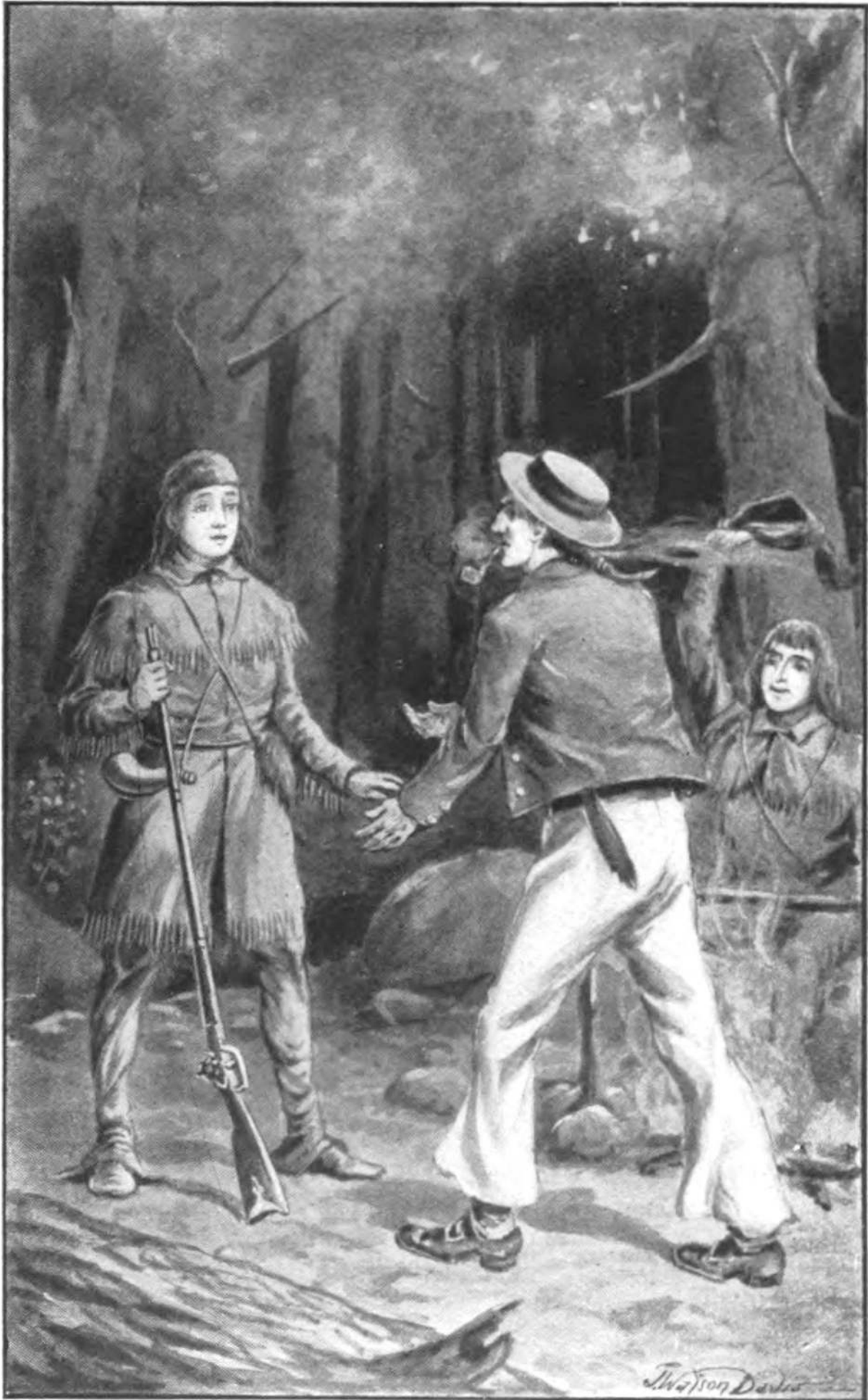




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It was difficult to believe the evidence of my own eyes when Captain Sam sprang up to meet me with outstretched hands.
Page 59. *Frontispiece.* *At the Siege of Detroit.*

AT THE SIEGE OF DETROIT

A Story of Two Ohio Boys in the war of 1812

As set down by
DAVID BELLINGER

Edited by **JAMES OTIS**



With Six Illustrations by J. Watson Davis

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AT THE SIEGE OF DETROIT
BY JAMES OTIS

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At the Siege of Detroit.

IN EXPLANATION.

It is late in the night on this 22d of February, in the Year of Peace 1815, when Ezra Churchill and I, David Bellinger, are but just come into our room after having witnessed the glorious and wonderful spectacle of New York City illuminated because of the treaty which the Prince Regent signed on the 28th of December of last year.

During this three-years war Ezra and I have played such a part as our age permitted, side by side with men, and when I say that Ezra, who is nearly four months older and by far the wiser and more courageous of us two, has on this day but just turned nineteen, it can well be understood the share which we have had in this second struggle with England has been an humble one; but in it we take no little pride, because mayhap we have done something towards bringing about the rejoicings of this day.

We came down to New York to see all of the wondrous spectacle which was promised, and have not been disappointed.

On the contrary, we are almost puffed up with pride because even before the war was declared we began to serve our country, and Ezra insists that what we have done shall be set down on paper, arguing that unless we do it ourselves those who live after us will never know that two lads bearing our names ever aided, in however slight degree, in teaching the Britishers a lesson which they have needed these many years.

It would have been better, according to my way of thinking, had Ezra undertaken this work; he has a greater flow of words, and, as I well know, can set them down in more clerkly fashion than it will ever be possible for me to do; but despite all I can say he insists that the task shall be performed by me, and, after what has happened to us two, his desire must be the same as a command, as will readily be understood when I have progressed with this tale.

At the beginning of the year 1812, Ezra and I were living near Dayton, in the State of Ohio. His father was my mother's brother, and when I was orphaned, Ezra's parents took me to their home

with such kindly intent that, as the years rolled on, it was, save for the memory, as if I had never known other father and mother.

In the fall of 1811, a war party of Wyandots, under lead of the Chief Walk-in-the-Water, ravaged that portion of the state in which we were living, and Ezra's father and mother were most cruelly murdered, we boys escaping death by the lightest chance, having been sent out to a clearing owned by my uncle, five miles from the farm, where we remained during the night in a log camp. When we returned to our home, late in the afternoon of the next day, we found it in ashes, and—

It is such a story as wrings one's heart to tell, and even now I cannot repeat it.

During eight long, mournful weeks we lived alone, Ezra and I, in the log camp, and there suddenly appeared to us an old man by name of Samuel Bassett, who had come all the way from Sackett's Harbor, in the State of New York, to seek us.

My uncle, Christopher P. Bellinger, who commanded a regiment of soldiers stationed in Sackett's Harbor, had sent this old sailor in search of us, he having heard of the cruel misfortune which had come upon our family.

Captain Sam, as we soon came to call this new

friend, had served in the American navy under Commodore Preble, having been on board the *Constitution*, when our fleet gave such a lesson to the Bashaw of Tripoli as he is not likely to forget while he lives, and many an evening would have been spent by us lads in mourning over our loss, but for the yarns the old man spun.

It was his intention to take us to Sackett's Harbor, agreeably to Uncle Christopher's instructions; but because of this reason or that, each of which seemed good at the time, we put off making the journey until the day came when all our plans were changed in a twinkling.

This much by way of explanation as to we three, whose adventures I shall try to the best of my ability to set down, promising not to forget how small was the part I played in comparison with the deeds of Ezra and Captain Sam.

AT THE SIEGE OF DETROIT.

CHAPTER I.

CAPTAIN SAM.

It was near to the 1st of June in the year 1812 when Ezra, Captain Sam and I went down to Dayton, from our hut in the clearing, to lay in such a store of provisions as might be needed during the journey to Sackett's Harbor, for the old man had decided it was high time we set out to join my uncle.

Not since the spring came had we been to the town, although it was but little more than seven miles, and once arrived there our astonishment was great at learning that near at hand were more than three regiments of soldiers, under the command of Brigadier-General William Hull, who had enlisted for the relief of Detroit.

Here was news for us indeed!

We had had no idea any relief was needed by the people of Detroit, but by dint of much questioning on Captain Sam's part, we soon learned that the British had been stirring up the Indians against us of the United States, and it was feared that the same chief of the Wyandots who had led the attack when Ezra's parents were murdered, was preparing for war against the settlers.

Therefore it was that the people had assembled, and, even as we asked concerning them, were making ready for a march of two hundred miles through the wilderness and across the terrible swamps.

It was but natural that Ezra and I, who had never seen a body of soldiers, should desire to visit the camp, and Captain Sam was more than ready to bear us company.

We had but hardly arrived at the encampment, and were staring around like stupids—I now mean Ezra and myself—when Captain Sam was hailed in a cheery tone by an officer, who seemed highly pleased at meeting the old sailor.

The two remained in converse for some time, while Ezra and I were held silent and motionless by surprise that our friend should be received with so much courtesy by one of the commanders of the

forces, until he called us to him, saying when we had obeyed the summons :

“ These are the lads, Colonel McArthur, an’ I’m in duty bound to carry them to Sackett’s Harbor agreeably to orders given by Colonel Bellinger, else I might take the offer.”

“ They look fit to bear a musket, an’ I’ll warrant already know something concerning warfare with the savages,” the officer said as he laid his hand on my shoulder.

“ They’ve had cruel experience, Colonel,” Captain Sam replied, and then, speaking in a lower tone, as if to prevent us from overhearing the words, he told of the sorrow which had come to us through the foray of the Wyandot, Walk-in-the-Water.

“ It’s a sad story,” Colonel McArthur said in a kindly tone when the old sailor had finished, “ but one which is all too common here on the frontier, and will be until the Britishers are forced to stop stirring the red beasts to such deeds. I still maintain that Colonel Chris. Bellinger would not be averse to their joining the forces were he here to give an opinion, and you had better think over my offer.”

Saying this the officer walked away with a friendly bend of the head, as if to say he would see

us soon again, and, as was but natural, Ezra and I were impatient to learn what offer had been made to Captain Sam.

“ You might guess it, lads, so it seems to me. What would a colonel want of three like us when his regiment is not yet full? ”

“ Would he make soldiers of us who are not yet of age? ” Ezra asked in surprise.

“ Ay, lads, you can stop a bullet as well now as if you were as old as I, and I’ll warrant there are many here who’d not be as sharp at guard duty as either of you who have been brought up in the forest, trained to depend upon your rifle to defend your own lives. ”

“ But why should we not join them? ” I asked. “ Surely if we may strike a blow at Walk-in-the-Water none should be more ready than we two. ”

“ I’m free to admit that all you say be true, an’ yet I have my orders, which are to take you straight to Sackett’s Harbor. ”

“ Those orders are eight months old by this time, and it can make but little difference if we delay a few weeks longer, ” Ezra replied stoutly.

“ If it might be only a few weeks I’d not say you nay; but now we’re free to go or come as we please, and once let us sign the muster rolls, there’s

a different tune to be sung. Then we have a master over us, and no one can say how many months might pass before we would be able to turn our faces toward Sackett's Harbor."

"But surely we need stay with the troops no longer than it pleases us," Ezra cried, and then for the first time we learned what is really meant by enlisting.

Even with the knowledge that we should be bound to serve in the ranks for twelve months as the shortest term, both Ezra and I were eager to be members of the command in order to have an opportunity of striking a blow at that murdering savage who had done us so deep an injury; but the old sailor was firm in the stand he had taken.

"I am responsible to Colonel Christopher Belling for the safety of you lads, and do not intend to leave you in this camp."

"But why should we not follow the soldiers for a time on our own account?" Ezra cried as a sudden thought came to his mind. "Surely we could do full duty, even though not being enlisted, and then, the savages having been given a lesson, we might continue on to Sackett's Harbor as we pleased."

"That wouldn't be 'cordin' to the rules of the

army," and Captain Sam shook his head as if the idea was not to be considered for a moment.

Minded to do as Ezra suggested, but desiring the free consent of the old man, I asked:

"How is it that Colonel McArthur greeted you like an old friend?"

"Because that's what we should be but for his rank. He an' I met in Boston nigh on to two years ago, an' it was my good fortune to be able to do him a friendly turn."

"Such as what?" Ezra asked carelessly, probably having no great desire to receive an answer.

"If it should so chance, lad, that you could befriend an acquaintance, it would be worse than refusin' to do it if you boasted of the action afterward. What we do in the way of a favor is what ought to be kept a secret; it's a case of not lettin' the right hand know what the left does, or somethin' to that effect."

That Captain Sam was irritated because such a question had been asked there could be no doubt, and I hastened to change the current of his thoughts by saying:

"Since you and the colonel are friends, I see no reason why it should not be permitted us to accompany the troops for so long a time as pleases us,

even though our names are not on the muster-rolls. We might have a chance at striking Walk-in-the-Water a blow without any great delay so far as the journey to Sackett's Harbor is concerned, for the troops will travel in that direction."

Captain Sam looked at me intently an instant without speaking, and I had begun to fear I also might have said something to displease him, when he cried heartily :

"You have a great brain, lad, an' that very idee proves it. There *is* no reason why we shouldn't take in a little of this march, an' if the troops move too slow we can push on ahead."

Almost before he ceased speaking the old man had left us to find Colonel McArthur, as I believed, and when we were thus alone Ezra said irritably :

"It doesn't improve his temper to meet with friends. One would have thought I had committed a sin in asking what favor he did for the colonel."

"Surely you will not lay to heart anything he may have said in a heat! He only intended to reprove you."

"And he did it in great shape," Ezra replied, his face clearing as he spoke, for my comrade was

not one who could hold anger long, however good a cause he may have had.

“Would you be better pleased to enlist?” I asked, hoping to take his mind from Captain Sam’s hasty words.

“Ay, that I should, for it seems as if we two of all others ought to join those who go out to fight against the savages. I am free to admit that we must abide by what Colonel Bellinger says, for since he is your uncle it is as if he were mine also; but I warrant you he will not be displeased when we tell him of our desire to become soldiers.”

“That is as may be. All which concerns us now is, whether Colonel McArthur will allow us to go with his forces unless we bind ourselves in some way.”

There was little need for us to speculate upon this question, for before Ezra could reply to my remark Captain Sam was with us again, and from the look on his face I knew the matter had been settled as we wished.

“Colonel McArthur is pleased to have us with him, so he says, and, as I know him, he’s too much of a gentleman to tell what ain’t straight up and down true; but we’re not to play the part of soldiers, ’cordin’ to the way I understand it.”

“Not play the part of soldiers!” I repeated, deeply disappointed. “Why, then, should we follow the forces?”

“I don’t make out that we will follow ’em. He’s allowin’ that you lads should have had experience enough to be fairly good scouts, an’ I’m to play second fiddle to you both.”

Ezra looked at me as if to ask if it was possible such news could be true.

To act as scouts for the column was the work of all others we would have chosen, and there was no great doubt in our minds but that we could perform the task satisfactorily.

The only experience we had had was while out hunting with Ezra’s father; but he had the reputation of being the best woodsman on the frontier, and although our lessons in the craft had been comparatively few, they were thorough.

“When are we to start?” Ezra asked, impatient to begin the march.

“That’s what isn’t known as yet; but the colonel allows we shan’t be kept waiting very long. General Hull hasn’t been in command but four days, an’ it stands to reason he wants to find out what kind of timber he’s got to work with before tryin’ to do very much. We’ll lay a straight course

for our cabin, an' be back here by to-morrow mornin' ready for business."

Until this moment we had forgotten that it would be necessary to return to the poor shelter we called home before leaving it perhaps forever, and now we were reminded of the duty, both of us were impatient to set out.

During the journey home but little was said by either of us, because of the stirring thoughts in the minds of each; but after we had arrived, packed up the few belongings we could call our own, and sat down before the camp-fire as was our custom before going to bed, I understood that Captain Sam was in a most peculiar mood.

Usually he had plenty to talk about, and hardly let an evening pass without spinning some yarn which we found difficulty in believing to be true; but on this night he was strangely silent, as if in trouble.

After waiting half an hour or more in the hope he would tell us what weighed so heavily on his mind, I made bold to say:

"You're not very cheerful to-night, Captain Sam."

"I'm afraid I ain't, lad, an' that's a fact."

"Does it distress you because we wanted to go with the soldiers?"

“Not a bit of it, my boy. I don’t blame you, nor couldn’t justly if I wanted to, because I felt the same way myself, an’ me an old sailor what hasn’t any right to think about traipsin’ hither an’ yon on dry land.”

“Are you willing to tell us what troubles you?” I made bold to ask after another long time of silence.

“It’s none of my own concerns—I mean nothin’ private ’twixt myself an’ me, David; but some words Colonel McArthur let drop, which has set me to thinkin’ on what may be my duty.”

Having said this much I knew the old man would continue, even though he ceased speaking and sat smoking his pipe until our patience was well nigh exhausted.

Then suddenly, as if just reminded that we were yet waiting for an explanation, he said:

“It’s the belief of Colonel McArthur that we’ll be at war with England before this ’ere march to Detroit is ended, an’ I’m askin’ myself what Colonel Christopher Bellinger would say if he knew you lads were to do your part with General Hull’s scouts at such a time.”

“At war with England!” Ezra repeated, giving very little heed to Uncle Christopher’s views

regarding us. "Why should we fight the Britishers again, Captain Sam?"

"You'd best ask why we haven't done so many a year before!" the old sailor cried in an angry tone. "Since our independence was declared, an' admitted, the Britishers have claimed the right to overhaul any American vessel on the plea of takin' from her men who'd deserted from the British navy; an' when a man-of-war has been short-handed, her commander has never hesitated about yankin' native-born Americans out their own craft, makin' them serve the king or be flogged till there wasn't anything left to flog. Look ye, lads, I've heard it said that there is now on record over six thousand cases where our people have been impressed in that fashion, an' more'n as likely as not that ain't the half of them as have been dragged away from home. I could tell you of what I've seen with my own eyes, till you'd be wild because our folks haven't declared war long before this. It stands us in hand to fight the Britishers, Ezra, because we claim our flag shall protect them that are under it. Here's a piece I cut out of a paper jest before I left Sackett's Harbor. It's part of a report from them as calls theirselves the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States, though I ain't clear as to what

that means; but the man who wrote it had his eye-teeth cut, an' this tells why we should go to war with England!"

Captain Sam took the empty pipe from his mouth, laid it on a rock beside him, and smoothed out a much-soiled bit of paper for some time before reading in a halting, awkward way which would have been comical but for his earnestness and the subject itself, the following, which I copy from the identical fragment:

“To sum up in a word, the great cause of complaint against Great Britain, your committee need only say that the United States, as a sovereign and independent power, claim the right to use the ocean, which is the common and acknowledged highway of nations, for the purpose of transporting, in their own vessels, the products of their own soils and the acquisitions of their own industry to a market in the port of friendly nations, and to bring home, in return, such articles as their necessities or convenience may require, always regarding the rights of belligerents as defined by the established laws of nations. Great Britain, in defiance of this incontestable right, captures every American vessel bound to or returning from a port where her commerce is not favored; enslaves our seamen, and, in spite of our remon-

stances, perseveres in these aggressions. To wrongs so daring in character and so disgraceful in their execution, it is impossible that the people of the United States should remain indifferent. We must now tamely and quietly submit, or we must resist by those means which God has placed within our reach."

Having finished reading, Captain Sam refolded the bit of paper, put it carefully in his pocket, and, after filling and lighting his pipe, said emphatically:

"An' what that 'ere committee says is solid truth!"

"How long has this been going on?" Ezra asked, for the subject was new to him as it was to me.

"Since our independence was declared, an' we've kept on submittin' to it! How was it when the *Chesapeake* was fired into by the *Leopard* while we was supposed to be at peace with England? Three of our own men were hauled over the rail, because our vessel wasn't prepared for action, while the Britisher's crew were at quarters when he hailed. Twenty-one round shot struck the hull of the *Chesapeake*, an' all this Government had to say about it was that the thing oughtn't been done! Hark ye, lads, it's only last year since one of our vessels bound

for France was captured by the king's ships within thirty miles of New York Harbor, an' Captain Ludlow was sent in the forty-four gun *President* to straighten things out. He was a sailor what knew his duty, an' because he overhauled one of the king's vessels a bit rough, these very United States laid him by the heels on account of it, fearing we'd hurt Johnny Bull's feelin's! Wasn't it proved in 1809 that the Governor of Canada kept a spy by the name of John Henry in Boston, promisin' him a thousand pounds a year for doin' all he could to destroy the Union? There's been enough, leavin' aside the impressin' of our sailors, to bring on a war, an' if it comes I'll be glad of it! I ain't so old but I can manage to do my share afloat. What we want is men like Commodore Preble, who tackled the Bashaw of Tripoli till the old monster trembled in his boots, if he had any on! Now turn in an' get some sleep, for we'll make an early start to-morrow."

The old sailor laid himself down on the boughs which formed our bed, and we knew by experience that, having finished with the subject for the time being, it would be useless trying to make him continue the conversation.

But Ezra and I were not minded to go to sleep

while there was so much in our minds to excite us, and we sat by the fire discussing what it might be possible for us to do in case there should be a war, until the morning was hardly more than an hour away.

Then we laid down by the side of Captain Sam, and when he called us to share the breakfast he had cooked, it seemed to me as if my eyes had not been closed in sleep more than ten minutes.

Now the old sailor was ready to talk as long as was our wish regarding the startling information imparted by Colonel McArthur, and after giving us his views as to what it might be possible for our people to do in the way of teaching the king that he must keep his hands off American vessels, he told for at least the tenth time the story of what he had seen and done at Tripoli.

But that the purpose of my setting down these lines is to relate our adventures during this war of 1812, now so happily ended, I would dearly love to repeat all our old friend told us regarding the strange sights he saw while off the Barbary coast.

We were at the encampment before the day was more than well begun, and within a few moments after our arrival word was brought that Colonel McArthur would speak with us at his headquarters.

“Now we shall be asked again to enlist,” Ezra whispered to me, “and if you are minded to do so without waiting for your Uncle Christopher’s permission, I will set my name down right willingly.”

What I would have done had the matter been pressed it is impossible to say, nor does it matter much at this late date, but I verily believe, knowing as I did that war might soon be declared, I should have had no thought of my uncle had Colonel McArthur laid the muster rolls before us.

But we misjudged his purpose in sending for us.

Not one word was said regarding our enlisting, when we were before him; he simply questioned us to learn what we knew of the country thereabouts, and after we had replied to the best of our ability he said, much as though it were a plain business transaction we were to embark in :

“On the day after to-morrow the command will move, marching, with no more delay than may be necessary, to Urbana, from which point it will be necessary to enter the forest. In view of the fact that my regiment has been selected as the one to lead the column, and that upon us will devolve the labor of cutting roads for the forces, it is strictly within my right to send you in advance, although

I might not be willing to do so without the commander's permission were you regularly enlisted men. You will travel on the course I have marked out, for thirty miles, and then return."

"You count on our trudgin' out an' back again, eh?" Captain Sam said in surprise.

"That is the idea," the colonel replied with a laugh; "but I am not suggesting this simply for the purpose of providing you with exercise. You are to bring me a report of the country. That the Indians are prowling around there we know full well; small bands, or hunting parties would give us but little trouble in view of our numbers. But it is necessary we should know if there is any concerted action among them, and I depend upon you three for a truthful report of what we shall find in our path as we advance."

Captain Sam did not look overly well pleased at the idea of starting out on such a mission, and had he known as much about that section of the country as we did, there would have been even better cause for black looks.

Twenty-four hours after leaving Urbana the savages would be close at hand, ready to do murder, and he who kept the scalp on his head must ever have his wits about him.

Colonel McArthur said he had no fear of small bands, or hunting parties; but we three would have good cause to hold them in wholesome dread, even though we came across no more than four, and the warlike spirit which had animated me an hour previous now oozed rapidly away, leaving me as timorous as any girl.

I understood that thoughts similar to mine were in Ezra's mind, but we took good care to prevent the fear from being read on our faces, and replied with a great show of valor when the colonel asked if we were still of the mind to act as his scouts.

“What do you need in the way of an outfit?” he asked, when Ezra had declared we were ready to do as he proposed, and I made answer:

“Nothing more than we already have, save it may be powder. We should travel light on such a mission, and there is no need of taking food when it can be had in the forest for the shooting.”

“You at least know how to set about the work,” he said, in what I fancied was a tone of approval. “The quartermaster will supply you with ammunition, and here is the course I have marked out as the most direct to Detroit.”

As he spoke he handed Ezra a piece of bark on which was marked the watercourses and the swamps

he would pass on this side or that, until one could read his purpose plainly.

Seeing that we understood it, he spoke at some length regarding the work we were to do, reminding us of the dangers, which was needless, and repeating that by such work faithfully performed we would be rendering a far greater service than could have been done by us in the ranks, all of which I realized fully.

Then he took leave of us, making no mention of the time when we should set out, which, according to my way of thinking, was to let us know we might go when we would.

I was minded to start at once, for it was not such a task as one cares to think about very long lest his courage fail him entirely, and when we three were alone I found that Ezra was of my way of looking at the matter.

Captain Sam had no idea of hiding his fears; but began questioning us closely as to what dangers might lay in our path, and when we had answered him, making light of many things which gave us much uneasiness, he said flatly :

“Look ye, lads, I’m not at home on dry land, an’ this playin’ the scout in a forest filled with painted savages is not to my likin’. We’ll say to

Colonel McArthur that he's very kind in lettin' us sail thirty miles ahead of him; but we found it wasn't the kind of berth we were after."

"Surely you wouldn't show the white feather, Captain Sam, and that before we've gotten where the danger is to be found?" Ezra cried, fearing lest even now we might be deprived of this chance to serve the troops.

"I'd better do it this minute than wait till I'm where I can't show any kind of a feather," the old sailor replied in a tone so mournful that we laughed heartily, even though not in the mood for mirth.

And he would in good truth have refused to go ahead but that we urged him by every argument we could bring to bear not to make us the laughing-stock of the camp, as indeed we would have been if, after having asked permission to be of some service, we backed down because of the danger.

"I'll go, lads," he finally said with what was very like a groan; "but at the same time I want it plainly understood that my better judgment is opposed to any foolhardiness of the kind. There are plenty of men here better fitted for the job than me, who wouldn't be of much more account than a pratlin' infant if we got into a nest of painted savages."

“If we should get so far in as that I’m thinking none of us would be of any very great service,” Ezra said with a feeble smile. “It shall be the care of David and me that you are not put in such a position, for we have as great an affection for our hair as you or any other sailor can have.”

Even then I believe the old man would have found some excuse for preventing us from making the venture had we given him the opportunity; but we took good care not to leave him alone.

But for the fact that we would have been jeered by the soldiers as cowards, I would have been well pleased to do as Captain Sam desired, for the work was so fraught with danger as to be anything rather than pleasant; but once having proposed to do it, neither Ezra nor I were minded to show the white feather, and in less than half an hour after having taken leave of Colonel McArthur, we were on the road to Urbana.

CHAPTER II.

MISSING.

BOTH Ezra and I knew, from what we had already seen of Captain Sam, and because of his record under Commodore Preble, that he was far from being a coward, and yet no man could have shown more fear than he when we set out from the encampment agreeably to orders.

During all the time he was at our poor home the old man had been as unconcerned, when hunting in the forest, as the most experienced woodsman, and there we were really in danger of encountering small bands of savages ready for mischief, yet now, while traveling from Dayton to Staunton, where there was no fear of meeting an enemy, he halted in alarm at the slightest unusual noise.

But for the fact that he had been told we were going into danger, I do not think he would have paid any particular attention to what might possibly be

in our path, and it pained me to see him in such a state of terror.

Both Ezra and I explained that there was nothing to fear until after we had passed Urbana, the last settlement before arriving at the Rapids of the Maumee; but this did not revive his courage.

“I’m not given to bein’ weak-kneed, lads, as any of my old shipmates could tell you; but I allow this ’ere funk comes of my bein’ like a fish out of water, so to speak. If I was in a boat, no matter how small, I allow I’d carry sail in a different fashion.”

However, as the hours wore on, and he began to realize that what we had told him was true, he put a different face on the matter, and so far became himself once more as to spin a yarn regarding his doings on the Barbary coast.

We slept at Staunton that night, and were given a right hearty welcome once it was known we were on our way to act as scouts in advance of the troops.

The good people who gave us lodgment looked upon Captain Sam as a hero, after learning that he had served under Commodore Preble, and until a late hour in the night he told of his adventures in foreign parts, adding so much to the stories we had previously heard that they seemed quite new.

The distance from Staunton to Urbana is but little more than twenty miles, over a good trail broad enough to be called a road, and by starting at early light we covered the distance by noon.

Here we found the Fourth Regiment of regulars under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Miller, and were received in camp as comrades.

Ezra and I were minded to push ahead as soon as dinner had been eaten, for from this point our advance must be slow, and we were eager to be done with the task; but to such a proposition Captain Sam objected decidedly.

He was tired, not being accustomed to walking such distances, and, moreover, found lodgment in the camp so pleasant that he would not willingly exchange it for the forest; therefore we gave way, although our better judgment told us it would be wiser to make no delay.

Once the savages understood that troops were to march across the trackless wilderness, every tree would hide an enemy, and if we aimed to save ourselves much danger, it stood us in hand to push ahead before the intentions of General Hull could be made known to the enemy.

However, it would have been useless to make any attempt at convincing Captain Sam of this fact, and

we waited there impatiently while he spun yarns for the amusement of the idle soldiers, knowing all the time that duty and prudence demanded we should be on the move.

While in this camp we heard much said against the possibility of making the march in time to be of assistance to those in Detroit who were so sorely pressed.

Woodsmen who knew the country well told us of the Black Swamp which must be crossed if the troops were to push ahead in a straight line, such as Colonel McArthur had marked out on the map he gave into Ezra's keeping, and more than one predicted the journey could not be made in any reasonable length of time.

For nearly two hundred miles the men must press forward through a forest where not so much as an Indian trail could be found, encountering the morasses both before and beyond the big swamp, and all the while scourged by black flies and mosquitos in such numbers as were like to drive the more nervous ones crazy.

“ This strikin' out on a bee-line is all very han'-some while you're talkin' about it,” one of the men said to Captain Sam ; “ but when it comes right down to footin' it, there's a different song to be sung. I

don't say anything agin what General Hull knows of soldierin'; but I'll maintain, an' so will anybody what knows this section of the country, that he's a long bit out of his reckonin' when it comes to work in the woods."

In fact, Ezra and I had much the same opinion after we learned of the course to be taken; but it was not for us, a couple of lads who were wholly ignorant concerning methods of warfare, to say anything against a plan already decided upon.

Therefore it was we held our peace during the evening spent in this camp; but Captain Sam did not hesitate to express his opinion very freely, and when the time came for us to go to bed, he urged that we turn back with the report of what had already been heard.

"It'll save a deal of sufferin' for the men, an' perhaps be the means of gettin' the troops to Detroit in season to be of some service," he said at length, as if believing that argument should settle the discussion.

"It will save nothing," Ezra replied impatiently, for the old sailor had been talking long and unreasonably. "You wouldn't get even Colonel McArthur, to listen to two boys like us, let alone the general himself."

“Then I will give *my* opinion, an’ there’ll be no goin’ back of that.”

“I suppose not,” and Ezra spoke in a tone that aroused all my mirth, forcing me to stuff the sleeve of my shirt in my mouth to prevent an outburst of laughter. “Old sailors who have never seen an Indian, and who know nothing about woodcraft, would be listened to with the greatest attention on such a subject.”

Captain Sam was not overly well pleased with this reply, as I understood from the fact that he remained silent, and while waiting for him to answer my comrade, I fell asleep, not awakening again until the beating of drums caused me to spring to my feet in alarm.

It can well be fancied that Ezra and I made no delay on this morning; but hurried Captain Sam off despite the fact that he had accepted an invitation to breakfast with a certain sergeant who had listened most attentively to his stories during the evening previous.

“We’ll eat as we walk,” Ezra said curtly in reply to the old sailor’s remonstrances against leaving the camp with what he called “unseemly haste.” “Our orders are to travel thirty miles into the wilderness and then come back, and I don’t

count on spending more time on the task than is necessary.”

Even though we were going into danger, there was a sense of relief in my mind when we finally plunged into the forest, and our work as scouts was begun.

Owing to the fact that we had not been able to get any news in the encampment regarding the savages, both Ezra and I were extra cautious from the moment we were well clear of the town, and because we advanced slowly, scrutinizing every tree and bush as though positive the enemy was close at hand, Captain Sam asked impatiently :

“What do you lads expect to see? It don't stand to reason Indians would come so near the settlement.”

“In this country it isn't safe for a man to believe he is in any place where it's certain an Indian isn't lurking. If all we have heard be true, there are red scouts in the forest as well as white ones, and it is our business to learn where they are,” Ezra replied in a tone so grave that the old sailor could not fail to understand how great necessity there was for the utmost caution.

And not with any idea of increasing his fears, but rather that he might the better realize the situation as it really was, I added :

“ We are more likely to find the painted scoundrels close around the settlement, than two days’ journey beyond. Were we half way between Urbana and Detroit I should feel reasonably safe.”

From that moment until we halted at noon the old sailor did not so much as speak.

He copied our every movement as faithfully as a mimic would have done, all of which was greatly to our liking, for a single incautious movement might bring death close at hand.

We had brought from the encampment such a supply of food as would suffice us during the first day’s tramp, and after having partaken of our dinner Ezra stretched himself on the ground for a resting-spell.

Then it was that Captain Sam drew his pipe from his pocket and had begun to fill it, when Ezra said in a whisper, for loud talking was forbidden :

“ You must get along without a smoke while we are in the wilderness, Captain Sam? ”

The old man looked up in surprise, and I hastened to say :

“ An Indian can smell tobacco as well as either you or I, and once having done so he would not rest until he had learned from whence it came.”

Captain Sam returned the pipe to his pocket, and while one might have counted twenty remained

silent and motionless as if in deep thought, after which he said in a gruff whisper that could have been heard at a greater distance than if he had spoken in an ordinary tone :

“This 'ere is a leetle more'n I can stand, lads! It's bad enough to traipse 'round over fallen trees an' through bushes where a cat couldn't see an inch before her nose, with flies an' mosquitoes thick as skippers in cheese; but when it comes to knockin' off a man's allowance of tobacco, I'm ready to throw up the job, which there's no reason why we shouldn't do, seein's how we haven't signed articles.”

“It is a little late in the day for turning back, Captain Sam,” Ezra replied, and I could see that he was trying hard to prevent the laughter in his heart from being read on his face. “Now we've got this far it is necessary to keep on till the work is finished.”

“I'll thank you to tell me why? What's to hinder our goin' back to the encampment where we were treated like gentlemen? ”

“The fact that we have begun the task set us by your friend, Colonel McArthur. If the men who received us so well last night once came to believe us cowards, we shouldn't be made welcome.”

This silenced Captain Sam, but did not make him

any better satisfied with the situation, as I well understood by the expression on his face.

He made no effort to enter into conversation with us during the remainder of the day; but did all that was required of him with the air of one who is being deeply injured.

When an hour had passed Ezra gave the word for the march to be resumed, and during the afternoon we pressed forward in as nearly a direct course for Detroit as was possible: but without seeing or hearing anything betokening an enemy.

That night we made our camp in a clump of bushes which would serve to hide us from view, and by daylight next morning were tramping ahead once more, this time on the alert for game.

The provisions brought from the encampment had been consumed, and until we were with the troops again our rifles must supply us with food.

When the second day's march had come to an end, both Ezra and I believed we were not less than twenty miles from Urbana.

This was no great distance to make in eight and forty hours; but it must be remembered that we were forcing our way through the dense foliage, where no sign of a trail existed, and the advance could not be other than slow.

On this night we made camp in a small cave on the hillside, which might at some time have served as the den of a bear; but there were no signs of its having been occupied for some time.

It was nearly sunset when we stumbled upon the shelter, and the rain had been falling for an hour or more, which made this hole in the ground appear all the more agreeable as a resting-place.

Beyond examining the mouth of the cave we made no attempt at learning anything regarding it, being well content because it would serve to protect us from the storm.

We had of roasted rabbit, cooked that morning, an ample supply of meat for supper, and when the meal had been eaten Ezra said to Captain Sam :

“ There’s no reason why you shouldn’t enjoy your pipe here. I’ll promise there are no savages lurking around on this night, and even though there were a host but a short distance away, the cave would swallow up the fumes of the tobacco.”

The old sailor’s pipe was already filled, for he had indulged many times during the day in what he called a “ dry whiff,” and it seemed to me that Ezra had hardly ceased speaking before the smoke was pouring forth in volumes from Captain Sam’s mouth.

After enjoying himself in silence ten minutes or more, at the end of which time he was completely enveloped in the blue cloud, he grew more companionable than at any time since we had left Dayton, and speculated upon what we would do in case war was declared, or spun yarns of adventures at sea, until Ezra and I were asleep, at least, I believe such must have been the case, because the last sound either of us remembers of hearing on that night was his voice.

When I awakened next morning it was not yet daylight; but on looking out from the mouth of the cave I saw gray and yellow streaks in the sky which told of coming dawn, and I understood that it was time we made a move.

There was no breakfast to be cooked until after we had brought down game of some kind, and I stepped softly out, hoping to find meat close at hand.

The rain had ceased to fall, but the foliage was so wet that it was like taking a bath to push on through the bushes, and, knowing my rifle would soon be unfit for service if I continued the apparently useless labor, I went back to the cave.

By this time it was so light that I could see that portion of the excavation where we had slept, and to my surprise Ezra was there alone.

Captain Sam, when I saw him last, on the night previous, had been sitting at the left of Ezra toward the rear of the cave, and there he must have slept.

For a moment I was disturbed because of his absence, and then, saying to myself that he had most likely gone out for a look around, while I was searching for game, dismissed the matter from my mind.

Awakening Ezra I spoke of what we must encounter if we began the journey while everything was wet, and asked his opinion as to our remaining where we were until noon; but made no mention of the fact that our comrade was absent, nor did he appear to notice it.

It was finally decided between us that it would be wisest to continue the advance, even though it might be disagreeable, because we could not hope to break our fast so long as we remained there, and only after the discussion had come to an end did we grow concerned regarding the old man.

Ezra had neither seen nor heard anything of Captain Sam since the night before, when we fell asleep while he was talking, and it was impossible for me to say whether the old man had been in the cave when I went out, because I had not looked for him.

As the moments passed we grew alarmed, and,

regardless of the fact that by so doing we might bring Indians down upon us, both stood at the mouth of the cave shouting loudly the name of our absent friend.

No reply came, save in the echoes, and we looked at each other in mingled fear and bewilderment.

“Do you suppose he would be mad enough to make an attempt at finding his way back to the encampment?” Ezra asked, speaking in a whisper as if fearing to hear the sound of his own voice.

“That isn’t to be thought of; even though Captain Sam had made up his mind to go back, he would have told us. There is no reason why he should sneak away.”

“Except it might be he feared we would laugh at him.”

“Even that would not have prevented him from saying what he proposed to do. The old sailor would never leave us in such a manner, for he knows full well the trouble it would cause. It must be——”

I did not finish the sentence, and, indeed, there was no need, for Ezra knew that which was in my mind.

Although we had not seen signs of Indians, it was possible there were many of the painted beasts close

at hand, and that he had been taken prisoner by the red villains was the only reasonable explanation we could make of his absence.

As if the same thought was in the minds of both, we fell to examining the interior of the cave for his footprints, but the rock which formed a greater portion of the bottom had been swept clean by the wind, and an hundred men might have marched across it without leaving a trail.

At the entrance, where the earth was moist, our footprints could be seen, but I had come in and gone out so many times since daylight that nothing could be read there.

“There can be but one answer to the riddle,” Ezra finally said: “we believe ourselves fitted to act as scouts, when we know nothing whatever of woodcraft. Very likely we were followed by the savages during the whole of yesterday, and nothing but chance saved us from being killed or made prisoners. Captain Sam probably went out this morning simply for a look around, and, finding him unarmed, the red villains pounced upon him.”

That the old man was without a weapon we knew because of the fact that his rifle was yet leaning against the side of the cave where it had been placed when we arrived, and the knowledge that it was

there when I first went out prevented me from questioning whether he was yet with us.

It seemed to me as if the terrible trouble had come upon the old man wholly through us, for had we not insisted on joining the troops he would have been with us either at the clearing near Dayton, or on the road to Sackett's Harbor, and because we were responsible for this outcome I was bowed down with grief.

Ezra, fortunately, was more of a man, quicker to think, and more courageous to act, otherwise we might never again have seen Captain Sam in this world.

When perhaps half an hour had passed in the most mournful silence, we meanwhile listening intently for any sound which might betoken the presence of enemies, my comrade said, speaking so sturdily that I was heartened at once:

“We shall not only neglect our duty to the troops, but do nothing in the way of aiding either the poor old man or ourselves, if we sit here like stupids.”

“What can we do?” I asked helplessly. “It isn't likely we could rescue him.”

“What is our first duty?” he asked sharply, taking up his rifle as if thinking the danger so im-

minent that we must needs be prepared for it at an instant's warning.

“To find Captain Sam, of course.”

“I do not think so. His is but one life, while there are hundreds of men who may walk into an ambush if we fail to give warning of what has been done.”

“Do you believe we should go back without trying to help our old friend?” I asked in surprise, for Ezra was not wont to desert a comrade so readily.

“The most important thing is to have speech with Colonel McArthur, or some one in command; but we must also do what may be possible for Captain Sam. You can make your way back without fear, and it is likely the entire journey need not be performed, for the troops must have begun to advance before this. I will remain here, or push ahead, as may seem best, and you will join me later.”

I looked at him as if believing he had taken leave of his senses, as indeed seemed to be the case for an instant, and he added:

“Both of these things must be done, and it is only by separating that it will be possible.”

“Then why should you be the one to take all the

danger? Why should I not search for the old man, while you go back? ”

“ Because I am the elder, and, perhaps, have a bit more knowledge regarding this kind of work.”

I would have objected to that by insisting that we had had the same experience; but he would not listen an instant.

“ You are to go while I stay here, or continue on as may seem best,” he said in a tone such as I never heard him use before, and my tongue was silenced.

As if his was the right to command, and mine the duty to obey, I put myself in readiness for the journey, and when this had been done rose to my feet.

Then it was that the anger in my heart vanished suddenly, for Ezra took my hands in his with a loving clasp as he said almost tenderly:

“ We are nearer each other than brothers usually are, David, because of what we have suffered together. The danger to him who pushes on is not much greater than that which he may meet who returns, yet if there be a difference, I would have the most perilous portion of the work. We shall be together again in a few days, and till then——”

He shoved me from him as if not daring to say

more, and I, my eyes full to overflowing, turned away, going out of the cave without thought or heed of danger, so great was my grief.

“Not that way, David, not that way, or some skulking savage will soon have his hatchet in your brain!” the dear fellow shouted. “Keep your wits at work, for on you depends the lives, perhaps, of many who would aid those of Detroit.”

Thus admonished I straightened myself up as a man should, and set out more bravely, but yet not daring to so much as look behind me lest a sight of him whom I feared I might never see again should make a woman of me.

Of my journey toward Urbana until I met the advance of the troops under Colonel McArthur, it is not necessary to write, because of the fact that no adventure befell me.

Had I been walking on the highway between two towns there would have been more of interest to set down.

It was as if the savages had never inhabited that section of the country, for I saw not so much as a feather from the moment I parted with dear old Ezra until I met the First Regiment hewing their way through the wilderness.

Ten minutes after meeting the first of the soldiers

I was standing before the colonel, telling him the sad story, and he listened in silence until I had come to an end.

Then he mused for so long a time that I began to believe he had not heard what I said, but was intent on other matters, when he suddenly asked :

“ Are you certain that during all this time there were no Indian signs? ”

“ We saw none, sir, and neither my comrade nor I was careless as we advanced.”

“ Did you search around the cave for the sailor? ”

“ No more than I have said. Had he been near, there was no reason why he should not have heard when we hailed him.”

“ It is because you shouted so loudly, thus proclaiming your whereabouts had there been any savages near at hand, that causes me to believe his disappearance due to some other cause. It is not likely you would have been allowed to return with the information if he had been captured. Two boys penned up in a cave would have been such game as an Indian would most like to run across.”

It was all very well for the colonel to speculate thus; but it did not lessen my fears for Captain Sam's safety.

I knew the old man would not willingly have left us to such anxiety as he must have understood would be ours, and unless the Indians had taken him prisoner, how could he so completely have disappeared?

CHAPTER III.

REUNITED.

COLONEL McARTHUR, after having stated as his belief that Captain Sam's disappearance was not due to the savages, left me abruptly, and I saw no more of him until late in the evening of that same day.

I had come upon the troops shortly after noon, and the remainder of the time, while I remained uncertain as to whether anything more might be required of me, was spent in learning what the soldiers had done.

I was minded to retrace my steps early next morning, unless orders to the contrary were given, for it was not my intention to leave Ezra to seek out our old friend alone.

There was small doubt in my mind but that I could find him again even in the wilderness, for since he was hunting instead of being hunted, there was little likelihood he would make any great effort at concealing his trail.

After a certain fashion we were bound to obey any orders the colonel might give, for although not having signed the muster-rolls, we had agreed to give our services during the journey to Detroit, which, as both Ezra and I viewed it, was much the same as though we were regularly enlisted.

There was not much to be learned from the men, except it was as to how this or that causeway had been thrown across the morasses ; how such a stream had been bridged, or the extent of progress made in making the road, for the gallant regiment were in fact building a highway that those who followed might march without impediment.

Several of the more orderly inclined men who spoke with me, mentioned the fact that the troops commanded by General Hull chafed under the restraints of military regulations to such an extent as to be absolutely mutinous, and one, with whom I talked at some length, predicted that disastrous results must follow before the campaign was at an end, if this spirit was not checked.

At the point where I had met the soldiers two block-houses were being built on the south side of the stream, and I learned that the whole was to be stockaded into a regular fort ; but the work was at that time so incomplete that it did not appear to me

very much could be made of the place, save at the expense of halting the entire army in the wilderness until the supply of provisions might be exhausted.

It was not until late in the evening of this day that Colonel McArthur gave any sign he knew I remained with the troops, and then I was notified he wanted to see me.

I found the colonel, who was in fact the commander of this portion of the expedition, in a hut made of brush about an hundred yards in advance of the main body, in the very position of all others which would first be attacked if the Indians were bent on mischief, but a visitor, not so well acquainted with the situation as I was, would have said, judging from his manner and appearance, that he was in the most perfect security.

A brave man and a good one is this same colonel, as I have since had ample opportunity of knowing.

“I have been thinking over what you told me about the disappearance of my friend, Sam Bassett,” he said when I stood before him. “The longer I study the business the more I am inclined to the belief that his absence was due to some accident, rather than Indians. The fact that you were permitted to come back over the trail proves to my mind that the savages have had no hand in

the matter, and I'll guarantee that your comrade has by this time either found the old man, or can explain exactly why he failed to respond to your summons. Therefore it is that I propose, if it so be you are agreeable, to send you back at once. Find your comrade, and if he has learned nothing, return to me—we shall continue to advance at the rate of five miles each day, regardless of the work on hand. In case the matter is no longer a mystery, keep about thirty miles ahead of us until you have news of importance to impart.”

This was an order which failed to please me, although I would not have said as much to the colonel.

If peradventure Ezra had found Captain Sam alive and well, which did not seem probable, I would have been much better satisfied to see experienced men taking our places as scouts, for by this time I distrusted my own abilities as never before.

However, I had no opportunity of saying that which was in my mind, for, having given these orders, the colonel turned away as if in token that the interview was at an end, and I could do no less than take my leave.

I knew full well it was my duty to explain why Ezra and I should not longer remain in the advance,

unless older heads than ours had immediate charge of the work, and yet lost the opportunity to make the statement because of the fear he might think we had grown timid.

If Ezra had been in my place the matter would have been settled in proper shape, and I consoled myself with the thought that as soon as we were together once more I would insist on his having an interview with the colonel.

As for seeing poor Captain Sam, I had no hope.

When one disappears in a forest peopled with savages who ever thirst for human blood, there is little chance of his return.

After being dismissed by Colonel McArthur I looked around in search of a resting-place for the night, and was met by one with whom I had conversed during the afternoon.

He offered to share with me his shelter, which I gladly accepted, for I was not minded to wander about the encampment very long, because of the fact that I counted on setting out in search of Ezra as soon as the day had broken, and it was necessary I should have rest.

This host of mine questioned me closely regarding what we had seen, and from his questions I understood that the soldiers expected soon to find them-

selves in the midst of hostile Indians who would be able to work much mischief in the dense forest, where they could remain hidden from view while doing murder.

He it was who told me that the remainder of the troops under General Hull himself were within two days' march of this place, and that the entire force would push ahead as rapidly as a road could be made.

The stockade they were building had already been named Fort McArthur, and a certain Captain Dill was to be left in command of it when the army should pass on.

I was not inclined to spend the time in converse, for no one could say when I should be able to lie down again in safety, and as soon as might be, without offending him who entertained me, I gave myself up to slumber.

Save for the sentinels, not one in the encampment was astir when I set out once more, determined, now that we had done our duty in warning Colonel McArthur, to spend all my time in the search for Captain Sam, until we should at least get some proof of his fate.

To retrace my steps over the trail I had made was only a trifling task, and in less than eight and forty

hours I stood once more at the entrance to the cave which had been for us such an inhospitable place of refuge.

It is not to be supposed that during this time I pressed forward without due regard to the dangers which I believed menaced me on every hand, and yet thus far I had seen no signs of the savages, which fact struck me as strange if all I feared was true.

I had expected that from this point onward my work would be more difficult, knowing Ezra would proceed with the greatest caution; but to my surprise and joy everything was plain before me.

A sharpened stick with the point toward the north was set up in front of the cave, and I knew my comrade left it to show me the direction in which he had gone.

It lacked no more than two hours of sunset when I came upon this token, and I had better have remained at the cave until morning, since there I could rest with greater safety than elsewhere; but my anxiety was so great that I was not willing to waste a single moment.

Before the darkness forced me to halt a great hope sprang up in my mind, for by the trail I believed I could read that two persons were making their way

northward, and if Ezra had a companion it could be no other than the old sailor, incredible though that appeared to be.

It is not well that I set down at too great length all that I did or thought during this portion of our journey, lest I lack the time to finish the recital of more worthy deeds, therefore, of the three days when I followed the trail, becoming each hour more firm in my belief that Captain Sam and Ezra were together, nothing more shall be said than that I pushed ahead at my best speed, without seeing anything to cause alarm.

It was at noon of the fourth day after leaving Colonel McArthur's forces that my search was ended, for I came upon my friends, who had halted to prepare a dinner of venison from a buck which had accommodately come in their way.

Even though I had prepared myself to see the old sailor, it was difficult to believe the evidence of my own eyes when he sprang up to meet me with outstretched hands, and a look on his face which gave token to the heartiness of his welcome.

“ You are come in good season,” Ezra said, trying hard not to show the joy he felt because we were together once more, lest he appear womanish. “ This is the first time we have had a plentiful

supply of meat, and I am minded to make a long halt.”

It can well be supposed that I had not thought of eating while the mystery remained unexplained, and so I said when Ezra would have me cook my share of the venison.

“The story can be finished in few words,” the dear lad said in a tone which told me how happy he was at that moment. “Captain Sam was in the cave all the while we were searching, and you had not been gone from me two hours before I found him.”

I looked at the old man in bewilderment, for it was hard to believe that which Ezra had said, even though I knew it must be true.

“Yes, lad, I was there,” Captain Sam added, seeming to enjoy my mystification.

“Then why did you not answer when we hailed?” And I spoke sharply, for the forest is no place in which to play tricks.

“Because I didn’t hear you, an’ wasn’t in shape to make much of an outcry at the best.”

“Tell me the story at once!” I cried impatiently.

“It won’t make much of a yarn, though if Ezra hadn’t had his wits about him I would have died

where I was like a rat in a trap. Shortly before mornin' I was aroused, and could not close my eyes in sleep again, so thought to get a bit of fresh air without disturbin' you as needed rest. I reckon the darkness confused me, an' instead of creepin' outside as I counted on doin', went further in as if for no other purpose than to fall through the very floor, and that was the end of it for me, till a long spell afterward. When my senses come back I was layin' in what seemed more like a grave than anything else, an' so cramped up that there wasn't chance to straighten myself out in shape to yell, though I did contrive to squeak now an' then."

"I'll finish the story," Ezra interrupted. "When you had left me, David, I set about trying to find some trail, and after spending an hour or more looking around outside, it seemed certain Captain Sam hadn't left the cave, for I couldn't find a track that looked like his. Then I went in again, determined to search every inch of the place, even though you and I believed we had already done the work thoroughly. At the further end, hidden from our view by a jutting rock, I found a hole which ran straight down; but even then was not greatly heartened by the discovery, for I did not believe our friend could have gotten into it.

“ However, I had said to myself that I would see every nook and corner, and I set about finding out where the hole led to. Before many minutes passed I heard what Captain Sam calls ‘a squeak,’ and that settled the matter, though it took me half the day to pull him up. The strange part of the story is that he should have made his way around the jutting rock without learning that he was going directly into, instead of outside the cave. There was no more than barely room enough for a man to slip through, and yet he did so. When all this had been done it was too late to save you the journey back, and we decided to push ahead slowly, knowing you’d soon overtake us.”

Even now that the old man’s disappearance had been explained, I was puzzled to understand how it could have happened; but my comrades gave me little time to speculate upon the matter, so eager were they to learn concerning the troops.

When the little news I brought had been told, we ate heartily of the venison, and Captain Sam boldly lighted his pipe without protest from Ezra.

Answering the question in my eyes the dear lad said with a laugh :

“ We have decided that until there are more signs of an enemy than has been seen thus far, Cap-

tain Sam shall smoke; but only at noon, or when we have such a camp as the one which nearly proved to be his grave.”

“Then you do not believe we are in any danger from the savages?”

“That was not what I said. The danger is still as great as ever, but I do not think there are any Indians hereabouts. That we shall find them later, I have no question.”

“And you still count on acting as scout?”

“If you are minded to make the venture with me, we will go as far as Blanchard’s Fork of the Au Glaize, and then Colonel McArthur shall be told that experienced men must take our places. This much Captain Sam agrees to, and from that point we will march with the troops.”

I was ready to join in whatever he and the old sailor might propose, so great was my joy at being with them again, and from that hour until others were set at the task we did the work to the best of our ability.

Because I fail to set the fact down, it must not be thought that during the four days which followed we pushed ahead without difficulty.

We were now in the morasses, and at one time remained in a swamp where the ooze and mud was

knee-deep, forty-eight hours at a stretch; but yet kept to the course.

How the heavy baggage of the army might be brought safely over such places was more than I could imagine, and, in fact, we spent but little time speculating on such questions, for our own troubles were enough to provide us with ample food for thought.

Captain Sam, now he had gotten over his terror of the Indians, was an industrious, if not a patient traveler, and followed us faithfully, although grumbling meanwhile at the folly of trying to conduct an army across such a waste.

“It’s neither sea nor land,” he said once when we had floundered through the mud and water for a distance of three miles or more without finding a resting-place, “an’ them as comes after us will need to have both fins an’ feet.”

His complainings affected us but mildly, however, for we soon came to understand that it was in a certain degree a pleasure to him, and finally we were arrived at a point where we had the dry land under our feet once more.

Here we counted on spending twenty-four hours, for before gaining the stream where our duties as scouts would come to an end there was another morass

to be traversed, and we were in need of a rest before undertaking the fatiguing task.

We were now on what was very like an island in the midst of a sea of mud, and there was little fear of being disturbed by the savages, therefore Captain Sam was allowed to do as he pleased, and the camp appeared to him a pleasant one.

We had of meat enough to satisfy our wants for three days; but it was necessary this should be cooked, otherwise the millions of flies which were fattening from our bodies would have made short work of it.

While Captain Sam enveloped himself in a cloud of tobacco smoke to keep the winged torments at a distance, Ezra and I acted as cooks, and our work was progressing famously, when the noise as of splashing water in the distance caused us to seize the rifles, ready for an attack.

It was the first token of danger we had had since starting out on this task, for which we were not well fitted, and my heart beat fast and loud as I realized that in a few moments we might be battling for our lives, with the odds strongly against us.

Because of our folly in thinking the savages would not make their way through the swamps, our camp had been made where the first who came would see

it, and the only shelter to be had was behind the stunted bushes.

“It may be only a deer, in which case we can lay in a larger supply of meat,” Ezra whispered with a smile that went far toward overcoming my timorousness. “But if it should prove to be savages, keep under cover as long as may be, and if we are worsted, fight in the open to the very end, for death will be more kindly when coming in such a fashion than if the painted murderers have their will.”

Captain Sam moved more closely to us, and we were nerving ourselves for the possible struggle, when was heard that which put an end to all fear.

“If the way continues to be like this, we are likely to be drowned before having speech with Hull,” a voice said, and on thus knowing that white men, who must be friends if they wished to speak with General Hull, were approaching, my relief was so sudden and great as to be sickening.

While one might have counted twenty I stood leaning against a sapling, powerless to speak or move, and then the sound of Ezra’s voice gave me command over myself.

“Hello! Hello!” he shouted, and Captain Sam cried lustily:

“Ahoy, my hearties! Ahoy!”

The noise of the approach ceased very suddenly, and I could not but laugh as I fancied the surprise which must have come upon those who had probably fancied themselves alone in this profound solitude.

Then came an answering hail, which told that the strangers had recovered from their astonishment, and a few seconds later two white men stood before us.

It would be hard to say which party was the most bewildered by the meeting, and during fully a moment we five stood staring at each other as if speech was impossible.

Captain Sam was the first to break the silence, and perhaps he did it better than either Ezra or I could have done, although as to that I am doubtful.

“Well, my hearties, where are you bound?” he asked as if addressing shipmates, and I fancied the newcomers were not pleased at thus being called upon to state their purpose, for the elder of the two, he who wore a portion of the uniform, asked a question instead of replying:

“Are you hunting or bent on some journey?”

Captain Sam made as if to reply, but Ezra stopped the words by clapping his hand over the old man’s mouth as he said to the strangers:

“If you desire a truthful answer from us, sir, it

will be necessary to explain who you are, and your purpose in this portion of the wilderness.”

“Suspicious, eh?” the man said with a laugh when I had looked to see him fly in a rage because of Ezra’s free speech. “Are you three engaged in such questionable transactions that you do not dare acknowledge your purpose without first being assured we are not officers of the law?”

Captain Sam lost his temper at this, and would have sprung forward, evidently intent on mischief, but that Ezra kept a firm hold of the old man’s arm at the same time he replied to the stranger’s mocking remark :

“We may dare do many things which are not prudent; but certain it is that you get no information from us without first declaring yourselves. If you do not care to do that, the forest is broad enough—we are not blocking your way.”

Both the strangers changed their tone at this, and he who had spoken rudely made haste to say :

“We would learn of American forces who are making their way in this direction, if I mistake not.”

“Why do you want such information?”

“Because it is necessary we should meet them. But such playing with words is childish! I am

General Robert Lucas, and this gentleman is Mr. William Denny. We are lately from Detroit, and had hoped to meet with the troops long ere this.”

There was no question in my mind but that the stranger had spoken truthfully, and, as a matter of fact, I have always thought Ezra too cautious on this occasion, for it did not stand to reason we would meet with white enemies in that place, yet I made no attempt to take part in the conversation.

After a short pause Ezra said, and none could have spoken more fairly, or with better show of good manners :

“ Even in the wilderness it is not well to tell more than may be necessary, and particularly is that true, sir, if all we have heard be correct, therefore you will pardon me for having been over-careful. We are scouting in advance of the army you seek.”

“ Are the troops near at hand?” General Lucas asked eagerly.

We gave him all the information of which we were possessed, and soon the five of us were holding converse as if we were equals.

It was not to be expected that Colonel McArthur’s regiment could be very near at hand, and since the gentlemen wished an interview with General Hull

himself, it was likely they would be forced to travel many days over an exceedingly rough country before ending the journey.

That which we told regarding the difficulties of the way determined them on stopping at this place until the troops should come up, and General Lucas was so kind as to say he would be pleased if we remained with him.

Save for the news he gave us I question if we would have agreed to the proposition, for it had been our purpose to push on to the Au Glaize; but now it seemed wisest more experienced scouts should take the lead.

These gentlemen had been sent to Detroit many days previous by General Hull himself, and were now returning with more information than it would be possible for us to gather though we scouted a month.

They told us that the British were making friends with the savages in order to send them on the war-path against our people, and that large numbers of Indians were at Malden in Canada, where the king's officers supplied them liberally with blankets and ammunition.

General Lucas himself had been present at a council held by chiefs from the Wyandots, Ottawas

and Chippewas, and his report was most disheartening to us who lived on the frontier.

Many of the savages had promised friendship, but could not speak for all the members of their tribes, while Walk-in-the-Water was most bitterly hostile against Americans.

Tecumseh, the greatest warrior of them all, favored the British, and there could be no question but that the march of the troops would soon be opposed by the savages.

Then we were emboldened to speak with General Lucas regarding our fears that we could not perform the duties of scouts properly, and he was quite agreed that experienced men should be sent in advance, although he was at the same time very kind in praising us for our willingness to take upon ourselves so dangerous a duty.

These gentlemen both believed war would soon be declared, but, so far as they then knew, the two nations still professed to be at peace.

We no longer had any hesitation about following the advice of these two so strangely met in the forest where both parties might have passed within a dozen rods and yet remained ignorant of each other's whereabouts.

The fact that General Lucas was an officer in our

army gave us good warrant for following his advice as if it had been a command from Colonel McArthur himself, and without further hesitation we set about making such a shelter as would serve for our comfort in case of a storm, determined to await the coming of the troops.

CHAPTER IV.

CAPTURED.

THE one member of our company who felt best satisfied with the idea of remaining at this place until Colonel McArthur's forces arrived, was Captain Sam.

The tramping through dense underbrush, and wading across mile after mile of swamp, tired him more than he would admit, and he was well content to remain in camp even though with the companionship of the flies and mosquitoes.

Now comes a time when there is little of moment to be said, although many days were spent by us, and, as Ezra advises, I will set down no more than may be necessary to a better understanding of the misfortune which afterward befell us.

It was Colonel Findlay's regiment that we first saw, his men having relieved Colonel McArthur's in the work of road-building, and not until the

twenty-first of June did they arrive, the main body of troops coming up three days later, looking most wo-begone because of the fatiguing march through the morasses.

There was no need for us to say that we distrusted our ability to lead the forces, for once General Lucas had made his report the most skilful of the soldiers were detailed to lead the way, and we could do no less than aid in the heavy work, for, having come thus far, it was necessary to proceed with the army until it should be possible to make our way across the country to Sackett's Harbor.

On the high ground where we had encamped a stockade was built by the troops, and named Fort Necessity, the main body of the forces pushing on to Blanchard's Fork, where was erected Fort Findlay, and at this last place we three comrades arrived on the twenty-fourth of June, marching under Colonel McArthur's orders as if we were indeed properly enlisted soldiers.

The colonel was very kind; he had thanked us heartily for having served him in what he was pleased to call "a diligent fashion," and promised to repay the service in any way within his power that we should elect.

Now that we were come to Fort Findlay all was

bustle and confusion, and we were not long in learning the cause.

Messengers had arrived from Washington with despatches to General Hull from the War Department, and although the soldiers could not know the purport of these orders, it was evident no time was to be lost during the remainder of the journey to Detroit.

All the camp equipage was to be left at the fort, and with no more delay than was absolutely necessary the troops were sent forward to open a road to the Rapids of the Maumee.

It was wonderful to witness, this hewing a way through the wilderness, and it seemed to me the path was opened almost as fast as one could walk.

Colonel McArthur's regiment was the last to arrive at the Rapids, on the morning of the first of July, and there we found that the schooner *Cuyahoga* was loaded with the baggage of the officers, the hospital stores, and such implements of warfare as had not been left at Fort Findlay, while a short distance from her a smaller vessel was receiving on board the sick and disabled of our army.

Captain Sam, Ezra and I stood on the shore watching the work of putting aboard such odd cargoes, speculating meanwhile as to why there was

need of such haste, when a messenger came to say that Colonel McArthur would speak with us at General Hull's tent.

“Hark you, lads,” Captain Sam said as we hurried away to obey the command, “it wouldn't be strange if the colonel wanted an old sailor like me to take charge of one of them 'ere schooners, seein's how there can't be many seafarin' men in this crowd, an' if it so be the berth is offered me, or we have the smallest show of goin' aboard either craft, there must be no hangin' back. I've crawled 'round on my legs jest as long as is pleasant, an' would ship on the *Cuyahoga* as cook rather than traipse to an' fro over this fly-bitten country any further.”

“Don't think you are to be so fortunate that anything of the kind will fall to your share,” Ezra replied merrily. “If sailors were needed I don't fancy Colonel McArthur would be the one to hunt them up. The chances are we'll be asked to tramp back to Dayton, or something of that sort.”

“If the colonel wants us to foot it a single mile out of the regular course, you can reckon that I part company with him then and there. It's a fact, lads, that I've got all the soldierin' or scoutin' that's good for me.”

Captain Sam was still protesting against walking any further, when we arrived at headquarters and were greeted by Colonel McArthur with the question :

“ Are you three minded to take a short excursion by water? ”

The old sailor glanced at us triumphantly, and then replied most heartily :

“ We are, an' there's no mistake about it. I was jest sayin' to the lads that I was through with marchin' hither an' yon for the sake of followin' a lot of poor soldiers. ”

“ Those schooners are to be sent on to Detroit. The *Cuyahoga* carries such of our baggage as can be spared, and will be guarded by a detail of thirty men under command of Lieutenant Dent. There will also go in her the three ladies who have accompanied their husbands thus far. ”

Until this moment I did not know there was a woman with the command ; but I afterward learned that several of the officers had brought their wives along, thinking most likely the journey from Dayton would be simply a pleasure trip.

“ You have been so far in advance of the main body that it is not strange you should be ignorant of this fact, ” the colonel said to Captain Sam, as he

smiled at the old man's look of surprise. "It has been an exceedingly hard journey, and I warrant those ladies won't ask again to be allowed to follow their husbands on a campaign. However, I did not invite you here that we might gossip. I would like to have you three go on the *Cuyahoga* as a personal favor to me, and——"

"It'll be a personal favor to ourselves!" Captain Sam interrupted in high glee.

"Here is a packet which I would have delivered within an hour after you arrive at Detroit. It could have been entrusted to Lieutenant Dent, or Reynolds who is in command of the hospital vessel, but for the possibility that their duties might prevent them from attending to private matters for so long a time that my purpose would be defeated."

"You can count on its being delivered immediately," I said when he looked at me as if expecting some assurance. "Shall we have any trouble in finding the place to which we must go?"

"The address is written here plainly. Ask the first person you see for directions as to the course, and, if I am not misinformed, you can perform the mission with no more than ten minutes' loss of time."

He would have delivered me the packet, which

was small and of not above half a pound in weight, but that I motioned toward Captain Sam.

“He has had more experience in strange places than either Ezra or I, and should be the fittest to take charge of the affair. We will do whatever may be necessary in the way of aiding him.”

“There will be no difficulties in your way,” the colonel replied as he gave the packet to Captain Sam. “I knew it would be useless to ask that one of you go alone, therefore proposed the matter to all three, and it will be no more than a pleasant excursion.”

Then he advised that once in Detroit we await his arrival, unless it should chance we found opportunity to get passage on a vessel to Sackett’s Harbor, after which the interview was brought to a close by shouts from those on board the *Cuyahoga* to the effect that she was about to set sail.

“Has war been declared, sir?” I made bold to ask, tarrying an instant after my comrades had started toward the vessel.

“Not that I am aware of; but it is quite certain such will soon be the case. General Hull has received orders from Washington to make all haste to Detroit, and that means more than appears by the words, or I’m much mistaken.”

Then I ran to overtake Captain Sam and Ezra, and five minutes later we were seated on the schooner's rail forward, prepared to enjoy the excursion, but little dreaming how mournful it would prove to be.

“ Now you'll find that your Uncle Samuel can hold his own with the best of 'em,” the old sailor exclaimed as the little craft gathered way. “ I'm willin' to admit that I don't amount to very much on the land; but afloat I'll not call the queen my grandfather, so far as knowin' my duty is concerned.”

He was smoking vigorously, which both Ezra and I knew to be a token that we should hear more of his doings regarding the service under Commodore Preble, and we were not mistaken.

He at once began to spin a most astounding yarn, which at another time might have amused us hugely; but at this moment we were not in the mood for a story.

Never before had either of us seen a larger craft than a canoe or small flat-boat, and the schooner appeared to us the most beautiful vessel ever launched.

We could not give our minds to anything but her, and as she dashed on, sending the spray high above

her bows like a ruff of glass, I did not wonder that Captain Sam was so deeply in love with a sailor's life.

The vessel on which were embarked the invalids was by no means as swift as the *Cuyahoga*, and we soon left her a long distance astern.

It did not take Captain Sam many moments to understand that we were giving but little heed to the marvelous tale he was telling, and it soon came to an abrupt close, as the old man set about making acquaintance with the crew of the schooner.

Rations had been served out before we came on board, and Ezra and I ate supper on deck, being too much occupied with the beautiful scene spread before us to even so much as think of following Captain Sam into the stuffy forecastle, from which place we could hear the rumble of his voice now and then as he, most likely, regaled his new acquaintances with a recital of his adventures.

Not until a late hour were we willing to go below, and very likely we might have remained on deck all night but for the fact that the old sailor insisted on our "turnin' in Bristol fashion," which, as we soon learned, meant simply to roll into the narrow boxes called bunks without removing one's clothing.

We were out with the first gray light of the coming dawn, however, and by the time Captain Sam made his appearance the *Cuyahoga* was standing well over toward the Canadian Shore where, as one of the sailors explained to us, would be found the channel.

We saw no more of the ladies than during the march through the wilderness, and but for what Colonel McArthur had told us would not have suspected they were on board.

After Captain Sam had joined us, and the novelty of sailing had in a measure passed away, we fell to speculating upon the nature of the mission with which we were charged, until Ezra said, as if the subject was unpleasant to him :

“ I do not think we have any right to discuss the colonel’s business, inasmuch as he did not see fit to acquaint us with its nature. All we are required to do is to deliver the packet according to the written instructions, and then we are in a certain degree discharged from any further duty toward the army, which is not agreeable, as I look at it.”

“ Do you want more soldierin’, lad? ” Captain Sam asked in surprise. “ ’Cordin’ to my way of thinkin’, we’ve had enough of such foolish sport.”

“ I’m not hankering for another march through

the wilderness; but it would be pleasant if we might depend upon the army for food and shelter till we could find means of getting to Sackett's Harbor, otherwise there's a chance of going hungry. Neither David nor I own more than three shillings, and we shan't be given lodgings for the sake of our company."

"Surely Colonel McArthur will allow us to mess with the regiment," I replied carelessly, not having given this subject any thought.

"Ay, that he will, when the troops arrive; but who can say how many days may pass before that time comes?"

Even Captain Sam began to look disturbed, and I believed from the expression on his face that he was not overly well supplied with money.

"We'll pull through somehow, lads," he said after a long pause, "an' there's no need of crossin' a bridge before we come to it, so let the matter drop till we're hungry."

I should have insisted upon forming plans for the future had not our attention been diverted by one of Captain Sam's sailor friends, who said, as he came towards us:

"Yonder, where you can see that cluster of houses, is the village of Amherstburg, an' just be-

yond is Fort Malden. It will be an ugly place for them as wants to sail up the river if war is declared.”

Looking in the direction pointed out we saw the military post, and, lying close by in the channel, was a smart looking vessel flying British colors.

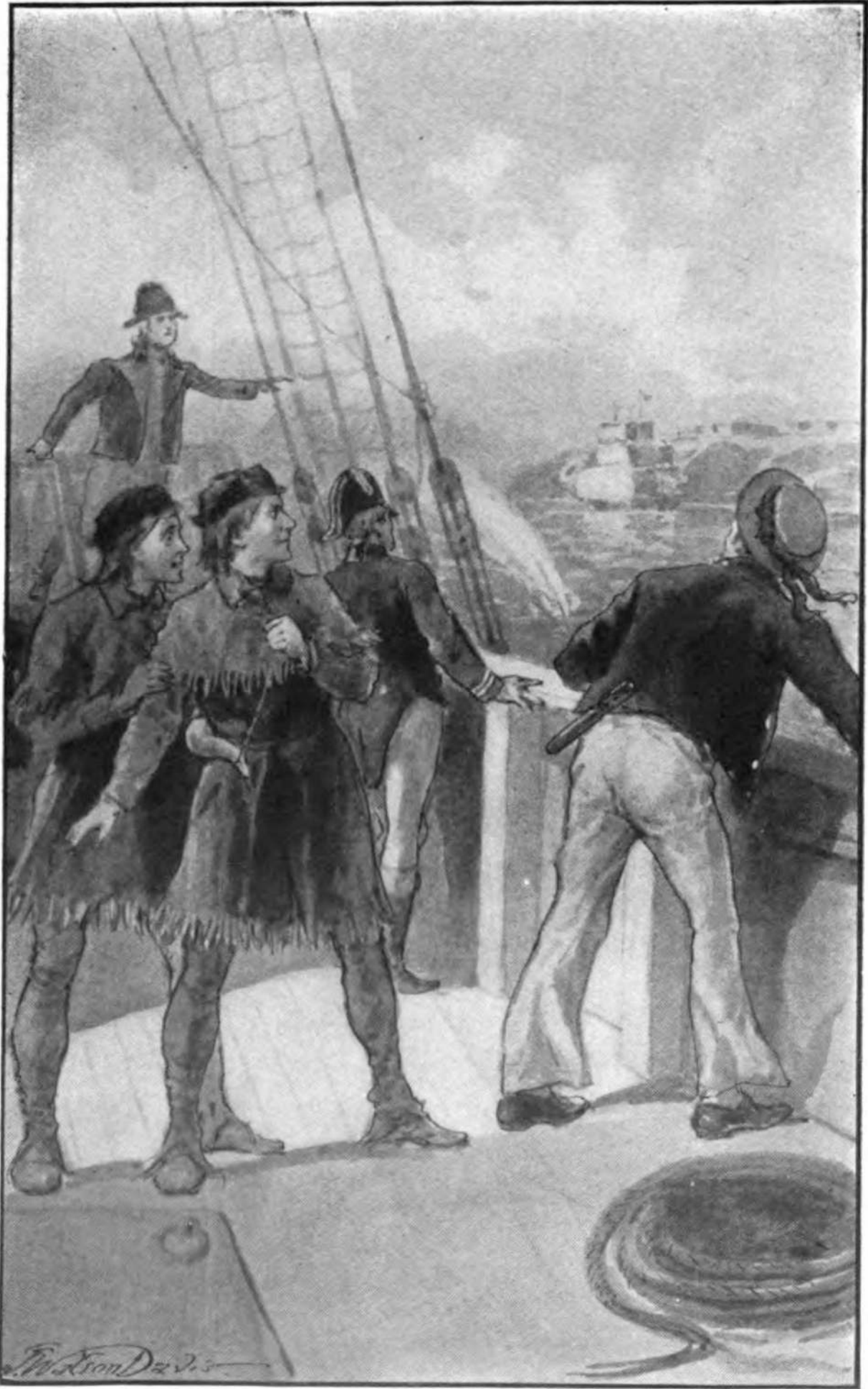
“She’s the armed brig *Hunter*, an’ I allow has been put in fine trim against the time when she can make it hot for craft sailin’ under the stars and stripes.”

Then Captain Sam and the sailor fell to discussing the proper rig for a vessel in those waters, and neither Ezra nor I had any interest in the matter because very much they said was not to be understood by us who had never before seen a sailing vessel.

Our schooner ran between the Island called Bois Blanc and the mainland, until we were so near the fort that the men inside could be plainly seen.

Then suddenly a puff of smoke went up from the stockade, a loud report rang out, and there was a prodigious splashing of water directly in front of us, which told that a heavy ball had struck within five rods of our bow.

“What is the meaning of that?” I cried, feeling anything rather than comfortable that such a salute should have been given.



There was a splashing of water directly in front of us which told that a heavy ball had struck within five rods of our bow.
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At the Siege of Detroit.

“The commandant of the fort wants to speak us,” the sailor replied carelessly. “We’re often hove-to off here.”

“Will they impress us?” and there came into my mind what Captain Sam had told regarding the British fashion of claiming American seamen as British subjects.

“There’s little danger of that,” the sailor said, and my courage began to revive when I saw that he treated the matter as of no especial importance.

A muttered exclamation from Captain Sam caused me to look toward him, and immediately I grew timorous again, for he appeared to be greatly disturbed.

“What is it?” I asked faintly.

“More’n a want to speak us, or I’m a Dutchman,” the old man exclaimed. “The Britishers mean business for a fact; the *Hunter* is coming out, an’ it wouldn’t surprise me greatly if war had been declared while we were paddlin’ through the mud of the wilderness!”

I noticed that the sailors on our vessel were running to and fro excitedly. Two of the sails had been lowered, and we were now swinging toward the shore.

“What made us stop so quick?” Ezra asked of

Captain Sam. "If there's likely to be trouble it seems to me we should have kept straight on, an' might, perhaps, have got clear."

"Take the fort and the armed brig together, and our chances would have been mighty small. It don't need much of a ball, if it strikes in the right place, to send a craft such as this to the bottom like a stone. We were forced to come about, an' I'm 'way off my reckonin' if Colonel McArthur's packet is delivered before he strikes Detroit."

By this time the sailors of our schooner had begun to suspect that all was not as it should be, and there was a scurrying to and fro among the soldiers who were aboard as guard.

From the instant the shot had been fired, until the king's vessel was alongside, not more than five minutes passed, as it seemed to me, and then I was not the only person aboard who had fallen timorous.

"I demand the surrender of that schooner," an officer who stood on the brig's rail shouted, and the captain of the *Cuyahoga* asked, in a voice that trembled wofully:

"What is the meaning of such a demand? By what right do you make it?"

"War was declared on the twelfth of June, and

it was the United States that set the pace; therefore you had best look pleasant.”

The two vessels had been drifting toward each other during this brief conversation, which plunged us all into the greatest distress, and even I who knew nothing whatever of warfare, could understand that it would be folly to make any resistance.

The brig had eight heavy guns—four on a side—and beside each piece stood a seaman with a lighted match.

Should they be discharged at such close range the *Cuyahoga* could not miss of being riddled like a sieve.

Captain Sam had not spoken, but stood near us muttering under his breath in so fierce a fashion that I was almost afraid he would make battle single-handed against the enemy.

Ezra came close by my side when the British captain announced that war had been declared, and we remained hand in hand just behind the angry old soiler, hardly daring to move lest it be thought we were unwilling to submit.

A company of red-coated marines came over the brig's rail and stood in line along our deck while several officers approached Lieutenant Dent and the captain of the *Cuyahoga*.

After some conversation among them the American soldiers were ordered on board the British vessel; but we three remained motionless.

“Did you hear the word given?” an officer shouted angrily to us, and Captain Sam replied promptly:

“Ay, sir; but we are neither of the army or among the crew of this schooner, as the lieutenant can tell you. We are private citizens, and as such you have no right to make us prisoners of war.”

The officer turned to one of his subordinates, and before I fairly understood what was being done a squad of marines marched up with leveled muskets, actually pushing us into the British brig with the muzzles of their weapons.

Despite Captain Sam's plea, and he continued to protest in a most energetic fashion, we were forced below with our soldiers and sailors, and there we remained until noon, with no idea of what might be doing above.

For a time I believed that there was danger of our being put to death, and held Ezra's hand with a firm grip as if I might never have such an opportunity again; but soon my fears so far subsided that I could understand what was said by our fellow-prisoners, when the matter grew less terrible.

Captain Sam persisted in raving against the Britishers, even going so far as to defy those who stood guard over us, and not until Sergeant Godfrey had talked right seriously with the old man, urging that he was not only failing to effect anything by his threats, but making the situation of us all more disagreeable than it naturally would be, did he succeed in quieting him.

Then the cooler-headed of the party speculated as to what would be done with us, and while they talked I began to understand that imprisonment would be the worst of our troubles.

The idea of being shut up in a jail for many months, perhaps years, was dreadful to contemplate; but it was so much less terrible than being hanged or shot, that I grew quite cheerful, and did my best to animate the old sailor, who, silent and motionless, was leaning against a bulkhead.

“It might be worse,” I reminded him, and it was as if the words, however true, only served to arouse his anger.

“I’d like to know how you figger that out, David Bellinger? What can be worse than layin’ in a British prison till the flesh rots off your bones?”

“Surely it wouldn’t come to that, Captain Sam. We must be treated as prisoners of war, and——”

“ You don’t know what you’re talkin’ about, lad, an’ I do! I’ve seen them as have been in the same kind of a place we’re goin’ to, an’ know what’s before us! ”

These words frightened me, and the tightening of Ezra’s hand on mine told that he was fast growing disheartened; but, noting the fact that the greater number of those around me did not appear so thoroughly cast down as was Captain Sam, I tried my best to put on a brave air.

“ Surely it can’t be as bad as he says, ” I whispered to Ezra, thinking to hearten him. “ He has seen those who have been imprisoned on board ships, which must be a different matter from a jail on land. We shall come through it somehow, lad, and while we remain together—— ”

“ Don’t think I am faint-hearted, ” the dear boy replied. “ Many, many men who have suffered the same as is before us, live, therefore why should we join Captain Sam in counting surely on a cruel death? ”

It was Ezra who was doing the heartening, and I grew quite brave with hearing his words.

“ That which makes me seem downcast is planning for action, ” he whispered a few seconds later, and I gazed at him in bewilderment, fearing lest he

was losing his senses, for how could we hope to find opportunity for action of any kind.

“Almost anything is better than listening to Captain Sam,” I made answer; “but you must not dwell upon impossibilities, Ezra.”

“Nor am I doing so. It is a fact that many men have been captured in time of war, and also true that a large number have escaped, even though surrounded by a much greater force than will likely be found at the stockade. When we are taken ashore there may be a chance of giving these red-coats the slip, and we must be prepared for anything.”

Now I began to see that I was the weak-minded one, not he, and a great hope sprang up in my heart.

“Do what you will, lad, so that I go with you. No chance can be so desperate that I will not follow where you lead.”

“It may be we shall see no opportunity; but if one does come our way we will take advantage of it, and it is during the first hours of our imprisonment that we are most likely to succeed. Keep your eyes open for everything which may serve us, when we go on deck, and above all get a good view of the river and its shore.”

“To what end?”

“If we should escape by any lucky chance, we must make our way to American soil, and that may only be done by swimming——”

“Across such a river as this?” I interrupted, growing faint-hearted at thought of the hazard.

“Ay, and you can do it. There are three or four islands in the stream, and the task may be accomplished by short stages.”

“Will you say anything to Captain Sam?”

“Of a verity I will, for we would not go without him, no matter how clear might be the way,” and Ezra went closer to the old man, where he could whisper in his ear.

I made no attempt to hear what was being said; but yet it was possible for me to know something regarding the matter simply by watching Captain Sam's face.

At first he appeared angry that such a proposition should be made, most likely believing it a piece of folly; but Ezra soon brought him around to another way of thinking, and the old man's face grew brighter and brighter till he clapped Ezra on the shoulder as he cried, in a tone that all might hear:

“You are a quick-witted lad, an' one with a brave heart! I'd follow you further than many men whom I know!”

Thus was it settled that we three should be on the alert for the first and slightest chance to give our enemies the slip, and I felt in my heart we would succeed, but Captain Sam dampened my ardor somewhat when, reading the thought in my eyes, he whispered :

“ Remember, lads, that every prisoner counts on makin’ his escape, an’ always allows it can be done till after he’s been shown to the contrary. If we do give the Britishers the slip, well an’ good ; but the odds are agin us, an’ you mustn’t have the hope too much at heart.”

CHAPTER V.

THE INVALID.

THOSE of us who had been made prisoners, with the exception of Lieutenant Dent, who was in command of the party, and Lieutenant Goodwin, remained on the gun-deck of the brig until noon came, and all the while closely guarded by a file of marines.

During the first hour the unfortunates talked of their possible fate, but as in the case of us three comrades, they grew more calm when the fact of the captivity grew familiar.

Then one after another began to ask why it was the commandant of Fort Malden should know that war had been declared and General Hull was yet in ignorance of the fact, although a messenger had but lately come to him from Washington.

It was now the third day of July, and yet our men, on their way to the frontier, where a disaster similar

to what had really overtaken us might well have been foreseen, were allowed to continue the journey in ignorance.

This last served to give the unhappy party something other than their own condition to think about, and if the big-bugs of the war department could have heard the comments made upon their neglect, more than one would have grown red in the face.

Ezra did not join in the discussion which often-times caused such a wrangle of words that our guards threatened instant punishment if the tumult was not hushed, but remained in a deep study as if even while in the brig's hold he could devise a means of escape.

It was wickedly hot down there, and not one among us but rejoiced when the word was passed for the prisoners to be taken ashore.

Anything short of a regular dungeon would be better than the broiling heat between decks, and we trooped up the gangway in an orderly fashion.

It was not very much cooler above, for the brig had been hauled close to the shore, where a bluff shut off what little wind might be stirring; but we fancied ourselves more comfortable in the open air.

Immediately on gaining the deck I looked across

the river which Ezra proposed we should pass by swimming, and was disheartened at the scene.

Not less than a mile of clear water lay between us and the nearest island, while the strength of the current could be guessed at by the ripples here and there, or the brush which floated down stream at the rate of three or four miles an hour.

Surely there was no hope of escape at present.

We were between two lines of soldiers, and on the bank, half a musket shot away, were an hundred or more uniformed men drawn up to receive us.

“We shall be taken to the stockade,” Ezra whispered, as if that knowledge was pleasing. “The river looks wide; but there should be no very great exertion required to swim across.”

“We’ll need to have the chance first, lad,” Captain Sam said grimly, and then we had no further opportunity for conversation, because it had come our turn to descend to the boats, which were in readiness to carry us ashore.

From this moment until the stockade was reached we were guarded so closely that at least twenty bullets would have entered the body of him who made a break for liberty, and then we were allowed a trifle more freedom, although not so much as to revive my drooping hopes.

That corner of the stockade nearest the village was marked off as the place in which we should remain, and around this faint line on the hard earth were stationed red-coated soldiers, while a dozen or more paced to and fro along the top of the timbers.

Now we could see that General Lucas had not been mistaken when he reported that large numbers of the savages had gathered at this post, brought together by British bribes.

When we had landed it was as if the entire shore for a quarter of a mile in length was fringed by the painted villains, and once inside the stockade we saw at least two hundred, all of whom eyed us greedily, as if believing they would be allowed a hand in taking care of the captives.

“There’s what will give us more trouble than a dozen companies of soldiers will,” Captain Sam said as he pointed to four young braves who were watching us three intently. “He who might slip past a white man easily would soon find himself laid by the heels in such company as them.”

Ezra made no reply; his face remained as bright as when he first proposed that it might be possible for us to escape, and again I began to have hopes.

After we prisoners had been let loose within the lines no attention was paid to us save when one ap-

proached too near the boundaries, and then a musket would be leveled as the owner shouted a warning, when, as a matter of course, the incautious captive would leap quickly back to a more safe distance.

The greater number of the unfortunate Americans remained huddled together in the center of the prison-space; but Ezra went directly to the base of the wall, where he laid at full length upon the ground as if suddenly stricken with illness.

I was alarmed; imprisonment was as nothing compared with the loss of my comrade, and great beads of fear stood on my forehead as I begged him to tell me what I might do for his relief.

“I am not so ill that you need be greatly alarmed,” he said with a smile, “and if you could get a blanket for me I should feel better.”

Without stopping to learn more I hurried off, giving little heed how near I approached the danger-lines as I cried loudly for permission to speak with some one in authority.

It seemed to me a painfully long while before a sergeant came forward leisurely, and warned me to hold my peace or I should be given something that would make me yell with good cause.

“I am not a soldier,” I cried wildly, determined that this man should know how pressing were my

wants. "My comrade and I were on our way to Sackett's Harbor when your people stopped the vessel. Now he is ill—dying, perhaps, yet all I ask is that you lend me a blanket for him to lie upon."

The man must have known by my face and the tone of my voice how deeply distressed I was, and after a show of hesitation he roughly ordered me to lead the way to my comrade.

When we approached the spot where I had left Ezra, Captain Sam was bending over him tenderly, and the poor fellow appeared in such pain as caused him to roll here and there, but he kept his face covered to stifle the groans which were forced from him by the agony.

"You should go into the hospital," the British sergeant said as he laid his hand on Ezra's head, and I could have hugged the fellow, even though he wore a red coat, because of the tenderness shown.

"I shall be better after a while," the poor lad managed to say. "It is cooler here in the open air."

"If he had a blanket," Captain Sam said, and the sergeant walked away, while I stood helplessly by, ignorant as to what might be done for poor Ezra's relief.

Ten minutes later a private came up with a dirty covering, which had the appearance of having been used in a stable, and threw it at the sick boy as he said brutally :

“ There’s too much coddling around here to suit me. It might do the Yankee good to wallow in the mud a little, and I warrant a pail of cold water would bring him into shape.”

At another time I should have given him a piece of my mind; but now it was not seemly, for it appeared to me necessary every attention should be given Ezra, and, with Captain Sam’s aid, I soon had him comfortably wrapped up, although it seemed almost cruel to do so because of the great heat.

“ Never mind that part of it,” the old sailor said when I made mention of what was in my mind. “ Hot air will do him good, and us too,” he added with a wink which caused me to look at him in surprise.

Then I bent over Ezra and asked if there was anything more I could do, to which he replied :

“ Nothing, except that you sit close by me, and keep sharp watch so that no one may come this way without my being warned.”

“ I’ll flit back an’ forth meanwhile, an’ between the two of us I reckon there’s little chance of your

bein' disturbed," Captain Sam said with a chuckle that, coupled with the wink, gave me an idea he had been partaking of strong drink.

When the old sailor had moved off a dozen yards or more I noticed that Ezra was rolling out of the blanket, although he kept it well over him, and I would have prevented him from doing so but that he looked up at me from under one corner as he asked with a grin:

"Is it possible you really thought I was sick?"

"*Thought* you were?" I repeated. "What do you mean?"

"Listen; but do not neglect to watch the red-coats. We are likely to be less closely guarded on this first day than at any other time, and unless we can escape now within a few hours, the odds will be heavy against us. With this blanket to hide me from view I count on being able to make such a rabbit-hole under the logs that we can crawl out to-night. Now you may understand why I had so much pain."

Then he covered his head again, and I sat like a statue, completely bewildered because of having been so thoroughly deceived.

During an instant I was nigh to being angered against my comrade, for I had suffered keenest

agony of mind while thinking him ill, and then it was with difficulty I restrained my laughter as I realized how neatly the trick had been done.

It was well I had been deceived, otherwise I might not have pleaded so eloquently as to touch the Britisher's heart, and Ezra was forgiven the suffering I had endured when the understanding came to me that but for my ignorance it was possible the game would have failed.

From the movements of the blanket I knew my comrade was working most industriously, and while wiping the perspiration from my own face it was possible to realize how uncomfortable he must be.

“There is no one near; let me uncover you a bit,” I whispered. “It must be desperately hot under that dirty blanket.”

“So it is, David; but if all goes well we'll be cooler before morning. Don't lift the covering, for some of the sentinels may be watching you.”

Captain Sam now came back as if to learn how the invalid was, and again he favored me with a wink, but this time it failed to cause surprise.

“Some of our men would have come over to see how the lad is gettin' on; but I told them he was better alone. You must watch every one, David,

for if the prisoners get wind of what is being done there's good chance the trick will be discovered."

In this fashion the afternoon passed: Ezra working beneath the blanket, Captain Sam moving to and fro, and I sitting by the supposed invalid's side.

Then the night came and I was hugely relieved in mind, for it was no longer necessary that Ezra should be covered so closely.

Neither the old sailor nor I looked beneath the blanket, but our comrade reported that he was making good progress, and if nothing happened to disturb him we would be ready for the venture by midnight.

"Then will come the real danger, by the side of which this is nothing more than child's play," Captain Sam said gravely. "Even though the three of us get outside the stockade, I misdoubt our bein' able to reach the water."

"If Ezra unlocks the door we should be keen enough to do the rest."

"We *should* be, I'll admit, lad; but are we?"

"That will soon be known if nothing goes amiss," Ezra cried from beneath the blanket, "and in the meantime there's no need of crossing a bridge until you come to it."

“Rightly said, lad, an’ I’ll hold my tongue. Dry land ain’t my element, an’ on it you can work all ’round an old shell-back like me; but on the water I’m at home, where you’d find it hard to get the best of your Uncle Samuel.”

Before the night had fully come we noted the fact that many of the savages were encamped between the stockade and the water, and I did my best to keep in mind the location of their tepees so that we might not stumble upon them in the darkness.

Rations were served to the prisoners shortly after sunset, and judging from this first meal those who remained long in the fort were not likely to be troubled by gout, if as is said, high-living brings on that disease.

We were served with squares of corn-bread less than the size of my hand, and Captain Sam and I divided ours so that Ezra, who had been working so long, might have a double share.

Even then he grumbled when we passed his portion beneath the blanket, because there was no more than enough to provoke his hunger, and devoured it quickly, not knowing how slim was the supper left for the old sailor and me.

After Captain Sam had smoked he proposed that we lay down close by Ezra’s side, pretending to be

asleep if any of our fellow-prisoners should come that way, and this we did.

To have seen us one would have said here were three fellows well content with captivity, and yet we believed liberty was close at hand.

It was not yet midnight when Ezra pulled a bit of the blanket from his head, and whispered triumphantly:

“It’s done! I’ve dug through under the log; but the one who crowds out first must do considerable squeezing, because the hole is none too large.”

“I’ll shrink myself to the size of a weasel, if by so doin’ it be possible to get away from these Britishers,” Captain Sam whispered. “It ain’t the size of the hole that’s troublin’ me, but the sentinels on the walls, an’ them ’ere painted brutes ’twixt us an’ the water.”

“One worry at a time is enough for me,” Ezra replied cheerily. “Just now the more important matter is to put ourselves on the other side of the stockade, and one of you must make the first venture, for if I so much as move all this loose earth will fall back where it came from.”

As the lad spoke he lifted the blanket so I might see what he had done with that which had been dug out.

It was packed under and each side of him so deftly that none showed outside the covering, and yet he had raised his bed several inches above its original level.

That portion of the venture which gave me the most anxiety was the journey across the broad river, and I grew impatient to be about it, for to my mind a danger always seems greater at a distance. I was not minded to spend any more idle moments than might be necessary.

“Better be a leetle too cautious at the start, than find our plan nipped in the bud through our own carelessness,” the old sailor said when I urged him to push ahead. I’ll take one more look around to get a notion of how that ’ere guard is movin’.”

I was in an agony of fear lest his strolling around at such an hour should excite suspicions, yet knew it would be useless to argue against it, and with bated breath I watched the old fellow making his way past the little groups of prisoners, all of whom appeared to be sleeping soundly despite the misfortune which had overtaken them.

“It seems selfish for us to think only of ourselves,” Ezra said as if speaking to himself. “Liberty is as sweet to them as to us,” and he pointed toward the sleepers.

“ Yet, it is impossible all, or even a dozen, could escape, and to let a single man know what we hope to do would be to deprive ourselves of this one chance which comes to us through your quick wit.”

The lad made no reply to this, but I well knew what was in his mind, for the same thoughts had come to me.

This was a time when selfishness had come to be a virtue, and I was resolved to forget so far as possible that we had any companions in misery.

When fully ten minutes had passed, Captain Sam returned, and, throwing himself upon the ground as if to sleep, he whispered :

“ The guard on this side of the stockade don't appear any too anxious to keep movin'. He has walked this way but once since I left, an' when he comes back for another turn our time will have come. We must crawl through, then keep close to the stockade as we creep around toward the water, an' then take our chances of what lays beyond.”

I knew from the sound of his voice that the old man had many fears for the result of the scheme, and my heart was like lead in my bosom.

It did not seem possible we could slip past the Indians as well as soldiers, yet not for any ordinary

consideration would I have said the word which would cause the plan to be abandoned.

In case of re-capture we would most likely be punished severely, if for no other reason than that it might serve to prevent others of the party from making a similar attempt, and, timorous though I certainly was at that moment, the resolve to brave all lay strong on my heart.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ESCAPE.

LYING motionless upon the ground as if overpowered by sleep, we listened intently for the footsteps of the guard, and the blood in my veins seemed as if turned to fire when he finally passed by above our heads.

Captain Sam laid his hand on mine to let me know the moment for the attempt was near at hand, and I hardly dared breathe until the Britisher had repassed.

Now was come the time!

Ezra rolled himself backward from the hole, that the weight of his body might serve to keep the loose earth in place, and Captain Sam whispered cautiously :

“ You shall go ahead, David. I am but a bungler at such work, an' it's best I keep behind you and in advance of Ezra.”

To delay for even a second would have been next to a crime just then, and I obeyed.

As Ezra had said, the hole was scant in size, but by dint of much wriggling, aided by my comrade who forced me on from behind, I managed to work myself entirely through.

Once on the other side I turned to help the old man, and he came out in a twinkling, with Ezra pushing from one side of the stockade and I pulling on the other.

I believe of a verity that one full minute had not elapsed from the time I started until the three of us stood beyond the walls of logs, but yet so far within the shadow that the sentinels on the top could not have seen us without bending far over the rail.

There was no waiting to decide upon a course.

It was my duty to lead the escape, and I pushed ahead as rapidly as was possible without making a noise.

How long that line of logs appeared to be while we were creeping toward that point from which the river could be seen!

Before the journey of perhaps an hundred yards had come to an end I began to believe I had mistaken the direction, and was going contrary to the course which should have been pursued.

It was my fears which made the way seem long, however, and when we were arrived at that point where a straight course must be laid for the water, the most dangerous portion of the venture confronted us.

Now we must come out from the shadow where any one of half a dozen sentinels might see us, and make our way close past the tepees of the savages.

However, here as at the hole Ezra had dug, one must not linger, and, bending low, I made all speed toward the lodges.

It seemed certain a shower of bullets would follow, and yet as the seconds passed, and the distance between us and the fort increased, the same profound silence reigned.

Then we were in a line with the Indian encampment.

The soldiers were ignorant of what had been done beneath their very noses, and it remained to see if we were a match for the painted villains who would have rejoiced at the opportunity to run us down.

Instead of continuing straight on I turned slightly to the right, advancing on such an angle as would bring me to the river bank an hundred rods or more above where the war vessel was moored.

Twice only had I looked back to make certain my comrades were following.

Captain Sam was less than a yard in the rear, and Ezra's hand was on the old man's shoulder in case he should make a misstep.

The dogs from the lodges barked loudly as they came in pursuit; but they had kept up an almost incessant yelping from shortly after sunset, and it did not seem probable the present outburst would arouse suspicions.

I knew by the noise that Ezra stopped an instant to pick up a club to defend himself from the curs close at his heels; but my pace was not slackened, and in less time than would be required for the telling of the story, we were crouching amid the bushes which grew close by the water's edge.

All three were panting and breathless, for the pace had been rapid and the distance long; but we were free, save for the yelping curs a few feet away, and that thought was enough to prevent us from giving heed to our bodily condition.

“We must wait here no more than three or four minutes,” Ezra said, speaking with difficulty because of his lack of wind. “If our escape is discovered before we gain yonder shore, the boats of the brig will soon carry us back.”

“We’re out of the fort!” Captain Sam said triumphantly, as if that fact was enough for him just then.

“But still this side the river,” I added.

“True, lad, but when it comes to a voyage by water your Uncle Samuel is on deck an’ lively. Ezra dug the hole, after trickin’ the Britishers handsomely; you led us past the savages, an’ now it’s my turn to take command. Strip off the bulk of your riggin’, an’ tie it into a bundle that can be fastened to your shoulders. Then look around for a stick or a branch that’ll serve to hold your head above water.”

“We can both swim.”

“I reckon you can; but I’m providin’ for a means of restin’ when a long stretch of paddlin’ in the water begins to tell on us. We’ll make sure of keepin’ our heads above water, an’ then if needs be can drift down stream till this place is far enough away to seem pleasant.”

All that he directed we did, and the dogs were yet yelping and snarling at our heels when we waded into the water, each carrying as much in the way of wood as might serve to make the paddle of a canoe.

Once in the stream Captain Sam said in a whisper :

“Now, lads, we’ll float for a spell, for in case chase is made we need to be fresh, an’ it matters little where we land, so it’s on the American shore.”

While lying in the stockade thinking over the plan for escape, the one portion of the work which had caused me the greatest uneasiness was the crossing of the river, and yet that proved the most simple of all.

Until the current had carried us fully a mile beyond Fort Malden we made no attempt to swim, and then Captain Sam cried :

“Now, boys, we’ll work toward the other shore. Don’t exert yourselves too much, ’cause there’s little need of it. The morning won’t come for quite a spell yet, an’ we’ve plenty of time.”

Save for the fact of my having seen that broad expanse of water I would have said, when we struck the first land, that we had crossed no more than a narrow stream, so little did I feel fatigue.

The current had carried us between Grosse and Turkey Islands, beyond the swamp which forms the lower end of the first named, and we stepped ashore not far above the mouth of the Aux Ecorces, within, as we had good reason to believe, no more than a good day’s journey from Detroit.

There is little need for me to set down the words

of rejoicing with which we greeted each other now there was no longer any fear of being overtaken by our late captors.

That which at sunset had seemed well nigh impossible was an accomplished fact, and after we had given words to our joy until there was nothing left to be said, Captain Sam exclaimed :

“ I declare, lads, I’d nigh forgot about Colonel McArthur’s packet? If it so be water will hurt what’s inside, I reckon we’ll do little good by deliverin’ it, for it’s been soakin’ since we took French leave of the Britishers.”

“ We have done well to bring any part of it away,” Ezra said as if the matter did not concern him seriously, “ and the colonel may think himself fortunate that it did not fall into the hands of the enemy.”

While talking we had been walking leisurely toward the mouth of the river, and once arrived at the bank neither of us felt like more exertion in the way of swimming just then, therefore it was we laid down to sleep, confident there was no one in the vicinity to do us harm.

It was yet night when slumber closed my eyelids almost instantly I stretched at full length on the warm sand, and the sun was shining brightly

when I sprang up with a cry of alarm, having been awakened by a mild blow on the ear.

For an instant I believed we had foolishly allowed ourselves to be re-captured, and then I recognized in the man who stood by my side, one of General Hull's scouts, Armstrong by name.

Captain Sam and Ezra were on their feet immediately I gave the alarm, and the scout's arm needed to be sinewy, otherwise he might have been pained by the energy of our greeting.

Through him we learned General Hull had received news that war was declared, within two hours after the *Cugahoga* sailed, and men were at once sent forward to intercept the schooner at the mouth of the Raisin; but the strong wind carried us onward faster than the messengers could travel.

The troops were now hurrying forward at the best possible pace, and Armstrong believed that within eight and forty hours they would have arrived where we then were.

The hospital schooner, which sailed from the Rapids the same day we had, was believed to have gone down the river in safety; but since that was not positive, the scout had been sent in advance to Detroit to give notice of General Hull's approach.

He now proposed that we perform his mission, leaving him at liberty to return to the army, and, remembering the packet entrusted to us by Colonel McArthur, I urged my comrades to do as Armstrong wished.

It was not difficult to bring them to my way of thinking, and within an hour after having been awakened we three were swimming across the mouth of the Aux Ecorces, while Armstrong was going back over his own trail.

With the army so near at hand it could not be a very serious matter if we failed of procuring food and lodgment until the forces should arrive, therefore we who had so fortunately escaped were in high spirits as we pressed forward toward our destination.

The packet, while being well soaked with water, did not appear to have suffered serious injury, and we decided that he to whom it was addressed might consider himself fortunate the damage was no worse.

The night had come before we arrived at the town, which is a considerable one as may be known from the fact that, as we were afterwards told, it contains not less than an hundred and sixty houses in which live upward of eight hundred people, and

this despite the conflagration of seven years previous, when every building, save one, was consumed.

Although a high stockade surrounded the place, we had no difficulty in passing through the principal gate, and then we were come to the very heart of the settlement.

It was a great surprise to find what one might almost call a city here on the edge of the wilderness, and while looking around in wonderment that people would be willing to spend their lives in such a secluded spot, we well nigh forgot the purpose of our coming.

Recalled to a sense of our duty by Ezra, we went at once to the fort and informed the commandant of General Hull's near approach, receiving in return for what must have been welcome news, such scant hospitality as caused us to take our leave without delay.

"I had thought mayhap we might find lodgment there," Captain Sam said when we were outside the fortification; "but I'd need be more tired than I now am to ask that puffed-up officer for shelter. One would have said we were beggars soliciting alms, rather than messengers from the governor of the state, and a general as well."

"We may have better fortune with the gentle-

man to whom we deliver Colonel McArthur's property," Ezra said hopefully as we came down the hill, and at that moment we were saluted courteously by a stranger whom we took to be a citizen of the town.

"Can you direct me to the house of Edward Reynolds?" Captain Sam asked, repeating the name which was written on the water-soaked packet. "We are charged with this to be delivered to him without delay."

Instead of making reply at once, the stranger looked around him quickly as if to make certain he was alone, and Captain Sam added foolishly, as if there were no such beings as enemies in the world:

"Colonel McArthur of the American army desired us to have speech with Edward Reynolds instantly we arrived in town."

"So your message is from the colonel?" the stranger replied as he extended his hand. "You must pardon me for being cautious; but at such times one knows not whom to trust."

"Then you will direct us?" I asked, not really suspecting the man of any evil designs, but saying to myself that he behaved oddly.

"I will in good truth, since I am he. You may deliver your goods, sir," he added to Captain Sam.

It seemed so strange that the first townsman with whom we spoke should be him we were seeking, that the old sailor did not immediately give up the packet, but stood staring at the gentleman as if bewildered.

“If you have any question as to the truth of my statement I can readily prove my name,” Mr. Reynolds said with no show of impatience because of Captain Sam’s delay.

Now it occurred to my mind that the colonel had said we would have no trouble in finding the person to whom the packet was addressed, and if I had had any suspicions before, they would have been dispelled by the good-breeding this gentleman displayed.

Yet when Reynolds looked around him quickly once more at the sound of hurried footsteps, I thought it odd he should be so ill at ease in his own town.

“You are in good time, Foster,” he cried while the stranger was yet some distance away. “You can do me a friendly turn by assuring these messengers that my name is Edward Reynolds.”

“Edward Reynolds! Why of course it is! Who dares dispute it?” and the ill-kempt man advanced threateningly as if ready for a quarrel.

“Nay, friend Foster, there is no ill-feeling here, although I thank you for the willingness to aid me if necessary. These gentlemen bring a message from Colonel McArthur of the American army, and, with good reason, hesitate about delivering it to any stranger who may give himself the name of Reynolds.”

“If that is their only business in Detroit, they are through with the job,” Foster said with what was evidently an attempt to speak in a friendly tone, “for if you be not Edward Reynolds, he can’t be found.”

I noted that Ezra looked searchingly at both these men, and he, like me, may have thought it strange Mr. Reynolds took such pains to pronounce his name to Foster before the latter had time to speak; but even then I did not question the truth of what had been said, and was content when Captain Sam delivered up the packet.

“Have you come far?” Mr. Reynolds asked, dropping carelessly into his pocket that which had been given him, as if it was of no especial importance.

“Quite a stretch when it’s all put together,” the old sailor replied with a laugh. “We gave the Britishers at Fort Malden the neatest kind of a slip,

an' what 'twixt swimmin' an' walkin', have come from there on foot an' in the water."

"So you have escaped from the English? I congratulate you, for that is a feat not often accomplished. Where were you captured?"

"On board the schooner *Cuyahoga*, she——"

"Yes, yes, we have heard the particulars of that outrage," Mr. Reynolds interrupted. "Do you count on returning to the army?"

"We'll wait here till the forces arrive," and now Captain Sam, believing he was with friends, had gotten himself into that mood where he was willing to talk any length of time for the sake of hearing his own words. "We reported General Hull's advance to the commandant of Fort Detroit, who was too high an' mighty to ask us if we needed soldier's fare, so we're forced to seek lodgin's in the town."

"They will be hard to find just at present, my friend," the gentleman said thoughtfully, as if turning some matter over in his mind. "Perhaps after having done me a good turn it is my duty to provide for your comfort."

"Don't think, sir, that Captain Sam had any such idea as that in his mind when he spoke," Ezra said quickly. "We would not take what might

seem like payment for the service we have performed.”

“ Well spoken, my lad, and I shall hesitate no longer. My home is but an humble one; I live with my friend Foster, and if you condescend to lodge there I can put you in the way of getting food until the army comes. I will take no refusal,” he added as the old sailor was about to speak. “ You may wander around until midnight without finding shelter, and I shall do by you as I would by Colonel McArthur himself.”

Surely no one could have asked for a more cordial invitation, and I saw no reason why it should not be accepted, therefore took it upon myself to say :

“ We may take advantage of your kindness at least for this one night, and then if it should prove to your discomfort, other lodgings can be found in the morning.”

As he spoke we heard the sound of approaching footsteps, and Mr. Reynolds did not wait for further converse of the subject.

Linking his arm in Captain Sam's he walked rapidly away, saying without so much as turning his head :

“ It shall be your care to guide the young gentle-

men, Foster, and it is high time we were under cover.”

Ezra and I had no hesitation at moving on, one either side of the now friendly-appearing man, and it might almost have been fancied the entire party was afraid of pursuit, so rapidly did we proceed.

On our way we passed another stockade, which Mr. Foster told us was called the Citadel Fort, and that it was garrisoned by night on to an hundred men.

With two such forts in the town, in addition to the fence of logs which entirely enclosed the place, it did not seem to me the citizens should have been so timorous when there were signs of mischief from the savages.

I kept such thoughts to myself, however, lest by giving them words our host might feel offended, and occupied the time by relating to Mr. Foster, at his especial request, an account of our march through the wilderness.

The story was hardly more than finished before we had arrived at Mr. Reynolds' home.

It was a small log-house standing some distance from any other building, and even in the gloom of night had about it the appearance of abandonment.

Nor was the interior any more inviting.

We were ushered into the main room, where was nothing save a rough table of splints and four stools.

In the fireplace were two small boxes made of sawed boards, which had the appearance of having been but lately set down, for I noticed that the ashes were yet strewn on the floor as if they had been thrown out by carelessness in handling the boxes.

All this I noted by the aid of a candle stuck on a block of wood, which Mr. Foster lighted, and the survey had no more than been made when the host said, after going into and coming out of the next room, which I believed to be the kitchen :

“ I cannot offer you any luxuries in the way of food ; but Foster shall see what he can find in the neighborhood, and it will go hard if we do not get at least enough to stay your hunger.”

Before we could protest at causing inconvenience, the ill-kempt man had gone out, and Mr. Reynolds, seating himself at the table, broke the seals of the packet we had brought.

I could now see that it contained a document on parchment, and four or five pages of paper nearly covered with writing.

It was this last to which Mr. Reynolds gave the most attention, and he was yet reading the lines when Foster returned with a basket in which was corn-bread and cold smoked-pork.

This food we were invited to partake of, and did so readily, although it was not removed from the basket; but we were too hungry to stand upon ceremony, and it was as welcome as if spread in proper form on the table.

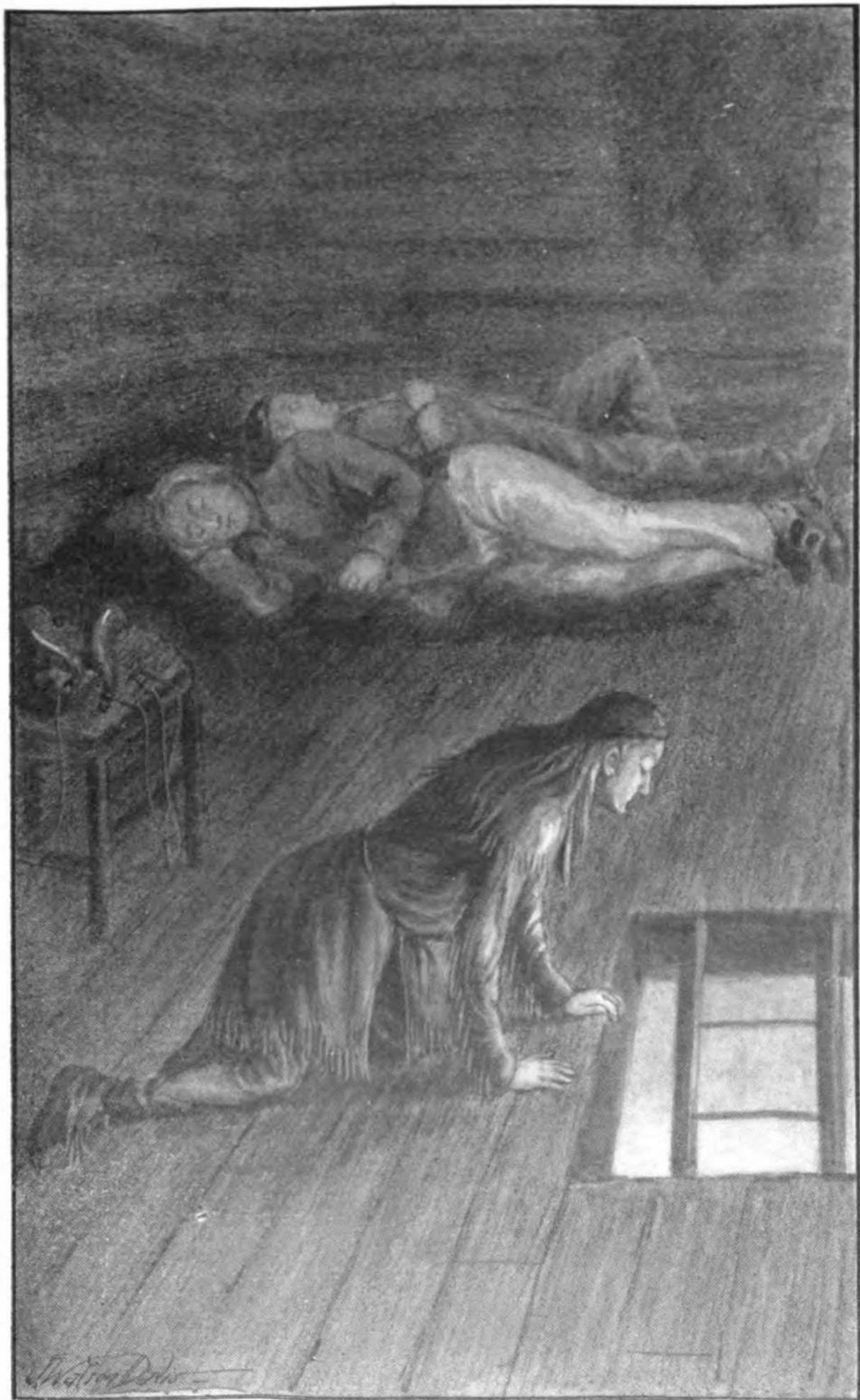
Then Captain Sam asked permission to smoke, and when he had finished my eyes were so heavy that I rejoiced at hearing Mr. Reynolds say we might go to bed whenever it was our pleasure.

Ezra was quite as sleepy as I, and ten minutes later the three of us, having climbed up the ladder leading to the rooms above, were lying on a bed of skins thrown upon the floor.

Neither of us felt inclined to talk, and it seemed as if my two comrades had no more than stretched themselves out before they were breathing heavily in slumber.

I had thought to lose myself in sleep at once; but now it was possible to do as I wished, my eyes were opened as wide as if I had spent a dozen hours in bed.

The noise made by my comrades irritated me,



I crept softly towards the ladder, and by bending over could hear every word spoken in the room below. Page 127.

At the Siege of Detroit.

and from the room below the hum of voices struck harshly on my ears.

There was no thought in my mind to play the eavesdropper; but now and then it was impossible to prevent myself from hearing a word when the speakers grew excited, and finally came that which brought me to a sitting posture as if I had been moved by a spring.

“If Master Reynolds could get a glimpse of this letter which came into my keeping by such a stroke of luck, we might find it desirable to go across the river without waiting to bid our friends good-by.”

Such were the words that had startled me, and once they were heard I felt no hesitation in doing anything within my power to overhear the remainder of the conversation.

At first I was minded to awaken Ezra, and then, realizing that one might move about the room with less chance of being overheard than could two, I crept softly toward the ladder.

Once there I could, by bending over, look into the room below, and every word which was spoken in an ordinary tone must be heard by me.

It was the host who had said that which caused me alarm, and when I gained a position by the ladder I heard Foster, if indeed that was his name, say :

“We’re not likely to linger here many hours longer at the best, if, as I understand it, the writer of that letter is like to come. What beats me is, how a man so far away knew anything of the work we propose to do here?”

“That is a question I would give much to be able to answer. Judging from what was said by those fools who let the packet out of their hands so readily, this Colonel McArthur must have had information from Montreal before we started on this mission.”

“Who is the traitor?”

“That remains to be discovered, and once we are back again it shall be my duty to set inquiries on foot. Some of our people have done this thing, and information must have been sent by way of Boston or New York. However, that doesn’t concern us just at present. It is yet possible we have not come in vain, for General Hull isn’t bound to come to Detroit. It is enough if he remains within short marching distance. Our forces may be here at any hour.”

“They must come before morning, for those fellows up there are like to soon learn who Mr. Edward Reynolds really is.”

“That is exactly what we must prevent. I do

not count on leaving this town to-morrow, neither do I intend they shall be able to work us mischief.”

“How may that be done?”

“I haven’t decided yet; but it’s certain we must hold them here until my business is finished or interrupted, after which we will send them back to Fort Malden.”

Then the conversation came to an abrupt end, and I crouched on the floor, not daring to so much as move, and shivering with terror.

CHAPTER VII.

BY FORCE OF ARMS.

DULL of wit as I am, it was a long while before I could decide as to the purpose of this man who had represented himself as the one to whom the packet was addressed, and then I suddenly realized that he could be none other than a British spy, sent to Detroit in the hope of rendering the capture of that post easy of accomplishment.

When this knowledge had finally found lodgment in my mind I grew yet more alarmed, understanding to what lengths the villains would go to prevent our exposing them.

It is true we numbered three, and they only two, yet was the advantage greatly with them because we were unarmed.

Could we have had the three rifles taken from us at the time of our capture, I would have been brave enough; but even a stout-hearted man may be ex-

cused from growing timid when he finds himself without a weapon, facing enemies who can shoot him down from a distance.

How long I crouched on the floor at the top of the ladder it is impossible to say; my head was in such a whirl because of what I had discovered that I could take no heed of time.

I know, however, that I remained there motionless not less than half an hour; but the villains below did not speak again, and I fancied each was turning over in his own mind how we might best be silenced forever, or so far put out of the way as to prevent us from interfering with their plans.

Then I crept softly back to the bed, chilled with fear as if the air was frosty.

It seemed necessary my comrades should learn without loss of time into what a trap we had fallen, and I set about rousing Ezra, doing so in the gentlest fashion lest he might speak aloud, thus betraying to the scoundrels below the fact that we were awake.

This was not an easy matter; but I finally succeeded, and once he began to understand what I would say, his eyes were opened wide.

The first thought in his mind was to awaken the

old sailor that we might all take council together, but this I opposed, knowing full well it was possible Captain Sam would work more harm than good before he should be brought to understand that only by strategy could we hope to get the upper hands of the spies.

That which gave me the greatest anxiety was the belief these men were not alone in the town.

It did not seem probable they had come on such an important work without others to aid, and, since our silence was absolutely necessary for the furtherance of the scheme, every one concerned would be on the alert against us.

This supposed fact it was which shut out from us the hope that by creating a disturbance we might bring citizens of the town to our aid, and told that whatever we accomplished toward preserving our liberty must be done by cunning.

The question as to exactly which was best for us to do proved a difficult one to settle, and until nearly daylight Ezra and I discussed it without coming to any satisfactory decision.

Then Captain Sam awakened, and we could do no less than tell him what had been learned.

Ezra gave the facts, while I sat by ready to check any outburst of anger from the old sailor, and it

was well this precaution had been taken, for he leaped up as if minded to go down to the next floor without delay.

Springing upon him, at the same time I covered his mouth with my hands, we forced him to listen, but not until after several moments, during which I was in mortal fear lest the buzz of our whispered conversation should be heard by the spies, did we succeed in so far quieting him that he ceased to struggle against us.

Then I gave him an opportunity to speak, first whispering that our lives might pay the forfeit if he was overheard by the Britishers.

“What I want to know is why you lads take it upon yourselves to stop me from doing as I please?” he asked angrily, but yet cautiously.

“Because a rash act now would bring us all into trouble,” Ezra replied, speaking so sternly that Captain Sam ceased to act defiantly. “It is possible we may escape from this house by stratagem ; but it can never be done by force, and we are not minded you should spoil our chances.”

“We are three against two,” Captain Sam grumbled, “an’ that ought to be enough for such as we.”

“I have yet to learn we are any more powerful

than others; but even though we were, the odds would be against us, for there can be no question but that both those men are armed.”

Captain Sam started up as if this fact had escaped him until now, and an instant later replied :

“ We can make an outcry, an’ bring the citizens down on the scoundrels.”

“ How long, think you, would we scream before any one outside of this house heard us ? There is no building within forty rods, and our enemies would not hesitate to do murder in furtherance of their plans.”

Now the old sailor was silenced, for he had begun to understand how helpless we really were, and there was no longer any need for us to argue with him.

“ What do you count on doin’ ? ” he asked after a long pause, and I replied :

“ That is exactly what I can’t say. Possibly we might barricade ourselves here in the garret; but they could soon starve us out.”

“ I have a plan,” Ezra said quietly; “ but its success depends entirely on the movements of those villains.”

“ What is it ? ” I cried eagerly. “ Surely the lad who took us out of Fort Malden can do as much here ! ”

“That was but a simple matter by the side of this, and for it I deserve no credit. Nor is the plan in my head now anything more than taking advantage of the chances, with the odds greatly against our having the opportunity needed.”

“There is no use for so many words,” Captain Sam interrupted irritably. “What I want to know is how we are to get away from this hole, an’ I’m willin’ to say straight out an’ out that I’m to blame for our bein’ here. If I’d held my tongue——”

“Any one would have made the same mistake,” I said, not minded the old man should reproach himself. “Ezra and I were well content when you gave up the packet, and once that had been done it was not necessary to go further into the trap, for these fellows knew full well we must be prevented from learning the truth.”

“We’ll hear what Ezra has to say,” Captain Sam replied curtly, and our comrade laid the plan before us.

“When it is light, instead of getting up we must remain as if asleep. They may call from below; but we are to pretend we do not hear them. Now if it should chance that one goes out and the other comes up the ladder to learn the reason of the silence, all will go well. I shall be lying close by

the scuttle with my boot in hand, and can answer for it he'll be knocked helpless by one blow, for I would not hesitate to kill either of the scoundrels."

"But suppose both are in the house when one comes up?" I asked, liking much the plan, but fearing it might not be possible to carry it into effect.

"Then we can do no less than pretend to be asleep, and allow him to awaken us. After that some fortunate chance may come; but my plan does not go as far as that yet."

We waited for Captain Sam to give his opinion; but he did not speak for many minutes, and then it was to say slowly, like one in perplexity:

"It's a great idee if everything turns as Ezra figgers; but in case it don't, I'm afraid we're in hard sleddin'."

Our comrade made no reply to this.

He rolled softly from off the furs, found his boots after some searching, and made his way cautiously to the scuttle, where I doubted not but that he had laid down.

"I'm not going to let him do all the work, and it may come to pass that help will be needed. You are to lie here, and I'll join him."

Captain Sam remained silent, and in as short a time as might be I was by Ezra's side.

“You should not have come,” he whispered. “If both men stay in the house we must be abed when one looks for us.”

“That is easily fixed. We can see into the room when it grows light, and shall know if either counts on coming up the ladder.”

The dear lad had nothing more to say, and I crept yet closer to him that there might be no reason for whispering so loudly.

It was as if I had no more than thus taken my station when we heard a rustling noise behind us, and knew Captain Sam was not minded to stay on the bed alone when it was possible there might be work to do.

Now if the plan did not progress as we hoped, it would be understood that we knew the secret of the house, for there was little chance all three could creep back unheard.

“You must make him go away,” Ezra whispered. “Stay with the old fellow, else we may find ourselves in trouble.”

I was on the point of doing as my comrade bade, and there was anger in my heart against Captain Sam that he should thus interfere with the work, when the sound of a voice from below caused me to remain silent.

“It’s time you were stirring, Jenkins,” we heard the man who had wrongfully possessed himself of the packet say in a low tone.

There was no reply. The words were repeated, this time louder, and Jenkins made answer after a sleepy fashion :

“It is nowhere near day.”

“The sun will rise in less than an hour, and you must be on the other side of the river and back again before many people are stirring.”

“What about the simples in the loft?”

“They are not likely to be awake for some time yet, and even though they prove to be early risers, I can manage to keep them here till you have returned. See that runners are sent out to announce the near approach of the Americans, and it may be well to bring some one back with you. We might need help.”

My heart beat high as I realized that this much of the plan was working according to our desire, and hope grew strong.

From the faint sounds below we understood that the fellow Jenkins was making ready for the journey, and no more than five minutes had passed before we heard him say :

“You had best bar the door behind me, for

visitors wouldn't be pleasant while your idiots are in the garret."

Then the noise of footsteps told that one of our enemies had departed, and immediately afterward we could hear the other spy barring the door.

This done he threw himself on the floor again, having, most likely, given up his bed to us, and silence reigned once more.

Like one with a clear conscience, the spy gave himself up to sleep in an exceedingly short time, or we supposed he had from the sound of heavy, regular breathing, and Ezra whispered to me:

"It would be worse than folly to wait longer. I am going down."

"If he awakens while you are on the ladder your life will pay the forfeit," and my voice trembled with the fear which had come upon me.

"It must be done. He hopes we may stay here quietly till his comrade comes back, and will do nothing to awaken us."

I understood this, but yet shrank from making the venture, or allowing Ezra to do so, because of the peril.

The spy would shoot instantly he saw us coming toward him, and it seemed to me as if our chances for success had suddenly dwindled to nothing.

“The lad is right,” Captain Sam said in my ear. “If we fail to strike a blow now we deserve to be carried back as prisoners.”

Timorous though I was, and never a woman had fainter heart than was mine at that moment, I would not allow Ezra to take all the danger upon himself, therefore said with as great a show of courage as it was possible to muster :

“Go on ; I shall follow close at your heels.”

“To what end? One will make less noise than two.”

“That must be risked, because it may be you will need aid.”

Ezra hesitated as if he would object to my company, and I added firmly, this time being able to hold my voice steady :

“I shall go whether it please you or not.”

“Come along then. If he moves while we are on the ladder, hold still unless it is certain we have been seen. Once on the floor, however, we must continue, whatever the hazard.”

“Go on ; I understand,” and I gripped my boot the harder, as if thereby to gain the courage I most sorely needed.

Looking through the scuttle I could see faint rays of light which came through the heavily shuttered

window, and thus knew the day was near at hand.

The man Jenkins had started late on his journey, if he counted on being back shortly after sunrise.

Ezra, always ready to bear more than his share of danger, did not delay.

Even as I glanced below he was on the ladder, and there was no time to be wasted if I would follow near enough to be of assistance in case of trouble.

Each instant I expected to hear an outcry from the spy; but the silence remained as profound as ever.

Looking upward when I was half-way to the floor below, I saw Captain Sam's legs.

The old sailor was not minded to be left at such a time, and it was now too late to urge that he go back.

We were taking unnecessary risks which might result in the ruin of the plan, and bring death upon us all.

Ezra was already on the floor, moving cautiously toward that corner of the room where lay our enemy, and I made haste to join him.

It was now so light that we could see dimly the table and stools, and thus were able to steer a clear course.

My comrade was creeping upon the sleeping man as stealthily as a savage could have done, and it seemed as if this venture, which at first seemed so rash, might be accomplished without danger, when suddenly came a crash that fairly shook the house.

Captain Sam had missed his footing and fallen full half the distance down the ladder.

The spy sprang and seized a rifle which must have been lying close beside him, and at that instant Ezra leaped forward like a bullet from a gun.

While one might have counted five I stood bewildered, seeing only a struggling, writhing mass in which could be distinguished neither our comrade nor his enemy, and then I threw myself on both, forgetting my fear in the desire to aid Ezra.

The spy caught me by the throat with his left hand, and I soon came to know how powerful a man we had to deal with, for I was nigh to strangling before having well gotten into the fray.

I fought desperately, as well I might, since it was for life itself, each instant growing weaker and weaker as the pressure on my throat increased rather than diminished, and just when it seemed to me we must be worsted, the spy's grasp was released.

I felt rather than saw that he sank helplessly

back with a deep groan, and then heard the old sailor cry triumphantly :

“ Even though we *are* on land, I reckon your Uncle Samuel did his share that time! You lads had tackled what was a little too much for both of you! ”

The old sailor was swinging a stool by one leg as he spoke, and this told what he had used in the way of a weapon.

“ You didn’t come any too soon, and that’s a fact,” Ezra said as he struggled from beneath the unconscious Britisher. “ I believe of a verity he’d have crushed out my life in a minute more.”

“ I kinder allowed the old man might come in handy, an’ so followed when you lads counted on doin’ the work alone. But hark ye, there’s no call to stand here chatterin’ when we’d best be makin’ that villain fast. If he revives once, the three of us may find it a tough job to get the upper hands, for he’s a tiger an’ no mistake.”

Ezra and I set about finding something with which to bind the spy, and this was only done when we had torn a blanket into strips.

It was Captain Sam who did the fettering, and we had no fear the captive would be able to unloose himself from such knots as the old sailor tied.

“Now let us get out of here,” I said nervously, for the air of the place, which had well-nigh been a shambles for us, was sickening.

“Why should we go so soon?” Ezra asked as if he was minded to linger.

“Because the man called Jenkins will soon return, bringing another, and we had best be in a safe place.”

“Why have you grown so timorous? Now we have weapons,” and Ezra pointed to several rifles which stood in one corner of the room, “therefore should not be afraid to meet two, or even five men, more particularly since we are warned of their coming.”

“But what good can be served by our staying?” and now I spoke impatiently, for not knowing what my comrade had in mind, it seemed to be more like bravado than good sense to linger after we were free to depart.

“Are you willing this spy should be set free when Jenkins arrives, and that the two of them cross over into Canada without being called to an accounting for the intent to do mischief?”

“We can tell the commandant all we have heard and done.”

“So we will; but I am reckoning on taking

three prisoners with us when we go to relate the story. We have only to wait here quietly until the others come back, and once that door is opened by them the villains will yield without a struggle.”

“Hurrah, lad! You’re a rare one at seein’ through a matter which looks thick to others!” Captain Sam cried in delight. “It will be no more than child’s play to bag the rest, an’ the commandant will have to come down off his high horse when he sees what we have done to the spies who are able to work under his very nose.”

I could have been angry with myself for not having thought of such a course before another did, but for the fact that that other was my quick-witted comrade Ezra.

In such work as we were now engaged I soon came to understand he was a match for a dozen lads like me, and from that moment never tried to cast ridicule upon anything he proposed.

We possessed ourselves of the rifles; saw to it that they were loaded, and then bethought ourselves of the prisoner, who had almost been forgotten while we were preparing for the coming of the second villain.

The fellow had regained consciousness and was watching us with a murderous look in his eyes.

Spy though he was, I began to have a shadow of respect for him because of the courage displayed, for not a trace of fear could be read on his face, and yet he knew full well that a halter awaited him.

Captain Sam would have jeered at the prisoner, but I stopped such brutal sport, which was at the least unmanly, and gave the old sailor to understand that we must not thus copy after the savages.

“He is beaten, and fairly. Perhaps his crime is not as great as we would make it, for what good soldier would hesitate at playing the spy if ordered to do so? We know what American spies did during the Revolution, and yet we do not condemn them for it.”

“But they were risking their necks to do a service to their country,” Captain Sam stammered, and Ezra added quickly :

“Which is neither more nor less than this man has been doing. Our business is to catch Jenkins, and we need not bandy words about him we have captured, for it was three to one, and even against those odds he very nearly got the best of us.”

Then Ezra moved the helpless man to a more comfortable position ; bathed the lump on his head which had been raised by the stool in Captain Sam’s hands, and by the time all this was done the sun-

light streamed in through the cracks in the shutters.

The old sailor, looking in no wise abashed by what we had said regarding his manner of treating the prisoners, bustled around in search of provisions, and succeeded in finding only that which Jenkins had brought us the night previous.

There was an ample supply for all, however, with some left over for the captive; but he refused even so much as a mouthful, and, understanding what must be in his mind, I was not surprised that food should seem distasteful to him.

CHAPTER VIII.

FAILURE.

CAPTAIN SAM would have unbarred the door in order that Jenkins might have no difficulty in entering, but Ezra prevented him by saying :

“ Believing we are upstairs, ignorant of what they count on doing with us, he will expect to find it fastened, and we had best leave it as it is. We can open when he knocks.”

“ Right you are, lad, an’ that’s what I’m bound to say to any order you give, in view of what’s been done since we went on board the *Cuyahoga*.”

Then the old sailor seated himself near the prisoner as if considering it his duty to guard the helpless man, while Ezra and I took up our stations either side the door, for it was reasonable to suppose Jenkins would soon return.

There would have been a more cheerful look about the place had we opened the shutters; but this it

was not safe to do, since the spy might, by looking through the windows, get an inkling of what had been done.

Half an hour went by slowly without our having heard the lightest sound from the outside.

Looking at the prisoner now and then I saw he was watching our movements intently, but other than by the rolling of his eyes he gave no signs of life, and this last made me feel uncomfortable at times, particularly when I thought of what he would do if it was within his power.

Then we heard footsteps, and I nerved myself for a possible struggle; but there was no summons at the door.

Whoever was outside appeared to have been attacked by a violent fit of coughing, which caused him to halt some time, after which he passed on.

Five minutes more and again came the heavy tread of a man.

“This must surely be Jenkins,” I whispered, and Ezra nodded.

For the second time we appeared to have been mistaken. The one who had passed a few moments before was evidently returning, and as before he coughed so harshly that I felt sympathy for him in his sufferings.

An instant later I chanced to glance toward the prisoner; the expression of his face had changed entirely, and I fancied there was a look of triumph in his eyes.

Even as I gazed at him the truth came to me, and leaping to the door I threw off the bar, saying as I did so:

“The fellow who coughed was none other than Jenkins! It was his signal, and getting no reply, he understands that it is not safe or wise for him to enter.

It was as I had suspected.

There, an hundred yards or more away, stood Jenkins, and a short distance in the rear was a second man whom I believed to be one who had come at the bidding of our prisoner.

Instantly he caught a glimpse of us rushing in hot haste from the house, Jenkins turned and ran toward the river at full speed.

Ezra fired before I had wit enough to raise my rifle, and his ball must have hit the mark, for I saw the fellow plunge forward as if impelled by a blow, and it appeared to me as if one arm swung uselessly by his side.

Then I fired, but in such excitement that I missed what should have been a fair target, and before we

could reload our rifles both men had passed through the open gate of the stockade in their way to the river.

I started in pursuit, but before it was possible to take a dozen strides Ezra halted me by shouting :

“It will be of no use, and who can say how large a force may be close at hand, hidden among the trees, or on the water? Come back! By running after that one we may lose him we have already caught!”

There was rage in my heart as I faced toward the house again, and I paid no attention to the questions which came in a flood from Captain Sam, who had just gained the open air.

Ezra looked at the matter in a more manly light than I could, for there had been in my mind the thought that we should gain great honor by capturing three spies in the very heart of the town, and my disappointment was grievous.

“Now we will do what should have been done immediately that man was overpowered,” Ezra said, much as if he no longer gave heed to our loss. “It was not for two lads and an old sailor to set themselves up to do the work of soldiers. If we had gone straight to the fort with the story, both those fellows would have been prisoners by this time.”

He spoke only the truth, but the words caused my

anger to increase, for I understood that now instead of being praised for having taken this one spy, we would be blamed severely because the others had escaped.

“It is of no use to cry over spilled milk,” Captain Sam said soothingly, understanding what was in my mind. “We have made somewhat of a snarl, I’ll admit, but yet it’s true that we’ll have been the means of straightenin’ out a good bit of what would have gone mighty crooked but for our coming.”

Ezra gave no heed to our chattering; he appeared to be turning some matter over in his mind, and said, when we two gave him the chance:

“We will go to the fort at once, and since it would be too hard a job to carry the prisoner with us, one must stay to guard him.”

“I’ll take that job,” Captain Sam replied promptly. “You two lads will make a better story of it without me, an’ you need have no fear our bird can give us the slip.”

I would willingly have remained to act the part of jailor, rather than be forced to hear the unkind things which it might please the commandant to say because of our blunder, yet I made no protest against the plan.

The old sailor took up his station by the side of

the prisoner, with all the rifles close beside him, and promised not to lose sight of his charge for a single instant.

Then Ezra and I set out, and having arrived at the fort did not find it an easy matter to get speech with the commandant.

The soldier who acted as messenger 'twixt us and him insisted that we first explain for what purpose we wished to see the officer, and when we refused to say, threatened that we would be denied admittance.

“We shall see the commandant, and without telling you wherefore, if we stand here until he shows himself. Say to him that two lads just come from General Hull would have speech with him at once, on business of greatest importance.”

“He will not see you,” the man replied impudently.

“Repeat to him what I have said, or General Hull, who, as you know, is the governor of the territory as well as the commander of the forces, shall be informed of your refusal to do a soldier's duty.”

This was a big speech; but Ezra had manners far above his station, and after some little grumbling the man did his bidding.

As soon as might be thereafter we were admitted,

and I no longer feared to meet the commandant, because the wrangle at the gate had given me better courage.

We were not received with any show of friendliness; but Ezra plunged at once into the heart of his story without troubling himself about black looks, and before he had well started in the matter the commandant forgot his high and mighty airs, as well he might, if two green lads like us who had been in the town but twelve hours could instruct him in what he should have known long before our coming.

Much to my surprise nothing was said regarding our neglect to report the situation of affairs to the proper authorities after we had secured our prisoner, nor were we reprovved for having attempted to manage the matter ourselves.

Since having time in which to reflect on all that was said during the interview, I have come to the conclusion that the commandant did not think it best to reprimand us when he himself might well be charged with neglect of duty, therefore we were treated as friends, most likely with the hope we would not speak too loudly of what he wished should remain a secret.

“ You shall breakfast with me,” he said when Ezra had come to an end of his story, “ and in the mean-

time I will send a squad of men for your friend and the prisoner.”

“ But is nothing to be done in the way of pursuit? ” I asked, not realizing at the time how ill-mannered was the question.

“ It would be useless. The British have a fortified camp at Sandwich, which is nearly opposite this town, and the spy is secure there, for we have not sufficient force to make an attack, even though it should be good policy. You have done the country a signal service in unearthing this plot; but I must request that the whole affair be kept a secret until General Hull arrives.”

While we made no absolute promise to refrain from speaking of the matter, our silence was much the same as an agreement to do so, and we considered it in that light, save in one case, which shall be set down later.

Captain Sam was in high glee as he joined us at the fort, and when we were at the table whereon a generous meal was spread, insisted on telling what he had done while serving under Commodore Preble, not ceasing his yarn-spinning until the breakfast had been brought to a close.

Then we were given the freedom of the fort, with the assurance that it would afford the commandant

great pleasure if we continued as his guests until we set out for Sackett's Harbor, or rejoined the army, as might be decided upon.

It seemed as if we would be very comfortably quartered, and when the officer left us to our own devices in order to visit the prisoner, I gave words to my hope that it would be several days before we felt called upon to make any change.

“There is no reason why you should not stay,” Ezra replied; “but I have no desire to linger here. Now that war has been declared we will hardly find a vessel bound to Sackett's Harbor, and I intend to join Colonel McArthur's regiment this very day.”

“But the prisoner!” I exclaimed in surprise.

“We have nothing more to do with him, and, unless I am much mistaken, it will please the commandant if we do not refer to the matter again.”

“But he belongs to us,” Captain Sam insisted.

“We have given him up to the proper authorities, and there our concern in the affair ends. I count on going down the river within an hour.”

This decision of Ezra's was not pleasing either to the old sailor or myself, yet both of us understood full well that it would be useless to make any attempt at persuading him into doing other than had been announced, therefore I said with an ill grace:

“ You know that we won't let you go alone.”

“ Why not ? There is nothing to prevent you from remaining here.”

“ True for you, lad an' *I've* come to an anchor. This traipsin' through the woods isn't to my likin', an' you'll not find me leavin' a snug moorin' place without good cause.”

“ David will keep you company,” Ezra added, and straightway fell to furbishing up the rifle he had brought with him from the house which had been so nigh to serving us as a prison.

I was vexed with my comrade for wishing to set out again at once, yet would not be left behind, and within the hour we said good-by to Captain Sam, who followed us as far as the gate leading toward the south.

“ I'll keep an eye on our prisoner, if it so be the commandant gives me a chance, an' in the meanwhile look up the real Edward Reynolds, for it may be he would like to read that which we brought for him.”

This the old man called after us as we set out, and I made no other reply than to wave my hand, for at the moment I was in the sulks because of feeling obliged to undertake what seemed like a useless journey.

Ezra remained silent, though not for the same reason, and during nearly an hour we two pushed ahead without speaking.

My comrade began to question the possibility of our being able to reach Sackett's Harbor, other than by traveling directly through the enemy's country, and before he had come to an end I understood he had it in his mind to join the army.

“What else can we do?” he asked when I taxed him with the purpose. “We no longer have a home, and in these days it will not be safe to spend the time hunting or trapping.”

“Yet we may find a chance to join my uncle.”

“Perhaps; but some time must pass before then, and how are we to live meanwhile?”

Knowing that if he once made up his mind to enlist my words would have no effect upon him, I set about trying to drive away the idea while it was yet young.

In this discussion another hour was spent, and we were far from coming to an agreement when we saw far in the distance a company of men who could be none other than the advance guard of our army.

“The journey which we had thought would be long, is likely to prove a short one,” Ezra said as he

threw himself on the ground to await the coming of these strangers. "At last General Hull has decided to move rapidly. The pity is he had not been in more haste while we were in the wilderness."

"Promise me, Ezra, that you will not regularly enlist for some days yet," I said earnestly, knowing full well that the question must be settled at once lest it be too late when the soldiers were with us. "Wait ten days, and then, if we see no other wise course, I will join with you in signing the rolls. In the meantime we can attach ourselves to Colonel McArthur's command, as when we left Dayton."

He hesitated only an instant, and then gave the desired promise, after which I felt right comfortable in mind.

Within the hour we were walking by the side of Colonel McArthur, relating all that had happened to us since we went on board the *Cuyahoga*; but he gave little heed to any part of our story save that which pertained to the spy.

"You did the work of men in taking him prisoner," he said approvingly, "and yet it may have been my duty to have sent you to the commandant himself; but I distrusted the zeal of that officer——"

He checked himself as if understanding he had been speaking too plainly against a brother soldier, and asked us concerning such of the British forces as we had seen.

We were within half a mile of the settlement known as Spring Wells, and here it was that General Hull had decided to encamp until he should be able to gain a better idea of where his forces might be most needed.

“You are to be with my command, I hope,” Colonel McArthur said after giving us the information set down above, “and I doubt not but that you will have plenty of work, even though you have not enlisted.”

“If it so be we may remain without agreeing to stay in the service any stated time, I shall be glad to do so,” Ezra made answer. “David’s uncle expects that we will come to him when it shall be possible, else would we both enlist at once.”

“I promise you shall earn your rations,” the colonel replied with a laugh, and then we were left to our own devices as he went to attend to the details of laying out the encampment.

During three days we remained at this place, and a time of anxiety it was to Ezra and I, for not only the troops, but the younger officers were ripe for

mutiny because General Hull did not immediately cross over into Canada.

The privates talked of little else all the while, and to us lads it seemed as if there was good cause for discontent.

The Britishers were building forts and otherwise preparing for defense, all of which might have been checked by a determined advance.

The general refused to leave the American side of the river without orders from the War Department at Washington, and there was much talk of advancing, regardless of his commands or wishes.

On the afternoon of the second day I believe serious trouble must have come but for the fact that the hoped-for orders were received, and there was great rejoicing in camp when it was made known that on the next morning our troops would march into Canada.

I wish to set down in the fewest words necessary all that took place on Sunday the twelfth of July, which was the morrow after orders came from Washington, and during Monday, for the better understanding of the adventure which came to us three comrades.

On the same evening when the mutinous spirit of the soldiers was checked by the announcement that

our forces should advance, all the boats and canoes—a sufficient number to carry four hundred men at a time—were sent down the river as if it was the general's purpose to make an attack on Fort Malden.

Colonel McArthur's regiment, which Ezra and I accompanied as if regularly enlisted, also marched down the shore in full view of the enemy, thus making it seem as if the American army had no concern regarding the fortified camp at Sandwich.

Having thus deceived the Britishers, our troops turned back after the distance of two miles had been traversed, and rapidly retraced their steps, passing directly through Detroit during the night, where we two were joined by Captain Sam, and continuing on to Bloody Bridge.

Under cover of darkness the boats were brought to this point, and shortly after sunrise the American soldiers were in Canada, General Hull making his headquarters at the mansion of Colonel Babie, a British officer who was then with the red-coats, most likely scurrying down the river expecting we would attack Fort Malden.

The troops were encamped on the farm, and then came a proclamation from our commander which

caused every man to forgive him for having refused to do as had been desired.

There was very much to this proclamation which did not interest me; the last portion was what I had hoped to hear, knowing full well that something must be done to prevent the Britishers from stirring up the Indians against us.

Therefore it was that these lines seemed more important than all the rest of the proclamation :

“The first stroke of the tomahawk, the first attempt with the scalping-knife, will be the signal for an indiscriminate scene of desolation. No white man found fighting by the side of an Indian will be taken prisoner. Instant destruction will be his lot.”

On Monday morning a reconnoitering party was sent toward Fort Malden, and returned at night bringing the news that Tecumseh with two hundred Indians was at Turkey Creek, about nine miles from the camp.

It was also reported that the forest beyond swarmed with savages who were serving with the British forces, and these must be dispersed before we could come to the red-coats.

Although Ezra and I made diligent inquiry, we could not learn whether Walk-in-the-Water was

there; but it seemed most probable he would be, and we burned with the desire to be sent against him.

“I’m willin’ enough to hang back here where the rations are plenty, an’ bullets none too thick,” Captain Sam said when we three were discussing the situation that evening. “This sneakin’ through the forest with them painted beasts waitin’ a chance to kill, scalp, or do worse, ain’t to my likin’.”

“I’d be willing to enlist for five years’ service, if by such means I could come face to face with that savage!” Ezra exclaimed, and I pressed his hand in token that my mind was the same.

“I don’t generally count on shirkin’ where there’s any danger,” the old sailor said half to himself; “but when it comes to stickin’ my nose into a nest of them red wolves, I’m mighty cautious.”

“If troops are sent against them, Ezra and I will go also.”

“Then I’d best stay here to look out for the camp; that’s the safest place for an old shell-back like your Uncle Samuel.”

Before I could reply to this assertion a messenger came to say that Colonel McArthur would speak with us, and we lost no time in obeying the sum-

mons, for it surely seemed as if our opportunity had come.

Nor were we mistaken.

“To-morrow—most likely late in the day—I shall set out for Turkey Creek with a small force of picked men,” the colonel said when we stood before him. “You lads have had bitter experience in such work as will be before us, and I would have you with me as scouts.”

“It will be a favor if you allow us to go !” Ezra cried joyfully, and there was no need for more words.

“Be ready to set out at any moment. I do not care to leave camp while it is light, because there are plenty of spies in the forest hereabouts, and we should not be able to give the savages such a surprise as I count on.”

“We will be ready,” Ezra replied curtly, and during the remainder of that evening he talked of little else save the scenes we had witnessed near about Dayton; but saying never a word of his parents’ fate.

During the next day no one in camp was idle.

Fortifications were thrown up on that side nearest the forest, and detachments of men sent in every direction to reconnoiter.

Before Colonel McArthur was ready to begin his work we had heard that a British fleet was to come against us; that troops from Fort Malden were advancing, and that the savages were in strong force within half a dozen miles of the encampment.

Then came the summons we had waited for so impatiently, and an hour after sunset we said good-bye to Captain Sam as we set out a few rods in advance of the hundred men Colonel McArthur had selected.

When the moment for parting came the old sailor would have delayed us to explain that he was no coward because he remained behind, and Ezra cut his explanations short by saying curtly, yet in a friendly tone:

“ You are wise in so doing, Captain Sam. Your place is not with such as follow Colonel McArthur. There will be plenty of work, and you would be a hindrance rather than a help. Watch out for us in two or three days; but if we fail to return, remember that we did our duty.”

“ I have no fear on that score, lad. What gives me the greatest trouble is that you may do more than a fair share, through dwelling on your own wrongs.”

Then the old man held our hands in his for an in-

stant; the colonel gave the word for us to advance, and we plunged into the gloom of the forest weighted heavily with the sense of responsibility, for upon us depended in a great measure the safety of those brave fellows who followed.

CHAPTER IX.

A RECOGNITION.

SAVE for the hope that we might be so fortunate as to meet with that Wyandot murderer, Walk-in-the-Water, I question if either Ezra or I would have undertaken the task of scouting in advance of the soldiers during the night, for it was such work as we had never done before, and the chances were many that, deceived by the gloom, we might make a fatal mistake.

However, the knowledge of our own ignorance rendered us doubly cautious, which may have atoned for lack of experience, and we acted our part fairly well.

Within four miles of the camp we detected the presence of savages, giving an alarm in time to prevent our men from walking into an ambush, and from that moment half a dozen of the soldiers were sent forward to aid us.

Under cover of the darkness we arrived at Turkey Creek without undue betrayal of the size of our force, and there remained on the alert until the day should dawn, for it was not prudent to advance further in the gloom.

After a strong line of sentinels had been posted permission was given to those not on duty to sleep, and although Ezra and I laid down with the others, it was not possible to close our eyes in slumber.

Knowing full well that the Indians who had done us such cruel wrong were close at hand, and might be met face to face when another day should come, our excitement was intense, and we gave heed to nothing save what the future had in store for us.

Colonel McArthur made no effort to gain rest. We could see him now and then as he moved constantly from one point of the encampment to another to make certain the sentinels were on the alert, and Ezra whispered to me :

“ Among all the army there is no one more likely to lead us where we would go. He understands his business, and if it so be the painted wretches show fight, Colonel McArthur will give them good opportunity.”

I agreed with him, yet did not care to talk much regarding the morrow because my courage was fail-

ing me at the approach of danger, and I had no fancy for giving words to all that was in my mind.

It seemed to me as if the morning would never come, so slowly did the moments pass, and I was rejoiced despite my timorousness when the first gray light sifted down among the foliage.

Now the sleepers were aroused, and as soon as one could pick his way amid the decaying logs or tangle of bushes, the scouts were sent forward with orders to push on at the best pace which could be made with due regard to safety.

During three hours we in advance moved warily but steadily onward, and just before arriving at the bank of the Ruscum River Ezra gave the word that a party of savages had been seen in hot retreat.

It was possible the Indians had shown themselves simply to draw us into an ambush, therefore our force did not press on as rapidly as they might have done until we were at the river bank, and then there was no question but that the cowards, so brave when a defenseless settler or an innocent child was before them, were fleeing in alarm.

The word was given to press forward with all speed, and we crossed the stream as best we might, each one doing his utmost to be first one over, for

among the party there were none timorous, save it might be myself, and by this time I was so deeply excited as to have forgotten my fears.

When half an hour had passed I began to be afraid the most we could accomplish would be the driving of these painted cowards into the fort, and then came the sharp crack of rifles from the right of our line, telling that some of the foe had been overtaken.

Never before had the sounds of conflict sounded so sweetly in my ears!

With shouts of joy Ezra and I pressed toward the spot from which had come the rattle of firearms, arriving on the scene in good time, for the Indians had rallied, and already our men were beginning to give way before what seemed like a determined assault.

“A Britisher has got them in hand now!” one of the men said as I halted near him to find a target for my bullet. “Injuns ain’t given to such work as that,” and he pointed to the wreaths of smoke which arose from among the foliage in a regular line.

“Tecumseh may be with them; he is said to be a good soldier.”

“Ay, lad, so he is as Injuns go; but with all

they say about him he don't hanker for a stand-up fight, an' is as much given to sneakin' as any of his crowd."

By this time Ezra had taken a stand by my side, and was peering through the bushes for a glimpse of the foe.

Twice did he discharge his rifle before I could see anything at which to aim, and each time I believe a savage went down.

"Fall back, lads, they are pressing us too hotly!" I heard Colonel McArthur cry, and would have obeyed the command but for the fact that Ezra remained motionless, save as he bent forward now and then for a better view.

"Did you hear the colonel?" I asked.

"Yes; but there will be time enough to do as he says when the beasts are so near that we can see them. The one we are looking for will never be found if we stay in the rear."

After those words had been spoken I would not have moved backward without him if all the savages 'twixt Fort Malden and that spot were directly in front of us, and we two remained far in advance of the rest of the force, holding our own without doing very much execution.

When ten minutes had passed I could see that the

enemy were drawing nearer; but Ezra gave no sign that he was aware of the fact.

We loaded and discharged our weapons more rapidly; but not one inch did we give way, thanks to the dear boy's courage.

Without him I should have beat a retreat some time before.

Then it was that suddenly a perfect shower of bullets fell around us as if a volley had been fired, and Ezra shouted warningly:

“Have a care now; they will make a rush!”

It was as he said.

The words had hardly been spoken when I saw a dozen painted figures coming toward us, and as Ezra stopped the foremost I checked the second with a bullet planted fairly in his head, after which we could do no more than stand with clubbed rifles, for it would have meant death for us had we turned to fly.

It seemed to me as if in a dream I was about to be killed. In my mind was the thought that the end had come, but it caused no more anguish than if another in whom I had no interest was on the verge of the grave.

I was not really conscious of all I did when that howling crowd rushed upon us.

There is now only the dimmest memory of a lad

striking wildly here or there; leaping behind the trunk of a tree to avoid a deadly blow, or of dashing forward to deal a death stroke, and then loud cries from the rear told that the soldiers were coming to our rescue.

Even before our men arrived the cowardly savages gave way, and I had begun to reload my rifle when Ezra cried exultantly as he pointed straight ahead to where I could see the figure of a white man skulking behind a tree-trunk as if to get aim at one of us.

“It’s our prisoner!”

I believe of a verity the lad would have leaped out into full view, so excited was he, but for my holding him back.

“Stay here!” I shouted, wrestling with him as with an enemy. “Has not death been near enough to us for the last half hour but that you must rush out to be killed by that red-coat who is willing to wage war with such allies as the Wyandots?”

“I tell you the man we made a prisoner is there!” the lad cried furiously; but now that his excitement was over in some slight degree he no longer tried to shake off my grasp.

Before I could answer the soldiers were beside us, and Colonel McArthur was asking sharply:



“It’s our prisoner!” Ezra cried exultantly, as he pointed towards one of the Indians. Page 174.

At the Siege of Detroit.

“ Why did you not fall back when the order was given ? ”

“ We were holding our own, sir, and can drive the scoundrels out now if you give the word. They are in full flight again. ”

The colonel did not wait to learn if I had spoken truly, but shouting to his men ran forward, Ezra and I close behind him, charging our rifles as we went.

For upwards of two miles we dashed on in pursuit, getting a glimpse now and then of a fugitive, but never a fair shot, and then we understood that further pursuit was useless.

The savages had scattered, and in the forest it would be impossible we could come upon any number this side of Fort Malden.

Our soldiers have since told me that our fight that morning could be called neither a battle nor a skirmish; that it was only a brush with the Indians, and of no account so far as the war with England was concerned; but I shall always think of it as an action worthy of record.

However, that is of no importance, for whatever the engagement be called it will not take any credit from Ezra who proved himself brave as the bravest, and must always have the name of having finally

scattered the savages. Save for him they would have rallied under the white man, and might have given us serious trouble before our return to the encampment.

Not until we had come to a halt did I realize that the blood was running down my arm, and Ezra, who saw it at the same instant I did, gave a shrill cry of fear as he tore off my coat to examine the wound.

Save for the blood, it was hardly more than a scratch, which, after being washed, would care for itself, and when this had been done I asked my comrade regarding the man he thought he recognized among the Indians.

“There can be no question about it,” he replied emphatically. “I got a full view of him, and cannot be mistaken. Had my rifle not been empty he would no longer be enjoying his freedom by heading a crowd of savages and calling it honest warfare.”

“It isn’t possible he could have escaped.”

“He *has* done so. There cannot be two men in the world who look so nearly alike.”

“Then I dare say he was given aid by some one in the fort—perhaps the commandant himself!” and I spoke so loudly that Colonel McArthur heard the words.

After that there was nothing for it but to explain to the colonel what Ezra had seen, and all I believed, at which he suddenly fell serious and walked away.

I feared he might be angry because of what I had said against the commandant; but Ezra could not agree with me.

“Any officer holding as high a command as he does might well be serious on learning that a prisoner has escaped, and at such a time. We shall hear from him later.”

And so we did.

During the afternoon our force was marched to the river on the way back to Sandwich; but there we were met by Captain Smith of the Detroit Dragoons, who had come from the encampment with orders for Colonel McArthur to push forward as far as the settlements on the river Thames, in search of provisions.

Then it was that our commander called us aside for a private conversation.

“It may be a week before I can return,” he said, “and in the meantime you lads are free to go or come as you please. Are you minded to do me a service?”

“We will be glad if you ask one of us,” I replied,

and Ezra laid his hand in mine to show my words were his.

“I will intrust you with a trifling message to Edward Reynolds of Detroit, and there you shall go as if with no other purpose. Once arrived it would not be strange if you should call upon the commandant who was so friendly when you last met, and most likely he will offer you quarters in the fort. I want you to accept, if the opportunity is given, and if not, you will lodge with Reynolds. Give all your time to learning what you can about the escape of the prisoner, if it so be he has escaped, and I am mistaken in your metal if you have not important information for me when I get back.”

“How may we know you have returned?” I asked.

“Captain Sam Bassett is at the encampment now. See to it he remains there, and I will use him as a messenger between us.”

The colonel wrote hurriedly a few lines on a bit of coarse paper, which he handed to me, and Ezra and I understood that the interview was at an end, therefore we set out on the journey without further words or delay, although the night was near at hand.

There would be no danger in traveling along the

highway now that our soldiers were both in front and behind us, therefore we pushed on at a rapid pace, neither speaking until fully a third of the distance had been made, when Ezra said thoughtfully :

“Of course we are bound to do as the colonel desires; but do you understand what we may miss now the troops are hot after the Indians?”

“That murdering Walk-in-the-Water will keep under cover for a while, since his people have had a sound drubbing, and when he dares show himself again we may have finished our task in Detroit. It isn't well to think of him now, Ezra; but our time will surely come, for it doesn't look as if either army would win any very sudden victory.”

“I had rather stayed with the colonel.”

“So had I; yet he won't have much fighting while searching for provisions.”

Then, to take the lad's mind from the unpleasant subject, I spoke of what we were expected to do, and put so many fanciful obstacles in our way that I soon had him arguing hotly against me, thereby effecting my purpose.

We arrived at the encampment shortly after midnight; but, being known to the sentinels, had no difficulty in passing the lines, and laid ourselves down upon the ground to sleep without care for a shelter.

When we were awakened next morning our first thought was to seek out Captain Sam, and we found him snugly quartered with a squad of men who, from the day we joined the army, had ever encouraged the old sailor in his yarn-spinning.

As might have been expected, he was surprised at seeing us so soon again, more particularly since it was well known in camp that Colonel McArthur's force would not return for several days.

We found it difficult to parry the many questions he asked, but finally succeeded in giving him to understand, without being forced to speak out plainly, that we were not minded to explain our business in public.

When we were alone, however, Ezra told him of the task which had been set us, and instantly he was most eager to go with us at once.

“There's no great call for me to stay in this camp so far as I can see,” he said grumblingly. “Here are dozens who could act as messengers 'twixt you and the colonel, without holdin' me on waitin' orders.”

“I thought you were well content to stay with the troops,” Ezra said, surprised that the old sailor should be so bent on going.

“So I was when you lads were in the field; but

now you're goin' back to the fort, I'd like to share the high livin' that's likely to come your way."

"Then it's for the flesh-pots, and not our company, you would return to Detroit," my comrade said with a hearty laugh. "If that is your only reason I reckon it won't be much of a hardship to stay. We are beholden to the colonel, and since his order was positive for you to remain here, we must part again."

Captain Sam came very near to having a regular fit of the sulks; but recovered in a few moments when he saw we paid no attention to his ill-humor, and went with us in search of rations.

After our fast had been broken the old sailor accompanied us to the river bank, where we took possession of a canoe which had been pressed into the service of the army, and were soon paddling out into the stream while Captain Sam watched us from the shore.

Now that we were come so near the town I began to have misgivings as to the possibility of accomplishing the task set us.

It seemed to me that of all those at Colonel McArthur's command, we two lads were the least able to perform the work in a proper manner, and so I

spoke to Ezra when he asked the cause of my silence.

“That should give us little worriment,” he replied cheerily. “We shall do our best, and if the business is not done because of our ignorance, then the blame rests with the colonel for having sent us.”

“You seem to have recovered from the disappointment of not being able to follow the Wyandots.”

“Not recovered; but have put the matter from my mind since it can't be mended to my liking. You are growing as childish and rusty as Captain Sam, and with no better cause.”

These words brought me to my senses, and I resolved to fashion my course after the manly example set by Ezra.

We spoke of how we might best begin the work; but could come to no decision because so much would depend upon circumstances, and after a time dropped the matter entirely.

There was no need of great haste. We paddled leisurely, enjoying the beauty of the scene, and otherwise conducting ourselves as if we had nothing to do more important than minister to our own pleasure.

The short voyage came to an end all too quickly

to please me, and we stood on the shore in front of the town idly a moment to consider in which direction we had best proceed.

“Why not go directly to the fort?” I asked as Ezra hesitated. “Surely there we shall learn how to find him we seek.”

“It seems to me better that we search out our man before meeting the commandant, although I cannot say why. When that has been done, and it should not be a difficult task, we shall have more leisure for the visit to the fort.”

“Do as you will, for you have the better head,” I replied; and without further parley Ezra led the way into the town.

CHAPTER X.

JENKINS.

Not until we met a group of citizens did my comrade ask concerning the man to whom we had been sent, for he was not minded to give any other scoundrel the chance to gain possession of our secret, as had happened when we were there before, and then we were directed to Mr. Reynolds' house, which was but a short distance from the fort.

The gentleman himself answered our summons at the door, and when he had read the written message I handed him, asked courteously that we enter.

“My friend, Colonel McArthur, simply states that you are two lads in whom he has every confidence, and begs I will assist you in every way. What can I do to your benefit?”

Having supposed that the colonel had explained everything in the writing we delivered, I was not prepared with an answer to this question, and stood

stupidly staring at the gentleman until Ezra said with an air of good breeding :

“ We have been sent by Colonel McArthur to perform a task which seems far beyond our powers. After learning what it is, you will know better than we in what manner you may be of assistance.”

Then the lad told the story of our first arrival in Detroit, all of which seemed to surprise the gentleman, and concluded by stating what it was the colonel would have us do.

Mr. Reynolds appeared more interested in what we could tell him concerning the spy than in our future movements.

He questioned us closely about the document we had given up to the Britisher, and as to what we had seen in the house.

“ I have not met Colonel McArthur since his arrival, and was beginning to feel that as a friend he had neglected me. Now I understand the matter better.”

“ Did you not receive the letter and parchment which must have been taken from the spy’s house by the soldiers ? ”

“ What you have just told me is my first information regarding the affair. I have not heard that a prisoner has escaped, nor do I believe such news has been given any of the citizens. You speak of

having seen two boxes in the house; can you not describe them more particularly?"

"At the time they did not interest us, and I no more than looked toward them," Ezra replied; while I added much the same, but suggested that they might still remain where we had seen them.

"It can do no harm to visit the building, although I question if anything belonging to the men has been left behind. Will you accompany me?"

There was no reason why we should not do so, and the three of us set out at once.

It was not an easy matter for Ezra and I to lead the way, because no especial attention was given to the course when we followed the spies; but by going to the fort, we finally succeeded, and in due time stood in front of the building which had like to have been our prison.

The door was closed, but not barred, and Mr. Reynolds entered without hesitation.

The table and stools yet remained as when we saw them last, but everything else had been removed, and in the ashes of the fireplace could be seen the imprint of the boxes.

Judging from Mr. Reynolds' appearance and actions he had a suspicion as to why he had been kept in ignorance regarding the matter, and I also fancied

he knew not a little about the boxes concerning which he inquired so closely even after we had told him all we could.

If such was the case, however, he held his peace, and we knew no more than before having met him.

Not until he had carefully examined every nook and corner in the house was our host ready to leave it, and then, as we were walking toward his home, this time going in a direction which carried us far from the fort, he said :

“I know of no way in which I can forward the work the colonel has set you, and even if I did should hesitate to give advice at present. You will look upon my home as your own, going and coming as best pleases you, and if the time arrives when you need counsel or assistance, do not hesitate to command me.”

This was not what I had expected to hear him say, and I felt grievously disappointed.

Both Ezra and I believed he would take the matter in charge, simply directing us what to do, instead of which he refused to make even so much as a suggestion.

Having returned to his home he showed us to a room in which we were to sleep, and then, saying dinner would be ready at noon, left us alone.

I looked at Ezra inquiringly when our host had closed the door behind him, and he replied by a shrug of the shoulders.

“It isn’t as plain sailing as if we had never met Mr. Reynolds,” I said petulantly, and my comrade remained as if in deep thought many seconds before speaking.

Then I was startled by his words :

“There is considerably more in this affair than Colonel McArthur supposed, and I have an idea we shall get into mighty deep water if we succeed in learning anything. Mr. Reynolds has a very good idea of the matter; but has reasons for keeping the knowledge to himself, while the commandant holds the key to the mystery, if indeed it be one, because he is most likely in possession of the boxes.”

“Why should so much be said about them?” I asked irritably. “I do not see how they can concern other than the spy himself, and yet both you and Mr. Reynolds persist in talking of them whenever the subject is under discussion.”

“I talk boxes because our host did. Until we met him I never so much as gave them a thought; but now to my mind they play an important part in the whole affair.”

“How can that be?”

“ I wish I knew, for then we might have something upon which to work.”

All this mystery made me uneasy in mind, and I had no desire to meddle with it further.

“ Well,” Ezra said after a long pause, “ we must do something, and I know of nothing better than to visit the fort.”

“ I can tell you what would be much wiser. Let us return to the encampment, and when Colonel McArthur comes back tell him we abandoned the task because it was too difficult for a couple of green lads who know nothing save woodcraft. It is not for us to stick our noses into matters which we do not understand.”

“ There is much wisdom in your words, David, and yet it seems to me childish to do as you propose simply because one man would make of it a mystery, and before we have seen any one else. Let us go to the fort, and when four and twenty hours have passed I will follow your advice if we both are of the same mind.”

There was no reason why we could not do this much, and I agreed; but insisted he should remember the promise if I claimed it on the morrow.

“ Do not fear but that I will readily go back once it is certain we are meddling in a danger-

ous plot. We owe Colonel McArthur much, yet are not his debtors so far as to do for him that which may bring us into serious trouble.”

“Why do we owe him anything?” I asked hotly. “We have done the same work as an enlisted soldier, and received for it only our rations and an opportunity of being killed. So far as the army is concerned we are quits.”

“As you will, lad, as you will, yet do not forget that we begged for the privilege of following the troops—Colonel McArthur did not set the labor and the danger as a price for what we might eat.”

This cooled me down somewhat, yet was I angry against the colonel for having sent us on a mission so far beyond our powers, and without further words we set out for the fort.

At the gate we were halted by the same soldier who had tried to browbeat us at the time of our second visit; but now he was so friendly that straightway I became suspicious of him.

“You want to see Major Towers, I suppose?”

“Is that the name of the commandant?” I asked sharply.

“It is; shall I say you would speak with him?”

Ezra made reply to this, for my wits had been sent wool-gathering by the great change in the sol-

dier's manner, and as soon as might be thereafter we were ushered into the commandant's quarters.

In Major Towers I expected to see a change, also, but was mistaken.

He received us in much the same manner as we had parted; courteously invited us to seats, and then awaited our pleasure.

Fully expecting to be questioned, I was not prepared with a tale to explain our coming, and looked helplessly at Ezra, who straightway began without hesitation.

“ We are here, sir, in the hope you may aid us in getting a passage to Sackett's Harbor, and are emboldened in the asking because of your friendly assurances when we left.”

“ I am ready to serve you, lads, and well I might be after the signal service rendered; but I fear you will find no vessel bound for that port while the war continues. The British have too many ships of war in the lakes for our merchantmen. I question if the fleetest schooner could pass through Lake Erie without being brought-to by a round shot within six hours after leaving this port.”

“ It would not be safe to make the journey on foot ? ”

“ By no means if you counted on passing through

Canada, and even though there was little danger, the distance is too great for you to undertake. Why do you not enter the army ? ”

Ezra explained, giving the true reason, and I fancied the major looked disturbed at learning that Colonel Christopher Bellinger was my uncle.

“ Then I see nothing for you save to remain here. You have done, and can continue to do, a soldier’s duty, even though not regularly enlisted, therefore the question of rations need cause no anxiety. I believed you would remain under Colonel McArthur. ”

Ezra told him of what we had already done, and gave as excuse for our return to Detroit that there was no good reason why we should remain with the force when they had nothing more important on hand than the gathering of provisions.

He was eager to learn, as any soldier might be, of the encounter with the savages, and thanked us kindly when the story had been brought to an end.

In the telling of the tale Ezra had made no mention of having seen the spy, and asked when he had finished :

“ Your prisoner is well, I suppose ? ”

“ So it is said by the guard. I have seen him but once, and that on the day he was brought here. ”

“ Will he soon have a trial ? ”

“That is for General Hull to say. My report in regard to the capture was made to him, and I did not neglect to give you lads and the sailor due credit.”

Then followed much needless talk, which made me so impatient that I asked bluntly :

“May we see the prisoner, sir ?”

“I know of no reason why you should not,” was the prompt reply, which actually staggered me.

I had believed the major would either tell us the man had escaped, or make some long-winded excuse as to why we ought not visit him, and yet he had treated it as a request to be expected from us.

Ezra's face was a study as he turned to me, and I knew full well how perplexed he was.

Major Tower waited an instant, as if believing there was something more we would say, and then added carelessly :

“I can fancy you would like to see the man who so nearly sent you back to the British lines, and since General Hull has given no orders to the contrary, your curiosity shall be gratified. I will go with you myself.”

He rose to his feet as he spoke, and we followed the example in such a daze and bewilderment as to be incapable of speech.

Stopping an instant to cover some papers left on his table, the major was apparently on the point of going to the door, when an officer entered hurriedly and unceremoniously.

“I must have a few words with you in private, sir,” he said, excitedly, and the commandant looked at him in surprise for an instant, after which he said courteously to us lads :

“I pray you to excuse me for a short time, young gentlemen. Perhaps it may suit your purpose as well to return this afternoon, when I shall be at leisure ? ”

We could do no less than say we would await his pleasure, and were then about to take our leave when he stopped us to say :

“If you do not prefer other quarters it may be as well to stay with us. There is ample room in the barracks, and you are at liberty to select whatever pleases you best.”

“We thank you, sir, and shall probably take advantage of your kindly offer,” Ezra replied, much as though his entire life had been spent in the company of gentlemen, and then he went out.

Not until we had gained the street did either of us speak, and then I asked :

“Are you still positive the man you saw in com-

mand of the savages was the one we made prisoner ? ”

“ I can't well doubt the evidence of my own eyes, and yet if he has escaped why was the commandant so ready to say there was nothing to prevent our seeing him ? But for the coming of that officer we must have been taken to visit some prisoner. Perhaps he would have tried to palm off another upon us ! ”

“ That would have been a fool's trick, for surely he could not hope to deceive us thus readily. ”

“ Then how can it be explained ? I am certain I saw the spy. ”

“ Major Tower himself may not know the prisoner has escaped. ”

“ In such case he is not fit to command the fort. ”

After this we both fell silent for a space of several minutes, when Ezra spoke again.

“ Everything appears mysterious. Mr. Reynolds did not show any surprise when we said positively we saw the spy at liberty ; but was more concerned regarding the boxes, which may have been empty for aught we know. ”

“ But for the fact that Colonel McArthur seems to have every confidence in the man, I should mis-

trust this Reynolds, who does not try to give information, but to gain it from us.”

I could see that this speech of mine struck Ezra forcibly, for he came to a full stop, knitted his brow deeply, and finally said :

“It is not likely you and I have wits enough to solve the riddle, therefore a mistake by us will not be serious. Suppose we keep our own counsel, making friends with no one, and holding secret all we learn, if it so chance we discover anything ?”

“I am agreed to whatever you may propose,” was my reply, and instead of continuing on in the direction we were then taking, which would carry us back to Reynolds’ home, Ezra turned toward the river.

When we were come to the bank he threw himself upon the ground as if to rest, and I held my peace, content to know he was considering the matter in all its bearings.

As for me, I am so thick-headed that no amount of study would have shown me any light on the subject, and I amused myself with watching the movements of those who went and came to and from the American camp.

We were yet sitting there idly when a squad of soldiers passed us on their way toward the water,

and without much thought I said to myself that they were just from the fort.

Suddenly, as I watched the men, hardly knowing I did so, the face of one attracted my attention, and it was only by the greatest effort I could prevent a cry of surprise from escaping my lips.

Without moving my position I said in a low tone :

“Look well at that squad of men, Ezra, and tell me who you see; but be careful lest they note that you take interest in them.”

The lad raised his eyes, and an instant later I saw his lips close together as if he, like me, was on the point of making an outcry.

Turning full upon me that his face might be hidden from the man, he said in a voice trembling with excitement :

“It is Jenkins; the spy who escaped us!”

“And wearing an American uniform,” I added.

There is no need to set down here that our bewilderment had by this time increased tenfold.

It was not strange that the man we captured should be seen at the head of a band of savages, if he had escaped from the fort; but that the one who gave us the slip should now be acting the part of an American soldier, passed all understanding.

While we sat there in bewilderment the squad went on board a boat, which was headed for the Canadian shore, and without speaking we two watched the craft until having made certain where it landed.

“They are going to the encampment, and in order to make Jenkins a prisoner we have only to repeat our story to General Hull,” I said excitedly, rising to my feet, eager to do this much before it should be too late.

“If he is apprehended his mouth will be closed in order to save his own neck, and we shall be no nearer the bottom of the mystery than at this moment.”

“Would you let him play his game of spy at the encampment, and desert when he has important information to give the enemy?” I asked hotly, for Ezra’s quiet way of dealing with the matter was beginning to irritate me.

“That can easily be prevented. Why should we not paddle across, tell Captain Sam of the muddle we are now in, and charge him to keep a sharp watch on Jenkins? I’ll answer for it the spy won’t have a chance to gain the enemy’s lines once the old sailor is set over him as guard.”

“If you think it is safe to run the risk of his giv-

ing Captain Sam the slip, I am willing;" and once more I came to the conclusion that it was best to let my comrade have the management of affairs.

The squad of soldiers had landed before we set out, and on arriving at the opposite side they were not to be seen; but this gave us no uneasiness, for it was natural to suppose they had gone on to the encampment.

When we were come to the Babie farm it was not difficult to find the old sailor.

Ezra looked around until he saw a group of soldiers intent upon something in their midst, and going toward it we saw Captain Sam spinning yarns of the Barbary coast to a dozen or more interested listeners.

The old man leaped to his feet in surprise when we appeared, and would have made much of our unexpected return, which might have excited some comment among the men; but Ezra checked him by saying in a significant tone:

"We have come according to agreement, and if you are not too busy would have a word with you concerning a passage to Sackett's Harbor."

Captain Sam forgot his story-telling instantly, and asked curiously as he approached:

"Where have you found a skipper who is bold

enough to run the chance of being overhauled by the Britishers? I didn't suppose an American vessel would dare leave port!"

We had passed beyond earshot of the idlers before Ezra replied, and then, after warning Captain Sam to betray no surprise, he told him why we had come.

The old man was so thoroughly bewildered that he could say no more than repeat over and over again:

"You saw Jenkins playin' the soldier, and with our men?"

"He is hereabouts at this moment, and you must find him as soon as we have gone, for we count on going back at once. Do not let him out of your sight a single instant, and make sure that he has no chance to desert. It may be he has friends who will try to have speech with him, and if you see anything particularly suspicious in his movements, report to Colonel McArthur at once, or if he be not here, to General Hull himself."

"I'll take good care he can't do any mischief; but what I don't understand is, how you expect to gain anything by leaving him at large."

"We don't understand it ourselves; but so long as you keep your eye on him no harm will be done,

and it is possible he may unwittingly aid us in solving the mystery.”

Then it became necessary to tell Captain Sam all that had taken place while we were in Detroit, and by the time this had been done he was in as fine a state of perplexity as either of us.

“It’s all a muddle that’ll bring you into mischief before it’s cleared up!” he exclaimed; but we laughed at such an idea, for it was not our purpose to venture in so far as to incur danger.

“Better give over doin’ anything till the colonel comes back,” the old sailor said imploringly. “This is a plot in which desperate men are concerned, an’ you’ll get the worst of it when things begin to go wrong.”

Ezra refused to listen to such foolish arguments, and changed the subject by asking concerning a body of soldiers who had assembled as if about to set out on an expedition.

“Colonel Cass is to scout toward Fort Malden,” the sailor replied. “He called for volunteers this mornin’, an’ more than half of all the army stepped forward. I’m told he’s a fighter, an’ there’s some chance of an engagement, for he promises to go to the very gates of the fort, unless the enemy is found in too large numbers.”

“Make certain Jenkins isn’t among the force,” Ezra whispered. “An expedition like that would give him a brave opportunity of deserting, or sending on such information as he may have gained.”

“I’ll ’tend to that part of it, and from now until I see you again, if so be you’re set on goin’ back, the spy shan’t be out of my sight.”

Captain Sam moved leisurely toward the men who were forming in line, and Ezra said :

“Now is our time to slip back. We have told him all that is necessary, and there’s no reason why we should wait to say good-by.”

I was of the same mind, and before our old comrade had finished his inspection of the volunteers we were on our way to the river once more, both feeling the need of dinner, for the day was nearing a close.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE ALERT.

Not until we were on the river paddling toward Detroit did the question arise between us as to where we should first go after landing.

It would be so late by the time we arrived, we could pay but one visit that night; wherever we went first there we must remain until morning, and Ezra proposed that we quarter ourselves upon Mr. Reynolds.

“We stand the chance of getting a better supper there,” he said, “and I am so hungry that I feel as if one soldier’s rations would not satisfy me. Major Tower and the fort will still be near at hand after sunrise, and it can make but little difference to the commandant whether we come to-day or to-morrow.”

I was willing to agree with this, more particularly since we knew Colonel McArthur’s friend would

expect us, and good manners demanded that we make some report of our reception at the fort, even though we did not tell him all we had learned.

Therefore it was we hurried to Mr. Reynolds' home immediately upon landing, and were received by that gentleman in the most friendly fashion.

After saluting us he remarked that we looked tired, which gave Ezra the opportunity of saying we were, and, in addition to the labor performed, suffered from hunger.

A milder hint might have effected our purpose equally as well; but certain it was that he lost no time in ordering for us a hearty meal, and forbore asking any questions until we were seated before it.

Then he said with a smile :

“ When the edge has been taken from your appetites, so that you can afford to dally with the food, I shall be pleased to hear how you were received at the fort.”

Ezra did not keep him in suspense, but straightway related all that had happened down to the time when we saw Jenkins.

In the stead of that part of the story he said :

“ We thought it best to go over to Sandwich and tell Captain Sam that we had decided to take up our

quarters at the fort after this one night, and the journey required so much time that we are but just returned.”

“Then it seems you were in error when you believed the spy had made his escape?” Mr. Reynolds suggested, and Ezra replied as if he no longer had any very great interest in the matter:

“So it appears; but at the time I did not think it possible to have been mistaken.”

“If there is no longer any work to be done here you will most likely rejoin the army.”

“We must remain until Colonel McArthur returns, for such are our orders. There is nothing we could do in the camp, save loaf around with the other idle men, and it will be quite as well to stay here—I do not mean in this house, for there is no good reason why you should be troubled by us.”

“Then you count on stopping at the fort?”

Now there was nothing in these questions which should have lingered in my mind for a single moment, and yet I asked myself again and again why he was so interested in what we now proposed to do, when, as he believed, we no longer had any business in which he was interested.

Even after all this had been said, he continued to inquire concerning what we would do in this case or

that, and it is possible he fancied himself gaining much information; but it was not true.

Ezra never hesitated with his answers, but made them promptly, and at the same time so evaded the questions that when he had finished it was like a nut without a kernel—all words and but little meaning.

After we had appeased our hunger and Mr. Reynolds had satisfied his curiosity, we went straight to our bed, being in fact the same as invited to do so, for our host insisted we were sleepy despite our denials, until we finally told him we would lie down.

Ezra and I did not hold any private converse on this night, for our bed was just above the kitchen, and all we said might readily be overheard by those below.

I fell asleep very soon after I laid down, and was conscious of nothing until Ezra aroused me by pulling my ear at the same time he held his hand over my mouth.

Then, understanding I was fully myself, he whispered:

“Two men have just come in, and are now talking in whispers with our host.”

It seemed to me we were allowing ourselves to become suspicious of shadows, and I replied carelessly:

“Neighbors, most likely. It isn’t strange his friends should visit him.”

“But it must be midnight. I slept some time, and was awakened by loud voices on the street. It has been not less than an hour since I was first aroused, and but a few moments since these men came knocking gently on the window shutter. Mr. Reynolds did not so much as greet them, and when the door had been shut again, the light was blown out.”

I was fully awake by this time, sitting up in bed and listening; but nothing save the soft buzz of voices could be heard.

So cautiously were our host and his guests talking that it seemed as if they must have been sitting with their mouths very near each other’s ears.

While perhaps half an hour passed we remained on the alert in the hope of catching some word, and then came slight sounds which told that the visitors were taking their leave.

Ezra and I did not dare hold converse with each other lest Mr. Reynolds, hearing the buzz of our voices as we had heard his, should come to know we were aware of his having entertained guests at such an hour, but I did a power of thinking before slumber overcame me once more.

We were astir as soon as it was light; but our host was a yet earlier riser.

Now that I had become suspicious of every one, the lightest matters attracted my attention, and I fancied he looked at us in an odd way as he asked if we slept well.

The sun had but just risen when breakfast was served, and after the meal had come to an end Ezra thanked our host for his hospitality, saying we would spend the coming night at the fort.

“As you will, lad; but remember that you are welcome to use my house as your home. Of course you no longer have any work to do for the colonel; but if it should so chance you catch a glimpse of those boxes at the fort, I’d thank you kindly for letting me know.”

“Do you think they may have been your property, sir?” I asked, not daring to look at him lest he should read more from my eyes than the words conveyed.

“It is not possible to say at present; I have certain suspicions regarding the boxes, which I would like to clear up.”

Then he bowed politely as if to say the interview was at an end unless we had something of importance to say, and my comrade and I went out.

When we were beyond sight of the house I asked :

“ What do you make of last night’s work, Ezra ? ”

“ Nothing, thus far. It certainly seems queer he should have had visitors at midnight, yet they might have been honest, and carried on their conversation in whispers lest we should be disturbed. ”

“ Yet you do not believe everything was as it should be ? ”

“ It doesn’t seem so, ” Ezra replied, and more than that I could not make him say.

When I pressed him hard, he changed the subject by proposing that we go down to the river.

“ It is yet too early to ask for an interview with Major Towers, and I am not minded to loiter around the fort. ”

I was willing to go wherever he proposed, and we seated ourselves on the river-bank, keeping careful watch of every soldier who came or went, as if believing Jenkins might have given Captain Sam the slip and recrossed to this shore.

We remained there perhaps an hour, and I was thinking we had tarried long enough in one place, when a boat in which were four men came from the Canadian side.

Having arrived so near that the loungers on the

shore could hear the words, the men began shouting news of a victory won by our forces; but not until they were landed was it possible for us to get the gist of their story.

Colonel Cass with his volunteers had left camp shortly after we did, marching to that stream which the Indians call "Ta-ron-tee," and the Canadians speak of as Rivière Aux Canards, where he found some British pickets, a squad of Canadian militia, and Indians under Tecumseh.

Our men had crossed the stream by wading arm-pit-deep, and attacked the enemy at sunset. The red-coats with their painted allies fled before the first charge, and our forces chased them half a mile or more when the darkness checked them.

Two Britishers were made prisoners, and it was said several had been killed and nine or ten wounded, while our people came off without a scratch.

That same night Colonel Cass sent couriers to General Hull asking for permission to hold the bridge over which the enemy had retreated; but instead of receiving it the men were ordered back at once, and those who brought the information reported that the encampment was in a state bordering on insubordination because the commander had shown himself thus faint-hearted.

On hearing this news the same thought came into Ezra's mind and mine.

While the encampment was a scene of such excitement as had been described to us, Jenkins might find good opportunity of deserting the enemy, and we questioned as to whether it was our duty to cross the river, or remain in Detroit.

Finally Ezra settled the matter by saying in the tone of one who has fully decided upon a course :

“ We will stay here. Captain Sam should be able to look out for the spy, and we might do more harm than good, for if Jenkins comes to understand that we are keeping our eyes on him he will take desperate chances in order to make his escape. Now that we have some excuse, let us go to the fort. The bearers of such news should be welcome.”

We were not the first to acquaint Major Towers with the victory of Ta-ron-tee, however.

One of the citizens who gained the information in the same manner as we did, had hurried to the fort, and when we arrived the commandant was closeted with his visitor.

We amused ourselves by wandering around the stockade until word came that the major would see us, and then proceeded to the apartment which he used both as a sitting-room and office.

There was a decided change in the manner of his greeting, although it was none the less warm than on the day before. He appeared as if distressed in mind, and there was a haggard look on his face which bespoke sleeplessness.

“We had hoped to be the first here with the good news, sir,” Ezra said as we entered and he gave the commandant as fine a bow as could have been made by the king himself.

“Let us pray we may get similar tidings every day, my lad. I thank you for the desire to please, and ask your closest attention to that you should know, but which I desire be kept a secret until I can hear from General Hull.”

There was little need for him to say more so far as I was concerned.

I knew beyond a peradventure that we were to hear of the spy's escape, and said to myself that the same tale would have been told yesterday but for the coming of the officer who interrupted us.

“You asked to see the man you had made prisoner,” the commandant said slowly, as if uncertain as to how he had best put the words together, “and I did not say you nay. At that moment I was confident the spy remained in close confinement; but the officer who entered so hurriedly came

to inform me that the fellow had escaped. How it was effected we have no means of knowing; but there can be little doubt we have traitors among us."

"When did he get away, sir?" I asked, watching him closely meanwhile.

"Word was brought to me instantly his absence was discovered, and you were here at the time."

I glanced at Ezra and found him gazing at me.

At that moment I felt positive the arch traitor in the fort was Major Towers himself, and under slight provocation I would have said as much then and there, for I was angry he should think us such simples as to believe his tale.

The spy could not have remained a prisoner more than four and twenty hours, otherwise how had he been met near about Fort Malden?

"Have you discovered nothing in regard to the escape?" I asked, minded to see how well the commandant could carry his story.

"Not as yet. I despatched a messenger, escorted by a squad of men, to General Hull yesterday, but thus far have received no instructions."

"Was he whom you sent a sergeant, with long black hair?" I asked, now grown excited.

"Yes; you must have seen him; he left here shortly after you did."

“I saw the squad, and gave attention to the sergeant only because of his hair, which was not unlike a savage’s.”

“He has Indian blood in his veins; but is a thorough soldier. I have known him many years.”

“Were the remainder of the squad old soldiers?” I asked quickly.

“I do not know anything about them, save that they were of our force, and I can answer for every man under me.”

He said this stoutly, as if thinking we might be minded to dispute him, and I thought if he was willing to answer for Jenkins he had the toughest kind of a conscience.

Neither my comrade nor I made answer to this last remark, and the major fell to musing, whereat I motioned with my eyes for Ezra to make a move.

“You intend staying in the fort?” the commandant said inquiringly as we stepped toward the door, and I replied before my comrade could speak:

“Indeed we do, sir, and if our services are needed you have only to command us as you would your own men.”

We bowed ourselves out of the room, leaving the major alone with his supposed grief, and I led the way directly to the parade-ground, not minded to

depart from the fort until at least some portion of this mystery had been cleared up.

“ Well? ” I said to Ezra when we were where our words could not be overheard.

“ There is nothing I can say; the further we go in this matter, the more muddled does it become. ”

“ You heard the major say Jenkins was one of the men he could answer for? ”

“ Yes; but he must not be judged by that, since the spy may have lately taken the place of another man, and it is certain Major Towers doesn't keep himself well informed in all that is being done around him. ”

“ Perhaps you will say he has just learned that our prisoner is no longer in the fort? ” I cried irritably, for Ezra's manner was so calm as to almost anger me.

“ It would not surprise me if such was the truth, ” he replied quietly. “ Major Towers is not a soldier like Colonel McArthur, who knows to a nicety everything which is going on around him, as is right and proper. The major depends upon the officers under him, and is like to believe without question whatever is told him by those he thinks he can trust. It is not impossible the spy may have escaped the day after we captured him, and

yet the commandant remained ignorant of the fact until this moment.”

“But why should it happen that the escape was discovered only when we had asked to see the prisoner?” I cried in a rage, for at that moment it seemed to me Ezra was wilfully dull.

“There was no good reason to make the report before. Suppose the officer who entered while we were there to be the traitor. He delayed informing the commandant as long as possible, but on seeing us arrive had good reason to believe we would ask to see the man, therefore burst into the room with the news.”

“You argue as if the major was your friend.”

“And you speak as if it was your desire to prove him a traitor. Remember, David, we are not here to judge any one; but simply to learn all that may be possible, and whenever we see what appears to be favorable to either one or the other concerned in this case, we should give it due weight.”

Ezra spoke so seriously and looked so grave that I could not fail of being impressed.

That last speech of his had shown me the responsibility resting upon us in a stronger light than I had ever seen it before; but it also made the mystery seem thicker.

“What would you do?” I asked after a short time of silence.

“Learn if Jenkins be in this fort.”

“But Captain Sam is watching him.”

“Ay, if it so be he is in the encampment; but we have just learned he is a member of the forces here, therefore may have returned while the old sailor was searching for him.”

Even if I had not known long before this that Ezra Churchill was of quicker wit than myself, I should have understood it now, and once more I resolved to follow his instructions rather than attempt to form any plan myself.

He had already decided upon what should be done, and set about it without delay.

As if curious to see the fort, we strolled here and there, poking our noses into every corner, and taking good care to observe well all the soldiers present.

In less than an hour we had learned that Jenkins was not within the stockade, yet this knowledge did not give assurance that he had remained at the encampment in Sandwich, because if one of the officers was a traitor and in league with the spy, it would have been an easy matter to keep him out of our sight.

Then came that discovery which would have interested Mr. Reynolds greatly.

On the top of a pile of rubbish, as if lately thrown there, were two empty boxes of sawed-boards, and both Ezra and I were well satisfied they were the ones we had seen in the fireplace of that house where we captured our prisoner.

“Mr. Reynolds is not likely to find out what was in them,” Ezra said grimly when we had decided between ourselves that we were not mistaken.

“Yet I venture to say he had a very good idea of their contents.”

“That is as may be, and I can’t see how it concerns us at present. The important question for us to decide is as to what we shall do now ? ”

“I thought we were to stay here in the hope of learning something by accident.”

“So we were; but——”

Ezra did not finish the remark, for at that moment Captain Sam stood before us.

CHAPTER XII.

UNDER FIRE.

THE first thought in my mind as I saw the old sailor was of anger that he should have abandoned his post, for I believed he had come simply for his own pleasure, and I knew Ezra had the same idea when he asked sharply :

“ Why have you left the encampment when you should be there on guard? ”

“ Because I couldn't find anybody to look after. You told me that spy Jenkins was paradin' 'round as one of our soldiers, an' yet I'll take my affidavit he can't be found. I searched high an' low, goin' over the ground half a dozen times, an' know what I'm talking about. ”

This report did not cause us as much surprise as it would have done before our interview with the major, yet we were uncertain whether Captain Sam had done his work thoroughly.

He insisted, however, that it was not possible he could be mistaken, and then Ezra asked why he had come.

“ You should have stayed there till you heard from us.”

“ That was my idee to a dot; but Colonel McArthur allowed it would be best to tell you——”

“ Is he at the encampment? ” I cried in mingled surprise and delight.

“ Ay, lad, came in last night bringin’ a stack of plunder! I can’t say exactly how much in the way of military supplies; but I’ve seen with my own eyes two hundred barrels of flour an’ four hundred blankets, so reckon he made a payin’ trip of it.”

I looked at Ezra with a question in my eyes, and he replied to it as promptly as if I had spoken.

“ We will go back. The colonel is the one man of all others who can best say what should be done.”

I was well content to have the responsibility taken from our shoulders, and would have left the fort without a word to any one; but Ezra insisted it was our duty to give notice to the major, who had surely treated us in a gentlemanly fashion even though he might be a traitor, and we asked for an interview.

He received us as though we were brother-officers instead of two green lads who had no claim on his

time, and listened in silence to our reasons for leaving so soon.

“I have no doubt but that Colonel McArthur will be glad to see you,” he said kindly when Ezra had come to an end of his reasons for going. “Word has been brought me this morning that an advance is soon to be made upon Fort Malden, and every rifle will be needed.”

“May I ask, sir, if any men are to be sent from this fort?” I made bold to inquire, and if the major had been more strict as a soldier he would not have answered my question.

“We shall send forward all that can be spared,” he replied kindly, and when we had taken our leave of him Ezra said with a smile:

“I am not surprised the major made so many appeals for aid when it was learned that the savages were ready for mischief. He is the mildest mannered soldier I ever expect to see. Fancy what sort of an answer you would have received from Colonel McArthur had you asked him such a question!”

“He’d been floored by a blow from the colonel’s eyes,” Captain Sam replied with a hearty laugh, and I now began to question for the first time if the major had ever told other than what he believed to be the truth.

We made all haste back to the encampment, arriving there early in the afternoon, and from the bustle and confusion on every hand would have known, even though Captain Sam had not told us, that some important movement was near at hand.

We reported ourselves to Colonel McArthur without delay; but he gave no heed to us, beyond returning our salute, until late in the day, when we were told that he would speak with us at headquarters.

It was near to sunset when we entered one of the chambers in the Babie mansion, where Colonel McArthur lodged, and once there had no cause to complain of his inattention.

Receiving us as if we had been his equals, he kindly bade us be seated, and then remained silent as if waiting to hear our story.

Ezra looked at me as if to say I should act the spokesman; but I refused by a shake of the head, and he repeated in a most masterly fashion all we had learned and done, laying blame on no man; but presenting my suspicions as well as his own fairly, and with due weight to each incident.

“Your manner of making a report does you credit,” the colonel said with a smile, and it warmed my heart that he should thus praise Ezra. “Now

I would hear more concerning Reynolds. Although you have not so stated, I fancy you are not inclined to trust him perfectly."

"May I ask if he is a friend of yours, sir?" and Ezra spoke hesitatingly, as if doubting whether such a question was proper.

"I have met him but once. We have mutual friends, however, and one of them assured me I could place every confidence in him. But that does not concern the present matter. I am ready to listen to a good or bad report of him, so it be honest."

"There is really nothing we can say for or against him," Ezra replied. "If we distrust him it is rather for what he did not say or do."

"Tell me all that is in your mind."

"I thought he gave no heed to the fact that a spy had escaped, and that much injury might be done thereby, while all his interest was in the boxes of which I have spoken. He made no suggestions as to how we could best discover in what manner our man had gotten away, yet enjoined us to learn everything possible regarding that which interested him. Of his visitors we can say nothing except to give you the facts."

Then the colonel questioned Ezra closely concerning the major, and my comrade did not hesitate to

say he believed that officer honest and loyal, yet at the same time he related everything which bore against him.

“As to Jenkins, we must bide our time,” the colonel said when there were no more questions to be asked. “I doubt not but that there are many British spies in our ranks, or loitering around the encampment, and some of them will soon come to grief. Should you see the fellow again, cause his arrest if it be possible. If you observe him leaving our lines at any time, shoot without delay or compunction. It does not appear to me that you can do anything more in Detroit, therefore I would suggest you accompany us to the front. This time we are likely to have some warm work; Colonel Cass has cut the pace, and we will try to hold it.”

I was surprised the colonel appeared so willing to bring to an end the work he set us, but it did not disappoint me.

Our short experience had been such as to teach me I was no more fitted for such a task than a cow is to catch mice, and it pleased me to act the soldier once more.

When we left the colonel we knew why this advance had been decided upon, for it was to be an advance, and not simply a scout.

Word had been brought to camp the night before that the British armed vessel of eighteen guns, the *Queen Charlotte*, had sailed up the river from Amherstburg, and was doing all possible damage to American property lying near.

Scouts had been sent out immediately, and through them it was known that the bridge Colonel Cass had been so anxious to hold was torn up and made into breastworks, near by which the *Queen Charlotte* then lay.

The vessel and the fortification was but another addition to the defenses of Fort Malden, which need not have been there had General Hull given the desired permission to hold the bridge, and these must be swept away if we hoped to do the enemy at Amherstburg any injury.

It was dark when we came from our interview with the colonel, but Ezra was not minded to waste any time.

He believed we should make a tour of the encampment in order to learn, if possible, whether Jenkins was there, and after getting our rations, we set out, but alone, for Captain Sam refused to accompany us.

“ I’ve been over every foot of the ground three times already, an’ know the spy ain’t here, so don’t

count on traipsin' 'round any more, 'specially, if I'm expected to march from here to Amherstburg in the mornin'."

"Are you really going with the troops?" I asked in surprise.

"What is left for me if I don't? Ain't the general countin' on movin' the whole army?"

"It isn't likely the encampment will be abandoned," Ezra replied. "There will be left here sufficient force to hold——"

"Then I shall stay with them!" and a look of relief came over the old fellow's face as he realized that it might not be necessary for him to play the soldier.

We left Captain Sam and continued the tour of the encampment, but it was only so much labor wasted; for we saw nothing of the spy.

There was no longer any question in my mind but that he had returned to the fort—was there before we left, but had taken good care to keep out of sight.

That night we were quartered in one of the barns, Captain Sam having seen to it that a certain amount of floor space was reserved for us, and we slept as only tired lads can, not one whit disturbed by dreams of coming dangers.

One needed to look long in order to see in the sky any signs of coming day when we were awakened by the beating of drums, and in less than half an hour thereafter one hundred and fifty men, among whom Ezra and I counted, as two, marched down the river in proper military formation.

Not a halt did we make until arriving at a settlement called Petite Côte, where we joined a small party under Captain Snelling, who had been sent on in advance to spy out the land.

During the march it was passed from one to the other, no one seeming to know who was responsible for the statement, that General Hull had given our colonel positive orders not to go within range of the British vessel's guns, and much discontent was caused thereby.

More than one spoke of our commanding general as a coward, and predicted that this campaign would end disastrously unless there was a speedy change of tactics or officers.

The men argued, and as I thought with good reason, that we only played the part of simples if, after traveling so far, we remained beyond range of the very guns it was our duty to capture.

Although perhaps it might not have been well for land troops to attack an armed vessel, we could

at least have shown the Britishers that we were not soldiers who marched up the hill and then marched back again.

True it is that neither my companions-in-arms nor myself had any right to be dissatisfied with a commander's orders, yet a body of men such as ours, who burned with the desire to show the enemy of what metal they were made, must be expected to grumble when held in leash while the enemy stands within easy striking distance.

However, certain it is that the men were not allowed to go forward when we came within sight of the dismantled bridge.

The British vessel could be seen in the distance, and Colonel McArthur, calling Ezra, myself and three others to his side, went to the top of the ridge to reconnoiter, sufficient proof, so I believed, that the soldiers had not been mistaken when they repeated the order said to have been given by our general.

We could see the enemy plainly. He had a battery of guns ashore supported by about sixty red-coats, twice that number of Canadian militia, two score dragoons, and forty or fifty savages.

With Captain Snelling's force we did not number two hundred, yet despite the guns of the vessel I

venture to say we could have whipped the Britishers, savages and all, out of their boots if we had been given the chance.

On seeing us the Indians began to cross on the remaining timbers of the dismantled bridge; a gunboat which had been hidden from view by the bluff, opened fire, and it looked as if we might have quite as hot a time as if we had gone within range of the *Queen Charlotte's* guns.

We of the reconnoitering party made good speed down the hill, and once having gained the troops it became necessary for every man to do his best.

Tecumseh himself was leading the savages; but instead of marching them across the open as he would have done had he been the great soldier some people try to make us believe, he came over the timbered land, and opened fire while his forces were concealed by the foliage.

It seemed to me that we had no sooner gotten down from off the hill than we were fighting for our lives, with the savages on both sides of us, and I heard more than one who had grumbled at the general's orders, complain because we had been led thus close.

Before the fight, which Colonel McArthur afterward said could be called no more than a skirmish,

was well on, it became a case of each man for himself, except that after moving among the timber we held some semblance of a military formation, and, as a matter of course, Ezra and I stood side by side.

The fact that Tecumseh was on the field gave us hope Walk-in-the-Water might also be present, and we watched eagerly for that murderer, but without avail.

In ten minutes we had silenced the savages, and pressed forward several hundred yards as they retreated, but no further lest we be led into an ambush.

Then the men were ranged in line once more, and as we stood there while scouts were sent out on every side, it was learned that we were not overburdened with ammunition.

Each man had twenty rounds in his box at the beginning of the fight, but more than half of all these had been expended, and when a squad was sent to the rear for a fresh supply it was learned that none had been brought with the troops.

Some one had made a mistake; but there was no time to learn who that guilty one was.

We were in the thicket almost completely sur-

rounded by foes, and with no more than ten cartridges to each man!

Colonel McArthur's face was clouded, and well it might be.

There was good chance the whole force might be wiped out, and he who made the mistake would have our blood on his conscience; but it would have pleased me better if he could have had the imprint of my hands on his body at that very moment.

The scouts came in hurriedly.

Tecumseh was bringing his murderers up once more.

The gunboat had hauled further out in the stream ready to pitch round shot and shell into us when we came from the cover.

“Save your ammunition as much as possible, lads!” Colonel McArthur said in a low tone as he walked the length of the line. “Hold the red villains in check; but at the same time move slowly backward till we are come to the edge of the wood. Then give Tecumseh's braves such a volley as will send them behind the trees, and make a dash across the open.”

A murmur was heard from some portion of the line, and our gallant leader added quickly:

“Don't fancy I intend a retreat. We will send

to the encampment for ammunition and reinforcements, and give the Britishers a taste of our quality before leaving Petite Côte!"

A cheer went up in response to these ringing words, and each man was heartened by them.

Our general might be cowardly; but our colonel was of the true sort!

There was little time for suspense.

The savages came on with a whoop as if thinking to scare us by their noise, and when a gun was fired from our side it meant a dead Indian, for no man was minded to waste a single cartridge.

Slowly backward, firing now and then when a red body was exposed to view, we held our own bravely as we retreated, for the murdering villains were getting such a taste of our lead as was not to their liking, and I warrant you they were surprised at our falling back while we were doing so much execution.

Sharp as was Ezra's gaze and mine, we saw nothing of that particular savage we panted to meet, and before ten minutes had passed were satisfied he could not be on the field, else was he a greater coward than I ever believed him.

One might husband his ammunition as he pleased, it would soon diminish if he continued to shoot at

every fair target, and we could not yet see through the foliage in the rear when Ezra and I had but six shots between us.

“We must cease firing now,” the brave lad said angrily, “else we shall not be able to join in the parting salute, and I would not cross the open without at least one bullet.”

At that instant a dozen painted scoundrels made a dash straight toward us, and we were forced to lessen our small stock of cartridges by two.

Our companions on either side aided in the work, and the savages were glad to run back more rapidly than they came, leaving five lying in full sight.

Two were dead, and three wounded.

They were not more than fifty paces away; I could see every streak of paint, and that they were suffering moved me only to joy, for I remembered the evidences of cruel torture we had seen that day when we came upon the bodies of Ezra's father and mother.

One more step backward, and my comrade handed me his rifle.

I took it as I asked why he did so, and throwing off his coat as he spoke, the brave lad said:

“There are five full cartridge boxes. I can get at least two!”

Knowing the mad thing he was about to do I leaped ahead to stop him, but was too late.

Dashing forward where he must be seen by half an hundred pairs of savage eyes, he sped straight toward the first painted body, and tore the British box from the Indian's belt.

A dozen bullets struck around him, but not one hit the mark.

“Come back, lad! Come back instantly!” Colonel McArthur shouted angrily, and up and down the line I could hear our men cheering.

Another box did Ezra take, and as he stooped for the third, which was slung from the shoulder of a wounded Indian, I saw him start in surprise.

“Come back!” I screamed, and our men continued to cheer.

Then he did that which so filled me with surprise I could no longer cry out for him to return.

He spit on his hand and passed it down the savage's cheek, leaping back just in time to save himself from the venomous thrust of a knife.

At that moment three or four Indians burst out from a clump of bushes.

The dear lad saw his peril, and started toward us; but would have been too late save for the watchful eyes in our line.

I stopped the foremost with a single shot, leaving me only one cartridge remaining, and before I could put that in my rifle our men had taken care of the others.

“ You deserve to be put on bread and water for a month for such disregard of orders,” Colonel McArthur said sternly, when the lad was with us once more, but at the same time he clasped Ezra by the hand.

My comrade hardly noticed the compliment thus paid him; but cried excitedly to me:

“ Whom do you think that is, out there, David? A painted man, but no Indian! It is Jenkins, and you shall come with me to get him. I am not minded to let him give us the slip this time.”

“ Do you mean the spy?” Colonel McArthur asked quickly.

“ Ay, sir. I wiped his face to make certain,” and the lad held up his hand, the palm of which was covered with paint.

The colonel suddenly turned his back toward us, and excited though I was I understood he did so that he might not be obliged to order us back.

“ Will you go with me, David?”

“ Ay, Ezra, wherever you lead,” and then it was as if I had never known fear—my blood was on fire.

Even as we started out from among the foliage I heard the colonel cry as he ran up the line:

“ Fire a volley into yonder thicket! Send it in hot, to shield the plucky lads! ”

The cheers of the men rang in my ears as we darted forward, and I thought of nothing—saw nothing but that figure, half lying, half leaning against a tree-trunk, knife in hand ready to meet those who should come, for the fellow must have known that, now his secret was discovered, we would seek him out.

CHAPTER XIII.

RETREAT.

SHELTERED as we two were by the shower of bullets sent into the thicket in advance of us, it was not a very daring thing which we did, and thus I set it down lest some say I would praise myself.

We were half enveloped in smoke, and instead of running in a straight line, darted here and there to prevent the foe from getting good aim at us, therefore the danger was slight.

It was not an easy task to bring the painted spy back to our lines, however, for he flourished his knife, threatening to run us through if we attempted to move him, and I wondered much that he was without a rifle until I saw it a dozen yards away, where he had flung it unconsciously when stricken by the bullet.

There was no time to dally with him, neither did we care to go directly within range of the steel.

“Drop that or I’ll fire!” Ezra cried, leveling his rifle, for this time he had made the venture armed.

“Shoot!” the spy cried. “Shoot! It is better to die than be taken back for hanging!” and he waved the knife above his head.

We were not minded to kill him outright, nor did I intend to stay there as a target for the savages within the line of foliage.

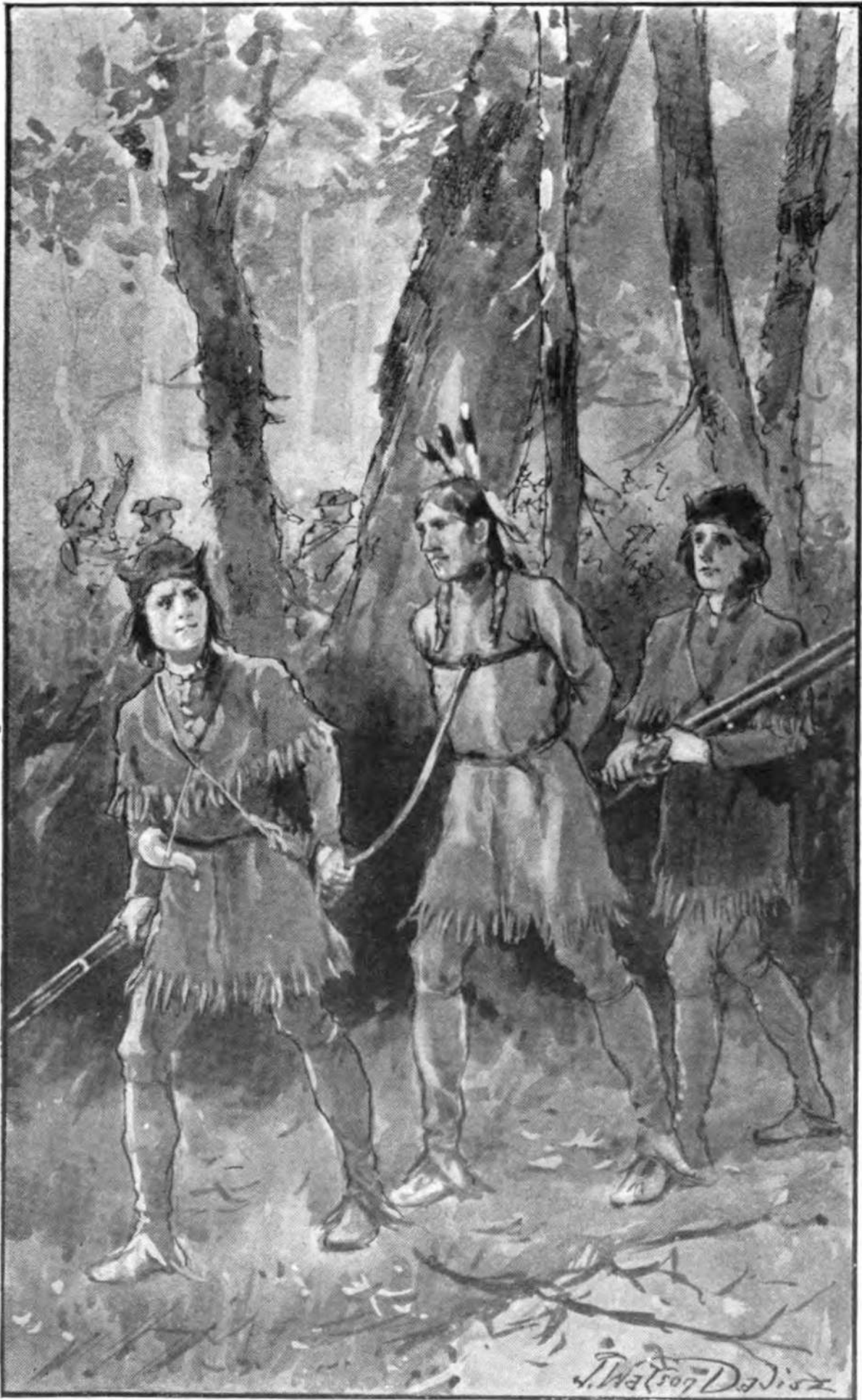
Lying near my feet where I had halted was a decaying branch of a tree, yet stout enough, however, to serve for a vigorous blow.

I was hidden from view of the fellow because of his own position, and raising the branch at the instant Ezra advanced as if to kill him, I struck at the hand which held the knife.

The steel blade sung in the air as it flew from the fellow’s grasp, and in another instant Ezra had him by the throat.

His own belt served as a halter, when placed beneath his arms, to drag him into our lines, and there he was before three minutes had passed from the time we set out, even though I have used so many words in the telling.

“Now get as far to the rear as is safe, and watch well your prisoner,” Colonel McArthur said sharply,



With his own belt for a halter, which we placed beneath his arms, we led him into our lines. Page 238.

At the Siege of Detroit.

forced to speak loudly because of the ringing cheers which the men bestowed upon us. "You lads have done enough for one day, and I am not minded to let you attempt any more reckless deeds."

Ezra gave all the cartridges he had taken from the foe, save six, to those nearest, and we started, dragging Jenkins as before.

When two hundred yards had been traversed we were forced to halt.

Before us was a strip of cleared land which could be swept by the guns of the vessels.

Jenkins, half stunned by our manner of dragging him along, revived somewhat as we paused, and began fighting viciously, hoping, most likely, to so enrage us that we would kill him.

In this he was mistaken.

We had no idea of putting an end to the life that could unravel for us the mystery of Detroit.

It was certain that we should not be able to keep pace with the troops while it remained in the fellow's power to make so much resistance, and we at once set about getting him into proper shape for transportation.

By tearing into strips his deer-hide shirt we made a rope with which to bind his arms, and yet leave enough to serve our purpose, for by no other way

could we hope to get him across the open than by hauling as if he had been a sled.

The troops had continued their backward march while we worked over the prisoner, and by the time our preparations were made the line was close upon us.

“ Make your way across there, lads! ” Colonel McArthur shouted. “ Don’t stop till you are under cover on the other side lest you interfere with our movements! ”

We obeyed the command at once, running at the best possible pace while we had such a burden to drag, and before gaining shelter Ezra came to understand why we were thus sent in advance.

“ It was not that we might be out of the men’s path, ” he said angrily. “ The colonel knows the vessels wouldn’t waste shot or shell when only two boys served as a target, and has made us push on that we may not be exposed to danger. ”

I was nigh to laughing because my comrade saw cause for anger in this attempt to save him from danger, and replied when it was possible to do so with a grave face :

“ After we have gotten this spy across you can go back in order to come over at a leisure pace. ”

“ I’m no more fond of dangerous places than any

one else, but it makes me ashamed to be treated like a child.”

The dear lad was really in a temper because of this thoughtfulness on the colonel's part, and I had no slight task to so far soothe him that he would say how we might best get our prisoner back to the encampment, for it was not to be thought of that we drag him all the way.

We had not decided the question when our men, having discharged a volley that must have staggered the savages, dashed across the cleared space at full speed, and then came the booming of the heavy guns as both vessels opened fire.

The Britishers wasted their ammunition that time through lack of marksmanship.

The shot and shell screamed far above the soldiers' heads, and not one of them was any the worse, save in the way of breath, for the rapid retreat.

Now we were almost in safety, and there was no reason why the men should not march in a leisurely fashion, which they did, until we were at Turkey Creek Bridge, and there we halted.

Colonel McArthur sent back a messenger on his own horse, which had been left at this place, with a request for more men and ammunition, and those

of our troop who were wounded now had a chance to care for themselves.

There were none in our lines severely injured, and not one had been left behind, thank God!

It was early in the day; there remained yet time to get both men and cartridges to us before night-fall, when, as I doubted not, we would fall upon the enemy in a manner that would surprise him.

We were still discussing what should be done with Jenkins, when the colonel came toward us and asked :

“ Well, lads, now that you hold the key to the mystery, what do you propose to do with it? ”

“ That is what puzzles us, sir, ” I answered. “ If we drag him from here to Sandwich there won't be enough left of his body to serve our purpose, and yet how else may we take him? ”

“ Stay where you are till the messenger returns, and then if there be no other conveyance you shall use my horse. He is so grievously wounded that he may not live unless you treat him tenderly. ”

“ He should be put under the surgeon's care I suppose, ” Ezra said doubtfully, “ yet I fear to leave him in an hospital lest he give us the slip again. ”

“ You need have no thought of that unless he can manage to exchange that shattered leg for a sound

one. Give him water now, and make the fellow as comfortable as possible.”

We obeyed the order, yet dared not untie his hands lest he succeed in taking his own life, as I have no doubt he would have done knowing the fate which awaited him in our camp.

The sun was yet two hours high when Colonel Cass and an hundred and fifty men came in on the double-quick, having made all the distance at that rate of speed with no more than a dozen halts.

They brought with them a goodly supply of ammunition, and a six-pounder, which last would serve to remind those on the vessels that we were yet alive and able to play Yankee Doodle, even though we had been forced to retreat a short distance.

Almost at the same time the reinforcements came up, the scouts returned with information that the enemy had also been strengthened, and now numbered not far from five hundred, without counting those on board the vessels.

But our leaders were both brave men, and each was eager to do something more than march to and fro, therefore we knew we should go forward—not backward.

With the fresh troops had come a surgeon, and, acting under Colonel McArthur's instructions, we

turned our prisoner over to him with the caution that he was not to be trusted with free hands.

Then came the words all were eager to hear :

“Forward! March!”

And away we went, our cartridge boxes full, and no fear in our hearts.

Down into Petite Côte the men trudged, and the order was given to make camp, for the night had come.

No one grumbled at this delay for our faces were still turned toward the foe, and we believed good work would soon be cut out for us.

That night Ezra and I slept even more soundly than in Mr. Reynolds' home, and when the morning came we ate our rations hurriedly lest we might be among the last to fall into line.

The six-pounder was wheeled into position, and by seven o'clock our gunners had begun to exchange shots with the enemy, which was but another way for saying that we would soon come to visit them.

The men were ready; every rifle was loaded with a bullet that would kill or disable when the proper time came, and we were almost holding our breaths in suspense, expecting each instant the word to move.

Then from the rear suddenly appeared a mounted man, waving his hand and riding hard as if his mission was an urgent one.

The two colonels stepped to the rear, looking grave even to anger.

The newcomer dismounted, gave Colonel McArthur a paper, and stood at attention.

Every pair of eyes in our line was upon the leaders at this moment.

We saw Colonel McArthur glance at the document, and then raise his hand threateningly, whereupon Colonel Cass took the paper from him.

Then the two officers spoke together, not in a friendly way, but excitedly, with raised voices, and we were puzzled to the verge of bewilderment.

The messenger came toward us, leading his horse, and a man near me cried out to him :

“ What is it, sergeant? What’s the matter? ”

“ An order from the commanding general for the troops to return to Sandwich without loss of time, ” the man replied, and every one of us stared at the messenger in open-mouthed astonishment until a corporal in front of me said between his closed teeth :

“ The beastly coward ! ”

Then from left to right and back again, the word

ran, as if each passed it to his neighbor, until the din was so great that Colonel McArthur came striding up shouting :

“ Order in the ranks! Let every man be silent! ”

He was obeyed.

No one spoke when the command was given which set us with our backs to the foe, and our feet moving along the road toward the encampment where our gallant general, who had not as yet smelled burning powder, awaited his troops.

That we should have thus wheeled about in the face of an enemy whom we could have driven into their fort and then taken it—that we should have been forced to beat a retreat when no foe pressed us, was a shameful thing, and even my comrade and I, who knew nothing of warfare, believed that he who should have been the one to urge us on, instead of holding us back, was faint-hearted even though no danger menaced.

Worse than that was said of him before we were arrived at Sandwich again.

I heard more than one accuse General Hull of being a traitor, and boldly declare he had British gold in his pocket.

On that day those who had panted to face the enemy's bullets to aid in making their country re-

spected among nations, were on the verge of open mutiny, and all that saved us from the most disgraceful of scenes was the fact that our leaders, Colonel McArthur and Colonel Cass, were brave men, and as such respected.

And there were moments when even they found it difficult to restrain the disappointed men; but they did it like soldiers and true officers, marching us into Sandwich in fair order, and then, arrived at the encampment, we discovered what had so frightened our general.

When the troops were dismissed it was learned that General Hull had started for Detroit that afternoon, and the soldiers said Colonel McArthur would represent him during his absence, which we understood, I know not how, was to be for several days.

Then we heard that which made us sick at heart, and knew the tidings were painfully true, for in the encampment was one who had escaped to tell the tale.

Mackinaw had been captured by the British and savages!

The garrison of fifty-seven men under Lieutenant Porter Hancks of the United States Artillery had been made prisoners almost before they knew war

was declared. In fact, so we were told by the half-breed who had come with the tidings, it was Captain Roberts himself, commander of the British forces, who gave news of the declaration to Lieutenant Hancks at the same time he demanded the surrender of the fort.

At that moment a force of ten hundred and twenty-one, counting white men and Indians, had surrounded the settlement, and what could our garrison of fifty-seven have done against them?

It was sickening news, but not such as should have frightened a general away from his own troops as it had done ours, and we were the more dispirited because of having such a commander.

All this drove from our minds—meaning Ezra and me—every thought of the prisoner until late in the evening, when Captain Sam asked us, after the excitement in the camp had subsided somewhat, to tell of what had been done.

Then, without waiting to answer the old man, Ezra and I moved ourselves right lively to the shed which had been turned into an hospital, and there were denied admittance by the sentinel, who told us his orders were to prevent any person except the surgeon and one of his assistants, from entering or leaving the building.

Nor could we learn whether Jenkins was inside until, after we had waited nearly an hour, the surgeon himself appeared.

“Your prisoner is here, and not likely to make his escape, even though there were no sentry on guard,” was the reply to our eager question. “I judge Colonel McArthur fears he may have an opportunity of speaking with some one of his kidney if not closely watched, hence the strict orders.”

“Is he seriously wounded?” Ezra asked.

“I have amputated his leg; but we are obliged to keep him fettered lest he compass his own death by pulling off the bandages. The fellow is no coward, even though he be a spy.”

I turned away faint at heart.

The anger which I had felt toward Jenkins fled very suddenly when I heard of his mutilation, and I no longer wanted to look upon him.

“Come away,” Ezra whispered, and I knew right well what was in his mind.

Captain Sam was not affected after the same fashion, however, and actually threatened to do us bodily harm if we did not explain what had happened.

“‘Takin’ one thing with another I’ve been terribly stirred up this day, an’ it ain’t safe for

you lads to keep so mum when I ask a civil question.”

Then we told him all, as is here set down, and when the story was brought to an end he had no further desire to talk.

CHAPTER XIV.

REINFORCEMENTS.

DURING the four days General Hull remained at Detroit as if in hiding, bad news came thick and fast, and but for the fact that the men well knew there were no better or braver soldiers than Colonel McArthur and Colonel Cass, the mutinous words would have grown into deeds.

With the news of the loss of Mackinaw came the information that all the savages between that settlement and the Rapids of the Maumee were hastening toward Detroit.

On the following morning scouts came in with the word that a large force of Canadians and Indians were marching from the east to Fort Malden, and also that a detachment of British soldiers with artillery had gotten as far as the River Thames on their way to Detroit.

Later in the day reliable information was brought

that Colonel Proctor of the British army had arrived at Fort Malden from Fort Erie, with large reinforcements.

Add to such dispiriting news as this, the strange absence of the commander and the insubordination of the men who were mutinous only because of the apparent cowardice of their leader, and one can have some idea of the encampment at this time.

On the top of it all Major Denny, who had been sent by Colonel McArthur to drive back the advancing savages, was whipped by the Indians soundly, and came to Sandwich bringing two wounded men after leaving six dead on the field.

It surely seemed as if our little army would be completely wiped out before a single move could be made toward escaping from the net which was drawn more tightly around us each instant.

The only ray of hope we had was when a courier arrived with word from Captain Henry Brush that he, with two hundred and thirty volunteers, one hundred beef cattle, and a supply of stores, had arrived at the crossing of the river Raisin, thirty-five miles away.

Within an hour after the men ceased cheering the courier who brought the glad tidings, another messenger came from the captain with information

he had learned through his scouts that Tecumseh and his followers had crossed the river at Amherstburg, and were lying in wait near Brownstown to fall upon the reinforcements.

The savages outnumbered the volunteers two to one, and, hampered as the latter were by the cattle, it was not safe for them to advance until sufficient escort could be sent from our camp.

Before I set down that which Ezra and I did toward unraveling the mystery which puzzled older heads than ours, let me tell what these reinforcements, only thirty-five miles away, cost us before the first decisive move had been made toward bringing them and their treasures of food into camp, although I am thus running ahead of our doings.

General Hull returned to the encampment when the word had been brought from Captain Brush, and was met with cold looks from every private in the ranks, while even the officers did not greet him in any too friendly a spirit.

Every one supposed, however, that he would at once send out an escort; but, incredible as it seemed then and does even now, he refused, nor would he grant permission for a detachment to leave camp until the colonels had made it a personal matter.

Surrounded as we were by enemies, and running

short of provisions, the men and food on the Raisin would be a most valuable addition, yet the commander was not willing to do the little he could toward helping them forward.

However, after a time he was brought to give an order for Major Van Horne to advance with two hundred men; but much precious time had been lost, during which the Britishers had good opportunity to lay plans for the capture of the reinforcements.

It was on the fourth day of August when the major started, with Captain William McCullough leading the way in company with four scouts, but before night had come the captain was wounded and scalped; the escort fell into an ambush where seventeen were killed and as many wounded; a running fight ensued which cost several more lives, and Major Van Horne could do no less than beat a retreat.

Now not only were our reinforcements surrounded on the bank of the Raisin; but the major's company lay between us and them unable to further retreat or make an advance because of the line Tecumseh and his murderers had drawn around them.

General Hull appeared to have lost his head.

Our colonels demanded that at least five hundred men be sent to relieve Captain Brush and Major

Van Horne; but the commander refused, and declared that there was no other course than to leave our people to the mercy of Tecumseh, for it was not safe to weaken the force at Sandwich.

The soldiers had done no more than murmur previous to this; but now they were prepared to act, and if Colonel McArthur had consented to take command, we of the rank and file would have seen to it that General Hull was not left in a position to make trouble.

Then suddenly, and it was said in camp that the officers themselves were on the verge of mutiny because of this wicked delay, orders were given for an immediate advance of the entire force.

We rejoiced, for in order to quiet the men our officers had allowed it to be made known that the general proposed marching upon Fort Malden, and, after that post had been taken, to clean out the savages who were awaiting an opportunity to massacre those they had surrounded.

Orders were given for the men to be supplied with three days' rations of cooked food; boats drawn up on the river bank that the army might be taken by water; materials for a bridge formed into a raft, and everything made ready for an active campaign.

Satisfied that the general had at last come to his senses, the men no longer raved against him, and only grumbled because the necessary preparations demanded so much time.

Then came the morning when we were to go forth against the enemy as the first step toward rescuing those of our people who were in so great danger, but even as the army formed in line to march toward the river, General Hull sent a written order for the abandonment of Canada.

Instead of going either to meet the Britishers or aid our companions-in-arms, we were to cross over to Detroit!

It is impossible for me, weak as I am at such work, to describe the scene which followed when this order was made known.

Almost to a man the army demanded that the advance be made as had been agreed upon, regardless of what the commander might say, and there were many who boldly promised to shoot him on sight.

I believe of a verity General Hull would have been killed by his own troops that morning if he had ventured forth; but he was too cowardly even to show himself, and the officers under him were too good soldiers to disobey a positive command.

It is sickening to write of it even now when he has been punished by the government for his treachery.

We actually crossed over to Detroit, leaving the escort and the detachment where Tecumseh might work his will upon them without show of protest from us, and of our coming into Canada nothing was left save a stockade in which were posted an hundred and twenty invalids for the purpose, as General Hull's order read: "To hold possession of that part of Canada, and afford all possible protection to the well-disposed inhabitants."

Fancy our reading such high-sounding words when we knew that within thirty-five miles were nearly four hundred of our people who had been cruelly abandoned!

The day after our return to American soil, General Hull, as if to pacify the men, sent a force of eight hundred under Lieutenant-colonel Miller for the relief of Captain Brush and Major Van Horne, and, two days later, after the battle of Maguaga, ordered them to return to Detroit.

This was done, and the only thing accomplished by the last move of our commander was the killing of eighteen and wounding of fifty-seven Americans.

Now it was no longer possible to keep the mutinous men in check, while nearly all the officers were in favor of putting Colonel McArthur in command, and sending General Hull to Washington as a prisoner charged with treason, cowardice and neglect of duty.

All this brings us to the twelfth of August, and having thus given an account of the state of affairs existing in the army, and the dangers by which we were surrounded, that which concerned us three comrades will be better understood.

When we marched over from Canada to Detroit the sick and wounded were left behind to aid Major Denny defend that stockade to which the gallant General Hull had given the name of Fort Gowris, and had the orders been rigidly obeyed we should have been forced to part company with the prisoner whom we risked our lives to take.

Neither Ezra nor I were minded to let Jenkins slip through our fingers again.

We were not enlisted soldiers, therefore could not be forced to follow the army, and it was decided between us that if the matter might not be compassed in any other way, we would remain behind until it should be possible to find some sort of a conveyance for the disabled spy.

Before resorting to such extremes, however, we laid the case before Colonel McArthur, urging that what we desired was no more than the safety of the army demanded, and he quite agreed with us.

“I will see to it that you have an opportunity of taking the prisoner along; but you must charge yourselves with his safety, for under the present circumstances I cannot trust the men with any duty of moment,” the colonel said gravely but kindly, and Ezra replied:

“We will do the work if orders are given that he be carried on one of the baggage-wagons. With three to stand guard I’ll warrant a one-legged man can’t give us the slip.”

All was done as we wished, and on arriving at the American side of the river the teamster proposed to take our prisoner to the fort; but to this I would not listen.

“We might as well set the fellow free at once, as to carry him there,” I said to my comrades, and Captain Sam asked impatiently:

“How can you guard him elsewhere? Of course we shall be quartered in the fort.”

“Don’t get any such pleasant idea in your head as that,” Ezra said with a laugh. “There isn’t space enough inside the stockade for more than half

the force, and you may be certain that we who do not belong to the army will be obliged to shift for ourselves, when it comes to a question of lodgings.”

“Where then are you countin’ on stayin’?” and the old sailor, who had been calm and apparently unconcerned while those around him openly discussed rank mutiny, now looked distressed because he might not be housed as comfortably as some others.

“That is what I can’t say, unless we go to Mr. Reynolds’, and I fancy he will have some of the officers as guests,” Ezra replied, and at that moment a happy thought came to my mind.

“Let us go to the house where we were so neatly tricked!” I cried. “It is so far from the fort that I warrant no one has taken possession of it as yet.”

“But the owner——”

“If he shows himself and orders us to leave the premises, well and good; but so long as we do not even know who he is, there’s no call to trouble our heads concerning him.”

“What about provisions?” Captain Sam asked, and this question was readily answered.

“We shall be allowed to draw our rations wherever we may be quartered.”

“Then I say let us take possession of the house!”

the old sailor cried emphatically. "It will go way ahead of any other lodgings we could find, for we'll be our own masters, so to speak."

The teamster who was charged with the transportation of the prisoner had remained during this discussion to learn our pleasure, and we now directed him which course to drive.

"I'll attend to getting Jenkins into the house, and I think it would be wisest for you to speak with Colonel McArthur regarding our purpose. He will then know where to send for us in case we might be needed, and, what is more to the point, can prevent any of the officers from attempting to dispossess us."

This last possibility did not disturb me because the building was so far from the town; but I was ready to do as Ezra suggested, and set out for the fort at once, leaving to my comrade the task of caring for the prisoner.

It was not an easy matter to gain speech with the colonel while everything in and around the fort was in such confusion.

General Hull had shut himself up in the commandant's quarters, and would neither allow his precious person to be seen nor give orders concerning the disposition of the troops, therefore very much

was left for officers like Colonel McArthur and Colonel Cass to do.

I waited nearly two hours before making any progress, and then the colonel came out from the building in company with three or four of the regimental officers.

By standing near where he must pass, and raising my hat when his eyes rested upon me, I was able to gain an audience without breaking in upon him ill-manneredly.

On seeing me he halted and asked what I would have.

Speaking in a low tone, for I was not minded to trust the members of his own staff, I told him what we purposed doing, and asked his sanction.

“It is a good idea, my lad. Take possession of the building by all means, and if an owner appears tell him Colonel McArthur ordered you to do so. Don't allow yourself to be turned out of doors save by a written word from me, and you shall be provided with rations.”

Then he gave me a requisition upon the quartermaster, and promised to call upon us as soon as it might be possible.

“I shall want to have a talk with the prisoner, and now that we are in Detroit there is no reason

why we should not make one more effort to get at the bottom of the mystery.”

A more kindly officer, or more pleasing gentleman than Colonel Duncan McArthur never lived, and that I'll maintain at any time or place !

When I reached the house Captain Sam was sitting in the doorway smoking his pipe, while just inside I could see Ezra burnishing up his rifle, and these two caused the place to seem so much like a real home that I could not but stand still a moment to look at the picture.

“Come in, lad, an' tell us if we're to hold the property as members of the army, or are we like to be turned out for worthless vagabonds ? ”

“The colonel gives us permission to say we took possession by his orders, and I have here a writing which entitles us to so much of the quartermaster's stores as is necessary for four people.”

Stepping inside I was surprised to see that already much had been done toward our comfort.

There were two beds of skins on the floor, and upon one of these, in the further corner of the room, Jenkins lay, watching our every movement as a cat watches a mouse.

“He complained bitterly because we brought him here, instead of sending him to the fort,”

Ezra said as he noted my glance toward the prisoner.

“ You have no right to keep me! ” the spy cried, having overheard Ezra’s remark. “ If I am held by the army, let them take care of me; but’ it is an outrage to thus turn a man over to a couple of boys and an old fool who don’t know the difference between his own head and a cabbage! ”

Captain Sam turned angrily, and, shaking his fist at the helpless man, said to me in a tone of injury :

“ That’s the way he’s been carryin’ on ever since we got here, I don’t understand why he’s so down on me. ”

Jenkins muttered something, the purport of which I could not catch, and then demanded to be taken to the fort, repeating that we lads had no right to hold him in custody.

“ We have a better one than you and your precious partner had when you counted on carrying us back to the British lines! ” I cried, losing my temper that such as he should prate of rights or wrongs. “ I don’t wonder you want to go to the fort, for once there I suppose you allow your protector will set you at liberty. ”

He looked up quickly, as if alarmed, when I said

this, and minded to let him understand we had learned much regarding his doings, I added :

“Don't think we only hold you as a spy, and one who would have murdered us. We are not ignorant of your many characters, and it would be well to keep a more civil tongue in your head. When you are turned over to the military authorities, one higher in rank than your friend at the fort will have you in charge.”

Now there was no question but that the fellow was frightened, and fearing lest I should say too much, thereby showing my ignorance, I turned away.

Not once since his leg was cut off had he been allowed free use of his hands, lest by tearing away the bandages he commit suicide, and he was so bound now.

It would have been needless to fetter him in any other way, for he could not so much as raise himself, unaided, to a sitting posture.

We had with us the three days' rations of cooked provisions which had been given out when it was supposed the army was to advance, yet it seemed to me best that we lay in such a stock of eatables as would provide us with food in case it seemed desirable to remain indoors for any length of time.

There was no particular plan in my mind to account for such prudence; it was simply an idea which had come to me without my knowing why or wherefore.

Ezra was willing to do as I wished, and Captain Sam ready to guard the prisoner in our absence, therefore we set out for the fort where I had been told we should find the regimental quartermaster.

The streets of the town were filled with our men, who, bent on sight-seeing, had put from mind for the time being their complaint against the commander who sent out his men simply to order them back again.

It was natural my comrade and I should give more thought just at this time to the puzzle we had failed to solve, than to the shortcomings of the commander, and while walking leisurely along the subject was uppermost in our minds.

“The idea has come to me that if we can get to the bottom of all this business regarding the spies and the ease with which they can escape, or appear in the disguise of American soldiers, we shall know better why General Hull plays fast and loose when the lives of many are at stake,” Ezra said thoughtfully, and I was startled by the remark.

“Surely you would not accuse——”

He interrupted me by saying almost sharply :

“ I have accused no one. It was simply a guess ; yet there are many in the ranks who do not hesitate to openly charge General Hull with being a traitor, and if he had shown himself this day I warrant you he would have heard the word from an hundred mouths.”

“ In that case we would be wise——”

Again I was interrupted, and this time by Mr. Edward Reynolds, who suddenly appeared before us as if he had risen from the very earth.

CHAPTER XV.

AN INTERVIEW.

MR. REYNOLDS could not fail to observe that we were startled by his sudden appearance, and said with a laugh as he extended both hands in what I thought a singularly friendly fashion :

“ You lads seem more afraid of those who would do a kindly turn, than of an enemy.”

I failed to catch his meaning, and he must have observed the look of perplexity on my face, for he added quickly :

“ You do not suppose that your deed of daring in making prisoner of the spy, when it was necessary to rush almost into the arms of death, could long remain a secret? Those who saw your bravery are very fond of telling the story.”

“ Then it must be in the absence of anything else out of which to make conversation,” Ezra said with reddening cheeks. “ We have done nothing more

than any one in the forces would under the same provocation.”

“Surely you don’t claim that every member of the army is brave,” the gentleman said in a meaning tone, and I was disgruntled that he, not a soldier, should thus speak to us.

Neither Ezra nor I made any reply to this remark ; but my comrade said after a short pause :

“We should thank you, sir, for making it appear as if we were brave, even though the words are not deserved.”

“Yet it is true that you captured a spy—mate to the one who is said to have escaped from the fort under curious circumstances? ”

“Then you have heard that the man got away? ” I said, eying him narrowly.

“Major Towers told me on the day you left. You got your man, it seems? ”

“Yes, sir, we took a prisoner,” Ezra replied curtly.

“And have taken up your abode in the house formerly occupied by the traitors? ”

I started, and with good cause.

Unless he had talked with Colonel McArthur during the last hour, how could he have known where our quarters were?

“Have you seen our colonel this afternoon, Mr. Reynolds?” I asked quickly.

“Meaning McArthur? No, I haven’t had that pleasure as yet; but hope he may consent to become my guest during his stay in town.”

That question was settled, and I asked myself again and again how he could have learned so much of our movements when no one, save the colonel himself, knew we proposed to live in that place.

As a matter of course the teamster who had brought the prisoner there could have told that we stopped at the house; but not a word had been said to give him an idea we intended to remain there longer than until the encampment had been made.

These puzzling thoughts so occupied my mind that I forgot it was necessary to make some reply to his remark, and he repeated it in a different form:

“How long do you count on stopping at the old house?”

“That is as Colonel McArthur shall say,” Ezra replied.

“And you think it safe to keep your prisoner there?”

“He has lately had his leg amputated, and cannot get away unless some one is kind enough to carry him,” Ezra said with a meaning look at me,

and I was lost in bewilderment because this gentleman should know so much regarding our movements and intentions.

“ Did you lads see those boxes of which I spoke, while you were in the fort ? ” Mr. Reynolds asked with a broader smile, as if thinking his grins would please us.

“ We saw the fragments on a pile of rubbish ; that is all. We did not think so slight a discovery would have interested you, sir, therefore made no report. ”

This Ezra said, and now Mr. Reynolds directed all his conversation to my comrade, most likely believing he was indulging in a fit of the sulks.

“ It would please me very much, in view of all I have heard regarding the mystery, to have an interview with that same prisoner. As you know, I am somewhat interested in the possible contents of those boxes, and it may be he can give some information. ”

I looked at Ezra quickly, hoping to be able to warn him against granting the permission, although I dared do no more than use my eyes.

“ We are only acting as keepers, sir, and have no authority to admit visitors, ” Ezra said as if reading the meaning in my glance.

“Then the orders are that no one be admitted?”

“Even we were not allowed to see the spy while the surgeon had him in charge, and we have seen his face to-day for the first time since he was captured.”

This was not a straight reply to the question; but it was as near as Ezra proposed to make one, for he was not minded to tell a lie, neither would he say the curious gentleman might speak with the spy.

“If an order from Colonel McArthur is all that is needed, you well know I can readily get it, therefore should have no hesitation about admitting me now.”

“The colonel’s written orders are positively necessary,” Ezra said promptly, and would have passed on but that Mr. Reynolds blocked the way.

“If, as I infer from the direction taken, you are going to the fort, will you kindly ask Colonel McArthur if I have permission to visit the spy?”

“It is hardly likely we shall be able to get speech with him, sir,” I replied, determined to bring the interview to a speedy end. “I waited two hours this noon for that purpose, and even then would not have succeeded save by accident.”

“Well, my young friend, the same means may possibly serve me. Then I have your promise?”

What could I have said other than as he wished, without being ill-mannered?

Even as it was I hesitated so long that he must have seen I did not care to bear the message; but he paid no attention to the pause, thanking me as blandly as if I had replied promptly.

Then he stepped aside, and after making our bows in proper fashion, Ezra and I walked on swiftly.

When we had gone an hundred paces or more I looked back and the gentleman was just in the act of turning, much as though he had been watching to make certain we were really going to the fort.

This action on his part made me more suspicious than ever, if, indeed, that could have been possible, and I said hurriedly to Ezra:

“You must draw the rations as best you can alone; but on no account allow yourself to meet Colonel McArthur.”

“I didn’t promise to present Mr. Reynolds’ request.”

“True, yet he might ask if you saw the colonel, and it would cause some trouble in your mind to explain that you would not carry the message.”

“I am not so certain about that; but where are *you* going?”

“Back to the house. I have an idea Mr. Rey-

nolds may take it into his head to go there, knowing we are away, and it would not be difficult to persuade Captain Sam into giving him admittance.”

“I will attend to the rations. Take my advice, David, and once you arrive bar the door on the inside. Open to no one until you hear me speak. That will be much easier than to prevent Mr. Reynolds from entering if he should so take it into his head.”

“I’ll do as you say. Get all you can that may add to our comfort, for we are likely to hug the house very close from this out.”

Then Ezra went his way and I hurried back, cutting across a piece of waste land to lessen the distance and save myself from seeing the curious Reynolds if it so chanced he had made, as I believed, a direct course for the house.

I arrived in good time; there was no one in sight on the street when I gained the door and said hurriedly to Captain Sam:

“You must get up from there, and come inside. I’m going to lock you and myself in with the prisoner.”

“I thought you had gone for rations?” the old fellow said leisurely, making no attempt to obey my order.

I bundled him over the threshold without ceremony, and he was like to be angry because of the rough treatment until I whispered :

“ Things look queer around here; I’ll explain matters later, when we can talk without being overheard by Jenkins.”

It was well I moved thus lively if I wanted to prevent another interview with the curious gentleman, for we had hardly closed the door and shutters, barring them securely, than the latch was raised from the outside.

I pressed my hand on Captain Sam’s lips in token that he must remain silent, and then stepped noiselessly to Jenkins’ side, for I was not minded he should give the visitor any information.

Then came a knock on the door, and the prisoner looked up in surly curiosity.

To make certain of silence I covered his mouth closely with both hands and waited.

The summons was repeated, this time louder than before.

When perhaps a full minute had passed I heard footsteps on the outside which told that our visitor was making a complete circuit of the building, and this fact caused me to grow timorous.

The gentleman was so persistent that I began to

fear him deeper in the plot than we had previously supposed, and asked myself what he might not do in order to gain his ends ?

However, I was somewhat heartened as I realized that we three should be able to hold this place against a larger force than any the traitors dared bring against it, and I wished Ezra might fetch a supply of ammunition, for we had none too much.

Then the noise of the footsteps died away in the distance, and I grew bolder, knowing Reynolds had finally given up the attempt to gain admittance, at least for the time being.

I took my hands from Jenkins' mouth and went toward the table, where Captain Sam was standing as if in bewilderment.

“What's the meanin' of all this sneakin', lad? If we're to be shut up here on a hot day, it would have been wiser to leave the spy at the fort.”

Knowing the old fellow would persist in asking questions if his curiosity was not satisfied soon, I led him into that corner furthest from Jenkins, and in whispers told the story.

“But Reynolds is Colonel McArthur's friend!” the old man exclaimed in surprise.

“Hardly so much as an acquaintance, and I am suspicious of him. As to what I suspect it would

be impossible to say, but we will be on our guard, no matter who comes.”

Captain Sam filled his pipe with infinite care after seating himself at the table, and when the task was finished lighted it in a certain solemn manner that would have seemed comical to me but for the anxiety in my mind.

Then he began to smoke, looking grave as an owl, and I ventured to and fro in the room until it seemed to me the day was fully spent, when I heard Ezra's voice.

I had never been more glad to see the dear lad than I was at this moment, and sprang to the door as eagerly as if we had been separated for days instead of only two or three hours.

He had with him one of the soldiers from the fort, and came weighted down with stores, among which I observed a supply of cartridges.

When the goods had been piled in one corner of the room the soldier walked away, but not before I noted a curious expression in his eyes as he looked toward Jenkins, and the thought came into my mind that here was another whom it might be well to watch closely.

After the door had been shut and barred again I told my comrade, speaking with caution lest the

spy should hear the words, of what Reynolds had done, and he said cheerily :

“I do not believe we shall have much more trouble with him. I failed to see the colonel; but spent above half an hour writing an account of what had been said by Reynolds, and asked that he would not grant any person permission to talk with our prisoner until he had seen us again.”

“That was a good idea, and now I believe we may rest content, knowing no mischief can be done for a while at least.”

Then it was I inquired as to where my comrades had gotten the skins which served as beds, and was told that Captain Sam had borrowed them from a man whose acquaintance he made when we were in Detroit the first time, and who lived near the river-front.

It was possible that this friend who so readily lent his skins may have been known to Mr. Reynolds, and had spoken of our having taken possession of the house to that gentleman simply as a matter of news, in which case there would be no mystery about his having been so well informed in our affairs.

Upon mentioning this to my comrades Captain Sam insisted that his friendly acquaintance did not

even know to what place the skins would be taken ; but must have thought we would lodge in the fort.

“Not but what I'd have explained without thought of harm ; but he gave me no chance. I'd jest begun to tell him that I wanted to borrow something for a bed, when one of the soldiers come up to buy tobacco, for he runs a store in a small way an' hasn't got head enough to tend to two customers at the same time, so he told me to take what I wanted, an' he'd see me later.”

It was useless to puzzle our heads over what could not be explained among ourselves, and we gave it up as a bad job, but were precious careful of the fastenings to the door and shutters when we went to bed not long after the sun did.

Next morning Captain Sam insisted that it was necessary he should go for a stroll, saying he was like to mold if he stayed indoors too long at a time, and after cautioning him against speaking of our affairs to any one save Colonel McArthur, we let him out, taking care to lock the door behind him.

Then Ezra set about fashioning a peep-hole in the shutters so that we might see who was at the door if a summons came, and I occupied myself with caring for the prisoner, who needed a deal of attention so helpless was he.

Perhaps an hour had been spent in this wise when the voice of Captain Sam was heard, and on admitting him we learned that which caused us the liveliest alarm.

“Major Denny an’ all his crowd of sick an’ disabled have jest landed!” he cried. “Fort Gowris, as the general saw fit to call the imitation stockade, has been abandoned!”

“I thought the orders were to hold it for the protection of those living near by,” I said in alarm.

“So the general was pleased to command; but it seems the British Major-general Brock has come to Fort Malden with any quantity of troops an’ all the savages that can be scared up between here an’ Mackinaw, so the major thought it was time to light out, an’ I can’t say as I blame him, seein’s he knows our commander hasn’t grit enough to help his own troops if they get into a tight place.”

“Do you know how large his force is—the Britisher’s, I mean?” Ezra asked.

“A scout who has just come from the other side of the river says there are not less than a thousand Injuns at Amherstburg, an’ all those who helped capture Mackinaw are toddlin’ down this way as hard as they can foot it. Four or five hundred red-

coats are now on the road from Fort Malden, an' it stands to reason they count on takin' possession of Sandwich agin, in which case we'll be in what you might call a tight box."

There was good reason for Captain Sam's excitement.

Never have I seen Ezra look so deeply troubled as at that moment, and since then we have been together in some very narrow places.

If our general had been a brave man matters would have seemed a little brighter; but even then there would be good cause for alarm.

At this moment we were in fact surrounded by the enemy, and even the reinforcements which had been sent by the people of Ohio had failed to reach us owing to the cowardice—or worse—of our commander.

There was in my mind the thought that the mystery which had disturbed us so greatly would not be solved because the time might not present.

With such a force as surrounded us, and I had heard Colonel McArthur say our number of effective men would fall short of one thousand, it might be only a few hours before the British would be in possession of the town.

To be shut up in this house at such a time was to

my mind placing us in the same position as rats in a trap, and I felt stifled.

There was no thought then of either Jenkins or Mr. Reynolds, and I threw open wide the door to get air. I was suffocating, in my imagination.

The door had hardly been opened and I was on the point of stepping into the sunshine, when a shadow fell upon me, and looking up I saw the one man in Detroit whom, with the exception of General Hull, I most distrusted—Edward Reynolds.

“Good morning, my young friends,” he said in what I fancied was a mocking tone. “I am come in good time, I see. When I last tried to pay you a visit the house had the appearance of being deserted.”

My mind was so troubled, owing to the news Captain Sam had brought, that I was not in the mood for hunting after soft words, and replied churlishly:

“It is the same as if the house was deserted now, so far as your seeing the spy is concerned, for we cannot admit you without a written order from Colonel McArthur.”

“Precisely, my dear boy. I understand that fully because you made it so clear the last time we met, therefore I have brought my credential with me.”

Then he handed me a bit of paper on which I saw the colonel's name, and a child could have knocked me down without much effort at that moment, for I had rested easy in the belief such permission would not be given after the precaution Ezra had taken.

He did not wait to further consult my pleasure, but pushed his way by me and entered the house.

Ezra came to the door on seeing Reynolds, and I handed him the paper without comment.

There was a wild idea in my mind to run directly to the fort and reproach the colonel for having acted thus contrary to our wishes, and then a soft murmur of voices from the inside aroused me to my senses.

Stepping across the threshold quickly I walked directly to where the prisoner was lying, and seated myself so near the spy and his visitor that they could not so much as whisper without I overheard the words.

Reynolds turned his head angrily, but I was not to be backed down by black looks.

I held my station, and was heartened in so doing as I saw that Captain Sam had stepped near at hand, while Ezra was fingering the rifles as if bent on furbishing them.

“ Although it is not so stated in the permit,

and once more he tried wheedling. "Surely you know I am above suspicion in this matter, and——"

"After what has happened I would not agree that any man in Detroit was above suspicion, therefore we need argue no longer. Say what you please to the prisoner, and then go, for this is no puppet-show."

Then it was Mr. Reynolds favored me with a look which I doubt not expressed what was in his heart, and after that he did not condescend to glance at me.

"I came to gain some information about those boxes," he said to Jenkins. "Can you tell me which of—I mean, what they contained?"

The prisoner opened his mouth as if to speak, and then shut it again as if catching a look of warning from his questioner.

"I have no doubt but that you would oblige me with the information if we were alone, and will see to it that we have a private conversation before many hours, regardless of the ridiculous pretensions set up by these boys. Think over what I want to know, that you may be better prepared to answer the question. Good-by for a short time, my misguided friend."

Colonel McArthur gave me to understand I would be able to see this—Mr. Jenkins alone.”

“Even if it was written down twice over, you should not do so,” I said roughly, and seeing that I was not born in the woods to be scared by an owl, Reynolds began to wheedle me once more.

“But surely there can be no objections to my speaking with your prisoner in private.”

“But there are, and we will not allow it.”

“Then I shall be forced to visit the fort again in order to get the colonel’s sanction to that which I desire.”

“Hark you, Mr. Reynolds, there is no need to take so much trouble, for if you came here with a dozen orders from the colonel you should not so much as look at that spy unless I stood close at hand.”

“Would you disobey a positive command from your superior officer?”

“I don’t question but that he is my superior, but he has no authority over either of us three. We are not of the army, although with it.”

“Yet you recognized his permit for me to enter.”

“That was in courtesy to the colonel—nothing more.”

“Now you are acting rashly, my young friend,”

He reached over to take Jenkins' hand, but I stopped him right suddenly.

I was not minded a weapon should be passed to the prisoner, and at that moment I had no better opinion of Mr. Edward Reynolds than to believe he would do such a thing if the opportunity offered.

The visitor turned away without a word, and I noted the fact that his eyes roamed over the entire room, but rested scrutinizingly on the window shutters.

Then he stalked out with as many airs and graces as if he had been king of the Cannibal Islands, I following him to the threshold.

Ezra joined me, and the two of us watched until he had disappeared in the distance, when my comrade whispered in my ear:

“ We shall have trouble to-night. That fellow will come back as he said, but when it is dark, and he intends to set Jenkins free, as most likely he did the other one.”

“ If he does it will be because I have forgotten how to aim a rifle,” I replied sharply, and then motioned for the lad to follow me out of doors.

CHAPTER XVI.

A FORGERY.

EZRA, brave-hearted and eager for adventure however perilous, had no thought of asking for assistance although it seemed certain we would be attacked by a force sufficiently large to overpower us, for, knowing our strength to a nicety, Mr. Edward Reynolds would see to it he did not make the attempt with too small a party.

I, timorous by nature, was resolved to ask Colonel McArthur for aid, and so spoke to my comrade, who said thoughtfully :

“Let us be careful not to do that which will allow the soldiers to laugh at us. It is not positive Reynolds has the mind to make an attack for the purpose of rescuing the spy, although I admit it has that look. Yet you must remember that to commit such an act of violence the man would show his hand, and it hardly seems probable he dare thus advertise himself a friend of the Britishers.”

“ You are now blowing cold where but a moment ago you blew hot,” I said impatiently.

“ You are right, David. At the instant that man left this house I felt certain he intended making a desperate effort to release the spy; but in thinking it over the matter appears almost incredible. He would forfeit the good opinion of his fellow-townsmen by thus aiding the enemy——”

“ This is the very moment when he can afford to aid them. It is well known we are in desperate straits, with a coward, perhaps a traitor, in command. The Britishers may capture this place at any moment, and if Mr. Reynolds makes himself thus active he gains the good will of the stronger party. There might be a different complexion to the matter if our people had the upper hands.”

“ There is much sound argument in what you say, David,” Ezra replied, convinced by my words.

“ Then you favor my going to Colonel McArthur ? ”

“ That is for you to decide. It surely would be well to make him acquainted with what we have heard.”

While talking we two had been standing a few paces from the open door lest our prisoner overhear the conversation, and Captain Sam loitered on the

threshold waiting until we should have ended what appeared to him like a private matter.

“I will go at once,” was my decision, and these words the old sailor overheard.

“Where are you bound, lad?” he said, coming toward us.

“To the fort.”

“I will go with you, if it so be Ezra does not need me here. This being hived up in a house don’t agree with me.”

My comrade made no objection to being left alone, and I cautioned him against even so much as leaving the door unbarred.

“Doubtless Reynolds is awaiting a favorable opportunity, and if it should so chance the British suddenly created a diversion, he would take advantage of it.”

“You need not fear I will be careless, lad,” he said with a smile, and straightway entered the house, whereupon I bent my steps toward the fort with Captain Sam close by my side.

“We are like to find ourselves in snug quarters, what with the British outside, and the traitors in the town ready to help Jenkins,” he said with so serious an air that I could not forbear laughing outright, although there was little mirth in my heart.

I understood even better than he did what might be our fate if the British captured Detroit, and, unless the officers of the army took General Hull's command from him, such a disaster was certain to come.

However, I would not let him see I was anxious, and replied with an attempt at carelessness :

“ Do not cross the bridge till you come to it, Captain Sam. As yet neither the Britishers nor the traitors are able to work their will.”

“ They may do so when it seems good to them, and I repeat, lad, that the time is come when we should shift for ourselves.”

“ What do you mean ? ” and I looked at him sharply, almost startled by his tone and bearing.

“ We are not of the army, and what prevents our leavin' this 'ere place where spies flourish, and honest men are like to be shot down by scores? ”

“ You would run away? ”

“ If we conclude to shape our course for Sackett's Harbor, or back to Dayton, who shall say us nay? I do not see that it would be running away.”

“ Tecumseh's band would say you ' nay ' with a vengeance. How may we three alone leave this place while the forest is filled with savages to torture such as we? ”

“I didn’t count on doin’ anything so wild,” and Captain Sam lighted his pipe in that methodical fashion which told he had something of import to say.

Not until after the weed was burning brightly, and the smoke issuing from his mouth in clouds did he continue, and I waited with mild curiosity, expecting to hear some wild plan which could never be carried into effect.

“While you lads have been cavortin’ ’round with your mysteries an’ your spies I’ve been turnin’ over this ’ere thing in my mind. Your Uncle Samuel ain’t a fool, even when he’s on the dry land, an’ he’s seen for the week past how this thing was likely to end. General Hull has played friend to the Britishers by lettin’ them get good an’ ready to gobble him up, an’ that day’s precious nigh to hand.”

“You’re news is not fresh, Captain Sam. A blind man might have seen as much.”

“Ay, lad, but I was makin’ such talk so you’d the better understand that I have a good idee now and then. I’ve had my eye on a boat that would skip along right lively after she’d been rigged in decent fashion, an’ big enough to take all the cargo we’d want to put into her.”

“Well?” I asked as the old sailor ceased speaking.

“Well, it seems to me your blind man might see the idee now without much of a strain. When the Britishers get about so nigh we go on board after dark; sneak down the river, an’ work along toward Sackett’s Harbor by huggin’ close to the shore. Even allowin’ one of the enemy’s vessels sighted us, we’d be able to run into shallow water where she couldn’t follow, an’ I’ll wager my head we’d make the voyage in great shape.”

The old sailor’s scheme was by no means as wild as I had fancied, and it surprised me that we had not thought of the same plan before.

Once we succeeded in getting down the river past the savage allies it would be plain sailing, so to speak, and already did my heart feel lighter.

“Well?” Captain Sam asked as I remained silent.

“It is a great plan, and no mistake, although matters may take a turn for the better, when we would not be warranted in making such a bold attempt. It can do no harm for you to prepare everything, and in case flight is necessary we shall be in fine shape.”

The old sailor appeared delighted because I thus

agreed with him, and promised to arrange matters privately, even to the extent of putting on board some of the stores.

“I’ve hauled her around where no one but a savage could find the craft, an’ her cargo will be safe on board as in that ’ere house where we’re likely to have a scrimmage any minute.”

The conversation was brought to an end at this point, for we were arrived within sight of the fort, and where had been waste land the day previous was now a military encampment, the white tents completely encircling the stockade.

In the midst of the tents was a marquee striped with red and blue, a most gaudy affair, and I stood looking at it in surprise, wondering to whom it could belong, when Captain Sam said grimly :

“I allow to know what you’re starin’ at, lad, an’ it’s little wonder. I’d been taken aback myself at sight of that red an’ blue thing but that I’ve seen it before. It was among the baggage at Sandwich, an’ the quartermaster said as how it was General Hull’s private tent. It was last put up on the fourth of July, when we were scoutin’, an’ hasn’t been seen since. A fanciful looking arrangement, ain’t it, for him as calls himself a soldier ?”

“Yet I am glad it’s there,” I replied after some

thought. "It gives one the idea the commander is among his troops where he belongs, instead of housed up as if it would do harm for common people to look at him."

"If any good is to come of it, the pity is he hadn't put up the butterfly thing before, for it's a leetle too late now the Britishers have been allowed to work their will."

As we entered the encampment I could see that the men were in better spirits, because preparations were making for defense, and sullen looks, were replaced by those of satisfaction that the moment had come when they might show their metal.

"The commander is where he's got to fight now," one of Captain Sam's friends said as we halted an instant to gaze around. "We're cornered, an' the most cowardly will kick under sich circumstances."

"Are all the troops outside the fort?" I asked.

"Mostly, lad. The Fourth Regiment, under Lieutenant-colonel Miller, is in the stockade; a good portion of the militia are stationed at the upper end of the town in case Tecumseh should sneak around that way; we've got two twenty-four pounders in battery on the brow of the hill to take

care of them as may come straight at us, an' everything is in prime shape for a row."

"Are the men in good spirits?" I asked, minded to know how they were disposed toward the commander.

"We believe we can hold our own, an' a leetle more. The general can't seem to help himself, as I figger it out, an' at last we're bound to give a fair account of ourselves."

I was heartened by the reply, and the thought which had been in my mind regarding Captain Sam's plan faded away, I began to hope matters were not as desperate as had seemed.

"Do you know where Colonel McArthur may be found?" I asked after a pause, and the soldier pointed out to me our regimental headquarters.

Luckily I found our colonel alone, and straightway plunged into my business by saying with more force than good manners:

"We were disappointed, sir, that you should have given Mr. Reynolds permission to visit the spy, and when I have repeated what was said by him I think you will regret having obliged the gentleman."

"What is the grievance, lad? I fail to understand you. There has been no permit given by me,

nor have I been asked for one. After receiving your comrade's letter I would have refused my best friend."

Now was I bewildered.

It had never come into my thick head that the writing on the paper was not that of the colonel, and I gazed at him in astonishment.

"Tell me what has happened, lad, and speak quickly, for time is precious. The general has again consented that we make one more effort to succor Brush, whose men and provisions we need here sadly, and I am to set out within the hour."

"Of course we are to go with you?" I cried eagerly, forgetting for the instant what had brought me.

"That may not be, unless your prisoner has escaped. You know as well as I that we cannot depend on his being kept safely in charge of any but yourselves. Tell me what you mean by my permit having been given Reynolds."

In as few words as would give him a clear idea of what had happened, I told of his visit; of the odd behavior of the man, and what both Ezra and I feared.

"You have good cause to be anxious, lad, and now there is no longer any possibility of your ac-

companying me. Reynolds forged my name to that permit, and must have reason to believe we shall soon find our hands full, otherwise he would not have grown so bold. But that I am forced to leave here at once, that gentleman should be called to an accounting; but it is only delay. If it please God that I come back, we will attend to his case, and without favor to him."

I was thinking more of the fact that our colonel was going into danger while we were to be left behind, than of the spy; but he speedily recalled me to my duty.

"It was never more important to hold that fellow secure, than at this time when the enemy are close at hand. Kill him rather than allow a chance for escape, and defend your house at all hazards. If it so be you wish, I will send a detachment there."

"I believe we can hold our own, sir, now we are warned. What is to be done if Mr. Reynolds presents himself again with your permit?"

"Shoot, make him prisoner, or do whatever seems best at the moment. My orders are to keep possession of the house and the spy at every cost, and I enjoin you to give no heed to any writing which may purport to be mine. If it so chance I

have occasion to send a message, it shall be by word of mouth from one whom you know.”

The interview was brought to an end as several officers entered the tent, and I could do no less than take my leave, however much it would have pleased me to remain.

When I rejoined Captain Sam, who had waited near by, he pointed to the movements of the men in this portion of the encampment, and said :

“ I allow General Hull counts on paradin’ them down the river a few miles, an’ then callin’ ’em back so’s there won’t be any chance their legs may grow stiff with layin’ still.”

I told him what was to be done, and the old man displayed no regret because Ezra and I were left behind.

“ It’s as it should be, an’ Colonel McArthur has done a good thing in leavin’ you two lads here. Take my word for it, this ’ere expedition comes to no more than the others which have left Detroit.”

“ Colonel McArthur will fight if it so be he gets the chance.”

“ True, lad, an’ so he would at Petite Côte; but I’ll lay considerable that the men are recalled within four an’ twenty hours.”

I did not believe, now we were in such sore straits when the reinforcements and provisions on the banks of the Raisin were absolutely necessary if we would hold the town, that the commander dared interfere with the colonel; but before the time set by Captain Sam had passed we learned to what extent General Hull was willing to play into the enemy's hands.

There was no reason why we should linger at the encampment, and good cause for us to rejoin Ezra without delay, therefore I turned toward the house once more, expecting, of course, that Captain Sam would follow; but he had no such intention.

“I allow to hang 'round here a spell, an' then look after that little scheme of mine,” he said when I asked why he lingered. “'Cordin' to all we've seen an' heard I reckon it won't be many hours before an open boat will boom up mighty pleasant by comparison with this 'ere town.”

I was dispirited because of being left behind when the regiment we claimed as “ours” was going into danger, and disheartened by sight of the British on the opposite side of the river where American troops might well have been but for their commander, therefore made no protest at his remaining.

Arriving at the house we occupied I found it

closed in proper shape; but at my hail Ezra appeared, and I saw he had his rifle in hand.

“You are bound to be on the safe side,” I said with a laugh as I entered and barred the door behind us. “Better that than too careless, though I don’t allow there’s anything to be feared in broad daylight.”

“There is where you make a mistake,” he said gravely. “I have had visitors—two strangers, who after knocking until they were tired, examined every portion of the outside.”

Still believing no attempt would be made to molest us for a while, I said lightly:

“Most likely the owner came to learn why his property had been taken possession of without leave or license.”

“I do not think those men ever owned property of any kind, and am certain Jenkins recognized their voices. I slipped a gag in his mouth just in time to prevent him from hailing them.”

Looking toward the prisoner’s corner I saw, lying on the floor, that instrument which Ezra had used to insure silence.

It was the sleeve of my comrade’s coat wound around a billet of wood, and must surely have been effective once in place.

“It is big, I’ll admit; but there was none too much time in which to fashion it. I took it out when they went away, fearing lest he might choke to death.”

“That would have been small matter, save for the fact that the secret would go with him.”

“Not so, David; his is a human life, and I would not take it through carelessness, or in cold blood, for the safety of Detroit. Tell me what you have seen.”

We were standing near the door talking in a tone so low that Jenkins could not have overheard, yet I whispered when I told of affairs in the town, concluding with a description of Captain Sam’s plan.

Because of the anxiety caused by the recital Ezra gave little heed to the old sailor’s proposition, but spoke at length of what might be the result when a battle should be fought, for we, like the soldiers, felt confident the place would be defended to the last.

We were still in converse when Captain Sam hailed us in a voice that could have been heard five hundred yards away, and as I opened the door he beckoned us to come out.

There was no one to be seen near at hand; we could readily get under cover if suspicious looking

men should appear, therefore we obeyed the summons.

“I didn’t want to talk before that ’ere spy, an’ there’s considerable in the way of news floatin’ ’round this town. In the first place I saw the troops set off, an’ before they went had a chat with the colonel. He liked my plan, an’ says if worst comes to worst, you must use the boat rather than let yourselves be taken prisoners. He wants you to hold on to Jenkins, if it so be you can; but thinks it mightn’t be a bad idea to offer him liberty if he’ll give away the whole plot.”

“How should we know whether he was telling the truth or not, no matter what story he might tell?” Ezra questioned irritably.

“I reckon you’d have to use your own judgment as to that. Now here’s the news in camp. This mornin’ Major Jessup went to the general an’ asked permission to take a force as far as Spring Wells to reconnoiter; but got ‘no’ for an answer. After talkin’ half an hour or more he was told he might have a squad of ten men. Fancy sendin’ a troop of ten out among the horde of red-coats an’ savages that are surroundin’ us. Now there’s more’n one of our men who believe the commander hasn’t got pluck enough to make a show of fightin’.”

“But what else can he do while we’re penned in a corner!” I asked impatiently, for such news seemed more like idle camp-chatter than information of value.

“Surrender, of course, an’ it ain’t any ways certain in my mind but that’s just what he will do.”

“It is nonsense to think of such a thing,” Ezra said sharply, and I quite agreed with him.

There was no reason why we should remain out of doors longer; the night was approaching, and I for one felt anxious to be under cover, therefore urged my companions to enter the house with me.

As before, the door and window-shutters were securely barred, and when this was done I stopped for an instant to look at our prisoner.

“I reckon you think that two boys an’ that old idiot can hold your own here,” Jenkins said with a snarl.

“That is exactly my idea.”

“You’ll soon find yourselves mistaken, an’ before eight an’ forty hours have passed the tables will be turned.”

“It is possible,” I replied carelessly; “but it will make little difference to you by that time, Mr. Jenkins.”

“What do you mean?” he asked, and his face grew a shade paler.

Minded to frighten him into being more civil, if nothing more, I said quietly so that he might not think I spoke to threaten :

“Because when we find ourselves being worsted your case will be attended to without delay. The orders are to kill you before it may be too late, rather than allow your friends to effect a rescue. Situated as we are it would be dangerous to wait very long after a regular attack was made upon us, and you should hope there will be no trouble.”

“Would you kill a defenseless man?” he asked, now grown ghastly white.

“I will obey orders,” I replied, which was no lie, although he might make his escape a dozen times over before I would take his life in cold blood as my threat implied.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BOMBARDMENT.

Now I am come to that which must be told in few words, lest this account of what we did while with General Hull's forces, will have grown so long there will not be time to set down all our adventures after we were happily come away from Detroit.

The day when Colonel McArthur left the encampment on the last attempt to succor Captain Brush, was the fourteenth of August.

On that night we three comrades made a generous supper, for our stores were plentiful, and then I waited upon the prisoner, which duty seemed to have fallen on me by chance.

We were not minded he should suffer other than in his mind while kept thus close, and his rations were the same as ours.

Until this night he had eaten hearty meals ; but now his appetite failed him, and I knew the reason

why, when he harked back to what I had said about killing him, in case we were like to be worsted.

“It would be a cruel thing to do,” he said whimpering, and I asked for his meaning.

“That you should kill a wounded man, who is also fettered, would be cowardly.”

“No more than must have happened had your plans worked. We would take but one life, while hundreds must have suffered through you.”

He winced a bit as I said this, and changed the subject by asking :

“Are you minded to earn a rich reward ? ”

“If you would say I might do so by allowing you to escape, there is no need for further words. Too much of such work has already been done in this town.”

“I did not mean that ; but will show you how many dollars may be earned, if you promise to spare my life when this place is attacked.”

“You know it is to be soon ? ” I asked sharply.

“You believe so yourself.”

“True, yet we have no other reason than our own suspicions.”

“And that is only why I believe it.”

It was in my mind to leave the scoundrel who

would hope to bargain thus, and then it came to me that he might be willing to tell what Colonel McArthur wanted to know.

“In what way could we earn money?” I asked with seeming interest.

“Mr. Reynolds wants to hear certain things I can tell him. He will pay well for a chance to speak with me secretly, and I agree to repeat for his benefit all I know, if thereby my life will be spared when it is no longer possible to hold me. It is not a hard bargain I would drive; you have only to promise that the wicked order shall not be carried out.”

“Will you tell me what Reynolds wishes to know?”

“It would lose its value if you heard me; he wants it as a secret, and will pay for it.”

I believe I might have got from him the plot then and there; but just at that moment a summons came at the door, and I cautiously rejoined my comrades, who were standing near the shutters peering out.

“It is Reynolds,” Ezra whispered when I approached, and there was little need for him to tell me this, for even as he spoke the fellow shouted from the outside:

“Open the door, lads! I have the permission

from your colonel to enter, and also bring you an important message.”

He must have been a fool to think we would believe him, and yet more of an idiot if he fancied we had made no effort to have speech with Colonel McArthur since his visit.

“Are you certain he is alone?” I asked, a sudden thought coming into my mind which promised such great things that I was nearly staggered by my own plan.

“There can be no question. We are able to see on each side of the house, and there is no other near at hand.”

“Then open the door,” I whispered.

“Have you gone mad? What reason had we for shutting ourselves up here but to keep him out?”

“There is a plan in my mind, lad, and I have no time to explain it, otherwise he may grow suspicious,” and raising my voice, I cried, “Wait till we can make certain you come from the colonel.”

“Are you countin’ on doin’ such a thing as that?” Captain Sam asked in a hoarse whisper as he seized me by the coat-collar, much as though I had been an unruly lad.

“There is no time for explanations,” I said, in an agony lest we might delay until it should be too

late. "Depend upon me five minutes, and then I think we shall have a hostage, for I would take him prisoner."

"Quick! Put in the gag while I see to the rifles!" Ezra said to Captain Sam, now understanding all I would do. "It is what may be the saving of us and our prisoner!"

The old sailor could not make out what we purposed doing; but he obeyed the order, and by the time Ezra and I were ready the spy's mouth was so full that he could have done no more than utter a groan.

Then Ezra and Captain Sam took their stations behind the door, rifles in hand, and I, speaking through the crevice, asked:

"Will you promise not to come in if I open the door, until we are certain you have the colonel's order?"

"Yes, yes, of course I promise. Don't be such fools as to make all this fuss when we may be interrupted at any moment!"

There was no question in my mind but that the man was well armed, yet I counted on his believing we still remained in ignorance regarding his forgery.

Unbarring the door slowly I opened it a crack, and held out my hand as if for the permit.

Then it was the traitor did exactly that which delivered him into our power.

Thrusting a bit of paper into my hands he forced his way past me, and, therefore, was well inside with one bound, his back turned toward my comrades.

Shutting the door quickly I barred it again; but had not finished when Ezra cried sharply:

“Hold up your hands, or you are a dead man!”

The fellow half-turned and made a movement as if to reach his pocket; but the click of a rifle-lock sounded ominously distinct as Ezra added:

“Quick! Hands up!”

He who would hesitate when he was covered with two rifles could be no other than a fool, and Reynolds might not be accused of scanty brains.

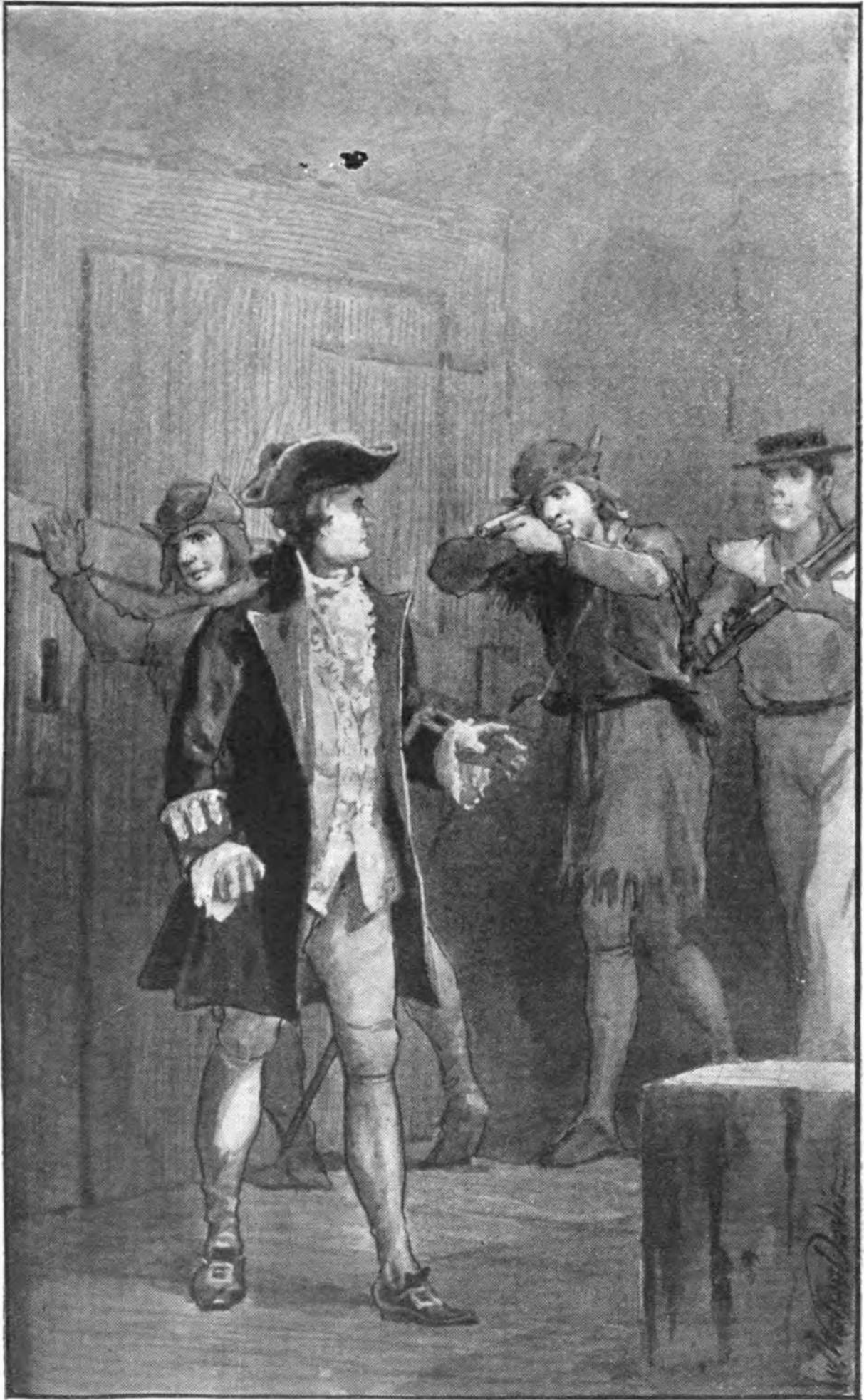
Both hands were raised as an exclamation of rage burst from his lips, and my two comrades stepped around where they could face him.

His first thought was to frighten us by bluster, and he cried loudly, his voice trembling with anger:

“What do you mean by such tricks? You shall suffer for this!”

I took up my rifle, and aiming it at his head made reply:

“This is no trick, Mr. Reynolds. We planned



“Hold up your hands, or you are a dead man!” Reynolds turned and saw a rifle aimed at his head. Page 310.

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to make you prisoner, and have succeeded well, thanks to your lie.”

“My lie?” he repeated in bewilderment.

“If you had waited until we could look at the supposed permit from Colonel McArthur, as was promised, our plan must have been discovered. You thought to get the best of us, and ran into the trap swiftly.”

His face was black with rage as he shrieked :

“You shall be made to suffer for this? Even though you may not be enlisted, Colonel McArthur has the power to punish, and I promise that he will do so most severely.”

“That may be, Mr. Reynolds; but it isn't us whom he will punish. Should you meet him here, his first question will be as to why you forged his name to the paper shown us this morning. We are now acting under his instructions, and he will be pleased to know how easily we succeeded. But there is no reason why we should hold further parley. Captain Sam, take from the prisoner all you find in his pockets, and if there be the slightest show of resistance I agree to shoot on the instant.”

“You dare not commit such an outrage!” he screamed.

“We not only dare to do it; but I stand ready

to kill you without further warning, so have a care.”

By this time the fellow must have understood that we really had received instructions from the colonel, and knew his game of pretending to be an honest American citizen had come to an end.

I have seen many people in a rage, but never one who made a greater spectacle of himself than did Reynolds.

He ground his teeth so loudly one on the outside might have heard him, and white foam stood on his lips.

Captain Sam was no bungler in the work set him to do.

Instead of troubling himself to fumble through the fellow's clothing, which would have required some time, he cut each pocket out, thus making certain nothing was overlooked.

“Lay the plunder on the table, and then truss him up hand and foot, after which it will be a good plan to make another gag.”

One of us could keep the traitor submissive, and Ezra set about assisting the old sailor in the work.

I do not believe more than ten minutes had passed from the time Reynolds first knocked, until we had him helpless, lying in the corner opposite Jenkins,

and Ezra was shaking me by the hand in token of his rejoicing.

“I think we have strengthened our fortification in a wonderful degree,” he said gleefully, “and I am not now certain we shall be attacked this night. Those who might have done so were most likely acting under his orders, and will hardly make a move until after receiving his instructions.”

As a matter of course Reynolds heard these words, and he must have realized the truth of the conjecture, for instantly a most terrific howl went up from him.

He probably hoped some of his hirelings were near by, and he could thus notify them of the plight into which he had fallen ; but the noise was soon shut off.

In a twinkling, showing that the old man must have had considerable practise in such work, Captain Sam clapped the gag between the prisoner's teeth, and the traitor was silent.

After we three had congratulated ourselves again and again upon our good fortune, I turned to the property taken from Reynolds and would have examined it, for there were papers and documents in great number from which I doubted not we should be able to learn much concerning the mystery.

“ It is not for us to look at those,” Ezra said, laying his hand on mine.

“ But we may come at the secret ! ”

“ Which we must not do. It is an affair Colonel McArthur should settle, this prying into a matter concerning the government, and we will keep them for him.”

“ We may be captured, and thus lose all we have gained,” I suggested, not minded to let such an opportunity slip me.

This staggered him, and after some thought he said :

“ At least we will not look at them now. If it so chance we are like to get into trouble, then it may be done.”

I could do no less than agree to this, even though burning with the desire to learn what had baffled us so long, and we tied the papers into two bundles.

There then remained on the table forty-three English gold pieces, a watch, and nigh to an hundred dollars of American paper money.

All this we put back into one of the pockets, and hung it like a bag around Reynolds' neck, Ezra saying to the fellow when this had been done :

“ Because we are not thieves this much of what

was taken from you is returned, although I doubt not the gold was paid for treacherous work. The documents and letters are to be given to Colonel McArthur, or some other honest officer of our army, and if he so elect you will receive them again."

That we had now in our possession positive proof of the fellow's guilt there was no doubt in my mind, because of the look on his face when Ezra spoke.

Big drops of sweat such as is brought out by fear, stood on his forehead, and there was mortal terror in his eyes.

"I reckon we've drawn his teeth, an' now it remains to be seen what his henchmen will do," Captain Sam said in a tone of satisfaction as he begun carefully to fill his pipe. "The only thing that has gone wrong in this whole plan was the givin' back of the money. It is ours by right, an' it would come in mighty handy when my plan is worked."

We did not dispute with the old man, for it would have been but a waste of words after we had thus positively decided the matter; but neither Ezra nor I would have touched a single cent of the traitor's money even though it was to save ourselves from starvation.

Perhaps half an hour had passed from the time

we trapped Reynolds so neatly, when I saw that on his face which told of bodily as well as mental suffering.

The prisoners were nigh to suffocation, and I proposed that the two be laid side by side where one of us could stand guard.

“Then we can relieve them of the gags, with the promise that they be replaced at the first outcry from either.”

“Don't let the fellows get their heads together!” Captain Sam cried, “else Reynolds will find out what he's been so set on knowin'.”

Confident that we held the secret already, I replied:

“It will make but little difference how much they talk now, and by having them on one bed our work will be the lighter.”

“Don't put that thing in my mouth again, an' I'll tell everything you want to know,” Jenkins said imploringly. “If it had been left there ten minutes longer I'd stifled to death.”

“It shall be kept out as long as you remain silent. As for your telling us anything, I fancy we can read for ourselves, though it is certain the papers we took from Mr. Reynolds do not give any idea of what was in the boxes.”

“ They held each two hundred gold pieces, packed in rags, and were to be used for bribing members of your army,” Jenkins cried quickly, determined to relieve himself of the information. “ Marshall had five when he came to this town eight months ago, and Reynolds got a whole one for himself! ”

“ Who is Marshall? ”

“ The man you saw in this house. He has been in the pay of General Brock for nearly a year, and Reynolds took service under him six months or more ago.”

By the time all this had been told our second prisoner was so thoroughly overcome that had we loosed his bonds then and there I do not think he could have walked as far as the door.

Never before nor since have I seen a man so completely unnerved, and it is but fair to add also, that I may never again see one so near the gallows. If we held Detroit eight and forty hours longer—which is to say, until Colonel McArthur came back—Edward Reynolds would be hanged with or without the sanction of General Hull, and of that I felt positive.

I turned away from the traitor and the spy, not minded to hear more; but Ezra lingered to ask Jenkins:

“Do you know whether this house will be attacked?”

“No more than do you, and that is the solemn truth. While Reynolds was at liberty I knew he was bound to help me out; but whether the others will act now the leader is downed, I can't say.”

“Who among our officers in the fort was the one to give Marshall the chance of escape, and provide you with an American uniform?”

“A lieutenant—I do not know his name. He was sent to the house for the prisoner, and must have carried the boxes away with him.”

“Do you believe Major Towers knew anything of all this plotting?”

“It is certain he didn't. Reynolds once proposed to make an attempt at buying him over, but Marshall objected, saying it could not be done, and the risk of discovery was too great to warrant the effort.”

We had now so much of the mystery as was necessary to give us a good show of guessing the rest, and I felt truly thankful Ezra had prevented me from prying into papers which we had no right to see.

Captain Sam proposed to “stand his trick” at

watching the prisoners, and suggested that Ezra and I try to sleep while everything was quiet.

“There’s no knowin’ what’ll turn up’ twixt this an’ morning’, an’ it’s wise to get shaped up for work so far as may be.”

We were ready to act upon his advice, and after it was decided between us that each in turn should do guard duty for two hours, Ezra and I laid down on the bed of skins.

So excited was I by all that had happened and was likely to happen, that my eyes would not close in slumber until the first two-hours’ watch was well nigh at an end, and had hardly lost myself before Captain Sam called me to do my share of the work.

There is no reason why our movements during that night should be set down here, for nothing of moment occurred except at a little past midnight, when Ezra, hearing the sound of footsteps as if some person was prowling around the building, awakened Captain Sam and me.

We three listened intently, ready for action ; but no attack was made, and we finally concluded that some of Reynolds’ henchmen were searching for him.

“It ain’t likely they’ll do anything in the way of breakin’ the peace to-night,” the old sailor said

with an air of exceeding wisdom; "but when the mornin' comes an' he's still missin', they'll begin to get an inklin' of where he may be. Then look out for squalls!"

After this we slept or watched undisturbed until morning, and at daylight set about attending to the prisoners, for since there were two to be looked after, Ezra lent a hand.

From that time until past noon the hours dragged slowly, and both Ezra and I were longing to hear what might be going on outside when Captain Sam said emphatically:

"It's no use, lads, I can't stay hived up here any longer! I've got to make a break for it, or smother. With both of you to care for the door, I don't see why it wouldn't be safe to give me a breathin' spell."

I looked at Ezra, and read the answer in his face.

We two, with rifles in hand, unbarred the door, and Captain Sam peered out.

No one was in sight, and the old man said, as he slipped through the opening:

"When I come back you can count on my havin' made certain the coast is clear before knockin'."

Then he was gone, and we returned to the weary

task of watching the wretched men, neither of whom had spoken since sunrise.

The old sailor was absent no more than two hours, and when he returned we knew from the expression on his face that he had startling news.

“The Britishers are makin’ ready to bombard the town! At noon General Brock sent over a flag of truce to demand the surrender of Detroit, an’ this is the way I’m told the message wound up: ‘The force at my disposal,’ Brock says through the two who come into our lines, ‘authorizes me to require of you the surrender of Detroit. It is far from my inclination to join in a war of extermination, but you must be aware that the numerous body of Indians who have attached themselves to my troops will be beyond my control the moment the contest commences.’ If he’d threatened outright to let the savages scalp an’ burn, he couldn’t have talked plainer, an’ yet the Britishers claim to carry on honorable warfare.”

“But why do you think they will bombard the town?” I asked, after it was possible to thoroughly understand the terrible words.

“Because there’s nothin’ to prevent ’em from doin’ it. They’ve got the guns mounted at Sandwich, an’ can pitch balls plumb into our fort.”

“Did you hear anything of General Hull?”

“Major Jessup fairly begged for one hundred men to make an attack on the *Queen Charlotte* which is lying at Spring Wells to cover the landin’ of the red-coats; but he refused straight up an’ down. Then Captain Snelling put in his oar; but the traitor wouldn’t listen to ’em, an’ yet we count on his allowin’ the troops to defend themselves like men should!”

“But surely he will fight when the enemy attack!” Ezra exclaimed.

“That remains to be seen, lad, that remains to be seen; but I have my doubts.”

This last did not trouble me, however, for at the time I believed it was not in the commander’s power to prevent our men from making resistance, and was on the point of saying the same when a noise like as a clap of thunder fairly shook the house.

“The bombardment has begun!” Ezra exclaimed, and he spoke scarce above a whisper.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ASSAULT.

SHUT out from view of what was being done, we in the house had more fear than if we were in the open where the effect of the enemy's shot might be observed, and the roar of the guns caused us to tremble with apprehension; but no one gave signs of such terror as did Reynolds.

When a report rang out causing the building to quiver, he would cower among the skins of the bed, his face pallid, and every limb trembling as if with palsy. It seemed to me as I watched him that he did not breathe for a dozen seconds after the noise of the discharge, and then, when satisfied the house would not be struck by that particular shot, he would draw in a long, quivering breath such as was painful to hear.

Nothing which could have been done by man would have inflicted greater punishment on the traitor than thus being forced to lie there expecting each in-

stant a shell or shot would strike the logs above him.

He must have suffered more than the agonies of death every ten minutes while the roar of the great guns continued, and the sight of such cowardice served to revive my courage by making me ashamed of such abject terror.

Even Jenkins despised him because of such an exhibition, and tried to move his mutilated body yet further away from the coward.

It can well be fancied that we were most eager to know what reply our own people were making to this attack.

We understood that our gunners were working, because at regular intervals the report of guns close at hand could be heard, when the building would shake as if a heavy blow had been struck the timbers, and each time this occurred Captain Sam would cheer wildly.

“The general understands by this time that he can’t crawl out of a fight,” the old sailor cried when it was as if three or four cannon had been discharged at the same instant directly above our heads, “an’ once the men are let loose it’ll be hard work to hold ’em back.”

Ezra and I shared his enthusiasm as the detonations of the guns continued.

At first we listened anxiously, fearing lest the commander should order our men to cease firing, which would not be a wilder thing than he had already done; but the reports continued steadily, and we believed Detroit would be defended in proper shape.

After an hour passed and our house had received no injury, we ceased to be alarmed, and all save Reynolds, who was literally beside himself with terror, could listen with a certain degree of composure to the din of the bombardment.

Then there came to my mind that it was necessary we should devise some means of knowing how matters were progressing.

It would be folly to remain shut out from view of everything many hours, because owing to the strength of the enemy it was not impossible the town might be captured even though most stoutly defended, and we should cut a sorry figure were the British to take possession without our knowledge.

I gave words to my thoughts, asking Ezra and Captain Sam how they thought the matter might best be compassed, and the old sailor replied without hesitation:

“It’s simple enough, lad. With two to guard the door there’s no risk in openin’ it while I go out, and

as for comin' back, why I can make certain everything is quiet around here when it's time to tell my news."

I was not so confident we should be warranted in weakening our defenses even during so short a time as might be required for Captain Sam to leave the house; but Ezra believed there would be no danger, and we decided the old sailor should venture out at once.

"Do not stay more than half an hour, unless some important movement is being made, and take every precaution on your return."

"You may trust me to keep a bright lookout, an' if necessary I can make a report now and then without obligin' you to open the door, for I allow matters will be pretty lively from this on."

The night had come, and, because we did not think it prudent to light a candle, the room was densely dark; but Captain Sam made his preparations by the sense of touch, and we took our stations near the door when he announced that he was ready to set out.

At the moment I was thinking more of what our troops might be doing than of possible danger to ourselves, and held the rifles in my left hand while taking down the bar.

Captain Sam, unarmed, opened the door instantly the fastenings were undone, and had no more than swung it sufficiently wide to admit of his passing through when the sharp crack of a rifle rang out, followed by the singing of the bullet as it flew just above the old man's head.

It was so unexpected that I, never quick-witted, remained for an instant as if in a daze, and even that short space of time might have been sufficient for our undoing had not Ezra acted promptly.

With the quickness of thought he seized Captain Sam by the coat-collar, pulling him backward onto the floor, and at the same instant flung all his weight against the door.

Then I was sufficiently master of myself to shoot the bar in place, and we three stood silent and motionless in the darkness as if bewildered.

“We should have known the scoundrels would take advantage of the bombardment to make an assault on us,” Ezra said after a time. “This house is so far from the fort that a small battle might be waged here and our friends know nothing about it.”

Now I had my wits about me once more, and realized that the prisoners might take it into their

heads to make an outcry, therefore stepped back quickly to where they were lying.

Understanding the meaning of my movements Jenkins said imploringly:

“Don’t put that gag into my mouth again! I promise solemnly not to so much as whisper, never mind what may happen, if you will not do it.”

Even though he was our bitter enemy I believed I could trust him; but did not feel so certain in regard to Reynolds, for the latter was a traitor to his country, while Jenkins had done no more than one of us might do if occasion arose.

“There’s no need of the gags,” Ezra said quietly. “Those on the outside well know who is here, thanks to the scoundrelly lieutenant at the fort. I have an idea that affair won’t be ended quickly.”

It was in my mind to insist that Reynolds might make mischief in some way if not rendered incapable of an outcry; but before I could give the thought words, Captain Sam called sharply:

“There is a crowd near the door, an’ I can’t make out what is goin’ on!”

I gained his side at the same instant Ezra did, and had leaned forward to peer through the opening in the shutter when the odor of smoke startled me.

“They are setting fire to the house!” I cried,

and while speaking came the knowledge that even such an outrage as this might be committed without attracting attention from our friends, who, seeing the glare of flames would naturally conclude one of the British shells had fired the building.

We were forced to rely upon ourselves alone, expecting no assistance from the outside however great the peril, and it was as if this disheartening fact aroused my courage.

“We must drive that mob away,” I whispered to Ezra, “and it is only to be done by bullets. See what you can do at that window, and I’ll make an attempt here. There is no time to be lost.”

I was afraid my comrade might hesitate to fire upon them, fearing lest we do injury to one who was not unfriendly toward us; but he had no such scruples.

Before I could thrust the muzzle of my rifle through the small peep-hole in the shutter he had discharged his weapon, and a howl of pain from the outside told that the ball had not been wasted.

I fired immediately after, doing so at random as a matter of course, and while reloading whispered to Captain Sam:

“Go into the loft and see if it is not possible to cut a loop hole with your knife between the logs at this

end of the building. From there it would be possible for us to take aim."

He made his way up the ladder, and I was ready to send another missile among the crowd; but now, as I looked through the aperture it was no longer possible to see an enemy.

The two bullets had advised them to seek shelter, and a small flame near the corner of the door on the outside so illumined the front of the building as to give us a good view.

But the flickering light was sufficient proof of a danger which must be checked without delay, yet I hesitated to do so because of the small supply of water.

During the forenoon Captain Sam had brought one bucket full, and half of that had already been used to quench our thirst.

"It must be put out, and quickly," Ezra said as if reading my thoughts.

"But once it has been done we shall be powerless to subdue the next fire which may be kindled."

"There will be no need of another if this be not speedily quenched."

I hesitated no longer.

By pouring the water slowly down at the bottom of the door it ran through directly on the fire, but the

entire quantity was used before the flame was extinguished.

Now came another thought, causing yet more alarm. In fact, the situation and the knowledge of our helplessness gave birth to fancies which well-nigh distracted one.

The only loopholes we had made were in the front of the building, and if the villains went around to the rear, or on either side, they could work their will without our being able to check them.

“We should have made better preparations,” I said bitterly. “All our attention has been given to the front of the house!”

“Go into the loft and see what may be done there. One can attend to matters here, and we may yet have time to prepare a surprise.”

There was little hope in my mind when I ascended the ladder, but on gaining the upper portion of the house I was heartened by Captain Sam, who said cheerily:

“I reckon you can keep your eye on the traitors through that 'ere crack I've opened up in front. It don't promise a long job to make a hole in the roof, which would give a good view of the surroundin's.”

He was working at one of the logs as he spoke,

and by lending him a hand we soon had it loosened from its fastenings at either end.

“ Now raise her up, my hearty, an’ she’ll roll off in proper shape.”

That timber at which he had been at work was about four feet from the flooring of the loft, therefore we were able to get good purchase on it, and a moment later it rolled off the roof.

I listened to hear it strike the ground, and was both startled and bewildered as a cry of agony rose on the air.

“ For a chance one, that was a pretty good shot!” the old sailor cried exultantly.

“ But what does it mean? Who cried out?”

“ One of the villains we drove away from the front. I allow there was a crowd of ’em on this side doin’ some mischief, an’ the log struck fair in their midst.”

I thrust my head and shoulders through the aperture, but could not see over the edge of the roof, and, in fact, there was no thought in my mind to do so after one glance toward the Canadian shore.

From where our troops had encamped I could see bright flashes of light as the guns were discharged, and hear the crashing of timbers as the missile shattered one of the buildings in the devoted town.

Then turning toward the fort I saw a similar

scene, and my heart leaped up as I realized that our men were doing gallant work at their guns.

We were at least replying to the enemy, even though it might not be possible to do much damage, which was far ahead of running away as our forces had heretofore been compelled to do whenever the Britishers showed any desire for a fight.

Captain Sam, who had waited for my report, grew impatient because I remained silent, and thrust his own head through the opening; but no word came from his lips. The scene was too terrific to permit of speech.

Here and there could be seen flames shooting up into the air after the explosion of a shell, and I knew our house might be burned to the ground without arousing the suspicion of those who saw it as to our true position.

I had remained here not more than two minutes, and was yet greedily taking in all before my eyes when the whistling of a bullet caused me to make change of position very suddenly.

“Look out for yourself!” I shouted. “The traitors have got the range!”

“Yes, an’ they did mighty well at their first shot. I allowed one of my ears had gone, for the bullet came close enough to burn the skin,” Captain Sam

said with the greatest good humor as he dropped to the floor beside me. "Did you get a sight of 'em?"

"I forgot to look; the flashing of the guns took all my attention."

"That's about the way it was with me, an' I reckon the villain who fired did us a good turn, for we were like to forget our duty."

A cry from Ezra caused me to leap toward the ladder.

"I can hear them working at the end of the house, near where the prisoners are lying! Look out for them!"

There was no longer time to cut a new loophole, as it seemed to me, and I resolved on running a few risks in order to do some execution.

"I'm going to have a look over the end of the building, Captain Sam. If you could raise me in your arms I'd have a chance to send a bullet among those who are at work."

"But the fellow who fired last would pick you off."

"He didn't succeed in doing much damage then, although he had two targets at which to fire. We must work quickly, if we count on putting a stop to the mischief."

Without further parley the old sailor clasped his

arms around my body just below the waist, and, when I was ready with the rifle, thrust my body through the opening at the very end of the roof where I could have a full view of the rear.

I saw four men lighting a fire under the lower timbers, and taking fair aim tumbled one over, Captain Sam dropping me on the floor instantly my weapon was discharged.

No less than three rifles were discharged at the very instant I was thus screened by the roof, and the "ping" of the bullets as they entered the logs just above our heads told that the enemy's aim had been good.

"There wasn't any time to spare on that little job, lad," the old sailor said with a chuckle of satisfaction. "They counted on our doin' something of the kind; but didn't work fast enough. 'Cordin' to my way of thinkin' Mr. Reynolds' friends will need to call up reinforcements if luck holds with us as it has begun."

"It isn't a good idea to crow before we are out of the woods, Captain Sam. So far we've had it all our own way; but once their chance comes it won't take long to wind up this engagement."

"If we keep our eyes peeled there's a show of

standin' 'em off a spell, I reckon, an' then, if matters look too warm, we'll get my craft under way."

"So long as those fellows remain where they are your boat won't be of much account," I said with a laugh, although there was no mirth in my heart, for the situation was grave for us, look at it as you might.

Ezra called out to know what we had been doing, and I ran down the ladder to explain.

"You have no right to risk your life in such a fashion," he said reprovngly when my tale was told. "If one of us should be disabled now it would go hard with all hands."

"Yet we must take some chances, otherwise they stand a good show for smoking us out."

"It will not be a long job to do that, no matter how hard we work. I have been thinking that perhaps we might make some kind of a bargain with them."

I looked at him in astonishment. He was the last person I should have thought would be willing to parley with an enemy, and I liked not this sign of weakening.

"Surely you would not think of such a thing now!" I exclaimed.

"If it is to be done at all we must make the attempt while seeming to have the advantage, other-

wise the bargain will be one-sided. Once they succeed in getting a fire started we shall be in hard sledding, now that we have no more water."

"Would you try to make a trade now?" I asked, minded to learn how far this matter had found lodgment in his mind.

"That is for all three to decide. Suppose you stop here on guard while I go and talk with Captain Sam?"

To this I agreed readily, and instantly he went up the ladder I set about cutting away the splints on one side of the room which were used to cover the crevices between the logs.

Soon the sound of the old sailor's voice, high and shrill, told me that he was not favorably disposed toward Ezra's plan, and this was to my liking, yet I feared the lad might finally bring Captain Sam over, for he had a smooth tongue which he knew full well how to use when so minded.

Then there came to me an idea which was well worth the trying, and without consulting my comrades I set about it at once.

"Look here, Jenkins, you of course know the situation, and most likely could call by name each man who is now on the outside taking big chances in the hope of setting you free."

“ I could give a good guess as to who they are.”

“ Are you minded to save your own life ? ”

“ Every man is eager to do that.”

“ Then you have the chance now. Hail one of those fellows, and say what our orders are in regard to you prisoners. If they seem to get the upper hands we must take care you are not in condition to benefit by their work.”

“ It is better to be shot to death than hung on a scaffold,” Reynolds cried.

“ If that is the case why do you shiver and quake every time one of the big guns are fired ? ” I asked angrily, provoked because he interfered in the conversation.

I had some respect for the spy who risked his neck to aid his king; but none for the American who would sell his country.

“ Call out to your friends, Jenkins, and say to them that when the next fire is built we will shoot this renegade.”

The spy hesitated an instant, and then asked:

“ Why don't you try the plan your comrade suggested? If those on the outside can free us, they will leave you in peace, that I'll answer for.”

“ But what surety have we that they would not be the more eager for our blood ? ”

“I will give you my word, and remain in your company until there has been every opportunity of rejoining your friends at the fort. You may stand over me with a rifle, and shoot at the first sign of treachery.”

I was beginning to think perhaps it might be worth our while to consider Ezra's plan, when suddenly the noise of the cannonading ceased.

Unless the bombardment was begun again, the enemy might not dare attack us so boldly, for the reports of our weapons would surely bring some one from the stockade to learn the cause.

However, my idea, if carried out, would insure partial safety for us during the remainder of the night, and I said hurriedly to Jenkins:

“I am going to call your friends to come near this end of the house where you can talk with them. Say what I have told you, and when they agree to hold off for a spell we will consider your proposition.”

“I will tell them,” he replied quietly; “but the other way is easiest for all concerned.”

Then I ran up the ladder, quickly told my comrades what I would do, and as neither made protest, shouted loudly through the aperture in the roof, taking good care however not to show myself:

“Jenkins, whom you well know is here, would

“speak with you. Step to the end of the house where you tried to build the last fire, and he can hear what is said.”

“Is this some trick?” a voice from the outside cried sharply, and I replied:

“How can it be? You have the same chance to shoot that we have. I pledge my word, and so do my comrades, that no shot shall be fired until two minutes after we gave fair warning.”

“I’ll risk it, if no one else will,” the same voice said. “It wouldn’t pay the Yankee to play false now.”

“We will keep our word,” I shouted, and then called down the ladder to Jenkins, “Your friends are coming, and you may say what you please, so no information is given regarding our force or means of defense.”

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ESCAPE.

CAPTAIN SAM appeared well pleased with my plan of allowing Jenkins to make threats in our name; but Ezra was plainly dissatisfied.

He made no protest, it is true; yet I could read on his face that he was not pleased, and before the conversation below was begun I asked him plainly:

“What is the matter, Ezra? Surely you are not anxious to give up our prisoners after we have held them thus long?”

“I can't well explain to you, David, why I believe we should make the most of our time in coming to some bargain with those fellows. As you know, we already have their secret, and I do not think it will ever be possible for us to deliver them up to our army. We can well fancy the British will not cease their efforts now they have begun, and we have no warrant our commander will do other than show the white feather.”

“How can he, now that we are cornered?” I interrupted.

“By surrendering his army, and I would not be surprised if that was almost his first act on the morrow.”

This seemed to me ridiculous, and I laughed.

It would have been more seemly had I waited a few hours, for then was it shown what a coward could do.

However, I did not continue the conversation, for at this moment we heard a voice from the outside, crying:

“Are you there, Jenkins?”

“Yes.”

“Well and hearty?”

“I’ve lost one leg, as perhaps you know, otherwise there is nothing to complain of. These lads who hold us prisoners have orders to kill rather than allow us to be taken, and I am asked to tell you that they will shoot Reynolds if you make another attempt to burn the house.”

“Then he *is* with you?”

“Yes, so much as may be while the coward is nearly out of his head with fright.”

“It’s a lie!” Reynolds snarled. “I’m no more afraid than any other man in my place would be.

These cubs of boys have stolen all my papers, an' I'm like to be hanged if you don't help me out."

"And according to what Jenkins says, you are like to be shot if we make any move," the man on the outside said with a laugh. "Well, don't fret yourself; the boys must give you up precious soon, for I promise that within the next eight and forty hours, if not before, Detroit will be in our hands."

"And they have orders to kill us rather than risk our being taken from them!"

There was a brief time of silence, and Ezra whispered pleadingly:

"I truly believe all that man has said in regard to the town. I am not a coward, as you well know, David, yet I would bargain with these men while it is possible."

Then the man on the outside spoke.

"We are willing to do whatever you may say, Jenkins. Shall we stop our work here, and wait until the town has been taken?"

"You think there is no doubt but that it will fall into our hands?"

"Knowing all, you should be as certain of it as I am."

"Our lives are in danger every moment we stay here!" Reynolds wailed.

“Now is our time, David,” Ezra whispered.

I had never seen the lad so moved as at this moment, and would have given up everything I held of value, rather than stood out against his will longer.

“As you may please,” I replied, and then the conversation from below was continued.

“There is hope we can make a bargain,” Jenkins said. “If I give my word that you will hold faithfully to an agreement, shall it be kept?”

“You well know it will, as truly as if we had sworn it.”

Running down the ladder I cried:

“Should we deliver up the prisoners at this moment would you agree to molest us no further?” I asked.

“Jenkins can answer that,” the man on the outside replied. “We will stand by his word.”

“Are you minded to set me free?” the spy asked quickly.

“If we may be assured it can be done with safety to ourselves,” I said, and a deep groan came from Captain Sam.

“I pledge you my word, and agree to remain here so long as you may say, if in return you promise to see me safely out of the town at the end of four and twenty hours.”

“How may that be? We cannot carry you past the sentinels.”

“And you will not believe in my promises?”

I waited for Ezra to answer, and the man on the outside said:

“Let me give you a piece of news which I swear to be true: Since sunset this night Tecumseh, followed by six hundred savages, landed without show of molestation from your forces, and are now in the rear of the town ready for the signal to begin an attack. Your commander is a coward who will not fight. You had better close the bargain.”

“I am willing,” Ezra said from above, and Captain Sam groaned once more, hearing which I asked:

“Do you hold out against our making these terms for ourselves, Captain Sam?”

The old sailor remained silent, and I understood he did not dare make opposition.

Then came the question as to how the matter might be arranged, for it had a look of danger to us, and Jenkins proposed that two of his comrades, unarmed, should be allowed to come in and carry him out.

At this point Reynolds raised a howl.

“You have made no bargain for my papers! Of course they must be returned!”

“Then the matter may be ended here,” I said de-

cidedly. "This man is a traitor; we have the proofs of his guilt and shall hold on to them whatever the cost to ourselves."

"The documents are no concern of ours," Jenkins said carelessly. "I am only bargaining for myself, and if he chooses to stay here for the sake of the papers he was so foolish as to carry on his person, let him do so."

"You shan't leave me behind!" Reynolds shrieked.

"Then hold your tongue, and be thankful for escaping the halter. That's what you deserve, even though you have been doing our dirty work."

From that instant the traitor was silenced, nor did we hear him speak again.

Ezra and Captain Sam came down the ladder; it was agreed that two unarmed men should be admitted, and I lighted a candle while my comrade opened the door.

My heart was in my throat when the enemy entered, and I took good care to have a rifle near at hand; but the visitors were intent only on their own business, and gave little heed to us.

They went straight to where Jenkins was lying and spoke to him in a whisper, after which his bonds were cut.

Then the strangers turned toward us, and one of them said in a friendly tone:

“ You need have no fear but that we will hold to our part of the bargain, and I am going to do more—give a piece of advice you will do well to follow: If you know the ways of the forest, lose no time in taking to it; do not put your trust in such a commander as heads the American army here.”

Having said this the men, after releasing Reynolds from his bonds, raised Jenkins in their arms, and the four went out, the traitor running ahead as if afraid of being left behind.

I shut and barred the door hardly conscious of what I did, so strange was it all.

Captain Sam began to fill his pipe, and Ezra spoke:

“ Those prisoners belonged to us, and we had the right to use them for the bettering of our own condition. If General Hull defends this town like a soldier, then I will say I have made a mistake, no matter what may be the outcome; but if he acts as he has from the day we arrived at the river, we were warranted in what has been done this night.”

I made no reply, but clambered up the ladder and stood looking through the aperture in the roof, sore at heart.

The day was breaking.

Through the dim, gray light I could make out the battery on the opposite shore, and even as I gazed a flash of light sprang up, the thunder of a heavy gun shook the earth, and a screaming shell passed over my head.

Ezra and Captain Sam, startled by the renewal of the bombardment, joined me, and during that forenoon we watched the disgraceful scene before us.

The stockade, the encampment, the forces in the upper part of the town and at the gates, were all in full view.

We saw the British troops cross the river and march toward the town, while yet no effort was made to check them.

An hundred men with two cannon might have wrought havoc among the boats loaded with troops, and yet our forces remained behind the palisades.

Then, suddenly, when they should have been standing to their guns, we saw officers ride out of the fort to this point and that, and in a twinkling all our soldiers marched in.

“The general has ordered them in for exercise,” Captain Sam said grimly, and Ezra added:

“He has no stomach for fighting. With so many inside the stockade they must tread on each other’s

heels. Detroit will be in the hands of the British before sunset."

I said not a word.

It was plain to me, although I knew nothing whatever of warfare, that this last movement had been ordered by a coward who was panic-stricken, and in my mind was the thought of Ezra's wisdom.

Had we delayed making terms with our prisoners until this moment, a bargain would no longer be possible.

I remembered Captain Sam's boat, and rejoiced that the old sailor had not been prevented from making ready a way of escape.

We would seek her, and if taken, should not be in the company of a coward and traitors.

The bombardment was continued vigorously; but the British were not yet come up to the town when Captain Sam shrieked as he pointed toward the fort:

"The villain! He should be hanged for that!"

Then it was I saw a white flag floating over the fort, and as if this was not proof enough of cowardice, a second was waved above the stockade.

"He has surrendered, and without firing a single shot!" Ezra cried.

Now was come the time when we must make good

use of our heels if we would avoid being made prisoners, and I cried nervously :

“ Can you find your craft, Captain Sam ? ”

“ Of course, lad ; but we’re needin’ more provisions.”

“ We will take as much as may be carried with safety, and start at once. It should require some time to arrange a surrender, and before it has been done we must be afloat, or make up our minds to see the inside of a British prison ! ”

As I had said, so we did, and fortune favored us.

Loaded down with such things as might be most necessary, we left the house and made our way to the river without attracting attention from the townspeople who had come out from their places of shelter to see the wind-up of a coward’s campaign.

The little craft was hidden under the bushes hardly more than a quarter of a mile above the town, and we remained in her, securely hidden from view of any who might pass on the river, until night had come, when we started on the long voyage which was to end at Sackett’s Harbor.

What befell us on that journey may not be set down here ; but in due season I shall continue to do as Ezra desires, and then to it will be added more

regarding the part we comrades took in the war of 1812.

It is enough now if I say that we did make the voyage in safety, thanks to Captain Sam's seamanship, and once with Uncle Christopher, discovered that it was his desire we should do our small share in setting the United States in her proper position among the nations of the world.

APPENDIX.

GENERAL HULL retired to his farm at Newton, Massachusetts, from which he was summoned to appear before a court-martial at Philadelphia on the 25th of February, 1813, of which General Wade Hampton was appointed president. The members appointed consisted of three brigadier-generals, nine colonels, and three lieutenant-colonels; and the eminent A. J. Dallas, of Pennsylvania, was judge advocate. This court was dissolved by the President without giving a reason for the act; and, almost a year afterward, Hull was summoned to appear before another, to convene at Albany, New York. It met on the 3d of January, 1814. General Dearborn was the president, and he was assisted by three brigadier-generals, four colonels, and five lieutenant-colonels. Again Mr. Dallas was judge advocate. As Hull blamed Dearborn for his negligence, and as his own acquittal would condemn that officer, he might very properly have objected to the

appointed president of the court; but he was anxious for a trial, and he waived all feeling. He was charged with treason, cowardice, and neglect of duty and unofficer-like conduct from the 9th of April to the 16th of August, 1812. General Hull objected to the jurisdiction of the court on the first charge—*treason*— as a matter of civil cognizance only. The court concurred in this view, and he was tried only on the other charges. After a session of eighty days, the court decided that he was not guilty of treason, but found him guilty of the second and third charges, namely, cowardice, and neglect of duty and unofficer-like conduct. He was sentenced to be shot dead, and his name to be struck from the rolls of the army. The court strongly recommended him to the mercy of the President, on account of his age and his revolutionary services. Mr. Madison pardoned him, and he retired to his farm, to live in comparative obscurity, under a cloud of almost universal reproach, for about twelve years.—LOSSING'S "War of 1812."

THE END.



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