

THE MACS OF '37



PRICE-BROWN

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The Mac's of '37

*A Story of
The Canadian Rebellion*

By

Price-Brown

Author of "In the Van," etc.

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THE MAC'S OF '37

PART I

CHAPTER I.

THE GOVERNOR AND HIS GUESTS.

Marie's school days were over. This was her first day off; and by invitation from Lady Head, she and her friend, Jessie, were guests at Government House.

The Governor's wife had taken a strong fancy to the tall, fair-haired girl. Queenly in figure, supple and graceful, with grey-blue eyes, teeth like pearls, and arms that Juno might have envied, it would be a wonder if she had not. Marie's principal charm, however, was the expression of her face. It was the kaleidoscope of her soul. The varied emotions of her mind, like sunshine and shadow, chased each other in quick succession over her features, for notwithstanding her youthfulness, her few years had been full of thought.

Marie's life had been a strange one. Motherless from childhood, she had lived through many of her early years with her father at his favorite haunt. This was the island of Fingal's Notch, one of the Thousand that usher Lake Ontario into the St. Lawrence River. There in her girlhood, summer after summer, enchanted by the ever-varying beauties which surrounded her, she had paddled like a fairy queen; yet, like a goddess from the Sagas of the Northland, she was unconscious of their influence upon her.

Two years had passed by since she, a maid in her teens, came to the Bradley School in the little city; and the chaos of the new life, cramped within walls that were to be both school and home, lived in her memory ever afterwards. Still her inherent candor, and the primitive charm of her manner, had won the hearts of her teachers; and the stripling maiden, who could swim like a mermaid, and run through the island woods like a deer, learned to be content in her school life and to love those who taught her.

During these long years, however, she had not once returned to her island home. Now, the suspense was to be broken, the school days were over, and the home journey at hand. It was from her father that the message came; but while pleasant to think of, it was a surprise, for the prospective three years at College were suddenly and unaccountably cut down to two, and this was to be the end.

A strange unrest, Marie had often understood, was beginning to be felt among the people; disturbing rumors were in the air; and although her father in his letter did not refer to the subject, Marie believed that this had much to do with her sudden recall.

"I intend to keep both of you until the evening," said their hostess as she greeted them. "It is such a pleasant day, that we shall probably spend the afternoon upon the water; and I shall take the liberty of sending you home by moonlight."

"Such delightful news!" returned Marie in an animated tone. "I am sure Miss Bradley will not object, now that school is over."

"We need not care much if she does," was Jessie's laughing comment. "We are her ladyship's soldiers under orders."

"I am not sure of Sir Francis' approval," said Lady Head. "Still I think I can manage it, although he is a stern disciplinarian, and we are living in troublous times. I am arranging for a little water trip beyond the island on the steamer *Transit*. She is now in port, and we are to start this afternoon, to return in time for dinner—provided, of course, that Sir Francis does not seriously object."

"How good of you to give us such a treat!" was Marie's further response. "I have not been on a steamer since my father brought me here two years ago on our little *Petrel*."

"Does your father own a lake steamer?" Lady Head asked in a surprised tone.

"Yes, he has several."

"And yet he never came to see you?"

"He believed that I would insist on returning with him if he did; and I am sure that I should have done any time during the first year."

"After that you became contented!"

"Yes, your Ladyship. I learned to appreciate my advantages."

"Your father evidently understood his daughter—a very reasonable man."

"Yes, stern as well as kind. While I always loved him, I dreaded him fully as much."

"But the dread will depart when you return home. Young ladies are rarely afraid of their fathers."

Marie's face for a moment became grave.

"When is he coming for you?" Jessie asked.

"In two days—again on the *Petrel*."

"I must see him this time," said Lady Head, looking directly into Marie's face. "Sir Francis, too, will wish to talk with him; he wants to know every good man we have in these rebellious days."

Marie felt uneasy. She did not know exactly why—but she did not think that her father would care to see the Governor.

"I am afraid my father will be shy, and would rather not see anyone but his own little girl, as he used to call me," she replied, looking frankly into Lady Head's face. "But it is very kind of you to mention it. You are always good to me; I can never be too grateful."

"Hoity, toity, child," replied her ladyship, repressing a sense of pique. "Ah! yonder comes Sir Francis and Lieutenant Stuart of the *Transit*. He is youngest son of Lord Vancroft, and claims lineal descent from the Stuarts."

Marie started, and glanced quickly across the lawn at the approaching gentlemen.

"That is Marie's name," said Jessie in a lower key. "Do you know, Lady Head, that she is descended from the Stuarts, too?"

"Oh! why did you mention it?" cried Marie, her face flushing vividly.

"It is nothing to be ashamed of!" exclaimed their hostess. "But Lieutenant Stuart does not resemble you in the least. Like Jessie, here, he's dark enough to be a Spaniard. Oh! Sir Francis, you see I have my young friends again."

"Yes," replied the Governor, gravely, "such winsome young ladies are always welcome."

And introducing Stuart, the conversation continued.

The young man's eyes soon rested on Marie, and tall though she was, he looked down from his greater height with pleasure into her animated face.

"I have just invited Miss MacAlpine and Miss Stedman to join our party, Sir Francis," exclaimed his wife. "I feel sure that the Captain of the *Transit* will not object."

"I can vouch for that," put in the lieutenant.

"I am always delighted to extend the courtesies of life to young ladies," reiterated Sir Francis, impressively patting the nearest one on the shoulder; "and I am glad to have the opportunity of seeing and examining the *Transit*. It looks like a serviceable boat, Lieutenant."

"So it is, sir. Well manned and well armed. We have a couple of guns, too, on board, as good as any that are on the lakes."

"That is satisfactory. What is more, we may need them before the year is out, in the Lower Province, if not in this."

"The very reason that we are here, sir. Captain Jerrold has been sounding the plummet all along the line; and he says that one cannot tell how soon the first break may come, either from MacKenzie here or Papineau there."

"True enough," muttered the Governor beneath his breath. "Confound that MacKenzie! Expelled from the House three times, and last year defeated at the polls; and yet utterly irrepressible."

"Yes, so I heard."

"Two of the biggest rebels of the century. I am amazed that the people are such idiots as to believe in them."

"Not all the people, surely."

"No, of course not; but there are enough to make it unpleasant for the bulk of the community, who, I am happy to believe, are thoroughly loyal."

"Ah! I see that the children are out again and our lunch is announced," said Lady Head. "We shall not have much time to spare, for I believe the *Transit* leaves the wharf at—"

"Half-past two!" exclaimed Lieutenant Stuart.

"Provided we are ready," added the Governor, emphatically.

"Certainly, Sir Francis."

And crossing the lawn, they entered Government House.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRIP ON THE TRANSIT.

They were notable people that the *Transit* carried out upon Lake Ontario that glorious afternoon. Captain Jerrold had sent a cordial invitation to the Lieutenant-Governor and his friends; thus affording his Excellency a favorable opportunity for a special meeting of the leading members of his Council, to consider certain important political problems which were then demanding the most serious consideration at his hands. At the same time it afforded the ladies the privilege of an outing upon an armed steamer, something much prized by the fair sex in those early days.

"Let my Cabinet have the forward saloon to ourselves for an hour," said Sir Francis, confidentially buttonholing the Attorney-General as soon as they had passed the island. "I have something important to communicate. The Captain has promised that we shall not be disturbed; and we might meet at once."

"Very well, sir. I see the Solicitor-General talking with Col. Fitzgibbon, and yonder are Sheriff Jarvis and some others."

"Have them all come."

For a few moments the Governor talked to the ladies, and then, followed by the other gentlemen, he led the way to the saloon.

"I'm going to make the most of my opportunity," said Stuart to Marie with a laugh, as the door closed upon the last man, "for Sir Francis says that I may be sent for before their session is over."

"Possibly they may want to intrust you with state secrets," replied Marie, carelessly; "I suppose gentlemen enjoy such things."

"Some do," was the rejoinder, "but it is the intervening hour that I prize. They won't want to discuss matters of importance with a subaltern."

"Still you might have something to communicate."

"Perhaps the incidents of the journey from the ocean westward," he replied.

"You came up the St. Lawrence?" said Marie, her interest increasing.

"Yes, by Prescott and Kingston and the Thousand Isles."

"The Thousand Isles! One of them is my home."

"Which one has that honor, Miss MacAlpine, may I ask?"

"Fingal's Notch," was her prompt answer.

"Fingal's Notch!" he exclaimed, in a tone of astonishment.

"What of it? Does it surprise you?" she asked, turning her eyes enquiringly upon him.

"Rather—well—not exactly," he returned, gathering himself together again. "There are so many of them—and all so picturesque—you can scarcely tell one from another."

"That's because you are not familiar with them. When a child I paddled among them so much that I learned to know each one by name; and no two of them are alike."

"You paddled, you say; not by yourself?"

"Yes," she replied with a low musical laugh, "why not?"

"Of course, you may well ask, 'Why not?' I am displaying my ignorance of your Western ways."

"Miss MacAlpine is a skilled canoeist," remarked Jessie, in vindication of her friend. "Many a time has she paddled

across the bay to the island and back."

"Only during holidays, though," said Marie; "Bradley School regulations forbid it during term."

"But term being over, I should like to see how you do it," was his response.

"See her do what, Lieutenant Stuart?" exclaimed their hostess, who happened to catch the last words.

"See her paddle her canoe all the way across this beautiful bay of yours," he replied, with a dramatic sweep of his arm.

"That's something I never heard of," said Lady Head, in a tone of mingled surprise and disapproval. "It is certainly a dangerous thing for any girl to attempt. It cannot surely be true."

"I confess, Madam, that it is true," said Marie, merrily. "And I shall be sorry not to do it again. I go away so soon."

"Why not prolong your stay for that very purpose?" suggested Stuart in a lower key, as her ladyship passed on with a deprecatory shake of the head at Marie.

"Because in two days my father will be here for me."

"There might still be time for another paddle if to-morrow would do," he suggested.

"But I have my packing and a hundred other things to attend to."

"If you could manage it, I would gladly help you," said Jessie.

"If I do attempt it you must come, too," said Marie, with a smile. "College girls travel in pairs, Mr. Stuart. Miss Stedman and I always go together."

"The complement of each other."

"Yes," said Jessie quickly, "the blond and brunette of it; almost the long and the short of it."

"Would you really care to go?" Marie asked, looking at her friend.

"I always did like the bay, and being unexpected, the pleasure of another paddle would be all the greater," she replied.

"Well, Jessie, say three o'clock. I will send Ned down to the boathouse and be ready in good time."

"And to make the trip secure against misadventure," volunteered Stuart, "I will have a boat ready to man at a moment's notice; and from the quarter-deck shall watch with a field-glass the venturesome ladies while they traverse the mighty deep."

"That will be fine," commented Mrs. Hagarman, the Attorney-General's wife. "Not many ladies are honored during their voyaging by the guardianship of a British-man-of-war."

"Scarcely that," laughed Stuart. "The *Transit* is only an armed frigate."

"It's a man-of-war, all the same," said Lady Head, emphatically, "and may have fighting to do before it leaves the lakes."

"If that time comes, the *Transit* will be true to her colors and her cause," said Stuart, "ever ready for duty."

Marie's face was grave again. She was looking out beyond the island to the far east. Talking of unrest and fighting and war vessels, even in bantering tones, troubled her. What did it all mean? There was more than a possibility of tumult. Rebellion was whispered of—rebellion that might shake the colonies to their centre. How would it affect her father and brothers, her home among the islands, herself? Was all this pleasantry and kindness and courtesy merely a prelude to devastation, to the breaking up of associations and friendships and life that had become a strong part of her new nature? Was this the reason why her father had so peremptorily directed her to return home? Why was the letter so stern? Might he not have been kinder in his demand? She would not think of disobeying him—dear old father—and having been away so long, the mere mention of his wish would have been law.

She was leaning over the railing, forgetful for the moment of all about her, while the talk continued. Suddenly Jessie's

arm was slipped within her own.

"Dear old girl," she murmured, "what were you thinking of?"

Marie started.

"Was I thinking?" she exclaimed; "I am afraid that I am not very polite."

"Yes, you were thinking about leaving Toronto and school and everything. I could read it in your face, Marie, like an open book—I was thinking of it, too, and I believe I'm as sorry as you are."

"Sorry and glad, both. Sorry to leave you all and the life; glad to be home again. Still there's something haunts me sometimes—strange paradox—the memory of the future. But I won't give way to it."

And she turned round with laughing face to answer a question from Lady Head; while Stuart was asking himself how much he could conscientiously conceal, when Miss Marie was Donald MacAlpine's daughter?

CHAPTER III.

PROSPECTIVE REBELLION.

At this moment the saloon door opened and Sir Francis appeared.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he called out, "as a pleasant indication of our loyalty, I ask you to join us in three cheers for the King."

All the men present being either members of his own Council or employees, the cheers were heartily given.

"Three more for Sir Francis Bond Head, His Majesty's representative, the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada," cried the Attorney-General. And the cheers were repeated.

"I thank you all," returned the Governor, "for this double expression of your loyalty; and I have no doubt if it could be heard on shore, it would find an echo throughout the Province."

Closing the door, he returned to the table around which the members of his Cabinet had gathered.

"I believe that is really a fair sample of the sentiment of our people," was his comment.

"I wish I were as confident as you are, sir," said the Attorney-General. "To my knowledge there are many places in this Province where no such cheers could be raised."

"If there are, it is purely MacKenzie's fault," returned the Governor, sharply. "We'll have to call that man to account before long. Even in York the people are against him, as his defeat at the polls in the last election demonstrates. No, in this city and this Province we are all loyal. What I desire to speak with you upon is the condition of Lower Canada. We are in receipt of bad news from there. Our eastern compatriots not only need our sympathy but our assistance also. Bands of armed men are secretly drilling all over that Province, and prowling about among the people, with the object of fomenting disloyalty and inciting rebellion. Papineau, the arch-rebel there, of whom better things might have been expected, is the leader of an obnoxious faction on the very verge of revolt. But we must remember that it is the French element, and not the English, that is producing the agitation. Yes, and let me repeat it, gentlemen, the English people are sound at the core in the Upper Province as well as in the Lower one. There may be a few demagogues among us; but they are really of little importance; and I assure you, they shall receive the punishment they deserve."

"I believe, sir, it is possible in this matter to labor under serious misapprehension," objected the Attorney-General again. "Distrust in this Province is widely disseminated, and we cannot over-estimate its influence."

"Pooh, pooh!" returned his Chief. "The very fact that at the last election, notwithstanding all the efforts of MacKenzie and his followers, the Government was sustained by such a large majority, proves that you are wrong in your conclusions."

"It has only made the malcontents more determined, your Excellency, and the spirit among the people more decisive. We carried the elections, it is true, but how we carried them is no indication of the stand that the people will take when put to the test," said Sheriff Jarvis.

"I believe with the Governor that the people are with us," said Colonel Fitzgibbon, "but to make our position surer, it would be a wise thing to call out the militia again, and give them a thorough drill, particularly when our corps of regulars is so small."

"That, too, I think quite unnecessary," replied Sir Francis, loftily. "If we commence to specially drill our men, the malcontents will at once believe that we are becoming alarmed, a most unjust and lamentable position for a strong Government to assume."

"Nevertheless, your Excellency, if you mixed as much among the people as I do, you would arrive at the conclusion that it would be a wise policy to pursue," said the Solicitor-General, who had not hitherto spoken. "Meetings are already being held in York and other counties to influence the people against the Government. At these meetings, I understand, they regularly discuss what they call a 'bill of rights,' which the people pledge themselves to support."

"What if they do, with the majority of the people, the country, and the Government against them," reiterated Sir Francis.

"As I said before, the unrest in this Province is entirely due to the red-handed work of one man, who has cajoled a few others to follow him. What we require is to arrest him and his accomplices forthwith, and have them summarily tried for treason. That will put an end to the whole thing; and the less we trouble ourselves about the matter the better. But I affirm most positively, that apart from our treatment of MacKenzie we cannot over-estimate the importance of being ready to help our fellow-countrymen in the Lower Province the moment they need our aid."

Seeing the apparent uselessness of further opposition, this statement was received with dumb acquiescence; and taking it for approval, the Governor continued:

"Towards this end we have important data at our command. We have with us one of the officers of the *Transit*, Lieutenant Stuart, son of Lord Vancroft, who has made himself familiar with many of the facts in connection with the proposed insurrection in the Lower Province. I purpose calling him in to supply us with any information he may possess upon this lamentable subject. Sheriff Jarvis, will you kindly have one of the stewards show him in?"

Accordingly Lieutenant Stuart appeared, and, in answer to queries, supplied them with several important facts with which the members of the Government were unfamiliar. While busily digesting these, the Governor asked him to furnish other items of general interest.

"I know that Lower Canadian independence is the talk of the people," was his answer. "They have mottoes and banners floating everywhere. In some places, under the very nose of the Government, 'Papineau and the People,' 'Liberty,' 'Sons of Liberty,' 'Declaration of the Rights of Man,' etc., are strung everywhere. No one knows how they appear or who puts them up; but every morning new mottoes are found in new places. In Montreal malcontents are drilling, and muskets and rifles are being smuggled in from no one knows where."

"Has any blood been shed?" Sir Francis asked.

"Yes, in a dozen places at least, between the French and the English; several lives have already been lost, chiefly around St. Charles and St. Denis. It is believed that at these places the contest will be the keenest."

"You think, then, that rebellion in the Lower Province is a foregone conclusion?"

"Undoubtedly it is, sir; Papineau has already sent out secret orders."

"But on what basis? What are the wrongs that he wishes to have removed?"

"The injustice of the existing Constitution to the French people of the colony, and the bad system of laws that has been established are the claims they make," said Stuart.

"Both of which complaints are exceedingly indefinite," said the Governor.

"Bad administration is perhaps a more definite term," said Stuart. "The Lower Canadians want to have a direct voice in the administration of the affairs of the Province, and in the appointment of the members of the Legislative Council."

"Neither of which are they qualified ethically to possess, any more than they are here," said the Governor. "What else?"

"That the Council antagonizes the Assembly and ignores its mandates."

"As if the Council, composed of qualified gentlemen, responsible to Her Majesty's advisers, did not know what measures should be adopted for the best interests of the country much better than the boorish legislators."

"That may all be true, your Excellency," returned Stuart, "yet the House of Assembly claims that it ought to possess all the rights, immunities and privileges of the English House of Commons."

"A piece of extravagant impertinence!" exclaimed Sir Francis. "The demands of these people, both there and here, are preposterous. They put me out of all patience. I sincerely trust that my fellow-Governor, Lord Gosford, of the Lower Province, will judiciously and energetically meet the malcontents on their own ground, and crush out all resistance with promptitude; something which we will be glad to assist in if necessary."

"To come more to the point, your Excellency," said the Attorney-General, "what is the nature of the assistance that you propose to render?"

"Decidedly military. The moment assistance is required, I would despatch our regulars to Montreal by boat, leaving the militia to guard our own garrison."

"And yet you decline to drill the militia!"

"Only for the present, or until our way seems clear. But what of the Thousand Isles, Lieutenant Stuart? I understand there is much unrest and disturbance there. Captain Jerrold tells me that you personally visited many of the residential ones."

"I did, and I am of the impression that there is more talk than action among the islanders so far."

"And who are their leaders?"

"That is a hard question to answer," he said, evading a direct reply. "Some of the people talk of rebellion, some of annexation, while the loyalists pronounce both absurd. Rebellion there, when it comes, will be after its appearance in the east, I feel convinced."

"Misguided wretches, anywhere, east, west, or in the islands, wherever it be," ejaculated the Governor. "They do not know on which side their bread is buttered. The fact of it is, gentlemen," he continued, rising to his feet in order to give them a little closing speech, "I must remind you again of the similarity of Lord Gosford's position to my own. Each of us represents vice-regal power in his own particular Province. Each of us is working in every way for the best interests of his people. Take my own case, individually; if by my administration I increase the wealth and comfort of the people, I shall claim for myself the credit, which will be totally out of their power to withhold from me; whereas, if I diminish their wealth and comfort, it will be hopeless for anyone to shield me from blame. As, therefore, we have one common object in view, the question arises, which of us, the people or myself, has the greater power to do good to Upper Canada? Or in other words: Can the people do as much for themselves as I can do for them? My answer is emphatically 'No.' Gentlemen, I am exceedingly obliged to you for your presence, and the interesting discussion upon important matters that we have engaged in; that being over, I think we might with profit and pleasure join the ladies in our return."

As they withdrew from the saloon, Stuart's eyes again scanned the deck in search of Marie. He did not know as yet that a strain of royal blood, though dating back for three generations, flowed in her veins as well as in his. It was the charm of her personality, the beauty of her spirit, that attracted him. And then to know that she was the daughter of the wily freebooter of the Thousand Isles, a fact of which the Governor was unaware, enhanced the attraction. There was a spice of poetic romance in the situation. It was like a border feud transplanted across the ocean to the wooded islands of the west. He felt his interest deepening. What manner of man could this MacAlpine be, to be sire of such a maiden? When passing through the islands he had missed him, for although much talked of by his followers, he was informed that he was out in the west for the time being sailing the *Caroline*. How glad he was that he had refrained from mentioning his name. Still, what was it to him? He must and would be loyal to the King. Yet the more he thought, the more his interest deepened.

They had entered the bay again, on the inner side of the island, and as Stuart approached the ladies, he heard Jessie call out:

"Marie Stuart, see, there is the little cove you so often run your canoe into after paddling across the bay."

He was startled. The utterance of the name was like a sequence to his reverie. Could there possibly be a relationship between Miss Marie and himself?

"Yes," was Marie's answer, "we'll run in there again to-morrow."

CHAPTER IV.

THE WRECK OF MARIE'S CANOE.

"It's clear enough now, Miss, but yon sky looks squally," said Ned, as he slid Marie's canoe into the bay. "I'd advise ye to make a short run of it. Don't be out longer than an hour and a half, at most."

"Can't we make it longer than that?" Marie asked, looking thoughtfully over the eastern gap at the shifting white clouds.

"It wouldn't be safe." adjusting his pipe to the proper angle. "Toronto bay's al'us treacherous for canoes, and that storm's coming."

"We'll be back in good time, then; but it would be a joke if we had to swim ashore," Marie returned, jestingly.

"If there's danger we'd better not go," said Jessie.

"Can't you swim? I know you could last summer. But there's really no danger; I promise you we'll be back in time."

"And how much can I? Just the fifty yards you taught me, and that only in smooth water."

"As I say, in an hour an' a half, there's safety," repeated the old sailor, reassuringly; "and Miss MacAlpine's a good paddler. I never saw a better, and never expect to; but for heaven's sake don't stop a minute longer, Miss."

"On my word, Ned," said Marie, slipping a coin into his hand. "And be here, sure, to take charge of *Fawn* when we return."

"Sartin, Miss."

Followed by Jessie, she stepped lightly into the superb little craft. It was tough as whalebone, light as a feather, varnished and cushioned, and buoyant as a cork upon the water, but obedient to every impulse of Marie's paddle.

The air was still and hot, and the water almost without a ripple, while sail-boats and a steamer were moored in the harbor.

"I don't see why Ned should be so fearsome," said Marie, as she dipped her paddle with Jessie facing her. "I must have skimmed this bay a score of times at least, and he was always encouraging instead of exacting until now."

"But you never went when a storm was brewing," returned Jessie. "People say that Ned's a true seaman, and only signals danger when he has good reason."

"That may be, but I've seen many storms in the islands; and it may be hours before this one comes. Ned's a dear old fellow, but getting a little bit fussy. Still, I always prepare for a swim when I go out canoeing. I think every girl should."

"What do you do?"

"Did I never tell you? Why, I wear tights under a loose skirt, and so fastened that I can throw everything else off in a minute. Father insisted upon it when I was a child; and I have kept it up ever since."

"I wish I did," said Jessie, gravely, "it would be safer."

"We shall be just as safe as on shore!" exclaimed Marie with a silvery laugh that sounded far out over the still water, for her paddle was almost noiseless. "See, I am steering for our little cove at the east end of the Island. We can land and then run over to the lake side, for I want to gather a few more of those little white shells."

"If we have time."

"Yes, if we have time. Oh, yonder is the *Transit* away beyond the gap!"

Jessie turned and looked. "It's a long way off, must be two miles at least."

"It's heading in this direction," said Marie, "but scarcely moving."

"How still the bay is! I don't see a rowboat anywhere, nor a single canoe but ours."

"It is enchanting. Our paddle makes a little breeze; and the bay is so smooth that you can see the bottom."

"And the fish, is that a pickerel?"

"Yes, and there goes a bass. Oh, look at the little shoal of perch!"

Jessie languidly trailed her hand through the water, as Marie, with head thrown back and the grace of an accomplished canoeist, dipped her paddle. Then she hummed a low refrain in musical rhythm to the swing.

"Sing it out," said Jessie, "you haven't forgotten it."

"How could I? Association and memory make it both sad and sweet to me. It always comes to mind when canoeing alone on the water."

Again she hummed. She was thinking of her girlhood life in the Thousand Isles; and away back of that of the days of her childhood on the hills of Scotland, where her mother told her tales and sang her songs of their Stuart ancestry. It seemed like centuries ago, and yet only yesterday.

Jessie watched her with keen interest. She almost worshipped her friend, so lithe, so graceful, so strong.

"I believe you could swim across," she ventured.

"Could I?"

Evidently the answer was an unconscious one, for without comment her eye glanced again at the distant *Transit*.

"But the song. Do sing it, please."

Then her deep contralto rang out the words:

My paddle swings as memory sings
Of the tragic days of old,
And the long, dark past comes back too fast,
As legend and song unfold.

For the Stuart race could find no place
In the land of Scottish heather,
And smitten and torn from thistle and thorn
They were lash'd by wintry weather.

Both in lowland fen and highland glen
Men scorn'd the blood of their Kings;
Then truth came free far over the sea,
And liberty's song it sings.

Yes, justice and truth, while lost, forsooth,
By false ones over the brine,
Still fill the breast of the mighty west
Like bouquet of blood-red wine.

So my paddle swings and the forest rings,
All islands echo the sound;
Each swash of the wave is one more stave
In the freedom our race has found.

"The refrain is a sad one with a joyous outlook," said Jessie.

"That is why I like it," said Marie. "The song has its history."

"I thought so when I first heard you sing it. I often wondered what its origin could be."

"Well, I'll tell you. Our old Andrew, down at Fingal's Notch, is the author. He remembers the last Prince Charlie, and has a passion for rhyming, so when he found out that my two brothers and I were Stuarts, he wrote the song for us. Then to my delight I discovered that it would go to one of my mother's old Prince Charlie tunes."

"And did your father like it?"

"I think he did, for he once told me that it was not very loyal to King William, and perhaps I liked it all the better for that."

"The MacAlpines are Highlandmen," said Jessie.

"Yes, and it was in France, the refuge of the Stuarts, that my father met my mother. She was simply Marie Stuart then, and I have inherited her name."

"And she died in Scotland?"

"Oh, no, but in our island home. That sweet mother of mine! There never was anyone like her. Fair and gentle and frail. I was the only daughter. My brother Donald came before me, and Charlie after—then she died. I was only eight years old, but I remember her as if it were yesterday. Her fair face, her sweet blue eyes, her tales of the Stuarts and of France, and the songs she sang."

Again Marie hummed, but it was a different tune, that of a French ballad.

"We are nearing the shore," said Jessie. "The *Transit*, too, is closer."

"I'll slip in here and we can step on to that little reef," said Marie.

In another minute they drew the canoe up the bank. Again Marie looked at the clouds. "They are not much nearer. I don't know but they are drifting to the south. We may get the shells, I think."

"Are you sure we shall have time?"

"I paddled straight over, and we can easily get back and over to the wharf again before Ned's hour and a half are up. Come along, Pussie, don't be afraid."

And with cat-like devotion Jessie hurried after her. In little over a minute they were there, "gathering shells on the seashore."

"What beauties they are, the little pearly things! I have a handful already. But we cannot stay another second. Those treacherous clouds have veered round. See how they are sweeping in. We must run, Jessie. I should have seen it sooner. Oh, it is all my fault!"

And back they ran. Black clouds were looming up in the east and sweeping in with terrible velocity. It was no north nor south now, but due west with a vengeance.

Panting for breath, they launched the canoe and, springing in, shoved out from the shore.

"Ned's time was too long," said Marie, as she made her first stroke. "It's not nearly an hour since we left the wharf, and though still now, in five minutes we'll have the first swell of the sea."

"I'm glad the *Transit's* coming nearer," said Jessie.

"Lieutenant Stuart said he would watch the movements of the *Fawn*," said Marie with a smile. "He is coming for a better look."

"Stuart watching Stuart."

"It cannot be that; he knows nothing of the cousinship," retorted Marie, glancing keenly at the sky while she plied her

paddle with a long, steady sweep. "Ah, the waves are coming now! See the white crests. I must angle across to keep out of the trough. Slip down further, Jessie."

"Best I can do. Can I help you?"

"Not in the least. But it is well to be ready. Nothing is going to happen. But if it should and the canoe capsizes, don't forget but grasp the end of it and hold on. My! this is a lark! Not quarter over and the storm already started. Rain coming down already. In another minute we'll be drenched."

"Who cares for that if we can only get over!" ejaculated Jessie, doing her best to be brave.

"We'll get there, but it's hard paddling through these big waves."

"The *Transit's* lowering a boat," said Jessie.

"And a boat is shoving off from the wharf," echoed Marie, "coming directly toward us—one man in it—slip down Jessie, almost flat, but keep your head up. My, what a sea! Never was in as big a one before—not even in the islands."

Huge waves rolled in from the east, each one bigger than the last, while the wind in wild gusts ushered in a tumult of rain. The frail bark rose and fell as it lurched from one trough into another, while with every big wave water was shipped. Still the canoe floated and Marie valiantly stuck to her paddle.

"What shall we do?" exclaimed Jessie in despairing tones. "The canoe is full and sinking."

"Hold on a little longer and the boats will reach us," cried Marie, reassuringly.

But the canoe was quivering on the top of a mountain wave, and the next moment it pitched headlong into another abyss. Crash went the bow upon an unseen snag, piercing a large hole beneath the water line, and flinging the canoe upon its side. The girls were both hurled into the water; but Marie, seeing the inevitable, had sprung clear of the craft, and diving into deep water, rose again to find Jessie tangled beneath the upturned canoe. Seizing it with one hand and Jessie with the other, she trod water, while with all her strength she pulled her friend from beneath. But Jessie was stunned by the blow of the wreck.

Fortunately, Marie, terrible though the disaster was, had lost neither self-control nor strength. The island life had made her resourceful. She saw that the canoe, although upturned, was impaled upon the snag, and being fixed, was a safe anchor to cleave to. The question was, with such a high sea, each wave dashing their bodies against the little wreck, could she keep the unconscious Jessie and herself from being carried away before help could reach them? For this she prayed. It was the only hope. But how soon would help come? Seconds seemed like minutes—minutes like hours. Jessie hung like a log and was still unconscious, even if alive. A cut upon her temple indicated where the blow had struck; and the weight of her body, her head being held above water by one hand, while she clung to the canoe with the other, taxed Marie's strength to the utmost.

The boats from opposite directions were coming rapidly toward them through the rough sea; but Marie's strength was failing; her hold upon Jessie was becoming less secure; and her head reeled as one wave after another dashed over them. Sensation, too, was getting dull, when suddenly a voice roused her.

"Marie, catch this line," it sang out, and a rope was flung from the harbor boat.

But how could she catch the line, with one hand clinging to Jessie and the other to the canoe? The next moment an impetuous wave brought the two barks together with a crash. The canoe was rolled over by the collision and freed from the snag, while both Jessie and Marie were swept away in the current. Still with one hand Marie kept her hold upon her unconscious friend, while with the other she struck bravely out.

Other help was near. The ship's lifeboat, manned by two men and Lieutenant Stuart, was within oar's length. Marie saw it as the man from the harbor boat stretched out his hand to save her.

"Jessie first," she gasped, and, relieved of her burden, she struck out with both hands, rising on each wave until her friend was rescued. With such a hurricane blowing, the rain coming down in torrents, and each wave sweeping over his boat, it was all the man could do to rescue the insensible girl, while he frantically glanced at the one still in the water.

"For heaven's sake, save her!" he cried.

But there was no need for his call. Already Stuart had thrown out a rope, and with coat off, was ready to dive in his effort of rescue.

"Seize it!" he shouted.

A sweep of Marie's hand touched and held it.

"Now, don't let it slip."

Then he grasped her round the waist and lifted her out of the water. He was none too soon, for, worn out by the prolonged effort, she became unconscious as they stretched her upon the flat deck of the lifeboat.

"Throw me that rug!" he cried, for Marie had dropped her outer garments in her first dive from the wrecked canoe. "Now, brandy."

"For heaven's sake, how is she?" shouted the man in the other boat in excited tones.

Stuart glanced at him quickly. He was a powerfully built fellow, perhaps a little older than himself. His head was bare and his breast open, but he was evidently a man to be trusted.

"She's all right," returned Stuart. "A little faint, but the brandy's reviving her."

"Better steer for the shore," was the response; "when we get there I can help you."

"Which shall it be?" he asked of Marie, who had regained consciousness. "The shore or the *Transit*?"

"The shore, the shore," she gasped. "It was so good of you—both of you—and Jessie?"

"She's breathing better," shouted the man.

"Oh—I'm so glad—if she had died it would have been all my fault."

Again her eyes closed.

"Lead the way," cried Stuart to the shoreman. "We'll follow you."

And with a vague interest in the personality of the stranger who had called Marie by name, Stuart followed his lead.

CHAPTER V.

THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE MALCONTENTS.

During the same afternoon that Sir Francis Head was consulting with the members of his Council in the saloon of the *Transit*, another meeting was held in the city by a far different set of men. It was summoned by William Lyon MacKenzie, the man who had been elected many times by his constituents in York to represent them in Parliament; and who had been as frequently expelled from his seat by the vote of the dominant party.

From the period of his arrival in the country, Mr. MacKenzie had been a leader in the advocacy of liberal and progressive ideas, promulgating them through the columns of the *Advocate*, a weekly paper of which he was both founder and proprietor. In the early issues of this paper, his demands for reform were tempered by expressions of loyalty, although full of indignant protest against what he deemed to be injustices practised upon the people. From the first he was far ahead of his fellows in the views he advocated; and knowing this, the Governor-in-Council persistently rejected every proposition he advanced, whether in the glowing language of a weekly editorial, or still more eloquently on the floor of Parliament.

Possibly, if a more moderate man had been selected from among his confreres as leader, a more satisfactory result might have been the outcome. But MacKenzie could not and would not be restrained. Each expulsion from the House rendered him more bitter and more daring; while at the same time he still retained the leadership of his party.

The calling of this particular meeting had a special object in view. It was for the revision of a declaratory address which had been drafted by himself and accepted by his supporters during the previous year. Five men were gathered together in that little room, each one a study in himself, as with closed doors and grave faces they lent themselves to their work.

MacKenzie, slight in build, with massive head; keen, twinkling eyes and diminutive person, but endowed with resistless energy, was evidently the leader of that little band of men, as he laid down the law before them.

"You remember the first two principles of our declaration," he commenced, looking piercingly into each face in succession, after they had gathered round the table: "1st. That we should sustain the British Constitution in its purity; and 2nd, that we should also continue our connection with the parent state. This was but a reasonable preamble, gentlemen; and one that we were all ready to endorse, other things being equal; but it is impossible to continue to endorse it, for the reason that the Family Compact, the oligarchy that rules our Province, has got us by the throat, and not one atom of mercy will they show. They rule us with a rod of iron, trample upon our rights, tax us for their own gain, and deprive us of the common privileges which everywhere else are enjoyed by peoples that are free. What we have asked for, year after year in the House of Assembly, are only matters of simple justice. All could be summed up in a single paragraph; yet not one of these demands has been granted, or even seriously considered by the tyrants, who have flung them back into our faces. I say emphatically that the time has come for a change. We must stand firmly shoulder to shoulder and face the foe; for any Government is a foe to the people when it deliberately and persistently tramples upon their legitimate rights."

MacKenzie had spoken while sitting, with head thrown forward and hands clenched upon the table.

But Mr. Morrison's tall figure rose to its full height as he immediately followed him. His eyes flashed, but with a strong effort he controlled himself.

"You are carrying things too far, Mr. MacKenzie," he commenced, impressively; "such language is treason; and much as we have suffered, we are not going to be rebels yet. Let us place our case more strongly than ever before the Home Government; and I am convinced that in return for our very persistency, if from no higher motive, some measure of redress will be granted."

"I fail to see the force of your reasoning," harshly returned MacKenzie, who could not bear to be rebuked even by one of his staunchest friends; "the petition that I personally presented in London to the Colonial Secretary, bearing twenty-five thousand signatures from the small population of this Colony, was practically ignored, and the promise to investigate our claims unfulfilled; for the moment a counter-petition from the Council was entered, our case was dropped, and our oppressors were bidden to make no change whatever in the Government of the Colony."

"Read out the main clauses in our petition, and then we shall know better where we stand," said Dr. Rolph, who was

more closely associated with Mr. MacKenzie than any other of his colleagues.

"Well, here they are:

1. Responsible advisers to the Government.
2. Equal rights to all men, whether Protestant or Catholic; Churchmen or Dissenters.
3. The disposal of all revenues of the Province for the benefit of its inhabitants.
4. The reformation of the Legislative Council and the Land Granting Department.
5. The redress of all known grievances.

"Instead of acquiescing in these just demands," continued MacKenzie, in a tone of intense earnestness, "the appointed members of the Council have asked and the English Government have proclaimed that in Canada:

No Elective Council shall be tolerated; that Ministerial responsibility is inadmissible; that the expenditure of public money collected from the people may be without the sanction of their representatives; and to crown all, that coercion should be resorted to, if the Assembly elected by the people should refuse to submit.

"Could anything be more unjust? Could there be a greater travesty of righteousness, or law, or order, imposed upon any people, than to allow them to elect members of Parliament, and then to deprive these members of the rights and privileges, for the exercise of which they were elected? Even to go so far as to nullify their power of voting. It is time, I say, that we rose like men and demanded our rights, even at the point of the bayonet."

"MacKenzie is right!" exclaimed Captain Lount; "neither the Government nor the Council have any intention of yielding one jot to appease the popular demand. They have all the revenue and all the officials under their thumb—a dog in the manger act—and nothing but actual revolt will change their attitude."

"That is my contention," re-affirmed MacKenzie. "To arms, to arms, must be our watchword. Once let the people know that we are determined, then they will valiantly rally round our standard."

"Notwithstanding all that has been said," reiterated Mr. Morrison, indignantly, "I maintain, that in our present unorganized condition, revolt would be worse than disastrous, it would be suicidal. As reformers, we want no more than we ask; and as British freemen, we will be satisfied with no less. But I maintain that it is too soon to resort to arms. Constant and determined pressure of our claims upon the Government should in time force them to grant what we want. Our effort must be continuous, but along peaceful lines, at least, until in justice to ourselves we are prepared for more positive measures. What is our position to-day? We have no arms, our men are untrained. What is more than all, they are not sufficiently impressed with the enormity of the existing evils to persistently and valiantly fight for their removal."

"Again you are wrong," cried MacKenzie, with unusual asperity; "the people are alive to their wrongs. Once let the torch of insurrection be applied and the whole country will be ablaze. There are arms at the city arsenal that can be seized, and we have valiant men among us who are ready to seize them. All we want is unanimity among ourselves, then the success of our efforts will be assured."

"You can have no unanimity if you leave out the element of reason," said Morrison, doggedly; "I insist that direct action must be postponed; and if actual rebellion is to be the outcome, you must first systematically drill your men."

"Morrison is right," said Mr. Anderson, a large man with a reflective face. "The country is not prepared for revolt, and it is absurd to say it is. Here MacKenzie and I, and several others among our supporters, were defeated at the recent elections; and the Family Compact was sustained by an increased majority. These men were elected by the people; and no matter how much influence the Government brought to bear upon the electors, they could not have turned the tables upon us so completely, if our cause had the support throughout the Province which Mr. MacKenzie believes to be the case."

"Well, what do you suggest?" muttered MacKenzie between compressed lips.

"Make our central committee stronger. Establish sub-committees everywhere. Keep our actions secret from all but the

initiated; and regularly drill our friends."

"Until when?"

"Until summer is over, the harvest housed, and the people's barns are full."

"Anderson has struck the nail on the head," said Dr. Rolph. "A man fights best when his stomach is full and his rations sure."

"I protest against delay," said MacKenzie, "but even granting that there may be reason, however small, we have no time to lose. So we will dissolve ourselves at once into a committee of ways and means."

"With yourself still in the chair, sir."

So they entered into the work of detail, wilily listened to by an unseen ear, which for hours had been glued to a knot-hole in the pine floor above them.

CHAPTER VI.

MAD MADGE'S SONGS.

MacKenzie's brow was clouded when he parted with his confreres that afternoon. He had toiled hard. Night and day had he labored. He had devoted his efforts and exhausted his means in a cause that, with all the faith of his Scottish nature, he believed to be in every sense just; yet he knew in his soul that the support he received from these men was only half-hearted. Once let his own back weaken, the cause would be gone. He was one of those men for whom two and two could only make four. From a given hundred, subtract a hundred, and nothing could be left. Grant a people representatives, but deny them the right of decision upon their deliberations—the gift could only be a mockery and a farce—high treason of the crown against the subject. There could be no half-way course. The little leaven could not leaven the lump. Justice must be full and immediate. There could be no here a little and there a little; no gradual concession of rights and privileges; no slow development of freedom; but justice must come at once. A Briton's rights were God-given and divine; and if not granted when persistently and loyally asked for, they must be taken by force, no matter what the cost. If an unjust tax upon tea was sufficient to secure one young nation's freedom, the seizure of the entire taxes of another one would amply warrant the dawn of a new era—the floating of the flag of liberty. So at least MacKenzie reasoned.

Being an enthusiast himself, he could not understand why every other man should not be an enthusiast likewise. To him the wrongs were so plain, the injustices so palpable, that he could not believe that his opinions were not fully endorsed by the people. His speeches had been scattered widely among them, and hearing of approval in both town and country, he felt certain that support to the cause was assured, notwithstanding the seeming lukewarmness of his immediate councillors. If he could only ride out among them, inspiring them by his presence and energy and words, how quickly the deed could be done! How enthusiastically would the people rally round his standard!

"But this terrible opposition among the men who should be my bodyguard!" he muttered to himself, gloomily.

"Morrison's stubbornness, Rolph's timidity, Anderson's caution, are enough to wreck our efforts. But by heaven they shall not! God knows that our cause is a just one. We may have to wait; but we are in for a fight to the finish; and in the end we shall win."

His house stood a little back from the street, and as he walked up the pathway, the savory odor of broiled fowl greeted his nostrils. This was unusual, for tea with him was a light meal, following a heavier noon dinner.

His wife met him at the door. While not so enthusiastic as her husband, and always apprehensive of the possibility of renewed attacks upon his property or life, she was loyally faithful to his views of right and wrong; and, from a sense of duty, did her best to aid and abet his efforts. To-day her face was brighter than usual. There was an appreciative warmth in her look.

"What is it, wife?" he asked.

"Are you particularly hungry?" was her answer.

"I should think I might be, after talking steadily for three hours."

"All the good it'll do you, I fear, won't be much. But that's no matter, there are people in this town who worship the very ground you stand on."

"When the right time comes, I hope they'll show it."

"That's what they are doing—showing it now."

MacKenzie's look was a question.

"You remember the Kenny's, who had smallpox two years ago, when you were Mayor?"

"Yes."

"The mother was here this afternoon, and she says that she and her son owe their lives to you."

"Rather a strong statement."

"She declares that it is true; and as a little token of gratitude she brought over some choice chickens, that she has raised specially for you. And yet, dear heart, you never told me a word about it."

"Why should I? I took good care not to carry the infection; and it would have been foolish to make you timid."

"And that coat of yours that disappeared was kept in the bushes back of the house, just to visit them in?"

"Yes, and after two got well and the other two died, the coat was put in their stove and burned."

"That wasn't all," said Mrs. MacKenzie, shaking her head. "Their cases were so bad that people wouldn't go near the house. So you engaged a woman to act as nurse, and set the example, by going twice a day yourself to see that your orders were carried out. Why did you run such a risk?"

"What was I Mayor for?"

"Not to do the people's work."

"No, but a Mayor of a city is father to the folk in it. It's his duty to see that the sick are cared for. The well can take care of themselves."

"It was the Doctors' duty, not yours."

"Yes and no. Theirs to prescribe—mine to see that their directions were carried out. If I hadn't, many more people would have died."

"And suppose you had died yourself?"

"It might have been as well," he muttered, reflectively; "the present troublous times would have been postponed—only postponed, mark you, until some other dare-devil soul arose to fill my shoes—the coming rebellion would not even be thought of; and the oligarchy that curses our land with its tyranny might go on indefinitely preying upon the vitals of our people—it's a moot question which would have been best."

"And what will be the result as it is?"

"War to the knife, if need be—the people against the tyrants. But we must keep our own counsel until we're ready."

"Rest assured I shall not mention it. But the thought is a terrible one. Let us forget it for to-day, at least. Come to supper. Those broiled chickens must be done enough."

And very delicious they were to the hungry man and his patient wife.

Their children were picnicking that afternoon, and their grandmother had gone with them.

"Someone else coming? Who can it be?" exclaimed MacKenzie, as they finished the meal.

Through the little hall and open door he could see the tall figure of a woman standing on the steps and fumbling with the door-handle.

"She's another of your proteges," returned his wife; "one of the crazy women you found in the court-house dungeon when you became Mayor."

"What brings her here? We arranged a place for her, and it was said she was comfortably off again," said MacKenzie.

"So you did; but she thinks she's got a mission to look after your interest; this is the second time she has been here to-day. She claims to have a very important secret to tell you."

"Poor soul! I used to think she was more imbecile than crazy, and yet what a memory she had. Why not give her some of Mrs. Kenny's chicken while I make a note or two? Possibly she may have something really important to communicate. Mad people are not always fools."

"She certainly has been very sly in her visits—afraid of being either seen or heard; and yet very insistent upon seeing you."

"I'll go into the library, then, and in a few minutes you might show her in."

"Well, Madge, what can I do for you?"

Madge looked round to see that no one followed her, and then cautiously closed the door.

"I want to help you," she answered, mysteriously, "but he's spying on me, and I've got to be careful."

"Who is he, Madge?"

"The man who put me in gaol because I was crazy. He'd put me in again if he knew I told you."

"You mean Tom Cronch, your uncle. Has he a grudge against me?"

She approached MacKenzie's desk, put her hands upon it, and in a sepulchral tone announced: "He's a spy, and has been watching you for weeks. This afternoon he went to hide in the house where you met your men; and there he heard you tell your secrets."

"Who told you all this, Madge?"

"No one, I just heard them. They thought I was too daft to pay any attention. Ah, ah, what fools people are!"

"You are a wise woman, Madge, and I am glad you told me, but you need not mention this to anyone else."

"No fear of that. You saved my life. I should have died in that vile hole if you hadn't taken me out—and Tom Cronch knows it. He got my money, the rascal—and he'd be glad if I was dead."

"So he's taking his revenge by spying on me, is he?"

"And then he tells the news to your enemies."

"Have I got any enemies, Madge?"

"Yes, lots of them. Some say you are a fool—we are all fools—every one of us. Still you were good to me when other folks were bad—and they shan't touch you if Madge can help it:

But the villain that spies
And tells nothing but lies
And robs you whenever he can,
Is as wicked a hound
As ever was found
Since the earth was cursed by a man.

"And beware, Mr. MacKenzie, beware—for my uncle's a villain if ever there was one."

Then she made a sweeping curtsy, glanced again suspiciously round the room and, cautiously opening the door, ran down the path to the street.

Instead of returning by the way she came, Madge slipped along a narrow lane; then crossed a couple of blocks and, in a roundabout way, finally reached her home.

"Hello, Madge, what pranks are you up to now?" queried a sharp-featured, grizzle-headed man, as she entered the gate from the opposite direction to that of MacKenzie's house.

"Nary a prank, except to watch the sojers," she answered with a smirk. "Be'n't they fine?"

Cronch looked at her keenly, but Madge never flinched.

"Yes, they're fine enough," he drawled; "but looking at soldiers is not the thing for daft folks like you. Home's the best

place."

"By St. Andrew, when they fight for the King and keep down the rebels, a daft body might look at 'em," she returned, in seeming indignation.

"Get inside, girl, the wife says your work is waiting for you."

'Twas a soldier lad
That drove her mad
When Maggie was a beauty;
But now she's well
She still will tell
The lads to do their duty,

sang out the woman in piping tones, with a toss of her head, as she entered the kitchen.

"Madge hasn't improved much!" exclaimed the loyalist friend who had joined Cronch to ascertain the latest news.

"She's harmless though," was his answer. "She used to be both cunning and crazy—now she's got the jerks, but that won't matter so long as she does what she's told."

"Well, what about the business? Did you manage it all right, and hear things?"

"Yes, and I saw every one of em. They intend to keep together, but they are not unanimous. MacKenzie tries to lead 'em all by the nose, but he can't."

"Why not swoop down on the whole batch and have done with it?"

"It'll be better to let 'em fry in their own fat. They arranged to meet regularly once a week in the same place, to mature their plans. Let 'em do it, I say, till they think they have 'em perfect; I'll watch 'em with a cat's eye. Then we'll do the eagle business; and if we calkilate right, the Governor can nab every man of 'em, put 'em in the stocks, and give us the glory."

Madge came out again to gather an armful of wood, still crooning:

'Twas a soldier lad
That drove her mad
When Maggie was a ninnie.

"Shut up, Madge!" exclaimed Cronch, testily. "You needn't be a greater fool than you have to be."

"So I'm a fool too," she replied, with gaping eyes. "One's bad enough without t'other:

A fool's an imp without any brains,
A madman's got too many;
Don't lose your share, or you will be
As big a fool, as any."

"Stop, I say!"

"I'm stoppin', but I've got to take in another armful yet." And she hastened in and out again.

"Will you report to the Colonel at once?" the man asked.

"No, it would be better to wait further developments."

"As long as you can keep your ear at the knot-hole."

"That's where the trick comes in. I had to lie still and dare not move. It will be easier next time, though, for the meeting will be after dark. Luckily I know the place well and going in by the back stair there'll be less danger."

The soldier's the man for me,
His red coat and goatee;
With powder and shot
He'll give it 'em hot
And send the rebels to——

"Madge!" shouted Cronch again, savagely.

But Madge had secured her last armful, and as she entered the kitchen, she closed the door behind her and peeped through the crack.

CHAPTER VII.

MEETING OF LIEUTENANT STUART WITH HARRY THOMPSON.

"Heave slowly, men," cried the stranger, "or you'll smash your boat on the pier. The wind is terrific." He ran his skiff on the shore and, hauling it well in, stood on the little wharf to help with the larger boat. It came in with a sweep, then, shivering for a moment, bounded out again with the receding wave.

"Throw me your rope—now for your oar!" And seizing the wide end of the blade, the other being held by a sailor, the broadside of the lifeboat swung in and was fastened to the dock.

Marie's eyes were fixed upon the stranger. Suddenly she recognized him and, rising to her feet, she bounded out with the rug still wrapped around her.

"Why, Harry! Harry Thompson!" she exclaimed, in excited tones, for it was only now that his presumption in calling her by name was understood by her. "To think of you being here without me knowing it—and that we should owe our lives—Jessie's and mine—to Lieutenant Stuart and you. Oh, sir, this is an old friend from Fingal's Notch, whom I have not seen for years. Thank God, too, Jessie is alive."

The two men grasped hands.

"Let us lift Miss Stedman out," said Stuart, "she cannot help herself."

Consciousness had not returned.

"Carry her to my house," cried Ned, who was there in all eagerness ready to give assistance. "And you, too, Miss MacAlpine, it is only a step. What did I say? That storm was sure to come. Lord! to think you both were nearly drowned. And I, like a blamed fool, let you go."

"You'll never do it again," cried Marie, hysterically, for the terrible strain was telling upon her.

"No, I never shall."

"You can't. The *Fawn* is smashed. Oh, Lieutenant Stuart, what could we have done without you and Harry?"

"We only did what we couldn't help doing," was his answer as they carried Jessie.

"Come right in, Miss," cried Ned; "the wife will get some dry things for ye."

"And send at once for the doctor and to Bradley Hall for fresh clothes for Miss Stedman and myself," returned Marie, as she entered the cottage. The order was quickly executed, for a crowd had gathered round them and many offered their services.

The rain had ceased and the clouds were breaking as the two rescuers stood for a few moments together before parting.

"This is making acquaintance under unusual circumstances," said Stuart, looking keenly into the other's face.

"Yes, but I'm mighty glad we met," returned Thompson. "If either one of us had been absent, both of 'em might have been lost."

"I don't know but you're right. It was you that saved Miss Stedman anyway. Still," Stuart added with a smile, "it was your boat that smashed into the canoe and threw them off the wreck."

"Yes, that's true; but if a skiff could do so much damage dead against the wind, what would your heavy craft have done, bearing down upon the canoe in the very wake of the storm?"

"Ah, there you have me! Suppose we cry quits and declare that honors are even."

And again they shook hands.

"You are from the war-vessel," said Thompson, looking askance at the *Transit*.

"Yes, we arrived two days ago and sail east again to-morrow."

"Bringing in arms and ammunition to the fort," suggested Harry.

"Not necessarily so," returned Stuart, with equal *nonchalance*; "while on the lakes we've got to move up and down, you know. It would be against nature for a cruiser to lie still."

"So, true to her name, she roves?"

"Yes," replied Stuart, looking Harry again in the eyes, "and you, too, must be a rover, strayed from your moorings at Fingal's Notch?"

"True enough, I've been roving for two days, but in one direction, straight west from the islands; I only arrived yesterday."

"You'll take a rest then before you return?"

"That's scarcely optional; I've work here that will keep me busy for a little; upon it my movements depend."

"Knowing Miss MacAlpine, you must know her father," said Stuart.

"I should rather think so; that skiff is owned by him. It's as light as a feather, yet as strong as hoop-iron. If it hadn't been it could never have breasted this gale."

"True, indeed; Mr. MacAlpine is coming to-morrow, I believe. If he arrives early enough, perhaps I shall get a chance to see him."

"That's doubtful. He'll be here and away again, almost before you know it. Celerity of movement has always been his habit."

"His daughter has the same accomplishment well developed," said Stuart.

"She always had. Celerity and precision made her one of the best shots in the islands before she was fifteen."

"I knew she could swim and paddle, but I never heard that she could shoot."

"I've seen her take a partridge's head off at fifty yards with a small-bore rifle; and when the sportsmen laughed at her, she repeated the feat half-an-hour later under similar conditions with a black squirrel."

"She certainly has accomplishments."

"Accomplishment isn't in it. She comes of the Stuart race, sir; when she goes home the whole of the islands will be at her feet."

"And well they may," returned Stuart, his eyes flashing.

At this moment a carriage dashed down to the wharf to carry the young ladies back to Bradley Hall. Marie was already dressed and waiting.

"Miss Stedman will still need help," she said in much concern, as she appeared at the door. So the two men lifted her gently into the carriage.

"When shall I see you again?" Harry asked of Marie. "I must have a talk to-night; after all this time we have not had five words together."

"I would like to, but it may be difficult."

"But, Marie, I have many things to say."

"Well, Miss Bradley may object, but you are an old friend and I owe you much. Yes, I will see you at eight o'clock."

"And the man from the *Transit*," said Stuart, lifting his battered hat, which bore marks of its recent conflict with the elements, "will not impose his presence upon you again to-night; but to-morrow morning, if you will name the hour, he

will ask in person how you both have fared."

"It is very kind of you," she replied with a slight flush. "Perhaps ten o'clock would do; and the girls, whose lives you have helped to save, will be delighted to receive their guest,—at least one of them will—but poor Jessie!"

With a chirrup from the driver the horses started, Jessie's head resting on Marie's shoulder. A few minutes later, they reached Bradley Hall, where Dr. Rolph, who had already been summoned, awaited their arrival.

CHAPTER VIII.

DR. ROLPH AND THE OPERATION

Dr. Rolph was a shrewd politician. He had a large head and a big soul, but he liked to be on the safe side. Being a Liberal, both from heritage and principle, he always voted for reform measures; while he coquetted with the Tory administration for the good things of office. Hence, he was coroner, gaol physician, and medical attendant upon the Governor's family; while his scientific knowledge, professional skill, and suavity of manner, secured for him a large following among the people. He was, in fact, that great social functionary, society's doctor.

While ostensibly a member of MacKenzie's prospective Cabinet, provided that the forthcoming revolt should come to a successful issue, he was too astute to commit himself to the extent that his leader desired. That evils existed he knew well. The people were heavily taxed, and the Government applied the money thereby obtained to suit their own purposes, irrespective of the wishes of the people's representatives. A certain church was pampered by special privileges. All official appointments were either direct or indirect gifts of the Crown. Responsibility to the people did not exist, and there was no promise of change. A wise administrator could readily ameliorate these evils. Of this he felt sure; and in the vain hope that in time he might be asked to act as intermediary to partially satisfy the people, he was willing to hold back the car of Juggernaut, if he could.

Driving home from his round of professional visits during the afternoon of the storm, his mind was so full of the subject that he gave no heed to the rain, reaching his office earlier than usual. When he heard of the wreck of the canoe he was amazed to learn that his adopted niece, Jessie Stedman, was one of the victims, and that a messenger had arrived to secure his help in her behalf.

"She's awful bad, sir," said the man, "and they're taking her back to Bradley Hall."

Bidding the man jump into his carriage and give an account of her condition, he drove over, arriving in time to direct her removal to the house. She was still unconscious.

"It is all my fault," cried Marie, in a voice of deep contrition, as she noted the cloud upon the doctor's face. "Jessie wouldn't have gone if I hadn't persuaded her."

"It was a foolish escapade, right in the face of a threatening storm," he returned; "but there is no use lamenting now, the deed is done. Tell me how it happened?"

Frankly and graphically she told the story.

"So you saved her life," he commented, reflectively, as she spoke of treading water and holding Jessie up with the one hand.

"I held her until the men came. That was all, they saved her."

"Oh! but you did the first part. The men only carried on the work you began, and it is not finished yet. The child is still in danger. Has she spoken?"

"Not a word."

"No wonder. Her skull is fractured and depressed over the left temple. It is a very serious business. Where is Miss Bradley?"

"I am here, sir," replied the Principal.

"Jessie will have to be put in a large room where there is plenty of light, for an operation will be necessary," said the Doctor.

"Her own room is a good one, but Miss MacAlpine's is better. She might have hers," said Miss Bradley.

"Jessie's welcome to mine," echoed Marie, "but I would not think of leaving her."

"Is not your father coming for you?"

"He is, but I must stay. After what has happened it would kill me to leave her before danger is over."

"Bravely spoken," said the Doctor, "you shall be one of her nurses. If she were conscious she would rather have you than any one else. It is fortunate, Miss Bradley, that you can spare the room. It is better for her than my own house would be, and, as you know, she has no other home."

Then he hurried away for his instruments. By-and-by he returned, accompanied by a younger man, and they examined the patient more thoroughly.

"It is a large depression over the Island of Riel," said Dr. Backus.

"Yes," added Dr. Rolph, more seriously, "unconsciousness is deepening; the effusion must be stopped if possible."

"The sooner we operate the better. Fortunately she will feel no pain."

"It would be terrible to lose her," said Dr. Rolph. "She is in a sort of trance now."

"So much the better for her. It would be grand if we could put every one into a trance who required an operation. The curse of surgery is the pain it produces," said Backus.

"Some day that will be possible, though perhaps not in ours," muttered Rolph; "but we must to work while we yet have sunlight."

So the doctors did the operation, Miss Bradley remaining with them to render what assistance she could; while Marie, in an adjoining room, anxiously waited for news of the condition of her friend.

Fully an hour passed away. Sometimes quick steps were heard in the operating room; now and then low words were passed from one to the other; and occasionally a groan struck Marie's ear. After a while there was a sharp cry of pain, and Marie, with hands clenched, stepped to the door.

"Yes, you may come in now," said Dr. Rolph, in a low voice. "Do not say anything; but hand me that other bowl of fresh water and those extra sponges. There, that will do. You are a brave girl, Marie MacAlpine, and I may as well tell you what we have done. We have raised the depressed skull and removed a lot of blood clots that were pressing upon the brain. Jessie will be better now if we can keep the fever down."

"And will she become conscious again?" Marie whispered, eagerly.

"We think so, although it will take time to tell."

Then they placed her gently in bed, and adjusting the dressings about the wound, prepared to leave.

"This has been a terrible strain upon Miss MacAlpine," said Dr. Rolph in an aside to Miss Bradley. "If she is to do part of the nursing she will need to rest first. So we will only give her three hours to-night, say from nine to twelve; and have her rest at once."

"And who will stay with Jessie and apply the lotions?" Marie asked in much concern.

"I will provide someone," replied the doctor, "but you must lie down now."

"I am sure I cannot sleep if I do."

"Nevertheless, it is the doctor's orders to try; or I am afraid we will have to find someone to take your place."

"Well, I will do my best."

But Marie's mind was in a whirl, while her limbs were stiff and sore from her long and trying battle with the elements. She feared that the effort would be useless. After a while, however, Nature's restorative evinced its power and she fell asleep, with mingled thoughts of her engagement to see Harry at eight, her nursing duties at nine, and her father's orders to start for home on the morrow, fleeting through her brain.

CHAPTER IX.

MARIE IN CONFERENCE

"This is atrocious of me, Harry; I promised to see you at eight o'clock, and here——"

"It is all my fault. So don't say a word, please. When I arrived, Miss Bradley explained the circumstances. So I insisted not to call you. You needed a long rest after such a severe strain."

"How good of you! But we have only fifteen minutes left."

"That's the unfortunate part. It is like being compelled to run a mile a minute."

"Or swim one in two. But what of father? Has he sent me any special message?"

"Yes. This letter in particular. I was commissioned to deliver it in person the moment I saw you; but I did not arrive until after you had started on your canoe trip; and after that, the unexpected excitement of the afternoon drove it out of my mind."

"No wonder," said Marie.

She opened the letter and glanced over its pages. As she read on a troubled expression came into her face.

"Father insists that I must be ready to return without an hour's delay," she said, in a constrained tone. "I can do everything he wants but that. After what has occurred, it will be impossible to go back with him."

"Not return with him, Marie?" exclaimed the young man in surprise. "It is for that only that he is coming; and at a time, too, when both he and you are needed at Fingal's Notch. Surely you have no good reason for declining to go back with him?"

"But I have; Jessie is exceedingly ill, entirely due to my wilfulness. She has undergone a terrible operation; and I have decided, with the Doctor's full approval, to remain and help to nurse her until she is out of danger."

"But that cannot be necessary. The whole thing was an accident, for which you are not responsible. You saved her life, and when your father is coming for you, Marie, that should be enough."

"But it isn't. There is no use talking; I feel that the whole blame is on my shoulders. It would be cowardly to leave her now. But tell me more. There are some things my father only hints about."

Harry drew his chair closer and spoke in a suppressed tone.

"There is danger ahead. The whole country is on the verge of rebellion; and, although not known except by his friends, your father is the head of the *Thousand Island League*."

"Against the Government?"

"Yes, against the Government. The people are ripe for revolt in the Lower Province; and we cannot tell how soon it may come among the islands, or here, its very centre. It is only reasonable that your father should want you home before the break comes."

"Still a week or two cannot make any difference," said Marie, seriously. "I have heard of disaffection among the people ever since I came; and from appearances they are no nearer rebellion now than they were then."

"They are so much nearer, Marie, that your father does not intend to leave his boat. He directed me to arrange for the transfer of your boxes to the wharf at once, so that you could return with him without delay. I would not go against you for the world, Marie, and you know it; but these are the Commodore's orders, and what am I to do?"

"There is nothing for you to do," she replied in an imperious tone. "My things for the present will stay where they are. I will get what my father wants and have them sent to the *Petrel* by noon to-morrow, and at the same time go and see him myself. There will be no delay. But my time is up—and I thank you again from the bottom of my heart for all you have

done for me." Her concluding words were in a softer tone and her eyes moistened as she spoke.

The young man's face flushed and he held her hand in both of his, the action telling its tale.

"I would do ten times as much if I could!" he exclaimed, passionately; "I was to return with the *Petrel*; but if you stay longer, so shall I."

"You'll do nothing of the sort," she returned, indignantly. "There will be no occasion for it whatever. I will ask Dr. Rolph to-morrow how soon danger will be over; and will tell my father when to send the boat for me again."

"Dr. Rolph!"

"Yes, it was he that did the operation."

"He is the colleague of MacKenzie, the head of the whole movement!"

"That does not prevent him being a gentleman and my friend."

"Possibly the doctor being your friend, your father will be more willing to yield."

"Shall I see you again?" Marie asked.

"Certainly, to-morrow on the *Petrel*."

"Good-night."

And in another minute she was at Jessie's side.

During her three hours' vigil, Marie had much to think of. Nursing the sick was something new to her; but she persistently, though timidly, carried out the orders, while Jessie remained unconscious of the regular application of the cooling lotion. The room was still, and after ten o'clock outside noise ceased, save for the occasional bark of a dog, or the hoot of an owl in the adjoining grove. Jessie's even and regular breathing was a comforting assurance to her. She was sleeping peacefully, something the doctor had mentioned as particularly desirable. It made the outlook more hopeful, and while her fingers were busy, Marie's mind soon became engaged in her own affairs.

The even tenor of her life was over. For two years it had flowed uninterruptedly in a definite channel, with the prospect of simple transfer homeward when her school days should cease. Now she felt that she had come to a parting of the ways, and she knew not whither she was drifting. Instead of a clear sky shining above her head, nothing but clouds were visible. What did she know of war or the tumult of war? Why did her father set his face against the Government? What injury had it ever done to him or his? Yet being her father—a stern and honorable man—he must know the truth. Still if he was contending for the right, what of Sir Francis Head and Her Excellency, his wife, who had always been her friends? And what of her canoe trip with its dreadful disaster? Did she not owe her life to two men, the one, a loyalist of her own blood; the other, a friend, who in a few weeks, or even days, might become a rebel? These men had entered into her life, the one anew, the other for the first time, yet she felt that coming together during those few terrible moments when her life was in jeopardy, their influence might remain even to the end.

At last her hours of watching were over, and resigning her duties into the hands of another nurse, she slipped into bed, to dream of storms raging, armies fighting, and her two friends wildly struggling with each other to release her from the cabin of a ship which her father was deliberately blowing up into the air.

The shock awoke her. The sun was well above the horizon, and as she had much to do that day, she dressed hastily and went in for breakfast.

"How is Jessie?" was her first greeting.

"Doing nicely," was the response. "Dr. Rolph was here early and he left word that on account of your father's visit, your services will not be required again until the evening."

"That was kind of him. But when will he be here again?"

"At eleven o'clock."

So she hurried away to carry out her father's instructions, returning in time to receive Lieutenant Stuart at the appointed hour.

"Our movements are very uncertain. The Captain issued orders this morning that we must be outside the eastern gap by eleven-thirty. But I could not leave without fulfilling my promise," were almost his first words.

"It would have been a grief to me if you had. I could not tell you yesterday how deeply grateful I am."

"Gratitude should be the other way," was his answer. "If it had not been for your little mishap I should possibly never have had the pleasure of knowing you so well."

"But the little mishap nearly cost Jessie her life," said Marie.

"Sometimes we express our deeper thoughts in lighter vein, but how is she?"

"Sleeping quietly and still unconscious. The doctor says she is no worse."

"That has a hopeful sound, I am glad to hear it. I believe she will get well. But what concerns me most just now is the future."

"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," she quoted with carelessness that was only seeming.

"Yes," was his answer. "That is well enough for a proverb; but it will not do for our days. Do you know, Miss MacAlpine, I have discovered that we are cousins?"

"Who told you?" she exclaimed, her cheeks tingling notwithstanding her effort at self-control.

"My first suspicion was when I heard Miss Stedman call you Marie Stuart. And I assure you the surprise was doubly welcome when Lady Head said that it was true."

"I knew before we were introduced," said Marie.

"The usual way," was his rejoinder; "men are such slow coaches."

"It wasn't by intuition though," was her laughing response. "I received my information from the same source that you did, by a mere reference to ancestry."

"Well, granting that we are cousins, we should have similar interests. Possibly you can help me to solve a problem."

"Women may have wit but men have wisdom. I am afraid you cannot get much aid from me, for I never solved a problem in my life."

"You are the only person, man or woman, who can aid me," was his answer.

"What is it?" Her eyes dropped as intuitively she grasped the thought.

"I want you to influence your father to keep the peace. Convince him of the foolishness of rebellion. Then among the islands, at least, there will be no war."

"You do not know my father," said Marie, her face for the moment becoming pallid. "Do you think a Highland chieftain would ask advice of a woman upon such an important matter, least of all his own child?"

"His daughter is not a child, Miss Marie, but a genuine woman, filled with the blood of the Stuarts as well as the MacAlpines."

"The Stuarts and the MacAlpines were always ready to fight and to die for their rights. What Donald MacAlpine says is law, and Marie Stuart, his daughter, would die before she would show the white feather."

"Forgive me, I know it. I am proud of you, as every Stuart would be. The trouble is, that I, a soldier of the King, with our

troops, will have to patrol the lake and fight for the Government; while your father will lead the lake division of the rebel forces. There is no use mincing matters. The time of conflict will soon come. It is terrible in this new country to have a Stuart fighting against his kin—for your brothers under their father's banner will help him to fight his battles."

"Of course they will. Why should they not? Whether is it better to fight for one's country and one's home; or to come, as you have done, to trample out one's rights?"

"I didn't come to do that, Miss Marie. Heaven knows I didn't. The soldiers of the King came to keep the peace, to quell rebellion, to restore order, until wrongs can be righted, and injustices removed."

"Then their first duty will be to quell rebellion," said Marie, stoutly, in defence of her father's cause.

"God grant that the riddle may be solved in some other way."

"But it won't. The MacAlpines believe that they have wrongs to right; and their faces will be turned to the foe, whatever happens."

"Don't talk of foes. That should never be."

"But if it must, what then?"

"Stuart against Stuart?"

"Possibly even that," and tightly her fingers gripped each other.

"Then may my blood be the first to be shed."

And clasping her hand for a moment, he hurried away.

CHAPTER X.

COMMODORE MACALPINE'S MEETING WITH HIS DAUGHTER.

"Daughter, it is fine to see you again, straight and dashing; taller, too, and more winsome than ever." And, rugged Scotchman though he was, he clasped her in his arms with strong tenderness.

"And you, father, how little you've changed! Not a grey hair. Scarce a line in your face. The same blue eyes, and just the old look. Don't be stern though, please."

"Not much danger, child, when you are round again. But where are your things? I told Harry Thompson to be sure and have them here as soon as we reached harbor."

"Isn't he here yet? He must be on the road. He told me I would see him when I came. But, father, I want to talk to you before he comes. You must put all the blame on me."

"What are you talking about, Marie? You didn't answer my question—I don't understand."

His face had become grave. Something unusual must have happened.

"I have a little story to tell. Come into your cabin and let me tell it there."

"But my question," he repeated, doggedly.

"Come in, father, and then I'll answer you," and with a forced laugh she led the way.

Enchanted by her appearance, but vexed by her wilfulness, he followed. Then, putting her hands upon his shoulders, with saucy affection, she looked up into his face.

"Don't you know, father, that with a woman—I'm a woman now—the longest way round brings the quickest answer? Just another kiss to start with. Two years was an awful long time to go without any."

"Well, here goes, child," and he gave her several.

Then she told her story. It came quickly, for she had already related it several times, concluding with her plea to remain.

"It's lucky you escaped so well. You were always too venturesome, Marie. But it can't be done. You've got to go home with me."

"But it must be done, father. I must remain with Jessie until she's out of danger. I told you why."

"That's no reason at all. The doctor can easily find a competent nurse, and your stay would not make an atom of difference in the result."

"It might, father; we've been room-mates ever since I came to the school. She's been a sister to me. And it's simply that I can't leave her until she's better."

"All foolish sentiment, child; you've done your duty to her already, now it's your duty to me that must be considered."

"But I only ask to stay a week. Her father and mother are both dead, and she hasn't a single relative in the world but the doctor who attends her."

"It's no use talking, I say. It can't be done, and for reasons that I need not mention, it won't be done."

It was quite evident to Marie that further persuasion would be useless, and for a moment she nerved herself again for the conflict, and then returned to it.

"But, I repeat, it must be done, father. I am sorry, but if I can't have your permission, I shall stay without it."

"You mean to say that you defy me to my face?" he asked, in a low, stern tone, with a look, which, if she had not had previous contests with him, would have struck terror to her soul.

"Don't be unreasonable, father." She met his eye steadily now, although her heart thumped wildly and her knees shook beneath her. "I told you that every bit of the accident was my own fault, and think you, after saving her life in that wild storm, that I'm going to forsake her now, with her life still in danger. If you do, you don't know what Marie Stuart is made of, even if you are her father."

"So you left your things at the Hall in order to carry out your project of disobedience?" he asked in frigid tones.

"No, I left them because it would be useless to carry them here and back again."

"Well, you are here now and will stay here, until I send for them," he muttered sternly.

"But you won't!" and this time, with flashing eyes, she drew herself to her fullest height. "If you pull out from this wharf without letting me land, I shall jump overboard and swim ashore."

"Tut, you little goose, to think that you can prevent me carrying out my will by such a nonsensical threat as that!" he exclaimed, passionately, turning his back upon her. "Ye gods, after educating my child in the so-called best school in the land, and coming in my boat all this distance to take her home—to find, instead of a loving, grateful daughter, that she has turned into a rebellious little jade, is simply maddening. But we'll soon see who is master here. Jerry!" he called out to a figure that had entered by a door behind him.

"I'm not Jerry," returned the new arrival as he stepped quickly forward. "But I heard your taunt, sir. There must be some mistake, and I'll not stand by and hear Marie called a 'rebellious jade,' even by her father."

"The deuce you won't! What right has Harry Thompson, a new renegade, to interfere between myself and my child?" he stormed, this time losing what little self-control remained.

"The right of the man who saved my life," said Marie, more coolly than she had yet spoken.

"No," said Harry. "There were two of us. I only wish I had done it all myself."

"And who was the other precious cargo?" cried MacAlpine, still blind with fury.

"An officer in the King's navy," was the answer.

"Oh! that's what he is. One of the d—d enemies of all the Colonies. And you are sneaking back to be where he is, eh?"

"That's not true," said Harry, firmly. "Lieutenant Stuart's boat has left the harbor and does not expect to return. I do not know what this altercation is about; but I do know that you are unjust to Marie, terribly unjust!"

"Terribly unjust, when she defies me, and adds insult to defiance?"

"I want to do neither the one nor the other," returned Marie, biting her lips and bravely keeping back the tears. "But I'm of age; I'm twenty-one; and I will not be forced to return now when duty says I should stay."

"Duty, you jade! By every law of God and man you are smashing duty to atoms when you refuse to return home with your father."

Marie's heart was palpitating wildly, and her cheeks were hot and flushed as she leaned against the table for support. Passionate though her father was, and strong though her own convictions had always been, she had never experienced a scene like this before. Minor conflicts had not been infrequent during her girl life, due largely to his irascible temper forcing its way over all obstacles. Now, she believed that a principle was at stake, and much as she loved her father, notwithstanding all his faults, she was determined not to yield.

"There is no use in my staying any longer," she said in as quiet a voice as she could assume. "The afternoon will soon be gone, and Dr. Rolph said that my duty to-night would commence at six o'clock."

"Dr. Rolph!" exclaimed her father with a start.

"Yes," she answered, again meeting his look, while she extended her hand to bid him good-bye, "he is Jessie's uncle."

"Jessie's uncle—MacKenzie's right-hand man!" he ejaculated.

"Both travelling by the same boat that you are," interjected Harry, discerning a possible outlet from the difficulty. "All you men are engaged in a common cause. What's the use quarrelling about it?"

"And you still insist on going back?"

MacAlpine was evidently weakening, though he declined to see her hand.

"Don't be angry with me, father, but I certainly do."

"Well—after all—you may go for to-night—I must see MacKenzie—possibly I may not leave until to-morrow."

"Thank you, father," and she turned to leave the cabin.

"Stay, child," cried MacAlpine, softening still more; "I've been cross and you've been stubborn. Let's cry quits. I may even see Dr. Rolph. If so, I shall talk with him about it."

She held up her face, and taking both her hands he kissed her again.

"But about this other chap. He only did his duty as a man. Even a Hottentot would do that. But he's not with us, he's in the enemy's camp. You must give him a wide berth. We in Canada must be loyal to each other and down on our oppressors of whatever stripe. They are our foes, and the sooner we let them know that the better."

"I don't think you need have any fear about Lieutenant Stuart," said Marie, calmly. "Harry told you he left the harbor on the *Transit* this morning, and is not likely to come back again until long after I leave."

Still her eyes dropped beneath his searching gaze.

"Tell me more about him."

Harry tried to attract her attention. He nodded, coughed and made signs, but all in vain.

"It is strange," said Marie, toying with a ribbon at her throat, "but to my surprise I discovered that he was a distant connection of ours, the youngest son of Lord Vancroft."

"What, that jackanapes!" exclaimed MacAlpine, getting angry again. "The last man in the world that I would willingly be under obligation to. The son of the man who disowned your mother because she married myself, the head of the MacAlpine clan."

"I don't think you should blame the son for the father's act," said Marie, evidently willing to take up the cudgels again if needs be.

"It's all in the blood. Race proud, sure enough, and it would be purse proud, too, if they had anything to back it with."

"Not a very gallant thing to say when you married one of the race."

"All the more fool was I. Still, after all, I'm proud of you, girl; you've got lots of pluck. But you must keep a level head whatever you do. And always remember that you are a MacAlpine."

"I am sure, father, I shall never forget it."

Then she bade him adieu again, and Harry accompanied her beyond the wharf.

"So you got your wish," he ventured, as he pulled at some tall weeds by the roadside.

"If it had not been for Jessie, nothing in the world would have prevented me going home with father," she replied. This new strain, so different from the one of yesterday, was telling upon her, and her voice trembled. "He has always been good to me."

"Yes, and to everyone else on the islands. Quick and passionate, but faithful to his friends. He yielded to you at last, or I don't know where we would have been by this time."

"I feel sure that he'll let me stay for the week that I asked."

"It will involve another trip."

"If my father cannot come himself, he can surely send my brothers."

"Or I could come," said Harry. "The *Petrel* is one of the best little steamers on the lake and is not a bit hard to manage."

"Oh, yonder are Dr. Rolph and Mr. MacKenzie, going toward the boat!" exclaimed Marie, quickly changing the subject, as two figures approached the wharf from a different direction.

"Yes," replied Harry, "they are to meet your father; I arranged for it this morning. It is too bad, but I will have to go back at once, as I promised to be at the boat when they arrived."

"What are they going to do?"

"Plot, of course. It is an open secret among ourselves that they intend to overturn the tyrannical government of this Province. This time it will be by open revolt, as all other means have proved futile. I believe they are right. Good-bye, Marie, until to-morrow."

For a moment she stood still as Harry hastened away toward the *Petrel*. Then casting her eyes beyond the eastern gap in the far distance, she could see the smoke-stack of another steamer, which she knew must be the *Transit*.

CHAPTER XI.

MRS. BOULTON'S RECEPTION AT HOLLAND HOUSE.

The imps may fight
Where'er they light
On land or lake or lea,
And the deuce may turn
And each of 'em spurn,
Yet Mac's the man for me.

"Who's that?" exclaimed Jessie. It was the afternoon of the fifth day of her illness; and conscious again, she was dreamily watching Marie, who sat with her needle-work at the window, through which a gentle breeze was blowing in from the bay.

"It's daft Madge coming up the path," said Marie; "no matter where you meet her she is always singing. I wonder what brings her here?"

"What are the words? It sounds like 'imp' and 'light' and 'fight,' but it's hard to catch them."

"No wonder, for her voice is cracked. She always sings low as if afraid of being heard. It's one of her doggerels. She has dozens of them. There she goes again, but she's nearer. Listen!"

And he who dares
Run up the stairs
And glue his ear to the crack,
Will rue his fate
And quicken his gait,
For the man he's after is Mac.

In another minute there was a loud rap at the door, and the maid ran up with the message.

"Mad Madge wants to see you, Miss."

"Mad!" ejaculated Marie.

"She's civil and harmless; they call her that because she's daft."

Marie hastened down. The tall, dextrous woman was standing in the hall. First she glanced at Marie. Gradually her eye brightened and she peered into her face as she came nearer.

"I can trust ye. You're the right one. This is for ye, Mr. MacKenzie sent it."

"Was there any other message?" Marie asked as she took the letter.

"No, only that I was to give it to no other body, and he told me what you were like."

"Thank you, but you'd better wait; perhaps there will be an answer."

"No, not for me to take; if there is one you must carry it yourself."

Then she turned and ambled out of the room and down the walk, again singing in a low monotone:

And he who dares
Run up the stairs
And glue his ear to the crack.

The words became fainter as she neared the road. Marie watched her a moment, and then hastened to her own room to read the letter.

It ran thus:

Dear Miss MacAlpine:

I have just received word from your father that he will be here again at noon to-morrow. The special object this time, as on the former occasion, will be to take you home. I am glad to hear that Miss Stedman, thanks to your careful nursing, is recovering so well. In fact, Dr. Rolph assures me that all danger is over, and much as he values your services, they will not be required any longer. For that matter, he is sending another person to take your place to-night, in order that you may devote the few remaining hours at your disposal to leavetaking and preparation for departure. Dr. Rolph would have taken this message to you in person, had he not been summoned hastily to a more distant duty. With many compliments, I am ever, your father's friend,

William Lyon MacKenzie.

The letter was an unpleasant surprise to Marie. It came from a quarter least expected. That her father should make this announcement through a third person was a distinct shock to her. Could he not have trusted her when she had given her faithful promise? Surely he had not lost confidence, entirely, in his daughter. It seemed like a premeditated plan to have the message so worded and conveyed as to make it imperative for her to obey. And when she remembered that Dr. Rolph and Mr. MacKenzie and her father were all in league with each other, she realized that further opposition would be useless, even if she desired to remain the two days yet due her promise.

Returning to Jessie's room she told her of Mr. MacKenzie's note.

"My only surprise is that they let you stay so long," was Jessie's comment. "Now I am almost well and can easily spare you. But Marie, you must not forget the Holland House party this afternoon. You know you promised to go if I were well enough."

"If you really are, I would love to go," said Marie.

"Certainly I am, and when you are away, I can't talk. Miss Bradley won't let me."

"Jessie is right," said that lady, who had just entered the room. "I also received word from Mr. MacKenzie that you were to leave to-morrow; and as it may be your last opportunity, you must really be one of the guests at Holland House. Mrs. Boulton intends to serve tea on the lawn among the roses, and it will be a delightful gathering."

"Do go," reiterated Jessie, opening her eyes again. "As Miss Bradley says, it will be your last chance; for the bowls at the Grange and the archery at Castle Frank, I suppose, you will have to miss."

"Yes," said Marie, "Mrs. Dalton's is to-morrow. I might possibly go there, if I deferred leaving until the evening; but the archery at the end of the week is out of the question. I am glad, though, even to have the invitations. They will be kind memories of the closing days of my school life."

"All due to the overlapping of your time here after the rest of the young ladies have gone," said Miss Bradley, "and possibly to the fact that your name is getting abroad as a bit of a heroine. English people, you know, always idolize those who do things."

"They could never put me on that list, for I nearly drowned Jessie," said Marie.

"Yes, so nearly that it took two men to save her life," continued Miss Bradley, shrugging her shoulders. "But, my dear, you have only time to dress, so you had better hasten. I will take care of Jessie until the new nurse comes."

"Thank you, but what should I wear?"

"Your new white frock with the flounces," suggested Jessie. "You look sweet in that."

"Thank you, too," and away she went.

"Come in and let us see it before you go."

"If you'll promise not to talk any more."

"I'll be dumb as an oyster until you are back," and again Jessie closed her eyes.

Holland House, with its brown front, massive turrets and panelled windows, was a notable mansion in those early days of the city. At the time we speak of, although castle-like in structure, it was comparatively new, and embellished with many treasures of art brought from beyond the sea. Like its namesake in London, where Fox for so many years dispensed the good things of life to his friends, and where wit and repartee sparkled among the guests like old champagne fresh from the cellars, so Holland House in this western city was noted for its gatherings of the wit and wisdom and beauty of the land—and it was an honor to be a guest within its walls.

When Marie arrived with Mrs. Hagarman, her chaperon, many people had assembled. Some, passing beneath the gothic arches, were being received by Judge Boulton and his wife; while others were scattered up and down the spacious rooms or else out on the green sward by the elms.

"I'm so glad you could come," said Mrs. Boulton, "and sorry that Miss Stedman is not here also. Still, we have good reports of her progress, I am happy to say."

"And you are a much-discussed young lady," added her husband, holding her hand for a moment between both of his. "Two young gentlemen, who from a distance have long been your ardent admirers, laid a wager this afternoon. One swears that you swam with Miss Stedman in your arms for half an hour before relief came; while the other swears just as positively that it was only for ten minutes."

"I hope the bets were large," said Marie, her eyes sparkling.

"Martin and Golding, what were they?" Colonel McNab asked, moving with her to one side, as the two admirers came up to be introduced.

"One pound apiece," was the answer; "the loser's money to be applied as Miss MacAlpine may suggest."

"Then I would suggest that the losers' money be the nucleus of a fund to purchase a new city lifeboat," was her laughing answer, "and both of you have lost, for I only swam with her for a single minute. But remember, this is only a suggestion."

"And a very good one, too," said Mrs. Hagarman.

"Agreed," cried Martin; "if Golding is willing, we will get up a subscription right now, heading the list ourselves."

"Be sure and carry it out," echoed the Attorney-General's wife; "I shall be glad to be one of your number. Come inside, Marie. There's a picture in the library that I don't think you have seen. I know it will interest you."

Bowing to the young men, Marie followed her.

"Why, it's Prince Charlie!" she exclaimed, exultingly. "I certainly never saw this one before. Where did Judge Boulton obtain it, I wonder?"

"He brought it from England when he returned last month. It is one of Romney's pictures."

"It is like a small one my mother had in oils that she prized very highly, and that I shall always keep."

"Are you not related in some way?"

"Yes," said Marie, slowly and almost reverently. "He was my great-great-grandfather."

"Really, I never thought it was so close as that."

"The propinquity is certainly very remarkable," came from a familiar voice over her shoulder, which, notwithstanding all her efforts, caused Marie's blood to tingle.

"Lieutenant Stuart!" she exclaimed, in complete amazement.

"Yes, Miss MacAlpine."

"Yet you went away a week ago, never to return?"

"I didn't expect to, but a soldier must do his duty. I am here under orders."

"And in plain clothes."

"Does that surprise you?"

"You were in uniform before."

"Oh, yes, I forgot! Everything was so vivid when I saw you last. This time my visit is a surprise to myself."

"And how did it happen?" Marie asked. There seemed to be mystery somewhere, and involuntarily she thought of her father, as they stepped out upon the lawn into the freer air. "The perfume of these roses is exquisite," she continued, to remove the point from her query.

"Yes, delightful—it was only a message our Captain wished me to carry in person to Sir Francis. The *Transit* lies outside the harbor and two of the men rowed me over. So, having an hour to spare, I called at the Hall, enquired about Miss Stedman, and then followed you here. I could not come to the city even for an hour without making an attempt to see my new cousin again."

"It is kind of you."

They walked on beneath the elms.

"You would think it strange to find me still here," said Marie.

"Yes, if I had not learned the reason at Montgomery Island."

"And who could tell you there, away at the entrance of the St. Lawrence?"

"Cannot you guess?"

A startled expression appeared for a moment in Marie's face.

"It could not be Harry Thompson?"

"But it was. Of course he did not enter into particulars; but I gathered from what he did say, that there was a brief conflict between a Stuart and a MacAlpine; and that the Stuart won."

"That is not the right way to put it," returned Marie, indignantly. "With me the Stuart and the MacAlpine are one."

"Pardon me. You are right. But when the *Petrel* came for you without avail the conclusion seemed reasonable."

"Are not the MacAlpines as reasonable as the Stuarts?"

"I only wish they were," was his answer, shrugging his shoulders. "I did my best to obtain an interview with your father at Montgomery, but utterly failed."

"Possibly he heard who you were."

"Unfortunately he did. I was rowing in plain clothes among the islands; and seeing the *Petrel*, I hailed one of its men and asked to see the Captain, giving my name; and in five minutes received the message that Commodore MacAlpine was engaged and could not see anyone."

"He might have been very busy," said Marie.

"The answer had one salutary effect at any rate," said Stuart, looking again into her face.

"And what could that be?"

"Must I tell you?"

"If you wish."

"It raised my high esteem of his daughter one hundred per cent at least."

"I did not know that military men were mercenary," she replied with affected seriousness. "But, really, has anything unusual happened?"

"Only continued development. The Islanders are arming and drilling; and I wished to have a talk with your father while yet there was time."

"And you came with a message to Sir Francis upon the same subject," said Marie in a lower key.

"Yes, I conveyed to him the general news, although I still suppressed your father's name."

"Why did you do that?"

"I thought it best while you were here—Miss Marie—I must claim a cousin's privilege—it would be better for you to remain in town and not to return home until after this trouble is over. I am convinced that it would be safer."

They were at the far end of the lawn beneath the spreading branches of the trees, out of hearing of the rest of the guests.

"You are very kind in your solicitude, Lieutenant Stuart, and I appreciate all that you have done for me," returned Marie, drawing herself up as she often did when under unusual nervous tension. "But such a thing I could never do. My father's home is my home. He comes for me to-morrow. The necessity of remaining here is over, and I shall be very glad to return to him."

"Bravely said; I honor you for your courage; and if you are there, you may rest assured that Fingal's Notch shall not be touched if I can help it."

"If it is, our women will fight as well as our men; and my own rifle may be heard from, for I know every island in the whole group, and almost every cave."

"But I wish we were out of it, Cousin Marie, and both of us away across the sea."

"Both of us to turn the white feather? Could we be Stuarts and do that?"

"No, by heaven, we could not! But need we like pagans fight each other to the death?"

"How soon shall we commence?" Marie asked with a serio-comic air.

"I'm not joking, but it will be weeks at least."

"That will give me a chance to go home and have our men put up ramparts of defence," she continued in the same tone. "On our islands we could build batteries and forts and store our dens and caves with provisions for a prolonged siege. Then, armed to the teeth, like the Knights of the Roundtable, we could defy our enemies."

"Perhaps," said Stuart, responding to her sense of humor, "where the islands are so numerous and rocky, you could dig subterranean passages from one to another and, like the genii of old, live in an enchanted palace."

"And being enchanted, it could never be captured even by an invading Stuart."

"I am afraid one Stuart is captured already, body and bones, heart and soul; but not by the cause—heaven help me, no—but by the enchantress of Aladdin's palace."

"Oh, here you are! Do you know, Miss MacAlpine, that I have been commissioned by our hostess to escort you to the refreshment booth?" exclaimed Dr. Rolph, coming directly towards them.

"Oh, thank you! Doctor Rolph—Lieutenant Stuart."

"Bless my soul, one of our life preservers. I haven't seen him since the day of the rescue. It was grand work you did that

day, sir; may it always be as good. Let me thank you again."

Stuart bowed. "We can only do our best," was his answer.

"If we all did that there would be no commotion. But when all pull different strings, there's the deuce to pay. Come, my lady nurse, time is money."

"You are not going?" exclaimed Marie, as Stuart extended his hand.

"But I must, my time is up."

"And shall I not see you again?"

"I'm afraid not—unless it be away in the future—possibly at Aladdin's Palace."

"I thought you were going to give that a wide berth."

"That all depends," he said, and the slight tint on her face was reflected in his.

"What can he mean?" said Dr. Rolph, as he watched his retreating figure.

"Been reading 'Arabian Nights' perhaps," said Marie, a far-away look coming into her face.

"That's the way with these young navy and army beggars; they are good enough at an accident, but with so much idle time on their hands, they are not much at anything else. A little more solid reading would be better both for themselves and the country."

"I don't think Lieutenant Stuart is a lazy man," said Marie.

"Well, the laziness will be knocked out of him and all others like him before long," said the Doctor, turning round again.

"But what can you have against Lieutenant Stuart? Don't forget what he did for us, Dr. Rolph."

"Oh! I'm thankful to him for that, the exercise of one of the humanities, which we all possess; still what we really want are men like your father, who, although it is not publicly known, is ready to stand up and fight for the rights and liberties of the people; not a lot of naval and military cads, who trespass on the country and never earn their salt. But I am wandering from the subject I wished to speak about. You no doubt received Mr. MacKenzie's letter, and have made preparations to leave to-morrow."

"I can answer both questions in the affirmative now that Jessie is doing so well."

"Yes, thanks to your care."

"Could she not come to Fingal's Notch, too, as soon as she is strong enough to travel?" said Marie.

"She might; it would be an excellent place to recuperate before cold weather comes, if it were not for the political problem that overhangs the country."

"Oh, but that would not matter! She would be quite safe, I think, with us—with me."

"So she would. I feel sure of that, for you are the truest-hearted girl that ever lived. This is not an old man's flattery, for I have a wife to love and a daughter almost as old as you are."

"My father says I'm a jade!" she exclaimed, incredulously.

"That is far from the truth, and no man knows it better than he does. Yes, Jessie shall come to you."

CHAPTER XII.

THE VOYAGE HOME.

"Oh, Donald! Oh, Charlie! It's so good to see you. I never expected that you both would come. I thought it might just be father. It's simply splendid."

"It is a lark—and a first-rate one," said each in succession as he hugged and kissed his sister.

"Golly, but you are a stunner!" cried Charlie, the younger one, a strapping youth of nineteen, with eyes as blue as the sea and hair the duplicate of her own. "I always said you'd make a handsome woman. Girl isn't in it with you."

"You'll just queen it, when you get back, or my name isn't Donald MacAlpine," cried the elder brother.

"And such boys! Why, you are men already."

"Of course we are. We can shoulder a musket, or punch an enemy, or drill a company, or do anything you like, that's any way reasonable," volunteered Charlie.

"Military, military, military, is all we hear about!" exclaimed Marie, with a dubious laugh. "So different from what it used to be."

"But then you are grown up now. You were only a girl when you went away."

"That must be it. I'm getting very old, you know."

"Of course you are; I wish I were twenty-one."

"You needn't," said Donald briskly; "you're getting there fast enough."

"You were always a philosophical clansman," said Marie.

"And Charlie was always a prig of a Stuart," returned Donald.

"Oh, Donald! we are all Stuarts, but not prigs, surely."

"Donald isn't a responsible party," said Charlie, drawing down the corners of his mouth. "He thinks Gaelic, with its *ich dhu*, is the only language worth speaking; and he's been studying it so hard that he has forgotten how to speak English decently."

"Guess that hit's fair enough. Beg your pardon, Charlie," returned Donald, good-naturedly slapping his brother on the back.

"But where is father? Did he not come?"

"He's down at the boat, waiting for us. What do you think his orders were?"

"How should I know?"

"That if necessary we were to use a due measure of persuasion. If that didn't avail, moderate threatening was to follow. If resistance still continued, careful exercise of force was to be resorted to. And if that did not produce the desired effect, we were to seize our liege lady and carry her, willy-nilly, body and bones, directly to our man-of-war."

"You are certainly a polite pair of subjects."

"We are always ready to acknowledge our allegiance and perform our vows," said Donald.

"And pay homage," said Charlie, preparing to drop on one knee.

"Stop your nonsense and lead the way," cried Marie, laughing heartily.

"So that's the racket, is it? Where are your boxes?"

"All strapped and ready, at the head of the stairs."

"Charlie's luggage-master. He has a man at the door with a dray for them. If you are ready we'll start."

"In another minute." And Marie ran upstairs to say good-bye to Jessie. How many tears were shed history has not recorded; but the parting was relieved by the prospect of a further meeting at Fingal's Notch before the summer ended. Then Miss Bradley kissed her on the forehead, bade her adieu, and Marie departed.

Before nightfall they were far out on the lake and the ordeal of Marie's first meeting with her father was over. Although the former incident rankled in his mind, Mr. MacAlpine made no allusion to it. It was as if nothing had happened and Marie was happy.

"You'll find things different when you get back to the island," he said, as the four grouped themselves together on the forward deck. "We have made many changes."

"Fingal's Notch you wouldn't recognize, if you didn't know it was the same place," said Charlie.

"You could not change the shape of the island," said Marie.

"Not the shape, perhaps, but certainly the appearance," said her father. "The trees we planted have grown bigger, and the old house has been taken down and a larger one built on higher ground."

"And you never told me!" exclaimed Marie. "You don't mean that my own little room, that I prized so highly, has been taken away."

"Yes, we do," said Donald. "But your things are all right, piled up to fix for yourself in your new room, which is twice as large as the old one."

"But it can never be the same," said Marie, sadly. "I knew every inch of my old room, from the wooden rafters of the ceiling, the cedar boards of the walls, the little maple mantel, and the round peg upon which my cuckoo clock hung, down to the oval window through which I used to watch the sun rise. Now it is all gone."

"Oh, but everything is better and built on a larger scale! Our new house is of stone and three or four times as big as the old one."

"The funny part of it is," put in Charlie, "that father has built it right against the solid rock, and they are so nearly alike that you can scarcely tell where house ends and rock begins."

"You cannot tell at all unless you examine it closely," said her father; "and by treating the stone in a way I have discovered, I would defy even an expert to tell the one from the other."

"And about your room, Marie," said Donald, who did not like the look of distress still visible on Marie's face, "it, too, has an oval east window, but bigger than the one in the old house."

"No, child, we didn't forget you, and rather than make you uncomfortable about it, we kept the whole thing quiet for a big surprise," said her father, soothingly patting her hand.

"I hope I shall like it," said Marie, courageously. "In fact, I am sure I shall."

"To tell the truth, it's the nearest thing to a castle that I've seen for a long time—a fitting house for the MacAlpine clan."

"You could pack a whole regiment inside at one time, if necessary," said Donald.

"You couldn't do that," said Charlie, shaking his head.

"Why not?" demanded Donald.

"Oh, yes, I forgot," was the answer; and hearing the words, Lieutenant Stuart's mention of Aladdin's Palace flashed

through Marie's mind.

"Yonder goes that cruiser again!" exclaimed MacAlpine with an angry growl, as a steamer away to the leeward could be seen gaining upon them. "She's the biggest vessel the navy has on the lakes; and no matter where you go, you are sure to meet her one way or the other."

"It's the *Transit*, sure enough," said Donald. "The cut of her jib and her smoke-stack differ from all other steamers on the lake."

The boys both knew that Lieutenant Stuart was second officer on the vessel; and of the important part he had played in Marie's rescue; but their father had warned them that the subject was a distasteful one, and that all discussions of it with Marie must be avoided, and they were accustomed to obey.

For an hour in the moonlight the two vessels, differing widely in tonnage and equipment, but each heavily armed, pursued their way side by side. They were scarcely a quarter of a mile apart, but no acknowledgment of each other's presence passed between them.

The sight of the *Transit* made Marie serious; but the boys chatted on; while her father, restless to a degree, rose and walked the deck.

By-and-by Marie went to her little cabin and tried to forget both the present and the past in much needed sleep. Not so her father. For weeks now, almost daily, the *Transit* seemed to have watched his course; whether up or down the lake, the surveillance had almost become a menace.

MacAlpine was a man of strong passions, possessed of fixed ideas, bred in the bone. Once in possession, it was impossible to move them. Had the *Transit* pursued the ordinary course of a warship in time of peace, he would have thought nothing of it. But to be pursued and watched from day to day was a different matter; and, grinding his teeth, he vowed vengeance upon both ship and crew. He could bide his time, but if this continued much longer, he secretly determined that the punishment should be adequate to the cause.

After a while the warship put on extra steam and passed the slower vessel. Then the Captain, leaving the *Petrel* in the hands of another officer, sought rest likewise.

The sun was still near the horizon when the little steamer reached the first of the islands that studded the eastern end of the lake. It was a glorious morning, July being at its best. The drouth of summer had parched to aridity some of the fields on either shore; but recent rains had produced many touches of green; while the forest, verdant in beauty, sheltered the islands on both lake and river.

Marie rose early. The first glimpse of the islands could not be missed. It was a return to the homeland, and with rapture she took her first long look.

"It is just the same, Charlie; the same old coloring, the same old beauty, as sweet and dear as it ever was. The blue waves, the white gulls and the islands never change."

"Yes, Marie," slipping his hand up to her shoulder. "You and I see it through the same eyes we used to do. Wouldn't it be great if all these thousand islands were bound in a single knot, and you and I were the King and Queen?" he exclaimed, ecstatically.

"What a boy you are!" was her laughing answer. "After we were crowned I'd want a king of my own for a husband and you'd want a queen for a wife; and then where would we be?"

"You are too practical, Marie," he blurted out, his face reddening with excitement; "instead of accepting my poetic vision, you'd make us fight for the division of the kingdom to see who would get the biggest half."

"I'm afraid that is what it would be, Charlie."

"Reckon we won't do it then. Better let things stay as they are."

"Oh, if they only would!" cried Marie. "Look how peaceful these islands are. People building houses upon them and making little gardens; the farms on both sides of the river quiet and orderly. No noise whatever, no commotion, yet they

say that deep down beneath all this peace and good-will there is wild unrest; and in the end there will be rebellion and rapine and war."

"I'm afraid it's true, Marie, but they say there's good reason, for the Government oppresses the people. It may be so on the mainland, but I don't think it is among the islands."

"Then why does father side with the malcontents?"

"He says that the people's cause is a righteous one, and that they need all the help we can give them."

"And he's determined to support the cause?"

"He certainly is."

"What does Donald say?"

"He swears by the MacAlpine clan. Whatever the chief says is law, and he would die rather than disobey."

"In fealty he is right; and we must do as Donald does," responded Marie, gravely.

"Yes, we must."

"A house divided against itself cannot stand."

"That's true, too. There is no use arguing with father. He's just as determined and masterful as any chief the Highlands ever had."

"Almost as masterful as the Stuarts," said Marie.

"Yes, more so," responded Charlie.

"I wonder if that is really true," said Marie, reflectively.

The little steamer plowed on its way, passing between beautiful islands covered with underwood and crowned with the spreading branches of ash and elm trees; then through a medley of lesser islets, scattered broadcast on the deep waters of the lake, with brakes and lilies along the shallow edges. Further still rose a huge mound, dome shaped, as though it had been the tomb of kings. As they advanced the islands became more rude and irregular. Huge masses of granite here and there stood boldly out, while tall pines reared their bare trunks skyward above them; and maples and oak and cedar with variety of tint and outline added charm to the scene.

"Yonder one must be it!" exclaimed Marie at last. "We have passed all the others. Here's one we used to call Hickory, although it was said there never was a hickory tree upon it. And that is Jungle, the home of rattlesnakes, as dense as ever. Yes, we're coming to Fingal's Notch now. But how strange! Those poplars have grown so tall, and that big willow at the edge almost hides the view—now we are getting at it. Why, it's like the pictures of the Castle of Otranto, and big enough to have a huge dungeon beneath it. How still it is and yet how beautiful, almost buried among the rocks and the trees!"

"Do you like it, Marie?"

"It makes me shiver to look at it, and yet I believe I do."

"It draws one," said Charlie, solemnly.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh! I don't know. Was there ever a witch in our family?"

"What a question! Have you been studying Highland folk-lore, as Donald has the Gaelic?"

"No, but there's something queer about our new house. The place was all in the rough when I went away to college in January and I didn't observe anything then. But when I came home in June, I did. Father and Donald and the men had been working hard to finish everything up by the time you would come home. So all was complete but the fixings in your room when I arrived. Just you examine for yourself, but don't say anything to any one about it, until you are satisfied, and we

have another chance to discuss it with each other."

"Taking it all in, Marie?" said her father, as he came up the gangway with Donald. "What do you think of my castle building now when you see it?"

"It is handsome and strong, father," was her answer. "It looks as if you intended to fortify the island."

"That's what I do intend if I can only get the cannon to do it with. One's got to be canny, though, when there are so many d——d cruisers plying up and down the lake."

MacAlpine always scattered his oaths freely. His sons were better controlled.

"The people are yonder ready to receive us," said Donald. "Can't you recognize them, Marie? They are all down on the wharf."

"Yes, indeed, there's my old nurse Jean, in her white cap, waving her handkerchief. Here mine goes too; and old Andrew, the piper, he's actually blowing his whistles; and David, the fiddler, and Billy and Jock."

"Andrew's doing you special honor, don't you see; he's donned the tartan as well."

"Brave old boy, why he's marching round in a circle treading time to the swirl of his bagpipes."

In a few more minutes the little steamer drew close to the wharf, and willing hands made her fast. Then with shouts and laughter and welcome greetings Marie's old friends and servants gave her an ovation.

Of all the greetings, old Jean's was the tenderest. She threw her arms round Marie's neck, her cheeks wet with tears, and cried out: "Ye mither's bairn—ye're welcome, aye welcome—for the de'il's at work at hame without ye. Coom, lassie—coom," and she led the way. "Ye're breakfast's all ready, het and waitin' for ye this hoor lang."

CHAPTER XIII.

JESSIE'S VISIT TO THE EAGLE'S EYRIE.

Summer was over and September well nigh half gone before Jessie Stedman was well enough to pay her long-looked-for visit to Fingal's Notch. The glorious autumn hues of the Canadian woods were commencing to appear. The heavy masses of foliage on the island trees were beginning to turn; streaks of yellow were discernible here and there; while the breeze floated elm and ash and chestnut leaves gently downward to re-carpet the earth. The pines and spruces seemed darker and denser in their foliage than in the earlier summer days; but the frosts still holding off, the scarlets and deep purples of the woodland were not yet to be seen. Still the islands teemed with life. Now and then a grouse would wing its flight over to an adjacent wood, while pigeons swept in clusters through the air, preparing for a longer flight. Civilization had already touched the islands, and bobolinks and song-sparrows, king-birds and robins, proclaimed by their presence and their songs a right to a home in the clearings.

It was the third day after Jessie's arrival. She had rested well at the Eyrie, and her eyes had opened wide with astonishment at what she had seen within its walls; for Marie had showed her everything. Then they wandered off to the woods by themselves. Jessie felt strong again. The scar upon her temple could scarcely be seen, being adroitly covered by a droop of her hair; and she rejoiced greatly in being with her friend once more. The balsamic odors from the woods, the breezes from the lake, and the warmth of her reception, gave her new life.

The girls had much to talk about.

"And have you not seen him since?" asked Jessie.

"No," was the answer. "How could I? The British ships patrol the lake. There has been no outbreak yet, and father's vessels and theirs keep as wide apart as ever."

"But you have Mr. Thompson with you," said Jessie, in a lower key.

"Oh, yes! He is frequently here. Sometimes I wish he was not with us quite so often."

"Why, Marie, when we owe so much to him?"

"For that matter, I don't think I owe him quite so much as you do," returned Marie, with a laugh. "You know, Harry saved your life; Mr. Stuart saved mine."

A faint color rose to Jessie's cheek. They were in a little open dell in the woods, on one side of which Charlie had built the rustic bench upon which they were seated.

"Of course, being unconscious, I didn't know how it all happened," she murmured; "but I know you told me that it was Mr. Thompson who lifted me into his boat."

"And a difficult task he had of it; to pick you up in that terrible storm, and not upset his little craft, was a hard job for even Harry Thompson—one of the strongest and most skilful oarsmen among the islands."

"I never had a chance to tell him how grateful I was," said Jessie, her face still glowing in color.

"You'll soon get one," said Marie. "He's been away now for two days and may come over any time."

The wind was blowing on their faces, carrying their voices backwards, while drowning the sound of approaching footsteps.

"Yes, even now, and I have brought an old friend with me. I picked him up in my fishing, less than an hour ago." The speaker had caught her last words.

Startled, they both turned. Harry Thompson, followed by Lieutenant Stuart, in plain clothes, stepped into the open. The latter was so unexpected that a flush for the moment spread over Marie's face.

"This is not Aladdin's Palace," he said, greeting her as if they had met only yesterday, "but Feronia's grove, where she

deals out justice to her bondsmen."

"Say, rather, the Ultima Thule of Castor and Pollux," was her laughing response. "But this is a delightful surprise. We were talking of both of you only a moment ago."

"Think of his majesty and he'll appear," said Harry.

"I'm afraid that's a subtle fallacy," said Jessie; "I have thought of you, Mr. Thompson, over and over again these two months, and you never appeared."

"I was too far away to respond to the mandate," said Harry, jestingly.

"Was that it?" Then she thanked him. They were standing apart from Stuart and Marie. The deep blue of her eyes and the tone of her voice touched him. The fall of her hair over the left temple only enhanced her beauty.

"To a prudent oarsman it was a mere coincidence," he returned, lightly. "In facing a storm, too, it was a keen pleasure to help a little."

"Though I may not mention it again, I shall never forget," was her response, as she saw his eyes again following the other two.

"Where are they going?" he asked, as Marie and Stuart stepped from the dell to higher ground among the trees on the further side.

"Marie must be showing him the grotto," returned Jessie. "You know, she's great on the old Greeks and caves and poems and things. Only yesterday she showed it to me, declaring that Castor and Pollux used to share their alternate half-years there."

"I see, and she was talking about those two old chaps only a minute ago." But his face hardened a little.

Jessie laughed and they sat down on the bench to await their return.

"And how did you happen to come across Lieutenant Stuart?" she asked. "I am afraid it would go hard with Marie if the Commodore were to find out that an officer of the *Transit* had been here."

"We'll take care of that. He was catching bass with two of his men when I ran across him. They were in the boat, but he was on shore standing on a rock and pulling them out fast enough. It gave us a chance for a talk. So he shouted to his men that he would be back in an hour—and here we are."

"Marie is delighted."

"So I see," was his response. "The Commodore is away to-day, is he not?"

"Yes, he went with Donald and his men farther down the lake and won't be back until evening."

"I thought that was the order; and as it was evident that Mr. Stuart desired to visit the island, I could not refuse."

"I am glad you brought him."

"He showed such grit in that canoe escapade that I couldn't help but like him, even if he is on the other side. Still I don't want him to steal the heart of our Marie."

"Marie's heart could never be stolen, it would have to be won."

She flashed a glance into Harry's face, but he did not see it. His eyes were still peering through the trees at the two standing at the entrance to the grotto.

Stuart was pleading very earnestly.

"It is quite impossible," was Marie's answer. "Father would not think of it for a moment."

"So I must relinquish all thought of a run to the Eyrie."

"I fear you must."

"Thank heaven for this brief moment, then."

"I am glad, too, for it gives me a chance to thank you again. I owe you so much."

"A thousand times, no. It is I who am the debtor. But this horrid contest! God grant that it may never come."

"But it will," was Marie's answer. "I know my father too well to believe the contrary. The Patriots of the Islands will die before they will yield."

"But the madness of it, Marie—hundreds against thousands—a few ships against Britain's fleet."

"Yet little Greece could whip the nations—and my father is King of the Islands."

"And may he ever be—But my time is up. And our signal?" he whispered.

For answer she pursed her lips; her heart was beating wildly, but there came no sound.

"Yes, that is it."

Bending low, he kissed her hand. Then Harry and he departed.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNING OF THE REBELLION.

Months passed away. Step by step the fever of revolt was fanned in both provinces, ready for a single spark to set it ablaze. In Lower Canada the danger was the more imminent and the progress toward rebellion the more rapid. The Frenchmen of the Lower Province believed that they were particularly oppressed. In the recent election French-Canadians had been returned to the Assembly in larger numbers than ever, holding the House by an overwhelming majority; yet important places of emolument and office were still given to men whose homes and hearts were in England; while Frenchmen, no matter how eloquently their claims were supported, were persistently and repeatedly ignored.

With all this, Papineau demanded justice but not preference for his countrymen; while preference but not justice was granted to the other side. Responsible government and control of the finances raised in the Province were denied to the representatives of the people and, as a consequence, disaffection continued to spread.

Before the winter of that year arrived, bands of armed men frequently assembled, avowedly to discuss politics, but in reality to drill, Montreal being the centre of the revolutionary movement. The "Sons of Liberty," as the disaffected French-Canadians called themselves, established their quarters in every section of the city. These were tacitly supported by the Church, the meetings being frequently held after mass, without receiving priestly censure.

It was at St. Charles, twenty miles from the city, however, that the first strong ground was taken. Here two thousand people assembled to hear Papineau, LaFontaine and Girouard speak. The addresses were all inflammatory, the speeches being under the protection of a body of armed militia hostile to the Government; and a "Declaration of the Rights of Men" was freely subscribed to.

Then came the turning point. Warrants were issued for the arrest of Papineau and his chief conspirators; but they fled to St. Denis and St. Charles in the Richelieu District, to join their compatriots in the very act of revolt.

Brief and terrible for the insurgents was the battle that followed. They were completely routed, scattered in every direction and driven from the field, leaving the major part of the forces dead or wounded behind them. The pages of history graphically tell the story.

Papineau was undone. With his first defeat his physical energy vanished. Instead of remaining true to his compatriots whom he had led into revolt, he showed the white feather, abandoned them in the moment of danger, and precipitately sought refuge beyond the boundary line, to be exchanged later for long years of exile in France.

His conduct was an enigma. He was a man of culture and refinement, of commanding presence and great personal magnetism, a rhetorician and an orator. It is said that he could sway a French audience as the wind sways at will the leaves of the forest. Possessed of strong affection and vivid imagination, with a keen perception of what he considered to be inherent justice, he yet missed his role. His hand relaxed when it touched the plow. He forsook the cause, which he had spent years in proclaiming, the moment that defeat exhibited its ghastly visage.

Possibly he was a dreamer, imagining vain things, building impossible ideals upon sandy foundations, until, coming face to face with hard facts, the stubborn realities of life, his ideals and his enthusiasm alike fell shattered to pieces at his feet.

Possibly ambition was his guiding star, spurred on by egotism, failing to grasp the situation until defeat was inevitable, then shrinking within himself rather than face the coming doom.

Possibly, too, he was mentally a hero, but lacking in integrity of purpose; seeing the truth by the light of reason, but possessing not the strength and manhood to wrest it from the thralldom of error and plant it upon heights.

Little did MacKenzie know of the disaster that had overtaken his confrere at St. Denis. The very night that the "Sons of Liberty" were defeated so overwhelmingly in the east, he was discussing with Dr. Rolph, in the latter's office, the terms of a new "Constitution" which he had drafted. He had carried the document over with him that he might the easier outline

it to his associate.

"I have embodied in it all the main details," he exclaimed, enthusiastically. "It covers the whole ground of sound, constitutional government; and it is so worded that it will be impossible for the errors which have existed for ages in favored England ever to obtain an entrance into Canada, let us once obtain control."

"You speak as if success were a foregone conclusion," said the Doctor, gravely meeting MacKenzie's look of exultation, "and that before the first shot has been fired, or our supporters drilled, or our ammunition gathered."

"That's only partly true," was the reply. "The people, I know, have been drilling more or less for months; there are arms in abundance which are readily attainable; and to-morrow I intend to ride out on my grey mare and bid our men be ready for service upon a moment's notice. But this has nothing to do with our new 'Constitution,' which is a matter of necessity as well as history. As wise men we must be prepared for every emergency, and be ready not only to unfurl our banner, but to show the people that we have a sound Constitution to fight for—one that will ensure to every man the possession of all his just rights."

Dr. Rolph glanced over it for a minute or two, then handed the document back again.

"All abstract theory, an intangible mesh of words," he commented, shaking his head. "What we want, what the people need, are a few graphic sentences, thoroughly boiled down—something that will tell them at a glance what they are fighting for."

"Well, here they are, taken almost at random from the 81 clauses of the Constitution." And MacKenzie read out a number of clauses.

"Still I am not so enthusiastic as you are," returned Rolph, gloomily; "if it wasn't for the fact that we are hammering it into them, the great mass of the people would not believe that they are oppressed at all. It is only by pushing that you can drive them. Leave them to themselves and they wouldn't budge."

"It's time then that we gave them ideas," said MacKenzie.

"Yes, and if you will ride out among them to-morrow, you will know by nightfall what genuine support you are likely to receive."

"Late as it is, I shall strike off a number of copies of this synopsis to-night, and be out in the country before daylight. Meet me at my own office to-morrow night at eleven, and notify, too, the rest of the men; will you?"

"You may depend upon me. I am with you," returned the Doctor. "Anderson, Captain Lount and Morrison will all be there. Still, don't push things too hard, Mac; you have spirit enough, but you are not rugged; and if there is hard work to be done, it is important that you should conserve your energies."

"I'm little but I'm wiry," was the answer, "and I've lived long enough to believe that when a man has the nerve he can in the end accomplish whatever he aims at. It is only cowards that fail."

"Well, good-night, MacKenzie. Success for to-morrow."

"God grant it, Rolph. Good-night to you."

"A bundle of wisdom, yet a visionary enthusiast. Still he's in the right, and we've got to support him," muttered Rolph to himself, as he watched MacKenzie pass through the gate out into the darkness.

MacKenzie was as good as his word. Long before daylight, with his coat-pockets stuffed with copies of extracts from the "Constitution," he had saddled his grey nag and was out on the road. Very gently he pursued his way until beyond the outskirts of the town; then he put spurs to his steed, for he had a long day's work before him. But his grey mare was a trusty beast, sure footed, tough and strong; and, like her master, determined to accomplish what she aimed at.

To the nearest village was his first ride, where he spoke earnest and emphatic words to the few men who gathered to

hear him.

"We're with you, Mac. We're with you. Down with the traitors!" was the cry. "When shall we come?"

"How many men have you?"

"Sure, we've ten drilling with clubs, and three of 'em has muskets."

"Dan O'Connor has put iron prods on our pikes," cried another man.

"Well, my men, continue to drill every day and get all the men and muskets that you can. In ten days we'll be ready. I'll let you know in good time."

"Three cheers for MacKenzie and good gover'nment," and away he went.

Several times this was repeated, and then he reached Stouffville. He had sent word that he was coming and twenty men had gathered to meet him. Some had come as supporters of the proposed rebellion; some as opponents; some to see the man and hear what he had to say, ready to throw in their help if they found the scheme feasible and worthy of support, but not otherwise.

For this MacKenzie was prepared. An able speaker, sometimes flowery in his oratory, always distinct and earnest, not infrequently eloquent, he soon convinced all before him, the willing, the unwilling and the lukewarm. Whatever they might be to-morrow, to-day they were his.

Then for half an hour he personally drilled them. But it was a sorry business. What muskets they possessed had been left at home; and much as had been promised, there had been no previous attempt at regular drill. Still by persistent effort he instructed them in a few rudimentary exercises, taught them to stand with tolerable regularity in two lines, and, what they liked best of all, to stand at ease. Then he picked out two of the brightest of the young men, pronounced them the officers of the company, issued final orders, and started for the next village.

Before the day was entirely gone, Markham had also been visited and Lloydstown reached.

MacKenzie was both encouraged and depressed. All were willing to listen to his burning words; all were convinced, as never before, that they were a wronged race, that their rights had been trampled upon, that they had been unjustly taxed, that an obnoxious Church had been fostered and pampered at their expense, and that their postal rates were ten times as much as they ought to be. These things must all be remedied. MacKenzie said so and it must be true. He had represented them in Parliament over and over again; put there by their own votes; and having been equally often unjustly expelled from his seat, it behooved them to rally round his standard. They must defend their martyred hero and follow him into battle. If they could not do this with muskets and rifles, they would drive out the enemy with staves and clubs, and place their beloved leader on the throne of state.

Their protestations were long and loud; yet MacKenzie could not forget that up to this very day nothing had really been done. These were the forces upon which he relied most—the yeomen of his own county. How would they acquit themselves, ten days hence, when his own destiny, and the destiny of his country, would be placed in their hands and in the hands of others like them?

With weary brain and tired body, having covered more than eighty miles on horseback in a single day, and having spoken to the people many times, he wended his way homeward to keep his appointment at the midnight caucus; knowing well that some even there were no more loyal to himself and his cause than were the raw recruits upon whom he must depend to fight his battles.

CHAPTER II.

FINAL CONSULTATION WITH THE COLONEL.

MacKenzie's promises had been large. Not only must the Family Compact, which had ruled the Province so dishonestly for many years, be swept away, and a good stable Government put in its place, but even the villainy of British rule must be overthrown. Not a vestige must remain. As a free people, Canadians must rise in their might and show to the world what stuff they were made of. And to guarantee that all would be well, he promised a large, free homestead to each of his brave followers who would be faithful to the end.

"Canadians!" he cried, "do you love freedom? I know you do. Do you hate oppression? Who dare deny it? Do you wish perpetual peace, and a government founded upon eternal, heaven-born principles—a government bound to enforce the law to do to each other as you wish to be done by? Then buckle on your armor and put down the villains that oppress and enslave our country. Put them down in the name of that God who goes forth with the armies of his people. Put them down, I say, in the strength of the Almighty. You give a bounty for wolves' scalps. Why? Because wolves harass you. The bounty you must pay for freedom (blessed word) is to give the strength of your arms to put down tyranny. One short hour will deliver our country from oppression; and freedom in religion, peace and tranquillity, equal laws, and an improved country will be the prize.

"Up then, brave Canadians, get your rifles ready and make short work of it. Our enemies are in terror and dismay. They know their wickedness and dread our vengeance. Aye! now's the day and the hour. Woe be to those who oppose us, for in God is our trust."

Such was MacKenzie's final appeal sent in fly-leaf broadcast among the people. The effect was what he desired. Men rubbed up their old muskets and gathered in little groups to drill; while the women, with equal enthusiasm, melted lead into bullets for the fray. Pike heads were forged and fastened to hickory poles. Long smooth clubs were made by dozens; and, heterogeneously armed, men in all directions to the north prepared to march upon the city.

But—"The best laid schemes of men and mice gang aft alee." Although MacKenzie had listened to Madge, never doubting her sincerity, he placed little reliance upon her statement in reference to her uncle, and only mentioned it incidentally to his colleagues. But the crafty Cronch was not idle. In his espionage he ascertained that at a conference in which Dr. Rolph was unavoidably absent, Mr. MacKenzie had announced to the rest of his confreres that an uprising of the people must take place on the 7th of December and that during the intervening days, he himself would personally be away recruiting; that by the date mentioned, two thousand men would be ready and under the control of their new Commander, Colonel Van Egmond; and that Dr. Rolph would have full supervision until MacKenzie's return, when all would act in unison.

As soon as he was certain of MacKenzie's departure, Cronch, ostensibly to report the condition of his sick child, hastened over to the doctor's.

"Well, Cronch, what's the latest?" said Dr. Rolph, who looked upon the lame man as a pretty accurate purveyor of the most recent items of interest.

"More news than you could shake a stick at. But, first of all, Gertie's better. She took all your medicine."

"Glad to hear it. But what else? You say you have a budget?"

A sly look came into Cronch's face; and, peering beneath the peak of his cap at the doctor, he replied: "The militia are out at drill. They are coming in fast; and I hear say that by the 6th or 7th, Sir Francis will have an army big enough to wipe MacKenzie's men clean off the slate. Of course, I'm only a private citizen, my game leg prevents me being anything else; but it seems to me, if the Patriots intend to do anything, now's the time."

"You mean at once?"

"Yes, right off."

"What do you know about them?"

"Only that they are coming in as fast as the Lord will let them. I believe even now they could gather together a bigger bunch than the Governor could. But wait until the 7th and he'll double 'em easy."

"But MacKenzie's away and won't be back until the 6th."

"He must 'a' left some one in charge, I reckon; and I'd bet my last pound, there are men in his camp who could find him and bring him back in a jiffy if they wanted to."

"You exaggerate the situation, Cronch. Everyone knows that the Governor hasn't a single regular left. He sent them all to help the Loyalists against Papineau a month ago."

"For all that, Sir Francis has the gold and his men are scattering it around lively among the new recruits. Mark my word, but if they wait till the 7th, they'll rue it to the last day they live. But it's none o' my business. This is all mum, mind you. Glad the child's better," and he shuffled away briskly for a man whose game leg was so lame that he could not be recruited.

Rolph was in a quandary. What should he do? He had always been Cronch's physician, and although the man was considered peculiar, and had the reputation of being a spy, he could not conceive of any reason why he should deliberately lie upon such an important subject. He would at least sound the other Confederates. If Cronch's idea was correct, it would take all the available hours to gather men together and put them under control. If this could be done it might even be better to besiege the city and get possession of the armory that night. "Would to heaven," he muttered, "that MacKenzie were here."

While he was yet considering the predicament that he and his party were placed in by MacKenzie's absence, Captain Lount entered the office.

"It's a deuced box to be in!" exclaimed the latter, on hearing the news, "but I don't see that we can do much. We haven't many men yet; and MacKenzie expects to swell the number to two or three thousand by his own exertions during the next two or three days."

"Will they be armed?" Rolph asked.

"Yes, with clubs and pikes and rusty old swords, but not many with muskets, I fear; unless Colonel Van Egmond, the new Commander, brings them with him."

"Do you think he will?"

"How can he? There are none in the country except the four thousand stand of arms lodged in the City Hall."

"If there is any truth in Cronch's report, in two days, let alone three, the Governor's loyal troops will have them in their possession if nothing is done to prevent it."

"Undoubtedly."

"What would you advise, then?"

"If we only had men we might take the bull by the horns, and seize the firearms at once before Head will even think of it."

"Suppose we try it, will you assume command?"

"I will if you, as MacKenzie's head man, say so."

"Nothing ventured, nothing won, we'll do it."

So as speedily as possible a courier was despatched to secure MacKenzie's return. Then, Rolph and Lount, fully convinced of the accuracy of Cronch's report, quietly mounted their horses and rode out in different directions to hastily gather in the men.

Meanwhile Cronch, in a roundabout way, carried the news of the possible attack by the "Patriots" to Colonel Fitzgibbon. His chief motive was hatred of MacKenzie, and to accomplish his discomfiture he had determined that no stone should

go unturned. For weeks he had been gathering information upon the plans and prospects of both sides; and now it seemed to him that the people both in town and country were so bent upon revolt, due almost entirely to MacKenzie's influence, that the only chance for his defeat would be to precipitate action by his followers in the absence of their leader; the Loyalists in the meantime being notified of the fact and ordered to seize all available arms and ammunition.

But even with this new information at hand Colonel Fitzgibbon had a difficult task to accomplish. Sir Francis Bond Head was still of the opinion that rebellion in the city was out of the question, a simple impossibility; and that any man who persisted in the belief that such a thing could occur was a madman of the first water.

"I'm sorry, Colonel, that you place any reliance on such a story," said His Excellency. "Don't let the villainous masquerading of that man Papineau carry you away. He, as we know to-day, is a run-away criminal, his rebellious followers are defeated and his cause lies dead in the dust. Here our streets are quiet and our men peaceable. Even the renegade MacKenzie, whom I have a good mind to clap into prison, scarcely shows himself. Do have good sense, my dear fellow; there is nothing in the world to fight about."

"And I am sorry, your Excellency, that it is so impossible to make you see the truth."

"The Governor may be right, Colonel," said the Attorney-General, a broad smile expanding his face, "but I suppose it's every one to his own profession. Sir Francis in his place of authority wants to turn the law on MacKenzie for acts of attempted sedition; while you, as a soldier, want to scour the country in search for enemies, whether there are any in existence or not. My advice would be to clap the hot-blooded Highlander in gaol to fry in his own fat, if he has any, and let the country gang its ain gait."

"That's just what it will do," returned Fitzgibbon, angrily. "I give you my word as an officer in Her Majesty's service (Queen Victoria), unless we take efficient means to prevent it, there will be an attack on our city by armed rebels within the next twenty-four hours."

"Pooh, pooh!" exclaimed Sir Francis. "I would advise you as a military officer to carry that story to the marines."

"And mightily soon I would, if any of their vessels were in port."

"But, Colonel, what definite data have you for all this hubbub?" Sir Francis asked in more serious tones.

"Simply these, your Excellency: In the northern villages of Bradford, Markham, Lloydtown, Stouffville and other places, the people have been drilling for weeks, and now, under orders from MacKenzie, they are marching straight for the city."

"Steering, not marching," said Sheriff Jarvis, superciliously.

"Even so, I doubt if our own men would march much better, when you remember that I have not been allowed even to drill them," said the Colonel.

"Well, where is MacKenzie? I might at least order his arrest," said the Governor.

"As well order the moon to stand still. He is out in the country gathering in his men."

"Well, tell us what you want," said Sir Francis, with an air of mingled weariness and annoyance. "I still believe the whole thing is a wild-goose chase; but I suppose something must be done to satisfy you."

"Send couriers in every direction," said the Colonel, ignoring Sir Francis' mood, "with strict orders for every militia man to be at the City Hall by noon to-morrow; and issue instructions for arms and ammunition to be handed to them through their officers. I will attend to the rest."

"Well, gentlemen, shall it be done?" cried the Governor, glancing round the conclave of half-a-dozen men.

There was a clatter in the hall and a man rushed in.

"Your Excellency," he cried in excited tones, "Tom Jeffries of the Don Mills has ridden in at full speed from Markham. He says that the rebels are marching in to attack the city. They are not five miles away."

"How many men did he say there were?" Sir Francis coolly asked, elevating his eyebrows.

"He said there would be fifty, at least."

"Ah, well, that will do."

And the man sheepishly backed out of the room.

"And how many armed men can you gather together before the night closes in?" Sir Francis continued, turning to Colonel Fitzgibbon.

"Perhaps a hundred and twenty-five."

"That will do also. You might put them under orders and intercept these men if necessary. That will be sufficient for to-night. In the morning we will hold an early council and decide what further need be done, but you may consider yourself Adjutant-General. Oh, by-the-way, Hagarman, did you say that the little steamer *Victoria* is at the dock?"

"Yes. It is to leave for Hamilton at nine this evening."

"Ah!—it might be as well to give orders for it to remain over night. One never knows—possibly I might decide to send a message somewhere. Will you see to it—thanks. Good night, gentlemen. To-morrow morning—say at nine."

CHAPTER III.

SHOOTING OF COLONEL MOODIE AND CAPTAIN ANDERSON.

As Sir Francis returned to his library a change came over the expression of his face. Hauteur and anger were more marked than ever. The children had retired for the night. He and his wife were alone.

"What is it, Sir Francis?" she asked, slipping her arm into his, as they walked up and down the room.

"Why, my own knaves are fools, and the other fools are knaves."

"Please explain yourself. I don't understand."

"Nobody does. I don't believe I understand myself."

"Tell me what it is, it can't all be a riddle."

"Well, I've been governing these people to the very best of my ability. I've been brain to them ever since I came—the only brain they've got. I've worked night and day for them. I've spent the miserable pittance the Government has exacted from them to the very best advantage—ten times better than they could ever have spent it themselves, and still they are not satisfied. Yet I believe they would have been, but for the miscreant MacKenzie, a blatherskite who never knows when to hold his tongue. The only proper way to treat these people is to frown them down—to entirely ignore their existence; and if we had followed this plan, even MacKenzie would soon have failed to rouse them. But now our man, Fitzgibbon, wanting no doubt to establish a reputation for military prowess in the colony, comes to the front and insists upon preparation for a battle, knowing full well that when two game-cocks meet a fight is sure to follow."

"So MacKenzie and Colonel Fitzgibbon are the game-cocks?"

"Of course they are."

"Not very flattering to our Colonel."

"Perhaps not, but I know for a fact that the possibility of a conflict between the so-called Patriots and the Militia has been talked of for months, aye for years, by the people—fanned to some extent by the Colonel, himself—whereas, if he had done as I always have done—entirely ignored the possibility of such a thing, the flame of rebellion might never have been suggested. But things have come to such a pass that, to-night, I was almost compelled to give him leave, as Colonel of our forces, to arm the militia at once, and hold them in readiness for possible attack."

"I'm glad you did."

"You—glad—you in the melee, too!"

"You may be as blind as a bat, my dear, but I am not; there *is* danger of an uprising—a serious danger, too."

"By heaven, if there is, it is not due to any defect in my government; but to the fool-hardiness of busy-bodies who will never let well enough alone."

"I never questioned for a moment your desire to do your best by these people," said Lady Head, holding her husband's arm still more closely, as they continued to walk the floor; "but I have always contended that you should be less arbitrary."

"How could I help being arbitrary when my Councillors, chosen from the best men in the land, have not brains enough to give reasonable advice, but must leave the initiative always to myself? Whatever I propose they always accept; when I ask their opinions they defer to my judgment, and with them my words become law. And if this is the case with educated men, like my Attorney-General and my Solicitor-General, what reason would there be in accepting the suggestions of such men as MacKenzie and his tribe, and making their whims the law of the land?"

His wife knew that argument was useless, and, at the present time, too late to be effectual; but there was a distressed look upon her face. The position, in her opinion, was a very serious one.

"Is there any immediate danger?" she asked.

"Of what?"

"Of an attack upon the city."

"Not of material moment. Even if it should be made to-night, Col. Fitzgibbon must have three times as many men as the rebels can muster; more than that, they will be better armed."

"Have you provided any extra guard for us here at Government House? I noticed only the ordinary patrol to-night," said Lady Head, stopping in her walk and facing her husband.

"Zounds, madame, how silly you are! If an attack is made at all, it will be miles north of here, at the head of Yonge Street; and Fitzgibbon will surely have gumption enough to intercept them on the way. Besides, I never believe in showing the white feather. Until to-morrow the guard will remain just as it is."

"So, knowing that revolt may take place at any moment, even to-night, you have provided no extra protection for the children and myself."

"None will be necessary, my dear. There is not the slightest danger, and cannon have already been placed on the lawn. But in case a miracle of evil should actually occur, I have provided for it. By my orders the steamer *Victoria* will lie in the harbor all night; and, if necessary, I shall appropriate the vessel, without a moment's notice, for our service. But, wife, I am tired. I have had an exceedingly wearisome day, and shall require to rise very early. Had we not better retire for the night?"

And whether his wife was sleeping or not, half an hour later, Sir Francis was enjoying to the full the quiet repose earned by the conscientious discharge of his manifold and onerous duties.

Before midnight the bells of the City Hall rang out a long and fierce appeal. Colonel Fitzgibbon dispatched one of his cadets to give the alarm. It was to signal that the rebels were approaching the city in force, and that all loyalists must prepare for the defence.

The alarm roused Lady Head, who had just fallen asleep; and while shaking her husband—still dreaming of his integrity to principle—the Colonel's messenger brought the news that Government House itself might be in danger.

"Great Heavens!" cried the Governor, springing from his bed in actual alarm at last, and donning his outer garments. "How in the name of all the fiends can that be?"

"It is exactly as I said," returned his wife. "Here is our house unguarded, and you haven't a man to protect it."

"We'll soon remedy that," returned the Governor, testily. "Jackson," he cried to the messenger, still waiting for instructions, "tell the Colonel I must have a guard of ten men sent here immediately, a matter of the highest importance; now make haste," and to quicken the man's speed, and insure good service, he slipped half a crown into his hand.

"What shall we do?" said Lady Head, excitedly; "barricade the windows?"

"No," thundered the Governor, "call the servants, and have them dress the children, and pack boxes with what you need. As soon as the guard comes, I shall take you down to the steamer. It is armed and will carry you off on the lake, where you will all be safe. Then I shall return to council with my men. This despicable villainy of revolt must be put down at once, and its leaders hung at the gallows. I have had a warrant out for the arrest of MacKenzie for a week, and was a fool not to put it in execution before now."

Meanwhile Col. Fitzgibbon issued orders for the rousing of his followers, and the guard of honor demanded by the Governor was quickly sent. An order was also issued for citizens to gather at the Parliament Buildings, ready to meet the

enemy, leaving a special guard over the stand of arms still in the City Hall.

But there was other work that night for him to do. To reconnoitre was a necessity, and leaving Major MacNab to superintend the gathering in and arming of his followers, he cantered up Yonge Street with two of his most trusty youths, deciding to do this in person.

Soon they were out of the city, but everything was quiet; not an enemy or even a friend in sight.

"We'll push on to Yorkville," said the Colonel. "It is only another mile."

"Norris and I intended, with your permission, sir, to ride till we had them in sight," said Young, touching his hat.

"Well, we shall see," was the answer. "There must have been some mistake. The message was that the rebels were almost in the city."

"Yonder's the commencement of Yorkville and yet there isn't a man to be seen!" exclaimed Morris in a low voice.

"Halt!" muttered the Colonel. "If that story proves to be a hoax, I shall have the perpetrators punished. As it will be useless to go any further, I shall return at once to countermand any march Major MacNab may expect to be necessary. In the meantime my order is for you both to remain here until I send relief. Return then, or sooner, if the enemy appears, and report."

"Aye, aye, sir," was the answer.

But by the time the Colonel was a hundred yards away, the young men commenced to argue the point.

"Why stay here for long, mortal hours sucking our thumbs?" said Norris, who was not accustomed to military drill.

"Freezing our toes, you mean."

"We could walk our horses up and down, perhaps."

"Like a pair of fools who had nothing else to do."

"Neither we have. Suppose we push ahead, keeping our eyes skinned between the snow and the moon? We must be careful not to plunge into the renegades, though. They'd either shoot or nab us."

"It's my impression they'll do neither, for by all accounts they've scarcely a gun among them," said Young. "I'm glad to say, though, that I carry a brace of pistols in my belt that Uncle Dick made splendid use of in 1812; and it's for his nephew to keep up the record."

"The deuce of it is, when riding on horseback at night time, one's aim is apt to be wide of the mark," returned his comrade.

Forgetful of danger, they were emerging from the strip of woodland below the hill.

"Yes, very wide of the mark," rang out from a stern voice, as four men sprang out of the thicket and grasped their horses' heads. "Hands up or we fire."

And immediately the youths' hands shot heavenward.

Then while two held the horses, the others took possession of Young's renowned pistols, and dismounting their prisoners, bound them securely.

When the Colonel reached Government House, after giving orders at the Parliament Buildings to Major MacNab, he found that the Governor's family, with the exception of Sir Francis, were all on the steamer—for the mild winter had not yet frozen the bay over—and that the latter with his guard had returned and was awaiting his arrival.

Mr. Powell, whom he had met going north an hour earlier, was already back again, interviewing the Governor.

"So, Colonel, the first blood has been shed!" exclaimed the latter.

"Indeed! where? Whose was it?"

"Powell will tell you."

Powell's eyes were wild with excitement.

"You met me going out with McDonald as you were coming in," he said.

"Yes."

"It couldn't be ten minutes later, when on the road to Montgomery's tavern we met the enemy. MacKenzie must have got word somehow, for he was with them. They nabbed us before we could cry halt, and we had to surrender. I take it that everything's *fair in love and war*—so when Mac asked me if I had any firearms, I held up my hands and said 'No.' Then they bunched us off to one side, and set Captain Anderson and two other men on guard. They didn't tie us, though. So I watched my opportunity, and seeing Anderson's horse standing loose, I ripped out a pistol and let the Captain have it. He dropped in his tracks. There was a terrific howl among the men. They didn't seem to know who did it, and before they had time to think, I was in the dead man's saddle and here I am."

"And what became of McDonald?"

"Here I am too, sir, but I can tell you a different story to Powell's. He escaped, thank fortune, and shot his man; but by the Lord, we have lost a better man than that renegade Anderson could ever be."

"Who was it?" cried Sir Francis in excited tones; "not one of our own brave men, when we have so few of them?"

"It was no other than Colonel Moodie."

"Great heavens!" shouted Sir Francis, still more wildly; "a retired officer of the regular army. Not engaged in active service—nothing less than a dastardly cold-blooded murder."

"So it was," returned McDonald. "When Anderson fell, I managed to slip away in the excitement; but I ran north towards the tavern to cut through the woods and get clear of the rebels, when who should I see but the old gentleman with his stick marching towards town. A guard of men standing on the road cried 'Halt!' but he paid no attention, and the next moment a fellow on the hotel verandah seized his rifle and fired—and the old man dropped."

"A terrible chapter for the first night," said Colonel Fitzgibbon. "No plebeian's blood, but that of a Colonel on one side and of a Captain on the other."

"And for all this MacKenzie must answer."

"Yes, and he shall."

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST SKIRMISH.

"Make the most of it, boys. We are hale and hearty, if we are hungry; and by the Lord, if we ever lay hands on that villain Powell—"

But the speaker was interrupted by a stentorian voice singing out:

Swing him up on the nearest tree,
He's surely worth the catchin',
For while we're fightin' to be free,
He's a damned assassin.

"You are right there, bosses, both of ye's. And it's all well enough to be singin' yer songs and cussin' the villain that shot one of our best men; but here we are, nearly a hundred of us, gathered together after walkin' all day, and the landlord of this bastely shebang hasn't a mouthful of vittles for us."

"True, Mike, but he's got the whiskey."

"Bad whiskey, too. Is that the stuff to fight your country's battles upon? Be jabbers, a full stomach for me."

"Drink it up, man, and it'll make you forget your stomach."

"Yes, rot your insides out all night—neither supper nor breakfast—then fight your battles in the morning."

"Well, boys, here's to the success of the Patriots, our liberty's defenders."

The big room of the "Montgomery" was full. Each had something to say, while many raised their glasses and drank the toast with a cheer.

"And here's to Lyon MacKenzie, our leader, the biggest patriot of us all," cried a tall, slight man who was turning grey.

Then the men, tired though they were, sprang to their feet; and with a wild cheer, that made the ceiling ring, they drank the toast, crying out "Our new Governor! Our new Governor!"

"Why, men, what's all this about?" It was MacKenzie himself. He had just entered the room, after riding back from a night vigil over the city. His hair was unkempt, his dress soiled, and there was a look of distress and weariness upon his face. "No, no," he cried, his color rising. Instantly he mounted a chair, so that his short figure could be seen by all. "You are wrong. We are not fighting for office but principle. *Truth, justice, and honor* are our watchwords; and for them we are willing to sacrifice everything but our manhood."

"You are right there, sir, but what about grub? We've hardly had a bite to-day?"

"Neither have I had anything since morning. I am sorry we can have nothing to-night; but a good substantial breakfast is arranged for and you shall have it early. But, men, don't drink any more of this bad whiskey. It is not fit for pigs, much less for men."

"But when ye've naething to eat and nae bed to sleep on, what else, man, can ye dae?"

"Yes, there's the point," cried MacKenzie, looking indignantly round the room. "What drunken fool was it shot Colonel Moodie? It was a cowardly deed, one of which every man of us should be ashamed. And Captain Anderson, too, on our own side, a piece of base treachery. Both dastardly deeds, but the murder of the veteran was the fouler of the two. Better cut one's right hand off than stain it with so base a crime."

"MacKenzie is right," cried Captain Lount, who was afraid that his leader's indignation might carry him too far. "We must fight squarely and above the belt. Shoot your enemy face to face, kill him if you can; but never let a Patriot again take even an enemy's life in cold blood. Now, boys, you must lie down and sleep while you can, for by daylight we must be up for breakfast."

"And after that the battle," cried MacKenzie.

"Aye, aye, sir, we're with you," echoed the men.

MacKenzie had returned in hot haste. He was a mile or two from Stouffville when the message reached him that Rolph had suddenly decided to attack the city. It filled him with consternation. Two more days could have doubled his strength; and he knew of accoutrements that were coming in. It seemed like madness for a conflict to be precipitated by one of their own leaders, when so weak in numbers and so inefficiently armed.

But the die was cast, without his consent or even knowledge; and chagrined though he was, and indignant that the probability of success should be so materially lessened, he decided to accept the situation and face it.

What made the matter harder to bear, and the solution more difficult, was the fact that although orders had been sent out for the men to muster at Montgomery's Tavern, the interim commander, the man who had issued the order, was not even present. It was partly with the hope of seeing him on the road to the city, that he had made the night ride already related; and the disappointment only deepened his gloom.

By the next morning many more volunteers had come in; and all breakfasted together as arranged for. Lingfoot, the landlord, however, was a canny Scotchman, and would not consent to deal out a single plate to the "Patriots" until MacKenzie, out of his own pocket, had liquidated the bill.

"Lingfoot's a loyalist," whispered Lount, when he saw MacKenzie handing over the money.

"All the more reason why we should pay him," was the answer. "But what's yonder? Isn't that a flag of truce?"

"By heaven, it is, carried by a dragoon in uniform, with two other men on horseback."

"Sir Francis must be getting weak in the knees," said MacKenzie, rubbing his eyes to see more clearly.

"Somebody else is getting weak, too. You may well rub your eyes; I always thought we were over hasty, but having espoused the cause, the only square thing to do is to stick to it."

"Why, it's Rolph!" exclaimed MacKenzie in amazement; "the man who ordered the fight to commence to-morrow—coming with an offer of truce from the enemy! And who is that with him?"

"Robert Baldwin."

"That man I can respect. He's an honorable citizen, if he is a Tory. But oh, ye gods! to think of Rolph, the man of all others that I trusted."

"They are almost here," said Captain Lount, who for the time had command of the insurgents. "Let us meet them in the open."

"So be it."

MacKenzie's big head was thrown backwards as he led the way. He greeted the salutations with a nod, but the proffered hand remained unnoticed.

"His Excellency, our Lieutenant-Governor," commenced Mr. Baldwin, blandly, "sends to you greeting. He regrets that from causes unknown to himself a portion of his people have become disaffected. He desires that you will give him the reason."

"He also," said Dr. Rolph, in a conciliatory tone, "desires to know what they want, and upon what terms the malcontents will return to their allegiance?"

"You can tell Sir Francis Bond Head," said MacKenzie in frigid tones to Mr. Baldwin, ignoring the presence of the Doctor, "that although one of our chief officers, a man in whom, unfortunately, we placed complete reliance, has failed us, the mass of our men, true to their principles, are continually increasing in numbers, and are ready to seize the city."

You may also tell him, that the only terms we offer are the terms we demand: *Independence and a Convention to arrange details.*"

"Tell Mac he's all right," said Rolph, in an aside to Lount; "he'd be a fool to surrender, and after this fracas is over, I shall be with him."

"Pray what are you doing now?"

"Playing the diplomat and gaining time," was the answer.

And wheeling round the truce-bearers galloped back toward the city.

"There they go!" exclaimed MacKenzie, watching the retreating figures, "Rolph leading on the canter. What could possibly have induced him to take this step? I never thought him a coward."

"The Doctor's canny. He likes his bread buttered on both sides," returned Lount. "He says he'll be back again. Possibly, but rest assured, he'll not fight for the cause."

"I wish I'd known that before, but let it drop. We've defied the Governor, and it behooves us to act at once. We must attack the city."

"It is our only chance, for loyalist reinforcements are coming in faster than Patriots."

"Then with your division, Major, you had better march down Yonge Street; and with mine I'll enter by the western road and, gathering recruits on the march, meet you on Queen Street with your heavier arms. Then unitedly we'll raid the armory."

And so it was arranged, and with all the speed they could muster, they commenced to follow out the plan. But Dr. Rolph was not going to be dropped so easily. Scarcely had MacKenzie reached the street when a second flag of truce arrived, carried by the same three men.

"How, now," cried MacKenzie, "has the Governor, like a sensible man, yielded to the inevitable?"

"No," replied the Doctor; "he demands unconditional and immediate surrender; and promises justice tempered with mercy."

"Reinforcements are coming in. Steamers bearing loyalists and ammunition are already in the harbor," said Baldwin, "and, Mr. MacKenzie, as an old friend and fellowtownsman, I implore you to yield while there is yet time."

"Take back water! Eat my own words! Be false to my life and actions for the past ten years! Be a traitor to the people! Proclaim that the truth is a lie! Never! Tell Sir Francis Head that we defy him, and will quickly prove at the point of the bayonet whether he or the people shall be master."

"I must say I admire MacKenzie's pluck," said Rolph, again in an aside to Lount. "But about the points of your bayonets or the guns behind them? Are they not mythical? What Baldwin says is true. But if you are bound to hold out, my advice would be to wait until six o'clock, then attack the city in force after dark. Do not wait until to-morrow, for Head will have lots of men and guns by that time."

"Is that your ultimatum?" said the Sheriff, formally.

"Certainly it is," replied MacKenzie, in more even tones, "and that man with you I also defy, and dare him to do his worst."

"Don't be a fool, Mac. Sir Francis knew that I was your friend and that I endorsed your views in a measure; so when I was down attending his sick child, he asked me to act as intermediary. That's why I came. Rest assured, if I don't fight with you, I certainly shan't against you."

"Yet you did your best to kill our plan of action by countermanding my order."

"I knew nothing of the offer of truce then."

"Truce or no truce, you can carry back my message," replied MacKenzie, turning his back indignantly upon him.

"There is no use prolonging our conference," said Mr. Baldwin.

"None whatever," returned MacKenzie; "the breach is an open one."

And the truce-bearers, touching their hats, galloped back again in the direction of Government House.

"I ordered Lieutenant Jones to wait until I received your message," said Captain Lount, turning to MacKenzie.

"It was just as well. Don't know but that we might do as Rolph advises after all. Let us mass our men at the toll-bar and send out runners to bring others in. After supper, we'll charge down Yonge Street upon the city."

And while the "Patriots" were eating, he addressed them, doing his best to inspire them with courage. Rumors had come in from several sources that Sir Francis had only five hundred available men, and that the reinforcements that MacKenzie would receive on entering the city would be fully as many, thus making his own force the larger of the two.

The badly armed, undisciplined mob believed the tale, and although their leaders were chiefly untrained civilians, they were ready to obey the order. The officers, too, with the exception of Lieutenant Jones and Captain Lount, knew as little of military discipline as did their followers. Lount's rifles were placed in the front, followed by the pikemen; these kept some sort of order, but the boys and men in the rear, carrying clubs and sticks, made a sorry addition to the invading force. Still all were on the alert and did their best to make their approach noiseless in the moonlight.

Their first success was the capture of a couple of horsemen of Major MacNab's advance guard. But this was followed by an unlooked for catastrophe, for from behind a fence unseen loyalists poured a volley of bullets into the ranks of the approaching "Patriots."

Lount's company instantly returned the fusillade, and then, obedient to orders, dropped flat to reload. The effect was disastrous on both sides. In the moonlight it revealed to the loyalists a dense body of men, armed for aught they knew, rushing upon them; while the undisciplined insurgents, not understanding the manoeuvre, fancied that their front line of men were all slain.

Hence, each side, panic-stricken by the first fusillade, stampeded, holus-bolus, straight for home.

"We shall all be killed," yelled a valiant pikeman, who did his best to outstrip his fellows. "Everyman in the Captain's line is shot."

"It's a lie," shouted Lount. "Every man is alive. Not one killed. Halt! Halt!" But it was no use.

Mr. MacKenzie rode furiously up and down the road, waving his sword and insisting that no one was hurt; that the retreat was a mistake; and that every man of the loyalists had fled in the opposite direction. But words were useless, and the whole force, riflemen included, never stopped in the race for life until they reached the toll-gate.

Then, when they came to a halt, MacKenzie upbraided and stormed and threatened, but all in vain. Rally again, for that night at least, they would not. By the time that he and a few of his more staunch supporters arrived at the Montgomery, he was still more amazed, for their headquarters were deserted, and whether they intended to return in the morning or not, the majority of his valiant followers had gone home.

In mute agony, MacKenzie wrung his hands. After a while he went to bed, planning and praying that victory and not disaster would attend the battle of the coming day.

CHAPTER V.

THE BATTLE OF MONTGOMERY'S TAVERN.

It was MacKenzie's unselfishness that made him a "Patriot." With a strong sense of justice and an intense love of truth—as he saw it—every wrong must be righted, not in the future, but now. What right had error to prevail? By what law of the Divine should oppression continue, even for a moment, when there were men, able and willing to spend their lives, their energies, their all, in accomplishing its removal? And why should other men grovel at oppression's mandate and be willing to shed their blood and their lives also in defending a cause so monstrous?

Through long hours of that night he tossed in sleepless agitation upon his bed, trying to unravel the mystery before him. How much seemed to hang upon the morrow. And after the little skirmish of the night, with the cowardly retreat of his men, the prospect seemed dim enough. The attitude of Rolph worried him greatly. How could the attack of the loyalists from the ambush have occurred unless they had knowledge of the march of his own men? And how could that knowledge have been obtained? Soon the cloud assumed even blacker form. The picture of the "Patriots" retreating to their own homes with only a dim promise of return in the morning to fight under his banner was appalling. And then his wife and children and mother in their house on York Street, would they be molested? Would the tyranny of the Family Compact even invade his home? The children of his household were very dear to him, and his sweet wife had always been a comfort, even in the days when his printing press and type had been scattered and destroyed by the mob; but the woman who would rise in this emergency and take first place in defence of the sacredness of his hearth, he knew would be his mother, who with big head and little body and tottering footsteps would, in her old age, like Deborah, defy the armies of the Philistines.

MacKenzie had never doubted himself. To him his way was the only one, the God-given road, which of all others he must follow, believing in his heart that Divinity would guide his footsteps. At last with a passionate prayer upon his lips, he dropped off to sleep.

When daylight came the first news brought from the city by a runner was that Dr. Rolph had concluded that discretion was the better part of valor; and that he was now making his way as fast as his horse could carry him toward the United States.

But the "Patriot" forces were gaining again; hundreds of new men had come in, and with over five hundred strong, MacKenzie awaited the arrival of Colonel Van Egmond, the new Commander. Hence, the day was spent in drill, scouring the country for rations, and waylaying mails and stages for the plunder incident to war.

The next morning, however, all was ready. The force of circumstances had delayed the conflict to the period originally designed by MacKenzie; but these very circumstances had weakened his following, while they had strengthened the loyalist party. Still Van Egmond had joined them and they prepared for the fight.

The attitude of the contending parties had changed. The alarmed Governor had taken courage again, for incoming steamers in the early morning had landed several companies of armed yeomanry, greatly increasing his forces; while the newly arrived Colonel Chisholm gave additional strength to the command.

"This will alter our plans," said Lount to MacKenzie, as the men were getting into line. "The loyalists will be the attacking party."

"Nothing of the sort," was the answer. "I insist upon carrying out our original plan of an attack upon the city."

"I am afraid we will have to do what the gods decree," said Col. Van Egmond. "The loyalists are already approaching in force, and whatever we may do hereafter we will have to rally round this old tavern now. Listen, the bugles are coming up the street."

MacKenzie sprang to his feet and ran down the road to be sure that the news was true, while Van Egmond turned to his men. To his amazement out of three times the number, not more than two hundred were armed. Still, the loyalists had to

be faced, and he realized that a battle was inevitable.

MacKenzie's heart quaked. True enough they were coming in overwhelming numbers. Could his little band of badly equipped men stand the charge?

"Shall we try it here, as we are?" he asked, showing temerity for the first time, as he realized the danger to his men.

"Certainly," was Van Egmond's answer. And the men quickly formed in the little copse in which he had placed them. "We must fire in relays," he continued, "twenty rifles at a time. The order is 'Fire,' then drop in the rear and reload, while the next twenty take their places. So our shooting will never cease until the enemy is scattered."

"So be it," cried Lount, who hurried his men to the open field protected by the barn, "but my relays will be smaller—my men are fewer."

"Aim well! Fire!" cried the Colonel, as the loyalists came within easy range, thus taking the honor of opening the battle.

The attacking force was taken too quickly to fully realize the situation, and for a moment halted; but the order for a broadside upon the wood brought a tremendous shower of lead into the "Patriot" ranks, who were only saved from decimation by the protection of the trees. As it was, some fell.

"Fire again!" and a minute later, "and again"—"and again," rang out from Van Egmond's lips, as peal after peal from his little band of rifles startled the ears, while it riddled through the ranks of the royalists. They were out in the open with no protection from the well-aimed bullets of the insurgents.

Maddened by the fact that men were falling, either dead or wounded, the Adjutant ordered his men to "Charge."

So firing again at the thin line standing among the trees, they made a rush with fixed bayonets. It would have been a sorry fate for the "Patriots" but for an unexpected diversion.

Lount, dashing suddenly with his men from behind the building, ordered a flank fire upon the attacking force, diverting their attention to an unexpected quarter; while the pikemen rushed pell-mell upon them with their bludgeons before they had time to turn and fire.

MacKenzie's heart sank when he saw the full force of the loyalists' charge upon the defenders of the wood; but when he noted the double manoeuvre, hope for the moment revived; and standing by Van Egmond's side, he cheered on his followers.

For more than an hour the battle raged. Two to one, with one side fully armed, and the other poorly equipped, made a very unequal contest. Yet at times it seemed as though the chances were almost equal. Van Egmond and Lount and Jones from their knowledge of arms inspired their men with confidence; while MacKenzie's cheering voice and active body, never a moment still, filled them with zeal. The "Patriots" knew that it must be a fight to the finish. It must be victory now or at least a drawn battle. Otherwise their cause would be lost. Somehow the events of the last two days had impressed this upon MacKenzie's mind, as never before; and his own thought had reacted upon his people.

"It is now or never," he whispered into the Colonel's ear during a momentary lull.

"The question is how long can we hold out? The foe is weakening. They stagger under our shot; but they outnumber us so terribly that our men cannot stand it. Look how many have fallen. Twenty minutes more and our powder and shot will be gone."

"Bravo, men—that was a good one—for heaven's sake do it again," muttered MacKenzie, as another volley was fired from the rifles. "See they fall back."

But it was only a manoeuvre of the Adjutant's to make a more effectual charge. While this was going on, Lount's force, now sadly weakened, made a dash and joined them.

"I'm afraid it's all up," he cried. "The pikemen are already surrendering."

"But not the rifles," said MacKenzie.

"Not yet," muttered the Colonel. "To prolong the fight, though, we'll have to retreat to the farther side of the wood, and

get among the trees on higher ground."

"Very well," returned MacKenzie; "you know best, but do it quickly. We haven't a moment to spare."

Another broadside poured into their midst. Van Egmond's coat was torn and blood spurted from his sleeve, while a man fell at his feet.

"Zounds! that's Sergeant Riggs," cried Lount, "my right-hand man. One of the best fellows that ever lived."

"Men, right face, forward to the farther wood," cried the Colonel. "Double quick. We must get there before the enemy. Captain, have your men loaded?"

"Yes, not a minute ago."

"Well, stay here and give them another round as they try to cut off our retreat, then rush through the wood and come in on the rear."

"Aye, sir, I will."

And it was well that he did, for the shot was a surprise, and checking the sweep of the loyalists as they wheeled toward the rising ground, it enabled the "Patriots" to secure the desired position.

"I fear our option will be brief," muttered the Colonel, as he again faced the assailants. "See, they have reinforcements coming. Yonder is Sheriff Jarvis, at the head of a fresh relay. Where are our horses?"

"In the wood, at the turn of yonder copse," said MacKenzie. "But I shall not forsake my men."

"You'll have to directly; why not now? There's a reward on your head—a thousand pounds, dead or alive."

"That signifies nothing. The revolt arose through me. I must stay with my men."

"But your family—your wife—your children?"

"God help them. Just another volley, Colonel."

"Ah! yes, the chance is a good one, and they shall have it."

Instantly the order was given, the men wheeled and poured another one into the avalanche that was bearing down upon them.

"Now; retreat, retreat," was the muttered order, passed along the line. And having fired their last shot, every ounce of powder gone, the men turned and fled.

"Stay here a minute longer," cried MacKenzie to the officers. "Give the men a chance; then our turn will come."

The thicket there was somewhat dense, so that the retreat was not at the moment noticed; and to cover it still further, Van Egmond and Lount each picked up a loaded rifle and fired.

"Now's our chance, MacKenzie. Straight for the horses."

"This way then, it is shorter—quick."

The stampede through the wood was a memorable one. They were not fifty yards ahead of their pursuers. At first horsemen tried to follow them, but the thicket was too dense.

Then a body of men rushed through the woods in hot pursuit, firing their rifles as they ran.

Soon the horses were in sight, together with a man seated on his own beast while he held another by the bridle.

"Ah! yonder is Jack Connell, waiting for me," cried MacKenzie, while still running. "I may escape, but you must cut your straps or they'll capture you."

He swung himself into the saddle and dashed down the road, followed by Jack, his pursuers not twenty yards in the rear,

while oaths and ineffectual shots were still fired after him. When he got in full swing he glanced back in time to see Colonel Van Egmond and Lieutenant Jones spurring along a side-line, while the unfortunate Captain Lount, surrounded by the loyalists, was a captive.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MANLINESS OF OGILVIE.

MacKenzie's first thought was to get away north among his friends, where with all the calmness he could assume he might consider the final issue. So, accompanied by the faithful Jack Connell, he rode straight for Newmarket, knowing well that every effort would be made to follow him in his flight. For hours they were on the road, running the gauntlet of many queries from both supporters and opponents whom they met. The short day, however, favored MacKenzie, and it was dark before he entered the village and rode to one of the hotels. Still the question was, when everybody knew him, how was he to avoid general recognition? While a thousand other men might disguise their identity, with him it was impossible—once known—he would be known forever.

"How shall I do it?" he asked of his man.

"Your horse is known, too, sir."

"Yes."

"Suppose we tie up in the dark corner of Ogilvie's shed. Then I'll go in and send him out to you."

"That will do, but be quick about it."

The man acted with alacrity, and in a few minutes Ogilvie appeared.

"What, MacKenzie!" he muttered, "has it come to this? Defeated and on the retreat?"

"Both, unfortunately."

"But, Mac, this won't be tolerated. I've been recruiting for a week and have sixty men I can lay hands on. Still we can't talk about it here. Come into the hotel—nothing to fear, every man about the place is a friend."

"That may be," replied MacKenzie, "but if anything can yet be done, my presence should be known to none but our staunch supporters."

"There may be something in that. I'll take you in the back way and give you supper in a room by yourself. After that some of our best fellows can see you."

"Thank you, that will do."

An hour later he was in an upper room at Ogilvie's, discussing the situation with a dozen men. The younger ones urged a renewal of the struggle. The older men shook their heads.

"How many men have you?" MacKenzie asked.

"Sixty-five, sure," cried a youth of twenty, who was acting drill-sergeant.

"And how many rifles?"

"Guess we've a dozen straight; we had more, but the fellows round Richmond Hill got some of them when they joined the 'Patriots.' Still the rest can all get pikes. Every man of 'em."

"That has been our curse," said MacKenzie, bitterly, "want of arms. At Montgomery's tavern we had six hundred men; but only two hundred had guns; while our opponents, a thousand strong, were all armed. Our men fought well; better than the enemy, but they have all the ammunition in the country in their possession, four thousand stand to draw on while we had nothing."

"Then, in all conscience, why did you start the fight?"

"Because we thought we could seize the ammunition and take the city while yet the enemy was weak. But we missed our mark. Now, when we've neither guns nor ammunition to fight with, even though our men are willing, it would be worse

than useless to try it again."

"And would you give up at once and forsake the cause that you've been fighting for for years?" a man asked in surprise.

"That depends," said MacKenzie, reflectively. "If we can ever win it must be by aid obtained outside of ourselves."

"What do you mean?" cried a young man at the other end of the table.

"I mean that there is reason to believe that we have friends on the other side of the line, who, without involving their Government, would willingly give us aid if the way were open."

"You are right there. You have sympathizers on the border States who believe that the Canadians are an oppressed people, trampled upon by nincompoops who have more brass than brains, men who pretend to govern and don't know how, who cheat the people out of their earnings and give them no return; and when these men know that the 'Patriots' are driven to the wall and need help, they'll be mighty glad to come to their assistance."

"Not so fast, Patterson!" exclaimed Ogilvie. "You've been five years in business in this village, far away from the States; you speak too positively."

"I've mighty good reason for what I say. I'm a Yankee myself, through and through, and my father's a Yankee ship-master. It's from him I get my information."

A murmur of applause ran round the room.

"More than that," continued Patterson, encouraged by the manifest assent, "perhaps Mr. MacKenzie is willing to go over there and see what assistance he can get."

"That sounds reasonable," said a middle-aged man who sat next to Ogilvie. "What say you, MacKenzie? After all the work you've done, ending up with defeat to-day, I don't think it would be wise to go on with the fight unless you get substantial aid, and Yankeeland's the place to get it."

"It's a very serious problem," replied the rebel chief, solemnly; "yet, bad as the result has been, good will come out of it. I don't believe England really intends to injure her colonists; but she has sent out men to govern us, who, when far removed from central authority, have assumed the role of petty tyrants. Our revolt will open her eyes, and she will make amends all the sooner—and if we can make the rattle louder by help from over the border, it will come quicker still. My dream of Independence, however, is almost gone. It was too visionary ever to be realized. And I know too much about politics to believe that the American Government would ever go to war with England in order to annex her colonies."

Suddenly the door opened and in stalked two more men.

"Gosh! it's comfortable here," cried one, glancing round the room and edging up to the stove. "What a batch of fellers, too! What's up, boss?"

"Having a smoke, don't you see?" replied Ogilvie. "Take a cigar?"

"You have one, too," to the second man.

"Sartin," and the latter, turning to MacKenzie, asked him for a match.

"By jimminy, you men put a speed on," he continued; "when you overtook us at dusk, Alick and I were trotting tolerable like, for it was cold, but you fairly scooted past. Had a long ride, sir?"

"Yes, rather."

"Well, I must be going. Got another call yet; coming Alick?"

"Yes, Jeff, in a minute. Staying here?" Alick asked in a lower key of Ogilvie as he neared the door, casting an eye in the direction of MacKenzie. "Come to the bar, we want a drink."

Ogilvie nodded and followed. Jeff was waiting for them.

"Funny old chap," said the latter. "Suppose he's a stranger in these parts?"

"Going to drive farther? Ogilvie asked, ignoring the last remark.

"Rather, reckon. Want to reach Stouffville to-night."

"And where did you light from, Alick?" enquired the landlord. "Haven't seen you for a month."

"Was out in the lumber woods, but this cussed rebellion stopped things, and drove me home. How's it going?"

"How should I know away up here in the bush, thirty miles from the city? It's you driving fellows that bring in the news."

"Well, Jeff, we must get a move on. Here's luck," and draining their glasses they went out.

Half an hour later the group upstairs dissolved, leaving MacKenzie and Ogilvie by themselves.

"Those men came here purposely," said the former, "and one of them is a spy."

"I thought as much. Alick is the son of a staunch old Tory, and has lived here for years; the other man I never saw before. I think they know all about the Tavern battle, though they did not mention it."

"Yes, and Jeff is already on my trail."

"I shouldn't wonder. What do you propose to do?"

"It's a desperate measure, but the only safety will be in flight."

"But where to?"

"There's the rub. I'm thirty miles farther from the States than when I left Toronto."

"And the deuce of it is, you will almost have to retrace your steps."

"Yes, and be dogged by the military. They will intercept every road."

"If these men recognized you and have gone back to Toronto with the news, you'll need to start again to-night; but what direction is the question."

"West by south, I suppose," said the fugitive, drawing nearer to the stove.

"Well, MacKenzie, the moon doesn't set until morning. It is ten o'clock now. I propose that you turn into bed at once. I will see that your horse has an extra feed and will rouse you at two. Then, if you like, you can strike south for Springfield on your way to the States and trust to your wits and good luck to get you there in the end. I'll be sorry to have you leave so soon, but if those fellows are after you, it wouldn't be safe to wait any longer."

"I see it, and will follow your advice. But be sure to wake me, for I am terribly tired and may sleep soundly."

"That's what I want you to do; and I give you my word that I shall rouse you on time."

MacKenzie had scarcely touched this pillow before he was asleep. But Ogilvie's quandary had only commenced. How could he best help his fugitive chief was the question, and for another half-hour he smoked his pipe, reflectively.

Meanwhile, Jack Connell having attended to the horses and given them in charge of the stable boy, had gone off to the farther end of the village to sleep with a friend, with the understanding that he was to come back and breakfast at the hotel early in the morning and be ready to obey MacKenzie's orders. Consequently, when the two young men came out, the hostler was alone fastening up for the night.

"Have you room for my nag?" said Jeff, shoving open the door and walking in with Alick.

"Guess not, 'less you take the outermost stall, next to the grey; and it's too little for a big horse like your'n. It was never intended for anything but a colt."

"We'll look at it," returned Jeff, touching Alick on the shoulder. "That's his mare," he whispered, "dappled grey on the sides with a black hind foot. Nearest horse to the rear door."

"Yes, I see."

"Will this stall do?"

"I'm afraid not. As you say, too small for my horse. You've got a good stable though, boy. And that's your harness room?"

"Yes," said the lad, glad to hear a good word for his domain even at closing time. "We've got a good kit there. General harness on one side; saddles and bridles on t'other. We al'us hang 'em in sets." He held up his lantern so that they could be examined.

"This saddle is still wet," said Jeff, "somebody must have been riding hard."

"Yes, it's a little fresh. It belongs to the grey mare. Some gen'man, I don't know who he was, rode her in to-night."

"I'm sorry you can't take my horse," said Jeff, moving towards the door.

"You might get him in at the 'Bear's Paws,' at top of the street, perhaps."

"Thank you."

They went outside.

"What's the game?" said Alick, in an undertone, as they adjourned to the shed where their horses were still standing.

"Do people know his horse?" Jeff asked.

"Yes, everybody in Toronto does. The grey mare with the black foot and the little man in the saddle are familiar objects there."

"Well, the game may be a bold one; but we'll try it. There are a thousand pounds on MacKenzie's head, dead or alive—"

"Only alive, I believe."

"All the same, next to the man is his beast. Capture the one and you've got the other. To-night I shall ride MacKenzie's grey mare back to the city, if it takes a leg. There I shall tell the story, help the men to catch him, and get the reward. And after all is done I'll divvy up with you a little for putting me on the track."

"And a mighty small piece of business it will be, after all," said Alick, almost regretting the part he had taken in it.

"Small, when there's one thousand pounds in it, and when the Government declares that he's a rebel not fit to live, and a demagogue who has done his best to drive the people to perdition. By jimminy, if I could put him into their hands, I'd be doing the country a service."

"Yes, to the tune of a fortune."

"Simply big job—big pay—the laborer worthy of his hire," Jeff answered with a low chuckle.

"I suppose it would be better if he was out of the way," said Alick, moodily. "Of course my father is a bigger Tory than I am, and he always said that MacKenzie was the curse of the country."

"That settles it. If you are ticklish about the matter, this being your home, I'll do it all myself, even to getting through that blasted door, which I noticed the hostler locked before he went up street. But you'll hear from me. Good night." Jeff whistled softly as Alick mounted his horse to ride home; then leading his own beast away he stabled him for the night at the "Bear's Paws."

When Ogilvie took his lantern to the barn at eleven o'clock to further prepare MacKenzie's mare for the prospective journey, he discovered that the staple of the lock had been pulled out. With an angry growl, he went inside. The grey mare with saddle and bridle was gone. Then with a savage oath he examined more closely. Nothing else had been disturbed. Jack Connell's horse and accoutrements were all there.

"MacKenzie was right," he muttered. "That cunning scamp was a spy and a thief. With an eye to the reward, he has galloped back to the city to tell the story from the back of Mac's own mare. By Gad, if the fellows here had known what

he was up to, they'd have cooked his whistle for him and fed it to his own gobbler. What in creation is Mac to do now? His horse gone, his whereabouts known, and the whole southern country up in arms to catch him."

Ogilvie hung his lamp and commenced to walk slowly up and down the stable floor in deep thought.

"There is no use in rousing him," he muttered. "The man's done out, and needs all the rest he can get—but he'll have to face the music. The road was hard enough as it was—it will be harder now. If he had just twenty-four hours of a start he might have done it. Now he's six hours in the rear with the news all told, his horse gone, and a dastardly spy to cope with."

"Ah! I have it," he said aloud at last. "We'll be even with him yet. Mac shall lie till two, and then I'll rouse him."

CHAPTER VII.

INCIDENTS OF MACKENZIE'S RACE FOR LIBERTY

"Mac, it's two o'clock."

"Oh, thank you—I slept soundly—not a dream—haven't had a sleep like that for weeks."

"You'd better be up."

"Certainly, I'll be out immediately."

"My wife will send you a cup of hot coffee in a minute. It's better than whiskey for a night ride."

"You are all good to me."

In a few minutes MacKenzie was dressed and ready.

"I've not had much sleep myself," said Ogilvie. He didn't say that he hadn't had any. "So I'll take a cup with you."

"That's kind. About my ride south, I suppose I'll have to go alone, unless Jack is here."

"Unfortunately he isn't. My hostler said he'd gone to spend the night with a friend, he didn't know where."

"Perhaps it's as well," said MacKenzie, jocularly. "A political refugee with a price upon his head should be chary of companionship in his travels."

"It will be rough, though, over a road you are not familiar with. Perhaps I'd better rouse a man to go with you?"

"Not at all, thank you. I'd much rather go alone. Just give me an idea what course to take to avoid the Toronto lines."

"I'll do that. By-the-way, here are a pair of gauntlets you might take with you; I noticed the ones you wore are too light for night riding."

"Thank you, but they'll do very well. Of course I hadn't time to change—the flight was too sudden."

"Nonsense, man, you've got to take them. When in these parts again you can return them if you like."

"These parts!" and MacKenzie shrugged his shoulders. "If your word is law, I suppose I must obey as well as give thanks."

"It's law in more ways than one," said Ogilvie, with a shrug. "Your horse is saddled and ready; fresh as a daisy, too. Shall we go now?"

"Yes, after I pay my bill."

"Pay your bill! Talk about a man giving up home, and family, and business, and property, and wealth, and country, and all he possesses, for country's sake, paying a miserable tavern bill for half a night's lodging! Man! what do you take me for? But come along, it will be half-past two by the time you start."

MacKenzie was touched keenly. There was a lump in his throat as he silently followed Ogilvie to the barn. After they entered the owner closed the door. Two lights were burning instead of one, and a handsome bay gelding stood saddled on the floor instead of his own grey.

"I had to make a leetle change, Mac," said Ogilvie, apologetically. "A tavern-keeper is always responsible for what's put in his barn; and as some d—d thief took the liberty to steal your grey mare, I, as in duty bound, am putting another nag in its place. I'm awfully sorry that it's a bay, when grey is your color."

MacKenzie's face grew hot and cold. Stormy passions raced through his soul. The manly heart of Ogilvie was too much for him. Suddenly he threw his arm over the big man's shoulder.

"Oh, the villain!" he cried, hoarsely. "Do you know, if you were a woman I'd hug you?"

"I'm awfully glad I'm not," returned Ogilvie, dryly. "What would a giant of a woman do with a kid for a lover? The only thing she could do would be to cuff him."

"The world's doing that already."

"Let 'em cuff. It'll come out all right, Mac. But about Nap, he's well broken to the saddle, sure footed, and can run like the wind."

"Why, he's your best trotting horse," said MacKenzie, reproachfully.

"I reckon so, but there are others coming on. See what a sharp nose he has. Well, when he was down at the York races, some smart Alick hung a green pumpkin over the racetrack to scare the horses. But Nap wouldn't scare worth a Yankee cent. Instead of dodging the pumpkin he ran straight for it, and his nose was so sharp and his gait so swift that he split it clean in halves without getting a scratch or shedding a seed. What think you of that for a horse? Huh! huh! huh! huh! huh!"

"Just as I think of his master for a man. I shall never forget." And MacKenzie laughed in spite of himself.

"Well, keep him if you can. If they steal him, no matter. He'll have done good work for you, that's all I want. Remember Ogilvie will always be your friend, whatever happens."

"God bless you, man. But I must go."

Ogilvie led the way out and down the street to the crossing. Then he gave him directions, and wringing his hand, stood and watched the retreating figure as he disappeared in the distance.

"The best man the country ever owned," he muttered to himself; "and going out alone, fleeing for his life, because he wants to give the people bread instead of a stone. His big brain and little body thrown into the mill to be ground to powder, lest he force for them their rights—born too soon—yes, born too soon."

For more than an hour MacKenzie's course was unimpeded. The snow was hard-packed and without drifts. In some places the ground was bare, and the horse being well shod, quickly left the miles behind him. The man's spirits rose. If it continued like this he would reach Springfield easily in the forenoon. But there was no such good fortune for the fugitive. Soon he came to an open sweep of extended clearings, where the north and south roads were drifted full of snow.

"I might have known it," he muttered to himself. "Last night's wind did the mischief, leaving the east and west roads free."

Pausing for a moment at the crossing of a side-line with the concession, the southern road blocked by a huge bank, he cast his eye westward. Away in the distance was the forest.

"That's better," he muttered, "but a long run for you, Nap. Two miles extra already, and our journey only beginning."

Nap snorted and tossed his mane, in seeming appreciation of his rider's words, as he trotted westward along the concession line. When they reached the woods, the cross-line was clear of drifts, and again MacKenzie speeded southward.

Often the experience was repeated; actual progress was slow. Not a single person did he meet on the road. Not a light did he see. At irregular intervals, barns and houses were passed; but all was still, save for the occasional howling of a hound or the barking of a watchdog, as the refugee passed on his way.

When dawn came, MacKenzie was still in the saddle, although not sure of his course. Looking around him he tried to realize the situation. He could discern several houses along the road which looked familiar, each one within its own clearing, smoke ascending from the most distant one. It could not be very far west of Toronto, he thought, a region with which he was tolerably familiar; yet the pine wood to the right, the maple grove to the left, and the little creek which crossed the road were all new to him; and he realized that he was farther away from the city than he imagined. Of this he was glad, as it made personal identification less likely. Instinctively he pulled his cap over his ears, to further hide the

contour of his head and face; surprised at himself for experiencing an inward satisfaction that his present beast was bay instead of grey. His gauntlets, too, were welcome in a way he had not thought of before. While warm, and large, and comfortable, they were of brown fur, while his own were the color of his mare.

Suddenly a dog bounded out of a house and made a dash for the horse's head, followed by two men, who rushed forward, endeavoring to seize hold of the bridle. But they were too slow, Nap leaped past them. Then, quick as a flash, he turned, almost throwing MacKenzie from his back, and striking out with tremendous force, laid the dog on the snow.

"D—n it, he's killed him!" ejaculated one of the men.

"And the fellow isn't Mac after all," cried the other. "Say, —— stranger."

But MacKenzie was far down the road, in all seeming, heedlessly pursuing his way. "After me so soon," was his thought; "people already on the trail," for he had caught the words.

His first idea was to stop at the house where smoke was visible and pay for a breakfast; but the incident put this out of the question. So he rode on, intending to make the venture at the first cabin that he should see in the woods; but the morning was half gone before the chance came at a lumber camp.

MacKenzie was tired, as well as hungry and sore. He had been in the saddle for eight hours, and come what would, he must obtain feed for his beast if not for himself.

"I'll ask no questions, then you'll tell no lies," said the foreman, after looking the rider and his horse well over. "Still I've seen you both before now. The men are in the woods and won't be back till noon; so there's time enough to feed you both before they come. There's the barn. Take the beast over and the stable boy'll look after him, then come in and the cook'll have something ready for you."

As MacKenzie rode on to the out-building the man stood still and stared. "Well, I swan!" he exclaimed at last—"who'd a thought it? That man of all others to be here at such a time—fagged out—and withered, as I never saw him—and riding High-flyer, the fastest, cleanest horse in York. Thank heaven, it's none o' my business. He shall have a square meal, but the quicker he's on the road again, the better."

"How far is it to Springfield?" MacKenzie asked him, after he had put his horse away.

"Twenty-five miles; be you going there?"

"Yes," replied MacKenzie, amazed that the distance was so great.

"Well you're on the wrong tack, and most of the road's bad. It will be hard to reach it to-night. But the sooner you start, the quicker you'll get there."

"That goes without saying," said MacKenzie, eyeing his interlocutor more closely.

"I mean the sooner you and your horse leave these parts, the better I'll be pleased," said the foreman with significant emphasis.

MacKenzie rose from his seat. "I'll go now if you say so."

"Not till you've had your grub," replied his host. "Is it breakfast or dinner?"

"Both," was the answer.

"Well!" exclaimed the man, "at a lumber shanty, every stranger's welcome to a feed, be he Governor, soldier, flunky, rebel or thief; it makes no difference."

"Well, I—"

"Not a word, please. Them's the conditions. You and I must abide by 'em. What we give you get, and there's no pay."

"But—"

"There's not even a 'but' in it. You finish your grub and I'll get your horse out for you."

CHAPTER VIII.

A CUPBOARD AS A HIDING-PLACE.

In half an hour MacKenzie was moving on. In his belief both he and his horse had been identified, although only twenty hours had elapsed since the battle. Since then he had covered several times as many miles; and half way back to Newmarket had passed men on his trail.

What would it be to-morrow, or even to-day, when the whole region from Hamilton to Niagara would know of his defeat and flight? With advertisements and posters offering a big reward for his capture, would the people help him, or would they forget all he had fought for in their interest, and for the sake of self, hand him over to the vengeance of his enemies?

When in ordinary mood, MacKenzie was of a hopeful nature, and even now was sanguine enough to believe that he could escape through the meshes of the net that was gathering around him. He had some staunch friends through the country on the road to the border, and of these he would make the best use that he could.

One such friend was the attraction at Springfield. For a temporary halt in his race for liberty, Mr. Renner's place especially suited him. He was familiar with the long barn and side entrance by trail through the woods; and the rambling log-house with its many additions, situated within sight of the village. The point was, not protection while there—it would be just the place for a rest—but to get there; and worse still, to get away again and escape capture.

There was no way of sending his friend word. He might possibly not even know yet of his defeat and flight. Still he would risk the unexpected visit; and that night some time, if not captured on the way, he would get there.

It was hours after midnight when Renner heard a low, rumbling knock at his outer door. It startled him unpleasantly out of his first sleep. What could it mean? He knew that a dozen mounted troops had arrived and were stationed in the village for the night. But their carousals at the tavern were over long ago, and now all would be sleeping. A thought suggested itself. Was it really possible? Surely not—and yet it might—

The long, low rat-tat-tat was repeated. This time Mr. Renner jumped out of bed and, drawing on his outer garments, hastened to the door.

"Who is there?" he demanded.

"A friend. Let me in," was the answer.

Yes, there he was, sure enough, the little man with the big head. Noiselessly he opened the door and let him in. Then they spoke in whispers.

"My horse is wet, standing in the barn, I had nothing to cover him with," said MacKenzie.

"I'll attend to him," replied Renner. "You must stay inside; it won't be safe to go out again; or even to strike a light. Wait here until I return."

Renner hurried out to the barn. MacKenzie removed his wraps and took a seat by the stove, fatigued, hungry, sore in every bone and muscle of his body. In thirty-six hours he had ridden more than a hundred miles, over bad roads, to find himself in the very den of his enemies.

When Renner returned the whispering conversation was resumed. Briefly MacKenzie told his story. They could scarcely see each other's faces in the darkness.

"And you are so used up," said Renner, "that when you awake in the morning, you won't be able to move."

"But I must resume my journey," was the answer.

"When rested, but not till then."

"Yet you say they will search every house in the neighborhood to-morrow."

"So they will, but they won't find the man they want in my house. I can hide you too well for that."

"And my horse?"

"I've a special stall that I put him in, and I'd defy any one to find it, unless the critter squeals."

"So you think I'll be safe here if I stay an extra day?" MacKenzie asked.

"Yes, perfectly; the only thing will be to keep the children from knowing. If they find out they might clatter, or the rascals might pump 'em. So you'll have to stay for a time where I put you—a regular state prisoner. Man, why don't you eat more?"

"I thought I was hungry but I'm not," was the answer.

"Well, we'll tiptoe it through the youngsters' room. Back of that is a place clean shut off from everything else. Oh, say, do you snore?"

"No, thank the Lord."

"It's a saving grace that you don't, for the children would be sure to hear you."

MacKenzie was too tired to worry any longer, and, getting into bed, he was soon asleep.

The long winter night was over and the forenoon far advanced when MacKenzie awoke. Renner was again beside him.

"I've brought you some breakfast," he muttered. "The wife's fixed it specially for you; but she waited until the boys were off to school."

MacKenzie arose and dressed. Then he ate his breakfast with a relish.

"I'm grateful to have friends," he said. "And what news?"

"The troopers are on the warpath. My son Ted has just come up from the village. He says they've already searched Scottie's and Dunn's houses on the concession, as well as two others near the tavern; and he heard, on the side, that they'd be here before noon."

"Will I be safe in this room?" MacKenzie asked.

"Quite safe; anyhow, if they should come in, look here. This chimney comes up from the kitchen, and right behind it in this corner there's a cupboard, which I'd defy anyone to find, even if they knew it was there, when they didn't know the knack of opening it. Although it's not very big, as there are no shelves in it, a man of your size could squeeze in quite comfortably. Just step in and try it."

MacKenzie did as directed.

"And look upward," said Renner; "you can see daylight through, so there will be no danger of suffocation, no matter how long you are a prisoner."

"Yes, I see," returned MacKenzie. "A rather tight box, but just the place for me. You couldn't have made a snugger fit."

"Well, as my wife and Ted both know all about it, and Ted's on the watch, you'd better come down and take a whiff of fresh air in the shed, while she arranges the room and makes it look natural. It would be hard for a stranger to find the blind door, and, as you see, the window has only two lights; still they give a view up the road, while one can't be seen from the outside. Look!"

"Why, yonder are the men crossing the street by the tavern. Their horses are all dark but one," said MacKenzie, in a tone of suppressed excitement, "and that one is grey."

"They call her rider, Jeff," said Renner. "He isn't a soldier, but monkeys round among the rest of the fellows a good deal, a sort of leader. They toady to him. But let's hurry down so that wife can fix things. The gang may be here sooner than we

expect."

The woman had only time to put the room in order, when her son rushed in with the statement that the men were galloping up the road straight for their house.

MacKenzie hurried upstairs and, shutting himself in, prepared for anything that might happen. First pulling off his boots so that he could slip about without making any noise, he next placed them and his overcoat in the closet and arranged the door so that he could step inside upon a moment's notice. Then he looked out of his little narrow window. The troopers were at the gate. Jeff was with them, sure enough, riding his own grey mare. It made his blood boil.

Jumping off his horse, Jeff threw the bridle over the tie-post and led the way up to the house. There was a loud rap at the door. The men rushed in. Then came altercation, loud demands and angry replies from Renner, tramping from room to room, slamming of doors, as the men blustered about in their search for the refugee.

Soon someone made a rush for the stairs; and MacKenzie, after slipping into the closet, securely fastened the door. Through a chink behind the chimney he could hear the conversation.

"There's no use lying about it!" Jeff exclaimed in a loud and angry tone. "I know for a fact that he steered straight for Springfield. This is the place he aimed at; and here he is."

"Well!" returned Renner, contemptuously, "prove that you are not a liar by finding him."

"We'll soon do that. He's in one of these blasted holes, sure as fate."

"Take care, young man; if you smash things, I'll fling you head first down those stairs when you are through with your search."

Again there was rummaging.

The rooms were investigated. Beds were pulled out of place and mattresses pounded. Finally, they were outside the wall of MacKenzie's room. Pounding the wall produced a hollow sound.

"This must be a room, too," said the sergeant, "but where's the door?"

"Here it is," replied Renner, flinging the concealed door widely open, and stepping inside. It was better by apparent frankness to throw off suspicion. "This is our guest chamber."

"Guest chamber be d—d," muttered Jeff; "just the place to stow away a scoundrel fleeing for his life."

"Find him, then. And if you don't, you know what you'll get. If it wasn't for the soldiers I'd take you out and thrash you for your impudence," returned Renner in well-assumed indignation.

"Don't know but I'll give you a chance," returned Jeff.

MacKenzie's heart beat rapidly and his breath came in short gasps. There were many men in his little room, and they were pounding the walls to find a hollow resonance somewhere. By-and-by he could hear Jeff's voice close beside the chimney, and he almost suffocated in his effort to control the sound of his own breathing.

The pounding continued. The man was right at his hiding-place. But the wall of it was a huge slab. It sounded like a log, and to still further deaden the sound and tantalize the men, Renner talked incessantly.

"A search like this is an outrage!" he exclaimed, vigorously. "If he knew what you are doing the Governor would never permit it. He knows his people too well to sanction such an imposition."

"We have his warrant," returned the sergeant. "Here it is."

"Let me see it."

The men gathered round him while he made the investigation.

"Yes, I see. You are authorized to follow the refugee and capture him if possible; to search all suspicious places; to hunt for him through all the apartments of any house or barn or other building where you have good reason to believe he may

be secreted or lodged."

"Exactly," said the sergeant.

"Yes, exactly. But what good reason can you show for the outrage upon the house of a peaceable and loyal citizen? Tell me that."

"I've told you already," replied Jeff. "There's no use repeating it again."

"But you haven't told me what the man is like, so that if he did happen to squeeze into my house, unawares, I might recognize and capture him. If you raise such a row over him, and scour the whole country to catch him, it must be worth one's while to help a little."

"Do you mean to say," stormed the sergeant, "that you don't know what this MacKenzie is like? Have you never seen the man, the rebel that the whole country is wild to capture?"

"You've outraged my house without saying even 'by your leave,' and I have asked a simple question," returned Renner, stiffly, "and I have a right as a subject of the Queen, God bless her, to receive a decent answer. What is MacKenzie like? Is he tall or short, large or small, dark or fair, young or old? Give me, like sensible men, a reasonable idea to go upon."

"If that's the way he talks, it's plain enough we're off the scent!" exclaimed the sergeant, making for the stairway. "We've no more time to waste. Come along, men."

Quickly they followed him and were soon down the stairs, but Jeff lingered.

"Say!" he exclaimed, putting a wistful tone into his voice, and pursing his lips toward Renner, "there's big money in this business. I've got a kinder inside track on it, a chance that no other fellow has. I sorter lead the militia in the hunt; and if you'll help me nab the fellow I'll give you a clean hundred pound."

"That is generous," said Renner, eyeing him keenly.

"Don't know but I might make it two," sidling up a little closer, "being as it is done neatly and soon. Wouldn't even be necessary to tell the militia, for that matter."

"Still more generous," said Renner, contemptuously. "Yesterday the Governor offered a thousand pounds to any man who would capture MacKenzie. The offer is open and likely to be. Yet you have the cheek to ask me to capture the man as soon as I get the chance, take the thousand pounds, keep two hundred of it myself and give the other eight hundred to you for nothing."

"But, I say—"

"Get out of my house—I've room for neither fool nor knave in it. Quick, I say!"

Incontinently, the brave Jeff floundered down the stairs after his compatriots; and as they cantered up the street again, MacKenzie quietly watched them from his bedroom window.

CHAPTER IX.

ARRESTED AS A HORSE THIEF

Before the afternoon was over, more men arrived in the village to aid in tracking the fugitive. The orders from Toronto were to scour the country with all possible speed; and to leave no stone unturned to secure his capture before he could cross the border. The offer of a thousand pounds sterling upon MacKenzie's arrest was no small inducement; and when Ted returned from the village at three o'clock he declared that a dozen militia had arrived from the city to swell the number of the "Patriot's" pursuers. As a consequence, Renner and MacKenzie had a long talk over the situation, and decided that he should push on again under cover of the coming night.

By midnight he had had his second long sleep, and, refreshed in body with another hearty meal, he was once more in the saddle on Nap's back. Ted acted as scout while his father led the horse out into the woods. There he bade the fugitive adieu, wishing him God-speed on his journey.

"Slip this into your pocket," Renner added, handing him a flask of brandy, "and here's some sandwiches my wife made; they'll balance the weight of the bottle."

"You're just like the rest," was MacKenzie's response; "with so many staunch friends I defy my enemies to capture me."

"True enough, Mac," whispered Renner, "but they'll be thick enough soon, scattered like peas; and it won't be safe to travel on horseback much longer. When daylight comes you'll be a good target for either eye or bullet."

"What would you advise?"

"Just to pick your way. Steal along at night time from barn to barn, or from house to house, and never stir in daylight between sun and sun. The Government squad will be after you. They'd tear you limb from limb if they could; but the people are your friends. They may think you were a fool to risk so much on so slim a chance; but there isn't a man of 'em from here to Niagara would give you up to the Governor, for all the rotten gold that he carries. Good-bye, my friend, good-bye."

"Yes, good-bye," echoed MacKenzie with trembling voice, "God bless you."

There was moonlight enough for him to follow the woodland trail, which led directly away from the village. Renner had given him full directions, and for hours his journey south was almost entirely through timber lands, thus avoiding the drifts. The snow here was light and the roads good, making progress easier. His object was to steer for a point west of Dundas and to reach the mountain ridge in rear of the village for his first stop. It was a long pull and a strong pull, but he patted Nap's neck and whispered in his ear, and the staunch beast, in sympathy with his rider, put his best foot to the front.

"If I could only reach Merritt's house before daybreak," was the fugitive's thought, and for this he made the effort.

Merritt had always been a subscriber to the "*Advocate*" while it lived, and he was willing to trust himself in his hands. He knew something of the location of the house, too. It was said to be on the corner of cross-roads, with a block of clearing on each corner lot. As dawn broke, after six hours' hard riding, he believed he had discovered the spot; the description seemed verified, but there was no light in the house.

Tying his horse to the gate-post MacKenzie entered the yard and rapped at the door. Soon a woman appeared. She had been fixing the fire for a light.

"Tom," she cried, stepping quickly backwards, "there's a man at the door. Come, quick!"

"Does Mr. Merritt live here?" MacKenzie asked; "excuse me for troubling you so early."

"Nice time to come before daylight asking questions and scaring folks," was her reply. "No, he don't, but my man's coming; he'll talk to you," and she closed the door in his face.

"There's a rum-looking customer outside," she whispered to her giant of a husband, who was donning his clothes. "He's wild and withered up like. Looks like a big pollywog, with red hair and red eyes."

"You must have looked hard to see so much in a minute."

"So I did. He's so queer he scared me."

"Well, stranger, what can I do for you?" Tom asked on opening the door.

"Can you tell me where Mr. Merritt lives?"

Tom, with his broad shoulders, towered a foot above the little man before him; and glancing from him to the steaming beast, he drew his own conclusions.

"He lives quite a ways from here," was his answer; "beyond the cross-roads."

"How long will it take to ride there?"

"Perhaps an hour, perhaps more."

"I'm sorry to trouble you; but will you tell me the direction, please?"

"It seems to me that both you and your horse need a rest, judging by the appearance of things," said the man, eyeing MacKenzie still more closely. "That's a mighty good beast you've got there. Pity to ride him too long or too hard without feed."

"Yes, I know," was the answer; "that's one reason why I want to reach Mr. Merritt's, so that I can feed him."

"How far did you come?"

"From near Springfield."

"For the land's sake! Riding all night, without stopping for a feed?"

"Not all night, but a good part of it."

"Well, I reckon, the best thing you can do is to put up here. We can feed you both. The woman's got lots o' buckwheat batter and pork; and after that I don't mind showing you the road. Step inside, I'll tend the critter."

And without waiting for a response he stalked out to the gate and led the horse away to the stable.

The woman in turn eyed the visitor.

"Put your things on the peg and take a chair," she said, jerking her thumb over her shoulder. "Tom's boss, but I'd be blessed if I'd take a tramp in at daybreak for nothing."

"It is not for nothing," returned MacKenzie, wishing to conciliate the woman. "I shall be glad to pay for myself and my horse. It was good of your husband to offer to take a tired traveller in."

"Well, well, we never takes no pay," she added in milder tones. "How do you like your slap-jacks, with molasses or pork?"

"With pork mostly." He had noted Tom's remark.

"You can have both if you want to."

"Thank you. This is a cozy place you've got, and it's good to be by the fire in the early morning."

"It ain't bad." This time she smiled.

The door opened and Tom came in. His keen eyes ran over MacKenzie's figure. "You've had a hard run, boss," was his comment. "That beast of yours is clear grit; but you've given him a terrible run. He needs two hours' rest to fit him for another dash for the States."

He was observing MacKenzie closely, and the latter knew it.

"I'm not taking him to the States," was his response.

"You're not, eh?" incredulously.

"I think I told you that Mr. Merritt's house was my present destination."

"All right, sir, and being as you are bound to get there, we'll just split your horse's feed and rest in two and start you off in one hour. Breakfast ready, Meg?"

"Yes, you can start now, both of ye."

"Sit up, Boss. Say, that *is* a dandy beast. Where did you say you got him?"

"I didn't say I got him anywhere. I've had him for some time," said MacKenzie, helping himself to the buckwheat slap-jacks offered by his host.

"He's got a splendid back and legs and is strong in the withers. When put to it, might carry a light man like you near a hundred miles in a day."

"Possibly he could," said MacKenzie.

"Should make an A 1 trotting horse, too. Ever had him on the racetrack?"

"No, I never had."

"Peculiar, isn't it? Looks mighty like a dark bay that took the sweepstakes at York two year ago. I happened to be down an' saw him. If you hadn't said 'no' I could 'a' sworn this was the beast."

"It is peculiar," said MacKenzie, still masticating his cakes.

"Yes, damned peculiar." To change the subject MacKenzie talked about the roads. Then, shoving his chair from the table, Tom announced that he had some chores to do; but that in twenty minutes he'd have the horse saddled and ready for his rider.

Before going out he whispered something to his wife. Instantly her mouth dropped, her face elongated, and her eyes flashed a glance at MacKenzie which he did not see.

"Where be your home, sir?" she asked, after her husband had gone.

"In Toronto," he replied, and concluding that it would be good policy to ply her with questions, rather than satisfy her curiosity, he learned that they had lived there for five years, that her husband's farm was on a clergy reserve, that he had paid five instalments and had five more to pay, that he was the strongest man in the township, could lift a barrel of flour with his teeth, and was bailiff as well. All the information she received in return was that his last stopping place was at Springfield, and that he was not sure how soon he would return to the city. Upon the latter point, she inwardly believed, although she had never seen her guest before, that she could have furnished him with substantial information if she had desired to do so.

But Mr. Thomas Ketchum, the bailiff, was at the gate holding his horse; and MacKenzie, after thanking the woman for his breakfast, joined him. He felt suspicious over his position. The grim humor of it interested him. If this man willed it, he was a prisoner in spite of all he could do. Although MacKenzie carried a brace of loaded pistols, the actual fight being over, he knew that he would suffer capture rather than shoot a man in cold blood.

Ketchum, however, was perfectly cool, and having on a rough pea-jacket and gauntlets, was prepared for a tramp.

"Your beast has cooled off fine," was his greeting, "and he must have been hungry, for besides hay, he's eaten more'n a gallon of oats. If you get into the saddle I'll lead the way and show you the road."

MacKenzie mounted, but instead of letting the horse loose, the man slipped his big arm into the bridle, and with his hand in his coat pocket, sauntered along by his head. The situation was not a pleasant one. Both horse and man were captured, sure enough. It might be from sheer hospitality and goodness of heart, or it might be that they were veritable prisoners. With Ketchum's huge strength and complete command of himself, MacKenzie doubted much his ability to free his horse

from his grasp, were he to try it. In the meantime, the better policy was to accept the conditions for the present and follow the man's lead.

For half an hour they pursued their way in silence, each man on the alert. The sun being above the horizon, MacKenzie could take his bearings. He had understood that the direction to Mr. Merritt's house was due south; but after crossing the side-line to the next concession, Mr. Ketchum turned his back on the sun and led the horse along the road to the west. In the distance he could discern a large log-house with smoke coming from the chimney.

"Is that Mr. Merritt's house?" MacKenzie asked.

"No, that is Squire Dalton's."

"Why are you going in this direction then?" he cried, suddenly pulling his horse in.

But the man was prepared for any emergency and pulled in with the beast.

"Why?" he echoed, turning sharply round and facing MacKenzie with a determined face. "Simply because I've arrested a horse thief, and shall deliver the man for commitment and the horse for detention."

MacKenzie now for the first time saw the breech of a revolver protruding from Ketchum's breast-pocket. The accusation coupled with this object lesson cleared the atmosphere.

"So I am the thief and Nap the beast I have stolen!" he exclaimed, with a ringing laugh at the absurdity of the idea. "What in the world made you think so?"

The acceptance of the accusation was so singular that Ketchum's faith was shaken. Still he felt in a measure sure of his ground and was not going to be bluffed.

"The circumstantial evidence of the thief and the beast," was the angry answer; "and if you want to know, I'll give it you straight from the shoulder. Although you're the size of a horse-jockey, you're too old and used up for one; yet after riding all night the best trotter in the county, you expect me to believe that the beast is your own; when any man with a grain of sense would know that its owner wouldn't be such a d—d fool as to put on the road such a valuable animal for a whole night's ride."

"That's horse sense," returned MacKenzie, who had arrived at the conclusion that a candid statement might induce the man to favor his escape, bailiff though he was. So he told him the facts. Ketchum was astonished, as well as chagrined, at his own lack of astuteness. But his features relaxed, for the story in its telling was evidently true; and although an officer of the Crown, he had always sympathized with the man who for years had been fighting for larger freedom.

"Yet I never heard a word of the fight," said Ketchum. "I knew the people were preparing; and you answer to the description they give of MacKenzie, but that a battle was fought, and you and your men defeated, is news to me. Perhaps it's because I'm out of the way, for you've missed it; Merritt's place is ten miles due east of here, straight on the road to the Falls."

"Ten miles!" exclaimed MacKenzie, in astonishment.

"Yes, and the best thing you can do is to make tracks for the river. I'm sorry I called you a horse thief, but you must acknowledge I had reason."

"Yes, I see it now. Perhaps I'd better not keep the horse much longer. This is the second time already that he has been recognized."

"You are right there. And past Dundas there'll be a lot of men after you. Go clean south of Merritt's place, but not to it. From there east the country will be full of scouts. Better sell the horse if you can. Travel at night on foot would be my advice."

"The horse is not mine to sell," said MacKenzie.

"But the man gave him to you."

"I only regarded it as a loan. I intend to leave him in charge somewhere, and, after I escape, write Ogilvie where Nap

can be found."

"Well, that's the honest way, I suppose, but everything is fair in love and war."

"But not to defraud one's friend."

"By jupiter, yonder are two men on horseback coming out of the woods; you'd better get. Take the side-line to the next concession. Quick, or they'll see you. Go south, then east, then south, then east. Do it three times, and then due east till some other fellow gives you a lift on the way. Good-bye, old man."

"Good-bye," and wringing the bailiff's hand he was off.

Fortunately the adjoining woods prevented his horse being seen by the approaching riders, and he took the long incline on the lope. In a few minutes the top was reached, and before the men had joined the bailiff MacKenzie was speeding his way into the valley beyond.

The officer of law was naturally anxious for news from the seat of war; so the troopers regaled him with a florid account, little dreaming that while they were talking, MacKenzie was doing his best to increase the distance between himself and them.

CHAPTER X.

REACHING THE RIVER.

MacKenzie lost no time by the way. Although tired from the long night ride, his breakfast had refreshed him, and he was ready to ride as long as the fates would permit. He was not a heavy burden for Nap to carry, and the beast was in good trim. The coast was still clear, so he pushed on determined to cover all the ground possible during the early hours of the day.

He passed many people that morning, some riding, others walking. Curiosity was depicted on every face; but no one stopped him, a nod or a word being the only greeting. Religiously he followed the directions given by Ketchum—to the south—to the east—to the south—to the east—to the south—to the east, and then steadily onward.

He felt it to be a desperate business, this fleeing for liberty, and while his eyes were constantly on the alert, his spirits became depressed. Over and over again his thoughts centered upon his wife and children. Still, amid all the gloom of the separation, and his dread and doubt concerning them, he had satisfaction in knowing that for a time they were provided for. He had left them enough money to buy the necessaries of life, and although the loyalists in their desire for revenge would swing him on the scaffold if they could, he did not believe that even Sir Francis would lay a molesting finger upon his household.

But what of the horror and despair that lay within those old walls? What of the mother's anguish when she knew that her son was flying into exile, with a reward upon his head, and scores of armed men in hot pursuit? What of the wife's devotion, with future wrecked, home life sacrificed, and her husband a ruined outlaw? What of the children whom he loved? What of the cause upon which he had risked all and lost? In bitter anguish he felt undone.

No wonder that his spirits fell and that hope seemed annihilated. But men live in the present, not in the past nor the future. The bodily functions do their duty just for to-day. The heart beats methodically in never-ending rhythm year in and year out, and the brain inevitably fulfils its mission, come what will. Terror may fill the heart, remorse may wreck the soul, despair may grind the spirit in anguish, but life's duties must be done; and the innerself, declaring its mighty ego, rises subconsciously and proclaims its supremacy.

MacKenzie was growing hungry again. He had still his sandwiches and brandy untouched; but noon was approaching, and these would not feed his beast. Nap must be provided for. For an hour he had been on the main road and saw more people; and as some scanned him and his beast suspiciously, he rode on the first good opportunity into a barnyard, and tied his horse in the shed.

Suddenly a mastiff bounded out of the barn with a savage growl. Nap's heels were getting ready for another conflict, when the dog's master appeared and called him off.

"Tige's savage and would nip you if I wasn't here," cried the man.

"He'll do it yet, if you don't call him off," returned MacKenzie, sidling round to hold the dog at bay.

"Down Tige, down, I say. What do you want, Mister?"

"Not a great deal, just to ask you to take care of my horse till he's sent for, if you will? He's a valuable animal. You'll be paid for your trouble."

"That's a queer proposition," said the man, rubbing his nose vigorously. "Who be you to ask me? And how do I know who owns the beast or where you got him?"

"Will you do what I ask if I give you satisfactory answers to your questions?"

"Sartin, or my name isn't Bert Rogers."

"You've given me your name. I'll give you mine. It's William Lyon MacKenzie."

"You! Lyon MacKenzie! you—a fellow I could throw over the fence as quick as I could a calf—you—the man who has set the whole country ablaze and turned one-half the people against t'other, until one doesn't know friend from foe. Man,

you've given me a shake. I never heard what you were like; but I calkulated you'd be a fellow with muscle, and bone and sinew, as well as brains. No wonder the Governor's recruits licked you and scattered your men like chaff when they took a chap like you for chief."

"Nevertheless, the cause was a good one," said MacKenzie, angrily, "and if I had succeeded, you like other men would have sung a different song."

"Of course, the winning horse gets the prize; but you are the losing one; with a big reward on your head, and the whole country after you."

"The people of the country, or the hounds of the city, which?"

"Well, the hounds, I reckon. Three different gangs have been along already to-day. One fellow on a grey mare was in only half an hour ago. He's keen for the dust, I tell you; and he offers any fellow he meets a share of the prize if he will only help to lay hands on you. I've a capital chance to go in halves myself," he concluded, with a broad grin.

"But being a man who can distinguish justice from tyranny, you'll scorn to do what the villain asks."

"How do you know?"

"By the look of an honest man's face."

"I don't know—guess I'm betwixt and between," said the man, rubbing his nose again. "There's good in quietude and order, even if you don't get much from the state; and there's good in standing up for your rights and demanding what is your due. Still, I'm too much of an Adullamite to make a fuss either way."

"Time is pressing. Will you do as I ask you?"

"If it comes to that, I guess I'd fight for the under dog," said the man, compressing his lips; "and a hundred against one couldn't get my support, anyhow. If I can help you in a quiet way, I'll do it—but mind you, I'm not in the racket for racket's sake, either for or against."

"I understand. So you'll keep my horse until he's sent for; and being familiar with the country, you'll tell me how I can best and safest reach Niagara river to cross the line."

"You've put it in a nut-shell; and I tell you frankly, there's not a single house in the 'hull of this district where you could be stowed away for keeps, no matter how much the people favored your cause. These confounded troopers swing through every inch of your shanty. They come one after another, and think nothing of investigating every cranny. So of house refuge there is none."

"What shall I do then?"

"Being fagged out you ought to rest before going further."

"But where can I?"

"That beats me. Still, why not try my pea-rick? It's clean and dry. The pigs have worried roads through it until it's honey-combed. I'll fasten em out. Then you can crawl in and have a sleep. Stay there until night, when you may steal away again. And being on a knoll not far from the road, you can get a good view without being seen."

So, after telling his story more fully, MacKenzie hastened off to the pea-rick and crawled in. Thoroughly tired out and secured against molestation from the pigs, he was soon asleep. After a while Rogers came quietly up to the rick and listened, but hearing the breathing of the sleeper, he left him undisturbed.

By-and-by rain commenced to fall, rapidly melting the snow; but MacKenzie's nook being thoroughly dry, he slept on. How long this lasted he didn't know, until awakened by loud shouts on the road. Peering out from his ambush he saw several horsemen noisily splashing to and fro, and among them was a rider on his own grey nag. They had evidently called a halt at Rogers's house. Listening intently, as the altercation became louder, he detected Jeff's blustering tones above all others.

"A man on horseback came this way," he shouted, "but he didn't pass your place."

"How do you know he didn't?" retorted Rogers.

"Both the farmers half a mile down the road swear to it."

"You must be as blind as a bat not to see the cross-roads before you get to either of 'em."

"Cross-roads be hanged! When a man's running for life he makes a bee-line. He don't do it by jags."

"That shows how much you know. A hare doubles on his tracks, and so does a fox. If the man you are after has any gumption, he'll make all the cross-cuts he can to throw you off the scent."

"By-jove, you've hit it. I wish we had a blood-hound here."

"As you haven't, why not divide into two parties, and size the cross-roads for all they're worth? That is, if you are sure your man came this way."

"Sure as death," said Jeff. "What say you, men?"

"We'd better feed first. We've got oats in our saddle-bags and grub in our pockets," cried the sergeant. "Here it's three o'clock and neither man nor beast has had a bite since breakfast."

"Stay if you like," said Rogers, quaking lest they would, "but it will give your man all the better chance to escape."

"Guess we'll stay," snapped Jeff; "half an hour's neither here nor there. But say, isn't that a feeding box over by yon pearrick? Just the place; our beasts are hot and will cool down better than in a stable, now the rain's over."

"There's room in the stable for your horses," cried Rogers, his heart beating wildly.

"The trough's good enough," returned Jeff, coolly; "but Pete, you might swing out a jag of hay if this chap don't mind."

"Take all you want."

And Rogers commenced to whistle an old ballad as loudly as he could, in the hope of awakening the sleeping refugee to a full appreciation of his danger.

But MacKenzie needed no awakening. He had heard the gist of the conversation, and for the first time he was positively afraid. He felt as though his body was already in a trap and his neck in a noose. With that group of men all round the pearrick for the next hour, how could he possibly escape detection? As the men were tired as well as hungry, what was there to prevent any of them from crawling into the stack just for a nap, as he had done? And if Rogers allowed his dog to come near the rick, he felt sure that his fate would be sealed.

But Rogers was keen witted, and while not an ardent supporter of the cause, he had too true an appreciation of the danger both to himself and MacKenzie to run any avoidable risk. He cursed himself roundly for suggesting the pearrick, but once done, he must make the most of it; and on the plea of getting something for the men, he hurried Tige into the house and bade his wife on no account to let him out again.

Meanwhile, MacKenzie, after the momentary shock of danger, was making the most of his position. Whatever he could do to avoid detection must be done at once and without noise. He had discovered that the stack, about twenty feet in diameter and more than a dozen in height, was riddled with runways, all but one of them interlacing with each other. This central beat, made probably by an unusually venturesome pig, had been run to a higher level, his pigship having doubtless intended to lord it over his fellows. To back up into this narrow hole, separate from the others, and to face the outlet, seemed to be the only move practicable. The question was, could he cover his hiding-place by piling the straw in front of him so that no exploring trooper could detect the run; and further, could he get enough air to live the ordeal through? At least, he would try.

The men were too busy attending to their horses to hear the slight rattle that he made; and he had the satisfaction of building a pretty solid rampart, and almost suffocating as a consequence, before he heard the voices of men as they stooped down and peered into the outer holes.

"Jimminy Isaacs," cried one; "regular hog-holes—the stack's full of 'em. They're clean, too. Don't know but I'll take a snooze."

"With Mac as a bed-fellow? Who knows but he's in here somewhere?" returned his companion.

"Pooh," was the answer, the man stretching his long length with his head not three feet from that of the man he was hunting.

"Pooh ahead, I'm going to look."

"And get a bullet through your brains if he is."

"I'll take my chances." And he crawled in and out through half a dozen run-ways.

"Chee! chee!" he ejaculated, as he rejoined his comrade, already half asleep, "how that does make you sneeze"; little knowing how vigorously MacKenzie was pressing his upper lip to avoid a similar catastrophe.

"Did you find him?" was the question.

"Blowed if I did, but I'd bet my last pound some fellow's been here. Took more'n hogs to put this stack jus' as it is."

"Shut up and lie down; I want to snooze, I tell you."

For some time the two men lay still. Both of them dozed, then something moved.

"What's that? It was back of your head."

"A rat, I reckon, I saw two in the yard just as we came."

"I'm going to see, anyhow."

"Dashed if you will while I'm here. This is my caboose. Keep your own stall."

And failing in his purpose, the man listened intently, while MacKenzie, grim as death, scarcely breathed.

"Time to be moving," cried Jeff at last, "every man to his saddle."

"What's the hurry?" drawled one of the men from the rick.

"It's late," was the answer, "and we've got to try both the cross-roads before the darkening."

"Bill, didn't I tell you? There's the rat," ejaculated the other man to his mate, as they both crawled out, while a huge rodent bounded before them across the yard.

"What's that?" exclaimed Jeff.

"This chap, after running through the stack like a rabbit, swore that his rat was a man; while I swore that his man was a rat, and there he goes."

"Shoot him, Phil."

"Save your shot for better game. You may bag MacKenzie before night if you're spry. We'll divide at the side-line, two each way, to meet after night at Berkeley's tavern, five mile south-east of here. What say you, sergeant?"

The sergeant agreed; for although Jeff was not a soldier, he had been given leadership in the chase, as he rode MacKenzie's mare, and was supposed to know more of his plans than any of his fellows.

In a few minutes the troopers started down the road on the trot; and as he heard the clatter of the retreating hoofs, MacKenzie shoved the pea-straw aside and crawled out, half suffocated from heat and lack of air.

"A deuced narrow escape," muttered Rogers.

"In two minutes more I should have had to give in," replied MacKenzie. "The troopers' rat couldn't stand it any longer. Jeff's call saved him."

"So you are grateful to Jeff."

"Grateful! I'd wring his neck if I could. The beast is riding my own mare, which he stole. Not only that, but he's pounding her to pieces."

"It's something new for a man to be run down by his own mare," said Rogers with a grin.

"Rather than be taken by that fellow—he isn't a man—I'd pull a trigger on him, something I never did upon a human being yet."

"He'll give you the chance before you reach the river, I reckon. Still, this was a pretty close shave, and he missed it. Speaking about rivers, there's the Sixteen-mile Creek you'll have to cross. It has only one bridge north of the village, and they say it's mighty shaky. If a heavy flood comes to-night, and the sky's rotten enough to warrant it, the bridge'll go before morning, and then where will you be?"

"On the other side. I'll cross it first."

"It will take you five hours to get there, and it won't be safe to leave here until these men are settled for the night."

"That means back to the rick again."

"Yes, until ten o'clock. After dark I'll bring you some vittles."

A team came rattling along the road, so MacKenzie backed once more into his lair to solace himself with his sandwiches and a pull at his flask, while Rogers hastened to the house, for rain was again falling.

For long hours the rain came down in torrents. It was midnight before the storm broke. Then the sky cleared, the moon and the stars were out, and MacKenzie sallied forth. Rogers gave him explicit directions, and it was light enough to see the way. There was little danger of meeting anyone at such an hour, but as he trudged on, splashing through the mud, MacKenzie's eyes and ears were continually on the alert. Steady walking was something new to him, but with a brace of pistols in his under belt, and a stout cudgel in his hand he pursued his way, determined to reach the Sixteen-mile Creek, if possible, before the bridge could be swept away. He knew something of the locality, for only the year before, when prospecting over the possibilities of revolt, he had visited much of the region. Pressing steadily onward throughout the night, he reached the spot as the day dawned. The little stream had swollen to the dimensions of a river, filling and overflowing its banks. Turning to the right he walked up the bank for a mile or more in search of the bridge that was said to cross it. But misgivings soon presented themselves. As the light became clearer, squared timber, planks, and pieces of scantling successively swept by. Tired as he was, he hurried on faster than ever to know the truth. And presently, emerging from the woods, he reached the road where it crossed the creek. Hurrying to the water's edge, he stood aghast, for the supporting blocks on the banks of the stream were all that was left of the bridge.

What should he do? So far no one else had arrived on the scene; but this quietude could not continue. The neighbors who knew of the danger would soon come to investigate. What made the matter worse, there was no possibility of crossing the creek dry-shod except at the village; and to appear there either by day or night would mean capture. To cross at once was imperative. Looking closely, he thought the water would come up to his neck if he waded; but as the temperature was at the freezing point, although he might live through the effort, it would only be to chill to death on the other side.

But MacKenzie was a man of quick decision. Two minutes' reflection was sufficient. Glancing sharply in both directions along the road, and seeing no one, he stepped behind a tree, and stripping everything off but his hat, he rolled his clothes up into a bundle, tied them and his boots with his suspenders, and holding all aloft on his stick, walked into the stream. Instantly his teeth commenced to chatter and his limbs to shake. But he had made up his mind he would go through the river or down it, one or the other. With a strong plea to God for help, he waded right on. Soon he was up to his middle; next, to the waist, and at one time even to the chin. Then his footing became unsteady. The current was sweeping him off his feet. Chilled to the bone, but with his clothes still aloft, he lurched forward. This time he stubbed his toe on timber in the bed of the stream. The sharp sting of pain acted as a stimulant, and with his feet on a log his shoulders were out of the water. Taking advantage of the impetus thus gained, he again lurched forward and in another minute reached the bank and crawled out.

But he was chilled through, thoroughly benumbed. He feared he had not strength enough left to dress himself, and as a result must perish of cold after all his efforts to escape. But a wild yell from the other side of the creek roused him. At this moment, too, he remembered that there was a little of the brandy left, and even before looking across, he took the flask from his pocket and drained it. Then with numb fingers he commenced to put on his clothes as well as he could. The liquor was stimulating his circulation. His dry clothes, too, quickly gave him warmth; and while tugging at his long boots he looked across the stream at the youths who were still yelling.

"You are a brick if ever there was one, but what did you do it for?" shouted one of them.

"Where's the nearest house?" was his answer.

"There's one two miles down east, and another off to the left on the cross-road."

"Golly, you ought to have a good breakfast after your swim," cried the other youth.

"Thanks," was his answer, and waving his hand to the lads, he took to the road again as the sun appeared above the horizon.

By high noon the next day MacKenzie was in sight of the Niagara River. The place he aimed at reaching was the house of Captain McInnes, whom he knew to be a staunch friend. The difficult thing was to get to the house unobserved. As he neared the river he was continually dodging in and out of the woods in order to escape detection. People along the Niagara by this time all knew of his defeat; and were aware that he was a political refugee, using every effort in his power to escape across the border; and that he was attempting to do it right through their midst.

Hence when he entered a little copse of pines not far from the Captain's house, hours passed before the coast was clear enough for him to dare to leave it. Couriers passed and repassed. Soon Jeff on the grey mare rode by on the gallop, to come back on the trot half an hour later.

"Confound his infernal impudence!" muttered MacKenzie, as Jeff disappeared down the river road again. For a while all was still. Cautiously he stole to the edge of the wood, and was about to make a dash, when his ear caught a more ominous sound, and looking in the same direction again he was chagrined to see several dragoons riding up the road towards him. Backing into the wood, he once more secreted himself and waited. Then they cantered past and away up beyond the head of Grand Island.

"Now or never," was his thought as he again sallied forth. The coast was clear once more, and, hurrying on, he was soon in the rear of the house, where, fortunately, he met the Captain.

"I've been looking for this," growled the latter. "It was a God-send you didn't come any sooner. The dragoons went through my house only a few minutes ago. Step in here out of sight."

"Is there a boat available?" MacKenzie asked in alarm.

"The Government has seized every one they know of," was the answer.

"And are there no others?" he ventured.

"I only know of one."

"And whose is that, pray?"

"My own."

"Thank God."

"You may well say 'Thank God'," again growled the Captain, who was a retired American officer, "for the fellows are here in full force, up and down the line all day long. In half an hour they'll be here again. There's not much of a chance. Still we'll try it and rush things while we can. My boat's in the coach-house, twenty yards from the river; and luckily

Mike's always been a good friend of yours. Wait a minute till I see."

Opening the door, he looked up and down the road. In another minute he was back.

"Not a second to spare! Come!"

A word to Mike was sufficient. The three men rushed the craft down the incline with a will. Part of the slide was cut through the bank of the river, the public road coming to the very verge.

"Be jabbers, ye'll have to hurry," cried Mike. "Yon's one of the spalpeens coming again."

And not a hundred yards away was the grey mare with Jeff on her back coming on the gallop. On the higher ground he had recognized MacKenzie, and, yelling for others to follow, he put spurs to his jaded steed, glorying at the chance of capturing the refugee at last. But the boat was on the water with MacKenzie at the bottom and the two men at the oars before Jeff could reach them. He was riding furiously. His prey had almost escaped. He must be captured at whatever cost; and with a wild yell he galloped to the edge.

"Good God!" exclaimed McInnes.

"What's the matter?" said MacKenzie.

"Matter?" returned the Captain; "the grey has stumbled and both horse and rider have rolled into the cut."

"Great heaven!" ejaculated MacKenzie, in a tone of distress. "That's my own grey mare, and the villain has killed her."

"Be aisy, sir," suggested Mike, deferentially, for to him the refugee was still a hero. "It's the villain that's kilt and not the mare, I'm thinking."

By this time they were out some distance on the river, and MacKenzie peering backwards, saw his mare again on her feet. Evidently there were no bones broken, in her case at least. But Jeff, who had not moved from the moment of the accident, was still unconscious.

Beyond the crest the dragoons, who had been reconnoitring at McInnes's house, were riding down in answer to Jeff's yell of triumph. But only the two oarsmen could be seen, MacKenzie's body being discreetly hidden from view. So when they arrived at the scene of the accident their attention was divided ruefully between granting help to the sufferer and observing the fast receding boat. The captain of the dragoons suspected that MacKenzie was on the skiff; yet he could not be sure; and knowing that McInnes was a reputable American, residing on Canadian soil, he did not feel justified in ordering his men to fire merely on suspicion. So MacKenzie, for a time at least, under the ægis of the Eagle, was likely to retain his freedom.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BURNING OF THE "CAROLINE."

Events followed one another in quick succession. It was soon known that MacKenzie had escaped. The Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada forthwith made a requisition upon the Governor of New York State to extradite the refugee as a fugitive from justice. This the Governor promptly declined to comply with, on the ground that MacKenzie's revolt was of a political and not of a criminal character, the extradition of political adventurers being contrary to the law of nations. Private individuals and sympathizers with means to aid the cause were also rallying round MacKenzie's standard, and General VanRensselaer offered his personal support.

MacKenzie's head was again turned. The God of righteousness and justice and truth once more was on his side! The cause of Liberty, upon which he had sacrificed his all, was still alive; bowed down and crushed but ready to be resuscitated! What made the renewed call appear to MacKenzie like an order from the Divine, was that it came from others than himself. He was ready and willing to abandon the cause as an impossible issue. But when strong men, with good financial backing, declared that a stand must again be made, with reluctant eagerness he accepted the mandate.

Navy Island was the spot chosen for the foundation of the new republic. Men came from both sides of the river, far and near, to swell the little band of "Patriots," each one cheered by the promise of receiving 300 acres of land and \$100 in cash as a fitting reward for his patriotism. Surgeons were on hand to attend the wounded, lawyers to negotiate the transfers and make the wills of the dying, and parsons to bury the dead.

A new Constitution, too, was quickly framed—MacKenzie was an adept at this sort of thing—and a grand seal was procured with the motto, 'Liberty—Equality.' A patriots' flag, with an emblem of 'Twin Stars' for the two provinces, was likewise floated on the air to cheer the disaffected and make all men loyal; while William Lyon MacKenzie was publicly proclaimed as first Provisional President.

General VanRensselaer drilled his men and fired his cannon at long distance at the Britishers over the river; while shots from the other side, equally harmless in effect, occasionally came back in answer.

And so the days passed, with scanty provisions but plentiful liquors; muskets and cannon, powder and shot, soldiers and civilians, all jumbled together in the little wooden shanties of the island, until Christmas was over and the New Year almost on its eve.

Then something of note happened.

MacKenzie was in his little log office, busily planning the details of the new Constitution, when, to his surprise, the door opened and his temporary orderly announced the entrance of Marie Stuart and her father.

"It was risky to bring your daughter," said MacKenzie, after the first greeting.

"Marie is not afraid to go anywhere," was MacAlpine's answer.

"Why should I be?" she asked, coyly extending her hand to the Provisional Governor.

"To cross on the *Caroline* is not without danger," replied MacKenzie. "There are rumors afloat, and if an ugly battle was to occur this would be a dangerous place for a woman. I have not brought my wife yet."

"Only two weeks since you escaped; you've scarcely had time," said MacAlpine. "But I reckon we are safe. Donald and Marie came up from the Islands to-day."

"He's your eldest son."

"Yes, the *Caroline* is under his care until I go back. He understands the boat as well as I do."

"Then your daughter will remain with us as our guest," said MacKenzie, courteously, dimly conscious of the fact that accommodation for her would be of the barest.

"Thank you, but she will return to the *Caroline*. We don't intend to go ashore again until morning."

MacKenzie's brows contracted. He was not a timid man, nor in the ordinary sense superstitious. But into his mind had crept a sense of coming evil in some way coupled with the *Caroline*. A vision of a burning steamer had troubled his sleep during the previous night, and he dreaded lest his dream might come true. The *Caroline*, under the command of its owner, Commodore MacAlpine, had recently been cut out of the ice and was doing valiant service for the 'Patriots.' Many things, from boots and flour and rifles, all the way to haversacks and hams and cannon-balls, had already been brought over surreptitiously by that vessel; and more than once, through his own long field-glass, had MacKenzie seen the glasses of officers on the Canadian shore steadily following the course of the little steamer.

During one of her trips that very day, a boat had been launched by the British forces and sent half way across the river to scan her movements. Two or three well-aimed shots from VanRensselaer's guns had splattered around them, one even touching the gunwale of the boat. It was not until this happened that they beat a retreat. Venturing so far in the daytime, what might they not do under cover of the night?

"It would be better not to risk the danger," reiterated MacKenzie. "The *Caroline* is not safe quarters for a lady."

"Bah!" returned MacAlpine, "what can they do? They haven't a vessel larger than a rowboat to cross the river with; and the *Caroline* bristles with cannon as well as powder and shot, even if she is small. You are too timid for a rebel, Mac."

"'Tis not the man, but the maiden I was thinking of," was MacKenzie's answer; "but she's your daughter, not mine."

"Forgive me, MacKenzie; I didn't mean what I said, and from my heart I thank you for your consideration. Perhaps it would be better to follow your suggestion. For that matter, Marie and I could both go back and sleep ashore for the night; and late as it is, Donald, who is keen for the work, might bring over another load of ammunition and a consignment of food-stuffs that has just arrived."

"God be thanked for that, for of flour and beans and sugar we are out already. I never knew before how much stuff a gang of hungry men would eat."

"But this is only the commencement of it."

"Yes, and the *Caroline* is the only steamer we have to aid us; but you have our gratitude, MacAlpine. Take care of her."

"I intend to, but we'd better be going, Marie, if Donald must bring another load to-night."

"Just a moment, father. So your wife is not with you," said Marie, speaking earnestly, and coming closer to MacKenzie. "Where is she?"

"Still in Toronto at our old home. A man arrived from there last night, and he says she's had a hard time of it. There is no actual molestation, but the Government and city officers prowl round the place from morning until night and have already searched the house several times for information that they can never get."

"Poor woman," returned Marie, in a tone of deepest sympathy. "I wish with all my heart that we had her at our island."

"Yes," assented her father. "To marauders it is inaccessible. Once there, she could rest in safety."

"I can only express my gratitude, but the children would be in the way," commented MacKenzie. "Over the line is the place for them, and I am planning for their removal from the clutches of the villains that oppress them. After that my wife will join me here at Navy Island."

"You may rest assured that I would do anything in my power for her," said Marie.

MacKenzie bowed over her hand and they returned to the boat.

When the *Caroline* reached the main shore, several men were summoned to carry out the orders for another loading.

"So you decline to pass the night on the *Caroline* with me?" said Donald, jestingly, to his sister, "and this my first night, too."

"I am willing, but father and Mr. MacKenzie are not," was her answer.

"No, we'll leave the whole thing to you, Donald," said his father. "Beware of the rocks, and you know that shoal. There

is light enough to steer by."

"Are you going, too, father?"

"Yes, Marie and I will stop at the hotel. I've passed so many nights on the *Caroline*, lately, that a change will be welcome."

"Well, good night."

"And for the present, good-bye," echoed Marie, with a little unaccountable shiver, for her wraps were warm and the night was not cold.

"And, remember, Donald, be vigilant, at least until after midnight," said his father. "I think I would anchor close to the island, or else at the shore—not mid-stream—keep a steady watch, and don't unload until morning. The men have had a busy day and are tired. Two or three of the fellows, for that matter, might sleep in the shanty, after you cast anchor."

"All right; good-bye, father and Marie." And seized by a sudden impulse, he threw his arm round his sister's neck and kissed her. Almost a minute passed before Marie released herself with a sob.

At midnight Donald stood alone on the deck. For hours the night had been growing darker; although anchored less than twenty rods from the little wharf, he could scarcely see its outlines. It was for this reason that he had not returned to Navy Island. The clouds had commenced to thicken while he was loading; and discretion demanded that he should hug the shore for the night.

Consequently, he did as his father bade him, and sent half his men to the shanty for the night's rest; while the other half retired to their berths, save one, who kept his place with Donald, near the wheel.

The air was still, like the hush before the storm; but it was full of weird music. Donald had never heard it before. The distant boom of the cataract, muffled by the drop into the huge caldron, struck a different note to the minor key of the rapids. But in the quietude the tone seemed unvarying, never ending.

For a while Donald stood mutely listening. Not a sound could he hear but that of the waters. On the shore all lamps were out, and on Navy Island only two or three lights could be seen. The air was chilly, and the work being over, Sandy, the second officer, commenced to move uneasily.

"Don't see any use in two of us staying here," he muttered, at length. "We've anchored for the night, and one watch ought to be enough at a time."

"We must be wary," returned Donald, "and we're too close to the enemy's camp to run any risk."

"What risk? There are no traitors in our camp; and the Britishers can only cross the river in rowboats. They are not such fools as to come over on a night like this; besides, one or two boats would be no good. They would have to come in a shoal; and any man on the watch would be sure to see 'em, even if it was as black as pitch."

"We'll wait a little longer, anyhow; it's not much after twelve."

"All right, sir."

Donald walked slowly up and down the boat peering out into the darkness, while Sandy stayed by the wheel.

Half an hour passed away. It was nearly one.

"Say Donald," muttered the man again, breaking the silence. He had long been in MacAlpine's employ and was a privileged person. "I protest again, you ought to be in bed. I'll keep watch all night if you say so; but for two of us, it is downright foolishness."

"Perhaps it is," returned Donald, doggedly; "but I shall stay. You might lie down, though. Stretch yourself in the cabin, but do not undress; I am not so sure of the situation as you are."

"Ah, ah! lad. You haven't had as muckle experience."

"For that reason, I am taking it now. I'll stand by the ship. Sleep lightly; when I want you, I'll call."

"Aye, aye, sir; but it's so still you'll be sleeping yourself in a couple of hours."

"Will I?" and Donald laughed.

Buttoning his coat up tighter, he again went to the stern of the boat and peered out into the darkness. For many minutes he listened and looked—seeing and hearing nothing but the beating of the waters. Then a faint sound caught his ear. It almost startled him as the possible product of human agency. It might be the splash of an oar, or the creak of a boat, or the rattle of a guy. But though he listened intently it was not repeated. He must have been mistaken. By-and-by through the darkness he groped his way to the other end. The gloom was oppressive; and youth though he was, full of life and vigor, depression commenced to enfold him in its iron grip.

With a strong effort he shook himself together again and wandered back to the other end of the boat, less intent upon exploring the blackness beyond, than in rousing his own drooping spirits.

What a fool he felt himself to be! A mile away from the Canadian side—making an attack impossible in the perilous darkness of the river—the *Caroline* securely anchored, and manned by men within call. What was there to dread? He had no cowardly fear. He was as brave a lad as ever swung a MacAlpine claymore. It was only the unaccountable, the poignant, the depressing gloom that bothered him.

He was glad that his sister was not with him, and yet he didn't know why. And his father, too, how he would laugh on the morrow when he told of the imps of fate that dogged his footsteps while he groped his way from end to end in the dark.

By-and-by, physically tired of prowling, he dropped on a seat by the wheel, determined to fight the unwonted depression that had well-nigh unmanned him. Should he call Sandy? But why? There was nothing to do. He must and would stand it alone.

Suddenly a light breeze commenced to blow. To his amazement the *Caroline* was moving. Jumping up, he peered over the boat's side again. Yes, there was something gliding in the darkness, and something beyond that. Boats they were, sure enough!

"Boat ahoy!" he shouted. "Who goes there?"

"Friends," was the answer.

"Your countersign?"

"I'll give it you in a minute."

With that Donald yelled down the gangway for his men; while the assailants from seven boats, armed with pistols, cutlasses and grappling hooks, boarded the *Caroline*.

Instantly Donald MacAlpine's gloom and depression vanished. The Britishers were there sure enough, rushing in on every side; and come what might, single-handed if need be, he would fight them to the death.

"Surrender! Put up your arms, you're our prisoners," cried Captain Drew, as Donald with the first shot from his pistol bowled a man over in the darkness.

"Prisoners—never," was his answer, as by the light of the flash he struck at the captain with the butt end, while he drew another pistol from his belt. Donald's men came rushing up the gangway. It was too dark to see clearly, but the assailants were many and the crew rallied round their leader. As Sandy rushed forward, Drew's sword was raised to strike an avenging blow at Donald. But Sandy's bullet struck the arm that held it and the blow fell fruitless; while a bullet at the same moment entered Sandy's body and rolled him over on the deck.

The terrible affray was of short duration. Several of his men fell, as well as more than one of the invaders, but Donald remained unscathed. His pistols emptied, he seized a cutlass, and was defending himself against a new assailant when a stampede was sounded for the boats. The steamer was floating out far from shore, and a bright light was commencing to

rise from her stern gangway, illuminating both the vessel and the water.

Donald began to realize the terrible truth. His few men were all gone save Sandy, who lay there wounded. The *Caroline* had been cut loose from her anchorage, set on fire, and the reserve men in the boats were towing her out into the stream to complete the terrible doom; while their companions rushed down the sloop's sides to effect a final escape.

"You cowards!" yelled Donald, hurling his cutlass at the last receding figure.

"You can escape if you like," shouted back the wounded Captain Drew, who was the last to mount over the railing and drop into his boat. "Come as my prisoner and I will see you get no harm. But you must come at once."

"What about Sandy here?"

"He's almost dead now. We can't take him."

"Then you don't take me."

"Nonsense, Donald—you must—I'm shot in the breast—and must die," gasped the man. "Go man, go—for God's sake go!"

In reply Donald stooped down and picked Sandy up in his arms as if he were a child. Rushing to the side of the boat, already ruddy with light from the flames, he yelled out:

"You must. He's not dead yet, you've got to take him."

"Too late for either of you," came from the fast receding boat, as the ill-fated steamer, borne by the swift current, swept onward, leaving all the boats behind.

A despairing wail rose from the lips of the dying man.

"Oh, Donald, Donald!" he cried, clasping him round the knees. "What do you mean, giving your life for a lout like me? Now both of us are lost. Oh, man! why did ye do it?"

"Sandy, it had to be," was Donald's grim answer, as, standing erect, he released himself from the embrace, his whole being strung to the highest tension. "But oh, my God, to think that it should come to this—a hell of fire behind—a hell of an abyss in front—and all life summed up in a moment between them! We'll have to get further forward, Sandy. Can you stand, man?"

But Sandy's wound was flowing faster. His strength was ebbing away.

"I'm dying, Donald; never mind me."

"Nonsense, man, you'll live as long as I will; there's just the two of us, we must stick to each other—aye, and go out on the one road. Oh! but it's hot here—we can't bear it."

The stalwart figure bent down again to lift the limp body of Sandy, and the broad shoulders straightened as they carried to the prow of the boat their burden.

"This is the best we can do," said Donald, more calmly. "Let us sit together. Lean on me, man, it will soon be over."

"Just like brithers."

"Yes, like brothers. That fire's closing in upon us. We're fifty yards from the fall yet. God grant that we reach it first."

"It's getting warm; seems like going to bed," said the dying man. "I'll say my mither's prayer—join in it, Donald. Our Father—which art in Heaven—Hallowed be thy name—thy kingdom come—thy will be done—on earth as in Heaven—Give us this day our—bread and—forgive our debts—"

"Oh, that fiendish heat—God be praised, the abyss at last—who cares for the falls—what does it—"

Clasped in each other's arms, the two men went out with the *Caroline* into the caldron of the falling waters. The ill-fated vessel—in flame from stem to stern—poised only for a moment. Then she plunged from the light of day into the

blackness of night.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

THE EAGLE'S EYRIE AT FINGAL'S NOTCH.

The Eagle's Eyrie at Fingal's Notch was Commodore MacAlpine's fortress; and in its "Gunnery," so dear to the lost Donald and himself, he often brooded in bitterness over his death, and planned for revenge. Donald, his first-born, had been the apple of his eye—a man after his own heart, daring, determined, true to the instincts of his clan—ready, when the time came, for the father's buckled tartan to fall upon his shoulders.

Much as he loved Marie, he knew that, in heart, she was a Stuart more than a MacAlpine; while, in bitterness of soul, he believed the same of Charlie.

Deep as was Marie's grief, she devoted herself to her father and tenderly soothed him, pouring on his troubled soul all the wealth of her affection. But only outwardly was he calm. In his heart the old furnace still raged at a white heat, calling irresistibly for vengeance upon the power that had robbed him of his son.

Months passed away. Then the spring opened, and the rivers and lakes being cleared of ice-floes, MacAlpine's barges, well manned and well armed, rowed as of old among the islands, still maintaining their supremacy. The ebb and flow of the revolt had produced many reverses during the winter. MacKenzie at last had become a veritable exile. But MacAlpine's thoughts were upon himself and his clan, and whatever the future might be, the fiat of the present chieftain, hidden though it was in his own bosom, must be carried out before the day of that future dawned.

It was evening and he stood on the road watching the long sweep of the oarsmen as they rowed their barge in. A tree hid him from view and he could hear their talk without being seen.

"It'll be a tough nut to crack," said one of the men. The voice was low, but could be heard distinctly over the still water, for the skilled boatmen scarcely made a sound with their oars. "The 'hunters' are whipped everywhere but in the islands, and they swear they'll cage 'em here."

"But they won't."

"Nor they can't."

"Not while MacAlpine's king."

"Oh, if we only had Donald!"

"Donald's father's jist as guid," chimed in an old veteran.

"Aye, that he is, but the lad was a good yun."

A spasm crossed the father's face. He closed his teeth tightly and stepped out into the open.

"Well, what news?" he asked.

"There are three of 'em, sir," replied Jack the boatswain; "the *Transit*, the *Bulldog*, and the *George*. They are all bearing down upon us."

"What makes you so sure?"

"We laid low and got what we wanted."

"You must tell me about it while the men put in the boat."

"It was this way. You know we've been away for two days. Well, last night while up at Swansea Island, Aleck and me got hold of an old boat and went fishing. We'd kep' our eyes open and knew that the *Bulldog's* men were at it too. In our old smocks they took us for fishers sure enough. Then we sailed right in amongst the bunch and showed the fellows not

only how to fish but where to catch 'em. It didn't take long to size 'em up, so we picked out a couple of fellows easy to pump, and being in a fishing smack by themselves, we led 'em to where the fish lay in shoals. It was out behind an island that the other fellows could not see. Then we took out our big flask and drank their health. Of course they wanted some, and we filled 'em full enough to make 'em jabber. So they let out and told the 'hull story. Of course we were on their side and ready to help—promised to scare up a 'hull barge of volunteers. An' they tuk it all as if they were suckin' eggs."

"And what did you learn?"

"That the *Bulldog*, the biggest ship, is under orders to attack Fingal's Notch to-night, after moon goes down; while the other two are reserved until morning for the eastern camps."

"The attack to be made then after midnight?"

"Yes, sir."

"But they'll run on the rocks before they get here. The passage is too narrow and winding for a big ship unless the pilot knows the road well."

"The deuce of it is, he's got your old pilot, Matheson, and he knows every twist and sand-bank among the islands."

"What! that infernal scamp, who stole my little *Albatross*, and sailed down to the sea with her?"

"Yes, he sold her in Maine afterwards, and the fellows were making game at your expense over it."

"It's bad news you've brought," returned MacAlpine, grimly. "That fiend Matheson knows the road well, but we'll match him. After the moon sets it will be dark to-night, so we must lay our plans and be ready. Come to me at once after supper; and notify all the men to have their barges ready and fully armed by 10 o'clock."

"I will, sir."

"What is it, father? Are you troubled to-night?" said Marie, as with gloomier face than usual he joined her.

"I was thinking of you, my girl. We are in for a fight, and your safety concerns me just now as much as anything."

"Nobody could take this place, father."

"But they might. The *Bulldog*, the biggest gunboat on the lakes, intends to bear down upon us before morning, if they get the chance, and pound us to pieces with their cannon."

"The *Bulldog*!" exclaimed Marie, in amazement, a sudden pallor spreading over her face. "Why that's——"

"The flagship of her Majesty's fleet on the lakes," he interrupted.

"Yes," said Marie blankly, "what will you do?"

"That's easily answered," returned her father. "I shall leave the 'Eyrie' in Charlie's care, well manned; and go out myself to deal with the enemy. We will see that he never gets here."

"And how will you do it, father?" she asked, anxiously, with both hands locked on his arm as they entered the house.

"That remains to be seen, child. Everything is fair in love and war."

"Is it?" she asked, in sudden earnestness.

"Yes," he replied passionately, "*everything*" his mind centered only upon the second article of his faith.

"Does Charlie know?" was her next question.

"Not yet, but here he is."

And to him in plain and graphic words the plan of the defence of the "Eyrie" was explained.

"Of course," continued MacAlpine, with meaning emphasis in every word, "the *Bulldog* will never get near enough to

fire a shot at Fingal's Notch; but if the heavens fall, which they never did and never will, you will know how to defend our home. And even if that should be destroyed, you both know the hidden spring and the secret passage by which both Marie and you can effect a safe retreat and escape from their clutches."

"Don't talk of such a thing, father," said Marie, her eyes entreatingly meeting his. "It looks like disaster to speak of it."

"Not at all, child, but it behooves us to be on our guard."

"Aye, father, you are right," echoed Charlie, stoutly, "and I warrant you the MacAlpines will shed the last drop of their blood before they will suffer an enemy to set foot upon this island."

"Well said, my son. But there need be no bloodshed here. The fate of the *Bulldog* is already sealed."

A little later Marie went to her room, to be alone with her thoughts. Her father had gone to complete arrangements with his men for the night expedition; and to give Charlie final instructions upon the defence of the "Eagle's Eyrie," should an attack during his absence be made upon the island. The door of her little old cuckoo clock, which once belonged to Prince Charlie, opened as she entered; and the bird sprang out as blithely as ever and carolled forth the hour of nine; his note as true and his plumage as gay as it ever was in the days of his youth. Above the clock hung her mother's portrait. Involuntarily Marie glanced from one to the other. Then long and earnestly she looked into her mother's face. "We are all Stuarts here, mother," she whispered at last. "This old clock and my plaidie and the Stuart arms upon my bed, and that bit of tapestry with its motto, and even my gauntlets, which Queen Mary owned and wore, and all the pictures, and you and I. But terrible to think even this night a Stuart and my father may fight each other to the death—as if Donald's blood was not enough."

For a moment she wrung her hands. Then she dashed away the tears and went to the open window. The moon shed lambent rays through the trees, flecking the casement; while beyond, its sheen upon the lake and the deepening shadows which it threw upon the islands, gave an added beauty to the night. All was still save for the croaking of the frogs in the shallows, the occasional hoot of the nighthawk, and the twang of the whip-poor-will, as it sped from tree to tree.

"And this is the night they have chosen for tumult and battle," she moaned. "It must be the Admiral's fault. I'm sure it cannot be Mr. Stuart's. But isn't it terrible? I haven't seen him since October, but I'm sure Jessie told me in her letter, written in March, that she knew he was to be promoted to the *Bulldog*, as captain, before the spring opened. Where did I put that letter? Ah! here it is." She glanced over the first part of its contents and then read in a low voice:

"And oh, Marie, I have a bit of news to tell you about Lieutenant S. Of course, I haven't seen him since you did, but I heard it from a gentleman who was present at a conference held by Sir Francis, in which the Captain of the 'Transit' stated positively that Lieut. Stuart's promotion had been ordered, and that on the opening of the river, he would be made captain of the gunboat 'Bulldog,' the admiral of the lake boats being in supreme command. This, my friend said, was positive. There could be no mistake about it. So you will see him no more on the 'Transit.'"

"So it's true," she whispered to herself. "A whole month since the change, and yet he has never sent me a word. I have only had one brief message from him since Donald's death. Of course, we are on opposite sides; but is it possible that he should be in command of a ship ordered to raze the 'Eagle's Eyrie' to the ground and never give a word of warning? I cannot believe it. Yet my father, to revenge Donald's death, intends to do something terrible to-night,—what it is, I don't know. Oh, if I only did! Mr. Stuart saved my life; I would gladly do something to save him. The Stuarts' blood is thicker than water. He would not, I am positive, willingly hurt any one of us—not even father—yet father would slay every man on the ship if he could. What shall I do? How can I know what to do? But perhaps Charlie can help me."

Half an hour later she went out to watch her father depart with his convoy of men and boats. Then she joined Charlie in the "Gunnery." This was, as its name implied, veritably a warrior's armory, lit up by a huge oil lamp suspended from the ceiling, which reflected vividly the light from the polished metal of many rifles. Swords were there, and pistols and poniards and tomahawks. Unlike Marie's room, it contained no picture of the Stuarts; but in their place were many of the clan, dating back through long generations to the time when the King of Scotland knighted the first great MacAlpine for bravery on the battlefield of Flodden.

There were no couches of comfort in this room, but rude oak chairs and a square table, upon which were scattered sketches of the islands, dotted over with obscure markings, the meanings of which none but the initiated could decipher.

For a moment neither Charlie nor Marie spoke, while their eyes met in a seriously comprehensive look. They seemed to read each other's thoughts.

"Did you know that Captain Stuart is on the *Bulldog*?" she asked at last.

"I suspected it. I believe you told me," was his answer.

"What do you think of it?"

"I am amazed that he has given you no warning. Having saved your life, as your friend it would be monstrous to lay siege to your home without letting you know."

"He may have had neither time nor opportunity."

"Nonsense, Marie, when he is the captain."

"Nevertheless, I don't believe that a shot will be fired at the 'Eyrie' without first sending us word."

The woman's wit grasped the situation better than the boy's cold reasoning. Intuitively, she knew that it would be impossible for Clarence Stuart to do the ignoble thing, and her mind refused to pass judgment upon him.

"I don't believe a shot will, either," said Charlie, "not on account of his clemency, but of father's well-laid plans. He's been preparing for this. His men are well trained, and the *Bulldog* will never see Fingal's Notch, to say nothing of the 'Eagle's Eyrie'."

"What do you mean?" she asked, excitedly, clasping her hands.

"I mean that the ship will be destroyed in revenge for Donald's death, before it can possibly reach our harbor. So, although I am following father's directions, and the whole place will be in a state of defence with men well placed, we are actually in no real danger."

"And what of Captain Stuart?"

"That is his own lookout. If he comes here to fight he must be prepared for the result, whatever it is; and although a Stuart, he deserves no sympathy, if he is willing to fire his guns at the home of his kinsfolk without giving them timely warning."

Marie was at a loss. The reasoning seemed sound, and she had no means of proving that the accusation was unjust. She intended to consult with Charlie upon the possibility of sending in some way a word of warning to Captain Stuart, that he might not be taken unawares in the terrible battle that was pending. She sympathized with the thought of a man for a man, a ship for a ship, a life for a life. Still Stuart had nothing to do with the death of her brother, and as the saviour of her own life—if for no other reason—she would help him to save his own if she could. But how could she do it under the circumstances; and how could she prevail upon her brother to aid her, when the man she would warn was at this very moment proving himself to be a traitor to the principles of chivalry and honor which he professed to uphold? If he had only sent some word—the briefest despatch—the shortest definite warning—it would have been a comfort and a guidance as well.

At this moment the old nurse Janet, with a knock at the door, popped in her head.

"What is it?" Marie asked.

"A fisher lad rowed in with this," she answered. "He was in a hurry and said I must gie it t' ye wi'out waitin' a meenit, an' here it is."

Marie glanced at the writing. Her face successively flushed and turned pale.

"Where is the lad?" she asked.

"He wouldn't stay a second. Mister Thompson was standing with the men at the wharf when he come—an' he said it was all right, an' there was no need for waitin' when the lad didn't want to."

The woman closed the door and Marie opened the letter.

"It's from Captain Stuart," she said, her voice trembling with excitement.

"Read quickly, time is precious," responded Charlie.

She read aloud:

..."I am exceedingly distressed on your account—more than words can tell—for our Admiral has received orders from England to 'crush the MacAlpine jungle at once at any cost'; and the Admiral intends to obey the order to the letter. I have command under him of the 'Bulldog,' and have orders to take Fingal's Notch, making the 'Eagle's Eyrie' the centre of attack. Rest assured, though, whatever becomes of the outworks and the island, I shall do all I can to spare the Eyrie; and I promise you not a hair of your head shall be touched; and if they will keep within the bounds of your castle, your father and brother shall both be safe—or I'll willingly give my life as a forfeit. So help me God. To say more would make me a traitor. Ever devotedly,

Clarence Stuart."

CHAPTER II.

THE PIPING OF THE LOON.

"Does that make it any clearer?" Charlie asked, after she had finished reading.

"Yes, it does," was her answer. "It tells nothing of the route or the time of the attack, but it proves that Captain Stuart is an honorable man."

"As for route, there is only one open for so large a vessel; the one which father intends to block. The other point is in his favor, and for Stuart's sake I'm glad of it. But I don't see how it will affect us, except that he will fire his guns at our out-buildings instead of our house, if he once gets within range, which, of course, he never will. Father is not the man to fail in his undertakings. Whatever he aims at he hits. And whatever he decides to do, he does."

"Is he aware that Captain Stuart is on the *Bulldog*?"

"He is not. Only yesterday I heard him say that he was still on the *Transit*. But it wouldn't make any difference with father. It's the principle of the thing he's fighting for, the cowardly cutting loose and burning of the *Caroline*; and the sending of Donald over the falls in the burning ship, without any chance of escape. The fiendish cowardice of the thing must be revenged."

Marie shuddered.

"It was a dastardly thing," she said, "but Mr. Stuart had nothing to do with it."

"Still in the ethics of war, father is right," said Charlie. "The *Bulldog* and the other boats are under orders to crush him, to destroy or capture all he has and to take him prisoner, dead or alive—they don't care which. And father, like a sensible man, intends to beat them on their own ground, before they have a chance to carry their orders into execution."

"Oh, I know it, I know it! But you don't help me a bit. Where is Harry Thompson?"

"There's nothing to be done, Marie—nothing can be done. We must just wait events. If I can't suggest anything, I'm sure Thompson can't."

"How long has father been gone?"

"Just ten minutes since the boats left the wharf."

"Well, I'm hot and restless. I must go into the fresh air. I cannot stand this any longer."

"So must I, for I have yet to plant a cannon on the lower wharf. It will take an hour to fix it."

Charlie rushed out, leaving Marie to her own thoughts. But her thoughts, though active, were brief. She met Harry Thompson at the door. Always devoted, he was ever ready to do her bidding. Although attached to the family and often with them, owing to his devotion to Marie, he had his own business to attend to, and followed his own independent life.

"Harry," she whispered, "I want to see you; come into the Gunnery, please."

She had never given direct encouragement to his suit; and although he suspected that her request had something to do with the departure of the fleet of boats on the warpath, he was at a loss as to the real object she had in view. Still it made his pulses beat faster to do anything for Marie, and he gladly followed her.

"I have not a minute to lose," she commenced, turning quickly towards him as she closed the door. "You remember when you helped to save my life. Now you can help to save another life. Will you do it?"

"Really, Marie—you take my breath away—certainly—I would be glad to; but surely you must tell me the circumstances."

"There is not time, only this: Captain Stuart's life is in danger from my father. When we met last fall we mutually promised that at any time, if the life of one of us was in serious risk and the other knew it, a warning should at once be

given. I am strong and know the islands and lake well, and might do it alone, night though it is, but I could do it better if you would aid me."

Harry's heart sank within him—it was to save the life of his supposed rival.

"Would not Charlie help you?" he asked, hoarsely.

"He could not if he would. He must obey father's orders and remain in command here. Will you come? There is not a minute to lose."

"Tell me exactly what you want."

"Well, with my long, narrow skiff, and in my sailor suit, with two pairs of oars, we can take the straight road through the shallows for Hickory Island. Father with his heavier boats has taken the longer route. He will have a half-hour's start of us; still I think we can make it and beat him. The rest of the plan I will tell you as we go."

"Really, Marie, this will be unsafe as well as unwise."

"I am willing to risk both. The point is, will you help me?"

"If I say, conscientiously, that I neither can nor will?"

"My reply will be that you are the only man that I have asked, and that I shall ask no other; that you have wilfully thrown over your shoulder the opportunity of being my cavalier; and that in five minutes I shall launch the *Fairy Queen* and row alone with all the strength I possess for Hickory Island."

"What of the danger and the responsibility?"

"Let them be on my own head, whatever they are."

"You are a wilful minx, Marie; but you shall not go alone. In five minutes I shall have your *Fairy Queen* ready. Meet me at your own boat-house."

Harry hastened away, while Marie slipped into her room to change her attire. She turned down the lights to avoid notice and joined Harry before anyone knew what had happened. Noiselessly the boat was slid into the water, and without a word the two took their seats. Harry felt like a criminal who deserved to be shot, while Marie was so excited over getting away before her absence could be discovered, that she failed to realize the ingenuous responsibility of the step she was taking.

For some minutes they rowed on in silence with a long and even pull. Marie was maturing her plans, as they shot past island after island. Harry was nonplussed. This was a new phase of Marie's character, utterly distinct from any former experience he had had of her. Although he knew that she frequently donned her jaunty sailor's suit while out canoeing, yet she always went alone. To be deliberately asked to accompany her in the same garb for a long and dangerous night trip, without even the knowledge of any of her people, was an entirely different matter; and on such an expedition, under existing conditions, was inexplicable.

Still he would risk anything and do anything for Marie. She was always a conundrum. What her next move would be no one could ever tell. Yet she was so true and winsome, and brave and daring, that he was filled with perpetual infatuation, no matter what she did. The ultimate result he never feared.

"We will take the north side of Hickory," said Marie, at length, never for a moment slackening her long, steady stroke.

"And wait at the west end for the arrival of the *Bulldog*. Father, I think, will stop at the east end and hide his boats behind it and Conway until the *Bulldog* arrives, when his attack will commence."

"And you want to meet the *Bulldog* first?" said Harry.

"Yes."

"What is your plan?"

"To row to the side of the *Bulldog*, call out the Captain, see him on deck for a minute, and at once return to you in the

boat."

"Call out the Captain? How can you? He knows nothing of your coming, and even in daytime could scarcely recognize you in your present garb."

"I don't think it will be difficult, but we shall see. Let us take a little quicker stroke. I am braced up to it now."

She had the steady athletic swing of a man. The regular rhythm had quieted her nerves, her heart had ceased to palpitate. She knew every foot of the journey, even better than Harry Thompson did; and during the long pull without a break he marvelled at her endurance.

"Are you not tired?" he asked at last; "you will need reserve power when the row is finished."

"Not in the least," was her answer; "I could keep it up as long again if needful; I'll rally quickly when we reach our end of the island. In the meantime we must not slacken for a moment, the rest will come later."

"What if your father meets the *Bulldog* first?"

"Then my mission will be useless. But he won't. I know the comparative distances and the speed of the boats too well to be deceived. The *Fairy Queen* is the fastest skiff on the lake. Father's barges can't touch it and our route is nearly a mile the shorter."

There was silence for some minutes as they made out into the open. The moon was sinking below the horizon, giving them the last clear vision over the lake, as they reached the east end of Hickory. Almost involuntarily they both glanced backwards over the course by which the barges must come.

"Yonder they are," muttered Harry, "away beyond the jutting point of Conway."

"Yes, I see, half a mile due east," she responded; "there is time enough yet. We have the straight back of Hickory; they the curved front."

And without further words they bent all their energies again upon their oars.

As they rounded the west end of the island the *Bulldog* hove in sight, not a quarter of a mile away, coming directly toward them on half steam.

"We must intercept his course and aim at the bowsprit," ejaculated Marie.

"And get caught in the swirl and go to the bottom," concurred Harry.

"No, we won't. They'll stop for us."

"How can they, on a night like this, and without signal?"

As he was speaking the weird cry of a loon close at hand was heard.

Harry started. "That infernal bird," he muttered, "where is he? It's an omen of evil when he sings in that way."

"You are superstitious," was Marie's response.

"Not at all," he returned, "but I don't see it."

Again the shrill cry filled the air with its ominous twang.

"It must be a wraith from the spirit land," said Marie. "I don't see any loon either."

Once more the long note went aloft, concluding this time with an upward inflection.

"Talk about goblins!" exclaimed Harry, "the devil himself couldn't beat this."

"Yes, he could," was her response; "see, the ship is slowing."

In another minute they were alongside.

"Who goes there?" cried the mate.

"A lad with a message," came back in boyish tones from below. "Throw him a line, please."

"Bring the ladder," was Captain Stuart's order as he peered down through the darkness at the boat.

"The rope will do," responded Marie as, hand over hand, she mounted the side of the ship.

"Captain Stuart," she exclaimed, on jumping over the railing to the deck, "can I have a word with you? I have a message."

"Certainly, step this way," and the cabin door closed upon them.

"What, Marie Stuart!" he exclaimed in bewildered excitement. "You here. What can it mean?"

"I scarcely know, myself." Her laugh was half hysterical.

"You got my letter? Did it lead to this?"

"Yes, and I answer it in person. It was the only way. The messenger could not wait."

"But what answer could call for so terrible a risk?"

"Simply that your life is in danger. I do not care for your men. In ten minutes my father will attack your ship and will capture it. You will never reach Fingal's Notch with the *Bulldog*, for the MacAlpines are never beaten in battle. He knew you were coming, and is prepared to meet you. But I wanted to give you warning; you saved my life, let me help to save yours."

"This is strange language, Marie. I don't know what it means. But come what will, I shall be the last man to leave my ship. I thank you—and the loon—for this warning; and if ten minutes is all that I have for preparation, I must leave you for more urgent duty. You will stay here on the ship, it will be safer."

"No, I must go at once; Harry Thompson awaits me on the boat."

"Harry Thompson!"

"Yes, Harry Thompson, the bravest of friends, came with me."

"And the bravest lass that ever lived has done me a service that I can never repay. In the meantime what do you intend to do?"

"To drop in your rear until the battle is over. Charlie has command of the 'Eyrie'."

"And if the worst comes to the worst?"

"The loon will pipe again."

"Good-bye—God bless you. Mate, have you the ladder ready? This young man wants to return to his boat."

But the "young man" preferred the line, and slid down to the *Fairy Queen*, where Harry sat patiently waiting.

"What direction now?" he asked.

"Back to Hickory again; there is a ledge yonder on which we can land. We must await events."

CHAPTER III.

THE ATTACK UPON THE BULLDOG.

MacAlpine's men were strong, brave fellows, ready at any cost to follow the mandate of their "King." He had always led them to victory, whether as brigands, dodging in and out among the islands, capturing whatever they wanted, and going where they listed; fighting single-handed with venturesome opponents; or marshalled either on land or lake against organized bodies of men. The result had always been the same, until on both sides of the St. Lawrence, MacAlpine's clan had become a terror and a menace to all living folk.

It was upon this unswerving allegiance of his followers that MacAlpine counted. For weeks he had been preparing for this night, and for days he had been eagerly waiting for its arrival. He knew that a climax was inexorably coming. The rebels were being defeated on every hand, and the schemes of their shrewdest men were successively foiled; while Government reinforcements were continually arriving both by land and lake. It was by his own independence of action that he had maintained supremacy over the islands; but now when the forces of the ruling faction were to be directed simultaneously against himself and his cohorts, he realized that he too in time might have to yield. He was determined, however, that this should not occur until after the fierce blow, which he had so long cherished, had been struck.

Having given specific orders to his men, MacAlpine, with his boatswain, led the way in his many oared barge.

"Are the coils all in order?" he asked.

"Yes," was the answer. "They are loaded and boxed, four in this boat and four in Tim's."

"We'll use these first and keep Tim's in reserve. What of the port-holes?"

"The *Bulldog* has four in the stern. They are right above the powder barrels. Don't know but they were intended for guns."

"Are you sure about the powder?"

"I pumped the fishermen, and they swore to it."

"And the port-holes, how high are they?"

"Fully ten feet."

"That's pretty high; but we can reach 'em. And the men?"

"Both gangs are drilled, Tim's as well as yours."

When they reached Hickory Island, the *Bulldog* was not in sight, so the order was given to divide, four of the barges holding themselves in readiness, hidden by the lee of Conway on one side; other four by the foot of Hickory on the other; while MacAlpine and Tim rushed their own boats up the channel to a sheltered inlet higher up.

By this time the moon had set, and clouds covering the sky, it became intensely dark. But the swash of the approaching *Bulldog* was soon heard as it steered down the channel between the islands.

"She's mighty slow in her movements," whispered MacAlpine to the boatswain, "but it will give us a better chance."

Still not a blade moved, nor a sound issued from the men, until her stern was opposite the commodore's inlet. Then the forward barges made a dash for the *Bulldog*, and with pistols and cutlasses the men tore up the sides to the deck. They had planned the attack well, for the front half of the ship was surrounded almost before the men of the *Bulldog* knew it.

Captain Stuart, taking advantage of his warning, had diminished the speed and was preparing for the attack. Still the wild yell of the MacAlpines came sooner than he expected. As the Highlanders rushed up the sides of the ship like cats, and poured upon the deck to be met in hand-to-hand combat with Stuart's men, the latter regarded it as probably a bold manoeuvre to cover up a more deeply laid scheme; and seeing the necessity of instant action, he called out to the second officer:

"Go below and man every port-hole. They need to be watched."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"What's this?" demanded the Admiral, who stood at Stuart's elbow.

"MacAlpine himself is not here. Possibly he's trying to blow up the ship," replied Stuart.

"In that case, I'll take command of the men. Better see to it yourself."

Stuart disappeared down the gangway.

Meanwhile the men of the *Bulldog* continued to rush on deck, completely outnumbering the boarders. The MacAlpines fought for the honor of their clan and the sovereignty of the islands; while the mariners, armed to the teeth, were determined to redeem themselves from the disgrace of their ship being boarded by a horde of rebels.

For a while cutlasses clashed, pistols fired, and men were run through, while the wounded and the dying lay stretched upon a deck illuminated by the flashings of light from the guns. Gradually, notwithstanding all their bravery, the MacAlpines were driven back over the fallen bodies of friends and foes to the sides of the ship. Some of them tumbled into their boats again, others splashed into the water and swam for the nearest island; while a few doggedly held their ground determined to die where they stood rather than suffer defeat.

The assailants were disappointed. The unexpected was happening. They were the defeated, not the conquerors. The *Bulldog* was still floating, not by any means a wreck. Only one explosion was heard, and that outside as well as inside the stern of the ship. Truly they were being driven to the wall. Even MacAlpine himself, who had always done valiant things, and had brought them out in the dead of night to again conquer their enemies, had not even been seen.

But MacAlpine had not been idle. The savage diversion that he had planned had succeeded, so far as he knew. The yells of his men, the flashing of powder, the discharge of guns, placed the centre of the conflict where he wanted it; and under cover of the attack his own barge glided noiselessly out of obscurity, beneath the stern of the ship. Issuing his orders in whispers, two men grasped the iron girders looped beneath the nearest port-hole to steady the boat; while two others stood erect with a comrade on their shoulders.

"It's all right, sir," whispered the latter, "the hole's clear."

"Then slide it in. Do it gently." And he handed him a canvas bag containing explosives, to which was attached a long cord.

"It's in four feet, it touches."

"That will do. Let the cord dangle. Quick now."

In another minute they were down again, apparently unobserved and at the next hole. But this was locked. The little window would not open.

"Use your diamond. Nip it out," said MacAlpine.

The glass was cut, and though it fell the clash of battle drowned the noise. And again a bag was dropped.

"We'll do one more."

But they had waited too long. The dim light through the port-holes was seen to increase. Possibly the plot had been discovered.

"Light each fuse, quick!" ordered MacAlpine; and from a dark lantern a torch was ignited and applied.

There was a fizz and a flash. One of the fuses ran inside the port-hole, the other dropped back into the boat again with the bag. Then there came a terrific explosion—possibly a double one. MacAlpine's boat was capsized; he and his men thrown into the lake; while flames shot up from the stern of the ship as the deck flew upwards.

"Quick, turn them on," cried Stuart, and a score of men, armed with hose, poured streams of water either into the burning

vessel within the hold or else on barrels of powder, already rolled back from the centre of danger. Masses of flame and smoke shot up through the broken deck; and for some minutes it seemed as if the ship was doomed.

But the battle being practically over, other men joined the fire fighters, and it was not long before the flames were extinguished and the ship saved.

All danger from fire gone, Stuart hurried on deck and back to the stern of the vessel. From the first he had surmised the cause of the disaster; and was desirous to investigate the spot where damage was first done. But the demolished deck, the charred timbers, the huge black hole in the ship, were all that remained. MacAlpine and his barges were gone. Not a man of his could be seen. Even the wreck had been dragged out of sight.

"So this was the scheme," he muttered to himself. "And to think that Marie saved us! But for her warning I should never have moved the powder, nor watched the port-holes; and with that big fight to the front, scarcely a man of us could have been saved. But where is MacAlpine? That explosion was outside the ship as well as in. Can he be lost? And the brave girl, who risked so much to save a single life, where is she?"

CHAPTER IV.

MARIE'S NIGHT ON THE WATER.

Marie did not have many minutes to wait. Even in the darkness the *Bulldog* had scarcely disappeared from view when she saw the flash from the powder, accompanied by the report from the guns and the wild yell of the men.

Again her heart throbbed wildly. The conflict which she dreaded, and upon which so much depended, had already begun. The MacAlpines must have accomplished their object, the invasion of the deck and a footing actually obtained upon it, or they would never have sounded their yell. The war-cry is for the attacking force, not for the defenders.

"That's a grand assault," muttered Harry. "The MacAlpines are getting their innings from the start."

"I knew they would," said Marie, with curious emphasis. "Father never fails. But where is he? Did he mount the deck with his men?"

"That would not be his plan. His object was the destruction of the ship more than the defeat of his enemies. This attack is only a ruse to blind their eyes to his real purpose."

"That is what I feared," said Marie, despondently. "It will be all the harder for Captain Stuart."

Seated upon the rocky shelf, with her hands clasped round her knees, a shiver ran through her frame.

For a while flash followed flash and peal followed peal, mingled with the yells of many voices.

"This is terrible!" she exclaimed at last. "All the fiends seem to be let loose on the *Bulldog*. Oh! when will it end?"

"Not until its doom is sealed," replied Harry. "Ah, it is coming now! Hear that explosion."

"Oh, horrible, horrible!" cried Marie. Bounding to her feet, she pressed her hands over her ears and turned her back upon the scene, her whole body convulsed with emotion.

But the explosion was not repeated. For a time the heavens were ablaze with light; then, instead of concussion after concussion and flash after flash, the light grew dimmer, and by-and-by the flames died out.

Prepared as she was for the worst, Marie was astounded to see the demolition come to an end. What could have happened? Was the battle over? Could it be possible that her warning had changed the result of the conflict, and given the victory to Stuart instead of her father? This was not what she contemplated at all; although she wished to save Stuart's life, she certainly expected her father to win the battle and scuttle the ship.

But the *Bulldog* was still floating. The fire had been put out, and the ship was free. What could it mean? Gradually the whole tenor of her anxiety changed. Instead of Stuart's life being in danger, might it not be that of her father? And the more Marie thought it possible, the keener became her anxiety. For the first time in her life she experienced the primitive feeling of remorse. Was her father safe from harm? Was he injured by the explosion? Could he possibly be a prisoner? Some catastrophe must have befallen him, as well as his people. Otherwise everything would not be still like death, and the ship, although injured by the fire, serenely sailing away in the distance. How much, yes, how much, of the unexpected could righteously be laid at her door? Could anything have happened to her father—how terrible the thought! Was she to blame for endeavoring to save Stuart's life? Not even that—merely warning him to be on guard. Her father, always victorious, how reasonable to expect him to be so again!

The impenetrable blackness of the night helped to deepen her gloom, and unable to analyze her own thoughts, she felt as if her heart would break.

Harry, too, was appalled at the situation. The depression of Marie's spirits touched him keenly; and much as he had censured himself for yielding to her request, he blamed himself ten-fold now. Why had he not informed Charlie of her intention, and at once cancelled the pitiable scheme?

Suddenly Marie roused herself. "We must do something," she cried. "It is terrible to sit here and listen and not hear a sound."

"What can we do, without a light anywhere? Even the *Bulldog* is out of sight."

"We know the direction and must hunt for father."

"We might try; all the boats can't be gone."

They rowed cautiously down between Hickory and Conway, to the site of the battle. By the dim light from the cloudy sky the islands were faintly discernible, but no boats could be seen. Then Harry's oar caught on something.

"What is that?" he muttered.

"A barge run aground," whispered Marie. "Row in closer."

So they slid their boat up the side of the wreck, one end of which was lodged on the sloping bank of the island.

Marie stretched out and felt the near end with her hand. A startled cry escaped her. "It is father's barge!" she exclaimed. "The one he always uses. I know it by the brass rod at the stern. Cry out, Harry, there must be some one near. This is terrible."

The call was answered very near to them.

"Is that you, Thompson—and Miss Marie with you? How in God's name did you get here?"

It was the boatswain's voice.

"Heaven be praised! There is someone alive," whispered Marie, her voice tense with the reaction. "Where is father?"

"He's gone, miss. He went back in Tim's barge with the rest of the men—his own being stove in with the explosion."

"Was he hurt?" Marie asked in a transport of relief that he was still alive.

"Just shook a bit and his whiskers burned. But Tom Sheldon must 'a' been killed outright—the bag exploded as it dropped in his lap, and after the craft keeled, he was clean gone."

"And are you hurt?"

"Only a pickle—got my leg smashed in the pitch—another of the fellows whizzed past—haven't seen him since. Guess he's whizzin' still."

Marie left the boat and crept up the bank to the boatswain's side. He was lying in an open space among the bushes with his head on a folded coat and a piece of sail-cloth thrown over his leg.

"Why did they leave you here?" she asked.

"'Cause they couldn't help themselves; they had to. I'm easier like than I would 'a' been in a boat jammed with men. They'll come back, too, after daylight. Then they can do it better. Not only that, but being as they didn't smash the *Bulldog* as they expected, the able-bodied fellows, all that was left of 'em after the skirmish—they say it was a terrible one—had got to go back to the Notch to defend it."

"I must make you more comfortable," said Marie, and she took a scarf from her shoulders and gently wrapped it round the injured leg, "till the men come back for you."

"Were there many wounded?" Harry asked.

"There were some I know of, and them they took; but there was more kilt, I reckon. I bet there's some of the fellows in the woods yet."

The clouds were breaking and stars were shining through the rifts, making the night clearer.

"It is lighter now," said Marie. "Hadn't we better go back?"

"Yes," said Harry, emphatically.

"Straight home," said Marie.

"Round by the back wharf?"

"It would be better."

She didn't say why, but he knew the reason. It was his own wish as well as hers. As they rowed on, each silently thinking, he tried to analyze the situation. Where did Marie stand? MacAlpine's men would have boarded the *Bulldog* under any circumstances, and the fight would have followed. With that she had nothing to do, no matter which side secured the advantage. But the explosion? Was it modified by her actions? He believed it was. And over it hung a darker shadow, that of the coming day. She had saved the ship of the enemy and its men; but MacAlpine would have to answer for it with fewer followers and diminished strength. Yes, she had accomplished her object. She came out to save a life—but what would be the price? Might it not be the conquest of Fingal's Notch; the scattering of the clan, the destruction of the Eyrie? Yet could she be blamed for yielding to the impulse of intuition? Should not the censure be on his own shoulders for allowing stern reason to be over-ruled? And then, further still in the future, might not the end be the same in either case—cold philosophy—without a modicum of comfort?

Then he asked himself, what was the nature of her interest in Stuart? She scarcely treated him like a lover. If she had the grand passion she certainly held it in restraint. Yet simple gratitude for a saved life could not call for a devotion like hers. She was an enigma to him, distinct from all womenkind that he had ever known, yet an enigma that he worshipped.

They reached the island as the first streak of dawn appeared, and coming in by the back wharf at the opposite side to the Eyrie, the arrival of the boat was unobserved.

"I shall never forget your kindness," said Marie in a low tone, as they stopped for a moment under cover of the bushes. Her voice trembled. Her thoughts had been too deep for words. "And this night no one could ever forget. Wise or unwise, the result has been terrible."

"The result has yet to be faced," said Harry, gloomily.

"I know it, I know it."

"You must meet it bravely."

"God helping me, I shall do my best," and they parted.

CHAPTER V.

MADGE AGAIN.

"The witch knows more'n you think she does," said old Andrew to one of his comrades at the wharf the next day. They were discussing the recent battle and the condition of the wounded who had been placed in adjoining cottages, when Madge appeared. "She's not so daft but what she can cross the lake when she wants."

"And by an enemy's boat, too."

"Guess they're all alike to the puir body."

"Perhaps so, but I've heard Miss Marie say that Madge would give her ears to do MacKenzie a service."

"People used to call her 'The daft rhymer'," put in another old man, "forever chanting MacKenzie's praises; but she had good reason, for in letting her out of that dungeon he saved her life."

"Funny for her to turn up the very day after the battle with the *Bulldog*; MacKenzie had nothing to do with that."

"She might have a message from him, though."

"Here she comes, singing as usual, but what a cracked tin pan!"

"It's one better, it's a pewter pot."

"It's neither one nor t'other; but a chiney mug with a split in it. I tell ye, lads, that woman had a fine voice once. Yes sir, it was a good yun before she wilted at the top. Guess she's hunting Miss Marie."

"Miss Marie is in the shanties with the men," said old Andrew. "Our lady couldn't be found anywhere last night; but she was down among the fellows dressing their wounds by daylight."

For a gallant handsome blade,
And a winsome merry maid,
Would make a happy couple, one would say;
And when they are apart,
Each with a loving heart
Is waiting for the other all the day.

Yet if they are together,
The furies and the weather
Will not let them even have a lark;
So joy is turned to grief,
From which there's no relief,
Till Stuart meets his maiden in the dark.

"What the mischief does she mean?" said old Andrew, in a suppressed tone. "They say she always means something, but there's no maid on the island would fit that rhyme."

"Who said there was?" cried Madge, whose quick ear caught his words. "It takes an imp to catch a shadow."

"What's your business, Madge?"

"I'll tell you in a riddle."

Then the men gathered round her.

"If two horses run two races, and each one wins and each one loses, which is the best nag?"

"The one that can nag the longest."

"The one that's got the best wind for a third race."

"The one that has the most dust behind it."

"What kind of dust?"

"Gold dust, of course."

"You have it. But I want Miss Marie."

And swinging round she caught sight of the open door of the Eyrie, and ambled off with the words of another refrain:

Like a golden wren from a Highland glen
To her island home came she;
And the flowers where they stood,
And the birds in the wood,
In their homage made her free.

Till a dark unrest swept over the west,
Chilling the flowers in their birth;
Then the birds ceased to sing,
For the cypress did fling
Its mantle to ravish the earth.

But truth is the Lord's. His are the swords,
And liberty's echo is stirred;
And the day yet shall come
When the wren shall fly home,
For the prayer of her loved one is heard.

A lusty woman was sweeping the entrance of the MacAlpine castle when Madge presented herself.

"Goodness sakes! where did ye cam frae?" she asked in a high pitched tone, while she held her broom in a threatening attitude.

"From the de'il's own caldron at the bottom of the lake," replied Madge, stoutly.

"I was thinkin' as much, and the quicker ye gang back again, the better for yer shins."

And suiting the action to the word, she commenced to swing her broom in dangerous proximity to Madge's legs.

"Stop your clatter!" returned Madge, indignantly. "It's your mistress, Miss Marie Stuart, I want to see, not you. Be good enough to tell her that Mad Madge wants to see her."

"An' ye think she's deein' to see a crazy woman, do ye?"

"Yes, she'll be willing when you tell her who I am."

"She's gone to the cabins, and mayn't be back for an 'oor—Ah! but I see her comin'!"

"Why, Madge! This is a surprise. How could you possibly get here?" exclaimed Marie.

"You may well ask it. But it wasn't hard. Sailors are always good to Madge. So they gave me room on the *Target* all the way from Sackett's Harbor to Blizzard Rock. Then they put me ashore and a man paddled me over. I sing 'em songs, ye ken, and they just laugh at the daft body, believing that she don't know anything.

They think the auld wench has a split in her heed
And that her brains have sprouted and gone to seed."

Marie shook her head deprecatingly.

"But you have some good reason for being here, Madge. Come to my room and tell me."

As the door closed upon them Madge's face for the first time assumed a serious expression.

"You guessed rightly, Miss," she said, in an unusually low tone; "I have a letter from Mr. MacKenzie for the Commodore. When he gave it me, to make sure, I crumpled it soft and stitched it in my petticoat. He said if your father wasn't here you must read it."

Then she turned away, took a little pair of scissors out of her pocket, and ripped it out.

There was fierce pain in Marie's face as she silently glanced over the letter. She knew that her father was fighting desperately. Although one-third of his men were either killed or wounded in his fight with the *Bulldog*, yet he had that morning gone off again with three barges to intercept any intended attack upon the islands, knowing that other armed vessels were ready to follow in its wake. MacKenzie advised no surrender, although he acknowledged that the Hunters' Lodges were everywhere defeated, and that the battle of Prescott and the Windmill had been lost. Her father would fight to the last ditch, she knew, however hopeless the cause; and being backed by his old compatriot, he might make a yet more determined effort.

Still the brigand "King of the Islands" had reason for the defiance that he threw out to his enemies. Until now he was the only one of the malcontent leaders who had not been defeated; and whether the partial destruction of the *Bulldog* could be considered a defeat or not, was still a question. Every island, every channel, almost every cave, was known to him; many of the latter being stored with arms and ammunition as well as the detailed provisions of war.

Marie knew all this, but her heart ached for her father and her brother and the cause, which she defended much more from a sense of duty than of choice. MacKenzie's letter was full of the old theme, a detailed statement of his views, a repetition of the many points for which the people had been fighting; and the strong hope that MacAlpine, the monarch of the islands, the terror of his enemies, would fight to the bitter end and force the tyrannical government either to surrender its power or grant to the people their rights.

The letter was full, too, of lofty ideals. There were great things to fight for; noble aspirations to plant in the heart of every mother's son in the land. But what cared MacAlpine for these?

Sadly Marie shook her head and her thoughts ran on at random.

"Things that never enter my father's head at all," she soliloquized. "What does he care for the legislature, or the representatives of the people, or the control of the funds, or the affairs of the church, or the government of the country, or anything else? It is simply the MacAlpine clan, the control of the islands, and himself as chief. He revels in the new country, in the fairy land of lakes and islands, and the tribute of all who enter within the confines of his domain. 'Tis not for the good of the people that MacAlpine would fight, but that they might be dependents upon his bounty. Then he would bestow his goods with lavish hands. But it must be MacAlpine now—MacAlpine forever. Oh, my dear father, good and staunch soul that you are, you were never brought into the world to become a saviour to your people or a deliverer from the wrongs of oppression!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE LONG WAIT.

MacAlpine with his son and men, after snatching a short sleep to atone for the terrible experiences of the night, had gone out in barges in the early day. Through the long hours that followed no word came from him. That his movements were uncertain every man in his service knew. His standing order, "Be ever on the alert," was usually sufficient. But the battle with the *Bulldog* gave a new note to their anxiety, and the weakness of the guard at the island, together with the care of the wounded, made the outlook more serious.

When night came and there was still no return, the faces of the few men who were left as a home-guard became graver than usual. Eyes peered out into the darkness. Every ear was alert. Every movement upon the waters was scanned.

Throughout the day the old doctor had been busy among his new patients, and he was very grateful to Marie for her proffered services. She was in and out among them all day long, providing bandages, preparing washes, and making suggestions to old Andrew and his wife, who had them in charge. Little did Doctor Grantham, physician to the clan ever since its settlement in the islands, imagine that Marie had been rowing on the lake the whole of the previous night. Now she was alert and anxious, willing to keep her fingers busy and her attention concentrated, rendering aid wherever needed; lest her brain, too restive for sleep, should run riot over forbidden ground.

At last, in the dusk of evening, worn out both in body and mind, she lay down and tried to sleep. But the old reasoning came back again; the two sides of the question: the right and the wrong of it; the good and the evil of it. There was a gleam of satisfaction in the thought that fewer lives had been lost, and possibly Stuart's life saved, by her own wifful deed; but there was none in the thought that her father's forces had been weakened and his future imperilled from the same cause. The two sides would not balance each other. Remorse was playing havoc again. An hour passed away, but she could not sleep. By-and-by she rose, and filled with a presentiment of coming evil, and breathing a prayer for the safe return of her father, she went out into the freer air. The moon was casting flickering shadows among the trees, and by its light she distinguished the figure of a man seated on the terrace with his face buried in his hands. Her light footsteps failed to rouse him. For a moment she stood still, undecided whether to advance or retreat, for she recognized that it was Harry Thompson. Distressing though they were, she would rather have been alone with her thoughts then, than to converse even with Harry. But the hesitation was only for the moment.

"Harry, you startled me," was her greeting, as she stepped forward. "Is there anything new? I did not expect you to-night."

"Neither did I expect myself," was his answer, as he rose to his feet. "But I had to come; my conscience would not let me stay away."

"It was a long row," said Marie, lowering her voice, "five miles to your island and five back again—after last night."

"Yes, I know, but I had a rest; I lay down for three hours."

"I hope you slept."

"I tried."

"So did I."

"Did you fail, too?"

"Of course I did."

"But why should you? We did what you thought best."

"Don't speak of it, please. It is horrid to have to do impossible things."

For a moment she clenched her hands as she looked out over the still waters of the lake. No one was in sight except here and there a boatman standing by the water's edge straining his eyes for a vision of the long-looked-for barges.

"I do wish they'd come," she went on; "Charlie wanted to stay by the Eyrie, but father thought it better to give him charge of a barge. He said everything would be safe until their return."

"You must give them reasonable time, Marie," was Harry's comment. "They have gone a long distance, no doubt, and the night is young yet."

"He told me he would send a message before dark, and possibly might be back with his men by sun-down. But neither have come, and now it is after ten."

"I think the Commodore's object was to help the eastern camp," said Harry, "and if attacked to-day he might stay over to help to defend it."

"And what vessel would attack it?" Marie asked quickly. "Not the *Bulldog*?"

"Oh, no, I heard to-day that the *Bulldog* was disabled; that she had gone over to Sackett's Harbor for repairs, and wouldn't be out again for some days. It will be the *Transit* that will attack the camp."

"And Captain Stuart?"

"He'll remain with the *Bulldog*," said Harry.

"Do you think he would have attacked Fingal's Notch, but for last night?" she asked in a low, tense tone.

"He would have had to; it was the Admiral's orders; and as I understood, the Admiral was on Stuart's boat."

"Are you sure the Admiral was?"

"Yes, if there's any truth in a dozen different reports. Why do you ask, Marie?"

"It's a horrible thought, if the *Bulldog* had been blown up—there might have been no Admiral—"

"And no Captain Stuart and no marines," interrupted Harry; "and what is more, no MacAlpine clan, except the Commodore, who was not on the boat, and Charlie and Miss Marie, and the few men who were left at Fingal's Notch."

Marie shuddered.

"But my father—his enemies destroyed—with the few remaining followers, would still be King of the islands."

"Would he," said Harry, "with other ships on the lake and the country conquered, and indignant enemies over the sea?"

"Oh, you don't think the cause hopeless, do you?"

"It is just as good now as it was before, Marie, whatever comes of it. It looked black as hell last night, when from that shelf of rock we watched it. But if the loon had not summoned the Captain of the *Bulldog* to a conference, his ship would have been a burning wreck and his men, as well as the MacAlpines, would have been doomed to a horrible death. I do not think that your father, in his mad rush for revenge, realized, as he might have done, that his victory would have sealed the fate of the men of his own clan. One more point, Marie; I have thought of this almost every moment since last night—Stuart saved your life, but he risked no other, scarcely even his own. You have saved not only his, but scores of others likewise, both his friends and his foes."

"Oh, Harry! don't, please don't," and she, too, buried her face in her hands.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BRINGING HOME OF CHARLIE.

"I'll bet you the 'top of the morning' against 'the ghost of a chance,' that the Commodore won't be back till daylight," muttered Pat White to Andrew.

"By the beard of Bruce, I'll take your offer, and Alick shall hold the stakes," was the grim response.

"Ye may well say that. Hand 'em over straight, and I'll hold 'em for ye."

"The 'Ghost' has it," said Andrew, a minute later. "Yonder they come."

"Begorrah, ye're right. In two hours more I'll hand you the 'Top' sure enough. But them's not three boats—man! them's only wan."

Intently they peered through the darkness at the incoming barge. Sure enough it was alone. The suspense was ominous. The men instinctively gathered themselves into a silent little group and waited. As the boat neared the shore a man threw out a rope to Alick. Still not a word came from the barge.

"Ecod," whispered Andrew, in an awed tone. "The Commodore's bowed down in the middle of the boat, and there's a man lying beside him. Sure, it can't be Charlie?"

Every hand was stretched out from the wharf; and they held the barge so gently that its grating was like that of a feather. Then MacAlpine led the way and four strong men stepped off with locked arms, carrying the limp body.

It was too true. Charlie was dead.

At the house Marie met them at the door. Premonitions of evil had possession of her for the entire night. She had not slept at all. Now with one arm thrown round a pillar of the porch for support—her limbs shaking beneath her—she waited the coming of the sad procession. Usually strong and collected, even in depressing moments, to walk down the pathway now seemed impossible. With a feeling of despair, she could only wait while every moment seemed to be an age.

The stern agony on her father's face, as the light of the candle fell upon it, suddenly loosed both her tongue and her limbs, and with a cry she threw her arms around his neck.

"Not now, girl, not now," he replied in rough tenderness, pushing her away; "I can't stand it. Is Charlie's bed ready?"

"It is always ready," was her answer, and with choking sobs she led the way.

"It's the last time he'll need it," muttered her father, his own frame shaking with irrepressible emotion.

The next day they buried Charlie's body in the grove at the back of the Eagle's Eyrie. It was dangerous to wait longer. The fleet was closing in around them; and as this was reinforced by the arrival of fresh troops, every delay would add to the danger of the few followers still left to MacAlpine. The battle on the *Bulldog* was only a prelude to further disaster, for two of the barges had been captured after a brief but severe contest. And it was at the risk of his own life that MacAlpine had recovered the dead body of his son.

Maddened by grief and rage, the Chief could scarcely control himself. The loss of his remaining son, so quickly following that of his beloved Donald, was more than he could bear, and he tramped unceasingly in and out of the Eyrie and over the island, through the long hours until the Dominie had consigned Charlie's remains to the tomb.

Distracted though she was by her own grief, Marie did her best to soothe her father. But dire vengeance was all he asked for. Foiled in his efforts, defeated as never before, robbed of the lives of his sons, it was for another sight of his foes that he raved; and upon them he wildly declared he would show no mercy.

To divert his mind, even though it might strengthen his resolve, Marie at last showed him MacKenzie's letter.

"There's no use reading that!" he exclaimed, savagely. "They have slain my sons. They have driven us at bay, till the curse of all the devils is upon the MacAlpines. They are hedging us in, crowding us closer on every side to crush out our life. But I will fight to the last gasp—by heaven, I will—and, Marie, you'll be the only one left."

"Don't talk that way, father. Do read the letter. Mr. MacKenzie was always your friend. I read part of it, but not all. And the messenger is still waiting to take back your answer."

If she could only divert his mind, even by anything. The wild look in his eyes frightened her.

"Well, I will try." Gradually his eye cleared and his look grew steadier. Sometimes he read to himself, sometimes aloud, for the letter was a long one.

"Here's a worthy note," he muttered, after a long pause, "but of little use now:

"Strike on, MacAlpine! Remember that before ours there have been nineteen strokes for freedom on this continent; and all were successful. Why should we not add one more, the proudest of them all, to the number? But much now depends upon you, my friend'."

"Ah, indeed, does it? Fine enough for him to say so when he is over the border."

Then followed a repetition of the old story—the bill of rights—in support of which MacKenzie and his followers had rebelled, but for which MacAlpine personally did not care a farthing. These he skipped and then read on:

"Unfortunately we are living in trying times, and the opportunities of communicating with each other are very limited. But the fates have favored me in the person of a dingy, half-crazy wench. She is thoroughly reliable, too canny to be caught, but you can trust her absolutely, as I do with my message. And as I may not have another chance before the fates decide our destiny, I pray you to attend carefully to my words'."

Then followed a long preamble about the possibilities of defeat, due to the financial resources and overwhelming strength of their oppressors; which, in the end, would still be a victory to themselves:

"Even then, and I say it, before High Heaven, our cause will not have been fought in vain. These old coaches over the sea are desperately slow. They may not intend to be dishonest or mean or unjust to the settlers in distant lands; but they send out old fogies to govern us who know nothing of the principles of justice—men devoid of all generous and noble impulses—who look upon themselves as the salt of the earth, and ourselves as the scum; that it is our duty and privilege to grovel and cringe and slave our lives away, that they may have the proceeds to lavish upon their follies.

"Granting all this, even at the worst, we are opening the eyes of our far-away rulers to the true situation, and redress sooner or later will inevitably come'."

Then came a record of his doings over the border, of his successes and failures throughout the land, of the friends who were false and the friends who were true; and though he wrote from within the confines of prison walls, he concluded the epistle in a transport of ecstasy:

"Still, come what will, I see as in a vision that all in the end will be well. Though a prisoner to-day, to-morrow I shall be free; the time will come when my own loved land will call me home again; and though the rabble, the veritable scum, may spit on me, and burn in effigy my body, yet the people, having won for themselves light and liberty, will welcome home, and place in the rostrum of the nation, the despised refugee. Farewell, MacAlpine! May God bless you.

"MacKenzie."

"An impossible man chasing an impossible ideal," muttered MacAlpine between set teeth, "urging to fight on, and yet declaring that only a mythical success can ultimately be reached."

"Why fight on at all?" pleaded Marie, "with scarcely fifty men left and a thousand against you."

"I shall fight to the death, and die with the battle-cry of the MacAlpines on my lips."

"But, father, though the cause is hopeless, we could still escape from these islands before it is too late. There's always a refuge beyond the border," urged Marie, still more earnestly.

"Never, child; I came here to be free, and shall stay until the end, if I fight to the last breath. But for you, Marie—the only one left—it is different. Something must be done. What did you say about Madge? Is she still here? I could send you both away in the dead of night in my best barge. It would be quite safe. What say you, child?"

"And leave you to fight it out alone? Never!"

"But you must. It's the only reasonable plan. After I am gone—but mark you, I shall slay every man I can first—things will be quiet again. In the end you may find a home over there, or even back in Scotland—but you won't be a MacAlpine any longer."

"But I am a MacAlpine. They cannot take that from me, whatever they do; and I shall not leave you. I wouldn't be a MacAlpine if I did," and with deep emotion she clasped her hands around his neck.

Sadly MacAlpine shook his head.

"I'm proud of you, Marie," he muttered at last, "but this will be no place for you. It will be nothing but a desperate fight for life."

"All the more reason why I should stay."

"But you are a woman, Marie."

"Why should I not be a man? Charlie's clothes will fit me. If they shoot you they can shoot me, too."

"Don't be silly, child."

"Silly! Am I not a good shot? Can I not paddle a canoe as true and swift as any man you've got? And do I not know every cave in the islands? And cave-dwellers we'll have to be, father, if there is any hope left."

"Bravely spoken, Marie. Would to God I could save you, and still keep you to myself."

"You can do both, father."

"The odds are against us—and the risk terrible—but maybe we'd better try it." He clasped her in his arms and her tears fell upon his breast.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROPHEPIC VISION.

An hour later Marie was alone among the trees, cooling her fevered temples with the breeze from the lake and endeavoring to control her thoughts. For many nights she had slept little, for the deepest emotions of her soul had been stirred. The death of her brother Charlie produced in her the most poignant grief. Possessed like herself with Stuart affinities, the bond of affection that bound them together was of the tenderest character. It was like tearing a limb from her body or dividing her heart asunder to have him suddenly snatched away by the grim hand of death.

Though in heart a Stuart, she was now more than ever a MacAlpine, filled with the love of her clan and veneration for her father. He might be wrong in his opinion, and false to his own interests, fighting hopelessly for a cause the end of which was doomed; yet, as her father, and the chieftain of his clan, she, the last of the race, must obey his mandate, fight beneath his banner, and in some measure take the place of the brothers that were gone.

Suddenly she heard a crooning beneath the bushes at the edge of the lake. It was the monotone of the almost forgotten Madge. Seated alone with her hands clasped round her knees, she was looking out over the water.

Marie stood riveted to the spot as her ear caught the words:

Sad was the day in the glen,
Over the lea and the moor,
When the chief led his clan
Out over the sea
To open liberty's door.

Then good news came from afar,
Wafted back from the west,
That aloft as a star
O'er island and lake
Floated his standard and crest.

Then came the last stanza in lower tone and quivering voice. It was deep in the gloaming, and the weird witchery of the scene seemed to have seized the woman. Marie leaned forward with beating heart to catch the words. In a dim occult way she realized that a prophetic vision was coming:

But joy was doomed to be brief,
For the clan was shivered and shorn;
Both the sons and the chief
In battle were slain,
The princess alone left to mourn.

"Oh, Madge, how dare you sing such a thing like that?" Marie sobbed out in low, excited tones as she rushed down to the woman's side.

"What was it, dearie? Did I say anything?" Madge returned, half stupefied, passing her hand over her brow. "I must have been dreaming. I'm so tired, you know—always so tired—and I just say things as they come—then I forget. What was it, Miss Marie?"

Her tone evinced keen distress.

"Never mind. But how could you sing such a terrible song?—true and yet not true. It can't be possible, Madge."

"Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't know you were near or I would never have sung it; no, never."

"It can't be helped now," said Marie, endeavoring to control her emotion. "But you must go back to Mr. MacKenzie tomorrow—and take this letter to him."

"I will start at daylight. Alick has promised to row me back to Blizzard Rock, and the *Target* will take me over to Sackett's Harbor."

"Be sure and let no one see the letter."

"I'll quilt it in like the other one, and I'll warrant you no one ever shall but Mr. MacKenzie. But can you ever forgive me?"

"You didn't mean it, Madge; and it isn't true."

The next morning Alick rowed Madge over and, secreting himself near the wharf, he watched the *Target* approach.

"Here comes Madge," cried one of the men. "She hasn't turned a hair since we dumped her here three days ago."

"Nor combed one either," added the mate. "Her entire rigging hasn't changed an atom in a year."

"Nor it won't if she wears it for ten. She's like one of Macbeth's witches."

"Yes, sinews and wire and whip-cord all beaten into a mesh."

"Say, wench!"

But the wench had swung herself on deck and her cracked voice so filled the air that even Alick heard it:

The Buffalo boys and the Rochester girls
Are always in for a lark,
While all that a Briton expects to do
Is to be able to make his mark—
——mark——mark——
To be able to make his mark.

As she finished the stanza she ambled off to the saloon, followed by the laughter of the men.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BURNING OF THE EAGLE'S EYRIE.

MacAlpine's fury remained unabated. To have been foiled in the burning of the *Bulldog* galled him; but to meet with a second defeat, and the death of his son Charlie from an enemy's bullet, was heart-breaking and exasperating beyond measure. Bitterly he cursed his fate; like a lion at bay, he lashed himself to increase his fury; and while he offered up prayers for the safety of his daughter, he poured maledictions indiscriminately upon his enemies.

With the MacAlpine days numbered, his sons dead, a price on his own head, dead or alive, what was there to live for but revenge? He, the "King of the Islands"; his sons, heirs in fief, chieftains of his clan; and his daughter, the fair Princess of Fingal; to have his hopes dashed to the ground, his plans dragged in the mud, and his domain spattered with the life-blood of his children, was more than heart could stand.

His mood varied. Sometimes he was taciturn and gloomy, and but for Marie's dependence upon him, he might have taken his own life. Then, again, his spirits would rise, buoyed up by any trifling advantage, and new plans would be formed for regaining control of the islands, and defying to the death all who might oppose him.

But while he was strengthening the fortifications at Fingal's Notch and preparing for a siege, his enemies were gradually and fatally hemming him in. The insurrection everywhere else had been subdued, and the Government troops, being relieved from other duties, directed their attention to the final subjection of the "Brigand of the Isles." Hence gunboats were plied, lake steamers pressed into service, frigates armed and manned, all with the object of crushing, once and for all, MacAlpine and his cause.

All the while Marie, the Stuart princess, nattily dressed in Charlie's clothes, was her father's right-hand man. The Eagle's Eyrie soon bristled with guns and cannon, and whenever a troop-ship appeared, or a boat in the offing that could not reasonably be accounted for, muskets were fired or cannon-balls whistled through the air, to dare them at their peril to approach the little fortress. It was well known, too, that MacAlpine had arms and ammunition stored in the caves of many of the islands; and it was reported far and near, that some of them were replete with all the munitions of war. It was even believed, as an open secret, that he had special unseen means of transferring them from place to place and could, in an hour's notice, transfer all the ammunition and stores that he wanted to Fingal's Notch, if he so desired.

The fact that MacAlpine was almost continually firing his guns, gave color to the thought; and the enemy's ships for a time kept discreetly at a distance.

But in truth each side had its own object for delay. The Government forces were gathering data for action, and preparing for a single overwhelming night attack; while MacAlpine, with a seer's eye to the inevitable, was busily storing the inner caves of his castle with everything that a prolonged retreat into it as a hermitage might require, not for his own sake but his daughter's.

Marie, too, during all the long preamble, had her own thoughts and her own inner life. She had Stuart's inviolable promise, that, come what might, he and the men under him would never fire upon the Eagle's Eyrie; hence, Stuart and his ship might be counted out of the attacking force. Under this belief, zeal for her father's cause, coupled with memory of her brother's death, made her both willing and glad to help to fight the battles of the clan. Many a rifle she cocked and fired, and many a cannon's fuse did she touch with a match, for they were corporate actions, the clan's battles.

But when evening came, the day's work done, Marie's time was her own; and the fair-haired youth in Charlie's suit of grey would glide in her long canoe out in the gloaming, and, paddling swiftly and surely, would soon be out of sight among the islands.

No one asked whither she went. No one questioned her object. Among her people she was queen. Her will was law, their's fealty. And her father in his gloom had other things to think about. Besides, she had always been the free, fair maid of the islands, coming and going when she listed. If safe, then, through years of childhood, though danger might be present now, why question her?

Harry, too, for many days had been away; and old Janet thought that his continued absence might have much to do with Marie's lonely paddles. How little she knew!

One evening Marie was later than usual in her return. As she came swiftly toward her own little wharf, she was startled by the fire of musketry.

"Ah!" she murmured, as she quickly drew her canoe upon the bank, "it is here at last. Yes, there's another volley and another—and cannon, too. I wonder where father is?"

As she ran toward the house, the whole island seemed to be suddenly aroused. Men were everywhere preparing for the conflict which everyone had been expecting to come. Islands had been captured almost daily, and word had been brought in from the east and the west, that the combined attack upon Fingal's Notch, widely known as the best fortified of all the islands, as well as the home of the brigand chief, would be the next and final move. And now it had come.

"Glad you are in your greys, Marie," was her father's greeting, as she rushed up to him. "We'll have to fight desperately to hold our own to-night. So take charge of that cannon; Alick will load it for you. Yonder lies the *Transit*, take aim and hit her if you can."

And he left her to give orders to his men. In another minute Marie's fuse was lighted and boom went her gun.

"It's the first we've given 'em," cried Alick; "let us try another."

Marie's blood was stirred. She waited impatiently for the charge. Then she fired again. As there was no moon, the flashes from the powder gave the only light.

For half an hour or more the battle raged. Then a change came. The *Transit*, taking aim at the Eyrie, riddled it with shell, and the flames darting from its roof, proclaimed that the castle was doomed. Then MacAlpine forsook it and fell back to the woods, fighting every inch of his way. As the flames shot heavenward, every object became visible and every man a target.

"Nothing like shooting a man decently," cried Harry, as he brought down a fellow who was lunging at Marie while she was applying her fuse. "If I hadn't he would have killed you, Marie. It isn't safe for you here; run for Janet's cottage—back in the woods there's less danger."

"Not so fast, Harry. I'm a man now, and shall fight till it's over. Here goes again."

"What's the use? To die in your tracks! arrant foolishness!"

"By the Lord, the Commodore's hurt," cried old Andrew; "see, he's falling."

With a bound Marie was beside him.

"It's only my leg!" he exclaimed; "smashed by a bullet. But never mind me—fight on! They shall never make MacAlpine a prisoner—before they touch my body I'll be a dead man."

"If MacAlpine can do it, so can we. We'll die where we stand," cried one.

"But what of Miss Marie and the women?" yelled another.

"The women they'll not touch, and Marie's a man," was her answer, as she bent over her father. "Here will I stay."

"God knows that shall not be," cried MacAlpine, rousing himself from the shock that was plunging him into lethargy.

"Down to your wharf—take your canoe—paddle out quickly—go, child, go."

"Not a step, father, unless you go too."

"And forsake my men—play the coward and traitor—"

"It is neither," cried old Andrew. "If you stay you'll die. If you go with Marie, you'll get well, and live to knock the stuffing out of every man John of 'em."

"Aye, aye, that's true," muttered another, deliberately taking aim at a soldier not ten yards away. "Stay here, and in an hour you'll be as dead as that fellow is."

"They are crowding in. Come, lads, two of us can carry him before they can reach us, if Marie leads the way."

"Bind his leg first; he's bleeding terribly," cried Alick. MacAlpine was almost unconscious. "Where's the doctor?"

"Knocked out already," replied Andrew. "A stray bullet felled him five minutes ago. But leave the leg alone. If he faints, bleeding will stop—a sleeping man never kicks. Pick him up, lads. Now, Miss, run."

"Send some blankets and a bottle of brandy," she whispered to Harry. Then she ran down the pathway to the water's edge and shoved out her canoe.

Swiftly they bore the limp body of the Commodore after her, and stretching the blankets at the bottom of the canoe, they laid him upon them.

"Have you any plans, Marie?" Harry asked, realizing the difficulties and dangers the girl was undertaking.

"Yes," she answered, in a voice trembling with many emotions. "You know island X, which lies just below the southern end of Q?"

"Yes."

"You remember the bluff at the end and the shelving rock?"

"Yes."

"Well, come to-morrow if you can, and be sure to bring Andrew. But must we not bind his leg again?"

"No," cried old Andrew. "If we do he'll revive, and there'll be the devil to pay. There is no danger, child; it's not bleeding as much as it was. Bind it up when you get to the island. But can you manage it alone?"

"I must; one canoe may escape, but two would be seen. I know the road and will keep in the shadow of the islands."

"Still I might come in the distance," said Harry.

"No, you must not," was her answer.

"Good-bye, then, until to-morrow."

"Good-bye; good-bye, men." There was a choke in her voice. "You are brave fellows, but it would be madness to fight to the death; save yourselves if you can. Tell all the men that Marie says so."

"You are God's angel, child."

"Begorrah, she is," muttered Pat, "but an angel in breeks, and grey ones at that."

But Marie was away out on the water, noiselessly and deftly paddling her canoe under the deep shelter of the trees of the islands.

CHAPTER X.

THE ESCAPE TO THE CAVE.

As Marie paddled swiftly out she could count her rapid heartbeats, in mute terror lest her father should bleed to death; while to rouse him would be doubly dangerous. For him to speak or cry out might lead to discovery; while a sudden movement on his part, not knowing where he was, could scarcely fail to upset the canoe. She could save herself, were such a catastrophe to occur, but whether she could save her father in his helpless condition was a different question.

She could hear him breathe, though he did not move. Evidently he was not dead yet, and she paddled on. As the distance between the canoe and Fingal's Notch increased, she became more hopeful, and paddled less cautiously. There was little danger of any sound from the canoe being carried back, but a full quarter of an hour elapsed before she dared to slacken her speed. By this time other islands intervened; and, pausing for a moment, she listened. There was still the occasional crack of a rifle, and looking backwards the whole sky in the far distance was illuminated. She shuddered as she fixed her eyes upon it.

"Oh, the fiends!" she ejaculated, involuntarily. "The fiends, they are burning the entire island."

"What's that?" ejaculated MacAlpine, suddenly aroused by her voice.

"Keep still, father, or we'll upset; we are in a canoe," she returned, pressing him down again. "Just for a little while; we are almost there."

"Almost where?" he asked, obeying her while he pressed his hand upon his head. "What's happened?"

"You got hurt, and we're going to the island as fast as we can. Just lie still."

"Queer business!"

But he lay quietly and Marie paddled all the harder. In ten minutes she slowed up to glide safely past the shallows. Fortunately the sky was clear and the stars bright. Marie had become accustomed to the dim light and could see her way. "Q" island was left behind, and she paused at the shelving rock which jutted out at the side of "X," directly opposite the bluff. The perpendicular rock which rose from the lake for many feet on the east side of the island at one spot was lifted to the height of a foot or so above the water, leaving its surface free. That such an opening could indicate a cave no one would imagine. It might be a runway for mink or water rats; but as a possible habitat for human beings, with an entrance only on the water level, would never be thought of.

But Marie had been there many times. It was the very spot she had been looking for ever since the probability of defeat had stared the islanders in the face; and on first discovery her ardor induced her to dive from her canoe and swim under the ledge after the mink that led the way.

As she neared the spot she pointed her canoe for the centre of the elevated ledge, and bending forward to a prone position, it glided slowly in.

"Keep still, father. We are safe now," she whispered. "Wait till I close the opening and strike a light."

Stepping lightly onto a shelf of rock Marie picked up a door that she had brought over piece-meal, and placing it on its edge upon stones beneath the surface of the water, she leaned it against the entrance way, making an effectual screen. Then she struck a match and lit a candle. The cave thus closed in was both capacious and high. On one side was the flat surface of rock, as large as an ordinary sized room, which Marie had already covered with rugs and mats. Her nocturnal visits to "X" island were evidently productive of good. She had been preparing for an emergency. The emergency had arrived.

MacAlpine in amazement stared at everything. His bewildered mind was clearing.

"What does it all mean?" he asked at last. "We were fighting the enemy, but they were too strong for us. What has happened? Where are we?"

"They were too strong," Marie answered, "and you got your leg hurt, so I brought you here."

"Child, how did you do it?"

"That doesn't matter, father. What we have to do now is to get you onto these rugs. See, I've got a pillow, too. Then I'll fix your leg."

Suddenly he sprang to the sitting posture; but instantly fell back with a groan.

"Good Lord!" he exclaimed. "I remember now—my leg's smashed. It must have been a rifle shot. See, it's bleeding again—the pain is terrible."

"Drink a little of this and just bear it," said Marie, holding the brandy to his lips. "You must help me and I will lift the leg."

And with infinite pains and gentleness on her part, and groans and maledictions on his, she helped him onto the ledge. In her journeyings she had brought blankets and quilts, so that when she stretched him out he lay fairly comfortable with his head on the pillow. But the blood was streaming again; some large vessel must have been cut; so with scissors she removed the trouser leg. Then she washed off the ragged wound, straightened out the limb, and bound it with strips of cotton she had brought.

All the while he watched her. Now and then when a chance came he patted her hand. "You are a princess," he exclaimed at last, "if ever there was one! But what a boy you would have made!"

"Would have made!" was her quick response, suddenly kissing him on the brow. "Don't you know that I *am* a boy. See my clothes. The only boy you've got. But I'm getting hungry, aren't you? Last night I brought a tin of new biscuits that Kitty made, and some butter; and I've got lemons and sugar—lemons are good for a sick man, even better than brandy."

"That'll be fine, Marie; you do the eating after your hard paddle. Mix the lemons for me; that's all I want." And he took the drink eagerly.

For a while each avoided every subject but the actual present. The light of the candle only faintly illuminated the cave. Gradually, however, their eyes got accustomed to the dimness, and could pierce even into the gloom. The cave ran far in, the shelving rock sloping down in the rear to the level of the water-line, while in the interval there were regular projections of the limestone at varying heights. A black object, the size of a large plate, occupied one of these. After a time MacAlpine's roving eye rested upon it.

"What is that?" he suddenly exclaimed.

Marie rose and lifted her candle for a better look. Where they were the vault was high enough for her to stand erect.

"Only a turtle," was her cheery answer. "He's got his nose turned this way watching the interlopers."

Next came a splash into the water.

"That's a water-snake," she added.

"Yes," said he, "and there goes a water-rat scampering along the ledges."

"It was by swimming in after two mink that I discovered the cave," added Marie.

For the first time he smiled.

"So we are part of the menagerie. The MacAlpines are the last addition."

By-and-by he dozed again, then Marie made her preparations for the night. She drew the canoe so far in that the turtle in dull alarm began to move. But she crooned softly and he was still again. After placing what few things she had in such a position that she could lay her hand upon them at any moment, she put out the light, lifted back the door so that nothing could be seen from the lake, and finally lay down by her father's side, fatigued and distressed but comforted, and ready to drop off to sleep.

Suddenly her father opened his eyes.

"Marie!" he cried out in alarm.

"I am here, father, sleeping beside you."

"Oh, thank God! thank God!"

And in a little while they were both in the land of troubled dreams.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BRINGING OF ANDREW.

Long before dawn MacAlpine awoke, roused by the pain in his leg; but his mind was clear, and he comprehended the situation more accurately. Marie was still sleeping beside him. He realized how fatigued she must have been, and wouldn't rouse her. Even if awakened, she could do nothing for him without a light, and with the open entrance uncovered by the screen, to strike one would be unsafe. Still he felt his limb swelling—possibly the bandages were too tight—and impatiently he awaited the approach of day.

At last the opening above the water became lighter and the objects within the cave indistinctly visible. Marie stirred and he spoke to her.

"Yes, father," she replied, sitting up and rubbing her eyes. "It was horrid of me to sleep so long and you suffering. Poor, patient old father."

"My leg hurts too much to be patient over it," was his answer. "It is swelling, and the foot turns over too far. Can you prop it better?"

"I will try. There, will that do?"

"Yes, but the bandages are tight; when it gets light enough you'll have to loosen them a little."

Half an hour later, when she removed some of the dressings, the sight frightened her.

"Oh, father!" she exclaimed pitifully, "your leg is blue."

"You've done it too well, child; better open it up."

And so she did, putting on a looser roller.

"You must have a doctor, father," she exclaimed, seriously. "Surely we can get one somewhere."

"If we give ourselves away, we might; but our own doctor, as you know, was shot last night by the villainous invaders."

"But our own men, is there not one among them who is skilful in setting bones and things?"

"Yes, in a way, old Andrew is good for legs and Janet for burns."

"Andrew is coming to-day," she said; "Harry Thompson will bring him."

Then she got breakfast, but a cold one, as the ascent of smoke from the cave might indicate their whereabouts to their enemies. Again she ate it alone. Liquids to satisfy his thirst were all that her father desired.

Marie watched him anxiously. His skin was hot and his mouth dry; and to keep the heated leg comfortable, she repeatedly drenched it with water.

So the hours passed with slow monotony. Sometimes they talked of the fight at Fingal's Notch and the probable result; but as the fever made her father excitable, Marie did not speak again of the burning of the "Eyrie."

What she hoped and prayed for most was help. When would it come? Possibly not till night. Often she lay down flat on the rock to look beneath the ledge if any boat was in sight, but all in vain. The whole day passed without a single craft of either friend or enemy coming into view.

Long before nightfall her heart sank within her. For herself she did not care. But her father was not improving, and she realized that his leg should be set and his wound attended to by a competent surgeon—a matter of vital importance—but something which she feared would never be accomplished.

What she regretted now was that she had not arranged with Harry and Andrew for a special time for their visit. If any one should come, it was necessary that she should be there to meet them; otherwise they might not even discover the

cave. While sorely perplexed, the exclamations: "Andrew must come! Find some way of getting Andrew!" were continually ringing in her ear.

Still she felt that she must control the situation, and to accomplish anything must be guided by her own judgment.

So she bathed her father's leg and head, fed him with lemonade and brandy, and talked as brightly as she could of the possibilities of the future. More than once she brought a smile to his face, and he would call her his little Princess, his sweetheart, and his own brave girl.

"I've thought it all out, father," she said at last. "We'll wait until the darkening, and if they don't come by that time, I'll go and bring Andrew myself."

"By that time God only knows where he may be; you may not find him at all, child."

"If I cannot find Andrew, I'll be sure to find Janet; she'll be better than no one."

"Ah, well, perhaps it is best! If you go in daylight, they might never let you come back again, and where would MacAlpine be? Man! but I must be getting daft to blather like an old woman. You are right, girl; the lads'll come by the dark'ning, I'm sure."

As the sun was setting Marie took another look. There was a boat plain enough not twenty yards away, with two men in it, fishing. Then she heard voices.

"Begorrah," cried one, "I've been fishing for a great long sturgeon and a beautiful white perch for these two hours, and nary a bite 'ave I got of either of 'em yet."

"We munna hurry, Pat, just keep at it. I've been feeshin' for Alpine bass just as long as you have, wi' no better results. But we'll catch every one of 'em—only it winna do to get too close to the shore—it'ud be dangerous for feeshin'."

"Yes," came in clear, crystal tones from a voice close to the water under the ledge, "You'll catch every one of them; but go on fishing just where you are, while I talk to you. We're both here, the sturgeon and the perch, and the bass, too, if you like, in a cave under the rock. But father is terribly ill. We must have Andrew. Can you bring him at once, with splints and dressings and medicine for father's leg?"

"Saints in heaven, is that where you are, down in the lake, swimmin' for a livin'?" cried Pat in a low voice. "But by the holy Virgin, I'm glad to hear your voice again. In course we can bring Andrew."

"Yes, Miss Marie, we'll do our best to be back in an hour," echoed Alick. "Anything else we should bring?"

"Yes, but ask Janet; she'll know what to send. Be back as soon as you can."

"Do you know that Harry Thompson's been shot, but not kilt," said Alick.

"He's not bad," said Pat, "but he told us to tell ye that he couldn't come."

"Tell him I'm exceedingly sorry," said Marie.

"We'll do that, but don't be fearsome, he'll get well."

They paddled a little further on.

"Yonder boat is watching us," said Alick. "We must continue fishing here and there for a little while yet. Those fellows have their eyes skinned."

"It was lucky she warned us not to come any closer," said Pat. "Gorry, but Miss Marie's a brick. If ever there was an angel in heaven, she's one."

"But she's not in heaven yet, thank God," said Alick.

"I'll be d—d if she isn't. It's heaven wherever that girl plants her foot, bedad, so there to you."

"Right you are, Pat, after all. Reckon we'll start for home now."

"For home, say you, and every place on Fingal's Notch, except Janet's cottage, burned to the ground."

"I'm glad we didn't tell her. Time enough when we get back."

"Aye, aye, true you are; but what will become of the old Commodore?"

"That's the question. One of the bravest and truest men that ever lived. He has his faults—who hasn't? He took his toll from every brig coming into the islands. Why shouldn't he—he was king. But if they acted decent he gave them a clean bill and no trouble. They were always safe. And when in distress or wrecked on the islands, who came to their rescue? It was MacAlpine and his men every time."

"And did you ever know him turn down a man who was stranded?" said Pat, "or a beggar who wanted a meal, or a wench who needed a home?"

"No," said Alick, "nor even a dog that wanted a bone."

"It's a' true," said Pat, "every word of it; but he had some quare notions, that same Commodore MacAlpine, King of the Islands, as he was. His word was law. He was always chief, and nary a single spalpeen ever dast go agin him. No parlyment for him, except the parlyment of one man, and that man hisself; neither republic nor ould country gover'ment would ever suit him. He was just:

The holy divil on top of it all;
And yet, be jabers, no divil at all."

"By St. Andrew, you're right," muttered Alick, "and when the MacAlpine candle burns out, there'll never be another candle in God's world that can take its place."

"Mebbe not," echoed Pat, contemplatively. "I wasn't thinkin' of it in that way—but hadn't we better be movin'? Miss Marie'll be impatient for Andrew's coming."

And without more words they rowed rapidly in the direction of Fingal's Notch.

CHAPTER XII.

MEETING OF STUART AND MARIE.

"It's a compounded break," said old Andrew, two hours later, as he kneeled by his old master's side and through his spectacles examined the injured limb. "An' a muckle bad yun at that. The bone's splintry and the flesh is comin' through. It'll be a bad yun to fix, but 'a think I can manage it. It'll gie some pain, Commodore MacAlpine, afore I'm through; but I'll dae the best I can, not being skilly."

"All right, Andrew, I can stand it," said MacAlpine, grimly.

"Nae doot ye can, sir, nae doot at all. There never was a MacAlpine yet who cudna stan' mair than ither folk."

"But, my boys, Andrew, my boys."

"That was different, sir; an angel on airth cudna ha' stood what they had to gang through. But I'm losing time, I must make my splints. I brought the stuff wi' me. Man, sir, but you're feverish. It's gey ill when it comes so quick, an' I'll hurry all I can."

In another hour, with the help of Alick and Pat, Andrew had made the patient comfortable. His leg was neatly boxed and bound, with a hole in the dressing left open to treat the wound. And this he plastered over with his favorite prescription.

"It may smart a bit, sir, but it al'us does guid in these compounded cases," said Andrew; "leastways, it does in auld ulcers—and what's the difference between a compounded case and an' auld ulcer? In baith the skin's broken and there's a hole in the flesh. In baith there's a discharge. In baith the root's in the bone. And in baith you want to get 'em healed as fast as you can. I am sure, sir, you must acknowledge that my logic and my reason are also baith soond."

"But it smarts terribly, Andrew. Still I will try it for a while."

"Pray do, sir."

"And now," continued Andrew, turning to Marie, "if Alick and Pat will stay with the Commodore for half an 'oor, I wad like to gie ye a paddle on the lake. It's nae guid for a chiel like you tae be coopit up in a cave all day lang wi'out any fresh air at a'. I'm sure the Commodore will let ye gang all right."

"Certainly she may," was the quick response, "and thank you, Andrew, for suggesting it. What say you, Marie?"

"It's just what I want," said Marie. "I'll be ready in a minute. But Alick, you must put out the light before we move the door and then put it back before you light it again."

"Yes, Miss Marie, I noticed your wise precaution. Shall we tell him?" he finished in a whisper.

"Perhaps it would be better, but do it gently."

But her heart was beating more rapidly than usual, for a peculiar look was on Andrew's face when he made the suggestion. It was intended for no one but herself, and she alone saw it.

For several minutes the old man rowed in silence. Then he stopped. The air was still, there was scarcely a sound on the lake, and no life visible anywhere. Even the cave was so effectually closed by the door that the relighted candle did not throw out a spark of light upon the water.

"You have something to tell me," said Marie, "but we must speak very low, almost in a whisper."

"You are right, there are men on some of these islands who are oor enemies. But they don't count Janet and me. We are auld folk, ye ken, each with a foot in the hole, an' they think it sic an uncanny poseetion that they dinna care hoo lang we gang that way. So they just leave us to ourselves in oor auld cabin. But that wasna their fault. In the rush of the slaughter last night they didna find it—that was a'."

"And are all the other buildings burned as well as the Eyrie?"

"Yes, every man John of 'em."

"And what of our cave? Did the fire get in there as well?"

"No, I think not. I tuk a look this morn, after all had gaed awa' in their boats, and my impression is that the inside stone slab saved it. I dinna believe that even the smoke got intil't."

"That is well, and of our people?"

"Some are deed. They came back to bury 'em to-day. Some they tuk prisoners; and some, as yerself advised, Miss, went awa' for guid and all."

"I'm glad they did. But you've something else to tell me, Andrew?"

"Yes, and I don't know whether it's guid news or bad," he said reflectively. "But it's somethin' that happened this afternoon."

"Go on, please. We have so little time."

"I'm gettin' on as fast as I can, ye ken. I think it was about four o'clock, it might ha' been four fifteen, but I'm sure it wasna four twenty—"

"What does the exact time matter?" said Marie, impatiently.

"It matters enough, lass. There's nothin' like being pertickler in little things—then the big yuns'll take care of themselves."

"A very true saying, Andrew. Go on."

"That's what I'm doin'. If ye didna interrupt the auld man he'd gang along brawly. Mind, I'm not complainin', Miss."

"I know you are not. I won't interrupt you again, Andrew."

"Well, as I was saying, a big barge with eight sojers in it rowed up to the little back wharf this afternoon. They all did nothin' but stay right wi' the boat except one; an' he came straight up to the cottage—an' who do ye think it was?"

He could not see the expression on Marie's face; but her answer was in an even tone.

"How could I tell, Andrew? Who was it?"

"Naebody else but Captain Stuart."

"And what did he want?" said Marie.

"He wanted to know all aboot you and yer faither. He was awfu' anxious to know where ye'd gone tae. And he was clean beside himself when I tel't him that we didna ken."

"He had nothing to do with the battle," said Marie.

"Not a single bit. He's still on the *Bulldog*; and I tell you one thing, Miss, he was in terrible distress about ye."

"What else?"

"He just ganged up and doon the floor. I never seed a man so cut up in a' my life wi'out shedding tears."

"Is he quite well?"

"Yes, he limps a little wi' one foot, that is a'. Only for the wild excitement on his face he looked gey weel."

"And then he went away?"

"Yes, but he left a message for you. He wrote it with pencil on Janet's table, and here it is."

As Marie took it her hand trembled. Of course she could not read it in the dark.

"He said something else tae," said Andrew. "The battle being over and the people scattered, he said he was under orders to control the islands. But instead of trying to control either the Commodore or you, he would consider it the greatest favor you could grant him to let him help ye. Them was his words."

"And will he come back again?"

"Yes. To-morrow's morn."

"Do Alick and Pat know of this?"

"Of course I tel't them as they rowed me over, but they'll not say a word."

After they returned to the cave, Pat rowed Old Andrew back to Fingal's Notch; while Alick remained with the Commodore to give Marie a better chance for rest. So she hung up a curtain in the rear part of the cave, and, arranging her couch as comfortably as possible, she read her letter. Then she lay down hoping to sleep; but it was useless. The previous night, with the sole care of her father upon her hands, coupled with the unusual fatigue and anxiety, she slept soundly. This time she could not sleep at all, but tossed restlessly for hours. At last, fancying that she heard the sea-gulls, and impressed by an irresistible desire to paddle upon the lake, Marie rose, and noiselessly pushed her canoe out into the open. She could hear the quick breathing of her father, who fortunately was asleep, as well as the slow and stertorous respiration of Alick, stretched out beside him; but so silent was she in her movements that neither of them awoke. Stepping into the dainty little craft, which was as obedient to her dexterous hand as the well-trained pony is to the rein of its mistress, Marie was soon far out on the still water. Now she wondered why she had come? There was no reason that she knew of, except that she was sleepless, and impressed with a desire to exchange the confined atmosphere of the cave for the purer air of the lake. Above all, she wanted to stop thinking. She needed the exercise, too. Perhaps if she made a quick spin for half an hour and returned fatigued, sleep would come. At any rate she would try. So taking her bearings, to familiarize herself with the position of the cave, she struck out in the direction of the main shore, realizing that by this course the possibility of losing herself would be reduced to a minimum. Seeing by the star-light a knot of tall pines in the far distance, she made them her steering point; and was soon disporting every muscle in her body in the game she loved. The exertion equalized her circulation and soothed the tumult of her thoughts. By-and-by she began to feel tired. The home-spin would be enough, and once in the cave again she would be sure to sleep. Varying the stroke of her paddle, she swept round with a graceful curve, and, noting that the white cliff of "X" island was visible, she rested a moment before commencing the return.

As was wont with her, she listened while she rested. It was almost with a feeling of expectancy that she strained her ear to catch any sound that might occur. Yes, there was the note. She was startled. It was the plaintive piping of the loon. But it was not the note that startled her. It was the aftermath, coming, too, in a direct line between her canoe and the cave.

Her heart gave a great bound. What must she do? No loon ever piped its mournful cadence in that way. It was the signal given long ago between Stuart and herself—the one by which she had saved him. Whatever its meaning now might be, it was a human message. Was it possible that any one else knew it? Or was he, as she believed, the only one? If it were Stuart, he must at that moment be between herself and her island; and either knew of her presence on the water, or was pleading for a reply from any fastness in which she might have found refuge. There was no prescience of anything like this in his letter or in her own thoughts; and Marie, controlling her feelings as best she could, was wildly bewildered at the situation.

Alone on the lake, surrounded by enemies at three o'clock in the morning, her father almost dying, her brothers dead, out for a spin when she ought to be sleeping, just to help her to fight the terrible battle of life, what did she want with Stuart? or any man? She was a MacAlpine, every inch of her, and for the present no Stuart at all.

Again the loon piped his note. But it was nearer; Marie almost thought she could see a boat in the distance. Whatever it was she must face it. No help was near. Involuntarily her right hand slipped beneath her bosom. Yes, her pistol was there, a dainty little gun that had shot off the head of many a grouse, and had often struck the bull's eye of a target. She knew how to protect herself: and if the worst came to the worst, before any scoundrel could touch her body, a bullet would enter her heart.

But this was no scoundrel. It was Stuart himself, she felt sure. Still what should she do? If she were only past him, how quickly her paddle would swing the canoe back to its moorings and leave him just where he was. Would it be possible to make a long detour out into the lake and slip by unnoticed? Again the loon lifted up its voice and the math was

stronger than ever; and oh! so much nearer. There was no possible chance of escape.

It was best to answer and face the inevitable bravely. Quickly she raised her voice and, in shrill notes, piped out the answering call. Then she swung her paddle, took a firm grip with her knees, and struck for home in the direct line of the loon.

CHAPTER XIII.

REVEALING THE SECRET.

"I knew I could not mistake your answering call. It is what I've been asking for all night."

His tone was one of passionate appeal, as he sat in his boat parallel with her canoe, a dozen feet away. He was alone, but made no effort to come nearer.

"I didn't answer until your third call. Then I had to, you were so insistent," was her cold reply.

"My third call? It was my twentieth. For three hours up and down the islands and along the shore the loon has been piping, and I was almost in despair when your answer came."

"How could you expect an answer at such an hour?"

"I don't think I did expect one; but I knew you were somewhere among these islands, and with your father ill, you might be awake, and if you heard it, you would know that help was near."

"And you were up all night calling for an answer," she said, reflectively; "perhaps that was the reason I couldn't sleep. But why didn't you call in daytime instead of night?"

"Because I could help you better if no one knew but myself," was his reply.

"And a pitiful help it would be," said Marie, with a hardness that she did her best to control; "our people killed, our buildings destroyed, our home burned, and my father dying from wounds."

"Dying from wounds, surely it is not so bad."

"But it is. With his leg smashed and torn, he lies in a cave without either surgeon or apothecary to attend him."

"This must not be. Where is he?"

"That is our secret. Think you, even when dying, that he would consent to be a prisoner?"

"But he would be no prisoner. 'Pon my honor, I declare that living or dying, if you will take me to him, he shall be a free man, and everything that a surgeon can do for him shall be done."

"Think you, Captain Stuart, that a MacAlpine would ever accept generosity from an enemy? My father wouldn't if he knew it; and, thank heaven, though delirious at times, he still has his reason."

"He must indeed be ill, if delirious already. Can I not persuade you? He need not know the man; but there is a surgeon, and a good one, whom I could send. Your father might even take him for a private civilian from the mainland. Do let me send him, I beg of you. And then, wherever you may be, there are things you need. Do let me provide them. It's the least I can do. I owe you personally ten times as much, and you know it."

"It was only a life for a life, and the debt has been cancelled," said Marie, coldly.

"Not even a life for a life," he persisted. "Harry shared with me the glory of saving you; while to you I owe everything."

"Still wrong. I could have done you no service but for Harry's help. So between my father's foe and myself there is no obligation."

"Even so, shall we not be friends?"

"What can friendship do? It is like a mockery to offer it."

"Please don't say that."

Her only reply was a low, hard laugh. She felt like weeping till her heart would break, but she would not.

"It is terribly hard, and what you say is true," he continued. "Still I won't give up. Something must be done. If there is a

place anywhere that will suit your father's condition better than where he is now, I will see that you and he are taken to it as soon as daylight comes; and if you say so, I shall not appear at all, nor any of my men. It can all be done by your own followers."

Marie softened a little.

"It is good of you," she said at last. "I really don't want to be ungrateful; perhaps there is a way you could help us, but if I tell you I shall have to give away a secret."

"A secret will be as sacred in my heart as it is in yours."

"Will you swear to keep it?"

"By all that is holy, I swear."

For more than a minute Marie pondered. It was hard to come to a decision upon so important a subject in so brief a time. And the decision made must be final.

"Fingal's Notch is devastated?" she said at last.

"Too true," was his assent.

"And the Eagle's Eyrie is burned down?"

"Also true."

"But there is a deep cave behind it uninjured."

"Ah!" was his comment. "I did not know it."

"That is the secret."

"It shall be kept."

"That is the treasure-house of the MacAlpines, the Aladdin's Palace you once talked of."

"By heaven, you honor me."

"I trust I have not honored you in vain."

The queenly dignity thrilled his nerves and lifted him to a higher plane. "On this lonely lake, in the dead of night, God is the witness of our compact," he said.

"Amen," said Marie.

And with uncovered head he looked starward.

"The cave is furnished and armed, and provisioned for a prolonged hermitage," continued Marie, "and as we have two or three faithful followers left, I would like these men to take us to it to-morrow night—if God spares my father that long. After that I desire him to remain there until the end comes, master of his own inner castle."

"Your desire shall be carried out to the letter. But you will need fires, will not the smoke reveal the secret?"

"That contingency my father provided for. There is an outer room at the far end of the cave provided with a chimney, into which the smoke from all the hidden ones enters, and old Andrew and Janet will move from their cottage into it, and thus help us to maintain the secret."

"It shall be maintained. Again I swear it."

"Thank you, I must go; it is almost dawn."

"May I not escort you at least part of the way?"

"No, not even an oar's length. There are times when a woman needs to be alone."

"Well, then, farewell, but God knows it shall not be forever."

For a few moments Marie watched his boat as it gradually disappeared in the distance. Then she turned and paddled back to the cave.

CHAPTER XIV.

BACK TO THE EYRIE CAVE.

Three days had gone by. It was the fifth one after the battle, and MacAlpine, after a long struggle, followed by a potion given him by Marie, had dropped off to sleep. His room was a section of a grotto whose lofty, irregular roof was ornamented by the shields of his forebears, placed in position by the sons whose race was already run. Marie had truly said that the cave contained the heirlooms of the race; for on the walls hung poniards and daggers and pistols and broadswords, as well as bows and arrows of ancient days. A score of helmets decorated the walls, and gauntlets of the falconer hung side by side with claymores of the days of King James. Here and there bits of historic tapestry covered the rock and pictures of Stuart maidens and MacAlpine cavaliers, all debonair, were there.

The couch was a rich one of inlaid wood, decorated with the silver coat-of-arms of the clan, and the coverlet bore the motto translated from the Gaelic: "He who follows does it to the death."

Marie fanned her father gently, for even in the grotto the air was warm and his fever had not abated. Still careworn, her sombre dress only intensified the sad expression of her face. Although MacAlpine knew that in some way he had been translated to his own Eyrie cave, he still sternly resisted seeing a surgeon; and fearing that anger at one's arrival might undo all the good that he could accomplish, Marie had so far yielded.

Noiselessly old Andrew entered, and raising the tartan plaid which closed off that part of the cave, he peered in. Taking out his ponderous old watch he stood still and looked steadily at the patient.

"Forty breaths to the meenit," he whispered. "I dinna like it; he gets hot and then cold, and sweats so. Is he still crazy, Miss?"

"Always worse at night time," was Marie's answer.

"There's a skilly man at the hoose the noo," Andrew again whispered; "he came o'er fishin', no regimentals at all, and wanted Janet to gie him some dinner. So in the course of talk he said: 'Do ye ken I'm a doctor taking a holiday; but I'm so durned tired of it that I'd gie onything to see onybody sick. For,' says he, 'I'd tak it as a favor if I cud see a sick body; I don't care who it is, or what's the matter.' So I said, 'Janet's sick o' skeeters, can ye cure her?' and the crazy loon only laughed. But what think ye, Miss Marie? Would it be any use? He looks like a guid, sensible man."

"Perhaps it would," returned Marie eagerly. "When father awakes I will try again. Do not let him go."

"He brought some fish he had caught, and we asked him to stay for tea, so there is no danger. Fact, he is not far awa' this meenit."

A few moments later MacAlpine opened his eyes and looked round the room.

"Something like—my turret castle windows in the roof!" he exclaimed, jauntily. "See the foes we've conquered—MacAlpine shields to the right—our enemies to the left—slain in battle every one o' them—McKinnon, McDermot, McGeorge, McQueen, McClintock, McLeod, Morris and Lennox, and Dalgleish, too. Hurrah for the claymore, the battle-axe of our people! What is it? Is that you, Marie? What's the matter with this leg o' mine? It's like a log with a fire at both ends and a red-hot hole in the middle. Give me some drink—give it quick—I'm getting weak—need something stronger than lemon-wash and beer."

"Yes," said Marie over her shoulder, "have him come now."

And in another minute the stranger, with grave but kindly face, entered the room.

MacAlpine was wandering again, heedless of anyone. As the doctor touched his pulse he paused for a moment and then rattled on:

"'Tis not true—red men are all right—'tis the whites that are blackguards—rob them of their lands—cheat them of the pittance they give them—but MacAlpine gives 'em a home in the islands—where they fish for mackerel and sturgeon—and the little squaws stay at home—and never say die. What the deuce are you doing with my leg?—Oh! you are the

doctor—eh?—a privileged person—pray excuse me—I don't know what I'm talking about—my head's on fire—but—do you know—Andrew's better than the whole batch of you—if it wasn't for that fiendish plaster of his—may he die some day with one on his—mouth."

The doctor's face was very grave. He took Marie aside to question her.

"Can anything be done?" she asked.

"Not much I fear," was his answer. He was too kind-hearted to say that something might have been done, but it was too late.

"Would it give him any chance," she tried to overcome the choking sensation in her throat, "were you to remove the leg?"

"No," was his answer; "he is suffering from pus in the blood, and the pain and shock of the operation would kill him."

"And can we not make him easier?"

"Oh, yes, we will do what we can to relieve his sufferings."

"I am sure you will."

At Janet's cottage the doctor met Captain Stuart. "You have seen him," said the latter.

"Yes, just a moment ago."

"How is he?"

"Bad, bad; won't survive another twenty-four hours. Dying of pyæmia of the most virulent type. I cannot understand it. Of course he has a compound fracture of the leg, with a badly splintered bone and large external wound. And then there is the hot weather, and the jolting without splints to the cave, and the bungling of that good-natured old chiel, Andrew, and I know not what else. But a strong, true man—I don't care what he is in politics—he is a true man—should never be brushed out of life so easily as that. God pity us. We need just such men."

"I am glad to hear you say it. Give me your hand."

And for a moment they held each other with a silent grip.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PASSING OF THE "KING."

The doctor sadly neglected his fishing during the next twenty-four hours. He was with his patient morning, noon and night. Now and then he would take a run to Janet's cottage, and then hurry back again; and when evening came he flatly declared to Andrew that he did not intend to leave the cave again that night.

For a while MacAlpine was easier. Refreshing lotions soothed the fevered limb, and cooling medication checked the progress of the fever and quieted his nerves. More than once an hour's sleep followed the administration of a sedative; and Marie's hope revived. But when he awoke, delirious again, and refused to take nourishment, her depression returned. Sometimes his language was sharp and clear and, while panting for breath, he would ring out in clarion tones his commands to his followers. At others he would sing snatches of song leading his men to battle, or hurl maledictions upon his enemies or anyone who dared to oppose his will.

All day long, however, there were little intervals of consciousness, when Marie, with her hand clasped in his, could get close to her father's heart. These were precious moments to her and every one was treasured.

"Marie!" he once exclaimed, drawing her towards him and looking intently into her eyes. "Your mother's image—but stronger—as much MacAlpine as Stuart. You remember her, child—one of the purest lilies God ever made—too tender—too true to live. I'm afraid—yes—I'm afraid I was hard on her. The Highland chief was too much for the Stuart lassie—the lily should never wed the oak—nor the skylark the eagle. But I was young and it seemed to be best—and—I tried to be kind."

"I know you did, father. I'm sure you did," sobbed Marie.

"Ah! well, she didn't stand it long—three years only among the islands—far away from home and friends and people that she loved—then she wilted away—we didn't have either cave or castle then—and the iron-bound chests from our old fortress in Scotland—were stored like ourselves in shanties. It froze hard in winter—each one harder than the last. We could stand it, but our lily couldn't; and she left us—left us—what did I say?—

We left the hills behind us
In order to be free;
No tyranny could bind us,
And so we crossed the sea.

"No, it's not the sea—it's the islands—so many you can't count 'em. It makes me so tired—they are always singing it:

Mid the wrangle and jangle and tangle of men
MacAlpines are coming right out of the glen,

and, and—"

But his eyes closed and in muttering delirium he once more dropped off to sleep.

An hour later it was dark. The turret windows of the cave had long ceased to give sufficient light; and old-fashioned lamps with silver cords, suspended high in the air above MacAlpine's bed, threw a weird light into the deep recesses, and flashed it back from many a dark corner as it fell upon plated armor, scrolled scabbard, or glittering steel.

Consciousness by this time seemed to be gone. Marie had caught his last rational words, and wearily now she glanced around the room. The doctor stood by the bed while Andrew and Janet were peering beneath the tartan plaid. There was no one to help her; she must bear the cross alone.

But a light step approached. A hand touched her shoulder. It was Stuart's. "I couldn't stay away any longer," he murmured; "I had to come."

"Thank you, I am glad. It is terrible to be alone."

"And he's let all the men come back, every man John of 'em, to see the Commodore before he dees," whispered Andrew in a low staccato. "May they come in, Miss Marie?"

"It will do no harm," said the doctor, "if they can pass right through. And it's a tribute that I know a man like our friend would not refuse if he were conscious."

"Oh, yes, let them come," whispered Marie, with a sob of joy, as well as of grief; and drawing a silken cord, she threw open a passage to the cave beyond.

Then they filed through, two score of them, old and young, men and boys, with moistened eyes and haggard faces. Where they came from no one knew. How they had got the knowledge was equally a mystery. But somehow, seemingly without a messenger, from island to island, from shore to shore, had gone out the word that their King was dying and had been brought back to draw his last breath and to lay his bones by the old, old cave of the Eyrie, and that they were to see him. One word from Stuart, given three hours before, had done the deed. As the last one with bowed head passed through and the curtain was dropped again, Harry and Jessie, from different directions, came in also, and remained. Presently MacAlpine threw up his hand and with eyes still closed, sang out in broken voice:

'Tis the tramp of our men
Over mountain and glen,
The tramp of our men
For aye—

"They're a braw lot," and again he wandered.

Towards midnight the change came. They thought he had spoken his last word, for a deeper drowsiness had fallen upon him, his breath coming and going in short, hard gasps. But he opened his eyes once more and tried to look around.

"I must be getting blind," he said. "Can't see anybody—light the lamps, Marie. Where are you, child?"

"I am here, father, right beside you."

"Oh, yes, yes, I know your hand. Not soft as your mother's—but it's kind—God bless you, child, I'm going—yes, going. But what'll become of my darling when I'm gone? The race all dead—not one MacAlpine left to care for my little Princess—Oh, God! Oh, God! Why should it be so? Perhaps I've been selfish—wanted you all to myself—no one good enough for my Marie! And now the punishment is come."

"Oh, it's not that! It's not that."

"But it is. I say it is. There's a man I hated—not because he was bad, for he wasn't—not because he fought for the Queen, what matter? But I hated him for the feud's sake—and because he loved my child. I know in my fever I've been mad—my brain on fire—but Marie, I've been thinking hard—and a MacAlpine living or dying should be just. I don't know where he is—and I'm so blind that I couldn't see him—nor even you—but if you love him—take him. It will not be a skylark marrying an eagle—I acknowledge it all now—but a Princess—wedding a Stuart. Give me your hand, child—your hand—Bless, oh, Christ—" And on her knees she held his hand in both of hers, bathing it passionately in tears. When she arose he was dead.

But Marie was not alone. Stuart's arm supported her, and she sobbed out her grief upon his shoulder.

Transcriber's Notes:

original hyphenation, spelling and grammar have been preserved as in the original

Page 6, Lady Head." ==> Lady Head.

Page 137, And its all well ==> And it's all well

Page 155, sideline ==> side-line [Ed. for consistency]

Page 181, This must be ==> "This must be

Page 212, while we can ==> while we can.

Page 252, portholes ==> port-holes [Ed. for consistency]

Page 266, each one one wins ==> each one wins

Page 297, What's happened? ==> "What's happened?"

Page 306, she's one.' ==> she's one."

[The end of *The Mac's of '37 A Story of The Canadian Rebellion* by J. (John) Price-Brown]