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THE REFUGEES

A TALE OF TWO CONTINENTS

BY

A. CONAN DOYLE

VOL. III.

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1893

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

MICAH CLARKE.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE POLESTAR.

THE DOINGS OF RAFFLES HAW.

THE FIRM OF GIRDLESTONE.

THE WHITE COMPANY.

THE GREAT SHADOW.

A STUDY IN SCARLET.

THE SIGN OF FOUR.

THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.

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PART II.

THE NEW WORLD.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE START OF THE *GOLDEN ROD.*

Thanks to the early tidings which the guardsman had brought with him, his little party was now ahead of the news. As they passed through the village of Louvier in the early morning they caught a glimpse of a naked corpse upon a dunghill, and were told by a grinning watchman that it was that of a Huguenot who had died impenitent, but that was a common enough occurrence already and did not mean that there had been any change in the law. At Rouen all was quiet, and Captain Ephraim Savage before evening had brought both them and such property as they

had saved aboard of his brigantine, the *Golden Rod*. It was but a little craft, some seventy tons burden, but at a time when so many were putting out to sea in open boats, preferring the wrath of nature to that of the king, it was a refuge indeed. The same night the seaman drew up his anchor and began to slowly make his way down the winding river.

And very slow work it was. There was half a moon shining and a breeze from the east but the stream writhed and twisted and turned until sometimes they seemed to be sailing up rather than down. In the long reaches they set the yard square and ran, but often they had to lower their two boats and warp her painfully along, Tomlinson of Salem the mate, and six grave tobacco-chewing New England seamen with their broad palmetto hats, tugging and straining at the oars. Amos Green, De Catinat and even the old merchant had to take their spell ere morning when the sailors were needed aboard for the handling of the canvas. At last, however,

with the early dawn the river broadened out and each bank trended away leaving a long funnel-shaped estuary between. Ephraim Savage snuffed the air and paced the deck briskly with a twinkle in his keen gray eyes. The wind had fallen away but there was still enough to drive them slowly upon their course.

"Where's the gal?" he asked.

"She is in my cabin," said Amos Green. "I thought that maybe she could manage there until we got across."

"Where will you sleep yourself, then?"

"Tut, a litter of spruce boughs and a sheet of birch bark over me have been enough all these years. What would I ask better than this deck of soft white pine, and my blanket."

"Very good. The old man and his nephew, him with the blue coat, can have the two empty bunks. But you must speak to that man, Amos. I'll have no philandering aboard my ship, lad—no whispering or cuddling or any such foolishness. Tell him that this ship

is just a bit broke off from Boston, and he'll have to put up with Boston ways until he gets off her. They've been good enough for better men than him. You give me the French for 'no philandering,' and I'll bring him up with a round turn when he drifts."

"It's a pity we left so quick or they might have been married before we started. She's a good girl, Ephraim, and he is a fine man, for all that their ways are not the same as ours. They don't seem to take life so hard as we, and maybe they get more pleasure out of it."

"I never heard tell that we were put here to get pleasure out of it" said the old Puritan, shaking his head. "The valley of the shadow of death don't seem to me to be the kind o' name one would give to a playground. It is a trial and a chastening, that's what it is, the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. We're bad from the beginning, like a stream that runs from a tamerack swamp, and we've enough to do to get ourselves to rights without any fool's talk about pleasure."

"It seems to me to be all mixed up," said Amos, "like the fat and the lean in a bag of pemmican. Look at that sun just pushing it's edge over the trees, and see the pink flush on the clouds and the river like a rosy ribbon behind us. It's mighty pretty to our eyes, and very pleasing to us, and it wouldn't be so to my mind if the Creator hadn't wanted it to be. Many a time when I have lain in the woods in the fall and smoked my pipe and felt how good the tobacco was and how bright the yellow maples were, and the purple ash, and the red tupelo blazing among the bushwood, I've felt that the real fool's talk was with the man who could doubt that all this was meant to make the world happier for us."

"You've been thinking too much in them woods," said Ephraim Savage, gazing at him uneasily. "Don't let your sail be too great for your boat, lad, nor trust to your own wisdom. Your father was from the Bay, and you were raised from a stock that cast the dust of England from their feet rather than bow down

to Baal. Keep a grip on the word and don't think beyond it. But what is the matter with the old man? He don't seem easy in his mind."

The old merchant had been leaning over the bulwarks looking back with a drawn face and weary eyes at the red curving track behind them which marked the path to Paris. Adèle had come up now, with not a thought to spare upon the dangers and troubles which lay in front of her as she chafed the old man's thin cold hands, and whispered words of love and comfort into his ears. But they had come to the point where the gentle still-flowing river began for the first time to throb to the beat of the sea. The old man gazed forward with horror at the bowsprit as he saw it rise slowly upwards into the air, and clung frantically at the rail as it seemed to slip away from beneath him.

"We are always in the hollow of God's hand," he whispered, "but oh, Adèle, it is a dreadful thing to feel His fingers moving under us."

"Come with me, uncle," said De Catinat, passing his arm under that of the old man. "It is long since you have rested. And you, Adèle, I pray that you will go and sleep, my poor darling, for it has been a weary journey. Go now, to please me, and when you wake, both France and your troubles will lie behind you."

When father and daughter had left the deck, De Catinat made his way aft again to where Amos Green and the captain were standing.

"I am glad to get them below, Amos," said he, "for I fear that we may have trouble yet."

"And how?"

"You see the white road which runs by the southern bank of the river. Twice within the last half-hour I have seen horsemen spurring for dear life along it. Where the spires and smoke are yonder is Honfleur, and thither it was that these men went. I know not who would ride so madly at such an hour unless they were the messengers of the king. Oh, see, there is a third one!"

On the white band which wound among the green meadows a black dot could be seen which moved along with great rapidity, vanished behind a clump of trees and then reappeared again, making for the distant city. Captain Savage drew out his glass and gazed at the rider.

"Aye, aye," said he, as he snapped it up again. "It is a soldier, sure enough. I can see the glint of the scabbard which he carries on his larboard side. I think we shall have more wind soon. With a breeze we can show our heels to anything in French waters, but a galley or an armed boat would overhaul us now."

De Catinat who, though he could speak little English, had learned in America to understand it pretty well, looked anxiously at Amos Green. "I fear that we shall bring trouble on this good captain," said he, "and that the loss of his cargo and ship may be his reward for having befriended us. Ask him whether he would not prefer to land us on

the north bank. With our money we might make our way into the Lowlands."

Ephraim Savage looked at his passenger with eyes which had lost something of their sternness. "Young man," said he, "I see that you can understand something of my talk."

De Catinat nodded.

"I tell you then that I am a bad man to beat. Any man that was ever shipmates with me would tell you as much. I just jam my helm and keep my course as long as God will let me. D'ye see?"

De Catinat again nodded, though in truth the seaman's metaphors left him with but a very general sense of his meaning.

"We're comin' abreast of that there town, and in ten minutes we shall know if there is any trouble waiting for us. But I'll tell you a story as we go that'll show you what kind o' man you've shipped with. It was ten years ago that I speak of when I was in the *Speedwell*, sixty ton brig, tradin' betwixt Boston and Jamestown, goin' south with lumber and

skins and fixin's, d'ye see, and north again with tobacco and molasses. One night, blowin' half a gale from the south'ard we ran on a reef two miles to the east of Cape May, and down we went with a hole in our bottom like as if she'd been spitted on the steeple o' one o' them Honfleur churches. Well, in the morning there I was washin' about, nigh out of sight of land, clingin' on to half the foreyard, without a sign either of my mates or of wreckage. I wasn't so cold, for it was early fall, and I could get three parts of my body on to the spar, but I was hungry and thirsty and bruised, so I just took in two holes of my waist belt, and put up a hymn, and had a look round for what I could see. Well, I saw more than I cared for. Within five paces of me there was a great fish, as long pretty nigh as the spar that I was grippin'. It's a mighty pleasant thing to have your legs in the water and a beast like that all ready for a nibble at your toes."

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried the French soldier. "And he have not eat you!"

Ephraim Savage's little eyes twinkled at the reminiscence. "I ate him," said he.

"What!" cried Amos.

"It's a mortal fact. I'd a jack-knife in my pocket, same as this one, and I kicked my legs to keep the brute off, and I whittled away at the spar until I'd got a good jagged bit off, sharp at each end, same as a nigger told me once down Delaware way. Then I waited for him, and stopped kicking, so he came at me like a hawk on a chick-a-dee. When he turned up his belly I jammed my left hand with the wood right into his great grinnin' mouth, and I let him have it with my knife between the gills. He tried to break away then, but I held on, d'ye see, though he took me so deep I thought I'd never come up again. I was nigh gone when we got to the surface, but he was floatin' with the white up, and twenty holes in his shirt front. Then I got back to my spar for we'd gone a long fifty fathoms under water, and when I reached it I fainted dead away."

"And then?"

"Well, when I came to, it was calm, and there was the dead shark floatin' beside me. I paddled my spar over to him and I got loose a few yards of halliard that were hangin' from one end of it. I made a clove-hitch round his tail, d'ye see, and got the end of it slung over the spar and fastened, so as I could'nt lose him. Then I set to work and I ate him in a week right up to his back fin and I drank the rain that fell on my coat, and when I was picked up by the *Gracie* of Gloucester, I was that fat that I could scarce climb aboard. That's what Ephraim Savage means, my lad, when he says that he is a baddish man to beat."

Whilst the Puritan seaman had been detailing his reminiscence, his eyes had kept wandering from the clouds to the flapping sails and back. Such wind as there was came in little short puffs, and the canvas either drew full or was absolutely slack. The fleecy shreds of cloud above, however, tra-

velled swiftly across the blue sky. It was on these that the captain fixed his gaze, and he watched them like a man who is working out a problem in his mind. They were abreast of Honfleur now, and about half a mile out from it. Several sloops and brigs were lying there in a cluster, and a whole fleet of brown-sailed fishing boats were tacking slowly in. Yet all was quiet on the curving quay and on the half-moon fort over which floated the white flag with the golden *fleurs-de-lis*. The port lay on their quarter now and they were drawing away more quickly as the breeze freshened. De Catinat glancing back had almost made up his mind that their fears were quite groundless when they were brought back in an instant and more urgently than ever.

Round the corner of the mole a great dark boat had dashed into view, ringed round with foam from her flying prow, and from the ten pairs of oars which swung from either side of her. A dainty white ensign drooped over her

stern, and in her bows the sun's light was caught by a heavy brass carronade. She was packed with men, and the gleam which twinkled every now and again from amongst them told that they were armed to the teeth. The captain brought his glass to bear upon them and whistled. Then he glanced up at the clouds once more.

"Thirty men," said he, "and they go three paces to our two. You, sir, take your blue coat off this deck or you'll bring trouble upon us. The Lord will look after His own if they'll only keep from foolishness. Get these hatches off, Tomlinson. So! Where's Jim Sturt and Hiram Jefferson? Let them stand by to clap them on again when I whistle. Starboard! Starboard! Keep her as full as she'll draw. Now Amos, and you Tomlinson, come here until I have a word with you."

The three stood in consultation upon the poop, glancing back at their pursuers. There could be no doubt that the wind was freshening, it blew briskly in their faces as they

looked back, but it was not steady yet, and the boat was rapidly overhauling them. Already they could see the faces of the marines who sat in the stern, and the gleam of the lighted linstock which the gunner held in his hand.

"*Hola!*" cried an officer in excellent English. "Lay her to or we fire!"

"Who are you and what do you want?" shouted Ephraim Savage, in a voice that might have been heard from the bank.

"We come in the king's name, and we want a party of Huguenots from Paris who came on board of your vessel at Rouen."

"Brace back the foreyard and lay her to," shouted the captain. "Drop a ladder over the side there and look smart! So! Now we are ready for them."

The yard was swung round and the vessel lay quietly rising and falling on the waves. The boat dashed alongside, her brass cannon trained upon the brigantine, and her squad of marines with their fingers upon their triggers

ready to open fire. They grinned and shrugged their shoulders when they saw that their sole opponents were three unarmed men upon the poop. The officer, a young active fellow with a bristling moustache, like the whiskers of a cat, was on deck in an instant with his drawn sword in his hand.

"Come up, two of you!" he cried. "You stand here at the head of the ladder, sergeant. Throw up a rope and you can fix it to this stanchion. Keep awake down there and be all ready to fire! You come with me, Corporal Lemoine. Who is captain of this ship?"

"I am, sir," said Ephraim Savage, submissively.

"You have three Huguenots aboard?"

"Tut! Tut! Huguenots, are they? I thought they were very anxious to get away, but as long as they paid their passage it was no business of mine. An old man, his daughter, and a young fellow about your age in some sort of livery."

"In uniform, sir? The uniform of the

king's guard. Those are the folk I have come for."

"And you wish to take them back?"

"Most certainly."

"Poor folk! I am sorry for them."

"And so am I, but orders are orders and must be done."

"Quite so. Well, the old man is in his bunk asleep. The maid is in a cabin below. And the other is sleeping down the hold there where we had to put him, for there is no room elsewhere."

"Sleeping, you say? We had best surprise him."

"But think you that you dare do it alone! He has no arms, it is true, but he is a well-grown young fellow. Will you not have twenty men up from the boat?"

Some such thought had passed through the officer's head, but the captain's remark put him upon his mettle.

"Come with me, corporal," said he. "Down this ladder, you say?"

"Yes, down the ladder and straight on. He lies between those two cloth bales." Ephraim Savage looked up with a smile playing about the corners of his grim mouth. The wind was whistling now in the rigging, and the stays of the mast were humming like two harp strings. Amos Green lounged beside the French sergeant who guarded the end of the rope ladder, while Tomlinson the mate stood with a bucket of water in his hand exchanging remarks in very bad French with the crew of the boat beneath him.

The officer made his way slowly down the ladder which led into the hold, and the corporal followed him, and had his chest level with the deck when the other had reached the bottom. It may have been something in Ephraim Savage's face, or it may have been the gloom around him which startled the young Frenchman, but a sudden suspicion flashed into his mind.

"Up again, corporal!" he shouted, "I think that you are best at the top."

"And I think that you are best down below, my friend," said the Puritan, who gathered the officer's meaning from his gesture. Putting the sole of his boot against the man's chest he gave a shove which sent both him and the ladder crashing down on to the officer beneath him. As he did so he blew his whistle, and in a moment the hatch was back in its place and clamped down on each side with iron bars.

The sergeant had swung round at the sound of the crash, but Amos Green, who had waited for the movement, threw his arms about him and hurled him overboard into the sea. At the same instant the connecting rope was severed, the foreyard creaked back into position again, and the bucketful of salt water soused down over the gunner and his gun, putting out his linstock and wetting his priming. A shower of balls from the marines piped through the air or rapped up against the planks, but the boat was tossing and jerking in the short choppy waves and to aim was impos-

sible. In vain the men tugged and strained at their oars while the gunner worked like a maniac to relight his linstock and to replace his priming. The boat had lost its weigh, while the brigantine was flying along now with every sail bulging and swelling to bursting-point. Crack! went the carronade at last, and five little slits in the mainsail showed that her charge of grape had flown high. Her second shot left no trace behind it, and at the third she was at the limit of her range. Half an hour afterwards a little dark dot upon the horizon with a golden speck at one end of it was all that could be seen of the Honfleur guard-boat. Wider and wider grew the low-lying shores, broader and broader was the vast spread of blue waters ahead, the smoke of Havre lay like a little cloud upon the northern horizon, and Captain Ephraim Savage paced his deck with his face as grim as ever, but with a dancing light in his gray eyes.

"I knew that the Lord would look after his own," said he complacently. "We've got her

beak straight now and there's not as much as a dab of mud betwixt this and the three hills of Boston. You've had too much of these French wines of late, Amos, lad. Come down and try a real Boston brewing with a double stroke of malt in the mash tub."

CHAPTER XXV.

A BOAT OF THE DEAD.

For two days the *Golden Rod* lay becalmed close to the Cape La Hague, with the Breton coast extending along the whole of the southern horizon. On the third morning, however, came a sharp breeze, and they drew rapidly away from land, until it was but a vague dim line which blended with the cloud banks. Out there on the wide free ocean, with the wind on their cheeks and the salt spray pringling upon their lips, these hunted folk might well throw off their sorrows and believe that they had left for ever behind them all tokens of those strenuous men whose earnest piety had done more harm than frivolity and wickedness could have accomplished. And yet even now they could not shake off their traces, for the sin of the

cottage is bounded by the cottage door, but that of the palace spreads its evil over land and sea.

"I am frightened about my father, Amory," said Adèle, as they stood together by the shrouds and looked back at the dim cloud upon the horizon which marked the position of that France which they were never to see again.

"But he is out of danger now."

"Out of danger from cruel laws, but I fear that he will never see the promised land."

"What do you mean, Adèle? My uncle is hale and hearty."

"Ah, Amory, his very heart roots were fastened in the Rue St. Martin and when they were torn his life was torn also. Paris and his business, they were the world to him."

"But he will accustom himself to this new life."

"If it only could be so! But I fear, I fear, that he is over old for such a change. He says not a word of complaint. But I read

upon his face that he is stricken to the heart. For hours together he will gaze back at France with the tears running silently down his cheeks. And his hair has turned from gray to white within the week."

De Catinat also had noticed that the gaunt old Huguenot had grown gaunter, that the lines upon his stern face were deeper, and that his head fell forward upon his breast as he walked. He was about, however, to suggest that the voyage might restore the merchant's health, when Adèle gave a cry of surprise and pointed out over the port quarter. So beautiful was she at the instant with her raven hair blown back by the wind, a glow of colour struck into her pale cheeks by the driving spray, her lips parted in her excitement and one white hand shading her eyes, that he stood beside her with all his thoughts bent upon her grace and her sweetness.

"Look!" she cried. "There is something floating upon the sea. I saw it upon the crest of a wave."

He looked in the direction in which she pointed, but at first he saw nothing. The wind was still behind them, and a brisk sea was running of a deep rich green colour, with long creamy curling caps to the larger waves The breeze would catch these foam-crests from time to time, and then there would be a sharp spatter upon the decks, with a salt smack upon the lips, and a pringling in the eyes. Suddenly as he gazed, however, something black was tilted up upon the sharp summit of one of the seas, and swooped out of view again upon the further side. It was so far from him that he could make nothing of it, but sharper eyes than his had caught a glance of it. Amos Green had seen the girl point and observed what it was which had attracted her attention.

"Captain Ephraim," cried he, "there's a boat on the starboard quarter."

The New England seaman whipped up his glass and steadied it upon the bulwark.

"Aye, it's a boat," said he, "but an empty

one. Maybe it's been washed off from some ship, or gone adrift from shore. Put her hard down, Mr. Tomlinson, for it just so happens that I am in need of a boat at present."

Half a minute later the *Golden Rod* had swung round and was running swiftly down towards the black spot which still bobbed and danced upon the waves. As they neared her they could see that something was projecting over her side.

"It's a man's head!" cried Amos Green.

But Ephraim Savage's grim face grew grimmer. "It's a man's foot," said he. "I think that you had best take the gal below to the cabin."

Amid a solemn hush they ran alongside this lonely craft which hung out so sinister a signal. Within ten yards of her the foreyard was hauled aback and they gazed down upon her terrible crew.

She was a little thirteen foot cockle shell, very broad for her length and so flat in the

bottom that she had been meant evidently for river or lake work. Huddled together beneath the seats were three folk, a man in the dress of a respectable artisan, a woman of the same class, and a little child about a year old. The boat was half full of water and the woman and child were stretched with their faces downwards, the fair curls of the infant and the dark locks of the mother washing to and fro like water-weeds upon the surface. The man lay with a slate-coloured face, his chin cocking up towards the sky, his eyes turned upwards to the whites, and his mouth wide open showing a leathern crinkled tongue like a rotting leaf. In the bows, all huddled in a heap, and with a single paddle still grasped in his hand there crouched a very small man clad in black, an open book lying across his face, and one stiff leg jutting upwards with the heel of the foot resting between the row-locks. So this strange company swooped and tossed upon the long green Atlantic rollers.

A boat had been lowered by the *Golden*

Rod, and the unfortunates were soon conveyed upon deck. No particle of either food or drink was to be found, nor anything save the single paddle and the open bible which lay across the small man's face. Man, woman, and child had all been dead a day at the least, and so with the short prayers used upon the seas they were buried from the vessel's side. The small man had at first seemed also to be lifeless, but Amos had detected some slight flutter of his heart, and the faintest haze was left upon the watch glass which was held before his mouth. Wrapped in a dry blanket he was laid beside the mast and the mate forced a few drops of rum every few minutes between his lips until the little spark of life which still lingered in him might be fanned to a flame. Meanwhile Ephraim Savage had ordered up the two prisoners whom he had entrapped at Honfleur. Very foolish they looked as they stood blinking and winking in the daylight from which they had been so long cut off.

"Very sorry, captain," said the seaman,

"but either you had to come with us, d'ye see, or we had to stay with you. They're waiting for me over at Boston, and in truth I really couldn't tarry."

The French soldier shrugged his shoulders and looked around him with a lengthening face. He and his corporal were limp with sea-sickness, and as miserable as a Frenchman is when first he finds that France has vanished from his view.

"Which would you prefer, to go on with us to America or to go back to France?"

"Back to France, if I can find my way. Oh, I must get to France again if only to have a word with that fool of a gunner."

"Well, we emptied a bucket of water over his linstock and priming, d'ye see, so maybe he did all he could. But there's France, where that thickening is over yonder."

"I see it! I see it! Ah, if my feet were only upon it once more."

"There is a boat beside us, and you may take it."

"My God, what happiness! Corporal Lemoine, the boat! Let us push off at once."

"But you need a few things first. Good Lord, who ever heard of a man pushing off like that! Mr. Tomlinson, just sling a keg of water and a barrel of meat and of biscuit into this boat. Hiram Jefferson, bring two oars aft. It's a long pull with the wind in your teeth, but you'll be there by to-morrow night, and the weather is set fair."

The two Frenchmen were soon provided with all that they were likely to require and pushed off with a waving of hats and a shouting of *bon voyage*. The foreyard was swung round again and the *Golden Rod* turned her bowsprit for the west. For hours a glimpse could be caught of the boat, dwindling away on the wave tops, until at last it vanished into the haze, and with it vanished the very last link which connected them with the great world which they were leaving behind them.

But whilst these things had been done, the senseless man beneath the mast had twitched

his eyelids, had drawn a little gasping breath, and then finally had opened his eyes. His skin was like gray parchment drawn tightly over his bones, and the limbs which thrust out from his clothes were those of a sickly child. Yet, weak as he was, the large black eyes with which he looked about him were full of dignity and power. Old Catinat had come upon deck, and at the sight of the man and of his dress he had run forward, and had raised his head reverently and rested it in his own arms.

"He is one of the faithful," he cried, "he is one of our pastors. Ah, now indeed a blessing will be upon our journey!"

But the man smiled gently and shook his head. "I fear that I may not come this journey with you," said he, "for the Lord has called me upon a further journey of my own. I have had my summons and I am ready. I am indeed the pastor of the temple at Isigny, and when we heard the orders of the wicked king, I and two of the faithful with their little one put forth in the hope that we might come

to England. But on the first day there came a wave which swept away one of our oars and all that was in the boat, our bread, our keg, and we were left with no hope save in Him. And then He began to call us to Him one at a time, first the child, and then the woman, and then the man, until I only am left, though I feel that my own time is not long. But since ye are also of the faithful, may I not serve you in any way before I go."

The merchant shook his head, and then suddenly a thought flashed upon him, and he ran with joy upon his face and whispered eagerly to Amos Green. Amos laughed, and strode across to the captain.

"It's time," said Ephraim Savage grimly.

Then the whisperers went to De Catinat. He sprang in the air and his eyes shone with delight. And then they went down to Adèle in her cabin, and she started and blushed, and turned her sweet face away, and patted her hair with her hands as woman will when a sudden call is made upon her. And so, since

haste was needful, and since even there upon the lonely sea there was one coming who might at any moment snap their purpose, they found themselves in a few minutes, this gallant man and this pure woman, kneeling hand in hand before the dying pastor, who raised his thin arm feebly in benediction as he muttered the words which should make them for ever one.

Adèle had often pictured her wedding to herself, as what young girl has not? Often in her dreams she had knelt before the altar with Amory in the temple of the Rue St. Martin. Or sometimes her fancy had taken her to some of those smaller churches in the provinces, those little refuges where a handful of believers gathered together, and it was there that her thoughts had placed the crowning act of a woman's life. But when had she thought of such a marriage as this with the white deck swaying beneath them, the ropes humming above, their only choristers the gulls which screamed around them, and their wed-

ding hymn the world-old anthem which is struck from the waves by the wind? And when could she forget the scene? The yellow masts and the bellying sails, the gray drawn face and the cracked lips of the castaway, her father's gaunt earnest features as he knelt to support the dying minister, De Catinat in his blue coat, already faded and weather stained, Captain Savage with his wooden face turned towards the clouds, and Amos Green with his hands in his pockets and a quiet twinkle in his blue eyes! Then behind all the lanky mate and the little group of New England seamen with their palmetto hats and their serious faces!

And so it was done amid kindly words in a harsh foreign tongue, and the shaking of rude hands hardened by the rope and the oar. De Catinat and his wife leaned together by the shrouds when all was over and watched the black side as it rose and fell, and the green water which raced past them.

"It is all so strange and so new," she said.

"Our future seems as vague and dark as yonder cloud banks which gather in front of us."

"If it rest with me," he answered, "your future will be as merry and bright as the sunlight that glints on the crest of these waves. The country that drove us forth lies far behind us, but out there is another and a fairer country, and every breath of wind wafts us nearer to it. Freedom awaits us there, and we bear with us youth and love, and what could man or woman ask for more."

So they stood and talked while the shadows deepened into twilight and the first faint gleam of the stars broke out in the darkening heavens above them. But ere those stars had waned again one more toiler had found rest aboard of the *Golden Rod*, and the scattered flock from Isigny had found their little pastor once more.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LAST PORT.

For three weeks the wind kept at east or north-east, always at a brisk breeze and freshening sometimes into half a gale. The *Golden Rod* sped merrily upon her way with every sail drawing, alow and aloft, so that by the end of the third week Amos and Ephraim Savage were reckoning out the hours before they would look upon their native land once more. To the old seaman who was used to meeting and to parting it was a small matter, but Amos, who had never been away before, was on fire with impatience, and would sit smoking for hours with his legs astride the shank of the bowsprit, staring ahead at the skyline, in the hope that his friend's reckoning had been wrong, and that

at any moment he might see the beloved coast line looming up in front of him.

"It's no use, lad," said Captain Ephraim, laying his great red hand upon his shoulder. "They that go down to the sea in ships need a power of patience, and there's no good eatin' your heart out for what you can't get."

"There's a feel of home about the air, though," Amos answered. "It seems to whistle through your teeth with a bite to it that I never felt over yonder. Ah, it will take three months of the Mohawk valley before I feel myself to rights."

"Well," said his friend, thrusting a plug of Trinidado tobacco into the corner of his cheek, "I've been on the sea since I had hair to my face, mostly in the coast trade, d'ye see, but over the water as well, as far as those navigation laws would let me. Except the two years that I came ashore for the King Philip business, when every man that could carry a gun was needed on the border, I've

never been three casts of a biscuit from salt water, and I tell you that I never knew a better crossing than the one we have just made."

"Aye, we have come along like a buck before a forest fire. But it is strange to me how you find your way so clearly out here with never track nor trail to guide you. It would puzzle me, Ephraim, to find America, to say nought of the Narrows of New York."

"I am somewhat too far to the north, Amos. We have been on or about the fiftieth since we sighted Cape La Hogue. To-morrow we should make land, by my reckonin'."

"Ah, to-morrow! And what will it be? Mount Desert? Cape Cod? Long Island?"

"Nay, lad, we are in the latitude of the St. Lawrence, and are more like to see the Arcadia coast. Then with this wind a day should carry us south, or two at the most. A few more such voyages and I shall buy myself a fair brick house in Green Lane of North Boston, where I can look down on the bay, or on the Charles or the Mystic, and see the

ships comin' and goin'. So I would end my life in peace and quiet."

All day Amos Green, in spite of his friend's assurance, strained his eyes in the fruitless search for land, and when at last the darkness fell he went below and laid out his fringed hunting tunic, his leather gaiters, and his raccoon-skin cap which were very much more to his taste than the broadcloth coat in which the Dutch mercer of New York had clad him. De Catinat had also put on the dark coat of civil life, and he and Adèle were busy preparing all things for the old man who had fallen so weak that there was little which he could do for himself. A fiddle was screaming in the forecastle, and half the night through hoarse bursts of homely song mingled with the dash of the waves and the whistle of the wind, as the New England men in their own grave and solid fashion made merry over their home-coming.

The mate's watch that night was from twelve to four, and the moon was shining

brightly for the first hour of it. In the early morning, however, it clouded over, and the *Golden Rod* plunged into one of those dim clammy mists which lie on all that tract of ocean. So thick was it that from the poop one could just make out the loom of the fore-sail, but could see nothing of the fore-topmast-stay sail or the jib. The wind was north-east with a very keen edge to it, and the dainty brigantine lay over, scudding along with her lee rails within hand's touch of the water. It had suddenly turned very cold—so cold that the mate stamped up and down the poop, and his four seamen shivered together under the shelter of the bulwarks. And then in a moment one of them was up, thrusting with his forefinger into the air and screaming, while a huge white wall sprang out of the darkness at the very end of the bowsprit and the ship struck with a force which snapped her two masts like dried reeds in a wind, and changed her in an instant to a crushed and shapeless heap of spars and wreckage.

The mate had shot the length of the poop at the shock, and had narrowly escaped from the falling mast while of his four men two had been hurled through the huge gap which yawned in the bows, while a third had dashed his head to pieces against the stock of the anchor. Tomlinson staggered forwards to find the whole front part of the vessel driven inwards, and a single seaman sitting dazed amid splintered spars, flapping sails and writhing lashing cordage. It was still as dark as pitch, and save the white crest of a leaping wave nothing was to be seen beyond the side of the vessel. The mate was peering round him in despair at the ruin which had come so suddenly upon them when he found Captain Ephraim at his elbow, half clad, but as wooden and as serene as ever.

"An iceberg," said he, sniffing at the chill air. "Did you not smell it, friend Tomlinson?"

"Truly I found it cold, Captain Savage, but I set it down to the mist."

"There is a mist ever set around them, though the Lord in his wisdom knows best why, for it is a sore trial to poor sailor men. She makes water fast, Mr. Tomlinson. She is down by the bows already."

The other watch had swarmed upon deck and one of them was measuring the well. "There is three feet of water," he cried, "and the pumps sucked dry yesterday at sundown."

"Hiram Jefferson and John Moreton to the pumps!" cried the captain. "Mr. Tomlinson, clear away the long boat and let us see if we may set her right, though I fear that she is past mending."

"The long boat has stove two planks," cried a seaman.

"The jolly boat then?"

"She is in three pieces."

The mate tore his hair, but Ephraim Savage smiled like a man who is gently tickled by some coincidence.

"Where is Amos Green?"

"Here, Captain Ephraim. What can I do?"

"And I?" asked De Catinat eagerly. Adèle and her father had been wrapped in mantles and placed for shelter in the lee of the round house.

"Tell him he can take his spell at the pumps," said the captain to Amos. "And you, Amos, you are a handy man with a tool. Get into yonder long boat with a lantern and see if you cannot patch her up."

For half an hour Amos Green hammered and trimmed and caulked, while the sharp measured clanking of the pumps sounded above the dash of the seas. Slowly, very slowly the bows of the brigantine were settling down, and her stern cocking up.

"You've not much time, Amos lad," said the captain quietly.

"She'll float now, though she's not quite water tight."

"Very good. Lower away! Keep up the pumpin' there! Mr. Tomlinson, see that pro-

visions and water are ready, as much as she will hold. Come with me, Hiram Jefferson."

The seaman and the captain swung themselves down into the tossing boat, the latter with a lantern strapped to his waist. Together they made their way until they were under her mangled bows. The captain shook his head when he saw the extent of the damage.

"Cut away the foresail and pass it over," said he.

Tomlinson and Amos Green cut away the lashings with their knives and lowered the corner of the sail. Captain Ephraim and the seaman seized it, and dragged it across the mouth of the huge gaping leak. As he stooped to do it, however, the ship heaved up upon a swell and the captain saw in the yellow light of his lantern sinuous black cracks which radiated away backwards from the central hole.

"How much in the well?" he asked.

"Five and a half feet."

"Then the ship is lost. I could put my finger between her planks as far as I can see back. Keep the pumps going there! Have you the food and water, Mr. Tomlinson?"

"Here, sir."

"Lower them over the bows. This boat cannot live more than an hour or two. Can you see anything of the berg?"

"The fog is lifting on the starboard quarter," cried one of the men. "Yes, there is the berg, quarter of a mile to leeward!"

The mist had thinned away suddenly, and the moon glimmered through once more upon the great lonely sea and the stricken ship. There, like a huge sail, was the monster piece of ice upon which they had shattered themselves, rocking slowly to and fro with the wash of the waves.

"You must make for her," said Captain Ephraim. "There is no other chance. Lower the gal over the bows! Well, then, her father first, if she likes it better. Tell them to sit still, Amos, and that the Lord will bear us up

if we keep clear of foolishness. So! You're a brave lass for all your niminy-piminy lingo. Now the keg and the barrel, and all the wraps and cloaks you can find. Now the other man, the Frenchman. Aye, aye, passengers first and you have got to come. Now Amos! Now the seamen and you last, friend Tomlinson."

It was well that they had not very far to go for the boat was weighed down almost to the edge, and it took the bailing of two men to keep in check the water which leaked in between the shattered planks. When all were safely in their places, Captain Ephraim Savage swung himself aboard again, which was but too easy now that every minute brought the bows nearer to the water. He came back with a bundle of clothing which he threw into the boat.

"Push off!" he cried.

"Jump in, then."

"Ephraim Savage goes down with his ship," said he quietly. "Friend Tomlinson, it is not

my way to give my orders more than once. Push off, I say!"

The mate thrust her out with a boat hook. Amos and De Catinat gave a cry of dismay, but the stolid New Englanders settled down to their oars and pulled off for the iceberg.

"Amos! Amos! Will you suffer it?" cried the guardsman in French. "My honour will not permit me to leave him thus. I should feel it a stain for ever."

"Tomlinson, you would not leave him! Go on board and force him to come."

"The man is not living who could force him to do what he had no mind for."

"He may change his purpose."

"He never changes his purpose."

"But you cannot leave him, man! You must at least lie bye and pick him up."

"The boat leaks like a sieve," said the mate. "I will take her to the berg, leave you all there, if we can find footing, and go back for the captain. Put your heart into it, my lads,

for the sooner we are there the sooner we shall get back."

But they had not taken fifty strokes before Adèle gave a sudden scream.

"My God!" she cried, "the ship is going down!"

She had settled lower and lower in the water, and suddenly with a sound of rending planks she thrust down her bows like a diving water fowl, her stern flew up into the air, and with a long sucking noise she shot down swifter and swifter until the leaping waves closed over her high poop lantern. With one impulse the boat swept round again and made backwards as fast as willing arms could pull it. But all was quiet at the scene of the disaster. Not even a fragment of wreckage was left upon the surface to show where the *Golden Rod* had found her last harbour. For a long quarter of an hour they pulled round and round in the moonlight, but not a glimpse could they see of the Puritan seaman, and at last, when in spite of the balers the water

was washing round their ankles, they put her head about once more and made their way in silence and with heavy hearts to their dreary island of refuge.

Desolate as it was, it was their only hope now, for the leak was increasing and it was evident that the boat could not be kept afloat long. As they drew nearer they saw with dismay that the side which faced them was a solid wall of ice sixty feet high without a flaw or crevice in its whole extent. The berg was a large one, fifty paces at least each way, and there was a hope that the other side might be more favourable. Baling hard they paddled round the corner but only to find themselves faced by another gloomy ice-crag. Again they went round, and again they found that the berg increased rather than diminished in height. There remained only one other side and they knew as they rowed round to it that their lives hung upon the result for the boat was almost settling down beneath them. They shot out from the shadow into the full

moonlight and looked upon a sight which none of them would forget until their dying day.

The cliff which faced them was as precipitous as any of the others, and it glimmered and sparkled all over where the silver light fell upon the thousand facets of ice. Right in the centre, however, on a level with the waters' edge there was what appeared to be a huge hollowed-out cave which marked the spot where the *Golden Rod* had, in shattering herself, dislodged a huge boulder, and so amid her own ruin prepared a refuge for those who had trusted themselves to her. This cavern was of the richest emerald green, light and clear at the edges, but toning away into the deepest purples and blues at the back. But it was not the beauty of this grotto, nor was it the assurance of rescue which brought a cry of joy and of wonder from every lip, but it was that, seated upon an ice boulder and placidly smoking a long corn-cob pipe, there was perched in front of them no less a person than Captain Ephraim Savage of Boston. For

a moment the castaways could almost have believed that it was his wraith, were wraiths ever seen in so homely an attitude, but the tones of his voice very soon showed that it was indeed he, and in no very Christian temper either.

"Friend Tomlinson," said he, "when I tell you to row for an iceberg I mean you to row right away there, d'ye see, and not to go philandering about over the ocean. It's not your fault that I am not froze, and so I would have been if I had'nt some dry tobacco and my tinder box to keep myself warm."

Without stopping to answer his commander's reproaches the mate headed for the ledge, which had been cut into a slope by the bows of the brigantine, so that the boat was run up easily on to the ice. Captain Savage seized his dry clothes and vanished into the back of the cave to return presently warmer in body, and more contented in mind. The long boat had been turned upside down for a seat, the gratings and thawrts taken out and covered

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with wraps to make a couch for the lady, and the head knocked out of the keg of biscuits.

"We were frightened for you, Ephraim," said Amos Green. "I had a heavy heart this night when I thought that I should never see you more."

"Tut, Amos, you should have known me better."

"But how came you here, captain?" asked Tomlinson. "I thought that maybe you had been taken down by the suck of the ship."

"And so I was. It is the third ship in which I have gone down, but they have never kept me down yet. I went deeper to-night than when the *Speedwell* sank, but not so deep as in the *Governor Winthrop*. When I came up I swam to the berg, found this nook, and crawled in. Glad I was to see you, for I feared that you had foundered."

"We put back to pick you up and we passed you in the darkness. And what should we do now?"

"Rig up that boat sail and make quarters for the gal. Then get our supper and such rest as we can, for there is nothing to be done to-night, and there may be much in the morning."

CHAPTER XXVII.

A DWINDLING ISLAND.

Amos Green was aroused in the morning by a hand upon his shoulder, and springing to his feet, found De Catinat standing beside him. The survivors of the crew were grouped about the upturned boat, slumbering heavily after their labours of the night. The red rim of the sun had just pushed itself above the water-line, and sky and sea were one blaze of scarlet and orange from the dazzling gold of the horizon to the lightest pink at the zenith. The first rays flashed directly into their cave sparkling and glimmering upon the ice crystals and tinging the whole grotto with a rich warm light. Never was a fairy's palace more lovely than this floating refuge which nature had provided for them.

But neither the American nor the French-

man had time now to give a thought to the novelty and beauty of their situation. The latter's face was grave, and his friend read danger in his eyes.

"What is it then?"

"The berg. It is coming to pieces."

"Tut, man, it is as solid as an island."

"I have been watching it. You see that crack which extends backwards from the end of our grotto. Two hours ago I could scarce put my hand into it. Now I can slip through it with ease. I tell you that she is splitting across."

Amos Green walked to the end of the funnel-shaped recess and found, as his friend had said, that a green sinuous crack extended away backwards into the iceberg, caused either by the tossing of the waves, or by the terrific impact of their vessel. He roused Captain Ephraim and pointed out the danger to him.

"Well, if she springs a leak we are gone," said he. "She's been thawing pretty fast as it is."

They could see now that what had seemed

in the moonlight to be smooth walls of ice were really furrowed and wrinkled like an old man's face by the streams of melted water which were continually running down them. The whole huge mass was brittle and honeycombed and rotten. Already they could hear all round them the ominous drip, drip, and the splash and tinkle of the little rivulets as they fell into the ocean.

"Hullo!" cried Amos Green, "what's that?"

"What then?"

"Did you hear nothing?"

"No."

"I could have sworn that I heard a voice."

"Impossible. We are all here."

"It must have been my fancy then."

Captain Ephraim walked to the seaward face of the cave and swept the ocean with his eyes. The wind had quite fallen away now and the sea stretched away to the eastward smooth and unbroken save for a single great black spar which floated near the spot where the *Golden Rod* had foundered.

"We should lie in the track of some ships," said the captain thoughtfully. "There's the codders and the herring-busses. We're over far south for them, I reckon. But we can't be more'n two hundred mile from Port Royal in Arcadia, and we're in the line of the St. Lawrence trade. If I'd three white mountain pines, Amos, and a hundred yards of stout canvas I'd get up on the top of this thing, d'ye see, and I'd rig such a jury-mast as would send her humming into Boston Bay. Then I'd break her up and sell her for what she was worth, and turn a few pieces over the business. But she's a heavy old craft, and that's a fact, though even now she might do a knot or two an hour if she had a hurricane behind her. But what is it, Amos?"

The young hunter was standing with his ear slanting, his head bent forwards, and his eyes glancing sideways, like a man who listens intently. He was about to answer when De Catinat gave a cry and pointed to the back of the cave.

"Look at the crack now!"

It had widened by a foot since they had noticed it last, until it was now no longer a crack. It was a pass.

"Let us go through," said the captain.

"It can but come out on the other side."

"Then let us see the other side."

He led the way and the other two followed him. It was very dark as they advanced with high dripping ice walls on either side, and one little zigzagging slit of blue sky above their heads. Tripping and groping their way they stumbled along until suddenly the passage grew wider and opened out into a large square of flat ice. The berg was level in the centre and sloped upwards from that point to the high cliffs which bounded it on each side. In three directions this slope was very steep, but in one it slanted up quite gradually, and the constant thawing had grooved the surface with a thousand irregularities by which an active man could ascend. With one impulse they began all three to clamber up until a

minute later they were standing not far from the edge of the summit, seventy feet above the sea, with a view which took in a good fifty miles of water. In all that fifty miles there was no sign of life, nothing but the endless glint of the sun upon the waves.

Captain Ephraim whistled. "We are out of luck," said he.

Amos Green looked about him with startled eyes. "I cannot understand it," said he. "I could have sworn —— By the eternal, listen to that!"

The clear call of a military bugle rang out in the morning air. With a cry of amazement they all three craned forward and peered over the edge.

A large ship was lying under the very shadow of the iceberg. They looked straight down upon her snow-white decks, fringed with shining brass cannon, and dotted with seamen. A little clump of soldiers stood upon the poop going through the manual exercise, and it was from them that the call

had come which had sounded so unexpectedly in the ears of the castaways. Standing back from the edge they had not only looked over the topmasts of this welcome neighbour, but they had themselves been invisible from her decks. Now the discovery was mutual as was shown by a chorus of shouts and cries from beneath them.

But the three did not wait a instant. Sliding and scrambling down the wet, slippery incline, they rushed shouting through the crack and into the cave where their comrades had just been startled by the bugle call while in the middle of their cheerless breakfast. A few hurried words and the leaky long boat had been launched, their possessions had been bundled in, and they were afloat once more. Pulling round a promontory of the berg, they found themselves under the stern of a fine corvette, the sides of which were lined with friendly faces, while from the peak there drooped a huge white banner mottled over with the golden lilies of France. In a very few

minutes their boat had been hauled up and they found themselves on board of the *St. Christophe* man-of-war, conveying Marquis de Denonville, the new governor-general of Canada, to take over his duties.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN THE POOL OF QUEBEC.

A SINGULAR colony it was of which the shipwrecked party found themselves now to be members. The *St. Christophe* had left Rochelle three weeks before with four small consorts conveying five hundred soldiers to help the struggling colony on the St. Lawrence. The squadron had become separated, however, and the governor was pursuing his way alone in the hope of picking up the others in the river. Aboard he had a company of the regiment of Quercy, the staff of his own household, Saint Vallier, the new bishop of Canada, with several of his attendants, three Recollet friars, and five Jesuits bound for the fatal Iroquois mission, half a dozen ladies on their way out to join their husbands, two Ursuline nuns, ten or twelve gallants whom

love of adventure, and the hope of bettering their fortunes had drawn across the seas, and lastly some twenty peasant maidens of Anjou who were secure of finding husbands waiting for them upon the beach, if only for the sake of the sheets, the pot, the tin plates and the kettle which the king would provide for each of his humble wards.

To add a handful of New England Independants, a Puritan of Boston, and three Huguenots to such a gathering, was indeed to bring fire-brand and powder-barrel together. And yet all aboard were so busy with their own concerns that the castaways were left very much to themselves. Thirty of the soldiers were down with fever and scurvy, and both priests and nuns were fully taken up in nursing them. Denonville, the governor, a pious-minded dragoon, walked the deck all day reading the psalms of David, and sat up half the night with maps and charts laid out before him, planning out the destruction of the Iroquois who were ravaging his domi-

nions. The gallants and the ladies flirted, the maidens of Anjou made eyes at the soldiers of Quercy and the bishop Saint Vallier read his offices and lectured his clergy. Ephraim Savage used to stand all day glaring at the good man as he paced the deck with his red-edged missal in his hand, and muttering about the "abomination of desolation," but his little ways were put down to his exposure upon the iceberg, and to the fixed idea in the French mind that men of the Anglo-Saxon stock are not to be held accountable for their actions.

There was peace between England and France at present, though feeling ran high between Canada and New York, the French believing, and with some justice, that the English colonists were whooping on the demons who attacked them. Ephraim and his men were therefore received hospitably on board, though the ship was so crowded that they had to sleep wherever they could find cover and space for their bodies. The Catinats, too, had been treated in an even more

kindly fashion, the weak old man and the beauty of his daughter, arousing the interest of the Governor himself. De Catinat had, during the voyage, exchanged his uniform for a plain sombre suit, so that, except for his military bearing, there was nothing to show that he was a fugitive from the army. Old Catinat was now so weak that he was past the answering of questions, his daughter was for ever at his side, and the soldier was diplomatist enough, after a training at Versailles, to say much without saying anything, and so their secret was still preserved. De Catinat had known what it was to be a Huguenot in Canada before the law was altered. He had no wish to try it after.

On the day after the rescue they sighted Cape Breton in the south, and soon running swiftly before an easterly wind, saw the loom of the east end of Anticosti. Then they sailed up the mighty river, though from mid-channel the banks upon either side were hardly to be seen. As the shores narrowed in, they saw

the wild gorge of the Saguenay river upon the right, with the smoke from the little fishing and trading station of Tadousac streaming up above the pine trees. Naked Indians with their faces daubed with red clay, Algonquins and Abenakis, clustered round the ship in their birchen canoes with fruit and vegetables from the land which brought fresh life to the scurvy-stricken soldiers. Thence the ship tacked on up the river past Mal Bay, the Ravine of the Eboulements and the Bay of St. Paul with it's broad valley and wooded mountains all in a blaze with their beautiful autumn dress, their scarlets, their purples, and their golds, from the maple, the ash, the young oak, and the saplings of the birch. Amos Green, leaning on the bulwarks, stared with longing eyes at these vast expanses of virgin woodland, hardly traversed save by an occasional wandering savage, or hardy *coureur-de-bois*. Then the bold outline of Cape Tourmente loomed up in front of them; they passed the rich placid meadows of Laval's seigneury of

Beaupré, and, skirting the settlements of the Island of Orleans, they saw the broad pool stretch out in front of them, the falls of Montmorenci, the high palisades of Cape Levi, the cluster of vessels, and upon the right that wonderful rock with its diadem of towers and its township huddled round its base, the centre and stronghold of French power in America. Cannon thundered from the bastions above and were echoed back by the warship, while ensigns dipped, hats waved, and a swarm of boats and canoes shot out to welcome the new governor, and to convey the soldiers and passengers to shore.

The old merchant had pined away since he had left French soil, like a plant which has been plucked from its roots. The shock of the shipwreck and the night spent in their bleak refuge upon the iceberg had been too much for his years and strength. Since they had been picked up he had lain amid the scurvy-stricken soldiers with hardly a sign of life save for his thin breathing and the

twitching of his scraggy throat. Now, however, at the sound of the cannon and the shouting he opened his eyes, and raised himself slowly and painfully upon his pillow.

"What is it, father? What can we do for you?" cried Adèle. "We are in America, and here is Amory and here am I, your children."

But the old man shook his head. "The Lord has brought me to the promised land, but He has not willed that I should enter into it," said he. "May His will be done, and blessed be His name for ever! But at least I should wish, like Moses, to gaze upon it, if I cannot set foot upon it. Think you, Amory, that you could lend me your arm and lead me on to the deck."

"If I have another to help me," said De Catinat, and, ascending to the deck, he brought Amos Green back with him. "Now, father, if you will lay a hand upon the shoulder of each, you need scarce put your feet to the boards."

A minute later the old merchant was on deck, and the two young men had seated him upon a coil of rope with his back against the mast, where he should be away from the crush. The soldiers were already crowding down into the boats, and all were so busy over their own affairs that they paid no heed to the little group of refugees who gathered round the stricken man. He turned his head painfully from side to side, but his eyes brightened as they fell upon the broad blue stretch of water, the flash of the distant falls, the high castle, and the long line of purple mountains away to the north-west.

"It is not like France," said he. "It is not green and peaceful and smiling, but it is grand and strong and stern like Him who made it. As I have weakened, Adèle, my soul has been less clogged by my body, and I have seen clearly much that has been dim to me. And it has seemed to me, my children, that all this country of America, not Canada alone, but the land where you were born also, Amos

Green, and all that stretches away towards yonder setting sun will be the best gift of God to man. For this has He held it concealed through all the ages, that now His own high purpose may be wrought upon it. For here is a land which is innocent, which has no past guilt to atone for, no feud, nor ill custom, nor evil of any kind. And as the years roll on all the weary and homeless ones, all who are stricken and landless and wronged will turn their faces to it, even as we have done. And hence will come a nation which will surely take all that is good and leave all that is bad, moulding and fashioning itself into the highest. Do I not see such a mighty people—a people who will care more to raise their lowest than to exalt their richest—who will understand that there is more bravery in peace than in war, who will see that all men are brothers, and whose hearts will not narrow themselves down to their own frontiers, but will warm in sympathy with every noble cause the whole world through? That is what I see, Adèle,

as I lie here beside a shore upon which I shall never set my feet, and I say to you that if you and Amory go to the building of such a nation then indeed your lives are not misspent. It will come, and when it comes, may God guard it, may God watch over it and direct it!" His head had sunk gradually lower upon his breast and his lids had fallen slowly over his eyes which had been looking away out past Point Levi at the rolling woods and the far-off mountains. Adèle gave a quick cry of despair and threw her arms round the old man's neck.

"He is dying, Amory, he is dying!" she cried.

A stern Franciscan friar who had been telling his beads within a few paces of them, heard the cry and was beside them in an instant.

"He is indeed dying," he said, as he gazed down at the ashen face. "Has the old man had the sacraments of the church?"

"I do not think that he needs them," answered De Catinat evasively.

"Which of us do not need them, young man!" said the friar sternly. "And how can a man hope for salvation without them! I shall myself administer them without delay."

But the old Huguenot had opened his eyes, and with a last flicker of strength he pushed away the gray-hooded figure which bent over him.

"I left all that I love rather than yield to you," he cried, "and think you that you can overcome me now?"

The Franciscan started back at the words, and his hard suspicious eyes shot from De Catinat to the weeping girl.

"So!" said he. "You are Huguenots then!"

"Hush! Do not wrangle before a man who is dying!" cried De Catinat in a voice as fierce as his own.

"Before a man who is dead," said Amos Green solemnly.

As he spoke the old man's face had relaxed, his thousand wrinkles had been smoothed

suddenly out as though an invisible hand had passed over them, and his head fell back against the mast. Adèle remained motionless with her arms still clasped round his neck and her cheek pressed against his shoulder. She had fainted.

De Catinat raised his wife and bore her down to the cabin of one of the ladies who had already shown them some kindness. Deaths were no new thing aboard the ship, for they had lost ten soldiers upon the outward passage, so that amid the joy and bustle of the disembarking there were few who had a thought to spare upon the dead pilgrim, and the less so when it was whispered abroad that he had been a Huguenot. A brief order was given that he should be buried in the river that very night, and then, save for a sailmaker who fastened the canvas round him, mankind had done its last for Theophile Catinat. With the survivors, however, it was different, and when the troops were all disembarked, they were mustered in a little group upon the deck,

and an officer of the governor's suite decided upon what should be done with them. He was a portly, good-humoured, ruddy-cheeked man, but De Catinat saw with apprehension that the friar walked by his side as he advanced along the deck, and exchanged a few whispered remarks with him. There was a bitter smile upon the monk's dark face which boded little good for the heretics.

"It shall be seen to, good father, it shall be seen to," said the officer impatiently, in answer to one of these whispered injunctions. "I am as zealous a servant of Holy Church as you are."

"I trust that you are, Monsieur de Bonneville. With so devout a governor as Monsieur de Denonville, it might be an ill thing even in this world for the officers of his household to be lax."

The soldier glanced angrily at his companion for he saw the threat which lurked under the words.

"I would have you remember, father," said

he, "that if faith is a virtue, charity is no less so." Then, speaking in English: "Which is Captain Savage?"

"Ephraim Savage of Boston."

"And Master Amos Green?"

"Amos Green of New York."

"And Master Tomlinson?"

"John Tomlinson of Salem."

"And master mariners Hiram Jefferson, Joseph Cooper, Seek-grace Spaulding, and Paul Cushing, all of Massachusetts Bay?"

"We are here."

"It is the governor's orders that all whom I have named shall be conveyed at once to the trading brig *Hope*, which is yonder ship with the white paint line. She sails within the hour for the English provinces."

A buzz of joy broke from the castaway mariners at the prospect of being so speedily restored to their homes, and they hurried away to gather together the few possessions which they had saved from the wreck. The officer put his list in his pocket and stepped across

to where De Catinat leaned moodily against the bulwarks.

"Surely you remember me," he said. "I could not forget your face, even though you have exchanged a blue coat for a black one."

De Catinat grasped the hand which was held out to him.

"I remember you well, De Bonneville, and the journey that we made together to Fort Frontenac, but it was not for me to claim your friendship now that things have gone amiss with me."

"Tut, man, once my friend always my friend."

"I feared, too, that my acquaintance would do you little good with yonder dark cowled friar who is glowering behind you."

"Well, well, you know how it is with us here. Frontenac could keep them in their place, but De la Barre was as clay in their hands, and this new one promises to follow in his steps. What with the Sulpitians at Montreal and the Jesuits here, we poor devils are

between the upper and the nether stones. But I am grieved from my heart to give such a welcome as this to an old comrade, and still more to his wife."

"What is to be done, then?"

"You are to be confined to the ship until she sails, which will be in a week at the furthest."

"And then?"

"You are to be carried home in her, and handed over to the governor of Rochelle to be sent back to Paris. Those are Monsieur de Denonville's orders, and if they be not carried out to the letter, then we shall have the whole hornet's nest about our ears."

De Catinat groaned as he listened. After all their strivings and trials and efforts, to return to Paris, the scorn of his enemies, and an object of pity to his friends, was too deep a humiliation. He flushed with shame at the very thought. To be led back like the home-sick peasant who has deserted from his regiment! Better one spring into the broad blue river beneath him, were it not for little pale-

faced Adèle who had none but him to look to. It was so tame! So ignominious! And yet in this floating prison, with a woman whose fate was linked with his own, what hope was there of escape?

De Bonneville had left him, with a few blunt words of sympathy, but the friar still paced the deck with a furtive glance at him from time to time, and two soldiers who were stationed upon the poop passed and repassed within a few yards of him. They had orders evidently to mark his movements. Heart-sick he leaned over the side watching the Indians in their paint and feathers shooting backwards and forwards in their canoes, and staring across at the town where the gaunt gable ends of houses and charred walls marked the effects of the terrible fire which a few years before had completely destroyed the lower part.

As he stood gazing, his attention was drawn away by the swish of oars, and a large boat full of men passed immediately underneath where he stood.

It held the New Englanders who were being conveyed to the ship which was to take them home. There were the four seamen huddled together, and there in the sheets were Captain Ephraim Savage and Amos Green, conversing together and pointing to the shipping. The grizzled face of the old Puritan and the bold features of the woodsman were turned more than once in his direction, but no word of farewell and no kindly wave of the hand came back to the lonely exile. They were so full of their own future and their own happiness, that they had not a thought to spare upon his misery. He could have borne anything from his enemies, but this sudden neglect from his friends came too heavily after his other troubles. He stooped his face to his arms and burst in an instant into a passion of sobs. Before he raised his eyes again the brig had hoisted her anchor, and was tacking under full canvas out of the Quebec basin.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE VOICE AT THE PORT-HOLE.

That night old Theophile Catinat was buried from the ship's side, his sole mourners the two who bore his own blood in their veins. The next day De Catinat spent upon deck, amid the bustle and confusion of the unlading, endeavouring to cheer Adèle by light chatter which came from a heavy heart. He pointed out to her the places which he had known so well, the citadal where he had been quartered, the college of the Jesuits, the cathedral of Bishop Laval, the magazine of the old company, dismantled by the great fire, and the house of Aubert de la Chesnaye, the only private one which had remained standing in the lower part. From where they lay they could see not only the places of interest, but something also of that motley

population which made the town so different to all others save only its younger sister, Montreal. Passing and repassing along the steep path with the picket fence which connected the two quarters they saw the whole panorama of Canadian life moving before their eyes, the soldiers with their slouched hats, their plumes, and their bandoleers, habitants from the river *côtes* in their rude peasant dresses, little changed from their forefathers of Brittany or Normandy, and young rufflers from France or from the seigneuries, who cocked their hats and swaggered in what they thought to be the true Versailles fashion. There, too, might be seen little knots of the men of the woods, *coureurs-de-bois* or *voyageurs*, with leathern hunting tunics, fringed leggings, and fur cap with eagle feather, who came back once a year to the cities, leaving their Indian wives and children in some up-country wigwam. Redskins, too, were there, leather-faced Algonquin fishers and hunters, wild Micmacs from the east, and savage Abenakis

from the south, while everywhere were the dark habits of the Franciscans, and the black cassocks and broad hats of the Recollets, and Jesuits, the moving spirits of the whole.

Such were the folk who crowded the streets of the capital of this strange offshoot of France which had been planted along the line of the great river, a thousand leagues from the parent country. And it was a singular settlement, the most singular perhaps that has ever been made. For a long twelve hundred miles it extended, from Tadoussac in the east, away to the trading stations upon the borders of the great lakes, limiting itself for the most part to narrow cultivated strips upon the margins of the river, banked in behind by wild forests and unexplored mountains which forever tempted the peasant from his hoe and his plough to the freer life of the paddle and the musket. Thin scattered clearings, alternating with little palisaded clumps of log-hewn houses marked the line where civilisation was forcing itself in upon the huge continent, and

barely holding its own against the rigour of a northern climate and the ferocity of merciless enemies. The whole white population of this mighty district, including soldiers, priests, and woodmen, with all women and children, was very far short of twenty thousand souls, and yet so great was their energy, and such the advantage of the central government under which they lived, that they had left their trace upon the whole continent. When the prosperous English settlers were content to live upon their acres, and when no axe had rung upon the further side of the Alleghanies, the French had pushed their daring pioneers, some in the black robe of the missionary, and some in the fringed tunic of the hunter, to the uttermost ends of the continent. They had mapped out the lakes and had bartered with the fierce Sioux on the great plains where the wooden wigwam gave place to the hide tee-pee. Marquette had followed the Illinois down to the Mississippi, and had traced the course of the great river until, first of all white men, he

looked upon the turbid flood of the rushing Missouri. La Salle had ventured even farther, had passed the Ohio, and had made his way to the Mexican Gulf, raising the French arms where the city of New Orleans was afterwards to stand. Others had pushed on to the Rocky Mountains, and to the huge wilderness of the northwest, preaching, bartering, cheating, baptising, swayed by many motives and holding only in common a courage which never faltered and a fertility of resource which took them in safety past every danger. Frenchmen were to the north of the British settlements, Frenchmen were to the west of them, and Frenchmen were to the south of them, and if all the continent is not now French, the fault assuredly did not rest with that iron race of early Canadians.

All this De Catinat explained to Adèle during the autumn day, trying to draw her thoughts away from the troubles of the past, and from the long dreary voyage which lay before her. She, fresh from the staid life of

the Parisian street and from the tame scenery of the Seine, gazed with amazement at the river, the woods and the mountains, and clutched her husband's arm in horror when a canoeful of wild skin-clad Algonquins, their faces striped with white and red paint, came flying past with the foam dashing from their paddles. Again the river turned from blue to pink, again the old citadel was bathed in the evening glow, and again the two exiles descended to their cabins with cheering words for each other and heavy thoughts in their own hearts.

De Catinat's bunk was next to a port-hole, and it was his custom to keep this open, as the caboose was close to him in which the cooking was done for the crew, and the air was hot and heavy. That night he found it impossible to sleep, and he lay tossing under his blanket, thinking over every possible means by which they might be able to get away from this cursed ship. But even if they got away, where could they go to then? All

Canada was sealed to them. The woods to the south were full of ferocious Indians. The English settlements would, it was true, grant them freedom to use their own religion, but what would his wife and he do, without a friend, strangers among folk who spoke another tongue? Had Amos Green remained true to them, then, indeed, all would have been well. But he had deserted them. Of course there was no reason why he should not. He was no blood relation of theirs. He had already benefited them many times. His own people and the life that he loved were waiting for him at home. Why should he linger here for the sake of folk whom he had known but a few months? It was not to be expected, and yet, De Catinat could not realise it, could not understand it.

But what was that? Above the gentle lapping of the river he had suddenly heard a sharp clear 'hist!' Perhaps it was some passing boatman or Indian. Then it came again, that eager urgent summons. He sat

up and stared about him. It certainly must have come from the open port-hole. He looked out, but only to see the broad basin, with the loom of the shipping, and the distant twinkle from the lights on Point Levi. As his head dropped back upon the pillow something fell upon his chest with a little tap, and rolling off, rattled along the boards. He sprang up, caught a lantern from a hook and flashed it upon the floor. There was the missile which had struck him—a little golden brooch. As he lifted it up and looked closer at it, a thrill passed through him. It had been his own, and he had given it to Amos Green upon the second day that he had met him, when they were starting together for Versailles.

This was a signal then, and Amos Green had not deserted them after all. He dressed himself, all in a tremble with excitement, and went upon deck. It was pitch dark, and he could see no one, but the sound of regular footfalls somewhere in the fore part of the

ship showed that the sentinels were still there. The guardsman walked over to the side and peered down into the darkness. He could see the loom of a boat.

"Who is there?" he whispered.

"Is that you, De Catinat?"

"Yes."

"We have come for you."

"God bless you, Amos."

"Is your wife there?"

"No, but I can rouse her."

"Good! But first catch this cord. Now pull up the ladder!"

De Catinat gripped the line which was thrown to him, and on drawing it up found that it was attached to a rope ladder furnished at the top with two steel hooks to catch on to the bulwarks. He placed them in position, and then made his way very softly to the cabin amidships in the ladies' quarters which had been allotted to his wife. She was the only woman on board the ship now, so that he was able to tap at her door in safety,

and to explain in a few words the need for haste and for secrecy. In ten minutes Adèle had dressed, and with her valuables in a little bundle, had slipped out from her cabin. Together they made their way upon deck once more and crept aft under the shadow of the bulwarks. They were almost there when De Catinat stopped suddenly and ground out an oath through his clenched teeth. Between them and the rope ladder there was standing in a dim patch of murky light the grim figure of a Franciscan friar. He was peering through the darkness, his heavy cowl shadowing his face, and he advanced slowly as if he had caught a glimpse of them. A lantern hung from the mizen shrouds above him. He unfastened it and held it up to cast its light upon them.

But De Catinat was not a man with whom it was safe to trifle. His life had been one of quick resolve and prompt action. Was this vindictive friar at the last moment to stand between him and freedom? It was a danger-

ous position to take. The guardsman pulled Adèle into the shadow of the mast and then, as the monk advanced, he sprang out upon him and seized him by the gown. As he did so the other's cowl was pushed back, and instead of the harsh features of the ecclesiastic, De Catinat saw with amazement in the glimmer of the lantern the shrewd gray eyes and strong stern face of Ephraim Savage. At the same instant another figure appeared over the side, and the warm-hearted Frenchman threw himself into the arms of Amos Green.

"It's all right," said the young hunter, disengaging himself with some embarrassment from the other's embrace. "We've got him in the boat with a buckskin glove jammed into his gullet!"

"Who then?"

"The man whose cloak Captain Ephraim there has put round him. He came on us when you were away rousing your lady, but we got him to be quiet between us. Is the lady there?"

"Here she is."

"As quick as you can, then, for someone may come along."

Adèle was helped over the side, and seated in the stern of a birch-bark canoe. The three men unhooked the ladder, and swung themselves down by a rope, while two Indians who held the paddles, pushed silently off from the ship's side, and shot swiftly up the stream. A minute later a dim loom behind them, and the glimmer of two yellow lights was all that they could see of the *St. Christophe.*

"Take a paddle, Amos, and I'll take one," said Captain Savage, stripping off his monk's gown. "I felt safer in this on the deck of yon ship, but it don't help in a boat. I believe we might have fastened the hatches and taken her, brass guns and all, had we been so minded."

"And been hanged as pirates at the yard-arm next morning," said Amos. "I think we have done better to take the honey and leave

the tree. I hope, madame, that all is well with you."

"Nay, I can hardly understand what has happened, or where we are."

"Nor can I, Amos."

"Did you not expect us to come back for you, then?"

"I did not know what to expect."

"Well, now, but surely you could not think that we would leave you without a word."

"I confess that I was cut to the heart by it."

"I feared that you were when I looked at you with the tail of my eye, and saw you staring so blackly over the bulwarks at us. But if we had been seen talking or planning they would have been upon our trail at once. As it was they had not a thought of suspicion, save only this fellow whom we have in the bottom of the boat here."

"And what did you do?"

"We left the brig last night, got ashore on the Beaupré side, arranged for this canoe, and

lay dark all day. Then to-night, we got alongside and I roused you easily, for I knew where you slept. The friar nearly spoiled all when you were below, but we gagged him and passed him over the side. Ephraim popped on his gown so that he might go forward to help you without danger, for we were scared at the delay."

"Ah! it is glorious to be free once more. What do I not owe you, Amos?"

"Well, you looked after me when I was in your country, and I am going to look after you now."

"And where are we going?"

"Ah! there you have me. It is this way or none, for we can't get down to the sea. We must make our way over land as best we can, and we must leave a good stretch between Quebec citadel and us before the day breaks, for from what I hear they would rather have a Huguenot prisoner than an Iroquois sagamore. By the eternal, I cannot see why they should make such a fuss over how

a man chooses to save his own soul, though here is old Ephraim just as fierce upon the other side, so all the folly is not one way."

"What are you saying about me?" asked the seaman, pricking up his ears at the mention of his own name.

"Only that you are a good stiff old Protestant."

"Yes, thank God. My motto is freedom to conscience, d'ye see, except just for Quakers, and Papists, and—and I wouldn't stand Anne Hutchinsons and women testifying, and such like foolishness."

Amos Green laughed. "The Almighty seems to pass it over, so why should you take it to heart," said he.

"Ah, you're young and callow yet. You'll live to know better. Why, I shall hear you saying a good word soon, even for such unclean spawn as this," prodding the prostrate friar with the handle of his paddle.

"I daresay he's a good man, accordin' to his lights."

"And I daresay a shark is a good fish accordin' to its lights. No, lad, you won't mix up light and dark for me in that sort of fashion. You may talk until you unship your jaw, d'ye see, but you will never talk a foul wind into a fair one. Pass over the pouch and the tinder box, and maybe our friend here will take a turn at my paddle."

All night they toiled up the great river, straining every nerve to place themselves beyond the reach of pursuit. By keeping well into the southern bank, and so avoiding the force of the current, they sped swiftly along, for both Amos and De Catinat were practised hands with the paddle, and the two Indians worked as though they were wire and whipcord instead of flesh and blood. An utter silence reigned over all the broad stream, broken only by the lap-lap of the water against their curving bows, the whirring of the night hawk above them, and the sharp high barking of foxes away in the

woods. When at last morning broke, and the black shaded imperceptibly into gray, they were far out of sight of the citadel and of all trace of man's handiwork. Virgin woods in their wonderful many-coloured autumn dress flowed right down to the river edge on either side, and in the centre was a little island with a rim of yellow sand and an out-flame of scarlet tupelo and sumach in one bright tangle of colour in the centre.

"I've passed here before," said De Catinat. "I remember marking that great maple with the blaze on its trunk, when last I went with the governor to Montreal. That was in Frontenac's day, when the king was first and the bishop second."

The redskins who had sat like terra-cotta figures without a trace of expression upon their set hard faces, pricked up their ears at the sound of that name.

"My brother has spoken of the great Onontio," said one of them, glancing round. "We have listened to the whistling of evil

birds who tell us that he will never come back to his children across the seas."

"He is with the great white father," answered De Catinat. "I have myself seen him in his council, and he will assuredly come across the great water if his people have need of him."

The Indian shook his shaven head.

"The rutting month is past, my brother," said he, speaking in broken French, "but ere the month of the bird laying has come there will be no white man upon this river save only behind stone walls."

"What, then? We have heard little! Have the Iroquois broken out so fiercely?"

"My brother, they said that they would eat up the Hurons, and where are the Hurons now? They turned their faces upon the Eries, and where are the Eries now? They went westward against the Illinois, and who can find an Illinois village? They raised the hatchet against the Andastes, and their name is blotted from the earth. And now they

have danced a dance and sung a song which will bring little good to my white brothers."

"Where are they, then?"

The Indian waved his hand along the whole southern and western horizon.

"Where are they not? The woods are rustling with them. They are like a fire among dry grass, so swift and so terrible!"

"On my life," said De Catinat, "if these devils are indeed unchained, they will need old Frontenac back if they are not to be swept into the river."

"Aye," said Amos, "I saw him once when I was brought before him with the others for trading on what he called French ground. His mouth set like a skunk trap and he looked at us as if he would have liked our scalps for his leggings. But I could see that he was a chief and a brave man."

"He was an enemy of the church, and the right hand of the foul fiend in this country," said a voice from the bottom of the canoe.

It was the friar who had succeeded in

getting rid of the buckskin glove and belt with which the two Americans had gagged him. He was lying huddled up now, glaring savagely at the party with his fiery dark eyes.

"His jaw-tackle has come adrift," said the seaman. "Let me brace it up again."

"Nay, why should we take him further?" asked Amos. "He is but weight for us to carry, and I cannot see that we profit by his company. Let us put him out."

"Aye, sink or swim," cried old Ephraim with enthusiasm.

"Nay, upon the bank."

"And have him maybe in front of us warning the black jackets."

"On that island, then."

"Very good. He can hail the first of his folk who pass."

They shot over to the island and landed the friar, who said nothing but cursed them with his eye. They left with him a small supply of biscuit and of flour to last him until he should be picked up. Then, having passed a bend in

the river they ran their canoe ashore in a little cove where the whortleberry and cranberry bushes grew right down to the waters' edge, and the sward was bright with the white euphorbia, the blue gentian, and the purple balm. There they laid out their small stock of provisions, and ate a hearty breakfast while discussing what their plans should be for the future.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE INLAND WATERS.

They were not badly provided for their journey. The captain of the Gloucester brig in which the Americans had started from Quebec knew Ephraim Savage well, as who did not upon the New England coast? He had accepted his bill therefore at three months' date, at as high a rate of interest as he could screw out of him, and he had let him have in return three excellent guns, a good supply of ammunition, and enough money to provide for all his wants. In this way he had hired the canoe and the Indians, and had fitted her with meat and biscuit to last them for ten days at the least.

"It's like the breath of life to me to feel the heft of a gun and to smell the trees round me," said Amos. "Why, it cannot be

more than a hundred leagues from here to Albany or Schenectady, right through the forest."

"Aye, lad, but how is the gal to walk a hundred leagues through a forest. No, no, let us keep water under our keel, and lean on the Lord."

"Then there is only one way for it. We must make the Richelieu river, and keep right along to Lake Champlain and Lake St. Sacrament. There we should be close by the headwaters of the Hudson."

"It is a dangerous road," said De Catinat, who understood the conversation of his companions, even when he was unable to join in it. "We should need to skirt the country of the Mohawks."

"It's the only way, I guess. It's that or nothing."

"And I have a friend upon the Richelieu river who, I am sure, would help us on our way," said De Catinat with a smile. "Adèle, you have heard me talk of Charles de la Noue, seigneur de Sainte Marie?"

"He whom you used to call the Canadian Duke, Amory?"

"Precisely. His seigneury lies on the Richelieu, a little south of Fort St. Louis, and I am sure that he would speed us upon our way."

"Good!" cried Amos. "If we have a friend there we shall do well. That clenches it then, and we shall hold fast by the river. Let's get to our paddles then, for that friar will make mischief for us if he can."

And so for a long week the little party toiled up the great water-way, keeping ever to the southern bank where there were fewer clearings. On both sides of the stream the woods were thick, but every here and there they would curve away, and a narrow strip of cultivated land would skirt the bank with the yellow stubble to mark where the wheat had grown. Adèle looked with interest at the wooden houses with their jutting storeys and quaint gable-ends, at the solid stone-built manor-houses of the seigneurs, and at the

mills in every hamlet, which served the double purpose of grinding flour, and of a loopholed place of retreat in case of attack. Horrible experience had taught the Canadians what the English settlers had yet to learn, that in a land of savages it is a folly to place isolated farm-houses in the centre of their own fields. The clearings then radiated out from the villages, and every cottage was built with an eye to the military necessities of the whole, so that the defence might make a stand at all points, and might finally centre upon the stone manor-house and the mill. Now at every bluff and hill near the villages might be seen the gleam of the muskets of the watchers, for it was known that the scalping parties of the Five Nations were out, and none could tell where the blow would fall save that it must come where they were least prepared to meet it.

Indeed, at every step in this country, whether the traveller were on the St. Lawrence, or west upon the Lakes, or down upon

the banks of the Mississippi, or south in the country of the Cherokees and of the Creeks, he would still find the inhabitants in the same state of dreadful expectancy, and from the same cause. The Iroquois, as they were named by the French, or the Five Nations as they called themselves, hung like a cloud over the whole great continent. Their confederation was a natural one, for they were of the same stock and spoke the same language, and all attempts to separate them had been in vain. Mohawks, Cayugas, Onondagas, Oneidas and Senecas were each proud of their own totems and their own chiefs, but in war they were Iroquois, and the enemy of one was the enemy of all. Their numbers were small, for they were never able to put two thousand warriors in the field, and their country was limited, for their villages were scattered over the tract which lies between Lake Champlain and Lake Ontario. But they were united, they were cunning, they were desperately brave, and they were fiercely

aggressive and energetic. Holding a central position they struck out upon each side in turn, never content with simply defeating an adversary but absolutely annihilating and destroying him, while holding all the others in check by their diplomacy. War was their business, and cruelty their amusement. One by one they had turned their arms against the various nations until, for a space of over a thousand square miles, none existed save by sufferance. They had swept away Hurons and Huron missions in one fearful massacre. They had destroyed the tribes of the north-west, until even the distant Sacs and Foxes trembled at their name. They had scoured the whole country to westward until their scalping parties had come into touch with their kinsmen the Sioux, who were lords of the great plains, even as they were of the great forests. The New England Indians in the east, and the Shawnees and Delawares further south paid tribute to them, and the terror of their arms had extended over the

borders of Maryland and Virginia. Never, perhaps, in the world's history has so small a body of men dominated so large a district and for so long a time.

For half a century these tribes had nursed a grudge towards the French since Champlain and some of his followers had taken part with their enemies against them. During all these years they had brooded in their forest villages, flashing out now and again in some border outrage, but waiting for the most part until their chance should come. And now it seemed to them that it had come. They had destroyed all the tribes who might have allied themselves with the white men. They had isolated them. They had supplied themselves with good guns and plenty of ammunition from the Dutch and English of New York. The long thin line of French settlements lay naked before them. They were gathered in the woods, like hounds in leash, waiting for the orders of their chiefs, which should precipitate them with torch and with tomahawk upon the belt of villages.

Such was the situation as the little party of refugees paddled along the bank of the river, seeking the only path which could lead them to peace and to freedom. Yet it was, as they well knew, a dangerous road to follow. All down the Richelieu river were the outposts and blockhouses of the French, for when the feudal system was grafted upon Canada the various seigneurs or native *noblesse* were asigned their estates in the positions which would be of most benefit to the settlement. Each seigneur with his tenants under him, trained as they were in the use of arms, formed a military force exactly as they had done in the middle ages, the farmer holding his fief upon condition that he mustered when called upon to do so. Hence the old officers of the regiment of Carignan, and the more hardy of the settlers, had been placed along the line of the Richelieu, which runs at right angles to the St. Lawrence towards the Mohawk country. The blockhouses themselves might hold their own, but to the little party who had to travel

down from one to the other the situation was full of deadly peril. It was true that the Iroquois were not at war with the English, but they would discriminate little when on the warpath, and the Americans, even had they wished to do so, could not separate their fate from that of their two French companions.

As they ascended the St. Lawrence they met many canoes coming down. Sometimes it was an officer or an official on his way to the capital from Three Rivers or Montreal, sometimes it was a load of skins, with Indians or *coureurs-de-bois* conveying them down to be shipped to Europe, and sometimes it was a small canoe which bore a sunburned grizzly-haired man, with rusty weather-stained black cassock, who zigzagged from bank to bank, stopping at every Indian hut upon his way. If aught were amiss with the Church in Canada the fault lay not with men like these village priests, who toiled and worked and spent their very lives in bearing comfort and hope and a little touch of refinement, too,

through all those wilds. More than once these wayfarers wished to have speech with the fugitives, but they pushed onwards, disregarding their signs and hails. From below nothing overtook them, for they paddled from early morning until late at night, drawing up the canoe when they halted, and building a fire of dry wood, for already the nip of the coming winter was in the air.

It was not only the people and their dwellings which were stretched out before the wondering eyes of the French girl as she sat day after day in the stern of the canoe. Her husband and Amos Green taught her also to take notice of the sights of the woodlands, and as they skirted the bank, they pointed out a thousand things which her own senses would never have discerned. Sometimes it was the furry face of a raccoon peeping out from some tree-cleft, or an otter swimming under the overhanging brushwood with the gleam of a white fish in its mouth. Or, perhaps, it was the wild cat crouching along a branch with its

wicked yellow eyes fixed upon the squirrels which played at the further end, or else with a scuttle and rush the Canadian porcupine would thrust its way among the yellow blossoms of the resin weed and the tangle of the whortleberry bushes. She learned, too, to recognise the pert sharp cry of the tiny chick-a-dee, the call of the bluebird, and the flash of its wings amid the foliage, the sweet chirpy note of the black and white bobolink, and the long-drawn mewing of the catbird. On the breast of the broad blue river, with nature's sweet concert ever sounding from the bank, and with every colour that artist could devise spread out before her eyes on the foliage of the dying woods, the smile came back to her lips and her cheeks took a glow of health which France had never been able to give. De Catinat saw the change in her, but her presence weighed him down with fear, for he knew that while nature had made these woods a heaven, man had changed it into a hell, and that a nameless horror lurked behind

all the beauty of the fading leaves, and of the woodland flowers. Often as he lay at night beside the smouldering fire upon his couch of spruce boughs, and looked at the little figure muffled in the blanket and slumbering peacefully by his side, he felt that he had no right to expose her to such peril, and that in the morning they should turn the canoe eastward again and take what fate might bring them at Quebec. But ever with the daybreak there came the thought of the humiliation, the dreary homeward voyage, the separation which would await them in galley and dungeon, to turn him from his purpose.

On the seventh day they rested at a point but a few miles from the mouth of the Richelieu river, where a large blockhouse, Fort Richelieu, had been built by M. de Saurel. Once past this they had no great distance to go to reach the seigneury of De Catinat's friend of the *noblesse* who would help them upon their way. They had spent the night upon a little island in midstream, and at early dawn they

were about to thrust the canoe out again from the sand-lined cove in which she lay, when Ephraim Savage growled in his throat and pointed out across the water.

A large canoe was coming up the river, flying along as quick as a dozen arms could drive it. In the stern sat a dark figure which bent forward with every swing of the paddles, as though consumed by eagerness to push onwards. Even at that distance there was no mistaking it. It was the fanatical monk whom they had left behind them.

Concealed among the brushwood they watched their pursuers fly past and vanish round a curve in the stream. Then they looked at one another in perplexity.

"We'd have done better either to put him overboard or to take him as ballast," said Ephraim. "He's hull down in front of us now, and drawing full."

"Well, we can't take the back track anyhow," remarked Amos.

"And yet how can we go on," said De

Catinat despondently. "This vindictive devil will give word at the fort and at every other point along the river. He has been back to Quebec. It is one of the governor's own canoes, and goes three paces to our two."

"Let me cipher it out." Amos Green sat on a fallen maple with his head sunk upon his hands. "Well," said he, presently, "if it's no good going on, and no good going back, there's only one way, and that is to go to one side. That's so, Ephraim, is it not?"

"Aye, aye, lad, if you can't run you must tack, but it seems shoal water on either bow."

"We can't go to the north, so it follows that we must go to the south."

"Leave the canoe?"

"It's our only chance. We can cut through the woods and come out near this friendly house on the Richelieu. The friar will lose our trail then, and we'll have no more trouble with him, if he stays on the St. Lawrence."

"There's nothing else for it," said Captain Ephraim ruefully. "It's not my way to go

by land if I can get by water, and I have not been a fathom deep in a wood since King Philip came down on the province, so you must lay the course and keep her straight, Amos."

"It is not far and it will not take us long. Let us get over to the southern bank and we shall make a start. If madame tires, De Catinat, we shall take turns to carry her."

"Ah, monsieur, you cannot think what a good walker I am. In this splendid air one might go on for ever."

"We will cross then."

In a very few minutes they were at the other side and had landed at the edge of the forest. There the guns and ammunition were allotted to each man, and his share of the provisions and of the scanty baggage. Then having paid the Indians, and having instructed them to say nothing of their movements, they turned their backs upon the river, and plunged into the silent woods.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE HAIRLESS MAN.

All day they pushed on through the woodlands, walking in single file, Amos Green first, then the seaman, then the lady, and De Catinat bringing up the rear. The young woodsman advanced cautiously, seeing and hearing much that was lost to his companions, stopping continually and examining the signs of leaf and moss and twig. Their route lay for the most part through open glades amid a huge pine forest, with a green sward beneath their feet, made beautiful by the white euphorbia, the golden rod, and the purple aster. Sometimes, however, the great trunks closed in upon them, and they had to grope their way in a dim twilight, or push a path through the tangled brushwood of green sassafras or scarlet sumach. And then again the woods would

shred suddenly away in front of them, and they would skirt marshes, overgrown with wild rice and dotted with little dark clumps of alder bushes, or make their way past silent woodland lakes, all streaked and barred with the tree shadows which threw their crimsons and clarets and bronzes upon the fringe of the deep blue sheet of water. There were streams, too, some clear and rippling, where the trout flashed and the king-fisher gleamed, others dark and poisonous from the tamerack swamps, where the wanderers had to wade over their knees and carry Adèle in their arms. So all day they journeyed mid the great forests, with never a hint or token of their fellowman.

But if man were absent, there was at least no want of life. It buzzed and chirped and chattered all round them from marsh and stream and brushwood. Sometimes it was the dun coat of a deer which glanced between the distant trunks, sometimes the badger which scuttled for its hole at their approach.

Once the long in-toed track of a bear lay marked in the soft earth before them, and once Amos picked a great horn from amid the bushes which some moose had shed the month before. Little red squirrels danced and clattered above their heads and every oak was a choir with a hundred tiny voices piping from the shadow of its foliage. As they passed the lakes the heavy gray stork flapped up in front of them, and they saw the wild duck whirring off in a long V against the blue sky, or heard the quavering cry of the loon from amid the reeds.

That night they slept in the woods, Amos Green lighting a dry wood fire in a thick copse where at a dozen paces it was invisible. A few drops of rain had fallen, so with the quick skill of the practised woodsman he made two little sheds of elm and basswood bark, one to shelter the two refugees, and the other for Ephraim and himself. He had shot a wild goose, and this, with the remains of their biscuit, served them both for supper and for

breakfast. Next day at noon they passed a little clearing, in the centre of which were the charred embers of a fire. Amos spent half an hour in reading all that sticks and ground could tell him. Then, as they resumed their way, he explained to his companions that the fire had been lit three weeks before, that a white man and two Indians had camped there, that they had been journeying from west to east, and that one of the Indians had been a squaw. No other traces of their fellow mortals did they come across, until late in the afternoon Amos halted suddenly in the heart of a thick grove, and raised his hand to his ear.

"Listen!" he cried.

"I hear nothing," said Ephraim.

"Nor I," added De Catinat.

"Ah, but I do!" cried Adèle gleefully. "It is a bell—and at the very time of day when the bells all sound in Paris!"

"You are right, madame. It is what they call the Angelus bell."

"Ah, yes, I hear it now!" cried De Catinat. "It was drowned by the chirping of the birds. But whence comes a bell in the heart of a Canadian forest?"

"We are near the settlements on the Richelieu. It must be the bell of the chapel at the fort."

"Fort St. Louis! Ah, then, we are no great way from my friend's seigneury."

"Then we may sleep there to-night, if you think that he is indeed to be trusted."

"Yes. He is a strange man, with ways of his own, but I would trust him with my life."

"Very good. We shall keep to the south of the fort and make for his house. But something is putting up the birds over yonder. Ah, I hear the sound of steps! Crouch down here among the sumach, until we see who it is who walks so boldly through the woods."

They stooped all four among the brushwood, peeping out between the tree trunks at a little glade towards which Amos was looking. For a long time the sound which the quick

ears of the woodman had detected was inaudible to the others, but at last they too heard the sharp snapping of twigs as some one forced his passage through the undergrowth. A moment later a man pushed his way into the open, whose appearance was so strange and so ill-suited to the spot, that even Amos gazed upon him with amazement.

He was a very small man, so dark and weather-stained that he might have passed for an Indian were it not that he walked and was clad as no Indian had ever been. He wore a broad-brimmed hat, frayed at the edges, and so discoloured that it was hard to say what its original tint had been. His dress was of skins, rudely cut and dangling loosely from his body, and he wore the high boots of a dragoon, as tattered and stained as the rest of his raiment. On his back he bore a huge bundle of canvas with two long sticks projecting from it, and under each arm he carried what appeared to be a large square painting.

"He's no Injun," whispered Amos, "and

he's no woodsman either. Blessed if I ever saw the match of him!"

He's neither *voyageur*, nor soldier, nor *coureur-de-bois*," said De Catinat.

"'Pears to me to have a jurymast rigged upon his back, and fore and main staysails set under each of his arms," said Captain Ephraim.

"Well, he seems to have no consorts, so we may hail him without fear."

They rose from their ambush, and as they did so the stranger caught sight of them. Instead of showing the uneasiness which any man might be expected to feel at suddenly finding himself in the presence of strangers in such a country he promptly altered his course and came towards them. As he crossed the glade, however, the sounds of the distant bell fell upon his ears, and he instantly whipped off his hat and sunk his head in prayer. A cry of horror rose, not only from Adèle but from every one of the party, at the sight which met their eyes.

The top of the man's head was gone. Not

a vestige of hair or of white skin remained, but in place of it was a dreadful crinkled discoloured surface with a sharp red line running across his brow and round over his ears.

"By the eternal!" cried Amos, "the man has lost his scalp!"

"My God!" said De Catinat. "Look at his hands!"

He had raised them in prayer. Two or three little stumps projecting upwards showed where the fingers had been.

"I've seen some queer figureheads in my life, but never one like that," said Captain Ephraim.

It was indeed a most extraordinary face which confronted them as they advanced. It was that of a man who might have been of any age and of any nation, for the features were so distorted that nothing could be learned from them. One eyelid was drooping with a puckering and flatness which showed that the ball was gone. The other, however, shot as bright and merry and kindly a glance as ever

came from a chosen favourite of fortune. His face was flecked over with peculiar brown spots which had a most hideous appearance, and his nose had been burst and shattered by some terrific blow. And yet in spite of this dreadful appearance, there was something so noble in the carriage of the man, in the pose of his head and in the expression which still hung, like the scent from a crushed flower, round his distorted features, that even the blunt Puritan seaman was awed by it.

"Good evening, my children," said the stranger, picking up his pictures again and advancing towards them. "I presume that you are from the fort, though I may be permitted to observe that the woods are not very safe for ladies at present."

"We are going to the manor-house of Charles de la Noue at Sainte Marie," said De Catinat, "and we hope soon to be in a place of safety. But I grieve, sir, to see how terribly you have been mishandled."

"Ah, you have observed my little injuries,

then! They know no better, poor souls. They are but mischievous children—merry-hearted but mischievous. Tut, tut, it is laughable indeed that a man's vile body should ever clog his spirit, and yet here am I full of the will to push forward, and yet I must even seat myself on this log and rest myself, for the rogues have blown the calves of my legs off."

"My God! Blown them off! The devils!"

"Ah, but they are not to be blamed. No, no, it would be uncharitable to blame them. They are ignorant poor folk, and the prince of darkness is behind them to urge them on. They sank little charges of powder into my legs and then they exploded them, which makes me a slower walker than ever, though I was never very brisk. 'The Snail' was what I was called at school in Tours, yes, and afterwards at the seminary, I was always 'the Snail'".

"Who are you then, sir, and who is it who has used you so shamefully?" asked De Catinat.

"Oh, I am a very humble person. I am Ignatius Morat, of the Society of Jesus, and as to the people who have used me a little roughly, why, if you are sent upon the Iroquois mission, of course you know what to expect. I have nothing at all to complain of. Why, they have used me very much better than they did Father Jogues, Father Brebœuf, and a good many others whom I could mention. There were times, it is true, when I was quite hopeful of martyrdom, especially when they thought my tonsure was too small, which was their merry way of putting it. But I suppose I was not worthy of it, indeed I know that I was not, so it only ended in just a little roughness."

"Where are you going then?" asked Amos, who had listened in amazement to the man's words.

"I am going to Quebec. You see I am such a useless person that, until I have seen the bishop, I can really do no good at all."

"You mean that you will resign your

mission into the bishop's hands?" said De Catinat.

"Oh, no. That would be quite the sort of thing which I should do if I were left to myself, for it is incredible how cowardly I am. You would not think it possible that a priest of God could be so frightened as I am sometimes. The mere sight of a fire makes me shrink all into myself ever since I went through the ordeal of the lighted pine splinters, which have left all these ugly stains upon my face. But then, of course, there is the Order to be thought of, and members of the Order do not leave their posts for trifling causes. But it is against the rules of Holy Church that a maimed man should perform the rites, and so, until I have seen the bishop and had his dispensation, I shall be even more useless than ever."

"And what will you do then?"

"Oh, then, of course, I will go back to my flock."

"To the Iroquois!"

"That is where I am stationed."

"Amos," said De Catinat, "I have spent my life among brave men, but I think that this is the bravest man that I have ever met!"

"On my word," said Amos, "I have seen some good men, too, but never one that I thought was better than this. You are weary, father. Have some of our cold goose, and there is still a drop of cognac in my flask."

"Tut, tut, my son, if I take anything but the very simplest living it makes me so lazy that I become a snail indeed."

"But you have no gun and no food. How do you live?"

"Oh, the good God has placed plenty of food in these forests for a traveller who dare not eat very much. I have had wild plums, and wild grapes, and nuts and cranberries, and a nice little dish of *tripe-de-mére* from the rocks."

The woodsman made a wry face at the mention of this delicacy.

"I had as soon eat a pot of glue," said he. "But what is this which you carry on your back?"

"It is my church. Ah, I have everything here, tent, altar, surplice, everything. I cannot venture to celebrate service myself without the dispensation, but surely this venerable man is himself in orders and will solemnise the most blessed function."

Amos with a sly twinkle of the eyes translated the proposal to Ephraim who stood with his huge red hands clenched, mumbling about the saltless pottage of papacy. De Catinat replied briefly, however, that they were all of the laity, and that if they were to reach their destination before nightfall, it was necessary that they should push on.

"You are right, my son," said the little Jesuit. "These poor people have already left their villages and in a few days the woods will be full of them, though I do not think that any have crossed the Richelieu yet. There is one thing, however, which I would have you do for me."

"And what is that?"

"It is but to remember that I have left with Father Lamberville at Onondaga the dictionary which I have made of the Iroquois and French languages. There also is my account of the copper mines of the Great Lakes which I visited two years ago, and also an orrery which I have made to show the northern heavens with the stars of each month as they are seen from this meridian. If ought were to go amiss with Father Lamberville or with me, and we do not live very long on the Iroquois mission, it would be well that some one else should profit from my work."

"I will tell my friend to-night. But what are these great pictures, father, and why do you bear them through the wood?" He turned them over as he spoke, and the whole party gathered round them, staring in amazement.

They were very rough daubs, crudely coloured and gaudy. In the first, a red man was reposing serenely upon what appeared to be

a range of mountains, with a musical instrument in his hand, a crown upon his head, and a smile upon his face. In the second, a similar man was screaming at the pitch of his lungs, while half a dozen black creatures were battering him with poles and prodding him with lances.

"It is a damned soul and a saved soul," said Father Ignatius Morat, looking at his pictures with some satisfaction. "These are clouds upon which the blessed spirit reclines, basking in all the joys of paradise. It is well done this picture, but it has had no good effect, because there are no beaver in it and they have not painted in a tobacco-pipe. You see they have little reason, these poor folk, and so we have to teach them as best we can through their eyes and their foolish senses. This other is better. It has converted several squaws and more than one Indian. I shall not bring back the saved soul when I come in the spring, but I shall bring five damned souls, which will be one for each nation. We

must fight Satan with such weapons as we can get, you see. And now, my children, if you must go, let me first call down a blessing upon you!"

And then occurred a strange thing, for the beauty of this man's soul shone through all the wretched clouds of sect, and, as he raised his hand to bless them, down went those Protestant knees to earth, and even old Ephraim found himself with a softened heart and a bent head listening to the half-understood words of this crippled half-blinded little stranger.

"Farewell, then," said he, when they had risen. "May the sunshine of Saint Eulalie be upon you, and may Saint Anne of Beaupré shield you at the moment of your danger."

And so they left him, a grotesque and yet heroic figure staggering along through the woods with his tent, his pictures and his mutilation. If the Church of Rome should ever be wrecked it may come from her weakness in high places, where all churches are

at their weakest, or it may be because with what is very narrow she tries to explain that which is very broad, but assuredly it will never be through the fault of her rank and file, for never upon earth have men and women spent themselves more lavishly and more splendidly than in her service.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE LORD OF SAINTE MARIE.

Leaving Fort St. Louis, whence the bells had sounded, upon their right, they pushed onwards as swiftly as they could, for the sun was so low in the heavens that the bushes in the clearings threw shadows like trees. Then suddenly as they peered in front of them between the trunks, the green of the sward turned to the blue of the water, and they saw a broad river running swiftly before them. In France it would have seemed a mighty stream, but, coming fresh from the vastness of the St. Lawrence, their eyes were used to great sheets of water. But Amos and De Catinat had both been upon the bosom of the Richelieu before, and their hearts bounded as they looked upon it, for they knew that this was the straight path which led them, the one to

home, and the other to peace and freedom. A few days journeying down there, a few more along the lovely island-studded lakes of Champlain and Saint Sacrament, under the shadow of the tree-clad Adirondacks, and they would be at the headquarters of the Hudson, and their toils and their dangers be but a thing of gossip for the winter evenings.

Across the river was the terrible Iroquois country, and at two points they could see the smoke of fires curling up into the evening air. They had the Jesuit's word for it that none of the war parties had crossed yet, so they followed the track which led down the eastern bank. As they pushed onwards, however, a stern military challenge suddenly brought them to a stand, and they saw the gleam of two musket barrels which covered them from a thicket overlooking the path.

"We are friends," cried De Catinat.

"Whence come you, then?" asked an invisible sentinel.

"From Quebec."

"And whither are you going?"

"To visit Monsieur Charles de la Noue, seigneur of Sainte Marie."

"Very good. It is quite safe, Du Lhut. They have a lady with them, too. I greet you, madame, in the name of my father."

Two men had emerged from the bushes, one of whom might have passed as a full-blooded Indian, had it not been for these courteous words which he uttered in excellent French. He was a tall slight young man, very dark, with piercing black eyes, and a grim square relentless mouth which could only have come with Indian descent. His coarse flowing hair was gathered up into a scalp lock, and the eagle feather which he wore in it was his only head-gear. A rude suit of fringed hide with cariboo-skin moccasins might have been the fellow to the one which Amos Green was wearing, but the gleam of a gold chain from his belt, the sparkle of a costly ring upon his finger, and the delicate richly-inlaid musket which he

carried, all gave a touch of grace to his equipment. A broad band of yellow ochre across his forehead and a tomahawk at his belt added to the strange inconsistency of his appearance.

The other was undoubtedly a pure Frenchman, elderly, dark and wiry, with a bristling black beard and a fierce eager face. He, too, was clad in hunter's dress, but he wore a gaudy striped sash round his waist into which a brace of long pistols had been thrust. His buckskin tunic had been ornamented over the front with dyed porcupine quills and Indian bead work, while his leggings were scarlet with a fringe of racoon tails hanging down from them. Leaning upon his long brown gun he stood watching the party, while his companion advanced towards them.

"You will excuse our precautions," said he. "We never know what device these rascals may adopt to entrap us. I fear, madame, that you have had a long and very tiring journey."

Poor Adèle, who had been famed for

neatness even among housekeepers of the Rue St. Martin, hardly dared to look down at her own stained and tattered dress. Fatigue and danger she had endured with a smiling face, but her patience almost gave way at the thought of facing strangers in this attire.

"My mother will be very glad to welcome you, and to see to every want," said he quickly, as though he had read her thoughts. "But you, sir, I have surely seen you before."

"And I you," cried the guardsman. "My name is Amory de Catinat, once of the regiment of Picardy. Surely you are Achille de la Noue de Sainte Marie, whom I remember when you came with your father to the government *levees* at Quebec."

"Yes, it is I," the young man answered, holding out his hand and smiling in a somewhat constrained fashion. "I do not wonder that you should hesitate, for when you saw me last I was in a very different dress to this."

De Catinat did indeed remember him as one of the band of the young *noblesse* who

used to come up to the capital once a year where they inquired about the latest modes, chatted over the year-old gossip of Versailles, and for a few weeks at least lived a life which was in keeping with the traditions of their order. Very different was he now, with scalp-lock and war-paint, under the shadow of the great oaks, his musket in his hand and his tomahawk at his belt.

"We have one life for the forest and one for the cities," said he, "though indeed my good father will not have it so, and carries Versailles with him wherever he goes. You know him of old, monsieur, and I need not explain my words. But it is time for our relief, and so we may guide you home."

Two men in the rude dress of Canadian *censitaires* or farmers, but carrying their muskets in a fashion which told De Catinat's trained senses that they were disciplined soldiers, had suddenly appeared upon the scene. Young De la Noue gave them a few

curt injunctions, and then accompanied the refugees along the path.

"You may not know my friend here," said he, pointing to the other sentinel, "but I am quite sure that his name is not unfamiliar to you. This is Greysolon du Lhut."

Both Amos and De Catinat looked with the deepest curiosity and interest at the famous leader of *coureurs-de-bois*, a man whose whole life had been spent in pushing westward, ever westward, saying little, writing nothing, but always the first wherever there was danger to meet or difficulty to overcome. It was not religion and it was not hope of gain which led him away into those western wildernesses, but pure love of nature and of adventure, with so little ambition that he had never cared to describe his own travels, and none knew where he had been or where he had stopped. For years he would vanish from the settlements away into the vast plains of the Dacotah, or into the huge wilderness of the north-west, and

then at last some day would walk back into Sault La Marie, or any other outpost of civilisation, a little leaner, a little browner, and as taciturn as ever. Indians from the furthest corners of the continent knew him as they knew their own sachem. He could raise tribes and bring a thousand painted cannibals to the help of the French who spoke a tongue which none knew, and came from the shores of rivers which no one else had visited. The most daring French explorers when, after a thousand dangers, they had reached some country which they believed to be new, were as likely as not to find Du Lhut sitting by his camp fire there, some new squaw by his side, and his pipe between his teeth. Or again, when in doubt and danger, with no friends within a thousand miles, the traveller might suddenly meet this silent man, with one or two tattered wanderers of his own kidney, who would help him from his peril, and then vanish as unexpectedly as he came. Such was the man who now walked by their sides

along the bank of the Richelieu, and both Amos and De Catinat knew that his presence there had a sinister meaning, and that the place which Greysolon du Lhut had chosen was the place where the danger threatened.

"What do you think of those fires over yonder, Du Lhut?" asked young De la Noue.

The adventurer was stuffing his pipe with rank Indian tobacco which he pared from a plug with a scalping knife. He glanced over at the two little plumes of smoke which stood straight up against the red evening sky.

"I don't like them," said he.

"They are Iroquois then?"

"Yes."

"Well, at least it proves that they are on the other side of the river."

"It proves that they are on this side."

"What!"

De Lhut lit his pipe from a tinder paper. "The Iroquois are on this side," said he. "They crossed to the south of us."

"And you never told us. How do you know that they crossed, and why did you not tell us?"

"I did not know until I saw the fires over yonder."

"And how did they tell you."

"Tut, an Indian papoose could have told," said Du Lhut impatiently. "Iroquois on the trail do nothing without an object. They have an object then in showing that smoke. If their war parties were over yonder there would be no object. Therefore their braves must have crossed the river. And they could not get over to the north without being seen from the fort. They have got over on the south then."

"Amos nodded with intense appreciation. "That's it!" said he, "that's Injun ways. I'll lay that he is right."

"Then they may be in the woods round us. We may be in danger," cried De la Noue.

Du Lhut nodded and sucked at his pipe.

De Catinat cast a glance round him at the

grand tree trunks, the fading foliage, the smooth sward underneath with the long evening shadows barred across it. How difficult it was to realise that behind all this beauty there lurked a danger so deadly and horrible that a man alone might well shrink from it, far less one who had the woman whom he loved walking within hand's touch of him. It was with a long heart-felt sigh of relief that he saw a wall of stockade in the midst of a large clearing in front of him, with the stone manor house rising above it. In a line from the stockade were a dozen cottages with cedar-shingled roofs turned up in the Norman fashion, in which dwelt the habitants under the protection of the seigneur's château—a strange little graft of the feudal system in the heart of an American forest. Above the main gate as they approached was a huge shield of wood with a coat of arms painted upon it, a silver ground with a *cherron ermine* between three *caronets gules*. At either corner a small brass cannon peeped through an embrasure.

As they passed the gate the guard inside closed it and placed the huge wooden bars into position. A little crowd of men, women, and children, were gathered round the door of the château, and a man appeared to be seated on a high-backed chair upon the threshold.

"You know my father," said the young man with a shrug of his shoulders. "He will have it that he has never left his Norman castle, and that he is still the Seigneur de la Noue, the greatest man within a day's ride of Rouen, and of the richest blood of Normandy. He is now taking his dues and his yearly oaths from his tenants, and he would not think it becoming, if the governor himself were to visit him, to pause in the middle of so august a ceremony. But if it would interest you, you may step this way and wait until he has finished. You, madame, I will take at once to my mother, if you will be so kind as to follow me."

The sight was, to the Americans at least, a novel one. A triple row of men, women,

and children, were standing round in a semi-circle, the men rough and sunburned, the women homely and clean, with white caps upon their heads, the children open-mouthed and round-eyed, awed into an unusual quiet by the reverent bearing of their elders. In the centre, on his high-backed carved chair, there sat an elderly man very stiff and erect, with an exceedingly solemn face. He was a fine figure of a man, tall and broad, with large strong features, clean-shaven and deeply-lined, a huge beak of a nose, and strong shaggy eyebrows which arched right up to the great wig, which he wore full and long as it had been worn in France in his youth. On his wig was placed a white hat cocked jauntily at one side with a red feather streaming round it, and he wore a coat of cinnamon-coloured cloth with silver at the neck and pockets which was still very handsome, though it bore signs of having been frayed and mended more than once. This, with black velvet knee breeches and high well-polished boots,

made a costume such as De Catinat had never before seen in the wilds of Canada.

As they watched, a rude husbandman walked forwards from the crowd, and kneelling down upon a square of carpet placed his hands between those of the seigneur.

"Monsieur de Sainte Marie, Monsieur de Sainte Marie, Monsieur de Sainte Marie," said he three times, "I bring you the faith and homage which I am bound to bring you on account of my fief Herbert, which I hold as a man of faith of your seigneury."

"Be true, my son. Be valiant and true!" said the old nobleman solemnly, and then with a sudden change of tone, "what in the name of the devil has your daughter got there?"

A girl had advanced from the crowd with a large strip of bark in front of her on which was heaped a pile of dead fish.

"It is your eleventh fish which I am bound by my oath to render to you," said the *censitaire*. "There are seventy-three in the

heap, and I have caught eight hundred in the month."

"*Peste!*" cried the nobleman. "Do you think, André Dubois, that I will disorder my health by eating three-and-seventy fish in this fashion? Do you think that I and my body-servants and my personal retainers and the other members of my household have nothing to do but to eat your fish? In future, you will pay your tribute not more than five at a time. Where is the major-domo? Theuriet, remove the fish to our central store-house, and be careful that the smell does not penetrate to the blue tapestry chamber or to my lady's suite."

A man in very shabby black livery, all stained and faded, advanced with a large tin platter and carried off the pile of white fish. Then, as each of the tenants stepped forward to pay their old-world homage, they all left some share of their industry for their lord's maintenance. With some it was a bundle of wheat, with some a barrel of potatoes, while

others had brought skins of deer or of beaver. All these were carried off by the major-domo, until each had paid his tribute, and the singular ceremony was brought to a conclusion. As the seigneur rose, his son who had returned, took De Catinat by the sleeve and led him through the throng.

"Father," said he, "this is Monsieur de Catinat, whom you may remember some years ago at Quebec."

The seigneur bowed with much condescension, and shook the guardsman by the hand.

"You are extremely welcome to my estates, both you and your body-servants ——"

"They are my friends, monsieur. This is Monsieur Amos Green and Captain Ephraim Savage. My wife is travelling with me, but your courteous son has kindly taken her to your lady."

"I am honoured—honoured indeed!" cried the old man, with a bow and a flourish. "I remember you very well, sir, for it is not so common to meet men of quality in this country.

I remember your father also, for he served with me at Rocroy, though he was in the Foot, and I in the Red Dragoons of Grissot. Your arms are a martlet in *fess* upon a field *azure*, and now that I think of it, the second daughter of your great grandfather married the niece of one of the La Noues of Andelys, which is one of our cadet branches. Kinsman, you are welcome!" He threw his arms suddenly round De Catinat and slapped him three times on the back.

The young guardsman was only too delighted to find himself admitted to such an intimacy.

"I will not intrude long upon your hospitality," said he. "We are journeying down to Lake Champlain, and we hope in a day or two to be ready to go on."

"A suite of rooms shall be laid at your disposal as long as you do me the honour to remain here. *Peste!* It is not every day that I can open my gates to a man with good blood in his veins! Ah, sir, that is what I

feel most in my exile, for who is there with whom I can talk as equal to equal? There is the governor, the intendant, perhaps, one or two priests, three or four officers, but how many of the *noblesse?* Scarcely one. They buy their titles over here as they buy their pelts, and it is better to have a canoe-load of beaver skins than a pedigree from Roland. But I forgot my duties. You are weary and hungry, you and your friends. Come up with me to the tapestried *salon*, and we shall see if my stewards can find anything for your refreshment. You play piquet, if I remember right? Ah, my skill is leaving me, and I should be glad to try a hand with you."

The manor house was high and strong, built of gray stone in a frame-work of wood. The large iron-clamped door through which they entered was pierced for musketry fire and led into a succession of cellars and storehouses in which the beets, carrots, potatoes, cabbages, cured meat, dried eels, and other winter supplies were placed. A winding

stone staircase led them through a huge kitchen, flagged and lofty, from which branched the rooms of the servants, or retainers as the old nobleman preferred to call them. Above this again was the principal suite, centering in the dining-hall with its huge fireplace and rude home-made furniture. Rich rugs formed of bear or deer-skin were littered thickly over the brown-stained floor, and antlered heads bristled out from among the rows of muskets which were arranged along the wall. A broad rough-hewn maple table ran down the centre of this apartment, and on this there was soon set a venison pie, a side of calvered salmon, and a huge cranberry tart to which the hungry travellers did full justice. The seigneur explained that he had already supped, but having allowed himself to be persuaded into joining them, he ended by eating more than Ephraim Savage, drinking more than Du Lhut, and finally by singing a very amorous little French chanson with a tra-le-ra chorus, the words of which, fortu-

nately for the peace of the company, were entirely unintelligible to the Bostonian.

"Madame is taking her refection in my lady's boudoir," he remarked, when the dishes had been removed. "You may bring up a bottle of Frontiniac from bin thirteen, Theuriet. Oh, you will see, gentlemen, that even in the wilds we have a little, a very little, which is perhaps not altogether bad. And so you come from Versailles, De Catinat? It was built since my day, but how I remember the old life of the court at St. Germain, before Louis turned serious! Ah, what innocent happy days they were when Madame de Nevailles had to bar the windows of the maids of honour to keep out the king, and we all turned out eight deep on to the grass plot for our morning duel! By Saint Denis, I have not quite forgotten the trick of the wrist yet, and, old as I am, I should be none the worse for a little breather." He strutted in his stately fashion over to where a rapier and dagger hung upon the wall, and

began to make passes at the door, darting in and out, warding off imaginary blows with his poniard, and stamping his feet with little cries of "Punto! reverso! stoccata! dritta! mandritta!" and all the jargon of the fencing schools. Finally he rejoined them, breathing heavily and with his wig awry.

"That was our old exercise," said he. "Doubtless you young bloods have improved upon it, and yet it was good enough for the Spaniards at Rocroy and at one or two other places which I could mention. But they still see life at the court, I understand. There are still love passages and blood lettings. How has Lauzun prospered in his wooing of Mademoiselle de Montpensier? Was it proved that Madame de Clermont had bought a phial from Le Vie, the poison woman, two days before the soup disagreed so violently with monsieur? What did the Duc de Biron do when his nephew ran away with the duchess? Is it true that he raised his allowance to fifty thousand livres for having done it?" Such were

the two-year-old questions which had not been answered yet upon the banks of the Richelieu river. Long into the hours of the night, when his comrades were already snoring under their blankets, De Catinat, blinking and yawning, was still engaged in trying to satisfy the curiosity of the old courtier, and to bring him up to date in all the most minute gossip of Versailles.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE SLAYING OF BROWN MOOSE.

Two days were spent by the travellers at the seigneury of Sainte Marie, and they would very willingly have spent longer, for the quarters were comfortable and the welcome warm, but already the reds of autumn were turning to brown, and they knew how suddenly the ice and snow comes in those northern lands, and how impossible it would be to finish their journey if winter were once fairly upon them. The old nobleman had sent his scouts by land and by water, but there were no signs of the Iroquois upon the eastern banks, so that it was clear that Du Lhut had been mistaken. Over on the other side, however, the high gray plumes of smoke still streamed up above the trees as a sign that their enemies were not very far off. All day

from the manor-house windows and from the stockade they could see those danger signals which reminded them that a horrible death lurked ever at their elbow.

The refugees were rested now and refreshed, and of one mind about pushing on.

"If the snow comes, it will be a thousand times more dangerous," said Amos, "for we shall leave a track then that a papoose could follow."

"And why should we fear?" urged old Ephraim. "Truly this is a desert of salt, even though it lead to the vale of Hinnom, but we shall be borne up against these sons of Jeroboam. Steer a straight course, lad, and jam your helm, for the pilot will see you safe."

"And I am not frightened, Amory, and I am quite rested now," said Adèle. "We shall be so much more happy when we are in the English Provinces, for even now, how do we know that that dreadful monk may not come with orders to drag us back to Quebec and Paris?"

It was indeed very possible that the vindictive Franciscan, when satisfied that they had not ascended to Montreal, or remained at Three Rivers, might seek them on the banks of the Richelieu. When De Catinat thought of how he passed them in his great canoe that morning, his eager face protruded, and his dark body swinging in time to the paddles, he felt that the danger which his wife suggested was not only possible but imminent. The seigneur was his friend, but the seigneur could not disobey the governor's order. A great hand, stretching all the way from Versailles seemed to hang over them, even here in the heart of the virgin forest, ready to snatch them up and carry them back into degradation and misery. Better all the perils of the woods than that!

But the seigneur and his son, who knew nothing of their pressing reasons for haste, were strenuous in urging De Catinat the other way, and in this they were supported by the silent Du Lhut, whose few muttered

words were always more weighty than the longest speech, for he never spoke save about that of which he was a master.

"You have seen my little place," said the old nobleman, with a wave of his beruffled ring-covered hand. "It is not what I should wish it, but such as it is, it is most heartily yours for the winter, if you and your comrades would honour me by remaining. As to madame, I doubt not that my own dame and she will find plenty to amuse and occupy them, which reminds me, De Catinat, that you have not yet been presented. Theuriet, go to your mistress and inform her that I request her to be so good as to come to us in the hall of the dais."

De Catinat was too seasoned to be easily startled, but he was somewhat taken aback when the lady, to whom the old nobleman always referred in terms of exaggerated respect, proved to be as like a full-blooded Indian squaw as the hall of the dais was to a French barn. She was dressed, it was true,

in a bodice of scarlet taffeta with a black skirt, silver buckled shoes, and a scented pomander ball dangling by a silver chain from her girdle, but her face was of the colour of the bark of the Scotch fir, while her strong nose and harsh mouth, with the two plaits of coarse black hair which dangled down her back left no possible doubt as to her origin.

"Allow me to present you, Monsieur de Catinat," said the seigneur de Sainte Marie solemnly, "to my wife, Onega de la Noue de Sainte Marie, chatelaine by right of marriage to this seigneury, and also to the Château d'Andelys in Normandy, and to the estate of Varennes in Provence, while retaining in her own right the hereditary chieftainship on the distaff side of the nation of the Onondagas. My angel, I have been endeavouring to persuade our friends to remain with us at Sainte Marie instead of journeying on to Lake Champlain."

"At least leave your White Lily at Sainte Marie," said the dusky princess, speaking

in excellent French, and clasping with her ruddy fingers the ivory hand of Adèle. "We will hold her safe for you until the ice softens, and the leaves and the partridge berries come once more. I know my people, monsieur, and I tell you that the woods are full of murder, and that it is not for nothing that the leaves are the colour of blood, for death lurks behind every tree."

De Catinat was more moved by the impressive manner of his hostess than by any of the other warnings which he had received. Surely she, if anyone, must be able to read the signs of the times.

"I know not what to do!" he cried in despair. "I must go on, and yet how can I expose her to these perils? I would fain stay the winter, but you must take my word for it, sir, that it is not possible."

"Du Lhut, you know how things should be ordered," said the seigneur. "What should you advise my friend to do, since he is so set

upon getting to the English Provinces before the winter comes?"

The dark silent pioneer stroked his beard with his hand as he pondered over the question.

"There is but one way," said he at last, "though even in it there is danger. The woods are safer than the river, for the reeds are full of cachéd canoes. Five leagues from here is the block-house of Poitou, and fifteen miles beyond, that of Auvergne. We will go to-morrow to Poitou through the woods and see if all be safe. I will go with you, and I give you my word that if the Iroquois are there, Greysolon Du Lhut will know it. The lady we shall leave here, and if we find that all is safe we shall come back for her. Then in the same fashion we shall advance to Auvergne, and there you must wait until you hear where their war parties are. It is in my mind that it will not be very long before we know."

"What! You would part us!" cried Adèle aghast.

"It is best, my sister," said Onega, passing her arm caressingly round her. "You cannot know the danger, but we know it and we will not let our White Lily run into it. You will stay here to gladden us, while the great chief Du Lhut, and the French soldier, your husband, and the old warrior who seems so wary, and the other chief with limbs like the wild deer, go forward through the woods and see that all is well before you venture."

And so it was at last agreed, and Adèle, still protesting, was consigned to the care of the lady of Sainte Marie, while De Catinat swore that without a pause he would return from Poitou to fetch her. The old nobleman and his son would fain have joined them in their adventure, but they had their own charge to watch and the lives of many in their keeping, while a small party were safer in the woods than a larger one would be. The seigneur provided them with a letter for De Lannes, the governor of the Poitou block-house, and so in the early dawn the four of

them crept like shadows from the stockade-gate, amid the muttered good wishes of the guard within, and were lost in an instant in the blackness of the vast forest.

From La Noue to Poitou was but twelve miles down the river, but by the woodland route where creeks were to be crossed, reed-girt lakes to be avoided, and paths to be picked among swamps where the wild rice grew higher than their heads, and the alder bushes lay in dense clumps before them, the distance was more than doubled. They walked in single file, Du Lhut leading, with the swift silent tread of some wild creature, his body bent forward, his gun ready in the bend of his arm, and his keen dark eyes shooting little glances to right and left, observing everything from the tiniest mark upon ground or tree trunk to the motion of every beast and bird of the brushwood. De Catinat walked behind, then Ephraim Savage, and then Amos, all with their weapons ready and with every sense upon the alert. By midday

they were more than half-way, and halted in a thicket for a scanty meal of bread and cheese, for Du Lhut would not permit them to light a fire.

"They have not come as far as this," he whispered, "and yet I am sure that they have crossed the river. Ah, governor de la Barre did not know what he did when he stirred these men up, and this good dragoon whom the king has sent us now knows even less."

"I have seen them in peace," remarked Amos. "I have traded to Onondaga and to the country of the Senecas. I know them as fine hunters and brave men."

"They are fine hunters, but the game that they hunt best are their fellow-men. I have myself led their scalping parties, and I have fought against them, and I tell you that when a general comes out from France who hardly knows enough to get the sun behind him in a fight, he will find that there is little credit to be gained from them. They talk of burning their villages! It would be as wise to kick

over the wasps' nest, and think that you have done with the wasps. You are from New England, monsieur?"

"My comrade is from New England; I am from New York."

"Ah, yes. I could see from your step and your eye that the woods were as a home to you. The New England man goes on the waters and he slays the cod with more pleasure than the cariboo. Perhaps that is why his face is so sad. I have been on the great water, and I remember that my face was sad also. There is little wind, and so, I think that we may light our pipes without danger. With a good breeze I have known a burning pipe fetch up a scalping party from two miles distance, but the trees stop scent, and the Iroquois noses are less keen than the Sioux and the Dacotah. God help you, monsieur, if you should ever have an Indian war. It is bad for us, but it would be a thousand times worse for you."

"And why?"

"Because we have fought the Indians from

the first, and we have them always in our mind when we build. You see how along this river every house and every hamlet supports its neighbour? But you, by Saint Anne of Beaupré, it made my scalp tingle when I came on your frontiers and saw the lonely farmhouses and little clearings out in the woods with no help for twenty leagues around. An Indian war is a purgatory for Canada, but it would be a hell for the English Provinces!"

"We are good friends with the Indians," said Amos. "We do not wish to conquer."

"Your people have a way of conquering although they say that they do not wish to do it," remarked Du Lhut. "Now, with us, we bang our drums, and wave our flags, and make a stir, but no very big thing has come of it yet. We have never had but two great men in Canada. One was Monsieur de la Salle who was shot last year by his own men down the great river, and the other, old Frontenac, will have to come back again if

New France is not to be turned into a desert by the Five Nations. It would surprise me little if by this time two years the white and gold flag flew only over the rock of Quebec. But I see that you look at me impatiently, Monsieur de Catinat, and I know that you count the hours until we are back at Sainte Marie again. Forward, then, and may the second part of our journey be as peaceful as the first."

For an hour or more they picked their way through the woods, following in the steps of the old French pioneer. It was a lovely day with hardly a cloud in the heavens, and the sun streaming down through the thick foliage covered the shaded sward with a delicate network of gold. Sometimes where the woods opened they came out into the pure sunlight, but only to pass into thick glades beyond, where a single ray, here and there, was all that could break its way through the vast leafy covering. It would have been beautiful, these sudden transitions from light

to shade, but with the feeling of impending danger, and of a horror ever lurking in these shadows, the mind was tinged with awe rather than admiration. Silently, lightly, the four men picked their steps among the great tree trunks.

Suddenly Du Lhut dropped upon his knees and stooped his ear to the ground. He rose, shook his head, and walked on with a grave face, casting quick little glances into the shadows in every direction.

"Did you hear something?" whispered Amos.

Du Lhut put his finger to his lips, and then in an instant was down again upon his face with his ear fixed to the ground. He sprang up with the look of a man who has heard what he expected to hear.

"Walk on," said he quietly, "and behave exactly as you have done all day."

"What is it, then?"

"Indians."

"In front of us?"

"No, behind us."

"What are they doing?"

"They are following us."

"How many of them?"

"Two, I think."

The friends glanced back involuntarily over their shoulders into the dense blackness of the forest. At one point a single broad shaft of light slid down between two pines and cast a golden blotch upon their track. Save for this one vivid spot all was sombre and silent.

"Do not look round," whispered Du Lhut sharply. "Walk on as before."

"Are they enemies?"

"They are Iroquois."

"And pursuing us?"

"No, we are now pursuing them."

"Shall we turn, then?"

"No, they would vanish like shadows."

"How far off are they?"

"About two hundred paces, I think."

"They cannot see us, then?"

"I think not, but I cannot be sure. They are following our trail, I think."

"What shall we do, then?"

"Let us make a circle and get behind them."

Turning sharp to the left he led them in a long curve through the woods, hurrying swiftly and yet silently under the darkest shadow of the trees. Then he turned again, and presently halted.

"This is our own track," said he.

"Aye, and two redskins have passed over it," cried Amos, bending down, and pointing to marks which were entirely invisible to Ephraim Savage or De Catinat.

"A full grown warrior and a lad on his first war-path," said Du Lhut. "They were moving fast, you see, for you can hardly see the heel marks of their moccasins. They walked one behind the other. Now let us follow them as they followed us, and see if we have better luck."

He sped swiftly along the trail with his musket cocked in his hand, the others following hard upon his heels, but there was no

sound, and no sign of life from the shadowy woods in front of them. Suddenly Du Lhut stopped and grounded his weapon.

"They are still behind us," he said.

"Still behind us?"

"Yes. This is the point where we branched off. They have hesitated a moment, as you can see by their footmarks, and then they have followed on."

"If we go round again and quicken our pace we may overtake them."

"No, they are on their guard now. They must know that it could only be on their account that we went back on our tracks. Lie here behind the fallen log and we shall see if we can catch a glimpse of them."

A great rotten trunk, all green with mould and blotched with pink and purple fungi, lay to one side of where they stood. Behind this the Frenchman crouched, and his three companions followed his example, peering through the brushwood screen in front of them. Still the one broad sheet of sunshine poured down

between the two pines, but all else was as dim and as silent as a vast cathedral with pillars of wood and roof of leaf. Not a branch that creaked, nor a twig that snapped, nor any sound at all save the sharp barking of a fox somewhere in the heart of the forest. A thrill of excitement ran through the nerves of De Catinat. It was like one of those games of hide-and-seek which the court used to play, when Louis was in a sportive mood, among the oaks and yew hedges of Versailles. But the forfeit there was a carved fan, or a box of bonbons, and here it was death.

Ten minutes passed and there was no sign of any living thing behind them.

"They are over in yonder thicket," whispered Du Lhut, nodding his head towards a dense clump of brushwood, two hundred paces away.

"Have you seen them?"

"No."

"How do you know, then?"

"I saw a squirrel come from his hole in the

great white beach tree yonder. He scuttled back again as if something had scared him. From his hole he can see down into that brushwood."

"Do you think that they know that we are here."

"They cannot see us. But they are suspicious. They fear a trap."

"Shall we rush for the brushwood?"

"They would pick two of us off, and be gone like shadows through the woods. No, we had best go on our way."

"But they will follow us."

"I hardly think that they will. We are four and they are only two, and they know now that we are on our guard, and that we can pick up a trail as quickly as they can themselves. Get behind these trunks where they cannot see us. So! Now stoop until you are past the belt of alder bushes. We must push on fast now, for where there are two Iroquois there are likely to be two hundred not very far off."

"Thank God that I did not bring Adèle!" cried De Catinat.

"Yes, monsieur, it is well for a man to make a comrade of his wife, but not on the borders of the Iroquois country, nor of any other Indian country either."

"You do not take your own wife with you when you travel, then?" asked the soldier.

"Yes, but I do not let her travel from village to village. She remains in the wigwam."

"Then you leave her behind?"

"On the contrary, she is always there to welcome me. By Saint Anne, I should be heavy-hearted if I came to any village between this and the Bluffs of the Illinois, and did not find my wife waiting to greet me."

"Then she must travel before you."

Du Lhut laughed heartily, without, however, emitting a sound.

"A fresh village a fresh wife," said he. "But I never have more than one in each, for it is shame for a Frenchman to set an evil

example when the good fathers are spending their lives so freely in preaching virtue to them. Ah, here is the Ajidaumo Creek, where the Indians set the sturgeon nets. It is still seven miles to Poitou."

"We shall be there before nightfall, then?"

"I think that we had best wait for nightfall before we make our way in. Since the Iroquois scouts are out as far as this, it is likely that they lie thick round Poitou, and we may find the last step the worst unless we have a care, the more so if these two get in front of us to warn the others." He paused a moment with slanting head and sidelong ear. "By Saint Anne," he muttered, "we have not shaken them off. They are still upon our trail!"

"You hear them?"

"Yes, they are no great way from us. They will find that they have followed us once too often this time. Now, I will show you a little bit of woodcraft which may be new to you. Slip off your moccasins, monsieur."

De Catinat pulled off his shoes as directed, and Du Lhut did the same.

"Put them on as if they were gloves," said the pioneer, and an instant later Ephraim Savage and Amos had their comrades' shoes upon their hands.

"You can sling your muskets over your back. So! Now down on all fours, bending yourselves double, with your hands pressing hard upon the earth. That is excellent. Two men can leave the trail of four! Now come with me, monsieur."

He flitted from tree to tree on a line which was parallel to, but a few yards distant from, that of their comrades. Then suddenly he crouched behind a bush and pulled De Catinat down beside him.

"They must pass us in a few minutes," he whispered. "Do not fire if you can help it." Something gleamed in Du Lhut's hand, and his comrade, glancing down, saw that he had drawn a keen little tomahawk from his belt. Again the mad wild thrill ran through the

soldier's blood, as he peered through the tangled branches and waited for whatever might come out of the dim silent aisles of tree-boles.

And suddenly he saw something move. It flitted like a shadow from one trunk to the other so swiftly that De Catinat could not have told whether it were beast or human. And then again he saw it, and yet again, sometimes one shadow, sometimes two shadows, silent, furtive, like the *loup-garou* with which his nurse had scared him in his childhood. Then for a few moments all was still once more, and then in an instant there crept out from among the bushes the most terrible-looking creature that ever walked the earth, an Iroquois chief upon the war-trail.

He was a tall powerful man, and his bristle of scalp locks and eagle feathers made him look a giant in the dim light, for a good eight feet lay between his beaded moccasin and the topmost plume of his headgear. One side of his face was painted in soot, ochre, and vermilion to resemble a dog, and the other half

as a fowl, so that the front view was indescribably grotesque and strange. A belt of wampum was braced round his loin-cloth, and a dozen scalp-locks fluttered out as he moved from the fringe of his leggings. His head was sunk forward, his eyes gleamed with a sinister light, and his nostrils dilated and contracted like those of an excited animal. His gun was thrown forward, and he crept along with bended knees, peering, listening, pausing, hurrying on, a breathing image of caution. Two paces behind him walked a lad of fourteen, clad and armed in the same fashion, but without the painted face and without the horrid dried trophies upon the leggings. It was his first campaign, and already his eyes shone and his nostrils twitched with the same lust for murder which burned within his elder. So they advanced, silent, terrible, creeping out of the shadows of the wood as their race had come out of the shadows of history, with bodies of iron and tiger souls.

They were just abreast of the bush when something caught the eye of the younger warrior, some displaced twig or fluttering leaf, and he paused with suspicion in every feature. Another instant and he had warned his companion, but Du Lhut sprang out and buried his little hatchet in the skull of the older warrior. De Catinat heard a dull crash, as when an axe splinters its way into a rotten tree, and the man fell like a log, laughing horribly, and kicking and striking with his powerful limbs. The younger warrior sprang like a deer over his fallen comrade and dashed on into the wood, but an instant later there was a gunshot among the trees in front, followed by a faint wailing cry.

"That is his death whoop," said Du Lhut composedly. "It was a pity to fire, and yet it was better than letting him go."

As he spoke the two others came back, Ephraim ramming a fresh charge into his musket.

"Who was laughing?" asked Amos.

"It was he," said Du Lhut, nodding towards the dying warrior, who lay with his head in a horrible puddle, and his grotesque features contorted into a fixed smile. "It's a custom they have when they get their death blow. I've known a Seneca chief laugh for six hours on end at the torture-stake. Ah, he's gone!"

As he spoke, the Indian gave a last spasm with his hands and feet, and lay rigid, grinning up at the slit of blue sky above him.

"He's a great chief," said Du Lhut. "He is Brown Moose of the Mohawks, and the other is his second son. We have drawn first blood, but I do not think that it will be the last, for the Iroquois do not allow their war-chiefs to die unavenged. He was a mighty fighter, as you may see by looking at his neck."

He wore a peculiar necklace which seemed to De Catinat to consist of blackened bean pods set upon a string. As he stooped over it he saw to his horror that they were not bean pods, but withered human fingers.

"They are all right fore-fingers," said Du Lhut, "so everyone represents a life. There are forty-two in all. Eighteen are of men whom he has slain in battle, and the other twenty-four have been taken and tortured."

"How do you know that?"

"Because only eighteen have their nails on. If the prisoner of an Iroquois be alive, he begins always by biting his nails off. You see that they are missing from four-and-twenty."

De Catinat shuddered. What demons were these amongst whom an evil fate had drifted him! And was it possible that his Adèle should fall into the hands of such friends? No, no, surely the good God, for whose sake they had suffered so much, would not permit such an infamy! And yet as evil a fate had come upon other women as tender as Adèle—upon other men as loving as he. What hamlet was there in Canada which had not such stories in their record. A vague horror seized him as he stood there. We

know more of the future than we are willing to admit, away down in those dim recesses of the soul where there is no reason, but only instincts and impressions. Now some impending terror cast its cloud over him. The trees around with their great protruding limbs were like shadowy demons thrusting out their gaunt arms to seize him. The sweat burst from his forehead, and he leaned heavily upon his musket.

"By Saint Eulalie," said Du Lhut, "for an old soldier you turn very pale, monsieur, at a little bloodshed."

"I am not well. I should be glad of a sup from your cognac bottle."

"Here it is, comrade, and welcome! Well, I may as well have this fine scalp that we may have something to show for our walk." He held the Indian's head between his knees, and in a instant, with a sweep of his knife, had torn off the hideous dripping trophy.

"Let us go!" cried De Catinat, turning away in disgust.

"Yes, we shall go. But I shall also have this wampum belt marked with the totem of the Bear. So! And the gun too. Look at the 'London' printed upon the lock. Ah, Monsieur Green, Monsieur Green, it is not hard to see where the enemies of France get their arms."

So at last they turned away, Du Lhut bearing his spoils, leaving the red grinning figure stretched under the silent trees. As they passed on they caught a glimpse of the lad lying doubled up among the bushes where he had fallen. The pioneer walked very swiftly until he came to a little stream which prattled down to the big river. Here he slipped off his boots and leggings, and waded down it with his companions for half a mile or so.

"They will follow our tracks when they find him," said he, "but this will throw them off, for it is only on running water that an Iroquois can find no trace. And now we shall lie in this clump until nightfall, for we are

little over a mile from Fort Poitou, and it is dangerous to go forward, for the ground becomes more open."

And so they remained concealed among the alders whilst the shadows turned from short to long, and the white drifting clouds above them were tinged with the pink of the setting sun. Du Lhut coiled himself into a ball with his pipe between his teeth and dropped into a light sleep, pricking up his ears and starting at the slightest sound from the woods around them. The two Americans whispered together for a long time, Ephraim telling some long story about the cruise of the brig *Industry*, bound to Jamestown for sugar and molasses, but at last the soothing hum of a gentle breeze through the branches lulled them off also, and they slept. De Catinat alone remained awake, his nerves still in a tingle from that strange sudden shadow which had fallen upon his soul. What could it mean? Not surely that Adèle was in danger? He had heard of such warnings, but had he

not left her in safety behind cannons and stockades. By the next evening at latest he would see her again. As he lay looking up through the tangle of copper leaves at the sky beyond, his mind drifted like the clouds above him and he was back once more in the jutting window in the Rue St. Martin, sitting on the broad *bancal*, with its Spanish leather covering, with the gilt wool-bale creaking outside, and his arm round shrinking, timid Adèle, she who had compared herself to a little mouse in an old house, and who yet had courage to stay by his side through all this wild journey. And then again he was back at Versailles. Once more he saw the brown eyes of the king, the fair bold face of De Montespan, the serene features of De Maintenon—once more he rode on his midnight mission, was driven by the demon coachman, and sprang with Amos upon the scaffold to rescue the most beautiful woman in France. So clear it was and so vivid that it was with a start that he came suddenly to himself, and found that the night

was creeping on in an American forest, and that Du Lhut had roused himself and was ready for a start.

"Have you been awake?" asked the pioneer.

"Yes."

"Have you heard anything?"

"Nothing but the hooting of the owl."

"It seemed to me that in my sleep I heard a gunshot in the distance."

"In your sleep?"

"Yes, I hear as well asleep as awake and remember what I hear. But now you must follow me close, and we shall be in the fort soon."

"You have wonderful ears, indeed," said De Catinat, as they picked their way through the tangled wood. "How could you hear that these men were following us to-day? I could make out no sound when they were within hand-touch of us."

"I did not hear them at first."

"You saw them?"

"No, nor that either."

"Then how could you know that they were there?"

"I heard a frightened jay flutter among the trees after we were past it. Then ten minutes later I heard the same thing. I knew then that there was someone on our trail, and I listened."

"*Peste!* you are a woodsman indeed!"

"I believe that these woods are swarming with Iroquois, although we have had the good fortune to miss them. So great a chief as Brown Moose would not start on the path with a small following nor for a small object. They must mean mischief upon the Richelieu. You are not sorry now that you did not bring madame?"

"I thank God for it!"

"The woods will not be safe, I fear, until the partridge berries are out once more. You must stay at Sainte Marie until then, unless the seignieur can spare men to guard you."

"I had rather stay there for ever than expose my wife to such devils."

"Aye, devils they are, if ever devils walked upon earth. You winced, monsieur, when I took Brown Moose's scalp, but when you have seen as much of the Indians as I have done your heart will be as hardened as mine. And now we are on the very borders of the clearing, and the blockhouse lies yonder among the clump of maples. They do not keep very good watch, for I have been expecting during these last ten minutes to hear the *qui vive.* You did not come as near to Sainte Marie unchallenged, and yet De Lannes is as old a soldier as La Noue. We can scarce see now, but yonder, near the river, is where he exercises his men."

"He does so now," said Amos. "I see a dozen of them drawn up in a line at their drill."

"No sentinels, and all the men at drill!" cried Du Lhut in contempt. "It is as you say, however, for I can see them myself with their ranks open, and each as stiff and straight as a pine stump. One would think to see

them stand so still that there was not an Indian nearer than Orange. We shall go across to them, and by Saint Anne, I shall tell their commander what I think of his arrangments."

Du Lhut advanced from the bushes as he spoke, and the four men crossed the open ground in the direction of the line of men who waited silently for them in the dim twilight. They were within fifty paces, and yet none of them had raised hand or voice to challenge their approach. There was something uncanny in the silence, and a change came over Du Lhut's face as he peered in front of him. He craned his head round and looked up the river.

"My God!" he screamed. "Look at the fort!"

They had cleared the clump of trees, and the outline of the blockhouse should have shown up in front of them. There was no sign of it. It was gone!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MEN OF BLOOD.

So unexpected was the blow that even Du Lhut, hardened from his childhood to every shock and danger, stood shaken and dismayed. Then, with an oath, he ran at the top of his speed towards the line of figures, his companions following at his heels.

As they drew nearer they could see through the dusk that it was not indeed a line. A silent and motionless officer stood out some twenty paces in front of his silent and motionless men. Further they could see that he wore a very high and singular head-dress. They were still rushing forward, breathless with apprehension, when to their horror this head-dress began to lengthen and broaden, and a great bird flapped heavily up and dropped down again on the nearest tree

trunk. Then they knew that their worst fears were true, and that it was the garrison of Poitou which stood before them.

They were lashed to low posts with willow withies, some twenty of them, naked all, and twisted and screwed into every strange shape which an agonised body could assume. In front where the buzzard had perched was the gray-headed commandant with two cinders thrust into his sockets and his flesh hanging from him like a beggar's rags. Behind was the line of men, each with his legs charred off to the knees, and his body so haggled and scorched and burst that the willow bands alone seemed to hold it together. For a moment the four comrades stared in silent horror at the dreadful group. Then each acted as his nature bade him. De Catinat staggered up against a tree trunk and leaned his head upon his arm, deadly sick. Du Lhut fell down upon his knees and said something to heaven, with his two clenched hands shaking up at the darkening sky. Ephraim Savage

examined the priming of his gun with a tightened lip and a gleaming eye, while Amos Green, without a word, began to cast round in circles in search of a trail.

But Du Lhut was on his feet again in a moment, and running up and down like a sleuth-hound, noting a hundred things which even Amos would have overlooked. He circled round the bodies again and again. Then he ran a little way towards the edge of the woods, and then came back to the charred ruins of the block-house, from some of which a thin reek of smoke was still rising.

"There is no sign of the women and children," said he.

"My God! There were women and children?"

"They are keeping the children to burn at their leisure in their villages. The women they may torture or may adopt as the humour takes them. But what does the old man want?"

"I want you to ask him, Amos," said the

seaman, "why we are yawing and tacking here when we should be cracking on all sail to stand after them?"

Du Lhut smiled and shook his head. "Your friend is a brave man," said he, "if he thinks that with four men we can follow a hundred and fifty."

"Tell him, Amos, that the Lord will bear us up," said the other excitedly. "Say that He will be with us against the children of Jeroboam, and we will cut them off utterly and they shall be destroyed. What is the French for 'slay and spare not'? I had as soon go about with my jaw braced up, as with folk who cannot understand a plain language."

But Du Lhut waved aside the seaman's suggestions. "We must have a care now," said he, "or we shall lose our own scalps, and be the cause of those at Sainte Marie losing theirs as well."

"Sainte Marie!" cried De Catinat. "Is there then danger at Sainte Marie?"

"Aye, they are in the wolf's mouth now. This business was done last night. The place was stormed by a war party of a hundred and fifty men. This morning they left and went north upon foot. They have been *caché'd* among the woods all day between Poitou and Sainte Marie."

"Then we have come through them?"

"Yes, we have come through them. They would keep their camp to-day and send out scouts. Brown Moose and his son were among them and struck our trail. To-night ——"

"To night they will attack Sainte Marie!"

"It is possible. And yet with so small a party I should scarce have thought that they would have dared. Well, we can but hasten back as quickly as we can, and give them warning of what is hanging over them."

And so they turned for their weary backward journey, though their minds were too full to spare a thought upon the leagues which lay behind them or those which were

before. Old Ephraim, less accustomed to walking than his younger comrades, was already limping and footsore but, for all his age, he was as tough as hickory and full of endurance. Du Lhut took the lead again and they turned their faces once more towards the north.

The moon was shining brightly in the sky, but it was little aid to the travellers in the depths of the forest. Where it had been shadowy in the daytime it was now so absolutely dark that De Catinat could not see the tree trunks against which he brushed. Here and there they came upon an open glade bathed in the moonshine, or perhaps a thin shaft of silver light broke through between the branches, and cast a great white patch upon the ground, but Du Lhut prepared to avoid these more open spaces, and to skirt the glades rather than to cross them. The breeze had freshened a little and the whole air was filled with the rustle and sough of the leaves. Save for this dull never-ceasing sound all

would have been silent had not the owl hooted sometimes from among the tree tops, and the night jar whirred above their heads.

Dark as it was Du Lhut walked as swiftly as during the sunlight, and never hesitated about the track. His comrades could see, however, that he was taking them a different way to that which they had gone in the morning, for twice they caught a sight of the glimmer of the broad river upon their left, while before they had only seen the streams which flowed into it. On the second occasion he pointed to where, on the farther side, they could see dark shadows flitting over the water.

"Iroquois canoes," he whispered. "There are ten of them with eight men in each. They are another party and they are also going north."

"How do you know that they are another party?"

"Because we have crossed the trail of the first within the hour."

De Catinat was filled with amazement at this marvellous man who could hear in his sleep and could detect a trail when the very tree trunks were invisible to ordinary eyes. Du Lhut halted a little to watch the canoes, and then turned his back to the river, and plunged into the woods once more. They had gone a mile or two when suddenly he came to a dead stop, snuffing at the air like a hound on a scent.

"I smell burning wood," said he. "There is a fire within a mile of us in that direction."

"I smell it too," said Amos. "Let us creep up that way and see their camp."

"Be careful, then," whispered Du Lhut, "for your lives may hang from a cracking twig."

They advanced very slowly and cautiously until suddenly the red flare of a leaping fire twinkled between the distant trunks. Still slipping through the brushwood they worked round until they had found a point from which they could see without a risk of being seen.

A great blaze of dry logs crackled and

spurtled in the centre of a small clearing. The ruddy flames roared upwards, and the smoke spread out above it until it looked like a strange tree with gray foliage and trunk of fire. But no living being was in sight and the huge fire roared and swayed in absolute solitude in the midst of the silent woodlands. Nearer they crept and nearer but there was no movement save the rush of the flames, and no sound but the snapping of the sticks.

"Shall we go up to it?" whispered De Catinat.

The wary old pioneer shook his head. "It may be a trap," said he.

"Or an abandoned camp?"

"No, it has not been lit more than an hour."

"Besides, it is far too great for a camp fire," said Amos.

"What do you make of it?" asked Du Lhut.

"A signal."

"Yes, I dare say that you are right.

This light is not a safe neighbour, so we shall edge away from it and then make a straight line for Sainte Marie."

The flames were soon but a twinkling point behind them, and at last vanished behind the trees. Du Lhut pushed on rapidly until they came to the edge of a moonlit clearing. He was about to skirt this, as he had done others, when suddenly he caught De Catinat by the shoulder and pushed him down behind a clump of sumach, while Amos did the same with Ephraim Savage.

A man was walking down the other side of the open space. He had just emerged and was crossing it diagonally, making in the direction of the river. His body was bent double but as he came out from the shadow of the trees they could see that he was an Indian brave in full war paint, with leggings, loin-cloth, and musket. Close at his heels came a second, and then a third and a fourth, on and on until it seemed as if the wood were full of men, and that the line would never

come to an end. They flitted past like shadows in the moonlight, in absolute silence, all crouching and running in the same swift stealthy fashion. Last of all came a man in the fringed tunic of a hunter with a cap and feather upon his head. He passed across like the others, and they vanished into the shadows as silently as they had appeared. It was five minutes before Du Lhut thought it safe to rise from their shelter.

"By Saint Anne," he whispered, "did you count them?"

"Three hundred and ninety six," said Amos.

"I made it four hundred and two."

"And you thought that there were only a hundred and fifty of them!" cried De Catinat.

"Ah, you do not understand. This is a fresh band. The others who took the block-house must be over there, for their trail lies between us and the river."

"They could not be the same," said Amos, "for there was not a fresh scalp among them."

Du Lhut gave the young hunter a glance

of approval. "On my word," said he, "I did not know that your woodsmen are as good as they seem to be. You have eyes, monsieur, and it may please you some day to remember that Greysolon Du Lhut told you so."

Amos felt a flush of pride at these words from a man whose name was honoured wherever trader or trapper smoked round a camp fire. He was about to make some answer when a dreadful cry broke suddenly out of the woods, a horrible screech, as from some one who was goaded to the very last pitch of human misery. Again and again, as they stood with blanched cheeks in the darkness, they heard that awful cry swelling up from the night, and ringing drearily through the forest.

"They are torturing the women," said Du Lhut. "Their camp lies over there."

"Can we do nothing to aid them?" cried Amos.

"Aye, aye, lad," said the captain in English,

"We can't pass distress signals without going out of our course. Let us pút about and run down yonder."

"In that camp," said Du Lhut slowly, "there are now nearly six hundred warriors. We are four. What you say has no sense. Unless we warn them at Sainte Marie, these devils will lay some trap for them. Their parties are assembling by land and by water and there may be a thousand before daybreak. Our duty is to push on and give our warning."

"He speaks the truth," said Amos to Ephraim. "Nay, but you must not go alone!" He seized the stout old seaman by the arm and held him by main force to prevent him from breaking off through the woods.

"There is one thing which we can do to spoil their night's amusement," said Du Lhut. "The woods are as dry as powder, and there has been no drop of rain for a long three months."

"Yes?"

"And the wind blows straight for their camp, with the river on the other side of it."

"We should fire the woods!"

"We cannot do better."

In an instant Du Lhut had scraped together a little bundle of dry twigs, and had heaped them up against a withered beach tree which was as dry as tinder. A stroke of flint and steel was enough to start a little smoulder of flame, which lengthened and spread until it was leaping along the white strips of hanging bark. A quarter of a mile farther on Du Lhut did the same again, and once more beyond that, until at three different points the forest was in a blaze. As they hurried onwards they could hear the dull roaring of the flames behind them, and at last, as they neared Sainte Marie, they could see, looking back, the long rolling wave of fire travelling ever westward towards the Richelieu, and flashing up into great spouts of flame as it licked up a clump of pines as if it were a bundle of faggots. Du Lhut chuckled in his silent way as he looked back at the long orange glare in the sky.

"They will need to swim for it, some of them," said he. "They have not canoes to take them all off. Ah, if I had but two hundred of my *coureurs-de-bois* on the river at the further side of them not one would have got away."

"They had one who was dressed like a white man," remarked Amos.

"Aye, and the most deadly of the lot. His father was a Dutch trader, his mother an Iroquois, and he goes by the name of the Flemish Bastard. Ah, I know him well, and I tell you that if they want a king in hell they will find one all ready in his wigwam. By Saint Anne, I have a score to settle with him, and I may pay it before this business is over. Well, there are the lights of Sainte Marie shining down below there. I can understand that sigh of relief, monsieur, for on my word, after what we found at Poitou I was uneasy myself until I should see them."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE TAPPING OF DEATH.

Day was just breaking as the four comrades entered the gate of the stockade, but, early as it was the *censitaires* and their families were all afoot staring at the prodigious fire which raged to the south of them. De Catinat burst through the throng and rushed upstairs to Adèle, who had herself flown down to meet him, so that they met in each other's arms half way up the great stone staircase with a burst of those little inarticulate cries which are the true unwritten language of love. Together, with his arm round her, they ascended to the great hall where old De la Noue with his son were peering out of the window at the wonderful spectacle.

"Ah, monsieur," said the old nobleman with his courtly bow, "I am indeed rejoiced

to see you safe under my roof again, not only for your own sake, but for that of madame's eyes, which, if she will permit an old man to say so, are much too pretty to spoil by straining them all day in the hopes of seeing someone coming out of the forest. You have done forty miles, Monsieur de Catinat, and are doubtless hungry and weary. When you are yourself again I must claim my revenge in piquet, for the cards lay against me the other night."

But Du Lhut had entered at De Catinat's heels with his tidings of disaster.

"You will have another game to play, Monsieur de Sainte Marie," said he. "There are six hundred Iroquois in the woods and they are preparing to attack."

"Tut, tut, we cannot allow our arrangements to be altered by a handful of savages," said the seigneur. "I must apologise to you, my dear De Catinat, that you should be annoyed by such people while you are upon my estate. As regards the piquet, I cannot but

think that your play from king and knave is more brilliant than safe. Now when I played piquet last with De Lannes of Poitou ——"

"De Lannes of Poitou is dead, and all his people," said Du Lhut. "The block house is a heap of smoking ashes."

The seigneur raised his eyebrows and took a pinch of snuff, tapping the lid of his little round gold box.

"I always told him that his fort would be taken unless he cleared away those maple trees which grew up to the very walls. They are all dead, you say?"

"Every man."

"And the fort burned?"

"Not a stick was left standing."

"Have you seen these rascals?"

"We saw the trail of a hundred and fifty. Then there were a hundred in canoes, and a war party of four hundred passed us under the Flemish Bastard. Their camp is five miles down the river, and there cannot be less than six hundred."

"You were fortunate in escaping them."

"But they were not so fortunate in escaping us. We killed Brown Moose and his son, and we fired the woods so as to drive them out of their camp."

"Excellent! Excellent!" said the seigneur, clapping gently with his dainty hands. "You have done very well indeed, Du Lhut! You are, I presume, very tired?"

"I am not often tired. I am quite ready to do the journey again."

"Then perhaps you would pick a few men and go back into the woods to see what these villains are doing?"

"I shall be ready in five minutes."

"Perhaps you would like to go also, Achille?"

His son's dark eyes and Indian face lit up with a fierce joy.

"Yes, I shall go also," he answered.

"Very good, and we shall make all ready in your absence. Madame, you will excuse these little annoyances which mar the pleasure of

your visit. Next time that you do me the honour to come here I trust that we shall have cleared all these vermin from my estate. We have our advantages. The Richelieu is a better fish pond, and these forests are a finer deer preserve than any of which the king can boast. But on the other hand we have, as you see, our little troubles. You will excuse me now, as there are one or two things which demand my attention. De Catinat, you are a tried soldier and I should be glad of your advice. Onega, give me my lace handkerchief and my cane of clouded amber, and take care of madame until her husband and I return."

It was bright daylight now, and the square enclosure within the stockade was filled with an anxious crowd who had just learned the evil tidings. Most of the *censitaires* were old soldiers and trappers who had served in many Indian wars, and whose swarthy faces and bold bearing told their own story. They were sons of a race which with better fortune or with worse has burned more powder than any

other nation upon earth, and as they stood in little groups discussing the situation and examining their arms, a leader could have asked for no more hardy or more war-like following. The women, however, pale and breathless, were hurrying in from the outlying cottages, dragging their children with them, and bearing over their shoulders the more precious of their household goods. The confusion, the hurry, the cries of the children, the throwing down of bundles and the rushing back for more, contrasted sharply with the quiet and the beauty of the woods which encircled them, all bathed in the bright morning sunlight. It was strange to look upon the fairy loveliness of their many-tinted foliage, and to know that the spirit of murder and cruelty was roaming unchained behind that lovely screen.

The scouting party under Du Lhut and Achille de la Noue had already left, and at the order of the seigneur the two gates were now secured with huge bars of oak fitted into

iron staples on either side. The children were placed in the lower store-room with a few women to watch them, while the others were told off to attend to the fire buckets, and to reload the muskets. The men had been paraded, fifty-two of them in all, and they were divided into parties now for the defence of each part of the stockade. On one side it had been built up to within a few yards of the river which not only relieved them from the defence of that face, but enabled them to get fresh water by throwing a bucket at the end of a rope from the stockade. The boats and canoes of Sainte Marie were drawn up on the bank just under the wall, and were precious now as offering a last means of escape should all else fail. The next fort, St. Louis, was but a few leagues up the river, and De la Noue had already sent a swift messenger to them with news of the danger. At least it would be a point on which they might retreat should the worst come to the worst.

And that the worst might come to the worst was very evident to so experienced a woodsman as Amos Green. He had left Ephraim Savage snoring in a deep sleep upon the floor, and was now walking round the defences with his pipe in his mouth, examining with a critical eye every detail in connection with them. The stockade was very strong, nine feet high and closely built of oak stakes which were thick enough to turn a bullet. Half way up it was loopholed in long narrow slits for the fire of the defenders. But on the other hand the trees grew up to within a hundred yards of it, and formed a screen for the attack, while the garrison was so scanty that it could not spare more than twenty men at the utmost for each face. Amos knew how daring and dashing were the Iroquois warriors, how cunning and fertile of resource, and his face darkened as he thought of the young wife who had come so far in their safe-keeping, and of the women and children whom he had seen crowding into the fort.

"Would it not be better if you could send them up the river?" he suggested to the seigneur.

"I should very gladly do so, monsieur, and perhaps, if we are all alive we may manage it to-night if the weather should be cloudy. But I cannot spare the men to guard them, and I cannot send them without a guard when we know that Iroquois canoes are on the river and their scouts are swarming on the banks."

"You are right. It would be madness."

"I have stationed you on this eastern face with your friends and with fifteen men. Monsieur de Catinat, will you command the party?"

"Willingly."

"I will take the south face as it seems to be the point of danger. Du Lhut can take the north and five men should be enough to watch the river side."

"Have we food and powder?"

"I have flour and smoked eels enough

to see this matter through. Poor fare, my dear sir, but I daresay you learned in Holland that a cup of ditch water after a brush may have a better smack than the blue-sealed Frontiniac which you helped me to finish the other night. As to powder, we have all our trading stores to draw upon."

"We have not time to clear any of these trees?" asked the soldier.

"Impossible. They would make better shelter down than up."

"But at least I might clear that patch of brushwood round the birch sapling which lies between the east face and the edge of the forest. It is good cover for their skirmishers."

"Yes, that should be fired without delay."

"Nay, I think that I might do better," said Amos. "We might bait a trap for them there. Where is this powder of which you spoke?"

"Theuriet, the major-domo, is giving out powder in the main storehouse."

"Very good." Amos vanished upstairs,

and returned with a large linen bag in his hand. This he filled with powder and then, slinging it over his shoulder, he carried it out to the clump of bushes and placed it at the base of the sapling, cutting a strip out of the bark immediately above the spot. Then with a few leafy branches and fallen leaves he covered the powder bag very carefully over so that it looked like a little hillock of earth. Having arranged all to his satisfaction he returned, clambering over the stockade, and dropping down upon the other side.

"I think that we are all ready for them now," said the seigneur. "I would that the women and children were in a safe place, but we may send them down the river to-night if all goes well. Has any one heard anything of Du Lhut?"

"Jean has the best ears of any of us, your excellency," said one man from beside the brass corner cannon. "He thought that he heard shots a few minutes ago."

"Then he has come into touch with them.

Etienne, take ten men and go to the withered oak to cover them if they are retreating, but do not go another yard on any pretext. I am too short-handed already. Perhaps, De Catinat, you wish to sleep?"

"No, I could not sleep."

"We can do no more down here. What do you say to a round or two of piquet? A little turn of the cards will help us to pass the time."

They ascended to the upper hall where Adèle came and sat by her husband, while the swarthy Onega crouched by the window looking keenly out into the forest. De Catinat had little thought to spare upon the cards, as his mind wandered to the danger which threatened them and to the woman whose hand rested upon his own. The old nobleman, on the other hand, was engrossed by the play, and cursed under his breath, or chuckled and grinned as the luck swayed one way or the other. Suddenly as they played there came two sharp raps from without.

"Someone is tapping," cried Adèle.

"It is death that is tapping," said the Indian woman at the window.

"Aye, aye, it was the patter of two spent balls against the woodwork. The wind is against our hearing the report. The cards are shuffled. It is my cut and your deal. The capot, I think, was mine."

"Men are rushing from the woods," cried Onega.

"Tut! It grows serious!" said the nobleman. "We can finish the game later. Remember that the deal lies with you. Let us see what it all means."

De Catinat had already rushed to the window. Du Lhut, young Achille de la Noue, and eight of the covering party were running with their heads bent towards the stockade, the door of which had been opened to admit them. Here and there from behind the trees came little blue puffs of smoke, and one of the fugitives who wore white calico breeches began suddenly to hop instead of running and

a red splotch showed upon the white cloth. Two others threw their arms round him and the three rushed in abreast while the gate swung into its place behind them. An instant later the brass cannon at the corner gave a flash and a roar while the whole outline of the wood was traced in a rolling cloud, and the shower of bullets rapped up against the wooden wall like sleet on a window.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE TAKING OF THE STOCKADE.

Having left Adèle to the care of her Indian hostess, and warned her for her life to keep from the windows, De Catinat seized his musket and rushed downstairs. As he passed a bullet came piping through one of the narrow embrasures and starred itself in a little blotch of lead upon the opposite wall. The seigneur had already descended and was conversing with Du Lhut beside the door.

"A thousand of them, you say?"

"Yes, we came on a fresh trail of a large war party, three hundred at the least. They are all Mohawks and Cayugas with a sprinkling of Oneidas. We had a running fight for a few miles, and we have lost five men."

"All dead, I trust."

"I hope so, but we were hard pressed to keep from being cut off. Jean Mance is shot through the leg."

"I saw that he was hit."

"We had best have all ready to retire to the house if they carry the stockade. We can scarce hope to hold it when they are twenty to one."

"All is ready."

"And with our cannon we can keep their canoes from passing, so we might send our women away to-night."

"I had intended to do so. Will you take charge of the north side. You might come across to me with ten of your men now, and I shall go back to you if they change their attack."

The firing came in one continuous rattle now from the edges of the wood, and the air was full of bullets. The assailants were all trained shots, men who lived by their guns, and to whom a shaking hand or a dim eye meant poverty and hunger. Every slit and

crack and loop-hole was marked and a cap held above the stockade was blown in an instant from the gunbarrel which supported it. On the other hand, the defenders were also skilled in Indian fighting, and wise in every trick and lure which could protect themselves or tempt their enemies to show. They kept well to the sides of the loop-holes, watching through little crevices of the wood, and firing swiftly when a chance offered. A red leg sticking straight up into the air from behind a log showed where one bullet at least had gone home, but there was little to aim at save a puff and flash from among the leaves, or the shadowy figure of a warrior seen for an instant as he darted from one tree trunk to the other. Seven of the Canadians had already been hit, but only three were mortally wounded, and the other four still kept manfully to their loop-holes, though one who had been struck through the jaw was spitting his teeth with his bullets down into his gun barrel. The women sat in a line upon the

ground, beneath the level of the loop-holes, each with a saucerful of bullets and a canister of powder, passing up the loaded guns to the fighting men at the points where a quick fire was most needful.

At first the attack had been all upon the south face, but as fresh bodies of the Iroquois came up their line spread and lengthened until the whole east face was girt with fire, which gradually enveloped the north also. The fort was ringed-in by a great loop of smoke, save only where the broad river flowed past them. Over near the further bank the canoes were lurking, and one, manned by ten warriors, attempted to pass up the stream, but a good shot from the brass gun dashed in her side and sank her, while a second of grape left only four of the swimmers whose high scalp locks stood out above the water like the back-fins of some strange fish. On the inland side, however, the seigneur had ordered the cannon to be served no more, for the broad embrasures drew the enemy's fire, and of the

men who had been struck half were among those who worked the guns.

The old nobleman strutted about with his white ruffles and his clouded cane behind the line of parched smoke-grimed men, tapping his snuff box, shooting out his little jests, and looking very much less concerned than he had done over his piquet.

"What do you think of it, Du Lhut?" he asked.

"I think very badly of it. We are losing men much too fast."

"Well, my friend, what can you expect? When a thousand muskets are all turned upon a little place like this, someone must suffer for it. Ah, my poor fellow, so you are done for too!"

The man nearest him had suddenly fallen with a crash, lying quite still with his face in a platter of the sagamite which had been brought out by the women. Du Lhut glanced at him and then looked round.

"He is in a line with no loop-hole, and it

took him in the shoulder," said he. "Where did it come from then? Ah, by Saint Anne, look there!" He pointed upwards to a little mist of smoke which hung round the summit of a high oak.

"The rascal overlooks the stockade. But the trunk is hardly thick enough to shield him at that height. This poor fellow will not need his musket again, and I see that it is ready primed." De la Noue laid down his cane, turned back his ruffles, picked up the dead man's gun, and fired at the lurking warrior. Two leaves fluttered out from the tree and a grinning vermilion face appeared for an instant with a yell of derision. Quick as a flash Du Luth brought his musket to his shoulder and pulled the trigger. The man gave a tremendous spring and crushed down through the thick foliage. Some seventy or eighty feet below him a single stout branch shot out and on to this he fell with the sound of a great stone dropping into a bog, and hung there doubled over it, swinging slowly

from side to side like a red rag, his scalp-lock streaming down between his feet. A shout of exultation rose from the Canadians at the sight which was drowned in the murderous yell of the savages.

"His limbs twitch. He is not dead," cried De la Noue.

"Let him die there," said the old pioneer callously, ramming a fresh charge into his gun. "Ah, there is the gray hat again. It comes ever when I am unloaded."

"I saw a plumed hat among the brushwood."

"It is the Flemish Bastard. I had rather have his scalp than those of his hundred best warriors."

"Is he so brave then?"

"Yes, he is brave enough. There is no denying it, for how else could he be an Iroquois war-chief. But he is clever and cunning, and cruel —— Ah, my God, if all the stories told are true, his cruelty is past believing. I should fear that my tongue would wither if I did but name the things

which this man has done. Ah, he is there again."

The gray hat with the plume had shown itself once more in a rift of the smoke. De la Noue and Du Lhut both fired together, and the cap fluttered up into the air. At the same instant the bushes parted and a tall warrior sprang out into full view of the defenders. His face was that of an Indian, but a shade or two lighter, and a pointed black beard hung down over his hunting tunic. He threw out his hands with a gesture of disdain, stood for an instant looking steadfastly at the fort, and then sprang back into cover amid a shower of bullets which chipped away the twigs all round him.

"Yes, he is brave enough," Du Lhut repeated with an oath. "Your *censitaires* have had their hoes in their hands more often than their muskets, I should judge from their shooting. But they seem to be drawing closer upon the east face, and I think that they will make a rush there before long."

The fire had indeed grown very much fiercer upon the side which was defended by De Catinat, and it was plain that the main force of the Iroquois were gathered at that point. From every log, and trunk, and cleft, and bush came the red flash with the gray halo, and the bullets sang in a continuous stream through the loop-holes. Amos had whittled a little hole for himself about a foot above the ground, and lay upon his face loading and firing in his own quiet methodical fashion. Beside him stood Ephraim Savage, his mouth set grimly, his eyes flashing from under his down-drawn brows, and his whole soul absorbed in the smiting of the Amalekites. His hat was gone, his grizzled hair flying in the breeze, great splotches of powder mottled his mahogany face and a weal across his right cheek showed where an Indian bullet had grazed him. De Catinat was bearing himself like an experienced soldier, walking up and down among his men with short words of praise or of precept, those fire-words rough

and blunt which bring a glow to the heart and a flush to the cheek. Seven of his men were down, but as the attack grew fiercer upon his side it slackened upon the others, and the seigneur with his son and Du Lhut brought ten men to reinforce him. De la Noue was holding out his snuff-box to De Catinat when a shrill scream from behind them made them both look round. Onega the Indian wife was wringing her hands over the body of her son. A glance showed that the bullet had pierced his heart and that he was dead.

For an instant the old nobleman's thin face grew a shade paler, and the hand which held out the little gold box shook like a branch in the wind. Then he thrust it into his pocket again and mastered the spasm which had convulsed his features.

"The De la Noues always die upon the field of honour," he remarked. "I think that we should have some more men in the angle by the gun."

And now it became clear why it was that the Iroquois had chosen the eastern face for their main attack. It was there that the clump of cover lay midway between the edge of the forest and the stockade. A storming party could creep as far as that and gather there for the final rush. First one crouching warrior, and then a second, and then a third darted across the little belt of open space, and threw themselves down among the bushes. The fourth was hit and lay with his back broken a few paces out from the edge of the wood, but a stream of warriors continued to venture the passage, until thirty-six had got across and the little patch of underwood was full of lurking savages. Amos Green's time had come.

From where he lay he could see the white patch where he had cut the bark from the birch sapling, and he knew that immediately underneath it lay the powder bag. He sighted the mark, and then slowly lowered his barrel until he had got to the base of the little

tree as nearly as he could guess it among the tangle of bushes. The first shot produced no result, however, and the second was aimed a foot lower. The bullet penetrated the bag and there was an explosion which shook the manor house, and swayed the whole line of stout stockades as though they were corn-stalks in a breeze. Up to the highest summits of the trees went the huge column of blue smoke, and after the first roar there was a deathly silence which was broken by the patter and thud of falling bodies. Then came a wild cheer from the defenders, and a furious answering whoop from the Indians, while the fire from the woods burst out with greater fury than ever.

But the blow had been a heavy one. Of the thirty-six warriors, all picked for their valour, only four regained the shelter of the woods, and those so torn and shattered that they were spent men. Already the Indians had lost heavily, and this fresh disaster made them reconsider their plan of attack, for the

Iroquois were as wary as they were brave, and he was esteemed the best war-chief who was most chary of the lives of his followers. Their fire gradually slackened, and at last, save for a dropping shot here and there, it died away altogether.

"Is it possible that they are going to abandon the attack!" cried De Catinat joyously. "Amos, I believe that you have saved us."

But the wily Du Lhut shook his head. "A wolf would as soon leave a half-gnawed bone as an Iroquois such a prize as this."

"But they have lost heavily."

"Aye, but not so heavily as ourselves in proportion to our numbers. They have fifty out of a thousand, and we twenty out of three-score. No, no, they are holding a council, and we shall soon hear from them again. But it may be some hours first, and if you will take my advice you will have an hour's sleep, for you are not, as I can see by your eyes, as used to doing without it as I am, and

there may be little rest for any of us this night."

De Catinat was indeed weary to the last pitch of human endurance. Amos Green and the seaman had already wrapt themselves in their blankets and sunk to sleep under the shelter of the stockade. The soldier rushed upstairs to say a few words of comfort to the trembling Adèle, and then throwing himself down upon a couch he slept the dreamless sleep of an exhausted man. When at last he was roused by a fresh sputter of musketry fire from the woods the sun was already low in the heavens and the mellow light of evening tinged the bare walls of the room. He sprang from his couch, seized his musket, and rushed downstairs. The defenders were gathered at their loop-holes once more, while Du Lhut, the seigneur, and Amos Green were whispering eagerly together. He noticed as he passed that Onega still sat crooning by the body of her son without having changed her position since morning.

"What is it, then? Are they coming on?" he asked.

"They are up to some deviltry," said Du Lhut, peering out at the corner of the embrasure. "They are gathering thickly at the east fringe, and yet the firing comes from the south. It is not the Indian way to attack across the open, and yet if they think help is coming from the fort they might venture it."

"The wood in front of us is alive with them," said Amos. "They are as busy as beavers among the underwood."

"Perhaps they are going to attack from this side, and cover the attack by a fire from the flank."

"That is what I think," cried the seigneur. "Bring the spare guns up here and all the men except five for each side."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a shrill yell burst from the wood, and in an instant a cloud of warriors burst out and charged across the open, howling, spring-

ing, and waving their guns or tomahawks in the air. With their painted faces, smeared and striped with every vivid colour, their streaming scalp-locks, their waving arms, their open mouths, and their writhings and contortions, no more fiendish crew ever burst into a sleeper's nightmare. Some of those in front bore canoes between them and as they reached the stockade they planted them against it and swarmed up them as if they had been scaling ladders. Others fired through the embrasures and loop-holes, the muzzles of their muskets touching those of the defenders while others again sprang unaided on to the tops of the palisades and jumped fearlessly down upon the inner side. The Canadians however, made such a resistance as might be expected from men who knew that no mercy awaited them. They fired whilst they had time to load, and then clubbing their muskets they smashed furiously at every red head which showed above the rails. The din within the stockade was in-

fernal, the shouts and cries of the French, the whooping of the savages, and the terrified screaming of the frightened women blending into one dreadful uproar, above which could be heard the high shrill voice of the old seigneur imploring his *censitaires* to stand fast. With his rapier in his hand, his hat lost, his wig awry, and his dignity all thrown to the winds the old nobleman showed them that day how a soldier of Rocroy could carry himself, and with Du Lhut, Amos, De Catinat and Ephraim Savage, was ever in the forefront of the defence. So desperately did they fight, the sword and musket butt outreaching the tomahawk, that though at one time fifty Iroquois were over the palisades they had slain or driven back nearly all of them when a fresh wave burst suddenly over the south face which had been stripped of its defenders. Du Lhut saw in an instant that the enclosure was lost and that only one thing could save the house.

"Hold them for an instant," he screamed,

and rushing at the brass gun he struck his flint and steel and fired it straight into the thick of the savages. Then as they recoiled for an instant he stuck a nail into the touch-hole and drove it home with a blow from the butt of his gun. Darting across the yard he spiked the gun at the other corner, and was back at the door as the remnants of the garrison were hurled towards it by the rush of the assailants. The Canadians darted in, and swung the ponderous mass of wood into position, breaking the leg of the foremost warrior who had striven to follow them. Then for an instant they had time for breathing and for council.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE COMING OF THE FRIAR.

But their case was a very evil one. Had the guns been lost so that they might be turned upon the door, all further resistance would have been vain, but Du Lhut's presence of mind had saved them from that danger. The two guns upon the river face, and the canoes were safe, for they were commanded by the windows of the house. But their numbers were terribly reduced and those who were left were weary and wounded and spent. Nineteen had gained the house, but one had been shot through the body and lay groaning in the hall, while a second had his shoulder cleft by a tomahawk and could no longer raise his musket. Du Lhut, De la Noue and De Catinat were uninjured, but Ephraim Savage had a bullet hole in his forearm, and Amos was

bleeding from a cut upon the face. Of the others hardly one was without injury, and yet they had no time to think of their hurts for the danger still pressed and they were lost unless they acted. A few shots from the barricaded windows sufficed to clear the enclosure, for it was all exposed to their aim, but on the other hand they had the shelter of the stockade now, and from the further side of it they kept up a fierce fire upon the windows. Half a dozen of the *censitaires* returned the fusillade, while the leaders consulted as to what had best be done.

"We have twenty-five women and fourteen children," said the seigneur. "I am sure that you will agree with me, gentlemen, that our first duty is towards them. Some of you, like myself, have lost sons or brothers this day. Let us at least save our wives and sisters."

"No Iroquois canoes have passed up the river," said one of the Canadians. "If the women start in the darkness they can get away to the fort."

"By Saint Anne of Beaupré," exclaimed Du Lhut, "I think it would be well if you could get your men out of this also, for I cannot see how it is to be held until morning."

A murmur of assent broke from the other Canadians but the old nobleman shook his bewigged head with decision.

"Tut! Tut! what nonsense is this!" he cried. "Are we to abandon the manor house of Sainte Marie to the first gang of savages who choose to make an attack upon it. No, no, gentlemen, there are still nearly a score of us, and when the garrison learn that we are so pressed, which will be by to-morrow morning at the latest, they will certainly send us relief."

Du Lhut shook his head moodily.

"If you stand by the fort I will not desert you," said he, "and yet it is a pity to sacrifice brave men for nothing."

"The canoes will hardly hold the women and children as it is," cried Theuriet. "There are but two large and four small. There is not space for a single man."

"Then that decides it," said De Catinat. "But who are to row the women?"

"It is but a few leagues with the current in their favour, and there are none of our women who do not know how to handle a paddle."

The Iroquois were very quiet now, and an occasional dropping shot from the trees or the stockade was the only sign of their presence. Their losses had been heavy, and they were either engaged in collecting their dead, or in holding a council as to their next move. The twilight was gathering in, and the sun had already sunk beneath the tree tops. Leaving a watchman at each window the leaders went round to the back of the house where the canoes were lying upon the bank. There were no signs of the enemy upon the river to the north of them.

"We are in luck," said Amos. "The clouds are gathering and there will be little light."

"It is luck indeed, since the moon is only three days past the full," answered Du Lhut.

"I wonder that the Iroquois have not cut us off upon the water, but it is likely that their canoes have gone south to bring up another war party. They may be back soon, and we had best not lose a moment."

"In an hour it might be dark enough to start."

"I think that there is rain in those clouds, and that will make it darker still."

The women and children were assembled and their places in each boat were assigned to them. The wives of the *censitaires*, rough hardy women whose lives had been spent under the shadow of a constant danger, were for the most part quiet and collected, though a few of the younger ones whimpered a little. A woman is always braver when she has a child to draw her thoughts from herself, and each married woman had one now allotted to her as her own special charge until they should reach the fort. To Onega, the Indian wife of the seigneur, who was as wary and as experienced as a war sachem of her people, the command of the women was entrusted.

"It is not very far, Adèle" said De Catinat, as his wife clung to his arm. "You remember how we heard the Angelus bells as we journeyed through the woods. That was Fort St. Louis, and it is but a league or two."

"But I do not wish to leave you, Amory. We have been together in all our troubles. Oh, Amory, why should we be divided now?"

"My dear love, you will tell them at the fort how things are with us, and they will bring us help."

"Let the others do that, and I will stay. I will not be useless, Amory. Onega has taught me to load a gun. I will not be afraid, indeed I will not, if you will only let me stay."

"You must not ask it, Adèle. It is impossible, child. I could not let you stay."

"But I feel so sure that it would be best."

The coarser reason of man has not yet learned to value those subtle instincts which guide a woman. De Catinat argued and exhorted until he had silenced if he had not convinced her.

"It is for my sake, dear. You do not know what a load it will be from my heart when I know that you are safe. And you need not be afraid for me. We can easily hold the place until morning. Then the people from the fort will come, for I hear that they have plenty of canoes, and we shall all meet again."

Adèle was silent, but her hands tightened upon his arm. Her husband was still endeavouring to reassure her when a groan burst from the watcher in the window which overlooked the stream.

"There is a canoe on the river to the north of us," he cried.

The besieged looked at each other in dismay. The Iroquois had then cut off their retreat after all.

"How many warriors are in it?" asked the seigneur.

"I cannot see. The light is not very good, and it is in the shadow of the bank."

"Which way is it coming?"

"It is coming this way. Ah, it shoots out into the open now, and I can see it. May the good Lord be praised! A dozen candles shall burn in Quebec Cathedral if I live till next summer!"

"What is it then?" cried De la Noue impatiently.

"It is not an Iroquois canoe. There is but one man in it. He is a Canadian."

"A Canadian!" cried Du Lhut, springing up to the window. "Who but a madman would venture into such a hornet's nest alone. Ah, yes, I can see him now. He keeps well out from the bank to avoid their fire. Now he is in mid-stream and he turns towards us. By my faith, it is not the first time that the good father has handled a paddle."

"It is a Jesuit!" said one, craning his neck. "They are ever where there is most danger."

"No, I can see his capote," cried another. "It is a Franciscan friar!"

An instant later there was the sound of a canoe grounding upon the pebbles, the door

was unbarred, and a man strode in, attired in the long brown gown of the Franciscans. He cast a rapid glance around, and then, stepping up to De Catinat, laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"So, you have not escaped me!" said he. "We have caught the evil seed before it has had time to root."

"What do you mean, father?" asked the seigneur. "You have made some mistake. This is my good friend Amory de Catinat, of a noble French family."

"This is Amory de Catinat, the heretic and Huguenot," cried the monk. "I have followed him up the St. Lawrence, and I have followed him up the Richelieu, and I would have followed him to the world's end if I could but bring him back with me."

"Tut, father, your zeal carries you too far," said the seigneur. "Whither would you take my friend, then?"

"He shall go back to France with his wife. There is no place in Canada for heretics."

Du Lhut burst out laughing. "By Saint Anne, father," said he, "if you could take us all back to France at present we should be very much your debtors."

"And you will remember," said De la Noue sternly, "that you are under my roof and that you are speaking of my guest."

But the friar was not to be abashed by the frown of the old nobleman.

"Look at this," said he, whipping a paper out of his bosom. "It is signed by the governor, and calls upon you under pain of the king's displeasure to return this man to Quebec. Ah, monsieur, when you left me upon the island that morning you little thought that I would return to Quebec for this, and then hunt you down so many hundreds of miles of river. But I have you now, and I shall never leave you until I see you on board of the ship which will carry you and your wife back to France."

For all the bitter vindictiveness which gleamed in the monk's eyes, De Catinat

could not but admire the energy and tenacity of the man.

"It seems to me, father, that you would have shone more as a soldier than as a follower of Christ," said he; "but, since you have followed us here, and since there is no getting away, we may settle this question at some later time."

But the two Americans were less inclined to take so peaceful a view. Ephraim Savage's beard bristled with anger, and he whispered something into Amos Green's ear.

"The captain and I could easily get rid of him," said the young woodsman, drawing De Catinat aside. "If he *will* cross our path he must pay for it."

"No, no, not for the world, Amos! Let him alone. He does what he thinks to be his duty, though his faith is stronger than his charity, I think. But here comes the rain, and surely it is dark enough now for the boats."

A great brown cloud had overspread the

heavens, and the night had fallen so rapidly that they could hardly see the gleam of the river in front of them. The savages in the woods and behind the captured stockade were quiet, save for an occasional shot, but the yells and whoops from the cottages of the *censitaires* showed that they were being plundered by their captors. Suddenly a dull red glow began to show above one of the roofs.

"They have set it on fire," cried Du Lhut. "The canoes must go at once for the river will soon be as light as day. In! In! There is not an instant to lose!"

There was no time for leave-taking. One impassioned kiss and Adèle was torn away and thrust into the smallest canoe which she shared with Onega, two children and an unmarried girl. The others rushed into their places, and in a few moments they had pushed off and had vanished into the drift and the darkness. The great cloud had broken and the rain pattered heavily upon

the roof, and splashed upon their faces as they strained their eyes after the vanishing boats.

"Thank God for this storm!" murmured Du Lhut.

"It will prevent the cottages from blazing up too quickly."

But he had forgotten that though the roofs might be wet the interior was as dry as tinder. He had hardly spoken before a great yellow tongue of flame licked out of one of the windows, and again and again until suddenly half of the roof fell in, and the cottage was blazing like a pitch-bucket. The flames hissed and sputtered in the pouring rain but, fed from below, they grew still higher and fiercer, flashing redly upon the great trees, and turning their trunks to burnished brass. Their light made the enclosure and the manor house as clear as day, and exposed the whole long stretch of the river. A fearful yell from the woods announced that the savages had seen the canoes, which were plainly visible

from the windows not more than a quarter of a mile away.

"They are rushing through the woods. They are making for the water's edge," cried De Catinat.

"They have some canoes down there," said Du Lhut.

"But they must pass us!" cried the seigneur of Sainte Marie. "Get down to the cannon and see if you cannot stop them."

They had hardly reached the guns when two large canoes filled with warriors shot out from among the reeds below the fort, and steering out into midstream began to paddle furiously after the fugitives.

"Jean, you are our best shot," cried De la Noue. "Lay for her as she passes the great pine tree. Lambert, do you take the other gun. The lives of all whom you love may hang upon the shot!"

The two wrinkled old artillerymen glanced along their guns and waited for the canoes to come abreast of them. The fire still blazed

higher and higher, and the broad river lay like a sheet of dull metal with the two dark lines, which marked the canoes, sweeping swiftly down the centre. One was fifty yards in front of the other, but in each the Indians were bending to their paddles and pulling frantically, while their comrades from the wooded shores whooped them on to fresh exertions. The fugitives had already disappeared round the bend of the river.

As the first canoe came abreast of the lower of the two guns, the Canadian made the sign of the cross over the touch-hole and fired. A cheer and then a groan went up from the eager watchers. The discharge had struck the surface close to the mark, and dashed such a shower of water over it that for an instant it looked as if it had been sunk. The next moment, however, the splash subsided and the canoe shot away uninjured save that one of the rowers had dropped his paddle while his head fell forward upon the back of the man in front of him. The second gunner

sighted the same canoe as it came abreast of him, but at the very instant when he stretched out his match to fire a bullet came humming from the stockade and he fell forward dead without a groan.

"This is work that I know something of, lad," said old Ephraim, springing suddenly forward. "But when I fire a gun I like to train it myself. Give me a help with the handspike and get her straight for the island. So! A little lower for an even keel! Now we have them!" He clapped down his match and fired.

It was a beautiful shot. The whole charge took the canoe about six feet behind the bow, and doubled her up like an eggshell. Before the smoke had cleared she had foundered, and the second canoe had paused to pick up some of the wounded men. The others, as much at home in the water as in the woods, were already striking out for the shore.

"Quick! quick!" cried the seigneur. "Load the gun! We may get the second one yet!"

But it was not to be. Long before they could get it ready the Iroquois had picked up their wounded warriors, and were pulling madly up stream once more. As they shot away the fire died suddenly down in the burning cottages and the rain and the darkness closed in upon them.

"My God!" cried De Catinat furiously, "they will be taken. Let us abandon this place, take a boat and follow them. Come! Come! Not an instant is to be lost!"

"Monsieur, you go too far in your very natural anxiety," said the seigneur coldly. "I am not inclined to leave my post so easily!"

"Ah, what is it? Only wood and stone which can be built again. But to think of the women in the hands of these devils. Oh, I am going mad! Come! Come! For Christ's sake come!" His face was deadly pale, and he raved with his clenched hands in the air.

"I do not think that they will be caught," said Du Lhut, laying his hand soothingly upon his shoulder. "Do not fear. They had a

long start and the women here can paddle as well as the men. Again, the Iroquois canoe was overloaded at the start, and has the wounded men aboard as well now. Besides, these oak canoes of the Mohawks are not as swift as the Algonquin birch barks which we use. In any case it is impossible to follow for we have no boat."

"There is one lying there."

"Ah, it will but hold a single man. It is that in which the friar came."

"Then I am going in that! My place is with Adèle!" He flung open the door, rushed out, and was about to push off the frail skiff, when someone sprang past him, and with a blow from a hatchet stove in the side of the boat.

"It is my boat," said the friar, throwing down the axe and folding his arms. "I can do what I like with it."

"You fiend! You have ruined us!"

"I have found you, and you shall not escape me again."

The hot blood flushed to the soldier's head, and picking up the axe, he took a quick step forward. The light from the open door shone upon the grave harsh face of the friar, but not a muscle twitched nor a feature changed as he saw the axe whirl up in the hands of a furious man. He only signed himself with the cross, and muttered a Latin prayer under his breath. It was that composure which saved his life. De Catinat hurled down the axe again with a bitter curse, and was turning away from the shattered boat when in an instant, without a warning, the great door of the manor-house crashed inwards, and a flood of whooping savages burst into the house.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE DINING HALL OF SAINTE MARIE.

What had occurred is easily explained. The watchers in the windows at the front found that it was more than flesh and blood could endure to remain waiting at their posts while the fates of their wives and children were being decided at the back. All was quiet at the stockade and the Indians appeared to be as absorbed as the Canadians in what was passing upon the river. One by one, therefore, the men on guard had crept away and had assembled at the back to cheer the seaman's shot and to groan as the remaining canoe sped like a bloodhound down the river in the wake of the fugitives. But the savages had one at their head who was as full of wiles and resource as Du Lhut himself. The Flemish Bastard had watched the house from behind

the stockade as a dog watches a rat hole, and he had instantly discovered that the defenders had left their post. With a score of other warriors he raised a great log from the edge of the forest, and crossing the open space unchallenged, he and his men rushed it against the door with such violence as to crack the bar across and tear the wood from the hinges. The first intimation which the survivors had of the attack was the crash of the door, and the screams of two of the negligent watchmen who had been seized and scalped in the hall. The whole basement floor was in the hands of the Indians, and De Catinat and his enemy the friar were cut off from the foot of the stairs.

Fortunately, however, the manor houses of Canada were built with the one idea of defence against Indians, and even now there were hopes for the defenders. A wooden ladder which could be drawn up in case of need hung down from the upper windows to the ground upon the riverside. De Catinat

rushed round to this, followed by the friar. He felt about for the ladder in the darkness. It was gone.

Then indeed his heart sank in despair. Where could he fly to? The boat was destroyed. The stockades lay between him and the forest, and they were in the hands of the Iroquois. Their yells were ringing in his ears. They had not seen him yet, but in a few minutes they must come upon him. Suddenly he heard a voice from somewhere in the darkness above him.

"Give me your gun, lad," it said. "I see the loom of some of the heathen down by the wall."

"It is I. It is I, Amos," cried De Catinat. "Down with the ladder or I am a dead man."

"Have a care. It may be a ruse," said the voice of Du Lhut.

"No, no, I'll answer for it," cried Amos, and an instant later down came the ladder. De Catinat and the friar rushed up it and they hardly had their feet upon the rungs

when a swarm of warriors burst out from the door and poured along the river bank. Two muskets flashed from above, something plopped like a salmon in the water, and next instant the two were among their comrades and the ladder had been drawn up once more.

But it was a very small band who now held the last point to which they could retreat. Only nine of them remained, the seigneur, Du Lhut, the two Americans, the friar, De Catinat, Theuriet the major-domo, and two of the *censitaires*. Wounded, parched, and powder-blackened, they were still filled with the mad courage of desperate men who knew that death could come in no more terrible form than through surrender. The stone staircase ran straight up from the kitchen to the main-hall, and the door which had been barricaded across the lower part by two mattresses, commanded the whole flight. Hoarse whisperings and the click of the cocking of guns from below told that the Iroquois were mustering for a rush.

"Put the lantern by the door," said Du Lhut, "so that it may throw the light upon the stair. There is only room for three to fire, but you can all load and pass the guns. Monsieur Green, will you kneel with me, and you Jean Duval. If one of us is hit let another take his place at once. Now be ready, for they are coming!"

As he spoke there was a shrill whistle from below, and in an instant the stair was filled with rushing red figures and waving weapons. Bang! Bang! Bang! went the three guns, and then again and again Bang! Bang Bang! The smoke was so thick in the low-roofed room that they could hardly see to pass the muskets to the eager hands which grasped for them. But no Iroquois had reached the barricade, and there was no patter of their feet now upon the stair. Nothing but an angry snarling and an occasional groan from below. The marksmen were uninjured, but they ceased to fire and waited for the smoke to clear.

And when it cleared they saw how deadly their aim had been at those close quarters. Only nine shots had been fired, and seven Indians were littered up and down on the straight stone stair. Five of them lay motionless, but two tried to crawl slowly back to their friends. Du Lhut and the *censitaire* raised their muskets, and the two crippled men lay still.

"By Saint Anne!" said the old pioneer, as he rammed home another bullet. "If they have our scalps we have sold them at a great price. A hundred squaws will be howling in their villages when they hear of this day's work."

"Aye, they will not forget their welcome at Sainte Marie," said the old nobleman. "I must again express my deep regret, my dear De Catinat, that you and your wife should have been put to such inconvenience when you have been good enough to visit me. I trust that she and the others are safe at the fort by this time."

"May God grant that they are! Oh, I shall never have an easy moment until I see her once more."

"If they are safe we may expect help in the morning, if we can hold out so long. Chambly, the commandant, is not a man to leave a comrade at a pinch."

The cards were still laid out at one end of the table, with the tricks over-lapping each other as they had left them on the previous morning. But there was something else there of more interest to them, for the breakfast had not been cleared away, and they had been fighting all day with hardly bite or sup. Even when face to face with death nature still cries out for her dues, and the hungry men turned savagely upon the loaf, the ham, and the cold wild duck. A little cluster of wine bottles stood upon the buffet, and these had their necks knocked off, and were emptied down parched throats. Three men still took their turn, however, to hold the barricade, for they were not to be caught napping again. The

yells and screeches of the savages came up to them as though all the wolves of the forest were cooped up in the basement, but the stair was deserted save for the seven motionless figures.

"They will not try to rush us again," said Du Lhut with confidence. "We have taught them too severe a lesson."

"They will set fire to the house."

"It will puzzle them to do that," said the major-domo. "It is solid stone, walls and stair, save only for a few beams of wood, very different from those other cottages."

"Hush!" cried Amos Green, and raised his hand. The yells had died away and they heard the heavy thud of a mallet beating upon wood.

"What can it be!"

"Some fresh devilry, no doubt."

"I regret to say, messieurs," observed the seigneur, with no abatement of his courtly manner, "that it is my belief that they have learned a lesson from our young friend here,

and that they are knocking out the heads of the powder-barrels in the storeroom."

But Du Lhut shook his head at the suggestion. "It is not in a redskin to waste powder," said he. "It is a deal too precious for them to do that. Ah, listen to that!"

The yellings and screechings had begun again, but there was a wilder, madder ring in their shrillness, and they were mingled with snatches of song and bursts of laughter.

"Ha! It is the brandy casks which they have opened," cried Du Lhut. "They were bad before, but they will be fiends out of hell now."

As he spoke there came another burst of whoops and high above them a voice calling for mercy. With horror in their eyes the survivors glanced from one to the other. A heavy smell of burning flesh rose from below, and still that dreadful voice shrieking and pleading. Then slowly it quavered away and was silent forever.

"Who was it?" whispered De Catinat, his blood running cold in his veins.

"It was Jean Corbeil, I think."

"May God rest his soul! His troubles are over. Would that we were as peaceful as he! Ah, shoot him! Shoot!"

A man had suddenly sprung out at the foot of the stair and had swung his arm as though throwing something. It was the Flemish Bastard. Amos Green's musket flashed, but the savage had sprung back again as rapidly as he appeared. Something splashed down amongst them and rolled across the floor in the lamp-light.

"Down! Down! It is a bomb!" cried De Catinat.

But it lay at Du Lhut's feet, and he had seen it clearly. He took a cloth from the table and dropped it over it.

"It is not a bomb," said he quietly, "and it *was* Jean Corbeil who died."

For four hours sounds of riot, of dancing and of revelling rose up from the storehouse, and the smell of the open brandy casks filled the whole air. More than once the savages

quarrelled and fought among themselves, and it seemed as if they had forgotten their enemies above, but the besieged soon found that if they attempted to presume upon this they were as closely watched as ever. The major-domo, Theuriet, passing between a loop-hole and a light was killed instantly by a bullet from the stockade, and both Amos and the old seigneur had narrow escapes until they blocked all the windows save that which overlooked the river. There was no danger from this one, and, as day was already breaking once more, one or other of the party was for ever straining their eyes down the stream in search of the expected succour.

Slowly the light crept up the eastern sky, a little line of pearl, then a band of pink, broadening, stretching, spreading, until it shot its warm colour across the heavens, tinging the edges of the drifting clouds. Over the woodlands lay a thin gray vapour, the tops of the high oaks jutting out like dim islands from the sea of haze. Gradually as the light

increased the mist shredded off into little ragged whisps which thinned and drifted away, until at last, as the sun pushed its glowing edge over the eastern forests, it gleamed upon the reds and oranges and purples of the fading leaves, and upon the broad blue river which curled away to the northward. De Catinat, as he stood at the window looking out was breathing in the healthy resinous scent of the trees, mingled with the damp heavy odour of the wet earth, when suddenly his eyes fell upon a dark spot upon the river to the north of them.

"There is a canoe coming down!" he cried.

In an instant they had all rushed to the opening, but Du Lhut sprang after them, and pulled them angrily towards the door.

"Do you wish to die before your time!" he cried.

"Aye, aye!" said Captain Ephraim, who understood the gesture if not the words. "We must leave a watch on deck. Amos,

lad, lie here with me and be ready if they show."

The two Americans and the old pioneer held the barricade while the eyes of all the others were turned upon the approaching boat. A groan broke suddenly from the only surviving *censitaire*.

"It is an Iroquois canoe!" he cried.

"Impossible!"

"Alas, your excellency, it is so, and it is the same one which passed us last night."

"Ah, then the women have escaped them."

"I trust so. But alas, seigneur, I fear that there are more in the canoe now than when they passed us."

The little group of survivors waited in breathless anxiety while the canoe sped swiftly up the river, with a line of foam on either side of her, and a long forked swirl in the waters behind. They could see that she appeared to be very crowded, but they remembered that the wounded of the other boat were aboard of her. On she shot and on until as she came

abreast of the fort she swung round, and the rowers raised their paddles and burst into a shrill yell of derision. The stern of the canoe was turned towards them now, and they saw that two women were seated in it. Even at that distance there was no mistaking the sweet pale face, or the dark queenly one beside it. The one was Onega and the other was Adèle.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE TWO SWIMMERS.

Charles de la Noue, seigneur de Sainte Marie, was a hard and self-contained man, but a groan and a bitter curse burst from him when he saw his Indian wife in the hands of her kinsmen from whom she could hope for little mercy. Yet even now his old-fashioned courtesy to his guest had made him turn to De Catinat with some words of sympathy when there was a clatter of wood, something darkened the light of the window, and the young soldier was gone. Without a word he had lowered the ladder and was clambering down it with frantic haste. Then as his feet touched the ground he signalled to his comrades to draw it up again and dashing into the river he swam towards the canoe. Without arms and without a plan he had but the one thought

that his place was by the side of his wife in this, the hour of her danger. Fate should bring him what it brought her, and he swore to himself as he clove a way with his strong arms, that whether it were life or death they should still share it together.

But there was another whose view of duty led him from safety into the face of danger. All night the Franciscan had watched De Catinat as a miser watches his treasure, filled with the thought that this heretic was the one little seed which might spread and spread until it choked the chosen vineyard of the Church. Now when he saw him rush so suddenly down the ladder, every fear was banished from his mind save the overpowering one that he was about to lose his precious charge. He, too, clambered down at the very heels of his prisoner, and rushed into the stream not ten paces behind him.

And so the watchers at the window saw the strangest of sights. There, in midstream, lay the canoe, with a ring of dark warriors

clustering in the stern, and the two women crouching in the midst of them. Swimming madly towards them was De Catinat, rising to the shoulders with the strength of every stroke, and behind him again was the tonsured head of the friar, with his brown capote and long trailing gown floating upon the surface of the water behind him. But in his zeal he had thought too little of his own powers. He was a good swimmer but he was weighted and hampered by his unwieldy clothes. Slower and slower grew his stroke, lower and lower his head, until at last with a great shriek of *In manus tuas, Domine!* he threw up his hands, and vanished in the swirl of the river. A minute later the watchers, hoarse with screaming to him to return, saw De Catinat pulled aboard the Iroquis canoe, which was instantly turned, and continued its course up the river.

"My God!" cried Amos hoarsely. "They have taken him. He is lost!"

"I have seen some strange things in these

forty years, but never the like of that!" said Du Lhut.

The seigneur took a little pinch of snuff from his gold box, and flicked the wandering grains from his shirt-front with his dainty lace handkerchief.

"Monsieur de Catinat has acted like a gentleman of France," said he. "If I could swim now as I did thirty years ago, I should be by his side."

Du Lhut glanced round him and shook his head. "We are only six now," said he. "I fear that they are up to some devilry because they are so very still."

"They are leaving the house!" cried the *censitaire*, who was peeping through one of the side windows. "What can it mean! Holy Virgin, is it possible that we are saved? See how they throng through the trees. They are making for the canoe. Now they are waving their arms and pointing."

"There is the gray hat of that mongrel devil amongst them," said the captain. "I

would try a shot upon him were it not a waste of powder and lead."

"I have hit the mark at as long a range," said Amos, pushing his long brown gun through a chink in the barricade which they had thrown across the lower half of the window. "I would give my next year's trade to bring him down."

"It is forty paces further than my musket would carry," remarked Du Lhut, "but I have seen the English shoot a great way with those long guns."

Amos took a steady aim, resting his gun upon the window sill, and fired. A shout of delight burst from the little knot of survivors. The Flemish Bastard had fallen. But he was on his feet again in an instant and shook his hand defiantly at the window.

"Curse it!" cried Amos bitterly, in English. "I have hit him with a spent ball. As well strike him with a pebble."

"Nay, curse not, Amos, lad, but try him

again with another pinch of powder if your gun will stand it."

The woodsman thrust in a full charge, and chose a well-rounded bullet from his bag, but when he looked again both the Bastard and his warriors had disappeared. On the river the single Iroquois canoe which held the captives was speeding south as swiftly as twenty paddles could drive it, but save this one dark streak upon the blue stream, not a sign was to be seen of their enemies. They had vanished as if they had been an evil dream. There was the bullet-spotted stockade, the litter of dead bodies inside it, the burned and roofless cottages, but the silent woods lay gleaming in the morning sunshine as quiet and peaceful as if no hell-burst of fiends had ever broken out from them.

"By my faith, I believe that they have gone!" cried the seigneur.

"Take care that it is not a ruse," said Du Lhut. "Why should they fly before six men when they have conquered sixty!"

But the *censitaire* had looked out of the other window, and in an instant he was down upon his knees with his hands in the air, and his powder-blackened face turned upwards, pattering out prayers and thanksgivings. His five comrades rushed across the room and burst into a shriek of joy. The upper reach of the river was covered with a flotilla of canoes from which the sun struck quick flashes as it shone upon the musket barrels and trappings of the crews. Already they could see the white coats of the regulars, the brown tunics of the *coureurs-de-bois*, and the gaudy colours of the Hurons and Algonquins. On they swept, dotting the whole breadth of the river, and growing larger every instant, while far away on the southern bend, the Iroquois canoe was a mere moving dot which had shot away to the further side and lost itself presently under the shadow of the trees. Another minute and the survivors were out upon the bank, waving their caps in the air while the prows of the first of their rescuers

were already grating upon the pebbles. In the stern of the very foremost canoe sat a wizened little man with a large brown wig, and a gilt-headed rapier laid across his knees. He sprang out as the keel touched bottom, splashing through the shallow water with his high leather boots, and rushing up to the seigneur, he flung himself into his arms.

"My dear Charles," he cried, "you have held your house like a hero. What, only six of you! Tut, tut, this has been a bloody business!"

"I knew that you would not desert a comrade, Chambly. We have saved the house but our losses have been terrible. My son is dead. My wife is in that Iroquois canoe in front of you."

The commandant of Fort St. Louis pressed his friend's hand in silent sympathy.

"The others arrived all safe," he said at last. "Only that one was taken, on account of the breaking of a paddle. Three were drowned and two captured. There was a

French lady in it, I understand, as well as madame."

"Yes, and they have taken her husband as well."

"Ah, poor souls! Well, if you are strong enough to join us, you and your friends, we shall follow after them without the loss of an instant. Ten of my men will remain to guard the house, and you can have their canoe. Jump in then, and forward, for life and death may hang upon our speed!"

CHAPTER XL.

THE END.

The Iroquois had not treated De Catinat harshly when they dragged him from the water into their canoe. So incomprehensible was it to them why any man should voluntarily leave a place of safety in order to put himself in their power that they could only set it down to madness, a malady which inspires awe and respect among the Indians. They did not even tie his wrists, for why should he attempt to escape when he had come of his own free will. Two warriors passed their hands over him, to be sure that he was unarmed and he was then thrust down between the two women while the canoe darted in towards the bank to tell the others that the St. Louis garrison was coming up the stream. Then it steered out again, and made its way swiftly

up the centre of the river. Adèle was deadly pale and her hand, as her husband laid his upon it, was as cold as marble.

"My darling," he whispered, "tell me that all is well with you—that you are unhurt!"

"Oh, Amory, why did you come? Why did you come, Amory? Oh, I think I could have borne anything, but if they hurt you I could not bear that."

"How could I stay behind when I knew that you were in their hands. I should have gone mad!"

"Ah, it was my one consolation to think that you were safe."

"No, no, we have gone through so much together that we cannot part now. What is death, Adèle? Why should we be afraid of it?"

"I am not afraid of it."

"And I am not afraid of it. Things will come about as God wills it, and what he wills must in the end be the best. If we live, then we have this memory in common. If we die, then we go hand-in-hand into

another life. Courage, my own, all will be well with us."

"Tell me, monsieur," said Onega, "is my lord still living?"

"Yes, he is alive and well."

"It is good. He is a great chief, and I have never been sorry, not even now, that I have wedded with one who was not of my own people. But ah, my son! Who shall give my son back to me? He was like the young sapling, so straight and so strong! Who could run with him, or leap with him, or swim with him? Ere that sun shines again we shall all be dead, and my heart is glad, for I shall see my boy once more."

The Iroquois paddles had bent to their work until a good ten miles lay between them and Sainte Marie. Then they ran the canoe into a little creek upon their own side of the river, and sprang out of her, dragging the prisoners after them. The canoe was carried on the shoulders of eight men some distance into the wood where they concealed it between

two fallen trees, heaping a litter of branches over it to screen it from view. Then after a short council, they started through the forest walking in single file, with their three prisoners in the middle. There were fifteen warriors in all, eight in front and seven behind, all armed with muskets and as swift-footed as deer, so that escape was out of the question. They could but follow on, and wait in patience for whatever might befall them.

All day they pursued their dreary march, picking their way through vast morasses, skirting the borders of blue woodland lakes where the gray stork flapped heavily up from the reeds at their approach, or plunging into dark belts of woodland where it is always twilight, and where the falling of the wild chestnuts, and the chatter of the squirrels a hundred feet above their heads were the only sounds which broke the silence. Onega had the endurance of the Indians themselves, but Adèle, in spite of her former journeys, was footsore and weary before evening. It was a

relief to De Catinat, therefore, when the red glow of a great fire beat suddenly through the tree trunks, and they came upon an Indian camp in which was assembled the greater part of the war-party which had been driven from Sainte Marie. Here, too, were a number of the squaws who had come from the Mohawk and Cajuga villages in order to be nearer to the warriors. Wigwams had been erected all round in a circle, and before each of them were the fires with kettles slung upon a tripod of sticks in which the evening meal was being cooked. In the centre of all was a very fierce fire which had been made of brushwood placed in a circle, so as to leave a clear space of twelve feet in the middle. A pole stood up in the centre of this clearing, and something all mottled with red and black was tied up against it. De Catinat stepped swiftly in front of Adèle that she might not see the dreadful thing, but he was too late. She shuddered, and drew a quick breath between her pale lips, but no sound escaped her.

"They have begun already, then," said Onega composedly. "Well, it will be our turn next, and we shall show them that we know how to die."

"They have not ill-used us yet," said De Catinat. "Perhaps they will keep us for ransom or exchange."

The Indian woman shook her head. "Do not deceive yourself by any such hope," said she. "When they are as gentle as they have been with you it is ever a sign that you are reserved for the torture. Your wife will be married to one of their chiefs, but you and I must die, for you are a warrior, and I am too old for a squaw."

Married to an Iroquois! Those dreadful words shot a pang through both their hearts which no thought of death could have done. De Catinat's head dropped forward upon his chest and he staggered and would have fallen had Adèle not caught him by the arm.

"Do not fear, dear Amory," she whispered. "Other things may happen but not that, for

I swear to you that I shall not survive you. No, it may be sin or it may not, but if death will not come to me, I will go to it."

De Catinat looked down at the gentle face which had set now into the hard lines of an immutable resolve. He knew that it would be as she had said, and that, come what might, that last outrage would not befall them. Could he ever have believed that the time would come when it would send a thrill of joy through his heart to know that his wife would die ?

As they entered the Iroquois village the squaws and warriors had rushed towards them, and they passed through a double line of hideous faces which jeered and jibed and howled at them as they passed. Their escort led them through this rabble and conducted them to a hut which stood apart. It was empty, save for some willow fishing nets hanging at the side, and a heap of pumpkins stored in the corner.

"The chiefs will come and will decide upon what is to be done with us," said Onega.

"Here they are coming now, and you will soon see that I am right, for I know the ways of my own people."

An instant later an old war chief, accompanied by two younger braves and by the bearded half-Dutch Iroquois who had led the attack upon the manor house, strolled over and stood in the doorway, looking in at the prisoners and shooting little guttural sentences at each other. The totems of the Hawk, the Wolf, the Bear, and the Snake showed that each represented one of the great families of the Nation. The Bastard was smoking a stone pipe, and yet it was he who talked the most, arguing apparently with one of the younger savages who seemed to come round at last to his opinion. Finally the old chief said a few short stern words, and the matter appeared to be settled.

"And you, you beldame," said the Bastard in French to the Iroquois woman, "you will have a lesson this night which will teach you to side against your own people."

"You half-bred mongrel," replied the fearless old woman, "you should take that hat from your head when you speak to one in whose veins runs the best blood of the Onondagas. You a warrior? you who, with a thousand at your back, could not make your way into a little house with a few poor husbandmen within it! It is no wonder that your father's people have cast you out! Go back and work at the beads or play at the game of plum stones, for some day in the woods you might meet with a man, and so bring disgrace upon the nation which has taken you in!"

The evil face of the Bastard grew livid as he listened to the scornful words which were hissed at him by the captive. He strode across to her and, taking her hand, he thrust her forefinger into the burning bowl of his pipe. She made no effort to remove it, but sat with a perfectly set face for a minute or more, looking out through the open door at the evening sunlight, and

the little groups of chattering Indians. He had watched her keenly in the hope of hearing a cry, or seeing some spasm of agony upon her face, but at last, with a curse, he dashed down her hand and strode from the hut. She thrust her charred finger into her bosom and laughed.

"He is a good-for-naught," she cried. "He does not even know how to torture. Now, I could have got a cry out of him. I am sure of it. But you—monsieur, you are very white!"

"It was the sight of such a hellish deed. Ah, if we were but set face to face, I with my sword, he with what weapon he chose, by God, he should pay for it with his heart's blood."

The Indian woman seemed surprised. "It is strange to me," she said, "that you should think of what befalls me when you are yourselves under the same shadow. But our fate will be as I said."

"Ah!"

"You and I are to die at the stake. She is to be given to the dog who has left us."

"Adèle! Adèle! What shall I do!" He tore his hair in his helplessness and distraction.

"No, no, fear not, Amory, for my heart will not fail me. What is the pang of death if it binds us together?"

"The younger chief pleaded for you, saying that the *Mitche Manitou* had stricken you with madness, as could be seen by your swimming to their canoe, and that a blight would fall upon the nation if you were led to the stake. But this Bastard said that love came often like madness among the pale faces, and that it was that alone which had driven you. Then it was agreed that you should die and that she should go to his wigwam, since he had led the war party. As for me, their hearts were bitter against me, and I also am to die by the pine splinters."

De Catinat breathed a prayer that he might meet his fate like a soldier and a gentleman.

"When is it to be?" he asked.

"Now! At once! They have gone to

make all ready. But you have time yet, for I am to go first."

"Amory, Amory, could we not die together now?" cried Adèle, throwing her arms round her husband. "If it be sin, it is surely a sin which will be forgiven us. Let us go, dear. Let us leave these dreadful people and this cruel world and turn where we shall find peace."

The Indian woman's eyes flashed with satisfaction.

"You have spoken well, White Lily," said she. "Why should you wait until it is their pleasure to pluck you. See, already the glare of their fire beats upon the tree trunks, and you can hear the howlings of those who thirst for your blood. If you die by your own hands, they will be robbed of their spectacle, and their chief will have lost his bride. So you will be the victors in the end, and they the vanquished. You have said rightly, White Lily. There lies the only path for you!"

"But how to take it?"

Onega glanced keenly at the two warriors who stood as sentinels at the door of the hut. They had turned away, absorbed in the horrible preparations which were going on. Then she rummaged deeply within the folds of her loose gown and pulled out a small pistol with two brass barrels and double triggers in the form of winged dragons. It was only a toy to look at, all carved and scrolled and graven with the choicest work of the Paris gunsmith. For its beauty the seigneur had bought it at his last visit to Quebec, and yet it might be useful, too, and it was loaded in both barrels.

"I meant to use it on myself," said she, as she slipped it into the hand of De Catinat. "But now I am minded to show them that I can die as an Onondaga should die, and that I am worthy to have the blood of their chiefs in my veins. Take it, for I swear that I will not use it myself, unless it be to fire both bullets into that Bastard's heart."

A flush of joy shot over De Catinat as his

fingers closed round the pistol. Here was indeed a key to unlock the gates of peace. Adèle laid her cheek against his shoulder and laughed with pleasure.

"You will forgive me, dear," he whispered.

"Forgive you! I bless you, and love you with my whole heart and soul. Clasp me close, darling, and say one prayer before you do it."

They had sunk on their knees together when three warriors entered the hut and said a few abrupt words to their country-woman. She rose with a smile.

"They are waiting for me," said she. "You shall see, White Lily, and you also, monsieur, how well I know what is due to my position. Farewell, and remember Onega!" She smiled again, and walked from the hut amidst the warriors with the quick firm step of a queen who sweeps to a throne.

"Now, Amory!" whispered Adèle, closing her eyes, and nestling still closer to him.

He raised the pistol, and then, with a quick

sudden intaking of the breath, he dropped it and knelt with glaring eyes, looking up at a tree which faced the open door of the hut.

It was a beech tree, exceedingly old and gnarled, with its bark hanging down in strips and its whole trunk spotted with moss and mould. Some ten feet above the ground the main trunk divided into two, and in the fork thus formed a hand had suddenly appeared, a large reddish hand, which shook frantically from side to side in passionate dissuasion. The next instant, as the two captives still stared in amazement, the hand disappeared behind the trunk again and a face appeared in its place, which still shook from side to side as resolutely as its forerunner. It was impossible to mistake that mahogany, wrinkled skin, the huge bristling eyebrows, or the little glistening eyes. It was Captain Ephraim Savage of Boston!

And even as they stared and wondered a sudden shrill whistle burst out from the depths of the forest, and in a moment every

bush and thicket and patch of bushwood were spouting fire and smoke, while the snarl of the musketry ran round the whole glade, and the storm of bullets whizzed and pelted among the yelling savages. The Iroquois' sentinels had been drawn in by their blood-thirsty craving to see the prisoners die, and now the Canadians were upon them, and they were hemmed in by a ring of fire. First one way and then another they rushed, to be met always by the same blast of death, until, finding at last some gap in the attack they streamed through, like sheep through a broken fence, they rushed madly away through the forest with the bullets of their pursuers still singing about their ears, until the whistle sounded again to recall the woodsmen from the chase.

But there was one savage who had found work to do before he fled. The Flemish Bastard had preferred his vengeance to his safety! Rushing at Onega he buried his tomahawk in her brain, and then, yelling

his war-cry, he waved the blood-stained weapon above his head, and flew into the hut where the prisoners still knelt. De Catinat saw him coming, and a mad joy glistened in his eyes. He rose to meet him, and as he rushed in he fired both barrels of his pistol into the Bastard's face. An instant later a swarm of Canadians had rushed over the writhing bodies, the captives felt warm friendly hands which grasped their own, and looking upon the smiling well-known faces of Amos Green, Savage, and Du Lhut, they knew that peace had come to them at last.

And so the refugees came to the end of the toils of their journey, for that winter was spent by them in peace at Fort St. Louis, and in the spring, the Iroquois having carried the war to the Upper St. Lawrence, the travellers were able to descend into the English provinces, and so to make their way down the Hudson to New York where a warm welcome awaited them from the

family of Amos Green. The friendship between the two men was now so cemented together by common memories and common danger that they soon became partners in fur-trading, and the name of the Frenchman came at last to be as familiar in the mountains of Maine, and on the slopes of the Alleghanies as it had once been in the *salons* and corridors of Versailles. In time De Catinat built a house on Staten Island, where many of his fellow-refugees had settled, and much of what he won from his fur-trading was spent in the endeavour to help his struggling Huguenot brothers. Amos Green had married a Dutch maiden of Schenectady, and as Adèle and she became inseparable friends, the marriage served to draw closer the ties of love which held the two families together.

As to Captain Ephraim Savage, he returned safely to his beloved Boston, where he fulfilled his ambition by building himself a fair brick house upon the rising ground in the northern

part of the city, whence he could look down both upon the shipping in the river and the bay. There he lived, much respected by his townsfolk, who made him selectman and alderman, and gave him the command of a goodly ship when Sir William Phips made his attack upon Quebec, and found that the old Lion Frontenac was not to be driven from his lair. So, honoured by all, the old seaman lived to an age which carried him deep into the next century, when he could already see with his dim eyes something of the growing greatness of his country.

The manor house of Sainte Marie was soon restored to its former prosperity, but its seigneur was from the day that he lost his wife and son a changed man. He grew leaner, fiercer, less human, forever heading parties which made their way into the Iroquois woods, and which outrivalled the savages themselves in the terrible nature of their deeds. A day came at last when he sallied out upon one of these expeditions, from which neither he

nor any of his men ever returned. Many a terrible secret is hid by those silent woods, and the fate of Charles de la Noue, seigneur de Sainte Marie, is among them.

THE END.

Note on the Huguenots and their Dispersion.

Towards the latter quarter of the seventeenth century there was hardly an important industry in France which was not controlled by the Huguenots, so that, numerous as they were, their importance was out of all proportions to their numbers. The cloth trade of the north and the south-east, the manufacture of serges and light stuffs in Languedoc, the linen trade of Normandy and Brittany, the silk and velvet industry of Tours and Lyons, the glass of Normandy, the paper of Auvergne and Angoumois, the jewellery of the Isle of France, the tan yards of Touraine, the iron and tin work of the Sedanais—all these were largely owned and managed by Huguenots. The numerous Saint days of the Catholic Calendar handicapped their rivals, and it was computed that the Protestant worked 310 days in the year to his fellow-countryman's 260.

A very large number of the Huguenot refugees were brought back, and the gaols and galleys of France were crowded with them. 100,000 settled in Friesland and Holland, 25,000 in Switzerland, 75,000 in Germany, and 50,000 in England. Some made their way even to the distant Cape of Good Hope, where they remained in the Paarl district.

In war as in industry the exiles were a source of

strength to the countries which received them. Frenchmen drilled the Russian armies of Peter the Great, a Huguenot Count became commander-in-chief in Denmark, and Schomberg led the army of Brandenburg, and afterwards that of England.

In England three Huguenot regiments were formed for the service of William. The exiles established themselves as silk workers in Spitalfields, cotton spinners at Bideford, tapestry weavers at Exeter, wool carders at Taunton, kersey makers at Norwich, weavers at Canterbury, hat makers at Wandsworth, sailcloth makers at Ipswich, workers in calico in Bromley, glass in Sussex, paper at Laverstock, cambric at Edinburgh.

Early Protestant refugees had taken refuge in America twenty years before the revocation, where they formed a colony at Staten Island. A body came to Boston in 1684, and were given 11,000 acres at Oxford, by order of the General Court at Massachusetts. In New York and Long Island colonies sprang up, and later in Virginia (the Monacan Settlement), in Maryland, and in South Carolina (French Santee and Orange Quarter).

Note on the Future of Louis, Madame de Maintenon, and Madame de Montespan.

It has been left to our own century to clear the fair fame of Madame de Maintenon of all reproach, and to show her as what she was, a pure woman and a devoted wife. She has received little justice from the memoir writers of the seventeenth century, most of whom, the

Duc de St. Simon, for example, and the Princess Elizabeth of Bavaria, had their own private reasons for disliking her. An admirable epitome of her character and influence will be found in Dr. Dollinger's *Historical Studies*. She made Louis an excellent wife, waited upon him assiduously for thirty years of married life, influenced him constantly towards good—save only in the one instance of the Huguenots, and finally died very shortly after her husband.

Madame de Montespan lived in great magnificence after the triumph of her rival, and spent freely the vast sums which the king's generosity had furnished her with. Eventually having exhausted all that this world could offer she took to hair-shirts and nail-studded girdles in the hope of securing a good position in the next. Her horror of death was excessive. In thunderstorms she sat with a little child in her lap in the hope that its innocence might shield her from the lightning. She slept always with her room ablaze with tapers, and with several women watching by the side of her couch. When at last the inevitable arrived she left her body for the family tomb, her heart to the convent of La Flèche, and her entrails to the Priory of Menoux near Bourbon. These latter were thrust into a box and given to a peasant to convey to the Priory. Curiosity induced him to look into the box upon the way, and, seeing the contents, he supposed himself to be the victim of a practical joke, and emptied them out into a ditch. A swineherd was passing at the moment with his pigs, and so it

happened that, in the words of Mrs. Julia Pardoe, "in a few minutes the most filthy animals in creation had devoured portions of the remains of one of the haughtiest women who ever trod the earth".

Louis after a reign of more than fifty years, which comprised the most brilliant epoch of French history, died at last in 1715 amidst the saddest surroundings.

One by one those whom he loved had preceded him to the grave, his brother, his son, the two sons of his son, their wives, and finally his favourite great-grandson, until he, the old dying monarch with his rouge and his stays, was left with only a little infant in arms, the Duc D'Anjou, three generations away from him, to perpetuate his line. On 20th August, 1715, he was attacked by senile gangrene, which gradually spread up the leg until on the 30th it became fatal. His dying words were worthy of his better self. "Gentlemen, I desire your pardon for the bad example which I have set you. I have greatly to thank you for the manner in which you have served me, as well as for the attachment and fidelity which I have always experienced at your hands. I request from you the same zeal and fidelity for my grandson. Farewell, gentlemen. I feel that this parting has affected not only myself but you also. Forgive me! I trust that you will sometimes think of me when I am gone."

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