a plan that had long before occurred to him. It was a vision of what one or two desperate men with bombs might do at close quarters against a number with pistols. [Pg 280]

As Verbitzsky approached the south end of the yard, which is excavated deeply and walled in from the surrounding streets, he turned, to my amazement, away from the line that led into the suburbs, and ran along four tracks that led under a street bridge.

This bridge was fully thirty feet overhead, and flanked by wings of masonry. The four tracks led into a small yard, almost surrounded by high stone warehouses; a yard devoted solely to turntables for locomotives. There was no exit from it except under the bridge that we passed beneath.

"Good!" we heard Nolenki cry, fifty yards behind. "We have them now in a trap!"

At that, Verbitzsky, still in the moonlight, slackened speed, half-turned as if in hesitation, then ran on more slowly, with zigzag steps, as if desperately looking for a way out. But he said to me in a low, panting voice:—

"We shall escape. Do exactly as I do." [Pg 281]

When the police were not fifty feet behind us, Verbitzsky jumped down about seven feet into a wide pit. I jumped to his side. We were now standing in the walled-in excavation for a new locomotive turn-table. This pit was still free from its machinery and platform.

"We are done now!" I said, staring around as Verbitzsky stopped in the middle of the circular pit, which was some forty feet wide.

Just as the police came crowding to the edge, Verbitzsky fell on his knees as if in surrender. In their eagerness to lay first hands, on him, all the police jumped down except the chief, Dmitry Nolenki. Some fell. As those who kept their feet rushed toward us, Verbitzsky sprang up and ran to the opposite wall, with me at his heels.

Three seconds later the foremost police were within fifteen feet of us. Then Verbitzsky raised his terrible bombs.

From high above the roofs of the warehouses the full moon so clearly illuminated the yard that we could see every button on our assailants' coats, and even the puffs of fat Nolenki's breath. He stood panting on the opposite wall of the excavation. [Pg 282]

"Halt, or die!" cried Verbitzsky, in a terrible voice.

The bombs were clearly to be seen in his hands. Every policeman in Moscow knew of the destruction done, only six days before, by just such weapons. The foremost men halted instantly. The impetus of those behind brought all together in a bunch—nine expectants of instant death. Verbitzsky spoke again:—

"If any man moves hand or foot, I'll throw these," he cried. "Listen!"

"Why, you fool," said Nolenki, a rather slow-witted man, "you can't escape. Surrender instantly."

He drew his revolver and pointed it at us.

"Michael," said Verbitzsky to me, in that steely voice which I had never before heard from my gentle comrade; "Michael, Nolenki can shoot but one of us before he dies. Take this bomb. Now if he hits me you throw your bomb at him. If he hits you I will throw mine." [Pg 283]

"Infernal villains!" gasped the chief; but we could see his pistol wavering.

"Michael," resumed Verbitzsky, "we will give Nolenki a chance for his life. Obey me exactly! Listen! If Dmitry Nolenki does not jump down into this pit before I say five, throw your bomb straight at him! I will, at the moment I say five, throw mine at these rascals."

"Madman!" cried Nolenki. "Do you think to—"

He stopped as if paralyzed. I suppose he had suddenly understood that the explosion of a bomb in that small, high-walled yard would kill every man in it.

"One!" cried Verbitzsky.

"But I may not hit him!" said I.

"No matter. If it explodes within thirty feet of him he will move no more."

I took one step forward and raised the bomb. Did I mean to throw it? I do not know. I think not. But I knew we must make the threat or be captured and hung. And I felt certain that the bomb would be exploded anyway when Verbitzsky should say "Five." He would then throw his, and mine would explode by the concussion. [Pg 284]

"Two!" said Verbitzsky.

Dmitry Nolenki had lowered his pistol. He glanced behind him uneasily.

"If he runs, throw it!" said Verbitzsky, loudly. "THREE!"

The chief of the Moscow secret police was reputed a brave man, but he was only a cruel one. Now his knees trembled so that we could see them shake, and his teeth chattered in the still cold night. Verbitzsky told me afterward that he feared the man's slow brain had become so paralyzed by fright that he might not be able to think and obey and jump down. That would have placed my comrade and me in a dreadful dilemma, but quite a different one from what you may suppose.

[Pg 285]

As if to make Nolenki reflect, Verbitzsky spoke more slowly:—

"If Dmitry Nolenki jumps down into this pit *before* I say five, do *not* throw the bomb at him. You understand, Michael, do not throw if he jumps down instantly. FOUR!"

Nolenki's legs were so weak that he could not walk to the edge. In trying to do so he stumbled, fell, crawled, and came in head first, a mere heap.

"Wise Nolenki!" said my comrade, with a laugh. Then in his tone of desperate resolution, "Nolenki, get down on your hands and knees, and put your head against that wall. Don't move now—if you wish to live."

"Now, men," he cried to the others in military fashion, "right about, face!"

They hesitated, perhaps fearful that he would throw at them when they turned.

"About! instantly!" he cried. They all turned.

"Now, men, you see your chief. At the word 'March,' go and kneel in a row beside him, your heads against that wall. Hump your backs as high as you can. If any man moves to get out, all will suffer together. You understand?"

[Pg 286]

"Yes! yes! yes!" came in an agony of abasement from their lips.

"March!"

When they were all kneeling in a row, Verbitzsky said to me clearly:—

"Michael, you can easily get to the top of that wall from any one of their backs. No man will dare to move. Go! Wait on the edge! Take your bomb with you!"

I obeyed. I stood on a man's back. I laid my bomb with utmost care on the wall, over which I could then see. Then I easily lifted myself out by my hands and elbows.

"Good!" said Verbitzsky. "Now, Michael, stand there till I come. If they try to seize me, throw your bomb. We can all die together."

In half a minute he had stepped on Nolenki's back. Nolenki groaned with abasement. Next moment Verbitzsky was beside me.

[Pg 287]

"Give me your bomb. Now, Michael," he said loudly, "I will stand guard over these wretches till I see you beyond the freight-sheds. Walk at an ordinary pace, lest you be seen and suspected."

"But you? They'll rise and fire at you as you run," I said.

"Of course they will. But you will escape. Here! Good-bye!"

He embraced me, and whispered in my ear:

"Go the opposite way from the freight-sheds. Go out toward the Petrovsky Gardens. There are few police there. Run hard after you've walked out under the bridge and around the abutments. You will then be out of hearing."

"Go, dear friend," he said aloud, in a mournful voice. "I may never see you again. Possibly I may have to destroy myself and all here. Go!"

I obeyed precisely, and had not fairly reached the yard's end when Verbitzsky, running very silently, came up beside me.

[Pg 288]

"I think they must be still fancying that I'm standing over them," he chuckled. "No, they are shooting! Now, out they come!"

From where we now stood in shadow we could see Nolenki and his men rush furiously out from under the bridge. They ran away from us toward the freight-sheds, shouting the alarm, while we calmly walked home to our unsuspected lodgings.

Not till then did I think of the bombs.

"Where are they?" I asked in alarm.

"I left them for the police. They will ruin Nolenki—it was he who sent poor Zina to Siberia and her death."

"Ruin him?" I said, wondering.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"They were not loaded."

"Not loaded!"

"That's what Boris whispered to me in the wool-shed office. He meant to load them to-morrow before going to His Imperial Majesty's train. Nolenki will be laughed to death in Moscow, if not sent to Siberia." [Pg 289]

Verbitzsky was right. Nolenki, after being laughed nearly to death, was sent to Siberia in disgrace, and we both worked in the same gang with him for eight months before we escaped from the Ural Mines. No doubt he is working there yet.

THE END.

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*JUST ISSUED...*

[Pg 290]

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Transcriber's Notes:

Pg. 241: [Respectacle](#) is possibly a typo for respectable, or the author's coined word combining respectable and spectacle.

(For years after he disappeared, the peddling of white-fish by horse and cart was regarded in that



district as peculiarly respectable.)

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