RED RIVER ROVERS; or, Life and Adventure in the Northwest.

BY C. D. CLARK,

AUTHOR OF "CRUISE OF THE FLYAWAY," "THE FLYAWAY AFLOAT," ETC., ETC., ETC.

"SIT STIDDY, BOYS!" CALLED OUT A GRUFF VOICE. "DURN IT, U'VE WANT TO SPILL THE HULL OUTFIT INTO THE DRINK!"
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CHAPTER I.

RED RIVER OF THE NORTH—THE RIVAL HUNTERS—who OWNED THE CAMP—A STORM BREWING.

"Sir, saidly, boys!" called out a gruff voice from within the tent, "Don't be afraid to spill the hull outfit into the drink!"

The speaker sat in a large canoe upon the water's edge, intently watching the two boys, one of whom was to carry the canoe to the mouth of the Red River. He had just done this when he heard himself called, and hurried to the door, where he found Gaspard watching him from a canoe which was rocking on the water from the other shore, implored by the strokes of four paddles.

"Do you know those fellows?" Gaspard asked.

"Yes, sir, they left the sawyer yonder, that I heard them breathing curses against us.

"Do I know them?" hissed Walt, his face blazing with anger. "I should just say I did! I'll take some strong-armed Sampson to hold me if Jean La Bart gives me any of his fine—" I imagine cuss will!"

"Who are they?"

"The La Bart brothers, a set of blamed dastardly rascals, that ain't got enough sand to trap game for themselves, and go round robbing the traps of honest men. But you can't prove it on the cuesse; that's what fairly makes my blood boil when I think of it."

The canoe, containing the four men, ran up to the shore close to the place where Ed, Tom, and Walt had landed their baggage and goods from the canoe. They were tall, sinewy half-breeds, the Indian blood predominating in their bodies. They looked like a horrid looking fellow, with a hideous scar extending across his face from the left eye to the chin on the right side, hastily approached the boat.

"You do here?" he demanded, in a savage tone.

Both the boys had been taught to be gentlemanly, but the manner of the fellow was annoying, and Gaspard was rather prompt in his answer.

"If you think, if you will exercise your magnificent judgment, you will be able to see that we are landing the goods from our canoe, the color of which is not as white as snow. He sat in the stern of the canoe and had general supervision of the craft.

In the center of the boat were two boys, dressed in buckskin trousers, who might have been eighteen and nineteen years of age. They were handsome, bold-looking young fellows, and looked to be the first sixteen they had seen adventures in the midst of a wild country. They were New York boys, Basil and Cep; grave and somewhat quiet, as if they had not had enough to meet almost any adventure.

The man in the boat was their brother, Gaspard, who had spent many years in pursuit of the fur trade in various parts of the globe. He was a hunter-naturalist, who preferred to study the habits of wild animals in their own haunts, in order to speak understandingly concerning them. He was a man of powerful frame, with a handsome, sun-burned face. He handled a paddle with a skill which showed that he was no amateur in the work.

"Nearly time to camp, I think, friend Walt," suggested Gaspard, casting a quick glance at the two boys inside the tent.

"I reckon, Gaspard, that you are about right," replied the hunter, familiarly. "The frame of the canoe will be made well by this point, unless some of these cursed French thieves have taken possession, that's a hunter's cabin waitin' for us that."

"Pac," called out Walt Wilson, suddenly striding to the front. "I 'lbe in here an' make my loud buzzo heard. What in thunder do you want here, Jean La Bart—you an' your yester?"

"Ve come to make camp," replied Jean, "and 'is boy say he no go away."

"Then yer may take it fur gospel, ez this what this boy say. Now, don't let us make any mistake, an' we kin start right. Does yer claim this camp?"

"Oui," replied La Bart.

"What right have yer got to claim it?"

"We make camp here always," replied Jean.

"Cept when yer off 'robin' traps or some

seem thing, yer mean. But it's a lie, Jean; I don't mind tellin' yer thest. That ain't so. That's a place we used to have. What's more, me and my chum, Paul Douirett, put up thet cabin, an' I claim it. 'Sides from that, we ar' hyar ahead of you, an' we ain't got to move. Now you understand it—yea?"

The half-breed looked at his three brothers and saw that they were cowed, for they knew that old Paul Douirett, unless they got the first shot he would kill two of them before they could lift a hand. There was nothing for it but to yield, and he made a sign to the others to get into the canoe. They did so, but Jean stopped to shake his fist at Old Walt. This was more than the hunters could bear. They walked a little farther, making a slight halt, and there, among a tree, he grabbed the half-breed by the waist and shoulders, and with a slight effort of limbs which drooped from the bank, for they had got into the river, where he struck with a loud splash and disappeared.

"That!" thundered Walt; "of the rest of you will jest step natures I'll serve you all alike."

Jean La Bart rose dripping from the river, and was helped into the canoe, and pushed it over to the opposite shore, and landed on the opposite point. Soon the sound of axes could be heard, and it was evident that the fellows were making camp.

"Durn the hides," growled Walt, "I'd rather a nest of rattlesnakes'd make camp over there than them, but ye ain't th' I knew they'd foller, I'd make another camp."

"Do you think we are in any danger from them, Walt?" asked Gaspard.

"Danger! I should say so. They'll steal the very hide off a man of they get a chance, and it isn't often that they don't get a chance."

Jean was soon busy cutting the wood, and Gaspard brought up the bedding, while the boys cut pine boughs upon which to lay it, and before eight o'clock everything was ready for the night. Basil, however, did not slice the wood, but sat in the canoe up the creek and conceal it under a mass of overhanging bushes, and went back to the bank.

Basil was not long in doing it. The trout were plenty and hungry, and he did not waste any time in fancy fishing. In twenty minutes he had caught enough for supper. Edward cleaning them as fast as they were killed, and when the time they were ready for the pan Old Walt had the coffee boiling, and they were soon seated over a hearty fire, while Jean was busy at the canoe, and Gaspard brought up the bedding, while the boys cut pine boughs upon which to lay it, and before eight o'clock everything was ready for the night. Basil, however, did not slice the wood, but sat in the canoe up the creek and conceal it under a mass of overhanging bushes, and went back to the bank.

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CHAPTER II.

THE LA BARTS DEPART—SALMON-FISHING ON RED RIVER—BASIL AND THE BUCK—
A CRY IN THE CROOK

Old Walt, was a foot first, and as the gray light appeared in the east he launched the canoe and went out on the river, and, making a circuit, came down along shore with the current for a short distance to the camp of the half-breeds. He had a purpose in coming out, and, having satisfied himself that all was quiet in their cabin, he quietly drew their canoe off down the creek, laid the bay, kicked holes in them and saw them fill and float away. This good work done, he paddled down the time the sun was up, and went out and had taken their morning bath he had everything ready for breakfast.

You are an early bird, Walt, said Gaspard, as he came out, but you are in the right; there is nothing so beautiful as early morning in a northern climate.

"It's the breath of life to me," replied Walt; "an' besides, I hed nuthin' to do. I've bin studyin' na'tural history on my own count this mornin', a class you don't know about. I'm burnin' hatred an' handful, no 'count trap-thieves. They won't come prowlin' 'round my camp ag'in until they get some more sauce out of it. Spose we take a walk down 'long shore an' hear ens' tunes.

The two walked down to the bank, from which the camp of the La Barts was in full sight, perhaps one hundred and fifty yards distant, the Frenchmen were running up and down the shore in a distracted manner, and the air was loaded with curious French profanity as they realized that the canoes were gone. Jean La Bart, with his arms a-sling, came out on a point and hailed Old Walt.

"Oh, yes, you, Walt Vechon! Vat you do wix ze canos?" he roared.

"Oh, what's the matter with you, Frenchy!" bawled Walt, in return. "I don't want your durned canoes; got one of my own already."

"Vat for you steal him, zen? Oh sagr--dant! I vill 'ave ze art's blood out of you for this, certeinly... But I follow you like ze besom of destr-o-cration. Vraiment, you know Jean La Bart."

"See here, roared Walt, beginning to get angry. "You can't go over to this side of the river without on you with both feet. You've got my mark on you now, you cursed sneak thief. What's the matter with you, French, eh?"

"I von't forgit," replied Jean La Bart.

"Zis vill help me to remember. You steal our canoes so zat we can not get revenge; you steal our camp, you tow me in ze river, and by gar I vill have une grande revenge."

"What's my rifle, Basil?" cried Walt, turning toward the cabin. "I'll see if I can't put another crack on that frog-critin' French half-a-tooth."

Basil hurried down with the rifle, but Jean got it first, and, saying, "I've done so when the crack of a rifle was heard, and a ball whistled by the ear of Walt Wilson, say so indeed, as to almost graze the flesh. The hunters all ran for their rifles, and began to pull out their canoes, intending to cross and finish the Frenchmen, but instead proceeded to their hunting, and plunged into the dense forest behind their hut.

Let 'em go, said Walt. We've got'em on the war-path. We reckon they'll try to go no more trouble right away, an' before they get back from where they must go to get a canoe we'll break camp. Now what's the programme for to-day, Gaspard?

"An' anything that comes handy," replied Gaspard. You know that I want to study the animals of this region, and I don't care particularly where we begin.

"Then we shall send two boys in camp and let them fish to-day. They can have sport enough at that, I tell you, an' we'll take a tramp to see what we kin pick up in this."

After breakfast Gaspard, shouldering his rifles, started off into the forest, and the two boys, not at all troubled by being left alone, started off along the Eel, not far from the point where the deer first crossing to the late camp occupied by the La Barts. The fellows had not left any thing behind them of any consequence, and after hunting for some time again took their canoes to the canoe and paddled down to a place where the water slid swiftly over some broken rocks, not far from the point, where the two large logs, as if pushed by the current, were lying in the canoe. Having secured their canoes so that it was safe, they took their salmon rods, stepped out on the rocks, and prepared their cast. Basil then took his fly and cast haphazardly on the surface. Having secured their canoes so that it was safe, they took their salmon rods, stepped out on the rocks, and prepared their cast. Basil then took his fly and cast haphazardly on the surface. Having secured their canoes so that it was safe, they took their salmon rods, stepped out on the rocks, and prepared their cast. Basil then took his fly and cast haphazardly on the surface. Having secured their canoes so that it was safe, they took their salmon rods, stepped out on the rocks, and prepared their cast. Basil then took his fly and cast haphazardly on the surface. Having secured their canoes so that it was safe, they took their salmon rods, stepped out on the rocks, and prepared their cast. Basil then took his fly and cast haphazardly on the surface. Having secured their canoes so that it was safe, they took their salmon rods, stepped out on the rocks, and prepared their cast. Basil then took his fly and cast haphazardly on the surface. Having secured their canoes so that it was safe, they took their salmon rods, stepped out on the rocks, and prepared their cast. Basil then took his fly and cast haphazardly on the surface. Having secured their canoes so that it was safe, they took their salmon rods, stepped out on the rocks, and prepared their cast. Basil then took his fly and cast haphazardly on the surface. Having secured their canoes so that it was safe, they took their salmon rods, stepped out on the rocks, and prepared their cast. Basil then took his fly and cast haphazardly on the surface. Having secured their canoes so that it was safe, they took their salmon rods, stepped out on the rocks, and prepared their cast. Basil then took his fly and cast haphazardly on the surface. Having secured their canoes so that it was safe, they took their salmon rods, stepped out on the rocks, and prepared their cast. Basil then took his fly and cast haphazardly on the surface. Having secured their canoes so that it was safe, they took their salmon rods, stepped out on the rocks, and prepared their cast. Basil then took his fly and cast haphazardly on the surface.
—which it had arched in its struggles with its prey—a blow which, under ordinary circumstances, would have broken the creature’s spine. As it was, the panther entered a corner of the path, was alighted in the branches of a low tree, six feet from the earth, and glared about for its expected reward, as if to meet it. It was Ed Le Fevre, who had drawn his revolver and was taking sight at the panther, unfeeling. Just then, certain that he could send the ball through the brain of the ferocious brute, the animal made a spring into the air, and carried down upon the feet from which Ed had quickly put in another shot which struck the wild beast somewhere in the lower jaw, but did not stop it; for, with an agile creature again leaped, and this time the boy had not a chance to fire again, and went down, prostrate, by the infuriated panther.

It would have gone hard with Ed this time had not Basil been on hand with his club, but that mighty young Nimrod again turned forward, and swinging the club with both hands, struck a tremendous blow, and the hind-quarters of the enraged beast sunk in such manner that it was quite satisfied with the result of the blow. Ed shook himself free and rolled out of the way, while the panther, as it passed over his reception of life, as it had received, began to crawl away as fast as possible.

"You won’t do, you know," cried Basil, springing to his feet and rushing between the panther and the bushes. "You’ve treated us too rough to allow you to get away in that state.

The panther really seemed to understand, for she stopped, and resting her head upon her front paws, looked at the boy with a glare that was full of rage and pain. Twice she made an attempt to leap, but as often as she did, she would throw herself back, and the muscles refused to perform their functions, as the last blow from the club had completely paralyzed the magnificent animal. As she lay there helpless, Ed stepped forward, about putting in the finishing shot, but he feared that the effects of the blow might pass away, and another struggle follow while that might not result so pleasantly for him. Raising the heavy weapon, and taking good aim, he planted a ball directly between the glowing eyes, and the creature fell dead at his feet.

"Now let’s see what she was at," cried Basil, approaching the heap of tattered clothing which the panther was worrying when they came to the rescue. "The high jinks, Ed—Ed—Ed!"

It was indeed an Indian boy, though of what tribe they did not know, who lay extended upon the ground, and who had been stained with blood. His hands were considerably lacerated, there were several scratches on his face, and he was senseless.

"Bring some water," said Basil, as he tore open the hunting-shirt of the young Indian. Let us wash away the blood and see how his head looks."

Ed darted to a pool not far away and scooped up some water in his cap, which he set to the injured boy, who quickly washed away the blood, and found to their delight that although some of the scratches were quite deep, none of them went to the bone.

Just as they were leaving the branches, the remainder of the water in his face, when the Indian shivered and his eyes opened. He started up as if he saw Ed and his three boys, and raising himself on his elbow, looked about for the panther, and uttered an expression of delight to the fingers of his right hand.

"Get away from the earth, and, springing to his feet, shaking his head as if to free it from some confusion, he hurried to the side of the panther and the third boy. Just as he saw the three boys could hardly keep their eyes from him, he was so like the ideal Indian of whom we often read but seldom see.

"Me Stern Heart," he said. "Me Cree Indian. Who kill black beast?"

They signified that both of them had a hand in it, and he smiled as he reached out his hand to Ed. His hand was taller than either of the Le Fevre boys, and his copper-colored face was full of intelligence.

"Say, you didn’t go under tree—not look. PANTHER up in tree, jump on head, knock down, know nothing, can no see. Have time to scream once—then all dark."

"We heard you," said Basil, and ran over to help you."

"You good Stern Heart loves you, will make camp with you. Who else in camp?"

"My brother and Old Walt Williams," responded Ed.

"What big heart! Me like Walt; glad shake hands with he. Hi! you know Jean La Barte?" he demanded.

"Yes," replied Basil.

"Welcome.

"You come, Stern Heart loves you, will make camp with you. Who else in camp?"

"My brother and Old Walt Williams," replied Ed.

"Welcome."

"Yes," replied Basil.

"Me know Jean La Barte, you have seen."

"Yes," answered Ed.

"I should have thought. "I think he will be likely to preserve this one; he’s got all the materials for the work."

The two boys began to drag the body of the panther toward the river, for the young Indian assisting, but evidently at a loss to know what they wanted of the panther, as they both carried his ears in their hands. If they were not the only two, the young Indian seemed to think that they had actually killed the creature.

"No can eat," he declared, when they had got the body half into the bank. Basil laughed.

"I don’t think I’d care to wrestle with a stake on the old ‘critter’ myself," he said, "but my brother is a great hand to preserve such things."

Stern Heart shook his head doubtfully and turned up his bow and arrows, which he had dropped when first assailed by the panther.

"Got deer," he said. "He better than panther; good to eat; panther no good. Want him over river, eh?"

"Well," we were wandering, old fellow," replied Ed.

"Me take him over," said Stern Heart.

"Not good put big load in canoe; take them on for my canoe."

He walked along the bank until he came to an eddy, in which a number of logs had been cast, one of which he quickly selected, and unhitched a little horse. He then mounted the horse, and set off back up the river, the young Indian assisting, and the two boys followed. After a time, they came to a place where there was a little lake, and there they disembarked, and the boys began to look around them. It was a wooden boat, and the young hunter was anxious to preserve it. The boys had carried back the guns which had been unloaded, and the Indian had taken care of everything in the cabin, and after that built a fire and cooked some venison steaks, as Gaspard and Old Walt did not appear. As it grew dark, and they did not come, the boys began to get nervous, and if they had known which way to go, would have started out after their missing friends. A large number of venison steaks were prepared for cooking, ready to go on the coals the moment they were dried, but the boys did not know where they did not come. As he understood their fears, an expression of sympathy came into the face of the young Indian.

"No come to-night, we find em to-morrow. Stern Heart good strong and can follow a trail, but not at night as well as by daylight."

They had hardly said this when they heard the sound of hurrying feet, and Old Walt, followed by Gaspard Le Fevre, came in hastily.

"Thar," he exclaimed, releasing his hold, "lay down on that log! I am glad to see me look at yer leg. Durn an’ blast the pizen Frenchmen; no man’s life is safe with them."

Gaspard sunk down wearily, and upon removing the stocking from his right foot, closely. In a few minutes they saw something moving on the ground in the rear of the building, but so cautiously that they had not the skill to determine what it was, but the boys were certain that it was detected. A moment later they saw Stern Heart extended upon the earth, behind the cabin, peeping through a chink in the logs. He appeared to be thinking for a moment, but, as if suddenly struck, for he rose and beckoned them to come on, while he fitted an arrow to his bow and stepped back to look behind him. Just as he did so Jacques La Barte, the younger of the four brothers, came out of the cabin, literally under the two men, and faced the boys. As he did so, the boys stepped into view, and as the door was opened, the young Indian, with an arrow drawn to the head, looked around with a glance of surprise, Jacques, with a cry of astonishment, dropped his plunder and stood aghast.

"Well, you are a nice duck," declared Ed, as he came up. "Make yourself quite at home. There isn’t any other little thing you would like, is there?"

The fellow seemed to have lost his power of speech, so completely was he taken by surprise. His widow draped, and he shot like a man suddenly stricken with the ague.

"Don’t shoot him yet, Stern Heart," said Basil. "Remember, he is your best flower, where are the rest of your gang?"

Without making any reply Jacques suddenly sprang forward, and before either of the boys could seize him, he had reached the bank of the river. An arrow from Stern Heart pierced him through the heart, but he broke off the shaft, and, in spite of the pain, plunged into the water and disappeared. They got out the canoe and waited for him to rise, but they were surprised, when he did so, he was almost across the river, and quickly reached the bank and plunged into the woods. They saw the tracks of the horse they had seen the time, before many days, when they were sorry they did not let the Indian drive his arrow through the heart of Jacques La Barte."

CHAPTER IV.

CAUGHT IN AN AMBUSH—THE STOLEN CANOES—STERN HEART ON THE TRAIL.

Stern Heart was used to running, and in a wonderfully short time he had the buck cut out and ready for consumption. He had removed the head, under the direction of Ed, for he wore a fine skin, and the young hunter was anxious to preserve it. The boys had carried back the guns which had been unloaded, and the Indian had taken care of everything in the cabin, and after that built a fire and cooked some venison steaks, as Gaspard and Old Walt did not appear. As it grew dark, and they did not come, the boys began to get nervous, and if they had known which way to go, would have started out after their missing friends. A large number of venison steaks were prepared for cooking, ready to go on the coals the moment they were dried, but the boys did not know where they did not come. As he understood their fears, an expression of sympathy came into the face of the young Indian.

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cleaning out of the La Bart family. Put on more steaks, Basil; the boys will be hungry."

While the meal was being prepared Walt told what had happened to them since their landing, and of the range with deer and rabbits. "We're interested, for they had suffered again and again from the depredations of the La Barts, but I'm happy to say they went right after them. When Walt had finished, Nesdall brought his hand down on his thigh with a resounding thud.

"We've got the skunks at last," he cried, "and now we'll hunt the scoundrels down if it takes a month. They haven't dared to use the rifle lately, and they'd like to use it. You don't doubt it was the La Barts?"

"Nary, I've seed the cuspiders tracks along my traps to-day, and that's a few feet gives 'em away, an' the hollers I heard gave 'em aw. Oh, it was the La Barts—bet yer life."

They shall have frontier law," averred Nesdall, sternly. "We have allowed them to have their swing too long already. What's that snapping? And where is the young Injun gone?"

"Stern Heart, unseen by any one, had silently glided from the cabin, and all at once the silence was broken by the crack of a rifle, the rattle of bullets, and the twang of a bow string. The next moment, as the wind rose, the cabin was full of smoke, and a bright light shone through the chinks in the sides of the flimsy shack on fire, and the La Barts were again at their work."

"Lay out there, boys," cried Jim Nesdall. "The skunks are at it, as sure as you live."

At this moment Stern Heart came up at his noiseless pace, pointing with his bow toward the river.

"They gone," he gasped. "Steen all canoes; go down river."

Leaving me, they extinguished the fire. The rest started down to the river bank, but they were too late. The loud dip of paddles could be heard, and a strong volley was sent in the direction of the sounds, but only mocking laughter came back. The scoundrels had made clean work, and had taken the two canoes with which Nesdall and his party had come, containing all their supplies for the trapping season. The rage of the trapers was inexpressible, particularly that of Walt Wilson.

"Listen," said Stern Heart, speaking rapidly in the Cree language, which Walt and I understood. "I can't help it, the boys have taken your canoe. I'll find them."

"Stern Heart does this because he loves the white boys, who saved him from the panther; he does not do it for pay," declared the Indians.

"You'd like a rifle, just the same," answered Nesdall. "I never saw an Injun yet that didn't want one. But go long and do your work, and the skunks shall come back here and bring us word. Kin you use a revolver? Here, take this, but don't think it unless it really need it, for the bow makes no noise."

The boy caught the hands of Basil and Edward in succession, pressed them upon his heart, and, in the darkey manner, the dark-circled faces, the taking of the dinner-circled by a great bend in the river, and the manner, so we saw that he knew how the ground there ran swiftly and noiselessly even in the darkness. Woe to the La Barts, now that this persistent foe was upon the trail."

For two hours he continued his tireless pace, when the moon came out in the clear sky and he saw the river gleaming before him. By taking the course which he had pursued he had gained at least two miles, and felt quite certain that the thieves had not yet passed. Creeping down close to the water's edge, he lay flat upon the earth, and soon after heard the rapid beat of paddles and saw two canoes passing in the middle of the river. As the eye of the ranger was upon them, and sending the light canoes rapidly forward. They had evidently got rid of the three young men and had pilfered the stolen property in the two largest.

Stern Heart hesitated for a moment, and half-drew the revolver from his belt, but then thought it better of it and drew not one. The canoes were far too near, and a shot might only frighten them without doing any harm. Slowly, slowly to the steady heart. The white warrior ran down the river to a place where the eddy would bring them close inshore, and crept down into the water at a spot where the middle of the stream was wide, and threw out the brave Indian boy was so close at hand.

CHAPTER V.

STERN HEART AND THE FRENCHMEN—DRIVEN INTO CAMP—BACKWOODS JUSTICE.

"Zat well done, mon friend," cried Jean. "By gar, the varmint."

"Reck you saw the faces of zat Jim Nesdall and Valt Veelson ven ze canoe all gone; oui, oui; zat vas ze varmint."

"I hope I hit ze Indian," hissed Jacques La Bart. "Ze wolferat mark, me wiz his arrow yesterday."

"Now listen, mon friend," said Jean. "Zat ve 'ave done make zet_inzervekeen ve keep vat zat ze Americaine shall call shady, lay back Zart."

"Dar's lil' dey, and he nevar rest until he have revenge. Bah! zis is not good canoe; zere is too much water in it. Give me ze gourd, Jacques."

"Vairetze in zee-end of ze canoe, too," cried Jacques, as he took up the gourd which was used in bailing. "By gar, she sink."

"Oh, ze devil!" roared another of the brothers. "Ziz canoe half full of vairetze; zere is no bottom in her."

Stern Heart had been at work, and what he had done had rendered further flight by water impossible. The Indian had slipped under the canoe, and with a sharp knife cut the ropes of the canoe; but such was the extent of the damage that it was impossible to repair the damage quickly. He then sunk again, and swimming under water, reached the shore unseen, where even his Indian gravity was disturbed by the furious manner of the baffled thieves. In spite of all their efforts they could not keep the canoes above the water, and they ran into the shallow part of the stream and sprang out to save their ammunition and rides, which they carried up and laid on the bank, when they hurried back to save such goods as they could. Before they got back the canoes had floated down thirty or forty feet, and the Indians were so sure that they had been cut and the canoes dragged out of the water in order to examine them, and the fury of the water was simply terrible as they saw, by the light of the moon, the canoe being cut, and the keen-witted Jean knew in an instant that it was the work of Stern Heart.

"Ain't it so," he asked near by, said Jacques. "Look out, you little beat nick of zat varmint."

They ran up the bank together and darted toward the place where the Indians had left their weapons. As they came over the bank they saw Stern Heart, with a rifle at the "ready," coolly waiting for them. One of the Frenchmen made a movement to draw his weapon, but a stern command from the young Indian called them back.
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"Oh, you little curse!" roared Walt Wilson, "come here and let me hug you! How could you be so Thoughtless?"

The hull gang, nipped as easy as got out, an' drove into camp together. I don't know what to do with y'aller. Stern Heart in a few brief words explained the manner of their capture, while the Frenchmen stood in stolid silence, awaiting the fate of their brother. After the Indian boy had told his story, Nesdall turned to Walt.

"I'll see these fellows have got to swing, eh? It's no use to fight along with them, and they won't make any more trouble. Life and property ain't safe while they are alive.

"That's about the ticket," answered Walt, grimly. "If they ain't murderers ez well ez thieves it ain't their fault. They tried hard enough to kill Gaspard Le Preuve an' me.

"Mon Dieu!" screamed Jean La Bart. "You daw not hang us; it would be murder.

"Oh, they ain't any one in this kentry goin' to find fault with what you did, you dirty dogs. Rope is cheap, but we wouldn't waste it on you. A raw-hide lariat an' a ride on a swinging bough is about the vicket for you. Ez well by 'em live till mornin', Cap'! Ef they've got any prayers to say, they kin say 'em to night.

"All right; we'll tie them up and set guards over them. You stand by them, Ned Carey, and if they move a finger through the night put a bullet through the one that starts. It will save trouble in hanging that one in the morning.'"

It was an awful night in which the four villains passed as they lay bound upon the sod, with the guards passing to and fro in front of them. They had been so skillfully and rapidly done that they could only realize that they had been entangled in what they could hardly make out just how it was done.

"Now, Jean La Bart," said the Indian, "tie me to you and leave you while I fetch Jim Nesdall.

"Non! non!" screamed Jean La Bart.

"If a wolf come, I'll be a wolf," replied Stern Heart, again allowing that shadow of a smile to pass over his face.

At a moment a distant howling told that the wolves were indeed in the woods, and much as he hated them, he did not wish to leave them to be devoured by the savage creatures. The thing had been so skillfully and rapidly done that they could only realize that they had been entangled in what they could hardly make out just how it was done.

"Go before me," he commanded. "We go back to camp, and Walt say what to do with you.

By the expression of the four villains faces it was hard to say which they preferred—to be left a prey to the wolves or be carried back to meet the tender mercies of the trappers and Walt Wilson. The walk back was a weary one, only softened by the lavish hospitality of the Frenchmen. They were ordered upon each other for their foolishness in leaving all their weapons on the bank. It was nearly two o'clock in the morning when they stumbled into the opening, where they were hailed by the guard who had been set since the departure of Stern Heart. As he saw the trappers approaching he lifted his rifle and was about to fire, when Stern Heart called to him, and he saw that the Frenchmen had a young man a few feet behind him. He shouted to those within the hut, and all came running out, to see what was the matter. They opened the opening at the muzzle of a cocked revolver.

"Here Frenchmen, Captain Jim," he said, addressing Nesdall. "Stern Heart catch'em all."

One of the men soon appeared with a bundle of green boughs, and the four seceders were tied up and hushed without mercy. When the work was faithfully done their bonds were stripped off.

"Now go," said Walt, sternly. "And remember this: any one of us who gits sight of you in this kentry will put a ball in you; git.

"Give me my rifle!" hissed Jean, through his set teeth.

"No rifle, git!"
The four beaten wretches shank away without another word. At the edge of the forest, Jean La Bart turned. He scared face toward the party with such a vicious look in his eyes that Walt half brought his rifle to his shoulder. Jean instantly dove out of sight.

Mebbe we've done wrong not to hang 'em," muttered Walt, "but let'em go.

And indeed they did come a time when they knew that mercy to such sordidrs was thrown away.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD MAN AT HOME—STERN HEART AND THE BEAR—A GOOD SHOT.

The trappers did not stay long after the departure of the Frenchmen, and after learning the young Indian boy was left, took their rifles and departed on their tramp to the North. It is a strong belief that the trappers talked to the Frenchmen when we say that they ran with all their speed to the place where the goods were landed, packed all the lighter and most valuable articles and carried them two hours before Captain Nesdall and his men reached the spot. They repaired one of the posts of the cabin, and witharton and the remaining goods to take them to the next station. It was well for the Frenchmen that the bear was not too late, for the trappers might have run through and given them the benefit of the lariat yet. But they were in haste to get to the next station, and went on their way swearing vengeance another day.

The party in camp upon the point felt easier now, and prepared and loaded for a grand hunt. Gaspard, who was much better, but not yet able to take a long tramp, remained in the cabin, although they had no fear that the Frenchmen would return at present. It was thought by all that the lesson which they had received would be a lasting one, and the trappers gave this section of country a wide berth.

Captain Nesdall had kept his word with Stern Heart, who was punctual, and agreed to be the body of a man by slightly stopping.

"Where's he?" demanded Basil. "This don't look much like hunting.

"It will, before you get through," answered Jean La Bart, "and you'll see it.

"Old Man here," he assed.
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They concealed themselves behind the rocks and watched the opening, while Stern Heart went in and entered the cave, and taking up a stone, hurled it into the cavity. He had hardly done so when he came out on a run, and the trembling head of the huge brown bear emerged from the opening, and the huge, unwieldy animal came out at a rolling gait, his head wagging from side to side, the brute when angry. Ordinarily, the brown bear is not a dangerous opponent, but when made angry, swift and close in his own haunts, or when hungry or guarding his cubs, he becomes furious, and there is no creature which is more ferocious.

This was one of the largest of his species, and the stone which Stern Heart had hurled into the den had struck him on the nose and mangled the corners of his mouth, which came from within, told that there were two cubs. He had got his eyes on Stern Heart and went after him with a growl, his little eyes twinkling, and, when the animal got a few feet lightly ahead to lead bruin away from the den. As he came in range of the concealed hunters, he rose, roaring, depressed, and as many bullets were planted in the body of the animal. From the position which he occupied, Old Walt, who was behind the bear, could not get in a shot in the part of the body which he would have selected, and the boys, not knowing much in regard to hunting such animals, hurled their bullets in the face of the bristling beast, and did him any material damage, and drew from him roars of fury as he continued his chase of Stern Heart. The fire was still burning to load again, and continued to run, dodging lightly among the rocks, and from his fleetness of foot managing to keep out of the way of the savage creature. The breechloaders were quickly loaded, and the hunters prepared to close in.

"Fire at the head, you two!" cried Walt.

"You might go on plumping bullets into that fat fool for a month and do no harm. Watch Stern Heart; do ez be deuz.

Stern Heart now withdrew his head close upon him, the foam dripping from his bloody jaws ran nimbly up a slope and reached the level above the entrance to the state of his leg as he ran, so as to be ready for action. On the level above he turned, and raising the rifle breast high, waited calmly. The bear rushed on furiously, and when close in the hunter raised himself on his hind legs and made his waddling approach, while Stern Heart never moved a muscle, but stood like a statue, his bright black eyes fixed upon every movement of the animal.

"Fire, fire, Stern Heart!" cried Basil, wildly.

"Let the boy alone," growled, Old Walt.

"He knows his biz on bear-shootin."

The bear was excited upon the young Indian brought their rifles sharply to his shoulder, at the moment when the bear was almost close enough to give it a cuff with his paw or a good plug on his backbone. The animal, then, sunk down in a heap, dead before he touched the ground.

"Well done, Stern Heart, well done," cried Walt.

"You've got a stickly hand, that'll say yer. Con'ta' I done that better my self.

"Stern Heart no fraud of Old Man," he said. "Kill him with knife, fore now.

"I'll come along. When the Old Woman finds out what's been done, that will be wigs on the greenwaud but

what she'll hev revenge. Hark to that, she's callin' him now."

The shot pierced the side of the den, making the rocks tumble with bears for her mate, and they knew that in a few moments she would come out to see what the trouble was about.

"Get kiver ag'in, boys," the guide said.

"We'll hev to wait a bit afore she shows up, but when she does come she'll come a-whoppin' right down our yer fire, with a vewvy big shot; rememb' er an' aim at the head an' see if yer kin fetch her with one shot, same as Stern Heart. Now, yer Yukar, Basil; do you want to try your hand?"

"That's me," cried Basil, eagerly. "I'll do just as near what Stern Heart did as I can.

"Mind you take time. Ef you miss the b'ar you've got to come to a hug, an' look out you don't let her git your knife-arm in her grip, or yer won't be no use to nobody. Stiddy now; I think she's a-comin'."

The rattling of claws was again heard upon the rocky bottom of the cave, and a huge bear near as large as the Old Man," came plunging out of the opening, eyes blazing and blood-red, with her head had been called into the house, and did not respond, as many a husband has done before and will do again, to entreation to chastise him for his bad conduct, and her eyes roved quickly about the rocks in search of the delinquent. She did not see him at first, a little way, she was searching for him, and at last got to a place where she could see him lying on the rocks. Yes, there he was, summin' himself and having a good time, when she had repeatedly called to him to come in. She trotted up with a belligerent air, certainly meaning business, and, when he saw something on the rocks attracted her attention, and that something was fresh blood— the blood which was pouring out which burst out when she bent to smell this was perfectly hideous. Then, with a single bound, she reached his side and bent over him.

She seemed to realize in a moment what had happened, and with another wild roar, turned furiously to take vengeance upon the murderers of her mate. While she did the man who stood in her way, as with hair bristling and teeth snapping together with a horrible sound, she said, "Better let me take her," whispered Wait.

"She's just on her muscle." "No, sir!" replied Basil. That bear is my meat.

And with his rifle pointed, he stepped boldly out to meet the ferocious brute.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE SIE BEAR'S HUG—THE TWO CUBS—EAGLE AND OTTER.

It has been said before that Basil was not without practice in hunting, but up to this time his attention had been confined to the game to which he belonged. Some of the State of New York, especially in the Adirondack wilderness. But he had something which should be the prominent characteristic of every hunter, it was plainest ignorance in moments of danger. In this respect he was superior to Ed, who was apt to get a little feverish at times of excitement, until perhaps it was for this reason that the two Walt had selected Basil to "plug" the she bear. It is doubtful whether he would have been as safe as he was, had the bear been so close at hand, to give him aid if it should be really necessary.

Basil carried a short but heavy rifle of great power, and it had the utmost confidence. He knew that he was a good shot, but he had never been tried in a place where the bear was such a disastrous consequence. The moment he stepped out in view the bear stopped and looked at his strange form fixedly, for it was strange to her. The country had not yet been overrun by hunters, and it was probably the first time she had seen one. It was only for a moment that she paused, however, for she seemed to know that a creature of this sort had destroyed her mate, and dropping again on all-fours, she trotted up to him at a rolling pace, plainly bent on avenging, in her person, the evil which had been her own. She raised herself on her hind feet and walked toward Basil, and he drew a fine sight on her. He then knew that he was about to drive the ball. But, just as he pulled the trigger, she jerked her head on one side, and the ball, instead of passing through the grizzled paws of the beast, inflicted a painful but far from dangerous wound.

He dropped his rifle and drew his knife, holding his hands high above his head, and the next moment he was locked in an embrace which was too close to be pleasant. Lowering his left hand, he caught the bear by the loose skin on the lower part of the neck and clung to it with desperate strength, while he drew the knife again and again, with all his force, into her vital points. Thrust third thrust the bear staggered, and as Stern Heart rushed up to help him, Basil cried out to him to keep away, when he dropped his hand and hurled the broad blade to the very hilt in the body of the bear, and with a half-human ground she sunk at his feet, and, after a convulsive convulsion, died.

Basil thrust his knife into the moss growing on the rocks and wiped away the blood before he returned it to its sheath, while Ed looked rather annoyed. He was a good-natured young fellow, but his luck had been lately, and he felt the fact somewhat. But a few moments, Basil Heart had something to him which made him look brighter.

"The cubs are mine, understand. Now, then, Stern Heart, let's have 'em out," he cried.

"Wait a bit," responded Wait. "There's cubs, but sometimes they are mighty unhealthy critters to handle, 'specially when the're gittin' growed up. Git a pitch pine knot, Stern Heart. A little light on the subject won't come amiss.

The India dress away and quickly came back with a couple of pine knots, which were lighted, and the two boys entered the heart of the tree toghether. The cubs assailed their nostrils as they passed in told that the place had long been occupied in this way. The passage inclined downward for some time, and then turned right into a high arched room about twenty feet square, and by the light of the torches could see two pair of gleaming eyes in the further corer. Hurrying to the spot, they found two bright-looking cubs, not more than a month old, and each of the boys collared one and dragged him out, in spite of his spitting and scratching.

"Gaspard will be tickled to death with these," Basil said, "but I wanted a pair of cubs to train; he has said so a dozen times."

These are just the fellers for him, then, averaged the old hunter, and I'm mighty glad we captured 'em. I reckon we ar' likely to hev a load going home, understand! "

"I'm going to take bears," asked Stern Heart.

"Oh, jest the cubs and the heads; I reckon we can tote 'em," was the answer.

"Carry to creek, make raft and take 'em down, or some other way."

"You've got a head, anyhow," declared Walt. "Just strap the pelt off that she bear, will ye? Leave the head on."

They set out to go to a remarkably short space of time, the animals were stripped of their hides, and the party started for the town where Basil was driving one of the cubs at the end of a leash. They quickly reached the creek, when Stern
Red River Rovers.

Heart collected logs enough to make a serviceable raft, to which the two cubs were strapped, and Basil, Ed and Stern Heart, with long poles in their hands, embarked. The rest was easy; they floated down-stream about three miles, the young Indian, who was at the head of the raft, suddenly thrust his pole into the sand and stopped the current.

"Watch out," he said. "You see otter fish.

"A short distance ahead of them was a widening of the creek, forming a sort of bend, on the surface of which ducks and wild geese were floating, and the bend side was almost a high bank, descending in almost a perpendicular line to the water's edge, and upon the crest of this bank stood two strange creatures, evident at the sight of the shining bodies, the round and beautiful heads and brilliant eyes. Basil "We've seen those in the natural history under his brother, knew the fishing otter.

"Ain't they beauties!" said the guide from the shore. "Wait a minute an' maybe you'll see some fun. I wouldn't wonder. As he spoke the body of one of the others tended to sink. He said into the water with a smooth graceful motion, without a splash, and disappeared. A moment after he came to the surface, and said "I've got good sized salmon, with which he began to swim toward the other bank. The second otter, as once sprung into the water and overtook and surprised his hardfaced, rapping fish, they swam side by side to the land, and drew the salmon on the low bank, and the otter's after streets going to swim into the water until it was dead, when they laid it out carefully on the grass, and prepared to eat it.

"Oh, look at that," said Old Walt. "That ain't an eagle. Now he wants that fish and he's goin' to have it if it's in the books. The eagle is not a top hunter, neither. Where is he?" whispered Ed, eagerly.

"On that dry limb of the dead pine above the beaver's nest, and instead of leaving the prize, he's bending his head and lookin' down.

"Yes, I see him," replied Ed, "and by Gosh, he's mighty big!"

The monarch of the air, a magnificent specimen of his tribe, seated on the dry limb a hundred feet above the unconscious otter, folded his wings as a bullet, and closed the opening sound held in the otter's head and snapped the white teeth, and mapping viciously at the descending eagle. When near the ground the great bird spread his wings and soared away to a little vantage, evidently designing to draw the otter away from the fish, but the female seemed to be up to his little game, and instead of leaving the fish, she covered it with her body, while the male ran to and fro beneath the eagle, looking and whirling as if it were an animal for an animal to look, and not showing the slightest disposition to relinquish his dinner, even to please the king of the air.

The eagle, finding an altitude of perhaps three hundred feet came flashing down on the male otter, which reached for the top, and seemed to meet the foe boldly, but when near him, the eagle suddenly changed his course, and hurtled himself against the female, who was swiftly driven across the face of the course with the power of the white men. The sight of the weapons with which he was provided had made them very dangerous to the cubs, and were they ready to do anything to earn them.

Stern Heart explained to them that they were expecting to keep camp and that nothing would disturb them and assured them that they might depend upon the generosity of the white men for their reward. As the Indians had brought two large canoes with them, one of these was bought by Gaspard and paid for on the spot, a good rifle being the price, the other was given to the cubs as a present of the party until they could get more. At early morning the canoe was launched, and they were soon on the way, and, although somewhat delayed, got by the middle of the day to the mouth of a small river and landed for supper.

A camp was soon made, and, after supper, the boys put on their new fire helmet and went into the woods, and, with theaid of Mr. Murray of Adirondack fame. These hats had been built for them in New York, and were splendid sets of helmets, for a boy, and a broad funnymight be thrown forward, while the form of the hunter was enlivened in darkness. The boys put on their helmets, and, with the aid of the Adirondack hats, and the sight of the silvery tints, Stern Heart leading the way, until they came out in a broad opening in the forest, covered with short, spruce, and a splendid few feet of reindeer. Having taken their stations, the boys put on their helmets, which had carried their derbies with their backs within the woods, and presented a comical appearance with these strange head-dresses. Then, by a touch, the lantern in the face of the boys opened and two broad streams of light swept the edge of the woods in search of deer.

There is no creature which roams the forests and mountains of America so well known as the red deer. A light at any time in the night has a strange attraction for them and they will approach a man, or what danger to themselves. The boys had scarcely stood five minutes when the light from Basil's cap reflected on a pair of specked points, almost four feet from the ground. In an instant his rifle was brought to a level, and, as he looked through the double sight, he had seen a game of which he pulled the trigger. Something fell with a crash upon the earth, and there was a conflagration of flames among the bushes. Basil, drawing his hunting knife, was about to rush in, when Stern Heart caught his arm.

"Lead," he said. "Always lead rifle first.

At this moment Ed fired, and at once sprang away to finish a game which he had shot down. Basil had followed, and taking into his breech-lieader and hurried toward his struggling game, and Stern Heart, seeing him so engaged, darted away on the track of Ed, who had laid a little distance back as a precaution. Basil found the deer at which he had aimed down, with a ball through the base of the neck, for he had held a rifle too low, and at the sight of the hunter the animal bounded up and made a rush at him with lowered head and horns. Basil had leaped forward to attack a wounded animal with an empty rifle. Bringing the weapon to his shoulder, with a well-directed shot he dropped the deer, tearing down the way, in with his knife and gave the death-blow. Scarcely had he done so when he heard a heavy scream, following in the direction of shots, and knew that Ed was in trouble. Throwing another cartridge into his rifle as he ran, he darted back in the direction of the noise, and, under the use of a desperate struggle in the darkness, and ran as fast as life depended on his speed. Slowly, and needed aid badly.

The creature at which he had fired—not knowing what it was—had dropped at his shot, and with the impatience of the fault in his character as a hunter, Ed dropped his rifle and ran in the direction
from which the sound of struggling came. When near the spot a strange creature rose sudenly from the levi, with a merely snarly snarl, and began to run toward him, somewhat after the manner of a bear. It was the first time he had ever seen a long, tawny body, short, thick legs, and showing in its conformation something of the points of a bear and were. The long, tawny mane gleamed in the light of the lantern, and Ed recoiled, for he had never seen so ferocious a brute. But before he could turn the strange animal was upon him, and they rolled to the earth together, the boy, in his desperation, driving his long tawny mane of the animal’s teeth so deeply into his back that it formed, so firmly driven into the mouth. How it might have fared with him is impossible to say, but not Stern Heart come rushing up and drove his knife into the back of the wide beast.

With a snarl of rage the creature tore itself out of Ed’s grasp and he sprung up while the three shots which had followed its sudden descent as the animal came at him with hideous yells. These were the shots and screams which had startled Basil, and brought him to his feet. Stern Heart, who had an imperfect light to work by, as the helmet which Ed wore had been so battered, and one which no hunter cares to encounter alone. Upon examination they found why Ed had escaped from the teeth, for his knife had been driven into the animal’s body, and was forced to depend upon his claws as offensive weapons. The body was dragged down to the creek and there shot up. The animal’s same disposition was made of the deer which Basil had shot, and then the mouth was found and examined. And, according to Stern Heart used the best lot upon the torn limbs of Ed Le Fevre, it was some days before the wounds had passed away. But all this pain was nothing to the fact that he had slain an animal which almost any hunter would go out of his way
course, and it is needless to say that it made an addition to his collection of which he was justly proud. Ed was sitting on a small island, which in England would have been dignified by the name of river, and at the close of the second day’s work, perhaps seven miles in length and containing water of extraordinary purity. The place selected for a camp was on a long green point which extended into the water of grass lay the hunters, and swung down to the feeding-ground of the ducks where they lay resting on their backs, and with in the grass the lay quiet and waited for bigger game. Butter-balls or "hell divers" swam up and looked at them earnestly, but the hunters lay quiet and waited for bigger game. Butter-balls or "hell divers" swam up and looked at them earnestly, but the hunters lay quiet and waited for bigger game. Butter-balls or "hell divers" swam up and looked at them earnestly, but the hunters lay quiet and waited for bigger game.

The young Indian led them around the shore of the lake to a creek which let into it, and as they came near the island it was pitted with grass to make them look like the tufts which were continually floating past the stream, and made use of water of grass lay the hunters, and swung down to the feeding-ground of the ducks where they lay resting on their backs, and with in the grass the lay quiet and waited for bigger game. Butter-balls or "hell divers" swam up and looked at them earnestly, but the hunters lay quiet and waited for bigger game.

They had not long to wait, for a flock of black duck, the drakes resplendent in their unnatural attire, rushed up and stored their eggs in the earth, and were safe; only canvas-back and black ducks. They came tumbling down in all directions and the others on the pond rose in confusion and sailed away, and that breed of ducks in which their companions had been done to death. Those innocent-looking bunches of black ducks, and at first looked at, thought. Although the denizens of the pond deserted, others were not wanting to take their places, and as only a portion of the load was again the whirr of wings was heard, and a large flock of canvas-backs came fluttering down. Again the double-barkers went out of their barks, and the people in which they thought. Although the denizens of the pond deserted, others were not wanting to take their places, and as only a portion of the load was again the whirr of wings was heard, and a large flock of canvas-backs came fluttering down. Again the double-barkers went out of their barks, and the people

"This is slaughter," averred Gaspard, throwing off the grass and sitting up. "It is a shame to take duck like this! I say, Stern Heart; there is any way you can get me a pair of canvas-backs and another of black duck without tearing them all to pieces," Stern Heart answered. "Me do it," answered the Cree. "You come ashore and watch." The party landed on the shore, and then they brought their canoe, and Gaspard with only a blue-cloth. He ran up the creek a little distance and disappeared among the trees. Shortly after tufts of grass began to come down, which, at first, made comination among the ducks, but that was soon over and they paid no more attention to them. The tufts continued to float down, and soon one of them was seen surrounded by a flock of black ducks, led by a steately belshy, one of the finest specimens Gaspard had ever seen. While the ducks were gazing at him, and wishing that he could have that beauty in his collection, he suddenly appeared to be quite a great deal of a "quack," and directly after another of the flock went out of sight. After the shipment of canvas-backs, the party retired and left behind them the midst of a flock of canvas-backs, and to the surprise of the boys, a similar result followed, the finest pair of ducks disappearing among the trees.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW CAMP—HOW STERN HEART CAUGHT DUCKS—A COWARDLY SHOT.

Gaspard took possession of the body of the Carcajou the next day, quite a sickener.
Red River Rovers.

"Upon my word I never dreamed for a moment that you were under the grass."

"My way catch ducks," replied Stern Heart, with a laugh. "Good way, too; save powder and no scarce ducks."

The hunters remained on the bank, and commenced the exercise of the newfangled science of fancy shooting, only aiming at birds which were flying in such a way as to make the shots difficult. Stern Heart, using his rifle, shot two ducks to succession as he sat on the water, aiming only at the head.

They had a pleasant lunch under the lofty trees, and then went to the pond further inland, where they heard the crack of a rifle coming from the direction of the camp.

"We go back," cried Stern Heart hurriedly.

"Maybe Walt have trouble. Follow lake shore; me no wait."

He started with the speed of a grayhound, heading in the direction of the camp, from which a regular fusillade could be heard, which was from the sharp snap of shot. Basil, who had been a foot, kept pretty well up with Stern Heart, and when they were almost into camp, as the young man said, the crack of a rifle was heard, and he fell like a log. Basil grasped his shot-gun and ran toward the man, who lay extended on the ground by the blood coozing from a wound in the head. When he saw the ghastly face of Jean La Bart rise from the bushes beside the path, and without a moment's hesitation the boy gave him both barrel full of lead, and rolled back into the bushes, and the boy sprang after him, drawing his revolvers as he did so, and with the aid of some of the men that could see the track where his body had rolled down the bank, but he had entirely disappeared from sight.

Basil ran back to Stern Heart and lifted his head upon his knee. The young chief was senseless and appeared to be dead, and lying into the hut, and laid him on a pile of blankets, while the hunter looked at his wound.

CHAPTER X.

IRON BOW, THE CREE CHIEF—THE DEAD MESSENGER—JACQUES LA BART'S GRAVE.

Basil brought a gourd full of water from the creek, and Walt washed away the clotted blood from the wound. As he did so the lodge door was darkened, and a majestic figure stalked in, that of an Indian with long gray hair floating down on his shoulders. Walt looked up with a start, for in this old man he recognized the father of Stern Heart, the noted Cree chief, Iron Bow.

"Who has hurt Stern Heart?" he demanded, in the Cree tongue. The beaver's tail could carry a language.

"You know Jean La Bart, chief? He is the man who shot him," replied Walt.

"Then Jean La Bart is as good as dead, and a Cree chief does not lie. Is the boy dead?"

Walt was running his finger along the rugged marks of the rifle ball, and looked up again, hopefully.

"The ball glanced, chief. If the skull ain't fractured, as I think it ain't, then he's a better lucky for good for hurt flesh in that sake of yours, I'll go bail."

The old chief opened the bag and took out a silver dollar, and handed it, with a broad grin, to the half-white youth. He grasped the money opening took off his old cowboy hat, and with the guide continued to bathe the injured part, he bruised these leaves between two stones and made a sort of poultice. Gaspord opened the bag, and took out a fine piece of an old cotton shirt, which he tore quickly into bandages, and the poultice was laid upon the wound and the bandage tied neatly over it. Among other things the naturalist had a flax of brandy, a small portion of which he poured into a cup and passed to Walt, who managed to get to what few drops between it was worth a dollar to the boy. He grasped and opened his eyes weakly, and made an attempt to rise, but Iron Bow laid his broad hand on his breast and kept him down.

"Rest in God's peace now," he said, "I am with you and I will avenge you."

A contented look passed over the face of the boy as he sunk back again upon his soft bed. After resting a few moments he spoke:

"The bullet of Jean La Bart was not moulded to kill Stern Heart. I shall live, yes, through the following years of age. I knew before I came here, the tradition of the old chief, and I have always been in your right hand."

"Oh, let me get outside and dance," cried Ed. "I never felt so happy in my life. But say; where have those French fellows gone?"

"I just got a glimpse at 'em that below the bluff, where they were creeping up the hill.

"I saw to give myself no rest until I run them black dogs to earth. Let them look for me. Not a boy to carry the poor boy into their cabin."

They raised the body between them and passed into the hut, and laid him on a pile of blankets, while the hunter looked at his wound.

"We'd better let things go on just as they have to-day," said Walt. "Of course them half-an-half devils won't do us much harm. One of them a rogue; one of them a don't reckon will come back at all. Only we've got to keep our eyes peeled, or some on us may get a stray shot."

"Iron Bow nodded gravely and squatted on the earth, the lodge door, close to his son, looking earnestly at his face. The color was coming back now, and the appearance of his eye was good. All could see that he was rapidly improving, and knowing the nature of the Indian as he did, Walt was sure he would be on his feet in a few hours."

"Es that ain't anything particular to keep me here," he declared, "I think I'll go on a bit of a scout. That man has no objections. Hullo! What's that?"

As he spoke there came the sharp report of a rifle. Walt got to his feet, but the confusion taken by the Indian messenger. Walt grasped his rifle and darted from the hut, and making a wide circuit, came out upon the plains, and the path which led back to the village, the position of which he knew well. At this point he could see the well-defined trail which the Indian had left, and had made a dive for cover, he then jumped again plunged into the bushes and crept up to the path at another point and peered cautiously in, and saw something which made his stout heart beat hard, more with anger than fear.

In the path, just as he had fallen at the shot, lay the dead body of the messenger. Walt got to his feet, and lurched forward instantly; of that there could be little question. Even from where he stood Walt could see that the rifle had been in the hands of one who wore the buckskin hunting-shirt of the dead man had been scorched by the powder.

"The dirty thieves suspected that the Injun was arter help, an' killed him," said Walt. "I've got to look out fur myself, I reckon. An' then, ag'in, they probably come on this poor fellow unawares, an' thought best to put him out 'fore he could let on.

"No, man of the white fur," he added, in a questioning tone.

"I gave Jean La Bart two charges of duck shot after he shot Stern Heart, but he rolled down the bank and got away," responded Basil. "It will make funny business for him, picking the shot out of his caress."

"Good for you! I only wish you had ended him. Now then, chief, if you think the boy is safe in our hands, you'd better go to the village for men."

Iron Bow stepped to the door and gave a signal whoop. He was answered immediately, and a young brave appeared. Iron Bow met him at the door and gave him some orders in a low voice whereupon the brave darted away through the clearings.

"We'd better let the sun go on as they have to-day," said Walt. "Of course them half-an-half devils won't do us much harm. One of them a rogue; one of them a don't reckon will come back at all. Only we've got to keep our eyes peeled, or some on us may get a stray shot."

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him, and build a bright fire, that his soul may not wander in darkness beside the unknown river. Let us go. I ain't strong enough, my boy," replied Old Walt. "Better stay here an' leave this work to us.

The young warrior shook his head stubbornly.

"I am strong again. The bullet which does not pierce cannot long rob Stern Heart of his strength. Where is the water?"

The man called the Weasel stepped briskly forward. He had a sharp ferret face, a bright, piercing eye, and his motions were as sinuous and agile as those of an animal from which he derived his name.

"We seek Jean La Bart and his brothers, Weasel," explained Stern Heart. The trail leads from the place where you found the body of Oneto. Take up the trail and find the La Barts, that we may take vengeance.

The Weasel glided from the cabin with the slithery and scampag-like agility of hisnamesake, and the rest trooped after him in single file, leaving only Gaspard at the cabin. Their footsteps awakened no noise among the thick undergrowth, where the body was found was quickly reached, and the Weasel, with his nose to the ground, studied the earth intently, making a circuit about the spot where the body had lain. About six feet from the path he stopped and gazed more closely, and pointed to the place where the assassin had stood as he fired the fatal shot. From this point the trail hurriedly turned and went westward in a course which must bring him to the north side of the lake, and the others followed closely, keeping up with him so as not to interfere with the trailer. He took up the sign readily and advanced at a quick pace, and in an hour had passed the small creek from which the duck-hunters had emerged, and hence, for a moment, the trail was lost. Then he came back to the creek and looked into the water, and plainly saw the tracks of the hunter, men in the wilderness.

"How many do ye make them, Weasel?" asked Walt.

The trailer held up three fingers.

"That's more than four, old man, unless I fixed Jacks La Bart when I hit him. Look at the tracks again.

"Ha!" cried the Weasel. "Two carry one and make deep tracks; other man stood on the other.

"That's it," declared Walt. "One of them is wounded and the rest are hugging him along. Get on, Weasel; take over the other.

The two ran along the bank for a quarter of a mile, until they came to a place where a log crossed the creek and they saw where the trunk was slightly wet in place of the log. On the north side, they again took up the trail, until they came to a place where the party had stopped to rest, and there were the traces of blood on them, where a heavy body had lain for some time.

From this point the trail turned abruptly to the left, entered the woods, and stopped in a little sheltered hollow, where a pile of stones had been heaped up hurriedly.

"Off with these stones," cried Walt. "I reckon we'll find 'em 'ere.

The stones were hurriedly thrown aside and the face of a dead man was revealed—the face of the younger of the knavish brothers, Jacques La Bart.

"One's dead, Walt, solemnly. "Now for the others!"

And, after again hearing the stones over the dead man, the Weasel resumed the trail and the party moved steadily northward.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SWAMP REFUGE—TRAPPED BY ENEMIES.

It was plainly to be seen that the flying scoundrels could not go far without rest, bearing a wounded man with them. The old guide was delighted as he thought that Jacques La Bart was out of the way, for, although the youngest, he was at the same time the most dangerous of the gang.

"I don't see any store on the other two, boys," averred Old Walt. "Jean La Bart and his youngest brother were the head men of the front of the gang. Lord, don't I wish we'd strung up the unhealthly critters, this time that we had 'em for stealin' our canoes!"

Iron Bow nodded gravely.

"When you meet a snake in the woods, it is best to use a stick to drive it, if need be,

Jean La Bart and his brothers have lived too long, and done too much evil. Why do you stop, Weasel?"

The trail is lost," replied the trailer.

"I can't follow it any more.

"The rest on you keep back," ordered Walt. "I know these yer skunks like a book, an' I tell ye that the beat of them yer deviltry and savagery won't be found in the Canada Woods. Oh, I reckon they ar' tough; it ain't no name for them. Keep back, an' don't spoil the trail."

The Indians understood him, and stepped quickly back, while only the guide and Weasel studied the trail. It ended at the root of a large tree, and at this point the party had grouped together, and at the place where Jean La Bart had stood dark spots upon the leaves showed that his wounds had not yet ceased to bleed.

"By Jinks, Basil," said Walt, laughing, "you must hev filled him ez full of holes as a cullender. Durned ef ye didn't.

"I put four ounces of shot into him at twenty paces," replied the boy, "and he didn't feel it some, he is made of different stuff from any fellow I ever saw in my life.

"I wish you'd 'a' finished the cuss," averred Walt, "cause ez long ez he's got any life in him, he's bound to sting. I wish I could get started on this trail fugin', in them ye crows! Hey, the ar' gittin' along mighty lively toward safety."

At this moment Stern Heart, who had been standing at a little distance, gazing about him with keen eyes, stepped up to the tree and began to look at it intently. Then he raised his hand and pointed to blood stains which showed themselves on the bark.

"Jean La Bart go up tree," declared Walt. "Why he do that?"

Walt cast a hasty glance upward, and uttered a cry of joy. The top of the tree was overrun by a wild grape-vine, which had reached out its tendrils and caught the branches of a tree close at hand, and continuing to grow, had formed a perfect nest between the trees, strong enough to sustain a great weight. Walt darted to

the foot of the other tree, which stood aside from the path which they had been following, and again found the tracks of the fugitives, as they had reached the earth.

The break in the trail was easily explained now. William had climbed over the tree, crept across upon the mossy bank, and reached the other tree, from which they got to each again. By this cunning ruse they had deceived the Weasel, and doubt had made good use of the time.

"Oh, blame my head," bawled Old Walt, as he danced wildly on the sod, "now for the time when I think that I let them sneakin' in a' those young rascals! We've got to push this thing, or we will get left.

They again took up the trail, and advanced almost on a run, for the afternoon was nearly over, and they knew that Jean La Bart and his companions would travel all night, if they were able to do so. But, just as night came on, they made themselves another great swamp, extending a distance of three miles, and of nearly the same width. The trail led into the swamp, and the party looked at each other in dismay.

"Ach," cried the bewildered Walt, "this yer makes trouble. Here, Iron Bow; let's hev a talk."

The leaders of the party grouped together, and after a few minutes' conversation, quickly decided on a plan. Iron Bow called his men to his side and gave them hasty orders, and forty braves departed hastily to form a cordon about the swamp, leaving the rest of the party to pass into the swamp until the "surround" had been made. Stern Heart had gone with the braves to give them their stations and arrange a code of signals, while the party which the Weasel had pointed out that the villains whom they pursued could not leave it without being seen, and the rest threw themselves on the sol, and waited, for it would not do for them to pass into the swamp until the "surround" had been made. Stern Heart had gone with the braves to give them their stations and arrange a code of signals, which the Weasel had pointed out that the villains whom they pursued could not leave it without being seen, and the rest threw themselves on the sol, and waited, for it would not do for them to pass into the swamp until the "surround" had been made. Stern Heart had gone with the braves to give them their stations and arrange a code of signals, which the Weasel had pointed out that the villains whom they pursued could not leave it without being seen, and the rest threw themselves on the sol, and waited, for it would not do for them to pass into the swamp until the "surround" had been made. Stern Heart had gone with the braves to give them their stations and arrange a code of signals, which the Weasel had pointed out that the villains whom they pursued could not leave it without being seen, and the rest threw themselves on the sol, and waited, for it would not do for them to pass into the swamp until the "surround" had been made. Stern Heart had gone with the braves to give them their stations and arrange a code of signals, which the Weasel had pointed out that the villains whom they pursued could not leave it without being seen, and the rest threw themselves on the sol, and waited, for it would not do for them to pass into the swamp until the "surround" had been made. Stern Heart had gone with the braves to give them th..."
it was a capital spot to serve as a hiding place for the woodmen, and La Barts would be likely to seek. Every one stopped at once, just where he stood, and listened intently. They could hear the shimmer of the wind among the tree-tops, the shrill cry of the tree-toad and the mournful voice of the whip-poor-will; and, even as they stopped, there came the sound of their quick Bowling through the tree-tops over their heads. The Indians had not moved, for they knew every sound of the forest, and were satisfied that the noise was made by the great owl of the North, which had been startled from the branches by their approach.

Walt passed from man to man, and ordered them in a whisper to stay where they were, while he and the Wessel, creeping like snakes upon the earth, made the circuit of the island in opposite directions and met at the upper end, without finding them. Then he knelt down and came down the center of the island, with as little success as before.

"Sing'lar," declared Walt. "Queer things I see. I'll 'gree they find the skunks on this hyar island, but they ain't on deck. Now, my pinion is that they ar' on the other island that bears marks of their skunking. Walt: I'll discover it. An' ez fer you, boys, you jest set yersewse down hyar an' keep settin'. Ye ain't eklal to this hyar work, an' jest let me an' the noise an' ev'reey skunk whirrin', an' I won't hey you."

"All right, Walt," assented Basil, good-naturedly. "I can see that we are not out of place to do this in this kind of work, and perhaps we can do as much good by staying here. What signal shall we give if we should see them, by chance?"

"You've got the night-hawk call pretty fine, sir, and the guide. Give us that, and we'll soon be on hand."

The party departed in silence, leaving the two boys on the island. The utter loneliness and silence, boding ill to the impression upon them which they could not shake off. It did not seem possible, as they stood listening, that fifty or more Cherokee warriors surrounded the swamp and that quite a number of men were moving about in it, for not a sound was heard, save the usual noises heard in a Northern forest by night.

"I say, Basil," whispered Ed, as he pressed close to his brother, "it wouldn't be pleasant if the rascals got after us while we were alone."

"They wouldn't dare to try it," replied Basil. "We'd make so much row that it would bring the others on them, and they know we reck'n we'd better keep our clams shut, anyhow," responded Ed, "because our fellows might drive them on this island, and if they did come across us, it would be the end of us."

"I don't know about that. They are only three, and one of them hurt. We ought to be able to give them a lively show up."

"So we could, in a fair stand-up fight," answered Ed, "but you see this bush fighting is different, and I don't understand it.

And the boy cast uneasy glances into the surrounding darkness. If he had known it, the danger was closer than he thought, for the three villains they pur-

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CHAPTER XII.

HELD AS HOSTAGES—A SUDDEN ESCAPE.

The two boys were dragged out into the light, and their captors bent over them in savage glee, and the face of Jean La Bart looked demoniac under the light of the fire. The boys had been well laid, and they had managed to elude their pursuers, who had passed close to them several times without seeing them. All at once the man who was apparently senseless, gave the night-hawk call with startling distinctness, and Marius La Bart sprang at him with a howl of rage.

"You're a Dutch dog," he cried; "if you hide at the bottom of the sea, I will find you and kill you, if you dare to do harm to the white boys."

Walt answered: "You're now at Stern Heart. Zeo next time you shoot, I will take bateau air.

You have the best of it now," replied Walt. "You see our chief is not a man to harm the boys, there's more than we will be on your trail, an' never leave it till you ar' under the sod. Now, what do you want?"

The words were exchanged in the swamp, and are on the south side.

"You go to ze ozer island, and wait until morning," was the answer.

"I leave you free to murder the prisoners! Not if I know it," responded Walt. "Now I will not hurt zen, if you leave a path clear for us to make our escape."

I don't like to trust ye, durn ye," retorted Walt, in a perfect rage, "but ye understand it will go hard with ye if ye can't keep yer word. "Non, mon camarade!" answered Jean, with his shrill, devillish laugh. "I've got ye best of you, and I will not give it up. See ye; ye've captured ze two boys, and will keep zen as hostages."

"What do you want?" groaned Walt. "Oh, if it had only bin you I plugged instead of Jacks!"

"Diable! Don't speak about Jacques, or vezeer I live or die, I will kill ze boys. You listen: you've got Indians all round ze swamp;"

"Yes, I have; you can't escape."

"Ye can get revenge, and sat is bet-tain as you do vat I say. Why ze Crees chase us?"

"You know well enough. The chief, Iron Bow, is here, because you shot his son. The chief ordered him to come to the village. Mebbe it will please you when I tell you that Stern Heart ain't dead."

A savage hiss came from the lips of Jean La Bart. He had counted on the death of Stern Heart, in revenge for that of his brother, and it drove him nearly wild to think that he had escaped. He was half tempted to defy the guide and kill the boys on the spot, but he feared that his remaining brothers, who were more cowardly than himself, would not listen to that. He feared for his life, and at once demanded that the Indians who guarded the swamp should be withdrawn, and they should be allowed to go, taking the boys with them. He and the villain swore that if they would not agree to this the boys should be killed immediately. Knowing the desperate mood of Jean, Walt turned back that he would keep his word, and a messenger was sent at once to order the entire band to the south side of the swamp, and in the mean time Walt and Iron Bow held a conference. In half an hour they were joined by Stern Heart, who uttered a fierce ejaculation as he heard what had befallen the boys.

"I'm a French dog," he cried; "I'll find you, and kill you, if you dare to do harm to the white boys."

"Now listen: you can't do that," responded Walt. "You are now at Stern Heart; zeo next time you shoot, I will take bateau air."

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Basil Le Fevre, toward whom Jean was advancing with drawn knife. It was plain that the ruffian had not intended to spare the lives of his captives, but had only sought to break the texture of the war party and draw the guards away from the swamp.

"What would you do, Jean?" cried Marius, angrily.

"You must keep your wits about you, lads, as we have had in the old days," answered Jean, quietly.

"Nevar! Did you not hear him say zat Jacques had died wizout revenge? Out of ze vay, or I vill put a ball in you, Marius," said Jean.

But the other brother started up, and the two opposed themselves to Jean, and he saw that they would not permit him to kill the boys. It was not that they were too strong for him, but they feared the vengeance of Walt Wilson and Stern Heart if they allowed the captives to be murdered. An angry discussion took place, and for a time it seemed as if the brothers would come to blows, but after awhile the shrill vituperation closed, and Jean gave up.

"You are two cowards," he declared, in conclusion. "You will find zat we shall be chased, all ze same. Now, you go to sleep and take an hour's rest. I vill guard ze prisoners."

"I am sorry, Marius," said Jean. "I am not tired; you are hurt and I am not. Besides, you might forget yourself if we were not here to watch."

And the fellow grinned knowingly.

Jean growled out a sulky reply, and scraping together a pile of leaves, lay down to take a rest, which he really needed, after the long march which he had sustained. Marius sat on a log close to the prisoners, his gun resting across his knees, and feeling very sleepy. Not a thought of sleep, and blamed themselves deeply for the trap into which they had fallen. As Ed rolled over to change his position he felt that the cords on his hands were slightly lost, and began to work on his wrists about until he was almost sure that he could get his hands free, but after repeated efforts, he failed. Then he rolled over again. Basil, in his new position that his fingers touched the cords upon his brother's wrists, and he began to work on the knots. To his delight they opened quite easily, and the hands were saved. He hastened to work on Ed's bands, and the cords quickly dropped off.

When the young hunters were thrown to the earth their weapons had not been taken from them, and after glancing at Marius La Bart through his half closed eyes, and satisfying himself that he was not going to attempt to move them, he began to cut the wrists about until he was almost sure that he could get his hands free, but after repeated efforts, he failed. Then he rolled over again. Basil, in his new position, that his fingers touched the cords upon his brother's wrists, and he began to work on the knots. To his delight they opened quite easily, and the hands were saved. He hastened to work on Ed's bands, and the cords quickly dropped off.

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The party 'struck a lopse,' and Ed was surprised, after he had gone in this way for five miles, to find that this gait was not nearly as trying as a swift walk, and that he could keep up with the Indians. As far as he could see, both Wilson and Stern Heart, stopped by the sound, one was heard breaking through the underbrush, and the other shout):

"This way, lads; here we are!"

A cheerful shout from the lips of Basil Le Fevre was the reply, and the forest was in hot pursuit, and in five minutes the two boys were surrounded by their friends.

"Oh, let me hug you, my sons," cried Walt. "How did you get on? Any luck in that direction?"

"Never mind that now, Walt," answered Basil. "If you are going to chase those villains, you'd better be on your way."

"That's so. Away you go, Stern Heart, and get your horses over to the north side as quick as you can. You can bet they are started by this time. Were you chased, Ed?"

"Can't say. I was hoofing it as hard as I could, and didn't think whether they had left the trail or not. I reckon I knocked down half a dozen trees in getting through the swamp; didn't turn out for anything."

"Come on," cried Walt. "The quicker we are on the track the better.

The party at once bounded away in the direction of the island, which they quickly reached, but as had been expected, not a trace of the scoundrels was to be found. Jean La Bart was too old in villainy to hesitate for a moment when he found that the boys had escaped, but at once hurried on to his people, who were well out of the swamp when the Indians dashed through it and came out on the north side.

"Let's camp here," said Walt. "Jean La Bart has a good start, just what he asked for, but we won't give up for that. What do you say, Iron Bow?"

"When your son lay hurt almost to death I was no wonder, Jean, and I will do it," replied Iron Bow. "But we can not follow the trail in the night, and must have rest.

Very little preparation was made for camping, nor many precautions taken, for they had no doubt that the villains would continue their flight rapidly. Half a dozen runners were sent out to dash over the country, as swiftly as possible, and then to take up position upon commanding points, from which they might be able to see the flying Frenchmen. As soon as the light began to show in the east Walt was on his feet, and the search for the trail was commenced. So many of the Indians, in their haste to be on the trail, had pressed on the previous evening that it was difficult to take up the trail, and the Weasel began to make half-circles about the more promising traces, and then to take up position upon commanding points, from which they might be able to see the flying Frenchmen.
had heard them say they were going to Shadow Lake.

The wounded man was carried to firm ground by two of his friends, after his wound had been dressed, and Stern Heart pointed forward.

"Lost no time," he said. "Let us go to Shadow Lake, and when we find these wretches we will go after them."

And the party set forward with accelerated speed.

CHAPTER XIII.

SHADOW LAKE — THE CAPTURE OF THE MURDERERS — THE HOMeward TRAIL.

EARLY in the afternoon, the trailers rounded a small bay, and here and there scattered islands, and on the shore the trail abruptly ended.

"I reck'n we've run'em to the hole," said Walt, "an' now the next thing is to find 'em."

The lake was a gloomy one, the water having a somber appearance from being completely surrounded by tall pines which shaded the entire surface, and the Indians called it Shadow Lake.

The sharp eyes of the Weissel rounded over the low shores of the islands, but he could not see the Indians that he had discovered.

"Get logs," said Iron Bow. "We must cross to the big island and search."

In such a country as this, where trees are continually falling, it was easy to find floating timber, and in a wonderfully short space of time the greater portion of the warriors were in the water with their weapons laid upon the logs before them and swimming toward the island. Walt also secured a log, and stripping himself to the waist was about to go into the water, when he saw that Basil and Ed were similarly equipped.

"Hyar, he come, and in a wo'n't do. You two citizens stay jest whar ye air. Likely that I'm goin' to let ye b'lie a scrimmage like this."

"We are going over, just the same," replied Basil. "Do you think we came up here to look on? Go ahead and we won't be very far behind you."

"I wish I could," groaned Walt. "Waa'll, come along, you two young lunatics, an' ef ye git plugged, don't say I didn't warn ye."

The party, equipped for battle, soon spied the tiny points of the main island. There was not a sign, as far as human eye could see, that the foot of man had ever pressed this island, and the Indian scouts, who quickly made the circuit of the place, could find no spot where a landing had been made.

"Reckon they must be on another island," declared Walt. "It's durned singular they didn't land here. I don't see even a log on the beach hyar."

"Come here, Walt," cried Basil, "and tell me what this means."

The guide hurried to the place where the boy stood, on the point which looked toward the island. Here the water was shallow and in it, tending toward the beach, they could see the tracks of feet. The island itself was little more than a huge rock, rising fifteen feet from the water and covered by low growths of tangled underbrush, but the rock itself was a perfect fortress.

On all sides it rose almost in a perpendicular line from the water, and only in one place did it seem at all broken.

"Send in a man and let him try the water atween the islands, chief," ordered Walt. "I'll bet they're over that."

One of the Indians took a pole in his hand and stepped into the water. It rose gradually to his waist, then to his shoulders, and he began to rise from head to water, and they knew that the place could be forced.

"Hurrah for us, there's the place, bet yer life," assured Walt. "Go ahead."

He had been spoken when a puff of smoke shot out from the bluff, and the man in the water was seen to stagger, supporting himself by the pole. A second shot came from the bank.

"Another gone," wailed Iron Bow. "Forward, sons of the Cree, and let nothing stop you."

The Indians dashed into the water, holding their weapons above their heads, while the bullets whistled about them and several wounds were received. But it did not stop them, and they were soon seen climbing the broken place in the rocks, and with triumphant yells appeared upon the summit. Walt, shouting to Basil and Ed to stay where they were, followed the Indians. They were about to follow, when Ed stopped suddenly.

"I don't know but Walt was right, old man," he said. "Somebody ought to have seen these savages try to escape from that island to this. Get cover and watch them."

The first Indian who climbed the rocks expected a shot; and was prepared for it, but when he climbed the top, not the enemy was in sight. The bare rocks were plainly visible, and the low bushes would scarcely have given refuge to a rabbit. A rapid search commenced in all parts of the island, and they were about to give up in despair, when the eyes of the Weissel lighted on a blood-stain on the edge of the rocks, a sort of shell which ran along the feet below. Swinging himself over, the Indian ran along the shelf, followed by a dozen others, and came to a sort of open cave in the face of the rocks, where sat Jean La Bart alone, with his rifle on his knees, ready for a shot, and another rifle beside him.

"I wish Valt Veebbon came," he hissed, as he shot his bullet at the brain and caught up the second rifle; "but I send you home; zat is certain."

Before he could fire again he was borne down by half a dozen Cree, hurled to the earth by their blows, and the earthy hands of the whoops of the triumphant Indians called the others to the place, when the murderous villain was dragged out upon the upper part of the island.

"Now, you dog," exclaimed Old Walt. "What's them cursed brothers of yours?"

"Gone!" replied Jean, sullenly. "You never find them. Ah-h-h-h. If my hands are free I'll have your life."

"He's a liar," replied Old Walt.

"Them curses was here five minutes ago, but where they gone I can't tell. Did you see a canoe?"

"S'pose I tell you" hissed the Frenchman. "Jean La Bart know how to die with his teeth shut."

You'll have a chance," responded Walt.

At this moment the sound of rifles came from the island they had lately left, and the Indians bounded away, and Walt sent two of his men away. As they sprang down the slope to the water they could see figures running along the shore of the other island, and in one of them they recognized Marius La Bart. The two in pursuit were Basil and Basil.

"Hooray for the boys," yelled Walt, as he plunged into the water. "That chap ain't dangerous; they'll run him down."

The two boys had been swept up when the Indians, firing into the bushes, dragged a wounded limb after him. At a glance he recognized Jules, his own friend, and ran after him and dragged him back.

"You an Marius ain't quite so bad ez the other two," he said, "but you deserve punishment. Take keer of him, Injuns; I'll save Jules La Bart."

He darted across the island at a quick pace, but soon met Basil and Ed, dragging Marius La Bart between them, his face disfigured by a bullet wound. He knew the Indians had crossed from the other island and brought Jean with them. He only spoke once, and that was to ask Walt what would be done with them.

"Ask Iron Bow," replied Walt. "You have killed three of his men an' wounded his son, an' I leave you in his hands."

"Say somethin' for us, Jean," screamed Marius. "Tell zat Jules and me kill no one."

"Sacre!" hissed Jean. "Zat iz true; Jacques and I did zot work. From zis house on we get no more. You a coward, Marius La Bart."

The boys told how the capture of the last two had been effected. While search was being made for them on Stone Island and they had slipped across, hoping to get to the mainland and escape. When met by the boys Jules raised his rifle, and Basil shot him through the leg, while Marius ran away. The party spent the night on the island, and at early morning set out on their return, and the chief, with his prisoners, left at once for the Cree. Of the three of the vilians, for even Stern Heart never spoke of it, but they were never again seen in their old haunts. Stern Heart was gone two days, when he came quietly into camp and resumed his duties with the hunters, and for two months they trimmed these wilds, slaying noble game and adding largely to the collection of robes and birds which Gaspard sought to obtain.

At last their sport was over and they prepared to depart. Stern Heart, with his father and a number of the Indians, followed them to the southernmost point of the island, where they found everything had been faithfully taken care of by the guards. Another canoe was bought, and a crew of Indians secured to paddie it, one of whom was Stern Heart, and one bright autumn morning they turned their prosa southward, until they reached the point where wagons had been encamped a year before, on a certain day, and which they found on the spot.

The boys had all learned to love Stern Heart, and the parting was a sad one on both sides. They gave him their ammunition, as he now knew how to load shells, and he went home loaded down with gifts, among others Basil's Window.NEWSITEM two boys and one man, so they had taken a fancy. But before they went south a promise was passed that they would return, and with Stern Heart for their guide, pursue the perilous chase. The boys later took the young chief's canoe, the paddles dipped, and Basil and Ed stood sorrowfully on the bank to see the last of their young Indian friend, before they turned their faces to the south.
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