

Wacousta : a tale of the Pontiac conspiracy — Volume 1 eBook

Wacousta : a tale of the Pontiac conspiracy — Volume 1 by John Richardson (author)

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Title: Wacousta (Volume I) or The Prophecy

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Wacousta;
or,
the prophecy.

Volume One of Three

Preface

It is well known to every man conversant with the earlier history of this country that, shortly subsequent to the cession of the Canadas to England by France, Pontecac, the great head of the Indian race of that period, had formed a federation of the various tribes, threatening extermination to the British posts established along the Western frontier. These were nine in number, and the following stratagem was resorted to by the artful chief to effect their reduction. Investing one fort with his warriors, so as to cut off

all communication with the others, and to leave no hope of succor, his practice was to offer terms of surrender, which never were kept in the honorable spirit in which the far more noble and generous Tecumseh always acted with his enemies, and thus, in turn, seven of these outposts fell victims to their confidence in his truth.

Detroit and Michilimaclcinac, or Mackinaw as it is now called, remained, and all the ingenuity of the chieftain was directed to the possession of these strongholds. The following plan, well worthy of his invention, was at length determined upon. During a temporary truce, and while Pontecac was holding forth proposals for an ultimate and durable peace, a game of lacrosse was arranged by him to take place simultaneously on the common or clearing on which rested the forts of Michilimackinac and Detroit. The better to accomplish their object, the guns of the warriors had been cut short and given to their

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women, who were instructed to conceal them under their blankets, and during the game, and seemingly without design, to approach the drawbridge of the fort. This precaution taken, the players were to approach and throw over their ball, permission to regain which they presumed would not be denied. On approaching the drawbridge they were with fierce yells to make a general rush, and, securing the arms concealed by the women, to massacre the unprepared garrison.

The day was fixed; the game commenced, and was proceeded with in the manner previously arranged. The ball was dexterously hurled into the fort, and permission asked to recover it. It was granted. The drawbridge was lowered, and the Indians dashed forward for the accomplishment of their work of blood. How different the results in the two garrisons! At Detroit, Pontecac and his warriors had scarcely crossed the drawbridge when, to their astonishment and disappointment, they beheld the guns of the ramparts depressed—the artillerymen with lighted matches at their posts and covering the little garrison, composed of a few companies of the 42nd Highlanders, who were also under arms, and so distributed as to take the enemy most at an advantage. Suddenly they withdrew and without other indication of their purpose than what had been expressed in their manner, and carried off the missing ball. Their design had been discovered and made known by means of significant warnings to the Governor by an Indian woman who owed a debt of gratitude to his family, and was resolved, at all hazards, to save them.

On the same day the same artifice was resorted to at Michilimackinac, and with the most complete success. There was no guardian angel there to warn them of danger, and all fell beneath the rifle, the tomahawk, the war-club, and the knife, one or two of the traders—a Mr. Henry among the rest—alone excepted.

It was not long after this event when the head of the military authorities in the Colony, apprised of the fate of these captured posts, and made acquainted with the perilous condition of Fort Detroit, which was then reduced to the last extremity, sought an officer who would volunteer the charge of supplies from Albany to Buffalo, and thence across the lake to Detroit, which, if possible, he was to relieve. That volunteer was promptly found in my maternal grandfather, Mr. Erskine, from Strabane, in the North of Ireland, then an officer in the Commissariat Department. The difficulty of the undertaking will be obvious to those who understand the danger attending a journey through the Western wilderness, beset as it was by the warriors of Pontecac, ever on the lookout to prevent succor to the garrison, and yet the duty was successfully accomplished. He left Albany with provisions and ammunition sufficient to fill several Schenectady boats—I think seven—and yet conducted his charge with such prudence and foresight, that notwithstanding the vigilance of Pontecac, he finally and after long

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watching succeeded, under cover of a dark and stormy night, in throwing into the fort. the supplies of which the remnant of the gallant "Black Watch," as the 42nd was originally named, and a company of whom, while out reconnoitering, had been massacred at a spot in the vicinity of the town, thereafter called the Bloody Run, stood so greatly in need. This important service rendered, Mr. Erskine, in compliance with the instructions he had received, returned to Albany, where he reported the success of the expedition.

The colonial authorities were not regardless of his interests. When the Pontecac confederacy had been dissolved, and quiet and security restored in that remote region, large tracts of land were granted to Mr. Erskine, and other privileges accorded which eventually gave him the command of nearly a hundred thousand dollars—enormous sum to have been realized at that early period of the country. But it was not destined that he should retain this. The great bulk of his capital was expended on almost the first commercial shipping that ever skimmed the surface of Lakes Huron and Erie. Shortly prior to the Revolution, he was possessed of seven vessels of different tonnage, and the trade in which he had embarked, and of which he was the head, was rapidly increasing his already large fortune, when one of those autumnal hurricanes, which even to this day continue to desolate the waters of the treacherous lake last named, suddenly arose and buried beneath its engulfing waves not less than six of these schooners laden with such riches, chiefly furs, of the West as then were most an object of barter.

Mr. Erskine, who had married the daughter of one of the earliest settlers from France, and of a family well known in history, a lady who had been in Detroit during the siege of the British garrison by Pontecac, now abandoned speculation, and contenting himself with the remnant of his fortune, established himself near the banks of the river, within a short distance of the Bloody Run. Here he continued throughout the Revolution. Early, however, in the present century, he quitted Detroit and repaired to the Canadian shore, where on a property nearly opposite, which he obtained in exchange, and which in honor of his native country he named Strabane—known as such to this day—he passed the autumn of his days. The last time I beheld him was a day or two subsequent to the affair of the Thames, when General Harrison and Colonel Johnson were temporary inmates of his dwelling.

My father, of a younger branch of the Annandale family, the head of which was attainted in the Scottish rebellion of 1745, was an officer of Simcoe's well-known Rangers, in which regiment, and about the same period, the present Lord Hardinge commenced his services in this country. Being quartered at Fort Erie, he met and married at the house of one of the earliest Canadian merchants a daughter of Mr. Erskine, then on a visit to her sister, and by her had eight children,

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of whom I am the oldest and only survivor. Having a few years after his marriage been ordered to St. Joseph's, near Michilimackinac, my father thought it expedient to leave me with Mr. Erskine at Detroit, where I received the first rudiments of my education. But here I did not remain long, for it was during the period of the stay of the detachment of Simcoe's Rangers at St. Joseph that Mr. Erskine repaired with his family to the Canadian shore, where on the more elevated and conspicuous part of his grounds which are situated nearly opposite the foot of Hog Island, so repeatedly alluded to in "Wacousta," he had caused a flag-staff to be erected, from which each Sabbath day proudly floated the colors under which he had served, and which he never could bring himself to disown.

It was at Strabane that the old lady, with whom I was a great favorite, used to enchain my young interest by detailing various facts connected with the siege she so well remembered, and infused into me a longing to grow up to manhood that I might write a book about it. The details of the Pontecac plan for the capture of the two forts were what she most enlarged upon, and although a long lapse of years of absence from the scene, and ten thousand incidents of a higher and more immediate importance might have been supposed to weaken the recollections of so early a period of life, the impression has ever vividly remained. Hence the first appearance of "Wacousta" in London in 1832, more than a quarter of a century later. The story is founded solely on the artifice of Pontecac to possess himself of those two last British forts. All else is imaginary.

It is not a little curious that I, only a few years subsequent to the narration by old Mrs. Erskine of the daring and cunning feats of Pontecac, and his vain attempt to secure the fort of Detroit, should myself have entered it in arms. But it was so. I had ever hated school with a most bitter hatred, and I gladly availed myself of an offer from General Brock to obtain for me a commission in the King's service. Meanwhile I did duty as a cadet with the gallant 41st regiment, to which the English edition of "Wacousta" was inscribed, and was one of the guard of honor who took possession of the fort. The duty of a sentinel over the British colors, which had just been hoisted was assigned to me, and I certainly felt not a little proud of the distinction.

Five times within half a century had the flag of that fortress been changed. First the lily of France, then the red cross of England, and next the stars and stripes of America had floated over its ramparts; and then again the red cross, and lastly the stars. On my return to this country a few years since, I visited those scenes of stirring excitement in which my boyhood had been passed, but I looked in vain for the ancient fortifications which had given a classical interest to that region. The unsparing hand of utilitarianism had passed over them, destroying almost

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every vestige of the past. Where had risen the only fortress in America at all worthy to give antiquity to the scene, streets had been laid out and made, and houses had been built, leaving not a trace of its existence save the well that formerly supplied the closely besieged garrison with water; and this, half imbedded in the herbage of an enclosure of a dwelling house of mean appearance, was rather to be guessed at than seen; while at the opposite extremity of the city, where had been conspicuous for years the Bloody Run, cultivation and improvement had nearly obliterated every trace of the past.

Two objections have been urged against “Wacousta” as a consistent tale—the one as involving an improbability, the other a geographical error. It has been assumed that the startling feat accomplished by that man of deep revenge, who is not alone in his bitter hatred and contempt for the base among those who, like spaniels, crawl and kiss the dust at the instigation of their superiors, and yet arrogate to themselves a claim to be considered gentlemen and men of honor and independence—it has, I repeat, been assumed that the feat attributed to him in connection with the flag-staff of the fort was impossible. No one who has ever seen these erections on the small forts of that day would pronounce the same criticism. Never very lofty, they were ascended at least one-third of their height by means of small projections nailed to them for footholds for the artillerymen, frequently compelled to clear the flag lines entangled at the truck; therefore a strong and active man, such as Wacousta is described to have been, might very well have been supposed, in his strong anxiety for revenge and escape with his victim, to have doubled his strength and activity on so important an occasion, rendering that easy of attainment by himself which an ordinary and unexcited man might deem impossible. I myself have knocked down a gate, almost without feeling the resistance, in order to escape the stilettos of assassins.

The second objection is to the narrowness attributed in the tale to the river St. Clair. This was done in the license usually accorded to a writer of fiction, in order to give greater effect to the scene represented as having occurred there, and, of course, in no way intended as a geographical description of the river, nor was it necessary. In the same spirit and for the same purpose it has been continued.

It will be seen that at the termination of the tragedy enacted at the bridge, by which the Bloody Run was in those days crossed, that the wretched wife of the condemned soldier pronounced a curse that could not, of course, well be fulfilled in the course of the tale. Some few years ago I published in Canada—I might as well have done so in Kamschatka—the continuation, which was to have been dedicated to the last King of England, but which, after the death of that monarch, was inscribed to Sir John Harvey, whose letter, as making honorable mention of a gallant and beloved brother, I feel it a duty to the memory of the latter to subjoin.

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Government house, Fredericton, N.B.,

Major Richardson, Montreal.

November 26th, 1839.

"Dear Sir;—I am favored with your very interesting communication of the 2nd instant, by which I learn that you are the brother of two youths whose gallantry and merits—and with regard to one of them, his sufferings—during the late war, excited my warmest admiration and sympathy. I beg you to believe that I am far from insensible to the affecting proofs which you have made known to me of this grateful recollection of any little service I may have had it in my power to render them; and I will add that the desire which I felt to serve the father will be found to extend itself to the son, if your nephew should ever find himself under circumstances to require from me any service which it may be within my power to render him." "With regard to your very flattering proposition to inscribe your present work to me, I can only say that, independent of the respect to which the author of so very charming a production as 'Wacousta' is entitled, the interesting facts and circumstances so unexpectedly brought to my knowledge and recollection would ensure a ready acquiescence on my part."

"I remain, dear sir your very faithful servant"

"(Signed) J. Harvey. "

The "Prophecy Fulfilled," which, however, has never been seen out of the small country in which it appeared—Detroit, perhaps, alone excepted—embraces and indeed is intimately connected with the Beauchamp tragedy, which took place at or near Weisiger's Hotel, in Frankfort, Kentucky, where I had been many years before confined as a prisoner of war. While connecting it with the "Prophecy Fulfilled," and making it subservient to the end I had in view, I had not read or even heard of the existence of a work of the same character, which had already appeared from the pen of an American author. Indeed, I have reason to believe that the "Prophecy Fulfilled," although not published until after a lapse of years, was the first written. No similarity of treatment of the subject exists between the two versions, and this, be it remembered, I remark without in the slightest degree impugning the merit of the production of my fellow-laborer in the same field.

The author.

New York City, January 1st, 1851.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

As we are about to introduce our readers to scenes with which the European is little familiarised, some few cursory remarks, illustrative of the general features of the country into which we have shifted our labours, may not be deemed misplaced at the opening of this volume.

Without entering into minute geographical detail, it may be necessary merely to point out the outline of such portions of the vast continent of America as still acknowledge allegiance to the English crown, in order that the reader, understanding the localities, may enter with deeper interest into the incidents of a tale connected with a ground hitherto untouched by the wand of the modern novelist.

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All who have ever taken the trouble to inform themselves of the features of a country so little interesting to the majority of Englishmen in their individual character must be aware,—and for the information of those who are not, we state,—that that portion of the northern continent of America which is known as the United States is divided from the Canadas by a continuous chain of lakes and rivers, commencing at the ocean into which they empty themselves, and extending in a north-western direction to the remotest parts of these wild regions, which have never yet been pressed by other footsteps than those of the native hunters of the soil. First we have the magnificent St. Lawrence, fed from the lesser and tributary streams, rolling her sweet and silver waters into the foggy seas of the Newfoundland.—But perhaps it will better tend to impress our readers with a panoramic picture of the country in which our scene of action is more immediately laid, by commencing at those extreme and remote points of our Canadian possessions to which their attention will be especially directed in the course of our narrative.

The most distant of the north-western settlements of America is Michilimackinac, a name given by the Indians, and preserved by the Americans, who possess the fort even to this hour. It is situated at the head of the Lakes Michigan and Huron, and adjacent to the Island of St. Joseph's, where, since the existence of the United States as an independent republic, an English garrison has been maintained, with a view of keeping the original fortress in check. From the lakes above mentioned we descend into the River Sinclair, which, in turn, disembogues itself into the lake of the same name. This again renders tribute to the Detroit, a broad majestic river, not less than a mile in breadth at its source, and progressively widening towards its mouth until it is finally lost in the beautiful Lake Erie, computed at about one hundred and sixty miles in circumference. From the embouchure of this latter lake commences the Chippawa, better known in Europe from the celebrity of its stupendous falls of Niagara, which form an impassable barrier to the seaman, and, for a short space, sever the otherwise uninterrupted chain connecting the remote fortresses we have described with the Atlantic. At a distance of a few miles from the falls, the Chippawa finally empties itself into the Ontario, the most splendid of the gorgeous American lakes, on the bright bosom of which, during the late war, frigates, seventy-fours, and even a ship of one hundred and twelve guns, manned by a crew of one thousand men, reflected the proud pennants of England! At the opposite extremity of this magnificent and sea-like lake, which is upwards of two hundred miles in circumference, the far-famed St. Lawrence takes her source; and after passing through a vast tract of country, whose elevated banks bear every trace of fertility and cultivation, connects itself with the Lake Champlain, celebrated, as well

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as Erie, for a signal defeat of our flotilla during the late contest with the Americans. Pushing her bold waters through this somewhat inferior lake, the St. Lawrence pursues her course seaward with impetuosity, until arrested near La Chine by rock-studded shallows, which produce those strong currents and eddies, the dangers of which are so beautifully expressed in the Canadian Boat Song,—a composition that has rendered the “rapids” almost as familiar to the imagination of the European as the falls of Niagara themselves. Beyond La Chine the St. Lawrence gradually unfolds herself into greater majesty and expanse, and rolling past the busy commercial town of Montreal, is once more increased in volume by the insignificant lake of St. Peter’s, nearly opposite to the settlement of Three Rivers, midway between Montreal and Quebec. From thence she pursues her course unfed, except by a few inferior streams, and gradually widens as she rolls past the capital of the Canadas, whose tall and precipitous battlements, bristled with cannon, and frowning defiance from the clouds in which they appear half imbedded, might be taken by the imaginative enthusiast for the strong tower of the Spirit of those stupendous scenes. From this point the St. Lawrence increases in expanse, until, at length, after traversing a country where the traces of civilisation become gradually less and less visible, she finally merges in the gulf, from the centre of which the shores on either hand are often invisible to the naked eye; and in this manner is it imperceptibly lost in that misty ocean, so dangerous to mariners from its deceptive and almost perpetual fogs.

In following the links of this extensive chain of lakes and rivers, it must be borne in recollection, that, proceeding seaward from Michilimackinac and its contiguous district, all that tract of country which lies to the right constitutes what is now known as the United States of America, and all on the left the two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, tributary to the English government, subject to the English laws, and garrisoned by English troops. The several forts and harbours established along the left bank of the St. Lawrence, and throughout that portion of our possessions which is known as Lower Canada, are necessarily, from the improved condition and more numerous population of that province, on a larger scale and of better appointment; but in Upper Canada, where the traces of civilisation are less evident throughout, and become gradually more faint as we advance westward, the fortresses and harbours bear the same proportion. In strength and extent to the scantiness of the population they are erected to protect. Even at the present day, along that line of remote country we have selected for the theatre of our labours, the garrisons are both few in number and weak in strength, and evidence of cultivation is seldom to be found at any distance in the interior; so that all beyond a certain extent of clearing, continued along the banks of the lakes and rivers, is thick, impervious, rayless forest, the limits of which have never yet been explored, perhaps, by the natives themselves.

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Such being the general features of the country even at the present day, it will readily be comprehended how much more wild and desolate was the character they exhibited as far back as the middle of the last century, about which period our story commences. At that epoch, it will be borne in mind, what we have described as being the United States were then the British colonies of America dependent on the mother-country; while the Canadas, on the contrary, were, or had very recently been, under the dominion of France, from whom they had been wrested after a long struggle, greatly advanced in favour of England by the glorious battle fought on the plains of Abraham, near Quebec, and celebrated for the defeat of Montcalm and the death of Wolfe.

The several attempts made to repossess themselves of the strong hold of Quebec having, in every instance, been met by discomfiture and disappointment, the French, in despair, relinquished the contest, and, by treaty, ceded their claims to the Canadas,—an event that was hastened by the capitulation of the garrison of Montreal, commanded by the Marquis de Vaudreuil, to the victorious arms of General Amherst. Still, though conquered as a people, many of the leading men in the country, actuated by that jealousy for which they were remarkable, contrived to oppose obstacles to the quiet possession of a conquest by those whom they seemed to look upon as their hereditary enemies; and in furtherance of this object, paid agents, men of artful and intriguing character, were dispersed among the numerous tribes of savages, with a view of exciting them to acts of hostility against their conquerors. The long and uninterrupted possession, by the French, of those countries immediately bordering on the hunting grounds and haunts of the natives, with whom they carried on an extensive traffic in furs, had established a communionship of interest between themselves and those savage and warlike people, which failed not to turn to account the vindictive views of the former. The whole of the province of Upper Canada at that time possessed but a scanty population, protected in its most flourishing and defensive points by stockade forts; the chief object of which was to secure the garrisons, consisting each of a few companies, from any sudden surprise on the part of the natives, who, although apparently inclining to acknowledge the change of neighbours, and professing amity, were, it was well known, too much in the interest of their old friends the French, and even the French Canadians themselves, not to be regarded with the most cautious distrust.

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These stockade forts were never, at any one period, nearer to each other than from one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles, so that, in the event of surprise or alarm, there was little prospect of obtaining assistance from without. Each garrison, therefore, was almost wholly dependent on its own resources; and, when surrounded unexpectedly by numerous bands of hostile Indians, had no other alternative than to hold out to the death. Capitulation was out of the question; for, although the wile and artifice of the natives might induce them to promise mercy, the moment their enemies were in their power promises and treaties were alike broken, and indiscriminate massacre ensued. Communication by water was, except during a period of profound peace, almost impracticable; for, although of late years the lakes of Canada have been covered with vessels of war, many of them, as we have already remarked, of vast magnitude, and been the theatres of conflicts that would not have disgraced the salt waters of ocean itself, at the period to which our story refers the flag of England was seen to wave only on the solitary mast of some ill-armed and ill-manned gunboat, employed rather for the purpose of conveying despatches from fort to fort, than with any serious view to acts either of aggression or defence.

In proportion as the colonies of America, now the United States, pushed their course of civilisation westward, in the same degree did the numerous tribes of Indians, who had hitherto dwelt more seaward, retire upon those of their own countrymen, who, buried in vast and impenetrable forests, had seldom yet seen the face of the European stranger; so that, in the end, all the more central parts of those stupendous wilds became doubly peopled. Hitherto, however, that civilisation had not been carried beyond the state of New York; and all those countries which have, since the American revolution, been added to the Union under the names of Kentucky, Ohio, Missouri, Michigan, &c., were, at the period embraced by our story, inhospitable and unproductive woods, subject only to the dominion of the native, and as yet unshorn by the axe of the cultivator. A few portions only of the opposite shores of Michigan were occupied by emigrants from the Canadas, who, finding no one to oppose or molest them, selected the most fertile spots along the banks of the river; and of the existence of these infant settlements, the English colonists, who had never ventured so far, were not even aware until after the conquest of Canada by the mother-country. This particular district was the centre around which the numerous warriors, who had been driven westward by the colonists, had finally assembled; and rude villages and encampments rose far and near for a circuit of many miles around this infant settlement and fort of the Canadians, to both of which they had given the name of Detroit, after the river on whose elevated banks they stood. Proceeding westward from this point, and along the tract of country that diverged from the banks of the Lakes Huron, Sinclair, and Michigan, all traces of that partial civilisation were again lost in impervious wilds, tenanted only by the fiercest of the Indian tribes, whose homes were principally along the banks of that greatest of American waters, the Lake Superior, and in the country surrounding the isolated fort of Michilimackinac, the last and most remote of the European fortresses in Canada.

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When at a later period the Canadas were ceded to us by France, those parts of the opposite frontier which we have just described became also tributary to the English crown, and were, by the peculiar difficulties that existed to communication with the more central and populous districts, rendered especially favourable to the exercise of hostile intrigue by the numerous active French emissaries every where dispersed among the Indian tribes. During the first few years of the conquest, the inhabitants of Canada, who were all either European French, or immediate descendants of that nation, were, as might naturally be expected, more than restive under their new governors, and many of the most impatient spirits of the country sought every opportunity of sowing the seeds of distrust and jealousy in the hearts of the natives. By these people it was artfully suggested to the Indians, that their new oppressors were of the race of those who had driven them from the sea, and were progressively advancing on their territories until scarce a hunting ground or a village would be left to them. They described them, moreover, as being the hereditary enemies of their great father, the King of France, with whose governors they had buried the hatchet for ever, and smoked the calumet of perpetual peace. Fired by these wily suggestions, the high and jealous spirit of the Indian chiefs took the alarm, and they beheld with impatience the “Red Coat,” or “Saganaw,” [Footnote: This word thus pronounced by themselves, in reference to the English soldiery, is, in all probability, derived from the original English settlers in Saganaw Bay.] usurping, as they deemed it, those possessions which had so recently acknowledged the supremacy of the pale flag of their ancient ally. The cause of the Indians, and that of the Canadians, became, in some degree, identified as one, and each felt it was the interest, and it may be said the natural instinct, of both, to hold communionship of purpose, and to indulge the same jealousies and fears. Such was the state of things in 1763, the period at which our story commences,—an epoch fruitful in designs of hostility and treachery on the part of the Indians, who, too crafty and too politic to manifest their feelings by overt acts declaratory of the hatred carefully instilled into their breasts, sought every opportunity to compass the destruction of the English, wherever they were most vulnerable to the effects of stratagem. Several inferior forts situated on the Ohio had already fallen into their hands, when they summoned all their address and cunning to accomplish the fall of the two important though remote posts of Detroit and Michilimackinac. For a length of time they were baffled by the activity and vigilance of the respective governors of these forts, who had had too much fatal experience in the fate of their companions not to be perpetually on the alert against their guile; but when they had at length, in some degree, succeeded in lulling the suspicions of the English, they determined on a scheme, suggested by a leading chief, a man of more than ordinary character, which promised fair to rid them altogether of a race they so cordially detested. We will not, however, mar the interest of our tale, by anticipating, at this early stage, either the nature or the success of a stratagem which forms the essential groundwork of our story.

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While giving, for the information of the many, what, we trust, will not be considered a too compendious outline of the Canadas, and the events connected with them, we are led to remark, that, powerful as was the feeling of hostility cherished by the French Canadians towards the English when the yoke of early conquest yet hung heavily on them, this feeling eventually died away under the mild influence of a government that preserved to them the exercise of all their customary privileges, and abolished all invidious distinctions between the descendants of France and those of the mother-country. So universally, too, has this system of conciliation been pursued, we believe we may with safety aver, of all the numerous colonies that have succumbed to the genius and power of England, there are none whose inhabitants entertain stronger feelings of attachment and loyalty to her than those of Canada; and whatever may be the transient differences,—differences growing entirely out of circumstances and interests of a local character, and in no way tending to impeach the acknowledged fidelity of the mass of French Canadians,—whatever, we repeat, may be the ephemeral differences that occasionally spring up between the governors of those provinces and individual members of the Houses of Assembly, they must, in no way, be construed into a general feeling of disaffection towards the English crown.

In proportion also as the Canadians have felt and acknowledged the beneficent effects arising from a change of rulers, so have the Indian tribes been gradually weaned from their first fierce principle of hostility, until they have subsequently become as much distinguished by their attachment to, as they were three quarters of a century ago remarkable for their untameable aversion for, every thing that bore the English name, or assumed the English character. Indeed, the hatred which they bore to the original colonists has been continued to their descendants, the subjects of the United States; and the same spirit of union subsisted between the natives and British troops, and people of Canada, during the late American war, that at an earlier period of the history of that country prevailed so powerfully to the disadvantage of England.

And now we have explained a course of events which were in some measure necessary to the full understanding of the country by the majority of our readers, we shall, in furtherance of the same object, proceed to sketch a few of the most prominent scenes more immediately before us.

The fort of Detroit, as it was originally constructed by the French, stands in the middle of a common, or description of small prairie, bounded by woods, which, though now partially thinned in their outskirts, were at that period untouched by the hand of civilisation. Erected at a distance of about half a mile from the banks of the river, which at that particular point are high and precipitous, it stood then just far enough from the woods that swept round it in a semicircular

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form to be secure from the rifle of the Indian; while from its batteries it commanded a range of country on every hand, which no enemy unsupported by cannon could traverse with impunity. Immediately in the rear, and on the skirt of the wood, the French had constructed a sort of bomb-proof, possibly intended to serve as a cover to the workmen originally employed in clearing the woods, but long since suffered to fall into decay. Without the fortification rose a strong and triple line of pickets, each of about two feet and a half in circumference, and so fitted into each other as to leave no other interstices than those which were perforated for the discharge of musketry. They were formed of the hardest and most knotted pines that could be procured; the sharp points of which were seasoned by fire until they acquired nearly the durability and consistency of iron. Beyond these firmly imbedded pickets was a ditch, encircling the fort, of about twenty feet in width, and of proportionate depth, the only communication over which to and from the garrison was by means of a drawbridge, protected by a strong chevaux-de-frise. The only gate with which the fortress was provided faced the river; on the more immediate banks of which, and to the left of the fort, rose the yet infant and straggling village that bore the name of both. Numerous farm-houses, however, almost joining each other, contributed to form a continuity of many miles along the borders of the river, both on the right and on the left; while the opposite shores of Canada, distinctly seen in the distance, presented, as far as the eye could reach, the same enlivening character of fertility. The banks, covered with verdure on either shore, were more or less undulating at intervals; but in general they were high without being abrupt, and picturesque without being bold, presenting, in their partial cultivation, a striking contrast to the dark, tall, and frowning forests bounding every point of the perspective.

At a distance of about five miles on the left of the town the course of the river was interrupted by a small and thickly wooded island, along whose sandy beach occasionally rose the low cabin or wigwam which the birch canoe, carefully upturned and left to dry upon the sands, attested to be the temporary habitation of the wandering Indian. That branch of the river which swept by the shores of Canada was (as at this day) the only navigable one for vessels of burden, while that on the opposite coast abounded in shallows and bars, affording passage merely to the light barks of the natives, which seemed literally to skim the very surface of its waves. Midway, between that point of the continent which immediately faced the eastern extremity of the island we have just named and the town of Detroit, flowed a small tributary river, the approaches to which, on either hand, were over a slightly sloping ground, the view of which could be entirely commanded from the fort. The depth of this river, now nearly dried up, at that

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period varied from three to ten or twelve feet; and over this, at a distance of about twenty yards from the Detroit, into which it emptied itself, rose, communicating with the high road, a bridge, which will more than once be noticed in the course of our tale. Even to the present hour it retains the name given to it during these disastrous times; and there are few modern Canadians, or even Americans, who traverse the “Bloody Bridge,” especially at the still hours of advanced night, without recalling to memory the tragic events of those days, (handed down as they have been by their fathers, who were eye-witnesses of the transaction,) and peopling the surrounding gloom with the shades of those whose life-blood erst crimsoned the once pure waters of that now nearly exhausted stream; and whose mangled and headless corpses were slowly borne by its tranquil current into the bosom of the parent river, where all traces of them finally disappeared.

These are the minuter features of the scene we have brought more immediately under the province of our pen. What Detroit was in 1763 it nearly is at the present day, with this difference, however, that many of those points which were then in a great degree isolated and rude are now redolent with the beneficent effects of improved cultivation; and in the immediate vicinity of that memorable bridge, where formerly stood merely the occasional encampment of the Indian warrior, are now to be seen flourishing farms and crops, and other marks of agricultural industry. Of the fort of Detroit itself we will give the following brief history:—It was, as we have already stated, erected by the French while in the occupancy of the country by which it is more immediately environed; subsequently, and at the final cession of the Canadas, it was delivered over to England, with whom it remained until the acknowledgement of the independence of the colonists by the mother-country, when it hoisted the colours of the republic; the British garrison marching out, and crossing over into Canada, followed by such of the loyalists as still retained their attachment to the English crown. At the commencement of the late war with America it was the first and more immediate theatre of conflict, and was remarkable, as well as Michilimackinac, for being one of the first posts of the Americans that fell into our hands. The gallant daring, and promptness of decision, for which the lamented general, Sir Isaac Brock, was so eminently distinguished, achieved the conquest almost as soon as the American declaration of war had been made known in Canada; and on this occasion we ourselves had the good fortune to be selected as part of the guard of honour, whose duty it was to lower the flag of America, and substitute that of England in its place. On the approach, however, of an overwhelming army of the enemy in the autumn of the ensuing year it was abandoned by our troops, after having been dismantled and reduced, in its more combustible parts, to ashes. The Americans, who have erected new fortifications on the site of the old, still retain possession of a post to which they attach considerable importance, from the circumstance of its being a key to the more western portions of the Union.

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CHAPTER II.

It was during the midnight watch, late in September, 1763, that the English garrison of Detroit, in North America, was thrown into the utmost consternation by the sudden and mysterious introduction of a stranger within its walls. The circumstance at this moment was particularly remarkable; for the period was so fearful and pregnant with events of danger, the fort being assailed on every side by a powerful and vindictive foe, that a caution and vigilance of no common kind were unceasingly exercised by the prudent governor for the safety of those committed to his charge. A long series of hostilities had been pursued by the North-American Indians against the subjects of England, within the few years that had succeeded to the final subjection of the Canadas to her victorious arms; and many and sanguinary were the conflicts in which the devoted soldiery were made to succumb to the cunning and numbers of their savage enemies. In those lone regions, both officers and men, in their respective ranks, were, by a communionship of suffering, isolation, and peculiarity of duty, drawn towards each other with feelings of almost fraternal affection; and the fates of those who fell were lamented with sincerity of soul, and avenged, when opportunity offered, with a determination prompted equally by indignation and despair. This sentiment of union, existing even between men and officers of different corps, was, with occasional exceptions, of course doubly strengthened among those who fought under the same colours, and acknowledged the same head; and, as it often happened in Canada, during this interesting period, that a single regiment was distributed into two or three fortresses, each so far removed from the other that communication could with the utmost facility be cut off, the anxiety and uncertainty of these detachments became proportioned to the danger with which they knew themselves to be more immediately beset. The garrison of Detroit, at the date above named, consisted of a third of the ——— regiment, the remainder of which occupied the forts of Michilimackinac and Niagara, and to each division of this regiment was attached an officer's command of artillery. It is true that no immediate overt act of hostility had for some time been perpetrated by the Indians, who were assembled in force around the former garrison; but the experienced officer to whom the command had been intrusted was too sensible of the craftiness of the surrounding hordes to be deceived, by any outward semblance of amity, into neglect of those measures of precaution which were so indispensable to the surety of his trust.

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In this he pursued a line of policy happily adapted to the delicate nature of his position. Unwilling to excite the anger or wound the pride of the chiefs, by any outward manifestation of distrust, he affected to confide in the sincerity of their professions, and, by inducing his officers to mix occasionally in their councils, and his men in the amusements of the inferior warriors, contrived to impress the conviction that he reposed altogether on their faith. But, although these acts were in some degree coerced by the necessity of the times, and a perfect knowledge of all the misery that must accrue to them in the event of their provoking the Indians into acts of open hostility, the prudent governor took such precautions as were deemed efficient to defeat any treacherous attempt at violation of the tacit treaty on the part of the natives. The officers never ventured out, unless escorted by a portion of their men, who, although appearing to be dispersed among the warriors, still kept sufficiently together to be enabled, in a moment of emergency, to afford succour not only to each other but to their superiors. On these occasions, as a further security against surprise, the troops left within were instructed to be in readiness, at a moment's warning, to render assistance, if necessary, to their companions, who seldom, on any occasion, ventured out of reach of the cannon of the fort, the gate of which was hermetically closed, while numerous supernumerary sentinels were posted along the ramparts, with a view to give the alarm if any thing extraordinary was observed to occur without.

Painful and harassing as were the precautions it was found necessary to adopt on these occasions, and little desirous as were the garrison to mingle with the natives on such terms, still the plan was pursued by the Governor from the policy already named: nay, it was absolutely essential to the future interests of England that the Indians should be won over by acts of confidence and kindness; and so little disposition had hitherto been manifested by the English to conciliate, that every thing was to be apprehended from the untameable rancour with which these people were but too well disposed to repay a neglect at once galling to their pride and injurious to their interests.

Such, for a term of many months, had been the trying and painful duty that had devolved on the governor of Detroit; when, in the summer of 1763, the whole of the western tribes of Indians, as if actuated by one common impulse, suddenly threw off the mask, and commenced a series of the most savage trespasses upon the English settlers in the vicinity of the several garrisons, who were cut off in detail, without mercy, and without reference to either age or sex. On the first alarm the weak bodies of troops, as a last measure of security, shut themselves up in their respective forts, where they were as incapable of rendering assistance to others as of receiving it themselves. In this

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emergency the prudence and forethought of the governor of Detroit were eminently conspicuous; for, having long foreseen the possibility of such a crisis, he had caused a plentiful supply of all that was necessary to the subsistence and defence of the garrison to be provided at an earlier period, so that, if foiled in their attempts at stratagem, there was little chance that the Indians would speedily reduce them by famine. To guard against the former, a vigilant watch was constantly kept by the garrison both day and night, while the sentinels, doubled in number, were constantly on the alert. Strict attention, moreover, was paid to such parts of the ramparts as were considered most assailable by a cunning and midnight enemy; and, in order to prevent any imprudence on the part of the garrison, all egress or ingress was prohibited that had not the immediate sanction of the chief. With this view the keys of the gate were given in trust to the officer of the guard; to whom, however, it was interdicted to use them unless by direct and positive order of the Governor. In addition to this precaution, the sentinels on duty at the gate had strict private instructions not to suffer any one to pass either in or out unless conducted by the governor in person; and this restriction extended even to the officer of the guard.

Such being the cautious discipline established in the fort, the appearance of a stranger within its walls at the still hour of midnight could not fail to be regarded as an extraordinary event, and to excite an apprehension which could scarcely have been surpassed had a numerous and armed band of savages suddenly appeared among them. The first intimation of this fact was given by the violent ringing of an alarm bell; a rope communicating with which was suspended in the Governor's apartments, for the purpose of arousing the slumbering soldiers in any case of pressing emergency. Soon afterwards the Governor himself was seen to issue from his rooms into the open area of the parade, clad in his dressing-gown, and bearing a lamp in one hand and a naked sword in the other. His countenance was pale; and his features, violently agitated, betrayed a source of alarm which those who were familiar with his usual haughtiness of manner were ill able to comprehend.

"Which way did he go?—why stand ye here?—follow—pursue him quickly—let him not escape, on your lives!"

These sentences, hurriedly and impatiently uttered, were addressed to the two sentinels who, stationed in front of his apartments, had, on the first sound of alarm from the portentous bell, lowered their muskets to the charge, and now stood immovable in that position.

"Who does your honour mane?" replied one of the men, startled, yet bringing his arms to the recover, in salutation of his chief.

"Why, the man—the stranger—the fellow who has just passed you."

“Not a living soul has passed us since our watch commenced, your honour,” observed the second sentinel; “and we have now been here upwards of an hour.”

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“Impossible, sirs: ye have been asleep on your posts, or ye must have seen him. He passed this way, and could not have escaped your observation had ye been attentive to your duty.”

“Well, sure, and your honour knows bist,” rejoined the first sentinel; “but so hilp me St. Patrick, as I have sirved man and boy in your honour’s rigimint this twelve years, not even the fitch of a man has passed me this blissed night. And here’s my comrade, Jack Halford, who will take his Bible oath to the same, with all due difirince to your honour.”

The pithy reply to this eloquent attempt at exculpation was a brief “Silence, sirrah, walk about!”

The men brought their muskets once more, and in silence, to the shoulder, and, in obedience to the command of their chief, resumed the limited walk allotted to them; crossing each other at regular intervals in the semicircular course that enfiladed, as it were, the only entrance to the Governor’s apartments.

Meanwhile every thing was bustle and commotion among the garrison, who, roused from sleep by the appalling sound of the alarm bell at that late hour, were hastily arming. Throughout the obscurity might be seen the flitting forms of men, whose already fully accoutred persons proclaimed them to be of the guard; while in the lofty barracks, numerous lights flashing to and fro, and moving with rapidity, attested the alacrity with which the troops off duty were equipping themselves for some service of more than ordinary interest. So noiseless, too, was this preparation, as far as speech was concerned, that the occasional opening and shutting of pans, and ringing of ramrods to ascertain the efficiency of the muskets, might be heard distinctly in the stillness of the night at a distance of many furlongs.

He, however, who had touched the secret spring of all this picturesque movement, whatever might be his gratification and approval of the promptitude with which the summons to arms had been answered by his brave troops, was far from being wholly satisfied with the scene he had conjured up. Recovered from the first and irrepressible agitation which had driven him to sound the tocsin of alarm, he felt how derogatory to his military dignity and proverbial coolness of character it might be considered, to have awakened a whole garrison from their slumbers, when a few files of the guard would have answered his purpose equally well. Besides, so much time had been suffered to elapse, that the stranger might have escaped; and if so, how many might be disposed to ridicule his alarm, and consider it as emanating from an imagination disturbed by sleep, rather than caused by the actual presence of one endowed like themselves with the faculties of speech and motion. For a moment he hesitated whether he should not countermand the summons to arms which had been so precipitately given; but when he recollected the harrowing threat that had been breathed in his ear by his midnight visiter,—when

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he reflected, moreover, that even now it was probable he was lurking within the precincts of the fort with a view to the destruction of all that it contained,—when, in short, he thought of the imminent danger that must attend them should he be suffered to escape,—he felt the necessity of precaution, and determined on his measures, even at the risk of manifesting a prudence which might be construed unfavourably. On re-entering his apartments, he found his orderly, who, roused by the midnight tumult, stood waiting to receive the commands of his chief.

“Desire Major Blackwater to come to me immediately.”

The mandate was quickly obeyed. In a few seconds a short, thick-set, and elderly officer made his appearance in a grey military undress frock.

“Blackwater, we have traitors within the fort. Let diligent search be made in every part of the barracks for a stranger, an enemy, who has managed to procure admittance among us: let every nook and cranny, every empty cask, be examined forthwith; and cause a number of additional sentinels to be stationed along the ramparts, in order to intercept his escape.”

“Good Heaven, is it possible?” said the Major, wiping the perspiration from his brows, though the night was unusually chilly for the season of the year:—” how could he contrive to enter a place so vigilantly guarded?”

“Ask me not *how*, Blackwater,” returned the Governor seriously; “let it suffice that he has been in this very room, and that ten minutes since he stood where you now stand.”

The Major looked aghast.—“God bless me, how singular! How could the savage contrive to obtain admission? or was he in reality an Indian?”

“No more questions, *major* Blackwater. Hasten to distribute the men, and let diligent search be made every where; and recollect, neither officer nor man courts his pillow until dawn.”

The “Major” emphatically prefixed to his name was a sufficient hint to the stout officer that the doubts thus familiarly expressed were here to cease, and that he was now addressed in the language of authority by his superior, who expected a direct and prompt compliance with his orders. He therefore slightly touched his hat in salutation, and withdrew to make the dispositions that had been enjoined by his Colonel.

On regaining the parade, he caused the men, already forming into companies and answering to the roll-call of their respective non-commissioned officers, to be wheeled into square, and then in a low but distinct voice stated the cause of alarm; and, having communicated the orders of the Governor, finished by recommending to each the

exercise of the most scrutinising vigilance; as on the discovery of the individual in question, and the means by which he had contrived to procure admission, the safety of the whole garrison, it was evident, must depend.

The soldiers now dispersed in small parties throughout the interior of the fort, while a select body were conducted to the ramparts by the officers themselves, and distributed between the sentinels already posted there, in such numbers, and at such distances, that it appeared impossible any thing wearing the human form could pass them unperceived, even in the obscurity that reigned around.

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When this duty was accomplished, the officers proceeded to the posts of the several sentinels who had been planted since the last relief, to ascertain if any or either of them had observed aught to justify the belief that an enemy had succeeded in scaling the works. To all their enquiries, however, they received a negative reply, accompanied by a declaration, more or less positive with each, that such had been their vigilance during the watch, had any person come within their beat, detection must have been inevitable. The first question was put to the sentinel stationed at the gate of the fort, at which point the whole of the officers of the garrison were, with one or two exceptions, now assembled. The man at first evinced a good deal of confusion; but this might arise from the singular fact of the alarm that had been given, and the equally singular circumstance of his being thus closely interrogated by the collective body of his officers: he, however, persisted in declaring that he had been in no wise inattentive to his duty, and that no cause for alarm or suspicion had occurred near his post. The officers then, in order to save time, separated into two parties, pursuing opposite circuits, and arranging to meet at that point of the ramparts which was immediately in the rear, and overlooking the centre of the semicircular sweep of wild forest we have described as circumventing the fort.

"Well, Blessington, I know not what you think of this sort of work," observed Sir Everard Valletort, a young lieutenant of the —— regiment, recently arrived from England, and one of the party who now traversed the rampart to the right; "but confound me if I would not rather be a barber's apprentice in London, upon nothing, and find myself, than continue a life of this kind much longer. It positively quite knocks me up; for what with early risings, and watchings (I had almost added prayings), I am but the shadow of my former self."

"Hist, Valletort, hist! speak lower," said Captain Blessington, the senior officer present, "or our search must be in vain. Poor fellow!" he pursued, laughing low and good humouredly at the picture of miseries thus solemnly enumerated by his subaltern;—"how much, in truth, are you to be pitied, who have so recently basked in all the sunshine of enjoyment at home. For our parts, we have lived so long amid these savage scenes, that we have almost forgotten what luxury, or even comfort, means. Doubt not, my friend, that in time you will, like us, be reconciled to the change."

"Confound me for an idiot, then, if I give myself time," replied Sir Everard affectedly. "It was only five minutes before that cursed alarm bell was sounded in my ears, that I had made up my mind fully to resign or exchange the instant I could do so with credit to myself; and, I am sure, to be called out of a warm bed at this unseasonable hour offers little inducement for me to change my opinion."

"Resign or exchange with credit to yourself!" sullenly observed a stout tall officer of about fifty, whose spleen might well be accounted for in his rank of "Ensign" Delme. "Methinks there can be little credit in exchanging or resigning, when one's companions are left behind, and in a post of danger."

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"By Jasus, and ye may say that with your own pritty mouth," remarked another veteran, who answered to the name of Lieutenant Murphy; "for it isn't now, while we are surrounded and bedeviled by the savages, that any man of the —— rigimint should be after talking of bating a retrate."

"I scarcely understand you, gentlemen," warmly and quickly retorted Sir Everard, who, with all his dandyism and effeminacy of manner, was of a high and resolute spirit. "Do either of you fancy that I want courage to face a positive danger, because I may not happen to have any particular vulgar predilection for early rising?"

"Nonsense, Valletort, nonsense," interrupted, in accents of almost feminine sweetness, his friend Lieutenant Charles de Haldimar, the youngest son of the Governor: "Murphy is an eternal echo of the opinions of those who look forward to promotion; and as for Delme—do you not see the drift of his observation? Should you retire, as you have threatened, of course another lieutenant will be appointed in your stead; but, should you chance to lose your scalp during the struggle with the savages, the step goes in the regiment, and he, being the senior ensign, obtains promotion in consequence."

"Ah!" observed Captain Blessington, "this is indeed the greatest curse attached to the profession of a soldier. Even among those who most esteem, and are drawn towards each other as well by fellowship in pleasure as companionship in danger, this vile and debasing principle—this insatiable desire for personal advancement—is certain to intrude itself; since we feel that over the mangled bodies of our dearest friends and companions, we can alone hope to attain preferment and distinction."

A moment or two of silence ensued, in the course of which each individual appeared to be bringing home to his own heart the application of the remark just uttered; and which, however they might seek to disguise the truth from themselves, was too forcible to find contradiction from the secret monitor within. And yet of those assembled there was not one, perhaps, who would not, in the hour of glory and of danger, have generously interposed his own frame between that of his companion and the steel or bullet of an enemy. Such are the contradictory elements which compose a soldier's life.

This conversation, interrupted only by occasional questioning of the sentinels whom they passed in their circuit, was carried on in an audible whisper, which the close approximation of the parties to each other, and the profound stillness of the night, enabled them to hear with distinctness.

"Nay, nay, De Haldimar," at length observed Sir Everard, in reply to the observation of his friend, "do not imagine I intend to gratify Mr. Delme by any such exhibition as that of a scalpless head; but, if such be his hope, I trust that the hour which sees my love-locks dangling at the top of an Indian pole may also let daylight into his own carcass from a rifle bullet or a tomahawk."

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"And yit, Captin, it sames to me," observed Lieutenant Murphy, in allusion to the remark of Blessington rather than in reply to the last speaker,—“it sames to me, I say, that promotion in ony way is all fair and honourable in times of hardship like thase; and though we may drop a tare over our suparior when the luck of war, in the shape of a tommyhawk, knocks him over, still there can be no rason why we shouldn't stip into his shoes the viry nixt instant; and it's that, we all know, that we fight for. And the divil a bitter chance any man of us all has of promotion thin yoursilf, Captin: for it'll be mighty strange if our fat Major doesn't git riddlid like a cullinder through and through with the bullits from the Ingians' rifles before we have quite done with this business, and thin you will have the rigimintal majority, Captin; and it may be that one Liftinint Murphy, who is now the sanior of his rank, may come in for the vacant captincy.”

“And Delme for the lieutenancy,” said Charles de Haldimar significantly. “Well, Murphy, I am happy to find that you, at least, have hit on another than Sir Everard Valletort: one, in fact, who will render the promotion more general than it would otherwise have been. Seriously, I should be sorry if any thing happened to our worthy Major, who, with all his bustling and grotesque manner, is as good an officer and as brave a soldier as any his Majesty's army in Canada can boast. For my part, I say, perish all promotion for ever, if it is only to be obtained over the dead bodies of those with whom I have lived so long and shared so many dangers!”

“Nobly uttered, Charles,” said Captain Blessington: “the sentiment is, indeed, one well worthy of our present position; and God knows we are few enough in number already, without looking forward to each other's death as a means of our own more immediate personal advancement. With you, therefore, I repeat, perish all my hopes of promotion, if it is only to be obtained over the corpses of my companions! And let those who are most sanguine in their expectations beware lest they prove the first to be cut off, and that even before they have yet enjoyed the advantages of the promotion they so eagerly covet.”

This observation, uttered without acrimony, had yet enough of delicate reproach in it to satisfy Lieutenant Murphy that the speaker was far from approving the expression of such selfish anticipations at a moment like the present, when danger, in its most mysterious guise, lurked around, and threatened the safety of all most dear to them.

The conversation now dropped, and the party pursued their course in silence. They had just passed the last sentinel posted in their line of circuit, and were within a few yards of the immediate rear of the fortress, when a sharp “Hist!” and sudden halt of their leader, Captain Blessington, threw them all into an attitude of the most profound attention.

“Did you hear?” he asked in a subdued whisper, after a few seconds of silence, in which he had vainly sought to catch a repetition of the sound.

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"Assuredly," he pursued, finding that no one answered, "I distinctly heard a human groan."

"Where?—in what direction?" asked Sir Everard and De Haldimar in the same breath.

"Immediately opposite to us on the common. But see, here are the remainder of the party stationary, and listening also."

They now stole gently forward a few paces, and were soon at the side of their companions, all of whom were straining their necks and bending their heads in the attitude of men listening attentively.

"Have you heard any thing, Erskine?" asked Captain Blessington in the same low whisper, and addressing the officer who led the opposite party.

"Not a sound ourselves, but here is Sir Everard's black servant, Sambo, who has just riveted our attention, by declaring that he distinctly heard a groan towards the skirt of the common."

"He is right," hastily rejoined Blessington; "I heard it also."

Again a death-like silence ensued, during which the eyes of the party were strained eagerly in the direction of the common. The night was clear and starry, yet the dark shadow of the broad belt of forest threw all that part of the waste which came within its immediate range into impenetrable obscurity.

"Do you see any thing?" whispered Valletort to his friend, who stood next him: "look—look!" and he pointed with his finger.

"Nothing," returned De Haldimar, after an anxious gaze of a minute, "but that dilapidated old bomb-proof."

"See you not something dark, and slightly moving immediately in a line with the left angle of the bomb-proof?"

De Haldimar looked again.—"I do begin to fancy I see something," he replied; "but so confusedly and indistinctly, that I know not whether it be not merely an illusion of my imagination. Perhaps it is a stray Indian dog devouring the carcass of the wolf you shot yesterday."

"Be it dog or devil, here is for a trial of his vulnerability.—Sambo, quick, my rifle."

The young negro handed to his master one of those long heavy rifles, which the Indians usually make choice of for killing the buffalo, elk, and other animals whose wildness renders them difficult of approach. He then, unbidden, and as if tutored to the task,

placed himself in a stiff upright position in front of his master, with every nerve and muscle braced to the most inflexible steadiness. The young officer next threw the rifle on the right shoulder of the boy for a rest, and prepared to take his aim on the object that had first attracted his attention.

“Make haste, massa,—him go directly,—Sambo see him get up.”

All was breathless attention among the group of officers; and when the sharp ticking sound produced by the cocking of the rifle of their companion fell on their ears, they bent their gaze upon the point towards which the murderous weapon was levelled with the most aching and intense interest.

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“Quick, quick, massa,—him quite up,” again whispered the boy.

The words had scarcely passed his lips, when the crack of the rifle, followed by a bright blaze of light, sounded throughout the stillness of the night with exciting sharpness. For an instant all was hushed; but scarcely had the distant woods ceased to reverberate the spirit-stirring echoes, when the anxious group of officers were surprised and startled by a sudden flash, the report of a second rifle from the common, and the whizzing of a bullet past their ears. This was instantly succeeded by a fierce, wild, and prolonged cry, expressive at once of triumph and revenge. It was that peculiar cry which an Indian utters when the reeking scalp has been wrested from his murdered victim.

“Missed him, as I am a sinner,” exclaimed Sir Everard, springing to his feet, and knocking the butt of his rifle on the ground with a movement of impatience. “Sambo, you young scoundrel, it was all your fault,—you moved your shoulder as I pulled the trigger. Thank Heaven, however, the aim of the Indian appears to have been no better, although the sharp whistling of his ball proves his piece to have been well levelled for a random shot.”

“His aim has been too true,” faintly pronounced the voice of one somewhat in the rear of his companions. “The ball of the villain has found a lodgment in my breast. God bless ye all, my boys; may your fates be more lucky than mine!” While he yet spoke, Lieutenant Murphy sank into the arms of Blessington and De Haldimar, who had flown to him at the first intimation of his wound, and was in the next instant a corpse.

CHAPTER III.

“To your companies, gentlemen, to your companies on the instant. There is treason in the fort, and we had need of all our diligence and caution. Captain de Haldimar is missing, and the gate has been found unlocked. Quick, gentlemen, quick; even now the savages may be around us, though unseen.”

“Captain de Haldimar missing!—the gate unlocked!” exclaimed a number of voices. “Impossible!—surely we are not betrayed by our own men.”

“The sentinel has been relieved, and is now in irons,” resumed the communicator of this startling piece of intelligence. It was the adjutant of the regiment.

“Away, gentlemen, to your posts immediately,” said Captain Blessington, who, aided by De Haldimar, hastened to deposit the stiffening body of the unfortunate Murphy, which they still supported, upon the rampart. Then addressing the adjutant, “Mr. Lawson, let a couple of files be sent immediately to remove the body of their officer.”



“That shot which I heard from the common, as I approached, was not fired at random, then, I find,” observed the adjutant, as they all now hastily descended to join their men. —“Who has fallen?”

“Murphy, of the grenadiers,” was the reply of one near him.

“Poor fellow! our work commences badly,” resumed Mr. Lawson: “Murphy killed, and Captain de Haldimar missing. We had few officers enough to spare before, and their loss will be severely felt; I greatly fear, too, these casualties may have a tendency to discourage the men.”

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"Nothing more easy than to supply their place, by promoting some of our oldest sergeants," observed Ensign Delme, who, as well as the ill-fated Murphy, had risen from the ranks. "If they behave themselves well, the King will confirm their appointments."

"But my poor brother, what of him, Lawson? what have you learnt connected with his disappearance?" asked Charles de Haldimar with deep emotion.

"Nothing satisfactory, I am sorry to say," returned the adjutant; "in fact, the whole affair is a mystery which no one can unravel; even at this moment the sentinel, Frank Halloway, who is strongly suspected of being privy to his disappearance, is undergoing a private examination by your father the governor."

"Frank Halloway!" repeated the youth with a start of astonishment; "surely Halloway could never prove a traitor,—and especially to my brother, whose life he once saved at the peril of his own."

The officers had now gained the parade, when the "Fall in, gentlemen, fall in," quickly pronounced by Major Blackwater, prevented all further questioning on the part of the younger De Haldimar.

The scene, though circumscribed in limit, was picturesque in effect, and might have been happily illustrated by the pencil of the painter. The immediate area of the parade was filled with armed men, distributed into three divisions, and forming, with their respective ranks facing outwards, as many sides of a hollow square, the mode of defence invariably adopted by the Governor in all cases of sudden alarm. The vacant space, which communicated with the powder magazine, was left open to the movements of three three-pounders, which were to support each face in the event of its being broken by numbers. Close to these, and within the square, stood the number of gunners necessary to the duty of the field-pieces, each of which was commanded by a bombardier. At the foot of the ramparts, outside the square, and immediately opposite to their several embrasures, were stationed the gunners required for the batteries, under a non-commissioned officer also, and the whole under the direction of a superior officer of that arm, who now walked to and fro, conversing in a low voice with Major Blackwater. One gunner at each of these divisions of the artillery held in his hand a blazing torch, reflecting with picturesque yet gloomy effect the bright bayonets and equipment of the soldiers, and the anxious countenances of the women and invalids, who, bending eagerly through the windows of the surrounding barracks, appeared to await the issue of these preparations with an anxiety increased by the very consciousness of having no other parts than those of spectators to play in the scene that was momentarily expected.

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In a few minutes from the falling in of the officers with their respective companies, the clank of irons was heard in the direction of the guard-room, and several forms were seen slowly advancing into the area already occupied as we have described. This party was preceded by the Adjutant Lawson, who, advancing towards Major Blackwater, communicated a message, that was followed by the command of the latter officer for the three divisions to face inwards. The officer of artillery also gave the word to his men to form lines of single files immediately in the rear of their respective guns, leaving space enough for the entrance of the approaching party, which consisted of half a dozen files of the guard, under a non-commissioned officer, and one whose manacled limbs, rather than his unaccoutred uniform, attested him to be not merely a prisoner, but a prisoner confined for some serious and flagrant offence.

This party now advanced through the vacant quarter of the square, and took their stations immediately in the centre. Here the countenances of each, and particularly that of the prisoner, who was, if we may so term it, the centre of that centre, were thrown into strong relief by the bright glare of the torches as they were occasionally waved in air, to disencumber them of their dross, so that the features of the prisoner stood revealed to those around as plainly as if it had been noonday. Not a sound, not a murmur, escaped from the ranks: but, though the etiquette and strict laws of military discipline chained all speech, the workings of the inward mind remained unchecked; and as they recognised in the prisoner Frank Hallowsay, one of the bravest and boldest in the field, and, as all had hitherto imagined, one of the most devoted to his duty, an irrepressible thrill of amazement and dismay crept throughout the frames, and for a moment blanched the cheeks of those especially who belonged to the same company. On being summoned from their fruitless search after the stranger, to fall in without delay, it had been whispered among the men that treason had crept into the fort, and a traitor, partly detected in his crime, had been arrested and thrown into irons; but the idea of Frank Hallowsay being that traitor was the last that could have entered into their thoughts, and yet they now beheld him covered with every mark of ignominy, and about to answer his high offence, in all human probability, with his life.

With the officers the reputation of Hallowsay for courage and fidelity stood no less high; but, while they secretly lamented the circumstance of his defalcation, they could not disguise from themselves the almost certainty of his guilt, for each, as he now gazed upon the prisoner, recollected the confusion and hesitation of manner he had evinced when questioned by them preparatory to their ascending to the ramparts.

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Once more the suspense of the moment was interrupted by the entrance of other forms into the area. They were those of the Adjutant, followed by a drummer, bearing his instrument, and the Governor's orderly, charged with pens, ink, paper, and a book which, from its peculiar form and colour, every one present knew to be a copy of the Articles of War. A variety of contending emotions passed through the breasts of many, as they witnessed the silent progress of these preparations, rendered painfully interesting by the peculiarity of their position, and the wildness of the hour at which they thus found themselves assembled together. The prisoner himself was unmoved: he stood proud, calm, and fearless amid the guard, of whom he had so recently formed one; and though his countenance was pale, as much, perhaps, from a sense of the ignominious character in which he appeared as from more private considerations, still there was nothing to denote either the abjectness of fear or the consciousness of merited disgrace. Once or twice a low sobbing, that proceeded at intervals from one of the barrack windows, caught his ear, and he turned his glance in that direction with a restless anxiety, which he exerted himself in the instant afterwards to repress; but this was the only mark of emotion he betrayed.

The above dispositions having been hastily made, the adjutant and his assistants once more retired. After the lapse of a minute, a tall martial-looking man, habited in a blue military frock, and of handsome, though stern, haughty, and inflexible features, entered the area. He was followed by Major Blackwater, the captain of artillery, and Adjutant Lawson.

"Are the garrison all present, Mr. Lawson? are the officers all present? "

"All except those of the guard, sir," replied the Adjutant, touching his hat with a submission that was scrupulously exacted on all occasions of duty by his superior.

The Governor passed his hand for a moment over his brows. It seemed to those around him as if the mention of that guard had called up recollections which gave him pain; and it might be so, for his eldest son, Captain Frederick de Haldimar, had commanded the guard. Whither he had disappeared, or in what manner, no one knew.

"Are the artillery all present, Captain Wentworth?" again demanded the Governor, after a moment of silence, and in his wonted firm authoritative voice.

"All present, sir," rejoined the officer, following the example of the Adjutant, and saluting his chief.

"Then let a drum-head court-martial be assembled immediately, Mr. Lawson, and without reference to the roster let the senior officers be selected."

The Adjutant went round to the respective divisions, and in a low voice warned Captain Blessington, and the four senior subalterns, for that duty. One by one the officers, as



they were severally called upon, left their places in the square, and sheathing their swords, stepped into that part of the area appointed as their temporary court. They were now all assembled, and Captain Blessington, the senior of his rank in the garrison, was preparing to administer the customary oaths, when the prisoner Halloway advanced a pace or two in front of his escort, and removing his cap, in a clear, firm, but respectful voice, thus addressed the Governor:—

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“Colonel de Haldimar, that I am no traitor, as I have already told you, the Almighty God, before whom I swore allegiance to his Majesty, can bear me witness. Appearances, I own, are against me; but, so far from being a traitor, I would have shed my last drop of blood in defence of the garrison and your family.—Colonel de Haldimar,” he pursued, after a momentary pause, in which he seemed to be struggling to subdue the emotion which rose, despite of himself, to his throat, “I repeat, I am no traitor, and I scorn the imputation—but here is my best answer to the charge. This wound, (and he unbuttoned his jacket, opened his shirt, and disclosed a deep scar upon his white chest,) this wound I received in defence of my captain’s life at Quebec. Had I not loved him, I should not so have exposed myself, neither but for that should I now stand in the situation of shame and danger, in which my comrades behold me.”

Every heart was touched by this appeal—this bold and manly appeal to the consideration of the Governor. The officers, especially, who were fully conversant with the general merit of Halloway, were deeply affected, and Charles de Haldimar—the young, the generous, the feeling Charles de Haldimar,—even shed tears.

“What mean you, prisoner?” interrogated the Governor, after a short pause, during which he appeared to be weighing and deducing inferences from the expressions just uttered. “What mean you, by stating, but for that (alluding to your regard for Captain de Haldimar) you would not now be in this situation of shame and danger?”

The prisoner hesitated a moment; and then rejoined, but in a tone that had less of firmness in it than before,—“Colonel de Haldimar, I am not at liberty to state my meaning; for, though a private soldier, I respect my word, and have pledged myself to secrecy.”

“You respect your word, and have pledged yourself to secrecy! What mean you, man, by this rhodomontade? To whom can you have pledged yourself, and for what, unless it be to some secret enemy without the walls? Gentlemen, proceed to your duty: it is evident that the man is a traitor, even from his own admission.—On my life,” he pursued, more hurriedly, and speaking in an under tone, as if to himself, “the fellow has been bribed by, and is connected with—.” The name escaped not his lips; for, aware of the emotion he was betraying, he suddenly checked himself, and assumed his wonted stern and authoritative bearing.

Once more the prisoner addressed the Governor in the same clear firm voice in which he had opened his appeal.

“Colonel de Haldimar, I have no connection with any living soul without the fort; and again I repeat, I am no traitor, but a true and loyal British soldier, as my services in this war, and my comrades, can well attest. Still, I seek not to shun that death which I have braved a dozen times at least in the —— regiment. All that I ask is, that I may not be tried—that I may not have the shame of hearing sentence pronounced against me yet;



but if nothing should occur before eight o'clock to vindicate my character from this disgrace, I will offer up no further prayer for mercy. In the name of that life, therefore, which I once preserved to Captain de Haldimar, at the price of my own blood, I entreat a respite from trial until then."

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"In the name of God and all his angels, let mercy reach your soul, and grant his prayer!"

Every ear was startled—every heart touched by the plaintive, melancholy, silver tones of the voice that faintly pronounced the last appeal, and all recognised it for that of the young, interesting, and attached wife of the prisoner. Again the latter turned his gaze towards the window whence the sounds proceeded, and by the glare of the torches a tear was distinctly seen by many coursing down his manly cheek. The weakness was momentary. In the next instant he closed his shirt and coat, and resuming his cap, stepped back once more amid his guard, where he remained stationary, with the air of one who, having nothing further to hope, has resolved to endure the worst that can happen with resignation and fortitude.

After the lapse of a few moments, again devoted to much apparent deep thought and conjecture, the Governor once more, and rather hurriedly, resumed,—

"In the event, prisoner, of this delay in your trial being granted, will you pledge yourself to disclose the secret to which you have alluded? Recollect, there is nothing but that which can save your memory from being consigned to infamy for ever; for who, among your comrades, will believe the idle denial of your treachery, when there is the most direct proof against you? If your secret die with you, moreover, every honest man will consider it as having been one so infamous and injurious to your character, that you were ashamed to reveal it."

These suggestions of the Colonel were not without their effect; for, in the sudden swelling of the prisoner's chest, as allusion was made to the disgrace that would attach to his memory, there was evidence of a high and generous spirit, to whom obloquy was far more hateful than even death itself.

"I do promise," he at length replied, stepping forward, and uncovering himself as before,—"if no one appear to justify my conduct at the hour I have named, a full disclosure of all I know touching this affair shall be made. And may God, of his infinite mercy, grant, for Captain de Haldimar's sake, as well as mine, I may not then be wholly deserted!"

There was something so peculiarly solemn and impressive in the manner in which the unhappy man now expressed himself, that a feeling of the utmost awe crept into the bosoms of the surrounding throng; and more than one veteran of the grenadiers, the company to which Halloway belonged, was heard to relieve his chest of the long pent-up sigh that struggled for release.

"Enough, prisoner," rejoined the Governor; "on this condition do I grant your request; but recollect,—your disclosure ensures no hope of pardon, unless, indeed, you have the fullest proof to offer in your defence. Do you perfectly understand me? "

"I do," replied the soldier firmly; and again he placed his cap on his head, and retired a step or two back among the guard.

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“Mr. Lawson, let the prisoner be removed, and conducted to one of the private cells. Who is the subaltern of the guard?”

“Ensign Fortescue,” was the answer.

“Then let Ensign Fortescue keep the key of the cell himself. Tell him, moreover, I shall hold him individually responsible for his charge.”

Once more the prisoner was marched out of the area; and, as the clanking sound of his chains became gradually fainter in the distance, the same voice that had before interrupted the proceedings, pronounced a “God be praised!— God be praised!” with such melody of sorrow in its intonations that no one could listen to it unmoved. Both officers and men were more or less affected, and all hoped—they scarcely knew why or what—but all hoped something favourable would occur to save the life of the brave and unhappy Frank Halloway.

Of the first interruption by the wife of the prisoner the Governor had taken no notice; but on this repetition of the expression of her feelings he briefly summoned, in the absence of the Adjutant, the sergeant-major of the regiment to his side.

“Sergeant-major Bletson, I desire that, in future, on all occasions of this kind, the women of the regiment may be kept out of the way. Look to it, sir!”

The sergeant-major, who had stood erect as his own halbert, which he held before him in a saluting position, during this brief admonition of his colonel, acknowledged, by a certain air of deferential respect and dropping of the eyes, unaccompanied by speech of any kind, that he felt the reproof, and would, in future, take care to avoid all similar cause for complaint. He then stalked stiffly away, and resumed, in a few hasty strides, his position in rear of the troops.

“Hard-hearted man!” pursued the same voice: “if my prayers of gratitude to Heaven give offence, may the hour never come when my lips shall pronounce their bitterest curse upon your severity!”

There was something so painfully wild—so solemnly prophetic—in these sounds of sorrow as they fell faintly upon the ear, and especially under the extraordinary circumstances of the night, that they might have been taken for the warnings of some supernatural agency. During their utterance, not even the breathing of human life was to be heard in the ranks. In the next instant, however, Sergeant-major Bletson was seen repairing, with long and hasty strides, to the barrack whence the voice proceeded, and the interruption was heard no more.

Meanwhile the officers, who had been summoned from the ranks for the purpose of forming the court-martial, still lingered in the centre of the square, apparently waiting for



the order of their superior, before they should resume their respective stations. As the quick and comprehensive glance of Colonel de Haldimar now embraced the group, he at once became sensible of the absence of one of the seniors, all of whom he had desired should be selected for the court-martial.

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"Mr. Lawson," he remarked, somewhat sternly, as the Adjutant now returned from delivering over his prisoner to Ensign Fortescue, "I thought I understood from your report the officers were all present!"

"I believe, sir, my report will be found perfectly correct," returned the Adjutant, in a tone which, without being disrespectful, marked his offended sense of the implication.

"And Lieutenant Murphy—"

"Is here, sir," said the Adjutant, pointing to a couple of files of the guard, who were bearing a heavy burden, and following into the square. "Lieutenant Murphy," he pursued, "has been shot on the ramparts; and I have, as directed by Captain Blessington, caused the body to be brought here, that I may receive your orders respecting the interment." As he spoke, he removed a long military grey cloak, which completely enshrouded the corpse, and disclosed, by the light of the still brightly flaming torches of the gunners, the features of the unfortunate Murphy.

"How did he meet his death?" enquired the governor; without, however, manifesting the slightest surprise, or appearing at all moved at the discovery.

"By a rifle shot fired from the common, near the old bomb proof," observed Captain Blessington, as the adjutant looked to him for the particular explanation he could not render himself.

"Ah! this reminds me," pursued the austere commandant,— "there was a shot fired also from the ramparts. By whom, and at what?"

"By me, sir," said Lieutenant Valletort, coming forward from the ranks, "and at what I conceived to be an Indian, lurking as a spy upon the common."

"Then, Lieutenant Sir Everard Valletort, no repetition of these firings, if you please; and let it be borne in mind by all, that although, from the peculiar nature of the service in which we are engaged, I so far depart from the established regulations of the army as to permit my officers to arm themselves with rifles, they are to be used only as occasion may require in the hour of conflict, and not for the purpose of throwing a whole garrison into alarm by trials of skill and dexterity upon shadows at this unseasonable hour."

"I was not aware, sir," returned Sir Everard proudly, and secretly galled at being thus addressed before the men, "it could be deemed a military crime to destroy an enemy at whatever hour he might present himself, and especially on such an occasion as the present. As for my firing at a shadow, those who heard the yell that followed the second shot, can determine that it came from no shadow, but from a fierce and vindictive enemy. The cry denoted even something more than the ordinary defiance of an Indian: it seemed to express a fiendish sentiment of personal triumph and revenge."

The governor started involuntarily. “Do you imagine, Sir Everard Valletort, the aim of your rifle was true—that you hit him?”

This question was asked so hurriedly, and in a tone so different from that in which he had hitherto spoken, that the officers around simultaneously raised their eyes to those of their colonel with an expression of undissembled surprise. He observed it, and instantly resumed his habitual sternness of look and manner.

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"I rather fear not, sir," replied Sir Everard, who had principally remarked the emotion; "but may I hope (and this was said with emphasis), in the evident disappointment you experience at my want of success, my offence may be overlooked?"

The governor fixed his penetrating eyes on the speaker, as if he would have read his inmost mind; and then calmly, and even impressively, observed,—

"Sir Everard Valletort, I do overlook the offence, and hope you may as easily forgive yourself. It were well, however, that your indiscretion, which can only find its excuse in your being so young an officer, had not been altogether without some good result. Had you killed or disabled the—the savage, there might have been a decent palliative offered; but what must be your feelings, sir, when you reflect, the death of yon officer," and he pointed to the corpse of the unhappy Murphy, "is, in a great degree, attributable to yourself? Had you not provoked the anger of the savage, and given a direction to his aim by the impotent and wanton discharge of your own rifle, this accident would never have happened."

This severe reproving of an officer, who had acted from the most praiseworthy of motives, and who could not possibly have anticipated the unfortunate catastrophe that had occurred, was considered especially harsh and unkind by every one present; and a low and almost inaudible murmur passed through the company to which Sir Everard was attached. For a minute or two that officer also appeared deeply pained, not more from the reproof itself than from the new light in which the observation of his chief had taught him to view, for the first time, the causes that had led to the fall of Murphy. Finding, however, that the governor had no further remark to address to him, he once more returned to his station in the ranks.

"Mr. Lawson," resumed the commandant, turning to the adjutant, "let this victim be carried to the spot on which he fell, and there interred. I know no better grave for a soldier than beneath the sod that has been moistened with his blood. Recollect," he continued, as the adjutant once more led the party out of the area,— "no firing, Mr. Lawson. The duty must be silently performed, and without the risk of provoking a forest of arrows, or a shower of bullets from the savages. Major Blackwater," he pursued, as soon as the corpse had been removed, "let the men pile their arms even as they now stand, and remain ready to fall in at a minute's notice. Should any thing extraordinary happen before the morning, you will, of course, apprise me." He then strode out of the area with the same haughty and measured step that had characterised his entrance.

"Our colonel does not appear to be in one of his most amiable moods to-night," observed Captain Blessington, as the officers, after having disposed of their respective companies, now proceeded along the ramparts to assist at the last funeral offices of their unhappy associate. "He was disposed to be severe, and must have put you, in some measure, out of conceit with your favourite rifle, Valletort."

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"True," rejoined the Baronet, who had already rallied from the momentary depression of his spirits, "he hit me devilish hard, I confess, and was disposed to display more of the commanding officer than quite suits my ideas of the service. His words were as caustic as his looks; and could both have pierced me to the quick, there was no inclination on his part wanting. By my soul I could. ...but I forgive him. He is the father of my friend: and for that reason will I chew the cud of my mortification, nor suffer, if possible, a sense of his unkindness to rankle at my heart. At all events, Blessington, my mind is made up, and resign or exchange I certainly shall the instant I can find a decent loop-hole to creep out of."

Sir Everard fancied the ear of his captain was alone listening to these expressions of his feeling, or in all probability he would not have uttered them. As he concluded the last sentence, however, he felt his arm gently grasped by one who walked a pace or two silently in their rear. He turned, and recognised Charles de Haldimar.

"I am sure, Valletort, you will believe how much pained I have been at the severity of my father; but, indeed, there was nothing personally offensive intended. Blessington can tell you as well as myself it is his manner altogether. Nay, that although he is the first in seniority after Blackwater, the governor treats him with the same distance and hauteur he would use towards the youngest ensign in the service. Such are the effects of his long military habits, and his ideas of the absolutism of command. Am I not right, Blessington?"

"Quite right, Charles. Sir Everard may satisfy himself his is no solitary instance of the stern severity of your father. Still, I confess, notwithstanding the rigidity of manner which he seems, on all occasions, to think so indispensable to the maintenance of authority in a commanding officer, I never knew him so inclined to find fault as he is to-night."

"Perhaps," observed Valletort, good humouredly, "his conscience is rather restless; and he is willing to get rid of it and his spleen together. I would wager my rifle against the worthless scalp of the rascal I fired at to-night, that this same stranger, whose asserted appearance has called us from our comfortable beds, is but the creation of his disturbed dreams. Indeed, how is it possible any thing formed of flesh and blood could have escaped us with the vigilant watch that has been kept on the ramparts? The old gentleman certainly had that illusion strongly impressed on his mind when he so sapiently spoke of my firing at a shadow."

"But the gate," interrupted Charles de Haldimar, with something of mild reproach in his tones,—“you forget, Valletort, the gate was found unlocked, and that my brother is missing. *He*, at least, was flesh and blood, as you say, and yet he has disappeared. What more probable, therefore, than that this stranger is at once the cause and the agent of his abduction?"

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"Impossible, Charles," observed Captain Blessington; "Frederick was in the midst of his guard. How, therefore, could he be conveyed away without the alarm being given? Numbers only could have succeeded in so desperate an enterprise; and yet there is no evidence, or even suspicion, of more than one individual having been here."

"It is a singular affair altogether," returned Sir Everard, musingly. "Of two things, however, I am satisfied. The first is, that the stranger, whoever he may be, and if he really has been here, is no Indian; the second, that he is personally known to the governor, who has been, or I mistake much, more alarmed at his individual presence than if Pontecac and his whole band had suddenly broken in upon us. Did you remark his emotion, when I dwelt on the peculiar character of personal triumph and revenge which the cry of the lurking villain outside seemed to express? and did you notice the eagerness with which he enquired if I thought I had hit him? Depend upon it, there is more in all this than is dreamt of in our philosophy."

"And it was your undisguised perception of that emotion," remarked Captain Blessington, "that drew down his severity upon your own head. It was, however, too palpable not to be noticed by all; and I dare say conjecture is as busily and as vaguely at work among our companions as it is with us. The clue to the mystery, in a great degree, now dwells with Frank Halloway; and to him we must look for its elucidation. His disclosure will be one, I apprehend, full of ignominy to himself, but of the highest interest and importance to us all. And yet I know not how to believe the man the traitor he appears."

"Did you remark that last harrowing exclamation of his wife?" observed Charles de Haldimar, in a tone of unspeakable melancholy. "How fearfully prophetic it sounded in my ears. I know not how it is," he pursued, "but I wish I had not heard those sounds; for since that moment I have had a sad strange presentiment of evil at my heart. Heaven grant my poor brother may make his appearance, as I still trust he will, at the hour Halloway seems to expect, for if not, the latter most assuredly dies. I know my father well; and, if convicted by a court martial, no human power can alter the destiny that awaits Frank Halloway."

"Rally, my dear Charles, rally," said Sir Everard, affecting a confidence he did not feel himself; "indulge not in these idle and superstitious fancies. I pity Halloway from my soul, and feel the deepest interest in his pretty and unhappy wife; but that is no reason why one should attach importance to the incoherent expressions wrung from her in the agony of grief."

"It is kind of you, Valletort, to endeavour to cheer my spirits, when, if the truth were confessed, you acknowledge the influence of the same feelings. I thank you for the attempt, but time alone can show how far I shall have reason, or otherwise, to lament the occurrences of this night."

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They had now reached that part of the ramparts whence the shot from Sir Everard's rifle had been fired. Several men were occupied in digging a grave in the precise spot on which the unfortunate Murphy had stood when he received his death-wound; and into this, when completed, the body, enshrouded in the cloak already alluded to, was deposited by his companions.

CHAPTER IV.

While the adjutant was yet reading, in a low and solemn voice, the service for the dead, a fierce and distant yell, as if from a legion of devils, burst suddenly from the forest, and brought the hands of the startled officers instinctively to their swords. This appalling cry lasted, without interruption, for many minutes, and was then as abruptly checked as it had been unexpectedly delivered. A considerable pause succeeded, and then again it rose with even more startling vehemence than before. By one unaccustomed to those devilish sounds, no distinction could have been made in the two several yells that had been thus savagely pealed forth; but those to whom practice and long experience in the warlike habits and customs of the Indians had rendered their shouts familiar, at once divined, or fancied they divined, the cause. The first was, to their conception, a yell expressive at once of vengeance and disappointment in pursuit,—perhaps of some prisoner who had escaped from their toils; the second, of triumph and success,—in all probability, indicative of the recapture of that prisoner. For many minutes afterwards the officers continued to listen, with the most aching attention, for a repetition of the cry, or even fainter sounds, that might denote either a nearer approach to the fort, or the final departure of the Indians. After the second yell, however, the woods, in the heart of which it appeared to have been uttered, were buried in as profound a silence as if they had never yet echoed back the voice of man; and all at length became satisfied that the Indians, having accomplished some particular purpose, had retired once more to their distant encampments for the night. Captain Erskine was the first who broke the almost breathless silence that prevailed among themselves.

“On my life De Haldimar is a prisoner with the Indians. He has been attempting his escape,—has been detected,—followed, and again fallen into their hands. I know their infernal yells but too well. The last expressed their savage joy at the capture of a prisoner; and there is no one of us missing but De Haldimar.”

“Not a doubt of it,” said Captain Blessington; “the cry was certainly what you describe it, and Heaven only knows what will be the fate of our poor friend.”

No other officer spoke, for all were oppressed by the weight of their own feelings, and sought rather to give indulgence to speculation in secret, than to share their impressions with their companions. Charles de Haldimar stood a little in the rear, leaning his head upon his hand against the box of the sentry, (who was silently, though anxiously, pacing his walk,) and in an attitude expressive of the deepest dejection and sorrow.

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"I suppose I must finish Lawson's work, although I am but a poor hand at this sort of thing," resumed Captain Erskine, taking up the prayer book the adjutant had, in hastening on the first alarm to get the men under arms, carelessly thrown on the grave of the now unconscious Murphy.

He then commenced the service at the point where Mr. Lawson had so abruptly broken off, and went through the remainder of the prayers. A very few minutes sufficed for the performance of this solemn duty, which was effected by the faint dim light of the at length dawning day, and the men in attendance proceeded to fill up the grave of their officer.

Gradually the mists, that had fallen during the latter hours of the night, began to ascend from the common, and disperse themselves in air, conveying the appearance of a rolling sheet of vapour retiring back upon itself, and disclosing objects in succession, until the eye could embrace all that came within its extent of vision. As the officers yet lingered near the rude grave of their companion, watching with abstracted air the languid and almost mechanical action of their jaded men, as they emptied shovel after shovel of the damp earth over the body of its new tenant, they were suddenly startled by an expression of exultation from Sir Everard Valletort.

"By Jupiter, I have pinked him," he exclaimed triumphantly. "I knew my rifle could not err; and as for my sight, I have carried away too many prizes in target-shooting to have been deceived in that. How delighted the old governor will be, Charles, to hear this. No more lecturing, I am sure, for the next six months at least;" and the young officer rubbed his hands together, at the success of his shot, with as much satisfaction and unconcern for the future, as if he had been in his own native England; in the midst of a prize-ring.

Roused by the observation of his friend, De Haldimar quitted his position near the sentry box, and advanced to the outer edge of the rampart. To him, as to his companions, the outline of the old bomb proof was now distinctly visible, but it was sometime before they could discover, in the direction in which Valletort pointed, a dark speck upon the common; and this so indistinctly, they could scarcely distinguish it with the naked eye.

"Your sight is quite equal to your aim, Sir Everard," remarked Lieutenant Johnstone, one of Erskine's subalterns, "and both are decidedly superior to mine; yet I used to be thought a good rifleman too, and have credit for an eye no less keen than that of an Indian. You have the advantage of me, however; for I honestly admit I never could have picked off yon fellow in the dark as you have done."

As the dawn increased, the dark shadow of a human form, stretched at its length upon the ground, became perceptible; and the officers, with one unanimous voice, bore loud testimony to the skill and dexterity of him who had, under such extreme disadvantages, accomplished the death of their skulking enemy.

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"Bravo, Valletort," said Charles de Haldimar, recovering his spirits, as much from the idea, now occurring to him, that this might indeed be the stranger whose appearance had so greatly disturbed his father, as from the gratification he felt in the praises bestowed on his friend. "Bravo, my dear fellow;" then approaching, and in a half whisper, "when next I write to Clara, I shall request her, with my cousin's assistance, to prepare a chaplet of bays, wherewith I shall myself crown you as their proxy. But what is the matter now, Valletort? Why stand you there gazing upon the common, as if the victim of your murderous aim was rising from his bloody couch, to reproach you with his death? Tell me, shall I write to Clara for the prize, or will you receive it from her own hands?"

"Bid her rather pour her curses on my head; and to those, De Haldimar, add your own," exclaimed Sir Everard, at length raising himself from the statue-like position he had assumed. "Almighty God," he pursued, in the same tone of deep agony, "what have I done? Where, where shall I hide myself?"

As he spoke he turned away from his companions, and covering his eyes with his hand, with quick and unequal steps, even like those of a drunken man, walked, or rather ran, along the rampart, as if fearful of being overtaken.

The whole group of officers, and Charles de Haldimar in particular, were struck with dismay at the language and action of Sir Everard; and for a moment they fancied that fatigue, and watching, and excitement, had partially affected his brain. But when, after the lapse of a minute or two, they again looked out upon the common, the secret of his agitation was too faithfully and too painfully explained.

What had at first the dusky and dingy hue of a half-naked Indian, was now perceived, by the bright beams of light just gathering in the east, to be the gay and striking uniform of a British officer. Doubt as to who that officer was there could be none, for the white sword-belt suspended over the right shoulder, and thrown into strong relief by the field of scarlet on which it reposed, denoted the wearer of this distinguishing badge of duty to be one of the guard.

To comprehend effectually the feelings of the officers, it would be necessary that one should have been not merely a soldier, but a soldier under the same circumstances. Surrounded on every hand by a fierce and cruel enemy—prepared at every moment to witness scenes of barbarity and bloodshed in their most appalling shapes—isolated from all society beyond the gates of their own fortress, and by consequence reposing on and regarding each other as vital links in the chain of their wild and adventurous existence,—it can easily be understood with what sincere and unaffected grief they lamented the sudden cutting off even of those who least assimilated in spirit and character with themselves. Such, in a great degree, had been the case in the instance of the officer over whose

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grave they were now met to render the last offices of companionship, if not of friendship. Indeed Murphy—a rude, vulgar, and illiterate, though brave Irishman—having risen from the ranks, the coarseness of which he had never been able to shake off, was little calculated, either by habits or education, to awaken feelings, except of the most ordinary description, in his favour; and he and Ensign Delme were the only exceptions to those disinterested and tacit friendships that had grown up out of circumstances in common among the majority. If, therefore, they could regret the loss of such a companion as Murphy, how deep and heartfelt must have been the sorrow they experienced when they beheld the brave, generous, manly, amiable, and highly-talented Frederick de Haldimar—the pride of the garrison, and the idol of his family—lying extended, a cold, senseless corpse, slain by the hand of the bosom friend of his own brother!—Notwithstanding the stern severity and distance of the governor, whom few circumstances, however critical or exciting, could surprise into relaxation of his habitual stateliness, it would have been difficult to name two young men more universally liked and esteemed by their brother officers than were the De Haldimars—the first for the qualities already named—the second, for those retiring, mild, winning manners, and gentle affections, added to extreme and almost feminine beauty of countenance for which he was remarkable. Alas, what a gloomy picture was now exhibited to the minds of all!—Frederick de Haldimar a corpse, and slain by the hand of Sir Everard Valletort! What but disunion could follow this melancholy catastrophe? and how could Charles de Haldimar, even if his bland nature should survive the shock, ever bear to look again upon the man who had, however innocently or unintentionally, deprived him of a brother whom he adored?

These were the impressions that passed through the minds of the compassionating officers, as they directed their glance alternately from the common to the pale and marble-like features of the younger De Haldimar, who, with parted lips and stupid gaze, continued to fix his eyes upon the inanimate form of his ill-fated brother, as if the very faculty of life itself had been for a period suspended. At length, however, while his companions watched in silence the mining workings of that grief which they feared to interrupt by ill-timed observations, even of condolence, the death-like hue, which had hitherto suffused the usually blooming cheek of the young officer, was succeeded by a flush of the deepest dye, while his eyes, swollen by the tide of blood now rushing violently to his face, appeared to be bursting from their sockets. The shock was more than his delicate frame, exhausted as it was by watching and fatigue, could bear. He tottered, reeled, pressed his hand upon his head, and before any one could render him assistance, fell senseless on the ramparts.

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During the interval between Sir Everard Valletort's exclamation, and the fall of Charles de Haldimar, the men employed at the grave had performed their duty, and were gazing with mingled astonishment and concern, both on the body of their murdered officer, and on the dumb scene acting around them. Two of these were now despatched for a litter, with which they speedily re-appeared. On this Charles de Haldimar, already delirious with the fever of intense excitement, was carefully placed, and, followed by Captain Blessington and Lieutenant Johnstone, borne to his apartment in the small range of buildings constituting the officers' barracks. Captain Erskine undertook the disagreeable office of communicating these distressing events to the governor; and the remainder of the officers once more hastened to join or linger near their respective companies, in readiness for the order which it was expected would be given to despatch a numerous party of the garrison to secure the body of Captain de Haldimar.

CHAPTER V.

The sun was just rising above the horizon, in all that peculiar softness of splendour which characterises the early days of autumn in America, as Captain Erskine led his company across the drawbridge that communicated with the fort. It was the first time it had been lowered since the investment of the garrison by the Indians; and as the dull and rusty chains performed their service with a harsh and grating sound, it seemed as if an earnest were given of melancholy boding. Although the distance to be traversed was small, the risk the party incurred was great; for it was probable the savages, ever on the alert, would not suffer them to effect their object unmolested. It was perhaps singular, and certainly contradictory, that an officer of the acknowledged prudence and forethought ascribed to the governor—qualities which in a great degree neutralised his excessive severity in the eyes of his troops—should have hazarded the chance of having his garrison enfeebled by the destruction of a part, if not of the whole, of the company appointed to this dangerous duty; but with all his severity, Colonel de Haldimar was not without strong affection for his children. The feelings of the father, therefore, in a great degree triumphed over the prudence of the commander; and to shield the corpse of his son from the indignities which he well knew would be inflicted on it by Indian barbarity, he had been induced to accede to the earnest prayer of Captain Erskine, that he might be permitted to lead out his company for the purpose of securing the body. Every means were, however, taken to cover the advance, and ensure the retreat of the detachment. The remainder of the troops were distributed along the rear of the ramparts, with instructions to lie flat on their faces until summoned by their officers from that position; which was to be done only in the event of close pursuit from the savages. Artillerymen were also stationed at the several guns that flanked the rear of the fort, and necessarily commanded both the common and the outskirt of the forest, with orders to fire with grape-shot at a given signal. Captain Erskine's instructions were, moreover, if attacked, to retreat back under the guns of the fort slowly and in good order, and without turning his back upon the enemy.

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Thus confident of support, the party, after traversing the drawbridge with fixed bayonets, inclined to the right, and following the winding of the ditch by which it was surrounded, made the semi-circuit of the rampart until they gained the immediate centre of the rear, and in a direct line with the bomb-proof. Here their mode of advance was altered, to guard more effectually against the enemy with whom they might possibly have to contend. The front and rear ranks of the company, consisting in all of ninety men, were so placed as to leave space in the event of attack, of a portion of each wheeling inwards so as to present in an instant three equal faces of a square. As the rear was sufficiently covered by the cannon of the fort to defeat any attempt to turn their flanks, the manoeuvre was one that enabled them to present a fuller front in whatever other quarter they might be attacked; and had this additional advantage, that in the advance by single files a narrower front was given to the aim of the Indians, who, unless they fired in an oblique direction, could only, of necessity, bring down two men (the leading files) at a time.

In this order, and anxiously overlooked by their comrades, whose eyes alone peered from above the surface of the rampart on which they lay prostrate, the detachment crossed the common; one rank headed by Captain Erskine, the other by Lieutenant Johnstone. They had now approached within a few yards of the unfortunate victim, when Captain Erskine commanded a halt of his party; and two files were detached from the rear of each rank, to place the body on a litter with which they had provided themselves. He and Johnstone also moved in the same direction in advance of the men, prepared to render assistance if required. The corpse lay on its face, and in no way despoiled of any of its glittering habiliments; a circumstance that too well confirmed the fact of De Haldimar's death having been accomplished by the ball from Sir Everard Valletort's rifle. It appeared, however, the ill-fated officer had struggled much in the agonies of death; for the left leg was drawn up into an unnatural state of contraction, and the right hand, closely compressed, grasped a quantity of grass and soil, which had evidently been torn up in a paroxysm of suffering and despair.

The men placed the litter at the side of the body, which they now proceeded to raise. As they were in the act of depositing it on this temporary bier, the plumed hat fell from the head, and disclosed, to the astonishment of all, the scalpless crown completely saturated in its own clotted blood and oozing brains.

An exclamation of horror and disgust escaped at the same moment from the lips of the two officers, and the men started back from their charge as if a basilisk had suddenly appeared before them. Captain Erskine pursued:— "What the devil is the meaning of all this, Johnstone?"

"What, indeed!" rejoined his lieutenant, with a shrug of the shoulders, that was intended to express his inability to form any opinion on the subject

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"Unless it should prove," continued Erskine, "as I sincerely trust it may, that poor Valletort is not, after all, the murderer of his friend. It must be so. De Haldimar has been slain by the same Indian who killed Murphy.—Do you recollect his scalp cry? He was in the act of despoiling his victim of this trophy of success, when Sir Everard fired. Examine the body well, Mitchell, and discover where the wound lies."

The old soldier to whom this order was addressed now prepared, with the assistance of his comrades, to turn the body upon its back, when suddenly the air was rent with terrific yells, that seemed to be uttered in their very ears, and in the next instant more than a hundred dark and hideous savages sprang simultaneously to their feet within the bomb-proof, while every tree along the skirt of the forest gave back the towering form of a warrior. Each of these, in addition to his rifle, was armed with all those destructive implements of warfare which render the Indians of America so formidable and so terrible an enemy.

"Stand to your arms, men," shouted Captain Erskine, recovering from his first and unavoidable, though but momentary, surprise. "First and fourth sections, on your right and left backwards wheel:—Quick, men, within the square, for your lives." As he spoke, he and Lieutenant Johnstone sprang hastily back, and in time to obtain admittance within the troops, who had rapidly executed the manoeuvre commanded. Not so with Mitchell and his companions. On the first alarm they had quitted the body of the mutilated officer, and flown to secure their arms, but even while in the act of stooping to take them up, they had been grappled by a powerful and vindictive foe; and the first thing they beheld on regaining their upright position was a dusky Indian at the side, and a gleaming tomahawk flashing rapidly round the head of each.

"Fire not, on your lives," exclaimed Captain Erskine hastily, as he saw several of the men in front levelling, in the excitement of the moment, their muskets at the threatening savages. "Prepare for attack," he pursued; and in the next instant each man dropped on his right knee, and a barrier of bristling bayonets seemed to rise from the very bowels of the earth. Attracted by the novelty of the sight, the bold and daring warriors, although still retaining their firm grasp of the unhappy soldiers, were for a moment diverted from their bloody purpose, and temporarily suspended the quick and rotatory motion of their weapons. Captain Erskine took advantage of this pause to seize the halbert of one of his sergeants, to the extreme point of which he hastily attached a white pocket handkerchief, that was loosely thrust into the breast of his uniform; this he waved on high three several times, and then relinquishing the halbert, dropped also on his knee within the square.

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"The dog of a Saganaw asks for mercy," said a voice from within the bomb-proof, and speaking in the dialect of the Ottawas. "His pale flag bespeaks the quailing of his heart, and his attitude denotes the timidity of the hind. His warriors are like himself, and even now upon their knees they call upon their Manitou to preserve them from the vengeance of the red-skins. But mercy is not for dogs like these. Now is the time to make our tomahawks warm in their blood; and every head that we count shall be a scalp upon our war poles."

As he ceased, one universal and portentous yell burst from the fiend-like band; and again the weapons of death were fiercely brandished around the heads of the stupified soldiers who had fallen into their power.

"What can they be about?" anxiously exclaimed Captain Erskine, in the midst of this deafening clamour, to his subaltern.—"Quiet, man; damn you, quiet, or I'll cut you down," he pursued, addressing one of his soldiers, whose impatience caused him to bring his musket half up to the shoulder. And again he turned his head in the direction of the fort:—"Thank God, here it comes at last,—I feared my signal had not been noticed."

While he yet spoke, the loud roaring of a cannon from the ramparts was heard, and a shower of grape-shot passed over the heads of the detachment, and was seen tearing up the earth around the bomb-proof, and scattering fragments of stone and wood into the air. The men simultaneously and unbidden gave three cheers.

In an instant the scene was changed. As if moved by some mechanical impulse, the fierce band that lined the bomb-proof sank below the surface, and were no longer visible, while the warriors in the forest again sought shelter behind the trees. The captured soldiers were also liberated without injury, so sudden and startling had been the terror produced in the savages by the lightning flash that announced its heavy messengers of destruction. Discharge after discharge succeeded without intermission; but the guns had been levelled so high, to prevent injury to their own men, they had little other effect than to keep the Indians from the attack. The rush of bullets through the close forest, and the crashing of trees and branches as they fell with startling force upon each other, were, with the peals of artillery, the only noises now to be heard; for not a yell, not a word was uttered by the Indians after the first discharge; and but for the certainty that existed in every mind, it might have been supposed the whole of them had retired.

"Now is your time," cried Captain Erskine; "bring in the litter to the rear, and stoop as much as possible to avoid the shot."

The poor half-strangled fellows, however, instead of obeying the order of their captain, looked round in every direction for the enemy by whom they had been so rudely handled, and who had glided from them almost as imperceptibly and swiftly as they had

first approached. It seemed as if they apprehended that any attempt to remove the body would be visited by those fierce devils with the same appalling and ferocious threatenings.

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"Why stand ye there, ye dolts," continued their captain, "looking around as if ye were bewitched? Bring the litter in to the rear.—Mitchell, you old fool, are you grown a coward in your age? Are you not ashamed to set such an example to your comrades?"

The doubt thus implied of the courage of his men, who, in fact, were merely stupified with the scene they had gone through, had, as Captain Erskine expected, the desired effect. They now bent themselves to the litter, on which they had previously deposited their muskets, and with a self-possession that contrasted singularly with their recent air of wild astonishment, bore it to the rear at the risk of being cut in two at every moment by the fire from the fort.

One fierce yell, instinctively proffered by several of the lurking band in the forest, marked their disappointment and rage at the escape of their victims; but all attempt at uncovering themselves, so as to be enabled to fire, was prevented by the additional showers of grape which that yell immediately brought upon them.

The position in which Captain Erskine now found himself was highly critical. Before him, and on either flank, was a multitude of savages, who only awaited the cessation of the fire from the fort to commence their fierce and impetuous attack. That that fire could not long be sustained was evident, since ammunition could ill be spared for the present inefficient purpose, where supplies of all kinds were so difficult to be obtained; and, if he should attempt a retreat, the upright position of his men exposed them to the risk of being swept away by the ponderous metal, that already fanned their cheeks with the air it so rapidly divided. Suddenly, however, the fire from the batteries was discontinued, and this he knew to be a signal for himself. He gave an order in a low voice, and the detachment quitted their recumbent and defensive position, still remaining formed in square. At the same instant, a gun flashed from the fort; but not as before was heard the rushing sound of the destructive shot crushing the trees in its resistless course. The Indians took courage at this circumstance, for they deemed the bullets of their enemies were expended; and that they were merely discharging their powder to keep up the apprehension originally produced. Again they showed themselves, like so many demons, from behind their lurking places; and yells and shouts of the most terrific and threatening character once more rent the air, and echoed through the woods. Their cries of anticipated triumph were, however, but of short duration. Presently, a hissing noise was heard in the air; and close to the bomb-proof, and at the very skirt of the forest, they beheld a huge globe of iron fall perpendicularly to the earth, to the outer part of which was attached what they supposed to be a reed, that spat forth innumerable sparks of fire, without however, seeming to threaten the slightest injury. Attracted by the novel

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sight, a dozen warriors sprang to the spot, and fastened their gaze upon it with all the childish wonder and curiosity of men in a savage state. One, more eager and restless than his fellows, stooped over it to feel with his hand of what it was composed. At that moment it burst, and limbs, and head, and entrails, were seen flying in the air, with the fragments of the shell, and prostrate and struggling forms lay writhing on every hand in the last, fierce agonies of death.

A yell of despair and a shout of triumph burst at the same moment from the adverse parties. Taking advantage of the terror produced, by this catastrophe, in the savages, Captain Erskine caused the men bearing the corpse to retreat, with all possible expedition, under the ramparts of the fort. He waited until they got nearly half way, and then threw forward the wheeling sections, that had covered this movement, once more into single file, in which order he commenced his retreat. Step by step, and almost imperceptibly, the men paced backwards, ready, at a moment's notice, to reform the square. Partly recovered from the terror and surprise produced by the bursting of the shell, the Indians were quick in perceiving this movement: filled with rage at having been so long baulked of their aim, they threw themselves once more impetuously from their cover; and, with stimulating yells, at length opened their fire. Several of Captain Erskine's men were wounded by this discharge; when, again, and furiously the cannon opened from the fort. It was then that the superiority of the artillery was made manifest. Both right and left of the retreating files the ponderous shot flew heavily past, carrying death and terror to the Indians; while not a man of those who intervened was scathed or touched in its progress. The warriors in the forest were once more compelled to shelter themselves behind the trees; but in the bomb-proof, where they were more secure, they were also more bold. From this a galling fire, mingled with the most hideous yells, was now kept up; and the detachment, in their slow retreat, suffered considerably. Several men had been killed; and, about twenty, including Lieutenant Johnstone, wounded, when again, one of those murderous globes fell, hissing in the very centre of the bomb-proof. In an instant, the Indian fire was discontinued; and their dark and pliant forms were seen hurrying with almost incredible rapidity over the dilapidated walls, and flying into the very heart of the forest, so that when the shell exploded, a few seconds afterwards, not a warrior was to be seen. From this moment the attack was not renewed, and Captain Erskine made good his retreat without farther molestation.

"Well, old buffers!" exclaimed one of the leading files, as the detachment, preceded by its dead and wounded, now moved along the moat in the direction of the draw-bridge, "how did you like the grip of them black savages?—I say, Mitchell, old Nick will scarcely know the face of you, it's so much altered by fright.—Did you see," turning to the man in his rear, "how harum-scarum he looked, when the captain called out to him to come off?"

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“Hold your clapper, you spooney, and be damned to you!” exclaimed the angry veteran. —“Had the Ingian fastened his paw upon your ugly neck as he did upon mine, all the pitiful life your mother ever put into you would have been spirited away from very fear; so you needn’t brag.”

“Sure, and if any of ye had a grain of spunk, ye would have fired, and freed a fellow from the clutch of them hell thieves,” muttered another of the men at the litter. “All the time, the devil had me by the throat, swinging his tommyhawk about my head, I saw ye dancing up and down in the heavens, instead of being on your marrow bones on the common.”

“And didn’t I want to do it?” rejoined the first speaker. “Ask Tom Winkler here, if the captain didn’t swear he’d cut the soul out of my body if I even offered so much as to touch the trigger of my musket.”

“Faith, and lucky he did,” replied his covering man (for the ranks had again joined), “since but for that, there wouldn’t be at this moment so much as a hair of the scalp of one of you left.”

“And how so, Mr. Wiseacre?” rejoined his comrade.

“How so! Because the first shot that we fired would have set the devils upon them in right earnest—and then their top-knots wouldn’t have been worth a brass farthing. They would have been scalped before they could say Jack Robinson.”

“It was a hell of a risk,” resumed another of the litter men, “to give four men a chance of having their skull pieces cracked open like so many egg-shells, and all to get possession of a dead officer.”

“And sure, you beast,” remarked a different voice in a tone of anger, “the dead body of the brave captain was worth a dozen such rotten carcasses with all the life in them. What matter would it be if ye had all been scalped?” Then with a significant half glance to the rear, which was brought up by their commander, on whose arm leaned the slightly wounded Johnstone, “Take care the captain doesn’t hear ye prating after that fashion, Will Burford.”

“By Jasus,” said a good-humoured, quaint looking Irishman, who had been fixing his eyes on the litter during this pithy and characteristic colloquy; “it sames to me, my boys, that ye have caught the wrong cow by the horns, and that all your pains has been for nothing at all, at all. By the holy pope, ye are all wrong; it’s like bringing salt butter to Cork, or coals to your Newcastle, as ye call it. Who the divil ever heard of the officer wearing ammunition shoes?”

The men all turned their gaze on that part of the vestment of the corpse to which their attention had been directed by this remark, when it was at once perceived, although it had hitherto escaped the observation even of the officers, that, not only the shoes were those usually worn by the soldiers, and termed ammunition or store shoes, but also, the trowsers were of the description of coarse grey, peculiar to that class.

“By the piper that played before Moses, and ye’re right, Dick Doherty,” exclaimed another Irishman; “sure, and it isn’t the officer at all! Just look at the great black fist of him too, and never call me Phil Shehan, if it ever was made for the handling of an officer’s spit.”

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"Well said, Shehan," observed the man who had so warmly reproofed Will Burford, and who had formerly been servant to De Haldimar; "the captain's hand is as white and as soft as my cross-belt, or, what's saying a great deal more, as Miss Clara's herself, heaven bless her sweet countenance! and Lieutenant Valletort's nigger's couldn't well be much blacker nor this."

"What a set of hignoramuses ye must be," grunted old Mitchell, "not to see that the captain's hand is only covered with dirt; and as for the ammunition shoes and trowsers, why you know our officers wear any thing since we have been cooped up in this here fort."

"Yes, by the holy poker," (and here we must beg to refer the reader to the soldier's vocabulary for any terms that may be, in the course of this dialogue, incomprehensible to him or her,)—"Yes, by the holy poker, off duty, if they like it," returned Phil Shehan; "but it isn't even the colonel's own born son that dare to do so while officer of the guard."

"Ye are right, comrade," said Burford; "there would soon be hell and tommy to pay if he did."

At this point of their conversation, one of the leading men at the litter, in turning to look at its subject, stumbled over the root of a stump that lay in his way, and fell violently forward. The sudden action destroyed the equilibrium of the corpse, which rolled off its temporary bier upon the earth, and disclosed, for the first time, a face begrimed with masses of clotted blood, which had streamed forth from the scalped brain during the night.

"It's the divil himself," said Phil Shehan, making the sign of the cross, half in jest, half in earnest: "for it isn't the captin at all, and who but the divil could have managed to clap on his rigimintals?"

"No, it's an Ingian," remarked Dick Burford, sagaciously; "it's an Ingian that has killed the captain, and dressed himself in his clothes. I thought he smelt strong, when I helped to pick him up."

"And that's the reason why the bloody heathens wouldn't let us carry him off," said another of the litter men. "I thought they wouldn't ha' made such a rout about the officer, when they had his scalp already in their pouch-belts."

"What a set of prating fools ye are," interrupted the leading sergeant; "who ever saw an Ingian with light hair? and sure this hair in the neck is that of a Christian."

At that moment Captain Erskine, attracted by the sudden halt produced by the falling of the body, came quickly up to the front.



“What is the meaning of all this, Cassidy?” he sternly demanded of the sergeant; “why is this halt without my orders, and how comes the body here?”

“Carter stumbled against a root, sir, and the body rolled over upon the ground.”

“And was the body to roll back again?” angrily rejoined his captain.—“What mean ye, fellows, by standing there; quick, replace it upon the litter, and mind this does not occur again.”

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"They say, sir," said the sergeant, respectfully, as the men proceeded to their duty, "that it is not Captain de Haldimar after all, but an Ingian."

"Not Captain de Haldimar! are ye all mad? and have the Indians, in reality, turned your brains with fear?"

What, however, was his own surprise, and that of Lieutenant Johnstone, when, on a closer examination of the corpse, which the men had now placed with its face uppermost, they discovered the bewildering fact that it was not, indeed, Captain de Haldimar who lay before them, but a stranger, dressed in the uniform of that officer.

There was no time to solve, or even to dwell on the singular mystery; for the Indians, though now retired, might be expected to rally and renew the attack. Once more, therefore, the detachment moved forward; the officers dropping as before to the rear, to watch any movements of the enemy should he re-appear. Nothing, however, occurred to interrupt their march; and in a few minutes the heavy clanking sound of the chains of the drawbridge, as it was again raised by its strong pullies, and the dull creaking sound of the rusty bolts and locks that secured the ponderous gate, announced the detachment was once more safely within the fort.

While the wounded men were being conveyed to the hospital, a group, comprising almost all the officers of the garrison, hastened to meet Captain Erskine and Lieutenant Johnstone. Congratulations on the escape of the one, and compliments, rather than condolences, on the accident of the other, which the arm en echarpe denoted to be slight, were hastily and warmly proffered. These felicitations were the genuine ebullitions of the hearts of men who really felt a pride, unmixed with jealousy, in the conduct of their fellows; and so cool and excellent had been the manner in which Captain Erskine had accomplished his object, that it had claimed the undivided admiration of all who had been spectators of the affair, and had, with the aid of their telescopes, been enabled to follow the minutest movements of the detachment.

"By heaven!" he at length replied, his chest swelling with gratified pride at the warm and generous approval of his companions, "this more than repays me for every risk. Yet, to be sincere, the credit is not mine, but Wentworth's. But for you, my dear fellow," grasping and shaking the hand of that officer, "we should have rendered but a Flemish account of ourselves. How beautifully those guns covered our retreat! and the first mortar that sent the howling devils flying in air like so many Will-o'the-wisps, who placed that, Wentworth?"

"I did," replied the officer, with a quickness that denoted a natural feeling of exultation; "but Bombardier Kitson's was the most effective. It was his shell that drove the Indians finally out of the bomb-proof, and left the coast clear for your retreat."

“Then Kitson, and his gunners also, merit our best thanks,” pursued Captain Erskine, whose spirits, now that his detachment was in safety, were more than usually exhilarated by the exciting events of the last hour; “and what will be more acceptable, perhaps, they shall each have a glass of my best old Jamaica before they sleep,—and such stuff is not to be met with every day in this wilderness of a country. But, confound my stupid head! where are Charles de Haldimar and Sir Everard Valletort?”

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"Poor Charles is in a high fever, and confined to his bed," remarked Captain Blessington, who now came up adding his congratulations in a low tone, that marked the despondency of his heart; "and Sir Everard I have just left on the rampart with the company, looking, as he well may, the very image of despair."

"Run to them, Sumners, my dear boy," said Erskine, hastily addressing himself to a young ensign who stood near him; "run quickly, and relieve them of their error. Say it is not De Haldimar who has been killed, therefore they need not make themselves any longer uneasy on that score."

The officers gave a start of surprise. Sumners, however, hastened to acquit himself of the pleasing task assigned him, without waiting to hear the explanation of the singular declaration.

"Not De Haldimar!" eagerly and anxiously exclaimed Captain Blessington; "who then have you brought to us in his uniform, which I clearly distinguished from the rampart as you passed? Surely you would not tamper with us at such a moment, Erskine?"

"Who it is, I know not more than Adam," rejoined the other; "unless, indeed, it be the devil himself. All I do know, is, it is not our friend De Haldimar; although, as you observe, he most certainly wears his uniform. But you shall see and judge for yourselves, gentlemen. Sergeant Cassidy," he enquired of that individual, who now came to ask if the detachment was to be dismissed, "where have you placed the litter?"

"Under the piazza of the guard-room, Sir," answered the sergeant.

These words had scarcely been uttered, when a general and hasty movement of the officers, anxious to satisfy themselves by personal observation it was not indeed De Haldimar who had fallen, took place in the direction alluded to, and in the next moment they were at the side of the litter.

A blanket had been thrown upon the corpse to conceal the loathsome disfigurement of the face, over which masses of thick coagulated blood were laid in patches and streaks, that set all recognition at defiance. The formation of the head alone, which was round and short, denoted it to be not De Haldimar's. Not a feature was left undefined; and even the eyes were so covered, it was impossible to say whether their lids were closed or open. More than one officer's cheek paled with the sickness that rose to his heart as he gazed on the hideous spectacle; yet, as the curiosity of all was strongly excited to know who the murdered man really was who had been so unaccountably inducted in the uniform of their lost companion, they were resolved to satisfy themselves without further delay. A basin of warm water and a sponge were procured from the guard-room of Ensign Fortescue, who now joined them, and with these Captain Blessington proceeded to remove the disguise.

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In the course of this lavation, it was discovered the extraordinary flow of blood and brains had been produced by the infliction of a deep wound on the back of the head, by the sharp and ponderous tomahawk of an Indian. It was the only blow that had been given; and the circumstance of the deceased having been found lying on his face, accounted for the quantity of gore, that, trickling downwards, had so completely disguised every feature. As the coat of thick encrusted matter gave way beneath the frequent application of the moistening sponge, the pallid hue of the countenance denoted the murdered man to be a white. All doubt, however, was soon at an end. The ammunition shoes, the grey trowsers, the coarse linen, and the stiff leathern stock encircling the neck, attested the sufferer to be a soldier of the garrison; but it was not until the face had been completely denuded of its unsightly covering, and every feature fully exposed, that that soldier was at length recognised to be Harry Donellan, the trusty and attached servant of Captain de Haldimar.

While yet the officers stood apart, gazing at the corpse, and forming a variety of conjectures, as vague as they were unsatisfactory, in regard to their new mystery, Sir Everard Valletort, pale and breathless with the speed he had used, suddenly appeared among them.

“God of heaven! can it be true—and is it really not De Haldimar whom I have shot?” wildly asked the agitated young man. “Who is this, Erskine?” he continued, glancing at the litter. “Explain, for pity’s sake, and quickly.”

“Compose yourself, my dear Valletort,” replied the officer addressed. “You see this is not De Haldimar, but his servant Donellan. Neither has the latter met his death from your rifle; there is no mark of a bullet about him. It was an Indian tomahawk that did his business; and I will stake my head against a hickory nut the blow came from the same rascal at whom you fired, and who gave back the shot and the scalp halloo.”

This opinion was unanimously expressed by the remainder of the officers. Sir Everard was almost as much overpowered by his joy, as he had previously been overwhelmed by his despair, and he grasped and shook the hand of Captain Erskine, who had thus been the means of relieving his conscience, with an energy of gratitude and feeling that almost drew tears from the eyes of that blunt but gallant officer.

“Thank God, thank God!” he fervently exclaimed: “I have not then even the death of poor Donellan to answer for;” and hastening from the guard-room, he pursued his course hurriedly and delightedly to the barrack-room of his friend.

CHAPTER VI.

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The hour fixed for the trial of the prisoner Halloway had now arrived, and the officers composing the court were all met in the mess-room of the garrison, surrounding a long table covered with green cloth, over which were distributed pens, ink, and paper for taking minutes of the evidence, and such notes of the proceedings as the several members might deem necessary in the course of the trial. Captain Blessington presided; and next him, on either hand, were the first in seniority, the two junior occupying the lowest places. The demeanour of the several officers, serious and befitting the duty they were met to perform, was rendered more especially solemn from the presence of the governor, who sat a little to the right of the president, and without the circle, remained covered, and with his arms folded across his chest. At a signal given by the president to the orderly in waiting, that individual disappeared from the room, and soon afterwards Frank Halloway, strongly ironed, as on the preceding night, was ushered in by several files of the guard, under Ensign Fortescue himself.

The prisoner having been stationed a few paces on the left of the president, that officer stood up to administer the customary oath. His example was followed by the rest of the court, who now rose, and extending each his right hand upon the prayer book, repeated, after the president, the form of words prescribed by military law. They then, after successively touching the sacred volume with their lips, once more resumed their seats at the table.

The prosecutor was the Adjutant Lawson, who now handed over to the president a paper, from which the latter officer read, in a clear and distinct voice, the following charges, *viz.*—

“1st. For having on the night of the —th September 1763, while on duty at the gate of the Fortress of Detroit, either admitted a stranger into the garrison himself, or suffered him to obtain admission, without giving the alarm, or using the means necessary to ensure his apprehension, such conduct being treasonable, and in breach of the articles of war.

“2d. For having been accessory to the abduction of Captain Frederick de Haldimar and private Harry Donellan, the disappearance of whom from the garrison can only be attributed to a secret understanding existing between the prisoner and the enemy without the walls, such conduct being treasonable, and in breach of the articles of war.”

“Private Frank Halloway,” continued Captain Blessington, after having perused these two short but important charges, “you have heard what has been preferred against you; what say you, therefore? Are you guilty, or not guilty?”

“Not guilty,” firmly and somewhat exultingly replied the prisoner, laying his hand at the same time on his swelling heart.

“Stay, sir,” sternly observed the governor, addressing the president; “you have not read *all* the charges.”

Captain Blessington took up the paper from the table, on which he had carelessly thrown it, after reading the accusations above detailed, and perceived, for the first time, that a portion had been doubled back. His eye now glanced over a third charge, which had previously escaped his attention.

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"Prisoner," he pursued, after the lapse of a minute, "there is a third charge against you, viz. for having, on the night of the —th Sept. 1763, suffered Captain De Haldimar to unclothe the gate of the fortress, and, accompanied by his servant, private Harry Donellan, to pass your post without the sanction of the governor, such conduct being in direct violation of a standing order of the garrison, and punishable with death."

The prisoner started. "What!" he exclaimed, his cheek paling for the first time with momentary apprehension; "is this voluntary confession of my own to be turned into a charge that threatens my life? Colonel de Haldimar, is the explanation which I gave you only this very hour, and in private, to be made the public instrument of my condemnation? Am I to die because I had not firmness to resist the prayer of my captain and of your son, Colonel de Haldimar?"

The president looked towards the governor, but a significant motion of the head was the only reply; he proceeded,—

"Prisoner Halloway, what plead you to this charge? Guilty, or not guilty?"

"I see plainly," said Halloway, after the pause of a minute, during which he appeared to be summoning all his energies to his aid; "I see plainly that it is useless to strive against my fate. Captain de Haldimar is not here, and I must die. Still I shall not have the disgrace of dying as a traitor, though I own I have violated the orders of the garrison."

"Prisoner," interrupted Captain Blessington, "whatever you may have to urge, you had better reserve for your defence. Meanwhile, what answer do you make to the last charge preferred?—Are you guilty, or not guilty?"

"Guilty," said Halloway, in a tone of mingled pride and sorrow, "guilty of having listened to the earnest prayer of my captain, and suffered him, in violation of my orders, to pass my post. Of the other charges I am innocent."

The court listened with the most profound attention and interest to the words of the prisoner, and they glanced at each other in a manner that marked their sense of the truth they attached to his declaration.

"Halloway, prisoner," resumed Captain Blessington, mildly, yet impressively; "recollect the severe penalty which the third charge, no less than the others, entails, and recall your admission. Be advised by me," he pursued, observing his hesitation. "Withdraw your plea, then, and substitute that of not guilty to the whole."

"Captain Blessington," returned the prisoner with deep emotion, "I feel all the kindness of your motive; and if any thing can console me in my present situation, it is the circumstance of having presiding at my trial an officer so universally beloved by the whole corps. Still," and again his voice acquired its wonted firmness, and his cheek

glowed with honest pride, "still, I say, I scorn to retract my words. Of the two first charges I am as innocent as the babe unborn. To the last I plead guilty; and vain would it be to say otherwise, since the gate was found open while I was on duty, and I know the penalty attached to the disobedience of orders."

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After some further but ineffectual remonstrance on the part of the president, the pleas of the prisoner were recorded, and the examination commenced. Governor de Haldimar was the first witness.

That officer, having been sworn, stated, that on the preceding night he had been intruded upon in his apartment by a stranger, who could have obtained admission only through the gate of the fortress, by which also he must have made good his escape. That it was evident the prisoner had been in correspondence with their enemies; since, on proceeding to examine the gate it had been found unlocked, while the confusion manifested by him on being accused, satisfied all who were present of the enormity of his guilt. Search had been made every where for the keys, but without success.

The second charge was supported by presumptive evidence alone; for although the governor swore to the disappearance of his son, and the murder of his servant, and dwelt emphatically on the fact of their having been forcibly carried off with the connivance of the prisoner, still there was no other proof of this, than the deductions drawn from the circumstances already detailed. To meet this difficulty, however, the third charge had been framed.

In proof of this the governor stated, that the prisoner, on being interrogated by him immediately subsequent to his being relieved from his post, had evinced such confusion and hesitation, as to leave no doubt whatever of his guilt; that, influenced by the half promise of communication, which the court had heard as well as himself, he had suffered the trial of the prisoner to be delayed until the present hour, strongly hoping he might then be induced to reveal the share he had borne in these unworthy and treasonable practices; that, with a view to obtain this disclosure, so essential to the safety of the garrison, he had, conjointly with Major Blackwater, visited the cell of the prisoner, to whom he related the fact of the murder of Donellan, in the disguise of his master's uniform, conjuring him, at the same time, if he regarded his own life, and the safety of those who were most dear to him, to give a clue to the solution of this mysterious circumstance, and disclose the nature and extent of his connection with the enemy without; that the prisoner however resolutely denied, as before, the guilt imputed to him, but having had time to concoct a plausible story, stated, (doubtless with a view to shield himself from the severe punishment he well knew to be attached to his offence,) that Captain de Haldimar himself had removed the keys from the guard-room, opened the gate of the fortress, and accompanied by his servant, dressed in a coloured coat, had sallied forth upon the common. "And this," emphatically pursued the governor, "the prisoner admits he permitted, although well aware that, by an order of long standing for the security of the garrison, such a fragrant dereliction of his duty subjected him to the punishment of death."

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Major Blackwater was the next witness examined. His testimony went to prove the fact of the gate having been found open, and the confusion manifested by the prisoner. It also substantiated that part of the governor's evidence on the third charge, which related to the confession recently made by Halloway, on which that charge had been framed.

The sergeant of the guard, and the governor's orderly having severally corroborated the first portions of Major Blackwater's evidence, the examination on the part of the prosecution terminated; when the president called on the prisoner Halloway for his defence. The latter, in a clear, firm, and collected tone, and in terms that surprised his auditory, thus addressed the Court:—

“Mr. President, and gentlemen,—Although, standing before you in the capacity of a private soldier, and, oh! bitter and humiliating reflection, in that most wretched and disgraceful of all situations, a suspected traitor, I am not indeed what I seem to be. It is not for me here to enter into the history of my past life; neither will I tarnish the hitherto unsullied reputation of my family by disclosing my true name. Suffice it to observe, I am a gentleman by birth; and although, of late years, I have known all the hardships and privations attendant on my fallen fortunes, I was once used to bask in the luxuries of affluence, and to look upon those who now preside in judgment over me as my equals. A marriage of affection,—a marriage with one who had nothing but her own virtues and her own beauty to recommend her, drew upon me the displeasure of my family, and the little I possessed, independently of the pleasure of my relations, was soon dissipated. My proud soul scorned all thought of supplication to those who had originally spurned my wife from their presence; and yet my heart bled for the privations of her who, alike respectable in family, was, both from sex and the natural delicacy, of her frame, so far less constituted to bear up against the frowns of adversity than myself. Our extremity had now become great,—too great for human endurance; when, through the medium of the public prints, I became acquainted with the glorious action that had been fought in this country by the army under General Wolfe. A new light burst suddenly upon my mind, and visions of after prosperity constantly presented themselves to my view. The field of honour was open before me, and there was a probability I might, by good conduct, so far merit the approbation of my superiors, as to obtain, in course of time, that rank among themselves to which by birth and education I was so justly entitled to aspire. Without waiting to consult my Ellen, whose opposition I feared to encounter until opposition would be fruitless, I hastened to Lieutenant Walgrave, the recruiting officer of the regiment,—tendered my services,—was accepted and approved,—received the bounty money,—and became definitively a soldier, under the assumed name of Frank Halloway.

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"It would be tedious and impertinent, gentlemen," resumed the prisoner, after a short pause, "to dwell on the humiliations of spirit to which both my wife and myself were subjected at our first introduction to our new associates, who, although invariably kind to us, were, nevertheless, ill suited, both by education and habit, to awaken any thing like congeniality of feeling or similarity of pursuit. Still we endeavoured, as much as possible, to lessen the distance that existed between us; and from the first moment of our joining the regiment, determined to adopt the phraseology and manners of those with whom an adverse destiny had so singularly connected us. In this we succeeded; for no one, up to the present moment, has imagined either my wife or myself to be other than the simple and unpretending Frank and Ellen Halloway.

"On joining the regiment in this country," pursued the prisoner, after another pause, marked by much emotion, "I had the good fortune to be appointed to the grenadier company. Gentlemen, you all know the amiable qualities of Captain de Haldimar. But although, unlike yourselves, I have learnt to admire that officer only at a distance, my devotion to his interests has been proportioned to the kindness with which I have ever been treated by him; and may I not add, after this avowal of my former condition, my most fervent desire has all along been to seize the first favourable opportunity of performing some action that would eventually elevate me to a position in which I might, without blushing for the absence of the ennobling qualities of birth and condition, avow myself his friend, and solicit that distinction from my equal which was partially extended to me by my superior? The opportunity I sought was not long wanting. At the memorable affair with the French general, Levi, at Quebec, in which our regiment bore so conspicuous a part, I had the good fortune to save the life of my captain. A band of Indians, as you all, gentlemen, must recollect, had approached our right flank unperceived, and while busily engaged with the French in front, we were compelled to divide our fire between them and our new and fierce assailants. The leader of that band was a French officer, who seemed particularly to direct his attempts against the life of Captain de Haldimar. He was a man of powerful proportions and gigantic stature—"

"Hold!" said the governor, starting suddenly from the seat in which he had listened with evident impatience to this long outline of the prisoner's history. "Gentlemen," addressing the court, "that is the very stranger who was in my apartment last night,—the being with whom the prisoner is evidently in treacherous correspondence, and all this absurd tale is but a blind to deceive your judgment, and mitigate his own punishment. Who is there to prove the man he has just described was the same who aimed at Captain de Haldimar's life at Quebec?"

A flush of deep indignation overspread the features of the prisoner, whose high spirit, now he had avowed his true origin, could ill brook the affront thus put upon his veracity.

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“Colonel de Haldimar!” he proudly replied, while his chains clanked with the energy and force with which he drew up his person into an attitude of striking dignity; “for once I sink the private soldier, and address you in the character of the gentleman and your equal. I have a soul, Sir, notwithstanding my fallen fortunes, as keenly alive to honour as your own; and not even to save my wretched life, would I be guilty of the baseness you now attribute to me. You have asked,” he pursued, in a more solemn tone, “what proof I have to show this individual to be the same who attempted the life of Captain de Haldimar. To Captain de Haldimar himself, should Providence have spared his days, I shall leave the melancholy task of bearing witness to all I here advance, when I shall be no more. Nay, Sir,” and his look partook at once of mingled scorn and despondency, “well do I know the fate that awaits me; for in these proceedings—in that third charge—I plainly read my death-warrant. But what, save my poor and wretched wife, have I to regret? Colonel de Haldimar,” he continued, with a vehemence meant to check the growing weakness which the thought of his unfortunate companion called up to his heart, “I saved the life of your son, even by your own admission, no matter whose the arm that threatened his existence; and in every other action in which I have been engaged, honourable mention has ever been made of my conduct. Now, Sir, I ask what has been my reward? So far from attending to the repeated recommendations of my captain for promotion, even in a subordinate rank, have you once deemed it necessary to acknowledge my services by even a recognition of them in any way whatever?”

“Mr. President, Captain Blessington,” interrupted the governor, haughtily, “are we met here to listen to such language from a private soldier? You will do well, Sir, to exercise your prerogative, and stay such impertinent matter, which can have no reference whatever to the defence of the prisoner.”

“Prisoner,” resumed the president, who, as well as the other members of the court, had listened with the most profound and absorbing interest to the singular disclosure of him whom they still only knew as Frank Halloway, “this language cannot be permitted; you must confine yourself to your defence.”

“Pardon me, gentlemen,” returned Halloway, in his usual firm but respectful tone of voice; “pardon me, if, standing on the brink of the grave as I do, I have so far forgotten the rules of military discipline as to sink for a moment the soldier in the gentleman; but to be taxed with an unworthy fabrication, and to be treated with contumely when avowing the secret of my condition, was more than human pride and human feeling could tolerate.”

“Confine yourself, prisoner, to your defence,” again remarked Captain Blessington, perceiving the restlessness with which the governor listened to these bold and additional observations of Halloway.

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Again the governor interposed:—"What possible connexion can there be between this man's life, and the crime with which he stands charged? Captain Blessington, this is trifling with the court, who are assembled to try the prisoner for his treason, and not to waste their time in listening to a history utterly foreign to the subject."

"The history of my past life—Colonel de Haldimar," proudly returned the prisoner, "although tedious and uninteresting to you, is of the utmost importance to myself; for on that do I ground the most essential part of my defence. There is nothing but circumstantial evidence against me on the two first charges; and as those alone can reflect dishonour on my memory, it is for the wisdom of this court to determine whether that evidence is to be credited in opposition to the solemn declaration of him, who, in admitting one charge, equally affecting his life with the others, repudiates as foul those only which would attain his honour. Gentlemen," he pursued, addressing the court, "it is for you to determine whether my defence is to be continued or not; yet, whatever be my fate, I would fain remove all injurious impression from the minds of my judges; and this can only be done by a simple detail of circumstances, which may, by the unprejudiced, be as simply believed."

Here the prisoner paused: when, after some low and earnest conversation among the members of the court, two or three slips of written paper were passed to the President. He glanced his eye hurriedly over them, and then directed Halloway to proceed with his defence.

"I have stated," pursued the interesting soldier, "that the officer who led the band of Indians was a man of gigantic stature, and of apparently great strength. My attention was particularly directed to him from this circumstance, and as I was on the extreme flank of the grenadiers, and close to Captain de Haldimar, had every opportunity of observing his movements principally pointed at that officer. He first discharged a carbine, the ball of which killed a man of the company at his (Captain de Haldimar's) side; and then, with evident rage at having been defeated in his aim, he took a pistol from his belt, and advancing with rapid strides to within a few paces of his intended victim, presented it in the most deliberate manner. At that moment, gentlemen, (and it was but the work of a moment,) a thousand confused and almost inexplicable feelings rose to my heart. The occasion I had long sought was at length within my reach; but even the personal considerations, which had hitherto influenced my mind, were sunk in the anxious desire I entertained to preserve the life of an officer so universally beloved, and so every way worthy of the sacrifice. While yet the pistol remained levelled, I sprang before Captain de Haldimar, received the ball in my breast, and had just strength sufficient to fire my musket at this formidable enemy when I sank senseless to the earth.

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"It will not be difficult for you, gentlemen, who have feeling minds, to understand the pleasurable pride with which, on being conveyed to Captain de Haldimar's own apartments in Quebec, I found myself almost overwhelmed by the touching marks of gratitude showered on me by his amiable relatives. Miss Clara de Haldimar, in particular, like a ministering angel, visited my couch of suffering at almost every hour, and always provided with some little delicacy, suitable to my condition, of which I had long since tutored myself to forget even the use. But what principally afforded me pleasure, was to remark the consolations which she tendered to my poor drooping Ellen, who, already more than half subdued by the melancholy change in our condition in life, frequently spent hours together in silent grief at the side of my couch, and watching every change in my countenance with all the intense anxiety of one who feels the last stay on earth is about to be severed for ever. Ah! how I then longed to disclose to this kind and compassionating being the true position of her on whom she lavished her attention, and to make her known, not as the inferior honored by her notice, but as the equal alike worthy of her friendship and deserving of her esteem; but the wide, wide barrier that divided the wife of the private soldier from the daughter and sister of the commissioned officer sealed my lips, and our true condition continued unrevealed.

"Gentlemen," resumed Halloway, after a short pause, "if I dwell on these circumstances, it is with a view to show how vile are the charges preferred against me. Is it likely, with all the incentives to good conduct I have named, I should have proved a traitor to my country? And, even if so, what to gain, I would ask; and by what means was a correspondence with the enemy to be maintained by one in my humble station? As for the second charge, how infamous, how injurious is it to my reputation, how unworthy to be entertained! From the moment of my recovery from that severe wound, every mark of favour that could be bestowed on persons in our situation had been extended to my wife and myself, by the family of Colonel de Haldimar; and my captain, knowing me merely as the simple and low born Frank Halloway, although still the preserver of his life, has been unceasing in his exertions to obtain such promotion as he thought my conduct generally, independently of my devotedness to his person, might claim. How these applications were met, gentlemen, I have already stated; but notwithstanding Colonel de Haldimar has never deemed me worthy of the promotion solicited, that circumstance could in no way weaken my regard and attachment for him who had so often demanded it. How then, in the name of heaven, can a charge so improbable, so extravagant, as that of having been instrumental in the abduction of Captain de Haldimar, be entertained? and who is there among you, gentlemen, who will for one moment believe I could harbour a thought so absurd

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as that of lending myself to the destruction of one for whom I once cheerfully offered up the sacrifice of my blood? And now," pursued the prisoner, after another short pause, "I come to the third charge,—that charge which most affects my life, but impugns neither my honour nor my fidelity. That God, before whom I know I shall shortly appear, can attest the sincerity of my statement, and before him do I now solemnly declare what I am about to relate is true.

"Soon after the commencement of my watch last night, I heard a voice distinctly on the outside of the rampart, near my post, calling in a low and subdued tone on the name of Captain de Haldimar. The accents, hastily and anxiously uttered, were apparently those of a female. For a moment I continued irresolute how to act, and hesitated whether or not I should alarm the garrison; but, at length, presuming it was some young female of the village with whom my captain was acquainted, it occurred to me the most prudent course would be to apprise that officer himself. While I yet hesitated whether to leave my post for a moment for the purpose, a man crossed the parade a few yards in my front; it was Captain de Haldimar's servant, Donellan, then in the act of carrying some things from his master's apartment to the guard-room. I called to him, to say the sentinel at the gate wished to see the captain of the guard immediately. In the course of a few minutes he came up to my post, when I told him what I had heard. At that moment, the voice again repeated his name, when he abruptly left me and turned to the left of the gate, evidently on his way to the rampart. Soon afterwards I heard Captain de Haldimar immediately above me, sharply calling out 'Hist, hist!' as if the person on the outside, despairing of success, was in the act of retreating. A moment or two of silence succeeded, when a low conversation ensued between the parties. The distance was so great I could only distinguish inarticulate sounds; yet it seemed to me as if they spoke not in English, but in the language of the Ottawa Indians, a tongue with which, as you are well aware, gentlemen, Captain de Haldimar is familiar. This had continued about ten minutes, when I again heard footsteps hastily descending the rampart, and moving in the direction of the guard-house. Soon afterwards Captain de Haldimar re-appeared at my post, accompanied by his servant Donellan; the former had the keys of the gate in his hand, and he told me that he must pass to the skirt of the forest on some business of the last importance to the safety of the garrison.

"At first I peremptorily refused, stating the severe penalty attached to the infringement of an order, the observation of which had so especially been insisted upon by the governor, whose permission, however, I ventured respectfully to urge might, without difficulty, be obtained, if the business was really of the importance he described it. Captain de Haldimar, however, declared he well knew the governor

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would not accord that permission, unless he was positively acquainted with the nature and extent of the danger to be apprehended; and of these, he said, he was not himself sufficiently aware. All argument of this nature proving ineffectual, he attempted to enforce his authority, not only in his capacity of officer of the guard, but also as my captain, ordering me, on pain of confinement, not to interfere with or attempt to impede his departure. This, however, produced no better result; for I knew that, in this instance, I was amenable to the order of the governor alone, and I again firmly refused to violate my duty.

“Finding himself thwarted in his attempt to enforce my obedience, Captain de Haldimar, who seemed much agitated and annoyed by what he termed my obstinacy, now descended to entreaty; and in the name of that life which I had preserved to him, and of that deep gratitude which he had ever since borne to me, conjured me not to prevent his departure. ‘Halloway,’ he urged, ‘your life, my life, my father’s life,—the life of my sister Clara perhaps, who nursed you in illness, and who has ever treated your wife with attention and kindness,—all these depend upon your compliance with my request. ‘Hear me,’ he pursued, following up the impression which he clearly perceived he had produced in me by this singular and touching language: ‘I promise to be back within the hour; there is no danger attending my departure, and here will I be before you are relieved from your post; no one can know I have been absent, and your secret will remain with Donellan and myself. Do you think,’ he concluded, ‘I would encourage a soldier of my regiment to disobey a standing order of the garrison, unless there was some very extraordinary reason for my so doing? But there is no time to be lost in parley. Halloway! I entreat you to offer no further opposition to my departure. I pledge myself to be back before you are relieved.’”

“Gentlemen,” impressively continued the prisoner, after a pause, during which each member of the court seemed to breathe for the first time, so deeply had the attention of all been riveted by the latter part of this singular declaration, “how, under these circumstances, could I be expected to act? Assured by Captain de Haldimar, in the most solemn manner, that the existence of those most dear to his heart hung on my compliance with his request, how could I refuse to him, whose life I had saved, and whose character I so much esteemed, a boon so earnestly, nay, so imploringly solicited? I acceded to his prayer, intimating, at the same time, if he returned not before another sentinel should relieve me, the discovery of my breach of duty must be made, and my punishment inevitable. His last words, however, were to assure me he should return at the hour he had named, and when I closed the gate upon him it was under the firm impression his absence would only prove of the temporary nature he had stated.—Gentlemen,” abruptly concluded Halloway, “I have nothing further to add; if I have failed in my duty as a soldier, I have, at least, fulfilled that of a man; and although the violation of the first entail upon me the punishment of death, the motives which impelled me to

that violation will not, I trust, be utterly lost sight of by those by whom my punishment is to be awarded.”

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The candid, fearless, and manly tone in which Halloway had delivered this long and singular statement, however little the governor appeared to be affected by it, evidently made a deep impression on the court, who had listened with undiverted attention to the close. Some conversation again ensued, in a low tone, among several members, when two slips of written paper were passed up, as before, to the president. These elicited the following interrogatories:—

“You have stated, prisoner, that Captain de Haldimar left the fort accompanied by his servant Donellan. How were they respectively dressed?”

“Captain de Haldimar in his uniform; Donellan, as far as I could observe, in his regimental clothing also, with this difference, that he wore his servant’s round glazed hat and his grey great coat.”

“How then do you account for the extraordinary circumstance of Donellan having been found murdered in his master’s clothes? Was any allusion made to a change of dress before they left the fort?”

“Not the slightest,” returned the prisoner; “nor can I in any way account for this mysterious fact. When they quitted the garrison, each wore the dress I have described.”

“In what manner did Captain de Haldimar and Donellan effect their passage across the ditch?” continued the president, after glancing at the second slip of paper. “The draw-bridge was evidently not lowered, and there were no other means at hand to enable him to effect his object with promptitude. How do you explain this, prisoner?”

When this question was put, the whole body of officers, and the governor especially, turned their eyes simultaneously on Halloway, for on his hesitation or promptness in replying seemed to attach much of the credit they were disposed to accord his statement. Halloway observed it, and coloured. His reply, however, was free, unfaltering, and unstudied.

“A rope with which Donellan had provided himself, was secured to one of the iron hooks that support the pullies immediately above the gate. With this they swung themselves in succession to the opposite bank.”

The members of the court looked at each other, apparently glad that an answer so confirmatory of the truth of the prisoner’s statement, had been thus readily given.

“Were they to have returned in the same manner?” pursued the president, framing his interrogatory from the contents of another slip of paper, which, at the suggestion of the governor, had been passed to him by the prosecutor, Mr. Lawson.

“They were,” firmly replied the prisoner. “At least I presumed they were, for, I believe in the hurry of Captain de Haldimar’s departure, he never once made any direct allusion to

the manner of his return; nor did it occur to me until this moment how they were to regain possession of the rope, without assistance from within.”

“Of course,” observed Colonel de Haldimar, addressing the president, “the rope still remains. Mr. Lawson, examine the gate, and report accordingly.”

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The adjutant hastened to acquit himself of this laconic order, and soon afterwards returned, stating not only that there was no rope, but that the hook alluded to had disappeared altogether.

For a moment the cheek of the prisoner paled; but it was evidently less from any fear connected with his individual existence, than from the shame he felt at having been detected in a supposed falsehood. He however speedily recovered his self-possession, and exhibited the same character of unconcern by which his general bearing throughout the trial had been distinguished.

On this announcement of the adjutant, the governor betrayed a movement of impatience, that was meant to convey his utter disbelief of the whole of the prisoner's statement, and his look seemed to express to the court it should also arrive, and without hesitation, at the same conclusion. Even all authoritative as he was, however, he felt that military etiquette and strict discipline prevented his interfering further in this advanced state of the proceedings.

"Prisoner," again remarked Captain Blessington, "your statement in regard to the means employed by Captain de Haldimar in effecting his departure, is, you must admit, unsupported by appearances. How happens it the rope is no longer where you say it was placed? No one could have removed it but yourself. Have you done so? and if so, can you produce it, or say where it is to be found?"

"Captain Blessington," replied Halloway, proudly, yet respectfully, "I have already invoked that great Being, before whose tribunal I am so shortly to appear, in testimony of the truth of my assertion; and again, in his presence, do I repeat, every word I have uttered is true. I did not remove the rope, neither do I know what is become of it. I admit its disappearance is extraordinary, but a moment's reflection must satisfy the court I would not have devised a tale, the falsehood of which could at once have been detected on an examination such as that which has just been instituted. When Mr. Lawson left this room just now, I fully expected he would have found the rope lying as it had been left. What has become of it, I repeat, I know not; but in the manner I have stated did Captain de Haldimar and Donellan cross the ditch. I have nothing further to add," he concluded once more, drawing up his fine tall person, the native elegance of which could not be wholly disguised even in the dress of a private soldier; "nothing further to disclose. Yet do I repel with scorn the injurious insinuation against my fidelity, suggested in these doubts. I am prepared to meet my death as best may become a soldier, and, let me add, as best may become a proud and well born gentleman; but humanity and common justice should at least be accorded to my memory. I am an unfortunate man, but no traitor."

The members were visibly impressed by the last sentences of the prisoner. No further question however was asked, and he was again removed by the escort, who had been wondering spectators of the scene, to the cell he had so recently occupied. The room

was then cleared of the witnesses and strangers, the latter comprising nearly the whole of the officers off duty, when the court proceeded to deliberate on the evidence, and pass sentence on the accused.

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CHAPTER VII.

Although the young and sensitive De Haldimar had found physical relief in the summary means resorted to by the surgeon, the moral wound at his heart not only remained unsoothed, but was rendered more acutely painful by the wretched reflections, which, now that he had full leisure to review the past, and anticipate the future in all the gloom attached to both, so violently assailed him. From the moment when his brother's strange and mysterious disappearance had been communicated by the adjutant in the manner we have already seen, his spirits had been deeply and fearfully depressed. Still he had every reason to expect, from the well-known character of Halloway, the strong hope expressed by the latter might be realised; and that, at the hour appointed for trial, his brother would be present to explain the cause of his mysterious absence, justify the conduct of his subordinate, and exonerate him from the treachery with which he now stood charged. Yet, powerful as this hope was, it was unavoidably qualified by dispiriting doubt; for a nature affectionate and bland, as that of Charles de Haldimar, could not but harbour distrust, while a shadow of uncertainty, in regard to the fate of a brother so tenderly loved, remained. He had forced himself to believe as much as possible what he wished, and the effort had, to a certain extent succeeded; but there had been something so solemn and so impressive in the scene that had passed when the prisoner was first brought up for trial, something so fearfully prophetic in the wild language of his unhappy wife, he had found it impossible to resist the influence of the almost superstitious awe they had awakened in his heart.

What the feelings of the young officer were subsequently, when in the person of the murdered man on the common, the victim of Sir Everard Valletort's aim, he recognised that brother, whose disappearance had occasioned him so much inquietude, we shall not attempt to describe: their nature is best shown in the effect they produced—the almost overwhelming agony of body and mind, which had borne him, like a stricken plant, unresisting to the earth. But now that, in the calm and solitude of his chamber, he had leisure to review the fearful events conspiring to produce this extremity, his anguish of spirit was even deeper than when the first rude shock of conviction had flashed upon his understanding. A tide of suffering, that overpowered, without rendering him sensible of its positive and abstract character, had, in the first instance, oppressed his faculties, and obscured his perception; but now, slow, sure, stinging, and gradually succeeding each other, came every bitter thought and reflection of which that tide was composed; and the generous heart of Charles de Haldimar was a prey to feelings that would have wrung the soul, and wounded the sensibilities of one far less gentle and susceptible than himself.

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Between Sir Everard Valletort and Charles de Haldimar, who, it has already been remarked, were lieutenants in Captain Blessington's company, a sentiment of friendship had been suffered to spring up almost from the moment of Sir Everard's joining. The young men were nearly of the same age; and although the one was all gentleness, the other all spirit and vivacity, not a shade of disunion had at any period intervened to interrupt the almost brotherly attachment subsisting between them, and each felt the disposition of the other was the one most assimilated to his own. In fact, Sir Everard was far from being the ephemeral character he was often willing to appear. Under a semblance of affectation, and much assumed levity of manner, never, however, personally offensive, he concealed a brave, generous, warm, and manly heart, and talents becoming the rank he held in society, such as would not have reflected discredit on one numbering twice his years. He had entered the army, as most young men of rank usually did at that period, rather for the agremens it held forth, than with any serious view to advancement in it as a profession. Still he entertained the praiseworthy desire of being something more than what is, among military men, emphatically termed a feather-bed soldier; and, contrary to the wishes of his fashionable mother, who would have preferred seeing him exhibit his uniform in the drawing-rooms of London, had purchased the step into his present corps from a cavalry regiment at home. Not that we mean, however, to assert he was not a feather-bed soldier in its more literal sense: no man that ever glittered in gold and scarlet was fonder of a feather-bed than the young baronet; and, in fact, his own observations, recorded in the early part of this volume, sufficiently prove his predilection for an indulgence which, we take it, in no way impugned his character as a soldier. Sir Everard would have fought twenty battles in the course of the month, if necessary, and yet not complained of the fatigue or severity of his service, provided only he had been suffered to press his downy couch to what is termed a decent hour in the day. But he had an innate and, perhaps, it may be, an instinctive horror of drills and early rising; a pastime in which the martinets and disciplinarians of the last century were very much given to indulge. He frequently upheld an opinion that must have been little less than treason in the eyes of a commander so strict as Colonel de Haldimar, that an officer who rose at eight, with all his faculties refreshed and invigorated, might evince as much of the true bearing of the soldier in the field, as he who, having quitted his couch at dawn, naturally felt the necessity of repose at a moment when activity and exertion were most required.

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We need scarcely state, Sir Everard's theories on this important subject were seldom reduced to practice; for, even long before the Indians had broken out into open acts of hostility, when such precautions were rendered indispensable, Colonel de Haldimar had never suffered either officer or man to linger on his pillow after the first faint dawn had appeared. This was a system to which Sir Everard could never reconcile himself. He had quitted England with a view to active service abroad, it is true, but he had never taken "active service" in its present literal sense, and, as he frequently declared to his companions, he preferred giving an Indian warrior a chance for his scalp any hour after breakfast, to rising at daybreak, when, from very stupefaction, he seldom knew whether he stood on his head or his heels. "If the men must be drilled," he urged, "with a view to their health and discipline, why not place them under the direction of the adjutant or the officer of the day, whoever he might chance to be, and not unnecessarily disturb a body of gentlemen from their comfortable slumbers at that unconscionable hour?" Poor Sir Everard! this was the only grievance of which he complained, and he complained bitterly. Scarcely a morning passed without his inveighing loudly against the barbarity of such a custom; threatening at the same time, amid the laughter of his companions, to quit the service in disgust at what he called so ungentlemanly and gothic a habit. All he waited for, he protested, was to have an opportunity of bearing away the spoils of some Indian chief, that, on his return to England, he might afford his lady mother an opportunity of judging with her own eyes of the sort of enemy he had relinquished the comforts of home to contend against, and exhibiting to her very dear friends the barbarous proofs of the prowess of her son. Though these observations were usually made half in jest half in earnest, there was no reason to doubt the young and lively baronet was, in truth, heartily tired of a service which seemed to offer nothing but privations and annoyances, unmixed with even the chances of obtaining those trophies to which he alluded; and, but for two motives, there is every probability he would have seriously availed himself of the earliest opportunity of retiring. The first of these was his growing friendship for the amiable and gentle Charles de Haldimar; the second the secret, and scarcely to himself acknowledged, interest which had been created in his heart for his sister Clara; whom he only knew from the glowing descriptions of his friend, and the strong resemblance she was said to bear to him by the other officers.

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Clara de Haldimar was the constant theme of her younger brother's praise. Her image was ever uppermost in his thoughts—her name ever hovering on his lips; and when alone with his friend Valletort, it was his delight to dwell on the worth and accomplishments of his amiable and beloved sister. Then, indeed, would his usually calm blue eye sparkle with the animation of his subject, while his colouring cheek marked all the warmth and sincerity with which he bore attestation to her gentleness and her goodness. The heart of Charles de Haldimar, soldier as he was, was pure, generous, and unsophisticated as that of the sister whom he so constantly eulogized; and, while listening to his eloquent praises, Sir Everard learnt to feel an interest in a being whom all had declared to be the counterpart of her brother, as well in personal attraction as in singleness of nature. With all his affected levity, and notwithstanding his early initiation into fashionable life—that matter-of-fact life which strikes at the existence of our earlier and dearer illusions—there was a dash of romance in the character of the young baronet which tended much to increase the pleasure he always took in the warm descriptions of his friend. The very circumstance of her being personally unknown to him, was, with Sir Everard, an additional motive for interest in Miss de Haldimar.

Imagination and mystery generally work their way together; and as there was a shade of mystery attached to Sir Everard's very ignorance of the person of one whom he admired and esteemed from report alone, imagination was not slow to improve the opportunity, and to endow the object with characteristics, which perhaps a more intimate knowledge of the party might have led him to qualify. In this manner, in early youth, are the silken and willing fetters of the generous and the enthusiastic forged. We invest some object, whose praises, whispered secretly in the ear, have glided imperceptibly to the heart, with all the attributes supplied by our own vivid and readily according imaginations; and so accustomed do we become to linger on the picture, we adore the semblance with an ardour which the original often fails to excite. When, however, the high standard of our fancy's fair creation is attained, we worship as something sacred that which was to our hearts a source of pure and absorbing interest, hallowed by the very secrecy in which such interest was indulged. Even where it fails, so unwilling are we to lose sight of the illusion to which our thoughts have fondly clung, so loth to destroy the identity of the semblance with its original, that we throw a veil over that reason which is then so little in unison with our wishes, and forgive much in consideration of the very mystery which first gave a direction to our interest, and subsequently chained our preference. How is it to be lamented, that illusions so dear, and images so fanciful, should find their level with time; or that intercourse with the world, which should be the

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means rather of promoting than marring human happiness, should leave on the heart so little vestige of those impressions which characterize the fervency of youth; and which, dispassionately considered, constitute the only true felicity of riper life! It is then that man, in all the vigour and capacity of his intellectual nature, feels the sentiment of love upon him in all its ennobling force. It is then that his impetuous feelings, untinged by the romance which imposes its check upon the more youthful, like the wild flow of the mighty torrent, seeks a channel wherein they may empty themselves; and were he to follow the guidance of those feelings, of which in that riper life he seems ashamed as of a weakness unworthy his sex, in the warm and glowing bosom of Nature's divinity—*woman*—would he pour forth the swollen tide of his affection; and acknowledge, in the fullness of his expanding heart, the vast bounty of Providence, who had bestowed on him so invaluable—so unspeakably invaluable, a blessing.—But no; in the pursuit of ambition, in the acquisition of wealth, in the thirst after power, and the craving after distinction, nay, nineteen times out of twenty, in the most frivolous occupations, the most unsatisfactory amusements, do the great mass of the maturer man sink those feelings; divested of which, we become mere plodders on the earth, mere creatures of materialism: nor is it until after age and infirmity have overtaken them, they look back with regret to that real and substantial, but unenjoyed happiness, which the occupied heart and the soul's communion alone can bestow. Then indeed, when too late, are they ready to acknowledge the futility of those pursuits, the inadequacy of those mere ephemeral pleasures, to which in the full meridian of their manhood they sacrificed, as a thing unworthy of their dignity, the mysterious charm of woman's influence and woman's beauty.

We do not mean to say Clara de Haldimar would have fallen short of the high estimate formed of her worth by the friend of her brother; neither is it to be understood, Sir Everard suffered this fair vision of his fancy to lead him into the wild and labyrinthian paths of boyish romance; but certain it is, the floating illusions, conjured up by his imagination, exercised a mysterious influence over his heart, that hourly acquired a deeper and less equivocal character. It might have been curiosity in the first instance, or that mere repose of the fancy upon an object of its own creation, which was natural to a young man placed like himself for the moment out of the pale of all female society. It has been remarked, and justly, there is nothing so dangerous to the peace of the human heart as solitude. It is in solitude, our thoughts, taking their colouring from our feelings, invest themselves with the power of multiplying ideal beauty, until we become in a measure tenants of a world of our own creation, from which we never descend, without loathing and disgust, into the dull and matter-of-fact routine of actual existence. Hence the misery of the imaginative man!—hence his little sympathy with the mass, who, tame and soulless, look upon life and the things of life, not through the refining medium of ideality, but through the grossly magnifying optics of mere sense and materialism.

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But, though we could, and perhaps may, at some future period, write volumes on this subject, we return for the present from a digression into which we have been insensibly led by the temporary excitement of our own feelings.

Whatever were the impressions of the young baronet, and however he might have been inclined to suffer the fair image of the gentle Clara, such as he was perhaps wont to paint it, to exercise its spell upon his fancy, certain it is, he never expressed to her brother more than that esteem and interest which it was but natural he should accord to the sister of his friend. Neither had Charles de Haldimar, even amid all his warmth of commendation, ever made the slightest allusion to his sister, that could be construed into a desire she should awaken any unusual or extraordinary sentiment of preference. Much and fervently as he desired such an event, there was an innate sense of decorum, and it may be secret pride, that caused him to abstain from any observation having the remotest tendency to compromise the spotless delicacy of his adored sister; and such he would have considered any expression of his own hopes and wishes, where no declaration of preference had been previously made. There was another motive for this reserve on the part of the young officer. The baronet was an only child, and would, on attaining his majority, of which he wanted only a few months, become the possessor of a large fortune. His sister Clara, on the contrary, had little beyond her own fair fame and the beauty transmitted to her by the mother she had lost. Colonel de Haldimar was a younger son, and had made his way through life with his sword, and an unblemished reputation alone,—advantages he had shared with his children, for the two eldest of whom his interest and long services had procured commissions in his own regiment.

But even while Charles de Haldimar abstained from all expression of his hopes, he had fully made up his mind that Sir Everard and his sister were so formed for each other, it was next to an impossibility they could meet without loving. In one of his letters to the latter, he had alluded to his friend in terms of so high and earnest panegyric, that Clara had acknowledged, in reply, she was prepared to find in the young baronet one whom she should regard with partiality, if it were only on account of the friendship subsisting between him and her brother. This admission, however, was communicated in confidence, and the young officer had religiously preserved his sister's secret.

These and fifty other recollections now crowded on the mind of the sufferer, only to render the intensity of his anguish more complete; among the bitterest of which was the certainty that the mysterious events of the past night had raised up an insuperable barrier to this union; for how could Clara de Haldimar become the wife of him whose hands were, however innocently, stained with the life-blood of her brother! To

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dwell on this, and the loss of that brother, was little short of madness, and yet De Haldimar could think of nothing else; nor for a period could the loud booming of the cannon from the ramparts, every report of which shook his chamber to its very foundations, call off his attention from a subject which, while it pained, engrossed every faculty and absorbed every thought. At length, towards the close, he called faintly to the old and faithful soldier, who, at the foot of the bed, stood watching every change of his master's countenance, to know the cause of the cannonade. On being informed the batteries in the rear were covering the retreat of Captain Erskine, who, in his attempt to obtain the body, had been surprised by the Indians, a new direction was temporarily given to his thoughts, and he now manifested the utmost impatience to know the result.

In a few minutes Morrison, who, in defiance of the surgeon's strict order not on any account to quit the room, had flown to obtain some intelligence which he trusted might remove the anxiety of his suffering master, again made his appearance, stating the corpse was already secured, and close under the guns of the fort, beneath which the detachment, though hotly assailed from the forest, were also fast retreating.

"And is it really my brother, Morrison? Are you quite certain that it is Captain de Haldimar?" asked the young officer, in the eager accents of one who, with the fullest conviction on his mind, yet grasps at the faintest shadow of a consoling doubt. "Tell me that it is not my brother, and half of what I possess in the world shall be yours."

The old soldier brushed a tear from his eye. "God bless you, Mr. de Haldimar, I would give half my grey hairs to be able to do so; but it is, indeed, too truly the captain who has been killed. I saw the very wings of his regimentals as he lay on his face on the litter."

Charles de Haldimar groaned aloud. "Oh God! oh God! would I had never lived to see this day." Then springing suddenly up in his bed—"Morrison, where are my clothes? I insist on seeing my slaughtered brother myself."

"Good Heaven, sir, consider," said the old man approaching the bed, and attempting to replace the covering which had been spurned to its very foot,—“consider you are in a burning fever, and the slightest cold may kill you altogether. The doctor's orders are, you were on no account to get up."

The effort made by the unfortunate youth was momentary. Faint from the blood he had lost, and giddy from the excitement of his feelings, he sank back exhausted on his pillow, and wept like a child.

Old Morrison shed tears also; for his heart bled for the sufferings of one whom he had nursed and played with even in early infancy, and whom, although his master, he

regarded with the affection he would have borne to his own child. As he had justly observed, he would have willingly given half his remaining years to be able to remove the source of the sorrow which so deeply oppressed him.

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When this violent paroxysm had somewhat subsided, De Haldimar became more composed; but his was rather that composure which grows out of the apathy produced by overwhelming grief, than the result of any relief afforded to his suffering heart by the tears he had shed. He had continued some time in this faint and apparently tranquil state, when confused sounds in the barrack-yard, followed by the raising of the heavy drawbridge, announced the return of the detachment. Again he started up in his bed and demanded his clothes, declaring his intention to go out and receive the corpse of his murdered brother. All opposition on the part of the faithful Morrison was now likely to prove fruitless, when suddenly the door opened, and an officer burst hurriedly into the room.

“Courage! courage! my dear De Haldimar; I am the bearer of good news. Your brother is not the person who has been slain.”

Again De Haldimar sank back upon his pillow, overcome by a variety of conflicting emotions. A moment afterwards, and he exclaimed reproachfully, yet almost gasping with the eagerness of his manner,—

“For God’s sake, Sumners—in the name of common humanity, do not trifle with my feelings. If you would seek to lull me with false hopes, you are wrong. I am prepared to hear and bear the worst at present; but to be undeceived again would break my heart.”

“I swear to you by every thing I have been taught to revere as sacred,” solemnly returned Ensign Sumners, deeply touched by the affliction he witnessed, “what I state is strictly true. Captain Erskine himself sent me to tell you.”

“What, is he only wounded then?” and a glow of mingled hope and satisfaction was visible even through the flush of previous excitement on the cheek of the sufferer.

“Quick, Morrison, give me my clothes.—Where is my brother, Sumners?” and again he raised up his debilitated frame with the intention of quitting his couch.

“De Haldimar, my dear De Haldimar, compose yourself, and listen to me. Your brother is still missing, and we are as much in the dark about his fate as ever. All that is certain is, we have no positive knowledge of his death; but surely that is a thousand times preferable to the horrid apprehensions under which we have all hitherto laboured.”

“What mean you, Sumners? or am I so bewildered by my sufferings as not to comprehend you clearly?—Nay, nay, forgive me; but I am almost heart-broken at this loss, and scarcely know what I say. But what is it you mean? I saw my unhappy brother lying on the common with my own eyes. Poor Valletort, himself—” here a rush of bitter recollections flashed on the memory of the young man, and the tears coursed each other rapidly down his cheek. His emotion lasted for a few moments, and he pursued,—“Poor Valletort himself saw him, for he was nearly as much overwhelmed with affliction as I was; and even Morrison beheld him also, not ten minutes since, under

the very walls of the fort; nay, distinguished the wings of his uniform: and yet you would persuade me my brother, instead of being brought in a corpse, is still missing and alive. This is little better than trifling with my wretchedness, Sumners," and again he sank back exhausted on his pillow.

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"I can easily forgive your doubts, De Haldimar," returned the sympathizing Sumners, taking the hand of his companion, and pressing it gently in his own; "for, in truth, there is a great deal of mystery attached to the whole affair. I have not seen the body myself; but I distinctly heard Captain Erskine state it certainly was not your brother, and he requested me to apprise both Sir Everard Valletort and yourself of the fact."

"Who is the murdered man, then? and how comes he to be clad in the uniform of one of our officers? Pshaw! it is too absurd to be credited. Erskine is mistaken—he must be mistaken—it can be no other than my poor brother Frederick. Sumners, I am sick, faint, with this cruel uncertainty: go, my dear fellow, at once, and examine the body; then return to me, and satisfy my doubts, if possible."

"Most willingly, if you desire it," returned Sumners, moving towards the door; "but believe me, De Haldimar, you may make your mind tranquil on the subject;—Erskine spoke with certainty."

"Have you seen Valletort?" asked De Haldimar, while an involuntary shudder pervaded his frame.

"I have. He flew on the instant to make further enquiries; and was in the act of going to examine the body of the murdered man when I came here.—But here he is himself, and his countenance is the harbinger of any thing but a denial of my intelligence."

"Oh, Charles, what a weight of misery has been removed from my heart!" exclaimed that officer, now rushing to the bedside of his friend, and seizing his extended hand,—"Your brother, let us hope, still lives."

"Almighty God, I thank thee!" fervently ejaculated De Haldimar; and then, overcome with joy, surprise, and gratitude, he again sank back upon his pillow, sobbing and weeping violently.

Sumners had, with delicate tact, retired the moment Sir Everard made his appearance; for he, as well as the whole body of officers, was aware of the close friendship that subsisted between the young men, and he felt, at such a moment, the presence of a third person must be a sort of violation of the sacredness of their interview.

For some minutes the young baronet stood watching in silence, and with his friend's hand closely clasped in his own, the course of those tears which seemed to afford so much relief to the overcharged heart of the sufferer. At length they passed gradually away; and a smile, expressive of the altered state of his feelings, for the first time animated the flushed but handsome features of the younger De Haldimar.

We shall not attempt to paint all that passed between the friends during the first interesting moments of an interview which neither had expected to enjoy again, or the

delight and satisfaction with which they congratulated themselves on the futility of those fears, which, if realised, must have embittered every future moment of their lives with the most harrowing recollections. Sir Everard, particularly, felt, and was not slow to express, his joy on this occasion; for, as he gazed upon the countenance of his friend, he was more than ever inclined to confess an interest in the sister he was said so much to resemble.

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With that facility with which in youth the generous and susceptible are prone to exchange their tears for smiles, as some powerful motive for the reaction may prompt, the invalid had already, and for the moment, lost sight of the painful past in the pleasurable present, so that his actual excitement was strongly in contrast with the melancholy he had so recently exhibited. Never had Charles de Haldimar appeared so eminently handsome; and yet his beauty resembled that of a frail and delicate woman, rather than that of one called to the manly and arduous profession of a soldier. It was that delicate and Medor-like beauty which might have won the heart and fascinated the sense of a second Angelica. The light brown hair flowing in thick and natural waves over a high white forehead; the rich bloom of the transparent and downy cheek; the large, blue, long, dark-lashed eye, in which a shade of languor harmonised with the soft but animated expression of the whole countenance,—the dimpled mouth,—the small, clear, and even teeth,—all these now characterised Charles de Haldimar; and if to these we add a voice rich, full, and melodious, and a smile sweet and fascinating, we shall be at no loss to account for the readiness with which Sir Everard suffered his imagination to draw on the brother for those attributes he ascribed to the sister.

It was while this impression was strong upon his fancy, he took occasion to remark, in reply to an observation of De Haldimar's, alluding to the despair with which his sister would have been seized, had she known one brother had fallen by the hand of the friend of the other.

"The grief of my own heart, Charles, on this occasion, would have been little inferior to her own. The truth is, my feelings during the last three hours have let me into a secret, of the existence of which I was, in a great degree, ignorant until then: I scarcely know how to express myself, for the communication is so truly absurd and romantic you will not credit it." He paused, hesitated, and then, as if determined to anticipate the ridicule he seemed to feel would be attached to his confession, with a forced half laugh pursued: "The fact is, Charles, I have been so much used to listen to your warm and eloquent praises of your sister, I have absolutely, I will not say fallen in love with (that would be going too far), but conceived so strong an interest in her, that my most ardent desire would be to find favour in her eyes. What say you, my friend? are you inclined to forward my suit; and if so, is there any chance for me, think you, with herself?"

The breast of Charles de Haldimar, who had listened with deep and increasing attention to this avowal, swelled high with pleasurable excitement, and raising himself up in his bed with one hand, while he grasped one of Sir Everard's with the other, he exclaimed with a transport of affection too forcible to be controlled,—

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“Oh, Valletort, Valletort! this is, indeed, all that was wanting to complete my happiness. My sister Clara I adore with all the affection of my nature; I love her better than my own life, which is wrapped up in hers. She is an angel in disposition,—all that is dear, tender, and affectionate,—all that is gentle and lovely in woman; one whose welfare is dearer far to me than my own, and without whose presence I could not live. Valletort, that prize,—that treasure, that dearer half of myself, is yours,—yours for ever. I have long wished you should love, each other, and I felt, when you met, you would. If I have hitherto forbore from expressing this fondest wish of my heart, it has been from delicacy—from a natural fear of compromising the purity of my adored Clara. Now, however, you have confessed yourself interested, by a description that falls far short of the true peril of that dear girl, I can no longer disguise my gratification and delight. Valletort,” he concluded, impressively, “there is no other man on earth to whom I would say so much; but you were formed for each other, and you will, you must, be the husband of my sister.”

If the youthful and affectionate De Haldimar was happy, Sir Everard was no less so; for already, with the enthusiasm of a young man of twenty, he painted to himself the entire fruition of those dreams of happiness that had so long been familiarised to his imagination. One doubt alone crossed his mind.

“But if your sister should have decided differently, Charles,” he at length remarked, as he gently quitted the embrace of his friend: “who knows if her heart may not already throb for another; and even if not, it is possible she may judge me far less flatteringly than you do.”

“Valletort, your fears are groundless. Having admitted thus far, I will even go farther, and add, you have been the subject of one of my letters to Clara, who, in her turn, ‘confesses a strong interest in one of whom she has heard so much.’ She writes playfully, of course, but it is quite evident to me she is prepared to like you.”

“Indeed! But, Charles, liking is many degrees removed you know from loving; besides, I understand there are two or three handsome and accomplished fellows among the garrison of Michilimackinac, and your sister’s visit to her cousin may not have been paid altogether with impunity.”

“Think not thus meanly of Clara’s understanding, Valletort. There must be something more than mere beauty and accomplishment to fix the heart of my sister. The dark eyed and elegant Baynton, and the musical and sonnetteering Middleton, to whom you, doubtless, allude, are very excellent fellows in their way; but handsome and accomplished as they are, they are not exactly the men to please Clara de Haldimar.”

“But, my dear Charles, you forget also any little merit of my own is doubly enhanced in your eyes, by the sincerity of the friendship subsisting between us; your sister may think very differently.”

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"Psha, Valletort! these difficulties are all of your own creation," returned his friend, impatiently; "I know the heart of Clara is disengaged. What would you more?"

"Enough, De Haldimar; I will no longer doubt my own prospects. If she but approve me, my whole life shall be devoted to the happiness of your sister."

A single knock was now heard at the door of the apartment; it was opened, and a sergeant appeared at the entrance.

"The company are under arms for punishment parade, Lieutenant Valletort," said the man, touching his cap.

In an instant, the visionary prospects of the young men gave place to the stern realities connected with that announcement of punishment. The treason of Halloway,—the absence of Frederick de Haldimar,—the dangers by which they were beset,—and the little present probability of a re-union with those who were most dear to them,—all these recollections now flashed across their minds with the rapidity of thought; and the conversation that had so recently passed between them seemed to leave no other impression than what is produced from some visionary speculation of the moment.

CHAPTER VIII.

As the bells of the fort tolled the tenth hour of morning, the groups of dispersed soldiery, warned by the rolling of the assembly drum, once more fell into their respective ranks in the order described in the opening of this volume, Soon afterwards the prisoner Halloway was reconducted into the square by a strong escort, who took their stations as before in the immediate centre, where the former stood principally conspicuous to the observation of his comrades. His countenance was paler, and had less, perhaps, of the indifference he had previously manifested; but to supply this there was a certain subdued air of calm dignity, and a composure that sprang, doubtless, from the consciousness of the new character in which he now appeared before his superiors. Colonel de Haldimar almost immediately followed, and with him were the principal staff of the garrison, all of whom, with the exception of the sick and wounded and their attendants, were present to a man. The former took from the hands of the governor, Lawson, a large packet, consisting of several sheets of folded paper closely written upon. These were the proceedings of the court martial.

After enumerating the several charges, and detailing the evidence of the witnesses examined, the adjutant came at length to the finding and sentence of the court, which were as follows:—

"The court having duly considered the evidence adduced against the prisoner private Frank Halloway, together with what he has urged in his defence, are of opinion,—"

“That with regard to the first charge, it is not proved.”

“That with regard to the second charge, it is not proved.”

“That with regard to the third charge, even by his own voluntary confession, the prisoner is guilty.”

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“The court having found the prisoner private Frank Halloway guilty of the third charge preferred against him, which is his direct violation of a standing order of the garrison, entailing capital punishment, do hereby sentence him, the said prisoner, private Frank Halloway, to be shot to death at such time and place as the officer commanding may deem fit to appoint.”

Although the utmost order pervaded the ranks, every breath had been suspended, every ear stretched during the reading of the sentence; and now that it came arrayed in terror and in blood, every glance was turned in pity on its unhappy victim. But Halloway heard it with the ears of one who has made up his mind to suffer; and the faint half smile that played upon his lip spoke more in scorn than in sorrow. Colonel de Haldimar pursued:—

“The court having found it imperatively incumbent on them to award the punishment of death to the prisoner, private Frank Halloway, at the same time gladly avail themselves of their privilege by strongly recommending him to mercy. The court cannot, in justice to the character of the prisoner, refrain from expressing their unanimous conviction, that notwithstanding the mysterious circumstances which have led to his confinement and trial, he is entirely innocent of the treachery ascribed to him. The court have founded this conviction on the excellent character, both on duty and in the field, hitherto borne by the prisoner,—his well-known attachment to the officer with whose abduction he stands charged,—and the manly, open, and (as the court are satisfied) correct history given of his former life. It is, moreover, the impression of the court, that, as stated by the prisoner, his guilt on the third charge has been the result only of his attachment for Captain de Haldimar. And for this, and the reasons above assigned, do they strongly recommend the prisoner to mercy.”

(Signed)

Noel Blessington,
Captain and President.

Sentence approved and confirmed.

Charles de Haldimar,
Colonel Commandant.

While these concluding remarks of the court were being read, the prisoner manifested the deepest emotion. If a smile of scorn had previously played upon his lip, it was because he fancied the court, before whom he had sought to vindicate his fame, had judged him with a severity not inferior to his colonel's; but now that, in the presence of his companions, he heard the flattering attestation of his services, coupled even as it was with the sentence that condemned him to die, tears of gratitude and pleasure rose despite of himself to his eyes; and it required all his self-command to enable him to

abstain from giving expression to his feelings towards those who had so generously interpreted the motives of his dereliction from duty. But when the melancholy and startling fact of the approval and confirmation of the sentence met his ear, without the slightest allusion to that mercy which had been so urgently recommended, he again overcame his weakness, and exhibited his wonted air of calm and unconcern.

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"Let the prisoner be removed, Mr. Lawson," ordered the governor, whose stern and somewhat dissatisfied expression of countenance was the only comment on the recommendation for mercy.

The order was promptly executed. Once more Halloway left the square, and was reconducted to the cell he had occupied since the preceding night.

"Major Blackwater," pursued the governor, "let a detachment consisting of one half the garrison be got in readiness to leave the fort within the hour. Captain Wentworth, three pieces of field artillery will be required. Let them be got ready also." He then retired from the area with the forbidding dignity and stately haughtiness of manner that was habitual to him; while the officers, who had just received his commands, prepared to fulfil the respective duties assigned them.

Since the first alarm of the garrison no opportunity had hitherto been afforded the officers to snatch the slightest refreshment. Advantage was now taken of the short interval allowed by the governor, and they all repaired to the mess-room, where their breakfast had long since been provided.

"Well, Blessington," remarked Captain Erskine, as he filled his plate for the third time from a large haunch of smoke-dried venison, for which his recent skirmish with the Indians had given him an unusual relish, "so it appears your recommendation of poor Halloway to mercy is little likely to be attended to. Did you remark how displeased the colonel looked as he bungled through it? One might almost be tempted to think he had an interest in the man's death, so determined does he appear to carry his point."

Although several of his companions, perhaps, felt and thought the same, still there was no one who would have ventured to avow his real sentiments in so unqualified a manner. Indeed such an observation proceeding from the lips of any other officer would have excited the utmost surprise; but Captain Erskine, a brave, bold, frank, and somewhat thoughtless soldier, was one of those beings who are privileged to say any thing. His opinions were usually expressed without ceremony; and his speech was not the most circumspect *now*, as since his return to the fort he had swallowed, fasting, two or three glasses of a favourite spirit, which, without intoxicating, had greatly excited him.

"I remarked enough," said Captain Blessington, who sat leaning his head on one hand, while with the other he occasionally, and almost mechanically, raised a cup filled with a liquid of a pale blood colour to his lips,—“quite enough to make me regret from my very soul I should have been his principal judge. Poor Halloway, I pity him much; for, on my honour, I believe him to be the gentleman he represents himself.”

"A finer fellow does not live," remarked the last remaining officer of the grenadiers. "But surely Colonel de Haldimar cannot mean to carry the sentence into effect. The

recommendation of a court, couched in such terms as these, ought alone to have some weight with him.”

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"It is quite clear, from the fact of his having been remanded to his cell, the execution of the poor fellow will be deferred at least," observed one of Captain Erskine's subalterns. "If the governor had intended he should suffer immediately, he would have had him shot the moment after his sentence was read. But what is the meaning and object of this new sortie? and whither are we now going? Do you know, Captain Erskine, our company is again ordered for this duty?"

"Know it, Leslie! of course I do; and for that reason am I paying my court to the more substantial part of the breakfast. Come, Blessington, my dear fellow, you have quite lost your appetite, and we may have sharp work before we get back. Follow my example: throw that nasty blood-thickening sassafras away, and lay a foundation from this venison. None sweeter is to be found in the forests of America. A few slices of that, and then a glass each of my best Jamaica, and we shall have strength to go through the expedition, if its object be the capture of the bold Pontecac himself."

"I presume the object is rather to seek for Captain de Haldimar," said Lieutenant Boyce, the officer of grenadiers; "but in that case why not send out his own company?"

"Because the Colonel prefers trusting to cooler heads and more experienced arms," good-humouredly observed Captain Erskine. "Blessington is our senior, and his men are all old stagers. My lads, too, have had their mettle up already this morning, and there is nothing like that to prepare men for a dash of enterprise. It is with them as with blood horses, the more you put them on their speed the less anxious are they to quit the course. Well, Johnstone, my brave Scot, ready for another skirmish?" he asked, as that officer now entered to satisfy the cravings of an appetite little inferior to that of his captain.

"With 'Nunquam non paratus' for my motto," gaily returned the young man, "it were odd, indeed, if a mere scratch like this should prevent me from establishing my claim to it by following wherever my gallant captain leads."

"Most courteously spoken, and little in the spirit of a man yet smarting under the infliction of a rifle wound, it must be confessed," remarked Lieutenant Leslie. "But, Johnstone, you should bear in mind a too close adherence to that motto has been, in some degree, fatal to your family."

"No reflections, Leslie, if you please," returned his brother subaltern, slightly reddening. "If the head of our family was unfortunate enough to be considered a traitor to England, he was not so, at least, to Scotland; and Scotland was the land of his birth. But let his political errors be forgotten. Though the winged spur no longer adorn the booted heel of an Earl of Annandale, the time may not be far distant when some liberal and popular monarch of England shall restore a title forfeited neither through cowardice nor dishonour, but from an erroneous sense of duty."

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"That is to say," muttered Ensign Delme, looking round for approval as he spoke, "that our present king is neither liberal nor popular. Well, Mr. Johnstone, were such an observation to reach the ears of Colonel de Haldimar you would stand a very fair chance of being brought to a court martial."

"That is to say nothing of the kind, sir," somewhat fiercely retorted the young Scot; "but any thing I do say you are at liberty to repeat to Colonel de Haldimar, or whom you will. I cannot understand, Leslie, why you should have made any allusion to the misfortunes of my family at this particular moment, and in this public manner. I trust it was not with a view to offend me;" and he fixed his large black eyes upon his brother subaltern, as if he would have read every thought of his mind.

"Upon my honour, Johnstone, I meant nothing of the kind," frankly returned Leslie. "I merely meant to hint that as you had had your share of service this morning, you might, at least, have suffered me to borrow your spurs, while you reposed for the present on your laurels."

"There are my gay and gallant Scots," exclaimed Captain Erskine, as he swallowed off a glass of the old Jamaica which lay before him, and with which he usually neutralised the acidities of a meat breakfast, "Settled like gentlemen and lads of spirit as ye are," he pursued, as the young men cordially shook each other's hand across the table. "What an enviable command is mine, to have a company of brave fellows who would face the devil himself were it necessary; and two hot and impatient subs., who are ready to cut each other's throat for the pleasure of accompanying me against a set of savages that are little better than so many devils. Come, Johnstone, you know the Colonel allows us but one sub. at a time, in consequence of our scarcity of officers, therefore it is but fair Leslie should have his turn. It will not be long, I dare say, before we shall have another brush with the rascals."

"In my opinion," observed Captain Blessington, who had been a silent and thoughtful witness of what was passing around him, "neither Leslie nor Johnstone would evince so much anxiety, were they aware of the true-nature of the duty for which our companies have been ordered. Depend upon it, it is no search after Captain de Haldimar in which we are about to be engaged; for much as the colonel loves his son, he would on no account compromise the safety of the garrison, by sending a party into the forest, where poor De Haldimar, if alive, is at all likely to be found."

"Faith you are right, Blessington; the governor is not one to run these sort of risks on every occasion. My chief surprise, indeed, is, that he suffered me to venture even upon the common; but if we are not designed for some hostile expedition, why leave the fort at all?"

"The question will need no answer, if Halloway be found to accompany us."



“Psha! why should Halloway be taken out for the purpose? If he be shot at all, he will be shot on the ramparts, in the presence of, and as an example to, the whole garrison. Still, on reflection, I cannot but think it impossible the sentence should be carried into full effect, after the strong, nay, the almost unprecedented recommendation to mercy recorded on the face of the proceedings.”

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Captain Blessington shook his head despondingly. "What think you, Erskine, of the policy of making an example, which may be witnessed by the enemy as well as the garrison? It is evident, from his demeanour throughout, nothing will convince the colonel that Halloway is not a traitor, and he may think it advisable to strike terror in the minds of the savages, by an execution which will have the effect of showing the treason of the soldier to have been discovered."

In this opinion many of the officers now concurred; and as the fate of the unfortunate Halloway began to assume a character of almost certainty, even the spirit of the gallant Erskine, the least subdued by the recent distressing events, was overclouded; and all sank, as if by one consent, into silent communion with their thoughts, as they almost mechanically completed the meal, at which habit rather than appetite still continued them. Before any of them had yet risen from the table, a loud and piercing scream met their ears from without; and so quick and universal was the movement it produced, that its echo had scarcely yet died away in distance, when the whole of the breakfast party had issued from the room, and were already spectators of the cause.

The barracks of the officers, consisting of a range of low buildings, occupied the two contiguous sides of a square, and in the front of these ran a narrow and covered piazza, somewhat similar to those attached to the guardhouses in England, which description of building the barracks themselves most resembled. On the other two faces of the square stood several block-houses, a style of structure which, from their adaptation to purposes of defence as well as of accommodation, were every where at that period in use in America, and are even now continued along the more exposed parts of the frontier. These, capable of containing each a company of men, were, as their name implies, formed of huge masses of roughly-shapen timber, fitted into each other at the extremities by rude incisions from the axe, and filled in with smaller wedges of wood. The upper part of these block-houses projected on every side several feet beyond the ground floor, and over the whole was a sheathing of planks, which, as well as those covering the barracks of the officers, were painted of a brick-red colour. Unlike the latter, they rose considerably above the surface of the ramparts; and, in addition to the small window to be seen on each side of each story of the block-house, were numerous smaller square holes, perforated for the discharge of musketry. Between both these barracks and the ramparts there was just space sufficient to admit of the passage of artillery of a heavy calibre; and at each of the four angles, composing the lines of the fort, was an opening of several feet in extent, not only to afford the gunners room to work their batteries, but to enable them to reach their posts with greater expedition in the event of any sudden emergency. On the right, on entering the fort over the drawbridge, were the block-houses of the men; and immediately in front, and on the left, the barracks of the officers, terminated at the outer extremity by the guard-house, and at the inner by the quarters of the commanding officer.

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As the officers now issued from the mess-room nearly opposite to the gate, they observed, at that part of the barracks which ran at right angles with it, and immediately in front of the apartment of the younger De Haldimar, whence he had apparently just issued, the governor, struggling, though gently, to disengage himself from a female, who, with disordered hair and dress, lay almost prostrate upon the piazza, and clasping his booted leg with an energy evidently borrowed from the most rooted despair. The quick eye of the haughty man had already rested on the group of officers drawn by the scream of the supplicant. Numbers, too, of the men, attracted by the same cause, were collected in front of their respective block-houses, and looking from the windows of the rooms in which they were also breakfasting, preparatory to the expedition. Vexed and irritated beyond measure, at being thus made a conspicuous object of observation to his inferiors, the unbending governor made a violent and successful effort to disengage his leg; and then, without uttering a word, or otherwise noticing the unhappy being who lay extended at his feet, he stalked across the parade to his apartments at the opposite angle, without appearing to manifest the slightest consciousness of the scene that had awakened such universal attention.

Several of the officers, among whom was Captain Blessington, now hastened to the assistance of the female, whom all had recognised, from the first, to be the interesting and unhappy wife of Halloway. Many of the comrades of the latter, who had been pained and pitying spectators of the scene, also advanced for the same purpose; but, on perceiving their object anticipated by their superiors, they withdrew to the block-houses, whence they had issued. Never was grief more forcibly depicted, than in the whole appearance of this unfortunate woman; never did anguish assume a character more fitted to touch the soul, or to command respect. Her long fair hair, that had hitherto been hid under the coarse mob-cap, usually worn by the wives of the soldiers, was now divested of all fastening, and lay shadowing a white and polished bosom, which, in her violent struggles to detain the governor, had burst from its rude but modest confinement, and was now displayed in all the dazzling delicacy of youth and sex. If the officers gazed for a moment with excited look upon charms that had long been strangers to their sight, and of an order they had little deemed to find in Ellen Halloway, it was but the involuntary tribute rendered by nature unto beauty. The depth and sacredness of that sorrow, which had left the wretched woman unconscious of her exposure, in the instant afterwards imposed a check upon admiration, which each felt to be a violation of the first principles of human delicacy, and the feeling was repressed almost in the moment that gave it birth.

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They were immediately in front of the room occupied by Charles de Haldimar, in the piazza of which were a few old chairs, on which the officers were in the habit of throwing themselves during the heat of the day. On one of these Captain Blessington, assisted by the officer of grenadiers, now seated the suffering and sobbing wife of Halloway. His first care was to repair the disorder of her dress; and never was the same office performed by man with greater delicacy, or absence of levity by those who witnessed it. This was the first moment of her consciousness. The inviolability of modesty for a moment rose paramount even to the desolation of her heart, and putting rudely aside the hand that reposed unavoidably upon her person, the poor woman started from her seat, and looked wildly about her, as if endeavouring to identify those by whom she was surrounded. But when she observed the pitying gaze of the officers fixed upon her, in earnestness and commiseration, and heard the benevolent accents of the ever kind Blessington exhorting her to composure, her weeping became more violent, and her sobs more convulsive. Captain Blessington threw an arm round her waist to prevent her from falling; and then motioning to two or three women of the company to which her husband was attached, who stood at a little distance, in front of one of the block-houses, prepared to deliver her over to their charge.

“No, no, not yet!” burst at length from the lips of the agonised woman, as she shrank from the rude but well-intentioned touch of the sympathising assistants, who had promptly answered the signal; then, as if obeying some new direction of her feelings, some new impulse of her grief, she liberated herself from the slight grasp of Captain Blessington, turned suddenly round, and, before any one could anticipate the movement, entered an opening on the piazza, raised the latch of a door situated at its extremity, and was, in the next instant, in the apartment of the younger De Haldimar.

The scene that met the eyes of the officers, who now followed close after her, was one well calculated to make an impression on the hearts even of the most insensible. In the despair and recklessness of her extreme sorrow, the young wife of Halloway had already thrown herself upon her knees at the bedside of the sick officer; and, with her hands upraised and firmly clasped together, was now supplicating him in tones, contrasting singularly in their gentleness with the depth of the sorrow that had rendered her thus regardless of appearances, and insensible to observation.

“Oh, Mr. de Haldimar!” she implored, “in the name of God and of our blessed Saviour, if you would save me from madness, intercede for my unhappy husband, and preserve him from the horrid fate that awaits him. You are too good, too gentle, too amiable, to reject the prayer of a heart-broken woman. Moreover, Mr. de Haldimar,” she proceeded, with deeper energy, while she caught and pressed, between

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her own white and bloodless hands, one nearly as delicate that lay extended near her, “consider all my dear but unfortunate husband has done for your family. Think of the blood he once spilt in the defence of your brother’s life; that brother, through whom alone, oh God! he is now condemned to die. Call to mind the days and nights of anguish I passed near his couch of suffering, when yet writhing beneath the wound aimed at the life of Captain de Haldimar. Almighty Providence!” she pursued, in the same impassioned yet plaintive voice, “why is not Miss Clara here to plead the cause of the innocent, and to touch the stubborn heart of her merciless father? She would, indeed, move heaven and earth to save the life of him to whom she so often vowed eternal gratitude and acknowledgment. Ah, she little dreams of his danger now; or, if prayer and intercession could avail, my husband should yet live, and this terrible struggle at my heart would be no more.”

Overcome by her emotion, the unfortunate woman suffered her aching head to droop upon the edge of the bed, and her sobbing became so painfully violent, that all who heard her expected, at every moment, some fatal termination to her immoderate grief. Charles de Haldimar was little less affected; and his sorrow was the more bitter, as he had just proved the utter inefficacy of any thing in the shape of appeal to his inflexible father.

“Mrs. Halloway, my dear Mrs. Halloway, compose yourself,” said Captain Blessington, now approaching, and endeavouring to raise her gently from the floor, on which she still knelt, while her hands even more firmly grasped that of De Haldimar. “You are ill, very ill, and the consequences of this dreadful excitement may be fatal. Be advised by me, and retire. I have desired my room to be prepared for you, and Sergeant Wilmot’s wife shall remain with you as long as you may require it.”

“No, no, no!” she again exclaimed with energy; “what care I for my own wretched life—my beloved and unhappy husband is to die. Oh God! to die without guilt—to be cut off in his youth—to be shot as a traitor—and that simply for obeying the wishes of the officer whom he loved!—the son of the man who now spurns all supplication from his presence. It is inhuman—it is unjust—and Heaven will punish the hard-hearted man who murders him—yes, murders him! for such a punishment for such an offence is nothing less than murder.” Again she wept bitterly, and as Captain Blessington still essayed to soothe and raise her:—“No, no! I will not leave this spot,” she continued; “I will not quit the side of Mr. de Haldimar, until he pledges himself to intercede for my poor husband. It is his duty to save the life of him who saved his brother’s life; and God and human justice are with my appeal. Oh, tell me, then, Mr. de Haldimar,—if you would save my wretched heart from breaking,—tell me you will intercede for, and obtain the pardon of, my husband!”

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As she concluded this last sentence in passionate appeal, she had risen from her knees; and, conscious only of the importance of the boon solicited, now threw herself upon the breast of the highly pained and agitated young officer. Her long and beautiful hair fell floating over his face, and mingled with his own, while her arms were wildly clasped around him, in all the energy of frantic and hopeless adjuration.

“Almighty God!” exclaimed the agitated young man, as he made a feeble and fruitless effort to raise the form of the unhappy woman; “what shall I say to impart comfort to this suffering being? Oh, Mrs. Halloway,” he pursued, “I would willingly give all I possess in this world to be the means of saving your unfortunate husband,—and as much for his own sake as for yours would I do this; but, alas! I have not the power. Do not think I speak without conviction. My father has just been with me, and I have pleaded the cause of your husband with an earnestness I should scarcely have used had my own life been at stake. But all my entreaties have been in vain. He is obstinate in the belief my brother’s strange absence, and Donellan’s death, are attributable only to the treason of Halloway. Still there is a hope. A detachment is to leave the fort within the hour, and Halloway is to accompany them. It may be, my father intends this measure only with a view to terrify him into a confession of guilt; and that he deems it politic to make him undergo all the fearful preliminaries without carrying the sentence itself into effect.”

The unfortunate woman said no more. When she raised her heaving chest from that of the young officer, her eyes, though red and shrunk to half their usual size with weeping, were tearless; but on her countenance there was an expression of wild woe, infinitely more distressing to behold, in consequence of the almost unnatural check so suddenly imposed upon her feelings. She tottered, rather than walked, through the group of officers, who gave way on either hand to let her pass; and rejecting all assistance from the women who had followed into the room, and who now, in obedience to another signal from Captain Blessington, hastened to her support, finally gained the door, and quitted the apartment.

CHAPTER IX.

The sun was high in the meridian, as the second detachment, commanded by Colonel de Haldimar in person, issued from the fort of Detroit. It was that soft and hazy season, peculiar to the bland and beautiful autumns of Canada, when the golden light of Heaven seems as if transmitted through a veil of tissue, and all of animate and inanimate nature, expanding and fructifying beneath its fostering influence, breathes the most delicious languor and voluptuous repose. It was one of those still, calm, warm, and genial days, which in those regions come under the vulgar designation of the Indian summer; a season that is ever hailed

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by the Canadian with a satisfaction proportioned to the extreme sultriness of the summer, and the equally oppressive rigour of the winter, by which it is immediately preceded and followed. It is then that Nature, who seems from the creation to have bestowed all of grandeur and sublimity on the stupendous Americas, looks gladly and complacently on her work; and, staying the course of parching suns and desolating frosts, loves to luxuriate for a period in the broad and teeming bosom of her gigantic offspring. It is then that the forest-leaves, alike free from the influence of the howling hurricane of summer, and the paralysing and unfathomable snows of winter, cleave, tame and stirless in their varying tints, to the parent branch; while the broad rivers and majestic lakes exhibit a surface resembling rather the incrustation of the polished mirror than the resistless, viewless particles of which the golden element is composed. It is then that, casting its satisfied glance across those magnificent rivers, the eye beholds, as if reflected from a mirror (so similar in production and appearance are the contiguous shores), both the fertility of cultivated and the rudeness of uncultivated nature, that every where surround and diversify the view. The tall and sloping banks, covered with verdure to the very sands, that unite with the waters lying motionless at their base; the continuous chain of neat farm-houses (we speak principally of Detroit and its opposite shores); the luxuriant and bending orchards, teeming with fruits of every kind and of every colour; the ripe and yellow corn vying in hue with the soft atmosphere, which reflects and gives full effect to its abundance and its richness,—these, with the intervening waters unruffled, save by the lazy skiff, or the light bark canoe urged with the rapidity of thought along its surface by the slight and elegantly ornamented paddle of the Indian; or by the sudden leaping of the large salmon, the unwieldy sturgeon, the bearded cat-fish, or the delicately flavoured maskinonge, and fifty other tenants of their bosom;—all these contribute to form the foreground of a picture bounded in perspective by no less interesting, though perhaps ruder marks of the magnificence of that great architect—Nature, on which the eye never lingers without calm; while feelings, at once voluptuous and tender, creep insensibly over the heart, and raise the mind in adoration to the one great and sole Cause by which the stupendous whole has been produced.

Such a day as that we have just described was the — of September, 1763, when the chief portion of the English garrison of Detroit issued forth from the fortifications in which they had so long been cooped up, and in the presumed execution of a duty undeniably the most trying and painful that ever fell to the lot of soldier to perform. The heavy dull movement of the guns, as they traversed the drawbridge resembled in that confined atmosphere the rumbling of low and distant thunder; and as they

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shook the rude and hollow sounding planks, over which they were slowly dragged, called up to every heart the sad recollection of the service for which they had been required. Even the tramp of the men, as they moved heavily and measuredly across the yielding bridge, seemed to wear the character of the reluctance with which they proceeded on so hateful a duty; and more than one individual, as he momentarily turned his eye upon the ramparts, where many of his comrades were grouped together watching the departure of the detachment, testified by the significant and mournful movement of his head how much he envied their exemption from the task.

The direct military road runs in a straight line from the fort to the banks of the Detroit, and the eastern extremity of the town. Here it is intersected by the highway running parallel with the river, and branching off at right angles on either hand; the right, leading in the direction of the more populous states; the left, through the town, and thence towards the more remote and western parts, where European influence has yet been but partially extended. The only difference between its present and former character is, that what is now a flourishing commercial town was then a mere village; while the adjacent country, at present teeming with every mark of vegetation, bore no other evidence of fertility than what was afforded by a few scattered farm-houses, many of which skirted various parts of the forest. Along this road the detachment now wended its slow and solemn course, and with a mournful pageantry of preparation that gave fearful earnest of the tragedy expected to be enacted.

In front, and dragged by the hands of the gunners, moved two of the three three-pounders, that had been ordered for the duty. Behind these came Captain Blessington's company, and in their rear, the prisoner Halloway, divested of his uniform, and clad in a white cotton jacket, and cap of the same material. Six rank and file of the grenadiers followed, under the command of a corporal, and behind these again, came eight men of the same company; four of whom bore on their shoulders a coffin, covered with a coarse black pall that had perhaps already assisted at fifty interments; while the other four carried, in addition to their own, the muskets of their burdened comrades. After these, marched a solitary drummer-boy; whose tall bear-skin cap attested him to be of the grenadiers also, while his muffled instrument marked the duty for which he had been selected. Like his comrades, none of whom exhibited their scarlet uniforms, he wore the collar of his great coat closely buttoned beneath his chin, which was only partially visible above the stiff leathern stock that encircled his neck. Although his features were half buried in his huge cap and the high collar of his coat, there was an air of delicacy about his person that seemed to render him unsuited to such an office; and more than once was Captain Erskine, who followed immediately behind

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him at the head of his company, compelled to call sharply to the urchin, threatening him with a week's drill unless he mended his feeble and unequal pace, and kept from under the feet of his men. The remaining gun brought up the rear of the detachment, who marched with fixed bayonets and two balls in each musket; the whole presenting a front of sections, that completely filled up the road along which they passed. Colonel de Haldimar, Captain Wentworth, and the Adjutant Lawson followed in the extreme rear.

An event so singular as that of the appearance of the English without their fort, beset as they were by a host of fierce and dangerous enemies, was not likely to pass unnoticed by a single individual in the little village of Detroit. We have already observed, that most of the colonist settlers had been cruelly massacred at the very onset of hostilities. Not so, however, with the Canadians, who, from their anterior relations with the natives, and the mutual and tacit good understanding that subsisted between both parties, were suffered to continue in quiet and unmolested possession of their homes, where they preserved an avowed neutrality, never otherwise infringed than by the assistance secretly and occasionally rendered to the English troops, whose gold they were glad to receive in exchange for the necessaries of life.

Every dwelling of the infant town had commenced giving up its tenants, from the moment when the head of the detachment was seen traversing the drawbridge; so that, by the time it reached the highway, and took its direction to the left, the whole population of Detroit were already assembled in groups, and giving expression to their several conjectures, with a vivacity of language and energy of gesticulation that would not have disgraced the parent land itself. As the troops drew nearer, however, they all sank at once into a silence, as much the result of certain unacknowledged and undefined fears, as of the respect the English had ever been accustomed to exact. The men removed their short dingy clay pipes from their mouths with one hand, and uncovered themselves with the other, while the women made their hasty reverence with the air of people who seek to propitiate by an act of civility; even the very children scraped and bowed, as if they feared the omission might be fatal to them, and, clinging to the hands and dress of their parents, looked up occasionally to their countenances to discover whether the apprehensions of their own fluttering and timid hearts were likely to be realised. Still there was sufficient of curiosity with all to render them attentive spectators of the passing troop. Hitherto, it had been imagined, the object of the English was an attack on the encampments of their enemies; but when the gaze of each adult inhabitant fell on the unaccounted form of the lone soldier, who, calm though pale, now moved among his comrades in the ignominious garb of death, they could no longer doubt its true destination.

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The aged made the sign of the cross, and mumbled over a short prayer for the repose of his soul, while the more youthful indulged in half-breathed ejaculations of pity and concern that so fine and interesting a man should be doomed to so dreadful a fate.

At the farther extremity of the town, and at a bend in the road, which branched off more immediately towards the river, stood a small public house, whose creaking sign bore three ill executed fleurs-de-lis, apologetic emblems of the arms of France. The building itself was little more than a rude log hut, along the front of which ran a plank, supported by two stumps of trees, and serving as a temporary accommodation both for the traveller and the inmate. On this bench three persons, apparently attracted by the beauty of the day and the mildness of the autumnal sun, were now seated, two of whom were leisurely puffing their pipes, while the third, a female, was employed in carding wool, a quantity of which lay in a basket at her feet, while she warbled, in a low tone, one of the simple airs of her native land. The elder of the two men, whose age might be about fifty, offered nothing particularly remarkable in his appearance: he was dressed in one of those thick coats made of the common white blanket, which, even to this day, are so generally worn by the Canadians, while his hair, cut square upon the forehead, and tied into a club of nearly a foot long, fell into the cape, or hood, attached to it: his face was ruddy and shining as that of any rival Boniface among the race of the hereditary enemies of his forefathers; and his thick short neck, and round fat person, attested he was no more an enemy to the good things of this world than themselves, while he was as little oppressed by its cares: his nether garments were of a coarse blue homespun, and his feet were protected by that rudest of all rude coverings, the Canadian shoe-pack. This was composed of a single piece of stiff brown leather, curved and puckered round the sides and front, where it was met by a tongue of softer material, which helped to confine it in that position, and to form the shoe. A bandana handkerchief fell from his neck upon his chest; the covering of which was so imperfectly drawn, as to disclose a quantity of long, coarse, black, and grisly hair.

His companion was habited in a still more extraordinary manner. His lower limbs were cased, up to the mid-thigh, in leathern leggings, the seam of which was on the outside, leaving a margin, or border, of about an inch wide, which had been slit into innumerable small fringes, giving them an air of elegance and lightness: a garter of leather, curiously wrought, with the stained quills of the porcupine, encircled each leg, immediately under the knee, where it was tied in a bow, and then suffered to hang pendant half way down the limb; to the fringes of the leggings, moreover, were attached numerous dark-coloured horny substances, emitting, as they rattled against each

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other, at the slightest movement of the wearer, a tinkling sound, resembling that produced by a number of small thin delicate brass bells; these were the tender hoofs of the wild deer, dried, scraped, and otherwise prepared for this ornamental purpose. Upon his large feet he wore mocassins, made of the same pliant material with his leggings, and differing in shape from the foot-gear of his companion in this particular only, that they had no tongue introduced into the front: they were puckered together by a strong sinew of the deer, until they met along the instep in a seam concealed by the same ornamental quill-work that decorated the garters: a sort of flap, fringed like the leggings, was folded back from the ankle, upon the sides of the foot, and the whole was confined by a strong though neat leathern thong, made of smoked deer-skin also, which, after passing once or twice under the foot, was then tightly drawn several times round the ankle, where it was finally secured. Two strips of leather, about an inch and a half in width, attached to the outer side of each legging, were made fast at their opposite extremities to a strong girdle, encircling the loins, and supporting a piece of coarse blue cloth, which, after passing completely under the body, fell in short flaps both before and behind. The remainder of the dress consisted of a cotton shirt, figured and sprigged on a dark ground, that fell unconfined over the person; a close deer-skin hunting-coat, fringed also at its edges; and a coarse common felt hat, in the string of which (for there was no band) were twisted a number of variegated feathers, furnished by the most beautiful and rare of the American autumnal birds. Outside this hunting-coat, and across the right shoulder, was flung an ornamented belt, to which were appended, on the left side, and in a line with the elbow, a shot-pouch, made of the untanned hide of some wild animal, and a flask for powder, formed of the horn of the buffalo; on which, highly polished for this purpose, were inscribed, with singular accuracy of proportion, a variety of figures, both of men, and birds, and beasts, and fishes; two or three small horn measures for powder, and a long thin wire, intended to serve as a pricker for the rifle that reclined against the outside of the hut, were also attached to this belt by strips of deer-skin of about six inches in length. Into another broad leathern belt, that confined the hunting coat, was thrust a tomahawk, the glittering head of which was uppermost, and unsheathed: while at the opposite side, and half supporting the powder-horn, the huge handle of a knife, whose blade was buried in a strong leathern sheath, was distinctly visible.

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The form and face of this individual were in perfect keeping with the style of his costume, and the formidable character of his equipment. His stature was considerably beyond that of the ordinary race of men, and his athletic and muscular limbs united the extremes of strength and activity in a singular degree. His features, marked and prominent, wore a cast of habitual thought, strangely tinctured with ferocity; and the general expression of his otherwise not unhandsome countenance was repellent and disdainful. At the first glance he might have been taken for one of the swarthy natives of the soil; but though time and constant exposure to scorching suns had given to his complexion a dusky hue, still there were wanting the quick, black, penetrating eye; the high cheek-bone; the straight, coarse, shining, black hair; the small bony hand and foot; and the placidly proud and serious air, by which the former is distinguished. His own eye was of a deep bluish grey; his hair short, dark, and wavy; his hands large and muscular; and so far from exhibiting any of the self-command of the Indian, the constant play of his features betrayed each passing thought with the same rapidity with which it was conceived. But if any doubt could have existed in the mind of him who beheld this strangely accoutred figure, it would have been instantly dispelled by a glance at his lower limbs. We have already stated the upper part of his leggings terminated about mid-thigh; from this to the hip, that portion of the limb was completely bare, and disclosed, at each movement of the garment that was suffered to fall loosely over it, not the swarthy and copper-coloured flesh of the Indian, but the pale though sun-burnt skin of one of a more temperate clime. His age might be about forty-five.

At the moment when the English detachment approached the bend in the road, these two individuals were conversing earnestly together, pausing only to puff at intervals thick and wreathing volumes of smoke from their pipes, which were filled with a mixture of tobacco and odoriferous herbs. Presently, however, sounds that appeared familiar to his ear arrested the attention of the wildly accoutred being we have last described. It was the heavy roll of the artillery carriages already advancing along the road, and somewhat in the rear of the hut. To dash his pipe to the ground, seize and cock and raise his rifle to his shoulder, and throw himself forward in the eager attitude of one waiting until the object of his aim should appear in sight, was but the work of a moment. Startled by the suddenness of the action, his male companion moved a few paces also from his seat, to discover the cause of this singular movement. The female, on the contrary, stirred not, but ceasing for a moment the occupation in which she had been engaged, fixed her dark and brilliant eyes upon the tall and picturesque form of the rifleman, whose active and athletic limbs, thrown into powerful relief by the distention of each nerve and muscle, appeared to engross her whole admiration and interest, without any reference to the cause that had produced this abrupt and hostile change in his movements. It was evident that, unlike the other inhabitants of the town, this group had been taken by surprise, and were utterly unprepared to expect any thing in the shape of interruption.

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For upwards of a minute, during which the march of the men became audible even to the ears of the female, the formidable warrior, for such his garb denoted him to be, continued motionless in the attitude he had at first assumed—his right cheek reposing on the ornamented stock of his rifle, and his quick and steady eye fixed in one undeviating line with the sight near the breech, and that which surmounted the extreme end of the deadly weapon. No sooner, however, had the head of the advancing column come within sight, than the trigger was pulled, and the small and ragged bullet sped hissing from the grooved and delicate barrel. A triumphant cry was next pealed from the lips of the warrior,—a cry produced by the quickly repeated application and removal of one hand to and from the mouth, while the other suffered the butt end of the now harmless weapon to fall loosely upon the earth. He then slowly and deliberately withdrew within the cover of the hut.

This daring action, which had been viewed by the leading troops with astonishment not unmingled with alarm, occasioned a temporary confusion in the ranks, for all believed they had fallen into an ambuscade of the Indians. A halt was instantly commanded by Captain Blessington, in order to give time to the governor to come up from the rear, while he proceeded with one of the leading sections to reconnoitre the front of the hut. To his infinite surprise, however, he found neither enemy, nor evidence that an enemy had been there. The only individuals visible were the Canadian already alluded to, and the dark-eyed female. Both were seated on the bench;—the one smoking his pipe with a well assumed appearance of unconcern—the other carding her wool, but with a hand that by a close observer might be seen to tremble in its office, and a cheek that was paler considerably than at the moment when we first placed her before the imagination of the reader. Both, however, started with unaffected surprise on seeing Captain Blessington and his little force turn the corner of the house from the main road; and certain looks of recognition passed between all parties, that proved them to be no strangers to each other.

“Ah, monsieur,” said the Canadian, in a mingled dialect, neither French nor English, but partaking in some degree of the idiom of both, while he attempted an ease and freedom of manner that was too miserably affected to pass current with the mild but observant officer whom he addressed, “how much surprise I am, and glad to see you. It is a long time since you came out of de fort. I hope de gouverneur and de officir be all very well. I was tinkin to go to-day to see if you want any ting. I have got some nice rum of the Jamaïque for Capitaine Erskine. Will you please to try some?” While speaking, the voluble host of the Fleur de lis had risen from his seat, laid aside his pipe, and now stood with his hands thrust into the pockets of his blanket coat

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"It is, indeed, a long time since we have been here, master Francois," somewhat sarcastically and drily replied Captain Blessington; "and you have not visited us quite so often latterly yourself, though well aware we were in want of fresh provisions. I give you all due credit, however, for your intention of coming to-day, but you see we have anticipated you. Still this is not the point. Where is the Indian who fired at us just now? and how is it we find you leagued with our enemies?"

"What, sir, is it you say?" asked the Canadian, holding up his hands with feigned astonishment "Me league myself with de savage. Upon my honour I did not see nobody fire, or I should tell you. I love de English too well to do dem harms."

"Come, come, Francois, no nonsense. If I cannot make you confess, there is one not far from me who will. You know Colonel de Haldimar too well to imagine he will be trifled with in this manner: if he detects you in a falsehood, he will certainly cause you to be hanged up at the first tree. Take my advice, therefore, and say where you have secreted this Indian; and recollect, if we fall into an ambuscade, your life will be forfeited at the first shot we hear fired."

At this moment the governor, followed by his adjutant, came rapidly up to the spot. Captain Blessington communicated the ill success of his queries, when the former cast on the terrified Canadian one of those severe and searching looks which he so well knew how to assume.

"Where is the rascal who fired at us, sirrah? tell me instantly, or you have not five minutes to live."

The heart of mine host of the Fleur de lis quailed within him at this formidable threat; and the usually ruddy hue of his countenance had now given place to an ashy paleness. Still, as he had positively denied all knowledge of the matter on which he was questioned, he appeared to feel his safety lay in adhering to his original statement. Again, therefore, he assured the governor, on his honour (laying his hand upon his heart as he spoke), that what he had already stated was the fact.

"Your honour—you pitiful trading scoundrel—how dare you talk to me of your honour? Come, sir, confess at once where you have secreted this fellow, or prepare to die."

"If I may be so bold, your Honour," said one of Captain Blessington's men, "the Frenchman lies. When the Ingian fired among us, this fellow was peeping under his shoulder and watching us also. If I had not seen him too often at the fort to be mistaken in his person, I should have known him, at all events, by his blanket coat and red handkerchief."

This blunt statement of the soldier, confirmed as it was the instant afterwards by one of his comrades, was damning proof against the Canadian, even if the fact of the rifle

being discharged from the front of the hut had not already satisfied all parties of the falsehood of his assertion.

“Come forward, a couple of files, and seize this villain,” resumed the governor with his wonted sternness of manner. “Mr. Lawson, see if his hut does not afford a rope strong enough to hang the traitor from one of his own apple trees.”

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Both parties proceeded at the same moment to execute the two distinct orders of their chief. The Canadian was now firmly secured in the grasp of the two men who had given evidence against him, when, seeing all the horror of the summary and dreadful fate that awaited him, he confessed the individual who had fired had been sitting with him the instant previously, but that he knew no more of him than of any other savage occasionally calling at the Fleur de lis. He added, that on discharging the rifle he had bounded across the palings of the orchard, and fled in the direction of the forest. He denied, on interrogation, all knowledge or belief of an enemy waiting in ambush; stating, moreover, even the individual in question had not been aware of the sortie of the detachment until apprised of their near approach by the heavy sound of the gun-carriages.

“Here are undeniable proofs of the man’s villany, sir,” said the adjutant, returning from the hut and exhibiting objects of new and fearful interest to the governor. “This hat and rope I found secreted in one of the bed-rooms of the auberge. The first is evidently Donellan’s; and from the hook attached to the latter, I apprehend it to be the same stated to have been used by Captain de Haldimar in crossing the ditch.”

The governor took the hat and rope from the hands of his subordinate, examined them attentively, and after a few moments of deep musing, during which his countenance underwent several rapid though scarcely perceptible changes, turned suddenly and eagerly to the soldier who had first convicted the Canadian in his falsehood, and demanded if he had seen enough of the man who had fired to be able to give even a general description of his person.

“Why yes, your Honour, I think I can; for the fellow stood long enough after firing his piece, for a painter to have taken him off from head to foot. He was a taller and larger man by far than our biggest grenadier, and that is poor Harry Donellan, as your Honour knows. But as for his dress, though I could see it all, I scarcely can tell how to describe it. All I know is, he was covered with smoked deer-skin, in some such fashion as the great chief Pontecac, only, instead of having his head bare and shaved, he wore a strange outlandish sort of a hat, covered over with wild birds’ feathers in front.”

“Enough,” interrupted the governor, motioning the man to silence; then, in an undertone to himself,—“By Heaven, the very same.” A shade of disappointment, not unmingled with suppressed alarm, passed rapidly across his brow; it was but momentary. “Captain Blessington,” he ordered quickly and impatiently, “search the hut and grounds for this lurking Indian, who is, no doubt, secreted in the neighbourhood. Quick, quick, sir; there is no time to be lost.” Then in an angry and intimidating tone to the Canadian, who had already dropped on his knees, supplicating mercy, and vociferating his innocence in the same breath,

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—“So, you infernal scoundrel, this is the manner in which you have repaid our confidence. Where is my son, sir? or have you already murdered him, as you did his servant? Tell me, you villain, what have you to say to these proofs of your treachery? But stay, I shall take another and fitter opportunity to question you. Mr. Lawson, secure this traitor properly, and let him be conveyed to the centre of the detachment.”

The mandate was promptly obeyed; and, in despite of his own unceasing prayers and protestations of innocence, and the tears and entreaties of his dark-eyed daughter Babette, who had thrown herself on her knees at his side, the stout arms of mine host of the Fleur de lis were soon firmly secured behind his back with the strong rope that had been found under such suspicious circumstances in his possession. Before he was marched off, however, two of the men who had been sent in pursuit, returned from the orchard, stating that further search was now fruitless. They had penetrated through a small thicket at the extremity of the grounds, and had distinctly seen a man answering the description given by their comrades, in full flight towards the forest skirting the heights in front.

The governor was evidently far from being satisfied with the result of a search too late instituted to leave even a prospect of success. “Where are the Indians principally encamped, sirrah?” he sternly demanded of his captive; “answer me truly, or I will carry off this wench as well, and if a single hair of a man of mine be even singed by a shot from a skulking enemy, you may expect to see her bayoneted before your eyes.”

“Ah, my God! Monsieur le Gouverneur,” exclaimed the affrighted aubergiste, “as I am an honest man, I shall tell de truth, but spare my child. They are all in de forest, and half a mile from de little river dat runs between dis and de Pork Island.”

“Hog Island, I suppose you mean.”

“Yes sir, de Hog Island is de one I means.”

“Conduct him to the centre, and let him be confronted with the prisoner,” directed the governor, addressing his adjutant; “Captain Blessington, your men may resume their stations in the ranks.”

The order was obeyed; and notwithstanding the tears and supplications of the now highly excited Babette, who flung herself upon his neck, and was only removed by force, the terrified Canadian was borne off from his premises by the troops.

CHAPTER X.

While this scene was enacting in front of the Fleur de lis, one of a far more touching and painful nature was passing in the very heart of the detachment itself. At the moment when the halt was ordered by Captain Blessington, a rumour ran through the ranks that they had reached the spot destined for the execution of their ill-fated comrade. Those only in the immediate front were aware of the true cause; but although the report of the rifle had been distinctly heard by all,

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it had been attributed by those in the rear to the accidental discharge of one of their own muskets. A low murmur, expressive of the opinion generally entertained, passed gradually from rear to front, until it at length reached the ears of the delicate drummer boy who marched behind the coffin. His face was still buried in the collar of his coat; and what was left uncovered of his features by the cap, was in some degree hidden by the forward drooping of his head upon his chest. Hitherto he had moved almost mechanically along, tottering and embarrassing himself at every step under the cumbrous drum that was suspended from a belt round his neck over the left thigh; but now there was a certain indescribable drawing up of the frame, and tension of the whole person, denoting a concentration of all the moral and physical energies,—a sudden working up, as it were, of the intellectual and corporeal being to some determined and momentous purpose.

At the first halt of the detachment, the weary supporters of the coffin had deposited their rude and sombre burden upon the earth, preparatory to its being resumed by those appointed to relieve them. The dull sound emitted by the hollow fabric, as it touched the ground, caught the ear of him for whom it was destined, and he turned to gaze upon the sad and lonely tenement so shortly to become his final resting place. There was an air of calm composure and dignified sorrow upon his brow, that infused respect into the hearts of all who beheld him; and even the men selected to do the duty of executioners sought to evade his glance, as his steady eye wandered from right to left of the fatal rank. His attention, however, was principally directed towards the coffin, which lay before him; on this he gazed fixedly for upwards of a minute. He then turned his eyes in the direction of the fort, shuddered, heaved a profound sigh, and looking up to heaven with the apparent fervour that became his situation, seemed to pray for a moment or two inwardly and devoutly. The thick and almost suffocating breathing of one immediately beyond the coffin, was now distinctly heard by all. Halloway started from his attitude of devotion, gazed earnestly on the form whence it proceeded, and then wildly extending his arms, suffered a smile of satisfaction to illumine his pale features. All eyes were now turned upon the drummer boy, who, evidently labouring under convulsive excitement of feeling, suddenly dashed his cap and instrument to the earth, and flew as fast as his tottering and uncertain steps would admit across the coffin, and into the arms extended to receive him.

“My Ellen! oh, my own devoted, but too unhappy Ellen!” passionately exclaimed the soldier, as he clasped the slight and agitated form of his disguised wife to his throbbing heart. “This, this, indeed, is joy even in death. I thought I could have died more happily without you, but nature tugs powerfully at my heart; and to see you once more, to feel you once more *here*” (and he pressed her wildly to his chest) “is indeed a bliss that robs my approaching fate of half its terror.”

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“Oh Reginald! my dearly beloved Reginald! my murdered husband!” shrieked the unhappy woman; “your Ellen will not survive you. Her heart is already broken, though she cannot weep; but the same grave shall contain us both. Reginald, do you believe me? I swear it; the same grave shall contain us both.”

Exhausted with the fatigue and excitement she had undergone, the faithful and affectionate creature now lay, without sense or motion, in the arms of her wretched husband. Halloway bore her, unopposed, a pace or two in advance, and deposited her unconscious form on the fatal coffin.

No language of ours can render justice to the trying character of the scene. All who witnessed it were painfully affected, and over the bronzed cheek of many a veteran coursed a tear, that, like that of Sterne's recording angel, might have blotted out a catalogue of sins. Although each was prepared to expect a reprimand from the governor, for suffering the prisoner to quit his station in the ranks, humanity and nature pleaded too powerfully in his behalf, and neither officer nor man attempted to interfere, unless with a view to render assistance. Captain Erskine, in particular, was deeply pained, and would have given any thing to recall the harsh language he had used towards the supposed idle and inattentive drummer boy. Taking from a pocket in his uniform a small flask of brandy, which he had provided against casualties, the compassionating officer slightly raised the head of the pale and unconscious woman with one hand, while with the other he introduced a few drops between her parted lips. Halloway knelt at the opposite side of the coffin; one hand searching, but in vain, the suspended pulse of his inanimate wife; the other, unbuttoning the breast of the drummer-boy's jacket, which, with every other part of the equipment, she wore beneath the loose great coat so effectually accomplishing her disguise.

Such was the position of the chief actors in this truly distressing drama, at the moment when Colonel de Haldimar came up with his new prisoner, to mark what effect would be produced on Halloway by his unexpected appearance. His own surprise and disappointment may be easily conceived, when, in the form of the recumbent being who seemed to engross universal attention, he recognised, by the fair and streaming hair, and half exposed bosom, the unfortunate being whom, only two hours previously, he had spurned from his feet in the costume of her own sex, and reduced, by the violence of her grief, to almost infantine debility. Question succeeded question to those around, but without eliciting any clue to the means by which this mysterious disguise had been effected. No one had been aware, until the truth was so singularly and suddenly revealed, the supposed drummer was any other than one of the lads attached to the grenadiers; and as for the other facts, they spoke too plainly to the comprehension of the governor to need explanation. Once more,

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however, the detachment was called to order. Halloway struck his hand violently upon his brow, kissed the wan lips of his still unconscious wife, breathing, as he did so, a half murmured hope she might indeed be the corpse she appeared. He then raised himself from the earth with a light and elastic yet firm movement, and resumed the place he had previously occupied, where, to his surprise, he beheld a second victim bound, and, apparently, devoted to the same death. When the eyes of the two unhappy men met, the governor closely watched the expression of the countenance of each; but although the Canadian started on beholding the soldier, it might be merely because he saw the latter arrayed in the garb of death, and followed by the most unequivocal demonstrations of a doom to which he himself was, in all probability, devoted. As for Halloway, his look betrayed neither consciousness nor recognition; and though too proud to express complaint or to give vent to the feelings of his heart, his whole soul appeared to be absorbed in the unhappy partner of his luckless destiny. Presently he saw her borne, and in the same state of insensibility, in the arms of Captain Erskine and Lieutenant Leslie, towards the hut of his fellow prisoner, and he heard the former officer enjoin the weeping girl, Babette, to whose charge they delivered her over, to pay every attention to her her situation might require. The detachment then proceeded.

The narrow but deep and rapid river alluded to by the Canadian, as running midway between the town and Hog Island, derived its source far within the forest, and formed the bed of one of those wild, dark, and thickly wooded ravines so common in America. As it neared the Detroit, however, the abruptness of its banks was so considerably lessened, as to render the approach to it on the town side over an almost imperceptible slope. Within a few yards of its mouth, as we have already observed in our introductory chapter, a rude but strong wooden bridge, over which lay the high road, had been constructed by the French; and from the centre of this, all the circuit of intermediate clearing, even to the very skirt of the forest, was distinctly commanded by the naked eye. To the right, on approaching it from the town, lay the adjacent shores of Canada, washed by the broad waters of the Detroit, on which it was thrown into strong relief, and which, at the distance of about a mile in front, was seen to diverge into two distinct channels, pursuing each a separate course, until they again met at the western extremity of Hog Island. On the left, and in the front, rose a succession of slightly undulating hills, which, at a distance of little more than half a mile, terminated in an elevation considerably above the immediate level of the Detroit side of the ravine. That, again, was crowned with thick and overhanging forest, taking its circular sweep, as we have elsewhere shown, around the fort. The intermediate ground was studded over with rude stumps of trees, and bore,

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in various directions, distinct proofs of the spoliation wrought among the infant possessions of the murdered English settlers. The view to the rear was less open; the town being partially hidden by the fruit-laden orchards that lined the intervening high road, and hung principally on its left. This was not the case with the fort. Between these orchards and the distant forest lay a line of open country, fully commanded by its cannon, even to the ravine we have described, and in a sweep that embraced every thing from the bridge itself to the forest, in which all traces of its source was lost.

When the detachment had arrived within twenty yards of the bridge, they were made to file off to the left, until the last gun had come up. They were then fronted; the rear section of Captain Erskine's company resting on the road, and the left flank, covered by the two first guns pointed obliquely, both in front and rear, to guard against surprise, in the event of any of the Indians stealing round to the cover of the orchards. The route by which they had approached this spot was upwards of two miles in extent; but, as they now filed off into the open ground, the leading sections observed, in a direct line over the cleared country, and at the distance of little more than three quarters of a mile, the dark ramparts of the fortress that contained their comrades, and could even distinguish the uniforms of the officers and men drawn up in line along the works, where they were evidently assembled to witness the execution of the sentence on Halloway.

Such a sight as that of the English so far from their fort, was not likely to escape the notice of the Indians. Their encampment, as the Canadian had truly stated, lay within the forest, and beyond the elevated ground already alluded to; and to have crossed the ravine, or ventured out of reach of the cannon of the fort, would have been to have sealed the destruction of the detachment. But the officer to whom their security was entrusted, although he had his own particular views for venturing thus far, knew also at what point to stop; and such was the confidence of his men in his skill and prudence, they would have fearlessly followed wherever he might have chosen to lead. Still, even amid all the solemnity of preparation attendant on the duty they were out to perform, there was a natural and secret apprehensiveness about each, that caused him to cast his eyes frequently and fixedly on that part of the forest which was known to afford cover to their merciless foes. At times they fancied they beheld the dark and flitting forms of men gliding from tree to tree along the skirt of the wood; but when they gazed again, nothing of the kind was to be seen, and the illusion was at once ascribed to the heavy state of the atmosphere, and the action of their own precautionary instincts.

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Meanwhile the solemn tragedy of death was preparing in mournful silence. On the centre of the bridge, and visible to those even within the fort, was placed the coffin of Halloway, and at twelve paces in front were drawn up the six rank and file on whom had devolved, by lot, the cruel duty of the day. With calm and fearless eye the prisoner surveyed the preparations for his approaching end; and whatever might be the inward workings of his mind, there was not among the assembled soldiery one individual whose countenance betrayed so little of sorrow and emotion as his own. With a firm step, when summoned, he moved towards the fatal coffin, dashing his cap to the earth as he advanced, and baring his chest with the characteristic contempt of death of the soldier. When he had reached the centre of the bridge, he turned facing his comrades, and knelt upon the coffin. Captain Blessington, who, permitted by the governor, had followed him with a sad heart and heavy step, now drew a Prayer-book from his pocket, and read from it in a low voice. He then closed the volume, listened to something the prisoner earnestly communicated to him, received a small packet which he drew from the bosom of his shirt, shook him long and cordially by the hand, and then hastily resumed his post at the head of the detachment.

The principal inhabitants of the village, led by curiosity, had followed at a distance to witness the execution of the condemned soldier: and above the heads of the line, and crowning the slope, were collected groups of both sexes and of all ages, that gave a still more imposing character to the scene. Every eye was now turned upon the firing party, who only awaited the signal to execute their melancholy office, when suddenly, in the direction of the forest, and upon the extreme height, there burst the tremendous and deafening yells of upwards of a thousand savages. For an instant Halloway was forgotten in the instinctive sense of individual danger, and all gazed eagerly to ascertain the movements of their enemy. Presently a man, naked to the waist, his body and face besmeared with streaks of black and red paint, and his whole attitude expressing despair and horror, was seen flying down the height with a rapidity proportioned to the extreme peril in which he stood. At about fifty paces in his rear followed a dozen bounding, screaming Indians, armed with uplifted tomahawks, whose anxiety in pursuit lent them a speed that even surpassed the efforts of flight itself. It was evident the object of the pursued was to reach the detachment, that of the pursuers to prevent him. The struggle was maintained for a few moments with equality, but in the end the latter were triumphant, and at each step the distance that separated them became less. At the first alarm, the detachment, with the exception of the firing party, who still occupied their ground, had been thrown into square, and, with a gun planted in each angle, awaited the attack momentarily expected.

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But although the heights were now alive with the dusky forms of naked warriors, who, from the skirt of the forest, watched the exertions of their fellows, the pursuit of the wretched fugitive was confined to these alone. Foremost of the latter, and distinguished by his violent exertions and fiendish cries, was the tall and wildly attired warrior of the Fleur de lis. At every bound he took he increased the space that divided him from his companions, and lessened that which kept him from his panting and nearly exhausted victim. Already were they descending the nearest of the undulating hills, and both now became conspicuous objects to all around; but principally the pursuer, whose gigantic frame and extraordinary speed riveted every eye, even while the interest of all was excited for the wretched fugitive alone.

At that moment Halloway, who had been gazing on the scene with an astonishment little inferior to that of his comrades, sprang suddenly to his feet upon the coffin, and waving his hand in the direction of the pursuing enemy, shouted aloud in a voice of mingled joy and triumph,—

“Ha! Almighty God, I thank thee! Here, here comes one who alone has the power to snatch me from my impending doom.”

“By Heaven, the traitor confesses, and presumes to triumph in his guilt,” exclaimed the voice of one, who, while closely attending to every movement of the Indians, was also vigilantly watching the effect likely to be produced on the prisoner by this unexpected interruption. “Corporal, do your duty.”

“Stay, stay—one moment stay!” implored Halloway with uplifted hands.

“Do your duty, sir,” fiercely repeated the governor.

“Oh stop—for God’s sake, stop! Another moment and he will be here, and I—”

He said no more—a dozen bullets penetrated his body—one passed directly through his heart. He leaped several feet in the air, and then fell heavily, a lifeless bleeding corpse, across the coffin.

Meanwhile the pursuit of the fugitive was continued, but by the warrior of the Fleur de lis alone. Aware of their inefficiency to keep pace with this singular being, his companions had relinquished the chace, and now stood resting on the brow of the hill where the wretched Halloway had first recognised his supposed deliverer, watching eagerly, though within musket shot of the detachment, the result of a race on which so much apparently depended. Neither party, however, attempted to interfere with the other, for all eyes were now turned on the flying man and his pursuer with an interest that denoted the extraordinary efforts of the one to evade and the other to attain the accomplishment

of his object. Although the exertions of the former had been stupendous, such was the eagerness and determination of the latter, that at each step he gained perceptibly on his victim. The immediate course taken was in a direct line for the ravine, which it evidently was the object of the

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fugitive to clear at its nearest point. Already had he approached within a few paces of its brink, and every eye was fastened on the point where it was expected the doubtful leap would be taken, when suddenly, as if despairing to accomplish it at a bound, he turned to the left, and winding along its bank, renewed his efforts in the direction of the bridge. This movement occasioned a change in the position of the parties which was favourable to the pursued. Hitherto they had been so immediately on a line with each other, it was impossible for the detachment to bring a musket to bear upon the warrior, without endangering him whose life they were anxious to preserve. For a moment or two his body was fairly exposed, and a dozen muskets were discharged at intervals from the square, but all without success. Recovering his lost ground, he soon brought the pursued again in a line between himself and the detachment, edging rapidly nearer to him as he advanced, and uttering terrific yells, that were echoed back from his companions on the brow of the hill. It was evident, however, his object was the recapture, not the destruction, of the flying man, for more than once did he brandish his menacing tomahawk in rapid sweeps around his head, as if preparing to dart it, and as often did he check the movement. The scene at each succeeding moment became more critical and intensely interesting. The strength of the pursued was now nearly exhausted, while that of his formidable enemy seemed to suffer no diminution. Leap after leap he took with fearful superiority, sideling as he advanced. Already had he closed upon his victim, while with a springing effort a large and bony hand was extended to secure his shoulder in his grasp. The effort was fatal to him; for in reaching too far he lost his balance, and fell heavily upon the sword. A shout of exultation burst from the English troops, and numerous voices now encouraged the pursued to renew his exertions. The advice was not lost; and although only a few seconds had elapsed between the fall and recovery of his pursuer, the wretched fugitive had already greatly increased the distance that separated them. A cry of savage rage and disappointment burst from the lips of the gigantic warrior; and concentrating all his remaining strength and speed into one final effort, he bounded and leapt like a deer of the forest whence he came. The opportunity for recapture, however, had been lost in his fall, for already the pursued was within a few feet of the high road, and on the point of turning the extremity of the bridge. One only resource was now left: the warrior suddenly checked himself in his course, and remained stationary; then raising and dropping his glittering weapon several times in a balancing position, he waited until the pursued had gained the highest point of the open bridge. At that moment the glittering steel, aimed with singular accuracy and precision, ran whistling through the air, and with such velocity of movement as to be almost

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invisible to the eyes of those who attempted to follow it in its threatening course. All expected to see it enter into the brain against which it had been directed; but the fugitive had marked the movement in time to save himself by stooping low to the earth, while the weapon, passing over him, entered with a deadly and crashing sound into the brain of the weltering corpse. This danger passed, he sprang once more to his feet, nor paused again in his flight, until, faint and exhausted, he sank without motion under the very bayonets of the firing party.

A new direction was now given to the interest of the assembled and distinct crowds that had witnessed these startling incidents. Scarcely had the wretched man gained the protection of the soldiery, when a shriek divided the air, so wild, so piercing, and so unearthly, that even the warrior of the Fleur de lis seemed to lose sight of his victim, in the harrowing interest produced by that dreadful scream. All turned their eyes for a moment in the quarter whence it proceeded; when presently, from behind the groups of Canadians crowning the slope, was seen flying, with the rapidity of thought, one who resembled rather a spectre than a being of earth;—it was the wife of Halloway. Her long fair hair was wild and streaming—her feet, and legs, and arms were naked—and one solitary and scanty garment displayed rather than concealed the symmetry of her delicate person. She flew to the fatal bridge, threw herself on the body of her bleeding husband, and imprinting her warm kisses on his bloody lips, for a moment or two presented the image of one whose reason has fled for ever. Suddenly she started from the earth; her face, her hands, and her garment so saturated with the blood of her husband, that a feeling of horror crept throughout the veins of all who beheld her. She stood upon the coffin, and across the corpse—raised her eyes and hands imploringly to Heaven—and then, in accents wilder even than her words, uttered an imprecation that sounded like the prophetic warning of some unholy spirit.

“Inhuman murderer!” she exclaimed, in tones that almost paralysed the ears on which it fell, “if there be a God of justice and of truth, he will avenge this devilish deed. Yes, Colonel de Haldimar, a prophetic voice whispers to my soul, that even as I have seen perish before my eyes all I loved on earth, without mercy and without hope, so even shall you witness the destruction of your accursed race. Here—here—here,” and she pointed downwards, with singular energy of action, to the corpse of her husband, “here shall their blood flow till every vestige of his own is washed away; and oh, if there be spared one branch of thy detested family, may it only be that they may be reserved for some death too horrible to be conceived!”

Overcome by the frantic energy with which she had uttered these appalling words, she sank backwards, and fell, uttering another shriek, into the arms of the warrior of the Fleur de lis.

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"Hear you this, Colonel de Haldimar?" shouted the latter in a fierce and powerful voice, and in the purest English accent; "hear you the curse and prophecy of this heart-broken woman? You have slain her husband, but she has found another. Ay, she shall be my bride, if only for her detestation of yourself. When next you see us here," he thundered, "tremble for your race. Ha, ha, ha! no doubt this is another victim of your cold and calculating guile; but it shall be the last. By Heaven, my very heart leaps upward in anticipation of thy coming hour. Woman, thy hatred to this man has made me love thee; yes, thou shall be my bride, and with my plans of vengeance will I woo thee. By this kiss I swear it."

As he spoke, he bent his face over that of the pale and inanimate woman, and pressed his lips to hers, yet red and moist with blood spots from the wounds of her husband. Then wresting, with a violent effort, his reeking tomahawk from the crunched brain of the unfortunate soldier, and before any one could recover sufficiently from the effect of the scene altogether to think even of interfering, he bore off his prize in triumph, and fled, with nearly the same expedition he had previously manifested, in the direction of the forest.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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