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THE MAID OF WYOMING



ED. ROUTLEDGE & SONS, THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE.



THE
MAID OF WYOMING.

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THE MAID OF WYOMING.

CHAPTER I.

THE EMIGRANTS.

It was somewhat past noon of February 27, 1769, that a small waggon-train, drawn by oxen and accompanied by a stout band of pioneers, wound its way down the side of the last mountain, and entered upon a wide-spread and fertile plain. So beautiful was the scene presented to their gaze, that even the rough travel-stained men paused to pass congratulations and expressions of satisfaction. Away before them rolled the broad and beautiful expanse far as the eye could reach, shut in upon all sides by ranges of lofty mountains. Here and there could be seen the silvery course of a broad river, which wound in many a mazy fold through the emerald green—for the valley had already sprung into life, though the mountains about retained their winter's mantle of snow in many places.

There were forty of the bronzed and bearded men who walked beside the waggons and around them, many carrying rifles, and nearly all being armed in some manner. They seemed worn and tired, nor was it any wonder. For more than two weeks they had been pressing forward, struggling over ice-clad mountains, penetrating treacherous swamps, crossing swollen rivers and creeks. They had

endured much of hardship—still pressing on, never despairing. Thus they had finally reached the goal of their ambition, the valley of Wyoming, since rendered one of the sacred spots in our history. Two hundred weary miles they had travelled, from distant Connecticut, and finally the rich scene they had anticipated burst upon their strained eyes. Little wonder that it was to them as the promised land !

They had barely reached the plain when an abrupt order to “halt” ran along the lines. That the command was received with some surprise was at once apparent, as the men gathered about their leader, and importuned to be led forward.

“It ain’t but a few miles further, ye say,” remarked a man with silver-streaked hair. “Why not take us right thar’? I allow I’d like to see our destination before we pull up for a stop.”

“You wouldn’t like to see the place any better than I,” the person addressed replied, “though I have seen it before and know what to look for. But it’s after noon, as you’ll readily see, and the oxen need both water and food. We will eat our own dinners here, and when we reach the place we shall have nothing to do but go to work. There is no knowing what we may meet there, though I don’t apprehend any trouble. However, it is best to be prepared for any adverse circumstances. Several years make a great change in such places.”

“The cap’n is right; what are ye botherin’ about?” demanded a rough genius, as he turned away and set to releasing the oxen.

His example was followed by those who had congregated about their leader, who was, for the moment, left standing almost alone. His personal appearance, and the part he will of necessity take in our narrative, warrant a more than passing mention.

In age he was young, not having seen more than twenty-seven or eight years of life. In appearance he was decidedly handsome, notwithstanding the long and severe journey, which had been far from improving the exterior of the participants. He was slightly above the average height, firm and muscular in build. His open and pleasant features were bronzed with exposure, though not sufficiently to detract from their rich, manly beauty. Clustering masses of chestnut-brown hair wreathed around his full brow, from beneath which, earnest, truthful blue eyes looked forth.

Slung over his back was a long, heavy rifle, and his belt bore a pair of handsomely-mounted pistols. The handle of a knife peeped forth from beneath his hunting-frock, so that it would seem the pioneers were fully prepared for the native denizens of the forest, or any foe of more civilized appearance who might oppose their honest designs.

The oxen, having satisfied their thirst at a mountain stream which ran close beside the stopping-place of the emigrants, were turned forth to graze upon the short grass for a few minutes, while the men partook of a hasty lunch. They were too excited to eat anything like a regular meal, and despite the entreaties of their leader (whose name, we should have mentioned, was Abner Ainsworth), they became immediately clamorous for an onward movement.

Many of them were anxious to move forward at their leisure, inspecting the valley as they went, and allowing the teams to come on more at their convenience. But Ainsworth, who had visited the locality before, would hear nothing of such a plan.

“Do no such thing,” he said, decisively. “Whenever we move it must be in a body—at least until we find out more of the people and place. The height of folly would be single parties wandering about in this valley, when it is certain that the last party of our countrymen were driven out and murdered in cold blood. True we have a better title than they, but even that may not be respected. Let me warn you, once for all, to be very cautious what you do and where you go until we are finally settled. Even then it will be well to use prudence and caution, for these Penamites are wily and treacherous.

Thus adjured the impatient ones reluctantly returned, and waited till the procession was in readiness to set forth, which was very soon. Then, in close order, and with arms prepared for any onset, the party took its way over the rich, level land, aiming at a point distant some half-dozen miles from their halting-place. The oxen were urged forward at their best speed, Abner Ainsworth, with half a dozen friends, leading the way, while the balance of the party spread themselves upon either flank of the waggons, and feasted their gaze upon the rare beauties of the region through which they were passing.

The face of the country, though scarcely presenting a “roll,” was still beautifully diversified by wood and plain. Rich groves, planted by nature’s own hand, were springing

up everywhere, and many of the watercourses were lined with bushes, some of which had reached a growth almost rivaling the forest-trees in magnitude. Yet there were evidences scattered all about that man had been there before them. Here and there the work of the settler's axe was to be seen; in other places the marks of the plough were not yet utterly effaced.

The party had travelled some four miles, and were rapidly nearing their destination, when the quick eye of Ainsworth caught sight of moving forms in one of the numerous groves which bordered their pathway. The forms were some distance in advance, but a short observation on the young captain's part convinced him that they were mounted men. More than this he could not determine.

The news was immediately communicated from one to another, and the little party closed up about the waggons, some weak and trembling with the first thoughts of conflict, others burning to mingle in the fray—all excited, save the young leader. He alone walked carelessly forward, keeping an eye upon the moving figures.

“ You need have no alarm,” he said, as some of those near him began to indulge in rather wild speculations. “ Those persons in the grove yonder, whoever they may be, do not count more than one-fourth of our own number. They may be far from friendly, but you may be certain they will not openly attack us.”

This assertion served to cool down and reassure the pioneers somewhat, and in a short time they were quite calm again.

“Friends or not,” Abner pursued, a few moments later, “they are coming out to meet us. We shall soon learn their purpose from their own lips. Let me advise you all to keep quiet, and leave most of the talking to me, provided they should prove hostile. Yet, as they may be spies, with professions of friendship, you cannot be too guarded in your intercourse until we are more certain of our reception.”

The young man walked along, and his companions followed. The horsemen, seven or eight in number, rode down at a sharp walk, and in a very few minutes had placed themselves in line across the emigrant’s road. Here they paused and awaited the coming up of the latter.

They had almost met when the apparent leader of the horsemen rode forward a pace, his hand resting upon the hilt of a rich sword beside him. As he did so Abner gave the order to halt, and stepped forward in turn, stopping beside the bridle of his interlocutor.

“Who commands this rabble?” the latter asked, curtly and somewhat contemptuously.

“I have that pleasure,” Abner responded, returning the gaze of the questioner.

The latter was a tall, dark man, of heavy build and sinister aspect. Still his features were regular, and he might have appeared to advantage, had his native dignity been called into play. But at present his only characteristics seemed arrogance and passion.

“Who are you, and where are you going?” he demanded, after taking a deliberate survey of the young

captain, and running his eye over the stern men who were grouped behind him. It was evident from the contraction of his brow that the prospect was not all agreeable to him.

“We are settlers, Sir,” Ainsworth returned respectfully. “We came from Connecticut, and purpose to settle in this valley, within two miles from this very spot. We are merely pioneers for a larger company, which will follow when the roads shall have become settled and their labour needed for the cultivation of the ground.”

“Ah-ha !”

There was a tone in the Pennamite’s voice which perplexed the young man immensely. Whether of scorn and derision or of partial satisfaction he could not at the moment determine. But he was not long left in doubt.

“So you Yankees haven’t had enough of trying to settle upon our lands,” he continued. “You’ve concluded to try it again it seems.”

“Not to settle upon your lands, Sir; by no means,” promptly responded the young captain. “We have, in all respects, a prior claim upon this valley, whether you refer to the King’s charter or our purchase of the Indians.”

“Neither of which claims are of any validity,” added the dark man. “That fact has been pretty generally settled, the ownership of the land traced out by our best courts, and the land is now leased to three men, of which I, John Bradbury, am one. So you see that in any case possession is nine points of the law—and we are in peaceable possession now; so I warn you to turn about and

hasten back to Connecticut. You will make nothing of any attempt to steal away our rights—it has been tried, to the sorrow of the Yankees!”

“I admit our people have been driven from here in times past,” replied the young man. “But we do not admit that any such fact invalidates our title to these lands. We came out under directions, and those directions we shall follow fully. We prefer peace, by all means; but, if that cannot be allowed, we must thrust the responsibility upon those who set the example, and let the God of hosts judge between us.”

“All very well, so far as talk goes, young man,” returned Bradbury. “But I will draw your attention to a few facts. We, as I said, have leased this land. In addition we have fortified ourselves, and shall certainly resist all encroachments upon our premises. Your two score men will hardly prove a match for two hundred. But to be lenient, we will give you to-morrow to rest yourselves and oxen, for you must have had a long, hard journey. If you are not ready to leave on the morning following you will be roughly dealt with. Your presence will not be tolerated a moment longer, under any circumstances. I have told you what to expect,” he added, by way of a finishing argument, “and if you choose to involve yourselves and the country in ruin the responsibility must be upon your own heads. I have given you fair warning, and there can be no plea for you tarrying in the country more than one day. During that time you will be allowed to hunt and fish, if necessary, to provide food for your return—since we have no dealings, whatever, with you.”

He turned away, as if to leave the place, but Abner detained him.

“Stay a moment, Sir,” he said. “You have told us what to expect, and it is no more than right that I should give you an answer. Yourself may have a something to expect. I shall make a formal ballot of these men whenever a good opportunity presents. I have no doubt they will vote to remain. But if a majority decide to leave the place they shall have their choice. I give you no hope of this, however. We have come to claim our rights, and I can assure that threats of violence will have little to do in determining our course of action.

“You’re right in that, cap’n—that’s a fact!” shouted twenty voices together, and the response was taken up from lip to lip till the whole band had expressed their feelings, and weapons began to bristle in a decidedly unpleasant manner.

So thought John Bradbury, as he cast his eye over the determined assembly, bit his lip and turned his horse from the spot.

“Remember, I’ve given you your time; if you ain’t off you’ll hear from me!” he repeated, hissing, as he rode away.

A score of decided ejaculations followed him, much more intense in signification than elegant in language. There were some mutterings among the followers of Bradbury, but they did not give expression to their thoughts, having seen quite enough of the Yankees to convince them that they were not to be trifled with.

The latter watched them till hidden among the trees, and

then their long pent-up wrath burst forth. Though descended from Puritan stock a passer would sooner have fancied almost any other extraction, had he judged from the epithets which were bestowed upon the Pennamites Curses, loud, deep, and hearty, filled the air, and adjectives of every possible significance, save good, were used in the connexion.

Abner Ainsworth used his exertions to restore order among the pioneers, and soon succeeded in a great degree. When the tumult subsided, he said :—

“ You have heard what passed, my fellows. Think of it calmly, and when we reach a stopping place the matter shall be put to a direct vote, as I promised John Bradbury. Do not be excited, but think of the matter calmly. From our first decision there must be no after appeal without ample cause.”

“ That’s right, cap’n,” said a hardy Yankee, who was trudging near his leader.

After considering the reception they had met, and the threats which had greeted them, Ainsworth altered his course, steering several points further to the south. In fact he struck for the nearest point on the river, which was not far distant.

In half-an-hour a site had been selected, the waggons drawn up, the cattle let loose, and a mass-meeting was at once organized. Abner ran his eye quickly over the lines, and when satisfied that every man was present, he said :—

“ You all know why we have come here, and what our reception is likely to be from those who have slain our brothers and townsmen. You have heard us warned to

leave the place, and threatened with a like fate if we do not. Now let all those who prefer staying here and fighting, to returning to Connecticut, signify the same by the raising of their right hands !”

The case was put in slow and careful words, so that all might fully comprehend the matter. But the men had no need for deliberation. Every one had set forth with a knowledge of what might be before him, and with fixed determination not to turn back unless circumstances should render it imperatively necessary.

Consequently, as Abner Ainsworth ceased speaking, thirty-eight hands were raised aloft. There were two who did not vote, but whose hands were rather hesitatingly raised as they saw the unanimity of their companions.

“That is quite sufficient,” said Abner, as the hands were counted. “It is voted that we stay here, then, and maintain the rights of ourselves and those who sent us. To do this we must fortify a position, as the basis of all future operations. I have chosen this bend of the river, where we can only be approached on one side by land. Here we can put up a palisade front before dark, and, if they allow us time, to-morrow we put ourselves in good trim to resist them from all sides.”

The men were enthusiastic in their cause, and, while palisades were being cut and transported to the place, Abner marked out the lines of his embryo fort. It was well situated, so long as the Pennamites had no force of boats, being in a bend of the river, where a palisade line of thirty yards would shut off the land approach to more than half-an-acre of dry land. This area would be amply

sufficient for the present needs of the emigrants as a place of refuge, and sanguine were the anticipations that it could be made sufficiently strong to resist all the attempts of their adversaries.

Before night the stakes had all been set, and a bullet-proof breastwork constructed behind them as a shelter to the riflemen. A hearty supper was then partaken of, a large fire built within the new-made stronghold, the cattle driven in, and sentinels posted so as to give notice of any stealthy or open approach on the part of their enemies.

CHAPTER II.

ABNER CATCHES STRANGE FISH.

THE night passed in silence, save as it was broken by movements and conversations within the Yankee palisades. At the return of daylight came the sentinels, who reported all quiet, so far as they had observed. There were no indications that the Pennamites intended any immediate demonstrations; on the contrary, the general impression was that two or three days would pass without any attempt to rouse the intruders from their stronghold.

A few, more adroit than their fellows, were sent up the river to inspect the vicinity of the Pennamite fort, and notice any unusual movements upon their part. They returned in due time, reporting every thing quiet and but one or two sentinels in view, who seemed to hold their posts rather as a matter of course than of caution.

This was deemed so satisfactory that small parties were allowed to go out in quest of fish and game, both of

which were said to abound in the vicinity. Meantime the work upon the fortifications was continued, and in the course of a few hours considerable additions had been made.

Abner had been superintending these operations, and had just seated himself for a comfortable smoke, when a man, who had obtained permission to fish for a short time, entered the inclosure, shouting, rather than saying :

“See here, cap’n, jes’ look o’ them !” and he hurled a dozen goodly fish at his superior’s feet. “I’ve jest pulled out them ’ere in less’n tew minits. Thar’s one hole up here whar’ thar’s anuff ter feed us all till ayteen hundred ! They’re greedyer than sharks—bit anuff tew take a feller’s hook right off’n his liue. Come on, cap’n ; you ain’t needed here for ten or twenty minits, and I know ye kin ketch more fish than any ten men iu the caboodle. We’ve plenty of salt, so what we don’t want tew eat ’ll keep ; and what’s better’n a lot o’ them fellers salted ?”

“How far away is this wonderful spot ?” asked Abner, who was really a proficient in the art, which he enjoyed amazingly.

“Not over twenty-five or thirty rods,” was the voluble response, “and whar’ we kin see everything what’s goin’ on. It’s jest a grand old place, cap’n, or my name ain’t Zeph Jones. Come on, cap’n, ye had’nt orter lose the chance.

Abner saw that his presence was not really needed at that time, and he had a strong desire to look around a little, as well as to engage in the fine sport Jones had so ardently pictured out. Fully armed, and equipped with

fishing-line and hooks, he followed the overjoyed Zephaniah from the inclosure, and within ten minutes the two were earnestly engaged in the sport, which seemed to prove even more exciting than had been anticipated.

But Abner was not in his usual luck, or it may be that matters of weightier moment drove the usual skill from his operations. Zeph Jones certainly landed two for every one that his superior caught, and a close count might have made the ratio even greater.

“I declare, Zeph, I can’t fish worth a cent!” he finally exclaimed, throwing down his pole. “I can’t get my mind upon it. Do you proceed with your work, while I take a short turn off around, and see what may meet my eye. Perhaps, then, I can make something by attempting to fish.”

“Let me go to, cap’n,” urged Zeph. “I ain’t had ’ary chance to speer about, since I got here!”

“Not now, Zeph,” returned Abner, smiling. “You are serving the general cause better where you are. I will take a short stroll about, and see that all is right. Possibly the wretches may be up to some of their sly dodges.”

From their present position the two Yankees had an extensive survey of the scenery and plains about them. But by ascending a short distance the view was extended even to the block-house which had been erected by the Pennamites. To survey the region in his enemies’ vicinity was Abner’s present object.

He had hardly taken half-a-dozen steps from his companion’s side when a strange object met his eye. It was a horse, careering wildly over the plain, heading now this

way and now that—steering at times directly towards the Yankees, and anon galloping away at sharp angles to his former course. In that fact there might not have been anything to particularly arrest the young man's attention ; but when he saw that the horse had a rider, and that rider a woman, all the interest in the spectator's nature was aroused. He quickly beckoned to his companion, and together the twain stood watching the strange course of the animal.

“What can that mean?” asked Abner, as the other reached his side.

“Don' know, I's sure,” returned Zephaniah, watching the movements with an interest equal to that of his superior. “I can't make out, 'less it be a spy.”

“No, Jones, it can hardly be that. No woman would undertake such a business, and see—the horse seems to go wherever he likes. By heaven, but she rides well !

The last exclamation was called forth as the maddened animal ended a long series of bounds and kicks. Though with much difficulty, the rider kept her seat, and when the animal shot off upon a dead run both the lookers-on held their breath for very suspense.

“She'll certainly be thrown,” said Abner, huskily. “I never saw anything so vicious. But we can do nothing to help her. The horse runs a dozen different ways in a minute. See, he comes this way now ; I do think he will jump into the river.”

So it seemed at the moment Abner spoke. The maddened animal rushed straight through a grove of small trees and rapidly neared the river's bank, some hundred

yards above the watchers. Seeing the river, or from some other cause, he swerved in time to avoid plunging into the yellow water.

The fair maiden now seemed to espy the two Yankees, and a faint cry for help came to their ears. As will be readily seen they were quite powerless to assist the endangered one. The horse still continued to bolt from side to side and change his course momentarily, so that even a well-mounted man would have been utterly at fault in the endeavour to follow him.

Suddenly the animal turned again, and plunged full in the direction of the river, this time so as to strike the bank within a few paces of where the two men stood. How their hearts beat with the excitement they could not subdue! Already they could see that the lady was young, and apparently very fair. Still, though all colour had long since forsaken her features, she continued her futile efforts to guide the plunging steed.

All in vain. Straight on he came, till within a yard of the river's brink. Then he stopped with a bound, and wheeled upon his course so abruptly that it seemed impossible he could have kept his feet. So it was, however, although the fair rider was not allowed to retain her seat.

So great was her momentum, and so abrupt the change, that, before any human calculations could have been formed, she fell, with a headlong splash, into the dark waters. Of course she disappeared from sight almost instantly, and when the Yankees reached the place, as they did with a few quick bounds, there were no indications that the sullen stream had swallowed up a human being within its bosom.

Ainsworth uttered an exclamation of horror, as his eyes rapidly scanned the surface of the river for some traces of her he had so lately seen disappearing there. Not even a ripple indicated the presence of any unusual thing.

“I’m afraid our efforts will amount to nothing,” he said. “We might dive, but the chances would be less than one to ten, even then. Quite likely she was either stunned or killed by the fall, and sunk immediately.”

“I guess whatever’s become of her we shan’t be much the wiser for’t,” returned Zeph, with a shake of the head. “O’ course the river’s deep, and she may be a good many rods from here, jest this blessed minit !”

The words caused Ainsworth to glance quickly down the stream, and it was fortunate that he did so. Some distance below he espied the momentary rising of a woman’s garment to the surface of the water. It disappeared almost as soon, but the very fact of his having seen it gave the young man a fresh impulse.

Hastily throwing aside his rifle, pistols, and powder-horn, he sprung past the startled Zephaniah, and in a moment was floundering in the stream, near to where the floating garment had made its appearance. The water was far too cold for comfort or even safety; but in his excitement the youth thought nothing of this. He only realized that a young woman was struggling in that icy flood, and every spark of chivalry in his nature was aroused at the thought.

For some time—it seemed an age of agony to the groping young man—he sought in vain for any further traces of the woman. The river was not especially deep

at this point, and he readily touched bottom by sinking his head below the surface. He had surely passed the identical spot, and floated some yards down stream. Still his search was not rewarded.

Hope was fast dying out in his heart, especially the hope of finding her in time to save her life. Indeed, he felt that there was scarcely a probability of her being alive at the present moment. In fact he was beginning to feel exhausted, and realized that he must soon return to shore.

All such thoughts were dissipated in a moment by the reappearance of the garment just in advance of him. With a sudden plunge he reached and grasped it. After a momentary struggle he succeeded in drawing the head and shoulders above water, and then, securing a firm hold of the insensible lady, he struggled towards the bank.

He had assistance now, for Zeph saw the prospect of success, plunged in, and assisted in bearing the body to the shore. Placing it carefully upon the bank, the two men knelt beside it, and sought for signs of life.

For some time it seemed they were doomed to disappointment. The features were almost like marble in whiteness and rigidity. Yet, they noticed even then that those features were unusually beautiful, and that the lady was dressed richly and with taste.

“Guess she must be a rich man’s darter,” said Zeph, who held one of her hands, which he was chafing. “Jest see these rings—none o’ yer everyday things, these ain’t!”

He raised a lily hand as he spoke, upon which glittered two rings; one a simple circlet of gold, the other more elaborately carved, and with a rich setting.

Abner bent over to examine the latter, for his quick eye had detected letters engraven upon it. Possibly here was something which might give them a clue to the lady's identity if she really were dead. There was a delicate scroll upon either side of the bezel, surrounding the initials "C. B." Those were quite distinct, so that there could be no mistaking them, but, beyond that, nothing was revealed.

"'C. B.,'" the young man repeated, as he proceeded with efforts to restore vitality. "Certainly I am no wiser now. 'B.' may stand for Bradbury; it would be singular if she should prove the wife or sister of John Bradbury!"

"That can't be," replied Zeph. "Don't you see that the lady ain't above twenty years old, and that old Jezebel is more than forty if he's a day.

Abner was upon the point of replying when there came certain signs of returning consciousness. The slightest indications of such a consummation were sufficient to drive all other thoughts from the two men's heads, and they laboured with renewed energy to restore her fully.

Their efforts were finally rewarded. The young lady's eyes opened; she smiled faintly, and immediately closed them again.

"Thank Heaven for that!" exclaimed Abner. "She is still alive, and in a fair way to become herself again!"

"I knew all the while that we'd bring her out all right," said his companion, drawing himself up and speaking in a very self-satisfied manner. "I've see'd jest sich cases afore. Joe Perkins fell intew Shanteguanty pond, once, when he and I war' fishin' thar'—"

The recital was here cut short by a heavy gasp—almost a groan—from the recovering lady. This was repeated several times, then ceased, and her eyes opened with a permanent expression of consciousness. She seemed to notice the wet and dripping appearance of her rescuers, and gathered that they had saved her from the cold flood.

“I owe my life to you!” she said, with a painful attempt to smile.

“Never mind that, my fine gal,” said Zeph, with an indescribable air. “We’ve been a tryin’ to make out who ye was from them rings on yer finger, but we didn’t find out anything.”

“Never mind that now,” put in Abner, who had tried to catch his impulsive companion’s eye. It makes no difference to us, now that you are likely to recover consciousness.”

The young lady smiled a very sweet smile, and after a short silence, she continued:—

“I shall not certainly withhold my name from those who have saved my life. I am known as Charlotte Bradbury!”

The men both started as the latter name reached their ears, and exchanged quick glances. Perhaps their suppositions had not been so far from right after all!

“John Bradbury is—”

Abner began the sentence, and then paused, uncertain in what manner to proceed. The lady came to his aid at once.

“John Bradbury is my father!” she replied, rather seeming to enjoy the momentary confusion of her auditors.

For some moments neither of the men spoke. Indeed they knew not what to say. Finally Abner began to consider that common politeness would require that he should make known his own individuality.

“ You may have learned that a company of settlers from Connecticut arrived in the valley yesterday,” he commenced.

“ So I was informed.”

“ We are representatives of that party,” said the young man. “ My name is Abner Ainsworth, that of my companion Zephaniah Jones.”

“ I knew that you were Yankees,” said the maiden, who spoke with more ease. “ I can assure you that my father is far from friendly to your project of settlement. But that is a matter for the men to settle, and not for us women. In any case I should be most blameable if I entertained anything but friendship for those who have saved my life.”

“ We have not come for war,” said Abner, “ though prepared for it, if need be, so far as our numbers admit. But, in any case, we do not war with women. Whenever you feel sufficiently recovered I will order one of my wag-gons to convey you home, since I see that your horse has disappeared ; and even if he were here he would be no safe conveyance for you.”

“ The poor fellow is perfectly kind ordinarily,” she returned. “ I had taken him out for my usual morning ride, and we were so unlucky as to ride over a hornet’s nest. The infuriated insects instantly attacked him, and the consequence was that wild race of which you witnessed a por-

tion. I was utterly unable to direct him, and the mere chance of being thrown into the river probably saved my life. But I shall hardly need to trespass upon your kindness so far. I can walk home in a short time, as the distance is not great."

"No, no; I shall hear nothing of such a plan," said Abner, decisively. "Do you go and order one of the waggons to be fitted up and brought here, Zeph; you may drive it yourself if you choose."

"I'll dew that, cap'n, and I'll dew the right thing by the gal," said Zeph, as he took his way toward the palisadoed camp.

While he was gone the young captain seated himself beside the rescued maiden, and they conversed freely for several minutes. There were many things of which they could speak, and not refer to the topics upon which their interests were at variance. As they spoke each discovered that in the other they had found a person of candour and refinement, with whom it was a pleasure to converse.

At length Abner cast his eyes about, and as he did so discovered several horsemen approaching the spot from the direction of the Pennamite block-house. As none of his own people were mounted it at once followed that this must be a force of the maiden's people.

He drew the attention of Charlotte to the fact.

The maiden turned in that direction, and a look of concern mantled her face as she replied:—

"They are certainly from the block-house, and my father is one of them. They probably became frightened at my absence, or it may be that the horse returned riderless.

“It is no wonder that they are alarmed,” returned Abner. “But, fortunately, we can satisfy their fears in a measure. If no harm comes of your involuntary bath you will be well again with a day or two of rest.”

The maiden did not reply, but kept an anxious gaze upon the approaching horsemen. They came at a keen trot, and very soon drew rein beside the waiting ones. Abner had risen to his feet, and lifted his cap gracefully as John Bradbury rode up.

“What is the meaning of all this?” he demanded, his gaze roving from one to the other with a dark frown. “How is it that I find my daughter and the captain of this cursed Yankee rabble upon such good terms, and her horse galloping about without a rider?”

“I was thrown from my horse into the river,” said Charlotte, agitatedly. “This man, with another of his company, rescued me and saved my life.”

“Ha! ha! Very romantic!” sneered the father. “And so you stop for a few hours to talk over the matter? Here, Charlotte, you may mount behind me, and we will find more appropriate quarters for you.”

“The lady is weak,” said Abner, seeing that the maiden shrunk from the mode of journeying prescribed by her stern father. “I have sent one of my men for a waggon. It will be here soon, and you can use it to carry her home. I am sure it will be much more proper than asking her to mount behind yourself in her present state.”

“You are, eh?” hissed the dark man. “And pray how long since you assumed sovereign rule in this valley. I supposed I had at least a right to command my own household!”

“I assume no authority,” said the young man, the hot blood flushing his cheek. “I merely made a suggestion, which I supposed you would be pleased to profit by.”

“You did, eh? I suppose you have taken that formal ballot of your men of which you spoke?”

“I have, sir.”

“And what is your decision?”

“Our decision is to remain,” replied the Yankee captain, firmly.

“Then we may as well consider war declared at once,” said the dark man, with a savage smile. “Consider yourself my prisoner!” and he pointed a pistol at the young man’s head.

Abner was utterly unprepared for any such treacherous movement. His own rifle and pistols were lying upon the ground above, where he had dropped them when about to plunge into the water. He glanced quickly around, but saw that there was no avenue of escape. While talking with the leader of the Pennamites he had been surrounded by the horsemen, and weapons levelled upon him from all sides.

Finding that escape or resistance was impossible, he coolly folded his arms, and returned the triumphant gazes of Bradbury.

“So this is the extent of your gratitude,” the young man said, in very calm tones. “’Tis very well, sir; it shows us the nature of those with whom we have to deal.”

Charlotte also joined her protestations against such manifest treachery and breach of good faith, but they seemed only to arouse the anger of her father.

“So my only daughter is in league with the Yankees!” he exclaimed. “A pretty pass, truly. But it’s all for the young man’s benefit. We’ll take good care of him, and make sure that no stray bullet reaches his tender heart; some of his fellows might like to be in similar circumstances within the next few days.”

“You won’t need to tie the fellow,” Bradbury continued, as Charlotte was assisted to the saddle in front of him. “I can hold the girl on, and five of you can make sure that he doesn’t run away.”

With a horseman upon either hand, before and behind, Abner took up his forced line of march. He felt keenly the ignominy of his present position—blamed himself for having been caught thus, when he might have known the character of those with whom he had to deal. But it was too late now for regrets; they already were within sight of the Pennamite block-house, and none of his comrades even dreamed of the untoward fate which had befallen their young captain.

CHAPTER III.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

CHARLOTTE BRADBURY was almost in a fainting condition when she reached home. That fact, however, seemed to disturb her unfeeling parent but little. He simply ordered her to her room, and not to leave it again until she was well.

This done, he entered the block-house, which was a large two-story building, made of logs, quite roughly put together, and evidently but just completed. As it was

situated upon a gentle swell of land, and had a look-out upon the roof, it was probably from this place that the approach of the Yankees had first been discovered.

After having been gone for some minutes Bradbury returned, accompanied by two Pennamites of villanous appearance, one of whom took Abner by each arm and led the way into their stronghold.

At first the young man felt inclined to resist, but a glance showed him how useless that would be. There was no hope of escape at present, but there might be an opportunity for him at some future time. Filled with these hopes he submitted to the strong grips of the exulting men, and answered such of the many questions showered upon him as seemed proper.

Followed by Bradbury he was led into the building and up a strong, broad staircase. This had a landing in a room which occupied two-thirds of the upper story, and which seemed the arsenal of the Pennamites, judging from the muskets and miscellaneous weapons strewn about. But the guard did not halt here. There was a strong oaken door leading to some apartment beyond, and to this their steps were bent.

Stout bolts and heavy bars were upon this door, and Abner saw at a glance that it had been intended for a prison—and why as a prison, if not for his companions' especial benefit? Clearly he was the first to occupy it.

These thoughts dashed through his brain as the door was being opened, and when he was thrust within there was no disappointment. The room was of moderate capacity, though not large. Its chief characteristic was

strength. Upon three sides were solid walls of logs, with only loop-holes for the admission of light and air. The wall dividing it from the outer apartment was composed of solid oaken plank, pierced here and there so that occupants of the prison might be scrutinized without being able to return the observation.

All these things Ainsworth noticed in a moment, as he was pushed in and the three entered after him, closing the door. Surely the prospects of escape were dwindling indefinitely.

“I think the fellow will be safe enough in here,” said Bradbury, glancing about with a satisfied air. “However, to make the matter doubly sure, I will see that his arms are well tied behind him. What say to that, boys?”

“It are the best thing wot kin be done,” returned one, with tones of satisfaction. “These Yanks is slippery fellers any way, but we’ll make sure of this one, plague take us if we don’t?”

“A pair of handcuffs would be the thing,” remarked Bradbury. “But, seein’ we hain’t got ’em, we’ll have to use a rope. One of you bring a piece!”

The rope was soon brought, and Abner’s hands effectually secured behind his back. When this was done Bradbury took a calm survey of the apartment, and as he retreated toward the door he remarked:—

“There, I’ll allow that all the Yankees this side of the Hudson couldn’t get out of there. It’s a pretty snug cage, young sir, but you needn’t suppose we intend to use you badly. Nothing of that. Only we’ll keep you safe,

and when your fellows get ready to seek Connecticut again you'll be at liberty to go with them."

Abner would have assured his interlocutor that such a time was far distant, but the latter withdrew as he spoke, and the prisoner heard the bolts and bars shooting into their places. It was anything but a pleasant sound, and the young man threw himself upon the bare floor to reflect and plan. Physically he felt decidedly uncomfortable. The long icy bath to which he had been subjected had chilled every bone and muscle in his body. His clothing was still dripping, and the apartment where he was confined was chilly. As a consequence he did not sit long, but rose to his feet and commenced rapidly pacing the room. Even then he could scarcely quicken the circulation sufficiently to keep his teeth from chattering.

Mentally he felt even more uncomfortable. Too well he realized the nature of those who had thus treacherously used him to think that they would leave his followers in peace for a single hour after they had raised a force sufficiently powerful to justify an attack. And he, who should be their leader, foremost in every struggle, was here a prisoner! That he was so was partly the result of treachery and partly the effect of his own carelessness. He blamed himself most for the present state of affairs. Not that he for a moment repented of assisting Charlotte Bradbury—oh no! Abner Ainsworth was but a man, and one to whom the friendly regards of woman were never unacceptable. The kind smiles and artless demeanour of the one he had rescued more than compensated for all that he had or might endure. So much he felt as an individual; as cap-

tain of the Yankee force in Wyoming valley he felt far differently. Slowly the forenoon passed away. At times he endeavoured to look from the loopholes, but, though a wide extent of country was presented to his view, it was not in the direction of his own palisadoed fort. Still he could contemplate the broad river, the sweetly smiling plain beyond, and fancy carried him onward in imagination to the time when all those lands should teem beneath the quiet industry of his New England countrymen.

From such reflections he was aroused by the entrance of a bulky negro with his dinner. The black surveyed him with a comical look, and when his curiosity seem satisfied he deposited the mug of water and few slices of cold food which he carried.

“How does they ‘spec’ you goin’ to eat dese?” he asked, finally, pointing to the edibles, and regarding the confined hands dubiously. “I’s sartin suah dis chile neffer kud eat widout fingers or some such fing!”

“I should think those who placed me here would allow me sufficient liberty of hands to eat my food,” Abner remarked, somewhat bitterly.

“So dey’d orter, by grashis,” said the black, sympathetically. “I’ll tell mass’r B’adberry of dis, and ax him to cum up an’ take dem orf.”

So saying, the negro edged his way out, keeping a jealous eye upon the Yankee, who evidently had been painted to him in exaggerated colours. The door closed, Abner heard his retreating footsteps, and waited for some time to see if he was not to be released from the unpleasant bonds. But an hour passed, and, as no one came, he con-

cluded to satisfy his hunger, and bide his time. The attempt to eat was necessarily awkward, but he succeeded in a measure, and resumed the pacing of his cell.

The level beams of the sun shone in at the loop-holes, forming disks of light upon the opposite wall, and still the prisoner paced his narrow limits. He was more comfortable now, as the heat of his body had dried the wet clothing he wore, and the first sensations of dismay at his unhappy fate were wearing away. He had listened all the afternoon for sounds of fighting from the camp of his followers, but thus far all remained quiet. He was getting to be a philosopher, too, and reasoned that his own mysterious disappearance would put his companions upon their guard, and prevent any general surprise. Of course they would occupy their time in making their position as nearly impregnable as possible.

All his philosophy was blown to the winds, however, very soon. He was standing near one of the loop-holes, looking forth, when a rustling attracted his attention, and something fell to the floor with a thump. Looking around he saw that it was a scrap of paper, wrapped about a stone. He hastened to pick it up, but found that he was still confined. Seating himself near it, however, he soon succeeded in unwrapping the paper, which was wound about an ordinary pebble. He turned to the paper, which was soiled and crumpled, but upon which were several lines of delicate writing. Straightening it out as much as possible he placed it on the floor, and then proceeded to study its contents. It was written with pencil in a delicate woman's hand, and ran thus:—

“MY FRIEND—I feel that some restitution is due to you for the ungentlemanly manner in which you were brought to this place. My father certainly showed no consideration in the affair, so that I shall not hesitate to act from the dictates of my own heart. I have engaged the coloured man, Jonas, who brought your food at noon, and he will exchange places with you on bringing your supper. The details he will give you at that time. He will help you to leave the block-house, and after that you must rely upon yourself. I owe my life to you, and if I can serve you without blame I shall certainly do so.”

There was no signature to the note, nor did Abner need such to tell him whence it came. He bent over and kissed it passionately, then carefully re-read the lines. To describe his emotions would be more than difficult. Hope, fear, and anxiety were his ruling passions. Hope that he would regain his liberty and rejoin his companions—fear that Charlotte would implicate herself, and thus bring upon her head the anger of her unscrupulous father—anxiety lest something should happen to interfere with the plan she had been forming.

He carefully secreted the paper and pebble, then stood before the loop-hole, anxiously watching the sinking of the sun. How slowly it seemed to go down!

At length its disk touched the top of a distant mountain, and, with a great sigh of relief, Abner turned from his watching, and began to pace the room again.

A few moments later he heard steps ascend the stairs, cross the outer room, and pause before his door. So silent was all in that deserted building that he knew one

of the comers to be scrutinizing him through a hole in the wall while the other was unfastening the door. It could hardly be the negro who came. If so he was not alone, and there was nothing to hope from his endeavours! The prisoner's heart beat excitedly as he waited for the door to open.

When it did open, John Bradbury entered the room, followed by a soldier attendant. He cast a keen glance about the slowly-darkening apartment, tested the bonds of his prisoner, and tossed a blanket in one corner.

"Make yourself comfortable to-night," he said, with mock politeness, "and to-morrow will probably see you with companions."

With these words he turned from the room, and the prisoner made no attempt to detain him. Abner was looking for the coming of another; but in any case he would not care to bandy words with such a man as Bradbury. For half-an-hour he waited, and at the end of that time the apartment was so dark that Abner could scarcely discern the opposite walls.

At that moment he heard a step crossing the outer room. Certainly that lumbering gait could belong only to the negro. With feelings which no pen could describe the prisoner waited till the door was opened, and then he saw that there was no mistake. It was, indeed, the ebony Jonas, though so concealed from view by a slouching hat and enormous muffler that it required a close glance to be certain of his identity. Abner stepped back a pace as the African entered and closed the door.

The latter bore a large slice of bread and a tin vessel

filled with water, which he carefully deposited upon the floor, and then approached the prisoner.

“Masser Yankee want to go away?” he asked, in a confidential whisper.

“Just show me a chance to go,” was the only reply.

“Den see here,” pursued the African; “you mus’ hab your han’s loose, and knock me down w’en I come in, an’ tie my han’s wid dat rope wot’s on you! D’ye see?”

Abner thought he did see, all but the first part of the proposition. But the negro assisted him out of that dilemma by untying the knots, and when that was done the prisoner readily freed his hands.

“Now I’ll call it dat I’s a’ready knocked down,” said the fellow, prostrating himself upon the floor. “’Cos I’s no likin’ for a clip wid dose mauls ob yourn. You mus’ tie my han’s an’ den stop my mouf, so dat I can’t make berry big noise!”

“But before I go,” said Abner, his former fears returning, “tell me if it will not be dangerous for you or for Miss Charlotte? Will not John Bradbury discover your agency in my release?”

“How will he?” asked the negro, rolling up the whites of his eyes, which were about the only features visible in the darkness. “Me tell him I come in—dat you sprung ’pon me, and lef’ me dis way.”

Then lowering his voice to a confidential whisper again, he added:

“Massa’ll beliebe it all, ’cause he t’ink you Yanks am de berry old scratchify hisself! Dat’s wot make him tie your hands, an’ come up to see if you was all right, jes’ a

spell go. Now don' be waitin' for nuffin', 'cos de way be all cl'ar now."

Thus admonished, Abner proceeded to bind the negro. He was careful not to draw the bonds too tight, but at the negro's request made them secure. To find a gag was more difficult, since the place afforded nothing of the kind. However, the blanket which Bradbury had brought for Abner's accommodation was made use of, and answered the purpose in a measure.

His own cap was then exchanged for the darkey's slouched hat, and the huge muffler appropriated to the purpose of disguise. Thus accoutred, the metamorphose was perfect, and if Abner could avoid a close scrutiny from those Pennamites whom he might encounter, he felt little concerned but that he could regain the camp of his followers undetected. In any case he would have an open field, and he certainly should not submit to a second imprisonment without the utmost exertions for freedom.

Imitating the negro's gait and general appearance, he left the room, closed and barred the door, making considerable tumult in so doing. This done he groped his way to the stairs, down which he clattered, and reached the door leading to the open air. Several of the Pennamites were seated in the lower part of the block-house, and the few words to which Abner gave ear convinced him that it was a council. Much as he would have delighted to overhear their plans, it would have been suicidal to attempt it. He therefore shuffled to the door, which he succeeded in opening after one or two efforts, and passed out.

A sentinel stood upon the outside, who seemed quite satisfied that only the negro was passing, and who made no attempt to stop him. Half-a-dozen rough fellows were seated around a fire near by, playing cards and singing vulgar songs, who paused as he approached, and seemed to regard him with especial interest. Not caring to cultivate their acquaintance, he bore away to the right, which one of them noticed, and sprang to his feet.

“Here, nigger, whar’ you goin’?” he shouted. “Come back here and play me a game o’ poker!”

“Wait a minit!” returned Abner, assuming the negro’s tones as nearly as possible.

Thus speaking he lumbered off at a pace to indicate a speedy return. But the questioner did not seem satisfied, and followed him even more speedily. There seemed but two courses open to the young captain. He must run the risk of recognition in the midst of his enemies, or take to his heels, either of which promised anything but safety. Without looking upon either hand he kept on, and had left the block-house at some distance when the persistent follower overtook him, and placed a hand upon his shoulder.

“See here, Jonas, whose coat you got on?” the fellow demanded.

There could be no further evasion. The Yankee captain looked around, and saw that they had passed from the immediate view of his enemies. At that instant the fellow partially pulled him back, and brought his visage round, so as to peer into the young man’s face.

Abner loosened his hold with a quick movement. Then

gathering all his strength he struck the astonished inquirer a blow which might well have felled an ox. The victim turned a half-summersault, and sunk to the earth a quivering mass. Without pausing to notice the work he had done, the pseudo-African hurried from the spot.

Abner had the advantage of distance from the block-house, about which many of the Pennamites swarmed, like bees about their hive. Still the act was not unobserved, and one or two hastened to the fallen man's relief. The alarm soon spread, and in a few minutes twenty men were upon the search.

But the brief time he had gained was well used by the fugitive. Striking out towards one of the nearest patches of woodland, he gained its shelter, and then shaped his course directly towards the camp of his followers. He found upon glancing back that he could distinguish nothing of the men who might be in pursuit of him. Trusting that his own movements were equally involved in shadow, he sped onward. He had not made more than half the distance, however, when he stopped and bent his ear to the ground. Surely he had heard something, and a moment's silence convinced him that it was no more nor less than horsemen upon his track! This was no pleasant discovery, since the fugitive was unarmed, and upon that unbroken plain he would stand but little chance with a gang of mounted men.

Quickly he cast his eyes about, and at the distance of a few rods he espied a dark line of bushes. Hastening in that direction he found that it was a small brook, bordered by knots of willow. Here he thought it possible to find

a hiding-place, as the sound of hoofs, rapidly approaching, gave him warning that the danger was becoming imminent. He very soon found a spot which suited him fully, and into this he crept without delay.

Scarcely was he concealed when one of the riders went dashing by within a few feet of him, then turned, and riding into the willows peered earnestly around through the waving branches. Evidently satisfied that the one he sought was not there, he rode on again, muttering to himself as he went. The others had swept by at various distances, and Abner saw that it was their intention to scout that part of the plain over which he would be most likely to travel in reaching his own camp.

As he preferred remaining where he was to meeting them upon their return, he quietly settled himself down to wait till they should have passed him again. Nor was he obliged to tarry long. In less than fifteen minutes he heard the tramping of their steeds, and presently a rough voice sang out:—

“He ain’t in these bushes, is he, Bill?”

“Wasn’t when I came down—I looked there,” responded the one addressed.

The interrogator urged his horse through the bushes, peering in and slashing upon all sides with his sword, but finding nothing, though some of the blows almost reached the hiding Yankee.

Finally he, too, seemed satisfied that no living thing was there, and slowly followed his companions, as they rode sullenly back towards the Pennamite block-house.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST BATTLE.

No sooner was the young captain satisfied that those in search of him had returned to their fortifications than he crawled from his concealment, and made the best of his way towards the camp of his followers. How he should find things upon his return was all a matter of uncertainty, but he allowed this to trouble him very little. He felt positive that no decided movement had yet been made by the possessors of the valley, and if he could but regain his gallant little command, it really seemed that they might defy the efforts which would certainly be made for their ejection. Filled with such sanguine hopes, he drew near the palisaded retreat.

He had approached within a few yards of the palisades when a sharp challenge met his ear, and he fancied the muzzle of a rifle looked out coldly through the loop-holes which had been provided.

"Who be ye, and what's wantin'? Tell quick, or I'll let hev'!" pursued the unseen speaker.

"Captain Abner Ainsworth!" the officer returned. "Want to come into my quarters?"

"Boys, the cap'n's come!" went from mouth to mouth through the camp, and before the officer could really determine upon his reception, twenty stalwart fellows had bounded over the sharp barriers, and sprung forward to greet him with welcome.

Shaking such hands as he could grasp, the captain made

his way towards the inclosure. But he soon encountered Zephaniah Jones, and that worthy would not be shaken off till his recital was ended.

“By gravy, cap’n,” he began, proceeding without break or stoppage till he finished, “if ever thar’ war’ a skart feller it was jist mc, when I cum’ out with them yere oxen. I druv’ up purty near whar’ I’d left you and the gal, and I looked all round for ye, but couldn’t find anything—hide nor hair. Then I begun tew be skeert. I didn’t know but the gal was the old boy himself, what’d tuk that way to kerry ye off. By’m-by I found yer gun and pistils—then I knew that ye hadn’t gone off without help. Wal, some o’ the boys had gone out with me, and while I’s gittin’ yer gun and things they found the tracks of a dozen horses or so. Then we knowed as wal as we wanted tew what had become of ye. Nothin’ would ha’ suited the boys better’n to gone up and pitched right intew the tarnal Panners, but Leftenant Billin’s wouldn’t let us go; reckoned you’d come back all right, and so made us wait. But we sent out spies, and found out the place was full of the pesky critters. Hows’ever, I reckon we’d a gone up in about an hour, if you hadn’t come back. But ye ain’t hurt, be ye, cap’n?”

Abner assured them all that he was uninjured in body, and then requested them to retire, while he talked over matters with Lieutenant Billings, who had been in command during the day. Having assured themselves that their commander was safe among them and uninjured, they dispersed, seeking their several stations and employments, for they had not ceased to labour with the fading of day.

The lieutenant of the party, Oliver Billings, was a man whose experience had been wide-spread during more than forty years of life. He possessed many abilities, and would have been duly commissioned captain of the company, had not the general voice been so strong in favour of Ainsworth. As it was, Billings refused to accept the station to which his age and experience entitled him, and with worthy magnanimity insisted upon the office being given to Abner.

Upon the present occasion he met the young man with a hearty shake of the hand, and, after a few sentences had been passed, proceeded to explain his movements during the day.

“You see I have completed the palisade around the camp,” he said, indicating the various works as they passed. “I have left the necessary gateways, and fixed strong props to secure the sections in their place in case of an attack. Another thing I saw, that we needed boats very much, and so I set the men to work. Dug-outs will answer our purpose very well, and I have four of them constructing. They are not done yet, but will hold all of us when they are. We have paddles already made, so that we can cross the river if need be. We hope to maintain our present position, but you know, captain, that we may fail, and then we shall want to change our base.”

“Certainly, certainly, Oliver ; you have done better than I could. Now for a supper and a smoke, after which I will seek a little rest. I suppose you have a strong picket force out. We shall have a visit from them in the morning, if not before.”

“We are all right against any surprise,” returned the lieutenant. “I feared as much, and took measures accordingly. By the way, we will have a venison broil for supper. One of our men brought down a fine buck to-day.”

The steak was soon prepared, and after his scanty fare during the day it seemed to Abner that he had never tasted anything so delicious. He ate quite heartily, visited the outposts to satisfy himself that all was right; then returned, took a long smoke from his clay pipe, and put his weapons in perfect order before retiring.

When morning came he was awakened by the sound of workmen chipping merrily away upon the canoes. Roll-call over, they were exhorted to diligence and firmness if attacked during the day, after which fresh details were sent out to supply the places of those who had been upon duty during the night.

Scarcely an hour had passed after sunrise before a signal from the sentinels called every man to his feet in a moment, rifle in hand. Upon reaching a look-out it was seen that several men upon horseback were making down in a circuitous direction towards the palisades. Their purpose was evidently to spy out, more fully than they had yet done, the place, and learn the position and purpose of the Yankees.

This purpose was made more apparent soon after, when a handkerchief was produced, and fastened to a sword. With this emblem of peace raised aloft the party rode forward until they were within a few yards of the fortifications. Considering that they were quite near enough for all practical purposes, Abner shouted:—

“Halt, with that flag! Halt, or we will fire upon you!”

The horsemen seemed a little surprised at this greeting, but pulled up their horses, while John Bradbury, who was in advance, said:—

“You would not fire upon a flag of truce, I trust. I thought you Yankees were persons of the deepest honour!”

“You are quite near enough,” replied Abner. “Make any communication you wish, and then draw yourselves away, for I have not forgotten your treachery of yesterday!”

Recognizing the speaker at this moment, Bradbury seemed a little nonplussed for a few moments. But his natural effrontery came to his aid, and in tones which were rather plausible he continued:—

“So you are safe with your fellows, sir captain! I’m glad of that, for I feared harm would result from your rashness. My object is merely to request you again to leave, since you are aware that the stipulated time has long since expired. I trust you are ready to depart immediately.”

“We are prepared to defend ourselves, as you will have ample proof if you are not away directly!” was the decisive answer. “You have already initiated war, and the consequences will be upon your own head, whatever their nature.”

Whether fearful that some unseen foemen might open fire upon them, or having seen all that they wished, the riders wheeled and galloped away towards the Pennamite

fort. When well out of hearing Abner called his followers about him, and addressed a few words to them :—

“Those who have just left us,” he said, “though coming under the protection of a flag, are no doubt spies upon our position. If what they have learned justifies them in the attempt, we may expect soon to hear the whistle of their bullets. All that I ask of you, then, is to remember that we are fighting for our rights, and obey the commands that you may receive. Now busy yourselves upon the boats till such time as your services may be required.”

In order to stimulate their exertions he took an axe, and applied himself to hewing away the inside of the boat nearest him. For another hour all was silence, and the work rapidly progressed. At the end of that time, sentinels, who had been posted in trees beyond the walls of the camp, hastened down, and reported that the Pennamites were under weigh, in full force. They were at once admitted, the gates closed and barred, and forty men, silent and determined, took their stations behind the earthy breastwork. As they stood, the muzzles of their rifles were pushed through loop-holes or chinks in the palisades; and when it was considered that those men were nearly all marksmen, and that their weapons commanded every foot of the approaches to their stronghold, it would have seemed a desperate undertaking for any ordinary body of men to dislodge them.

But the Pennamites, or at least their leaders, did not seem to consider the difficulty of the undertaking. Men had been provided with ladders for scaling the walls, and the Yankees saw that it was intended to carry their works

by a single deadly assault. This plan, if any, must succeed, and Abner felt a momentary alarm as he saw that the enemy outnumbered his own men at least three to one. But when he had taken a quiet survey of his own brave fellows, all fears vanished. Their long rifles lay calmly across the bank, waiting till an enemy should present himself within range.

“Do not fire until your mark is certain,” he said, passing along the line; “especially aim for those who carry the ladders—they are the most important men in the force. The fall of one of them will embarrass his fellows, and some one else must stop to pick up his ladder, or leave behind them the means of reaching us.”

Steadily onward the foe came, pausing at the distance of four hundred yards to listen to the plans of their leaders. Whatever they may have said occupied but a few minutes in the delivery. Swords were pointed towards the palisadoed fort, lusty cheers broke from the ranks, and then the column set forward again.

They came on with a front but four abreast, thus presenting a more contracted mark for the Yankee sharpshooters. In the foremost ranks came the men with ladders, the officers having dismounted and hurrying along beside the men. All came at full speed, and soon Abner judged that a volley from his men might be of service in checking their approach.

The company had been divided into four sections, and to the first of these the dread command to fire upon their fellow-beings was given. Ten rifles burst forth in flame and smoke, and their messengers went howling across the plain.

All looked to see a number of the enemy fall, but in this they were disappointed. Not a man staggered, and with fresh cheers they burst forward at even greater speed. While the crestfallen section was reloading, the others poured in their volleys, and with more effect. Two or three of the Pennamites fell, and as many crawled from the ranks, evidently wounded.

Abner was surprised and mortified at the ill-success of his first volley, for he realized that such shooting would but excite the anger and valour of their opponents. Certainly not more than thirty rods now separated them, and even at this distance he could see that they were sanguine of immediate success.

“ Aim low ! ” he said, passing along the line, and arresting the arms of such as seemed disposed to fire hastily. “ This is our last shot—let every bullet tell ! ”

But those sturdy pioneers from Connecticut had little need to be cautioned further. They were mortified at their own ill-success, and the second volley was given with more precision. Under its cutting influences half a score of Pennsylvanians tumbled to the ground, and as many of the ladder-carriers were among the victims, the column was thrown into considerable confusion.

At that critical moment Abner discharged his own rifle with deadly aim, and as his followers kept up a rattling volley, which felled now and then one of the almost stationary force, he began to feel hope once more.

Suddenly a burst of flame ran along the confused column, and a shower of bullets pattered about the green timbers.

“ Good!” ejaculated Abner, as he saw that confusion was reigning in the midst of their enemies. “ If they stop there to fire at us their fate is sealed. Give it to them lively, boys, but be careful not to throw away lead!”

But the officers soon put a stop to this desultory firing, and urged the men forward. Grasping their ladders, they made a fresh rush, and crossed half of the intervening distance, when the fire became too deadly, and, without regard to orders, they broke and fled, pursued by the parting shots and hearty cheers of the Yankees!

“ Pity we hadn’t the men to follow ’em up,” said Zeph Jones, wiping the perspiration from his brow, and anxiously regarding the defeated Pennamites. “ I dew say ’tis a tarnal pity, ain’t it, cap’n?”

“ So it is,” returned Abner. “ The first defeat is always the most likely to produce a panic, and if we had but a hundred stout men I really believe we could sweep the valley at this moment. But we haven’t, and it would be madness to attempt anything with our present force. We must stay here behind our timbers, and see what their next move will be.”

On reviewing the scene of conflict it was certain that the loss had been heavy to the assaulting party. Eleven or twelve forms could be counted, lying upon the short green grass, either killed or too severely wounded to move from the place. Since those who could walk had accompanied their companions in the retreat, it was safe to estimate their total loss at twenty killed and disabled.

Of the defenders, but one had been wounded, and that so slightly in the shoulder that he knew nothing of it until the

firing had ceased. His injury was immediately dressed as well as might be, for every man had taken appliances for his comfort in case of being wounded. When this was done the man declared himself quite ready for another conflict with the enemy.

After all these matters had been attended to, Oliver Billings sought his superior's side.

"Well, captain, they are handsomely disposed of for the present," he remarked, a smile lighting up his bronzed features. "That experience has cost them pretty dear, and my candid belief is that the men cannot be brought to an immediate repetition of it."

"But you do not think they will give up the attack altogether?" said Abner.

"Far from it, Ainsworth, very far. What I mean is that they will vary the plan and details until—until they succeed in getting the best of it, or become convinced that we are too much for them."

"And which of those conclusions do you fancy they will arrive at?" the young commander asked, almost nervously.

"I haven't formed a conclusion," returned Billings. "You can reason the matter just as well as I—likely better. In some of the most essential points they have the advantage over us. They have more men—understand the nature and peculiarities of the valley better than ourselves—and have all the external influences in their favour. I think our men may be more determined, better marksmen, and in a close struggle more desperate and reliable. But we are penned up among ourselves, and when our food

and ammunition shall fail, we must fail. It is barely possible we may hold out, but my fears are to the contrary, although I speak differently to the men."

"Certainly, we must give them encouragement so long as there remains any prospect of ultimate success. Still, I have hopes. True they outnumber us now, but a few such conflicts will serve to draw the balance more close. We have secured a position, and if nothing more, we can show them that New England men mean to maintain their rights."

Their conversation was dropped here, and after the late battle had been discussed, and the enthusiasm of the men raised to the utmost pitch, they voluntarily returned to their work upon the dug-outs. This was fast approaching completion, and one of them had already been pronounced ready for service, when a quick warning broke from the lips of a sentry.

CHAPTER V.

YANKEE AND PENNAMITE.

BOTH of the Yankee officers hastened towards the place whence the alarm had come, and found that it had been given by Zephaniah Jones.

"Whew!" cried that worthy, rubbing his hands with delight; "seems the pesky raskils ain't satisfied yit, but are a comin' back for some more of our blue pills! Look off intew them maples, cap'n!"

The river above the palisadoed retreat ran nearly in a direct line for fifty or sixty rods, the banks being fringed

with natural groves of sycamore and maple. Within a short distance these had been cut away by the keen axes of the pioneers, and the timber adapted in the building of their fortifications. But at the distance of seventy-five yards the original growth remained, and the Pennsylvanians were now making a cover of it to approach the place from which they had been so surely repulsed in open field.

Abner regarded the moving forms for a moment, until satisfied that an attack was really intended, and then hurriedly placed his men to receive the enemy. But here a difficulty occurred. The attack was being directed upon one of the angles of the palisades, where not more than fifteen or twenty rifles could be brought to bear upon the assailants. Even this fact was turned to good account by the Yankees. The most expert marksmen were placed in front, and the rest formed a second line, to reload the guns, as they should be discharged by those in front.

These matters attended to, and a few hurried instructions given to the men, Abner placed himself at one of the openings where he could survey the movements of the foe. They had paused in the edge of the wood, keeping concealed among trees and stumps so far as possible.

"After one sad experience," the young captain from Connecticut remarked, "they begin to learn wisdom. If they had attacked us in this manner at first, I really think they might have succeeded in scaling the walls. Possibly they may in the present instance, though I doubt it if our men keep up a sharp fire."

“D’ye see that feller’s sassy profile layin’ out from behind that tree?” asked Zeph, indicating a person who, upon all-fours, was steadily surveying the palisades. “Jest let me try him once, cap’n; ’twould do me good to draw a bead on that ugly phiz of his!”

Before Abner could make any reply, there came a rapid volley of musketry from the edge of the wood. One bullet knocked Zeph’s hat from his head, and cut away a lock of hair, but otherwise the volley was perfectly harmless.

Under the cover of its smoke the assailants rushed forward with loud yells. Startled by the suddenness of the onset, those behind the timbers discharged their weapons. But so concealed were the Pennamites by their own smoke, and so hasty the discharge of the Yankee weapons, that no visible effect was produced.

There were loud yells of derision from the assailants as the volley passed harmlessly, and hoarse shouts of the officers, urging them forward with the utmost speed, were perfectly audible within the enclosure. For a moment it really seemed that they must gain the walls.

But scarcely had the foremost made half the distance between their woody covert and the goal of their ambition when the defenders were prepared to pour in their second fire. As in the conflict of the morning they felt galled by the rashness of their first attempt, and if the opening volley flew wide the second did not.

One by one the foremost of the assailants went down before that steady and remorseless fire. Half-a-dozen men had fallen, and the advance wavered, when an officer sprung to their head and waved his sword. In a moment he was lying upon the ground beside those who had previously fallen.

The panic was now complete. The Pennamites fled to the wood again, from which they kept up a scattering and harmless fire upon the Yankee palisades. But this soon ceased, and silence reigned where the storm of battle had rolled for a short time.

An hour passed in silence, when it became evident that the Pennamites still lingered in the wood, beyond easy rifle-shot of the Yankees. A close observation was taken, and the latter soon became convinced that the enemy were intrenching themselves a short distance within the wood.

The results of such a measure were obvious. The beleagured—men of steady habits—would be unable to procure wood or grazing for their cattle. They would be exposed to incessant attacks, and sharpshooters could lie in wait for any unguarded exposure they might make of their persons. Such a state of things was decidedly unpleasant to the contemplation of Abner, and he resolved to thwart it by some means. For this purpose he sought Oliver Billings, and the two sat down to a consultation.

The young captain would have urged an immediate attack upon the enemy, sallying forth and risking all upon one decisive engagement. But from this he was dissuaded by the cooler counsels of the lieutenant.

“ True, that will settle the matter at once and for the present time, at least,” he said, when Abner had laid his plans before him, and asked his advice. “ But then you must recollect that even if we are victorious it will cost us several, perhaps half, our men. We can ill afford to spare a single one at this time. Better to thwart them in any other way than to risk all upon so mad a blow.”

Abner could not fail to perceive the truth and force of this reasoning, and he admitted the same. He urged the

lieutenant to mark out some plan of action, but this the latter quietly refused.

"I have no idea at present of what will be best for us," he said. "Besides it is not my place to plan; I can counsel, after you have formed an idea of your own, and something may occur to my mind soon. In the mean time I have all confidence in your judgment. While I see to the preparation of dinner do you use your brain, and I wager my rifle we shall show these bastard Quakers a taste of Yankee strategy yet!"

Left to himself, Abner sauntered down to where the dug-outs still lay in process of completion. One of them was already prepared for the river, and an hour's work would finish the others. Then he walked down and looked over the river. Whatever his thoughts may have been did not readily appear, since he kept his own counsels, and gazed away into the distance for several minutes. Then he turned and sought the side of Billings.

"Set the men to work upon the boats when they have finished their dinner," he said. "I am going across the river to see what prospects there may be for us over there."

"What is that, cap'n?" put in Zeph Jones, with the freedom of a privileged follower. "Goin' 'cross the river? Course you won't go alone; can't I go along, too?"

"You can take the boat that is finished, and help row me across," said Abner; "but I shall go perfectly alone after reaching the other side. I am revolving a plan in my mind, and if it promises to work we shall all make an unexpected move before to-morrow morning."

Several had gathered about their young leader with open-mouthed wonder, but none heard the secret they coveted.

"Now, men, you will not, probably, be molested during the afternoon," he continued, "and I wish you to complete those boats as soon as possible, since they will play an important part in my contemplated movement. No doubt I shall return within two hours, possibly sooner."

The men eagerly promised compliance, and asserted that the boats should be ready within the shortest possible time. All seemed satisfied with the exception of one—a tall, lean Yankee, who sidled up to Abner, and in a nasal drawl demanded :—

"Reckin you karkilate tew tek us over thar', don't ye, eap'n?"

The "eap'n" did not reply, but advised the fellow to eat his dinner and get to work upon the boats, adding that he would know all in due course of time.

"I reckined like 'nuff tha's what ye's up tew," the undaunted fellow replied, "'eause ye know we've got to hev' feed for the oxen, or they'll get leaner'n a rail fence in less'n a week. They can't feed here, without them yere rapseallions tryin' tew drive 'em off, or suthin' another."

Having "freed his mind" he sauntered away, and was soon disposing of cold beef and brown bread at an alarming rate. Abner followed his example so far as satisfying his appetite went, and then he prepared for the mission he had undertaken.

It was something of a task to get the heavy boat into the water, but when it was done all hands were gratified to find that it answered their most sanguine expectations. True, nothing but axes had been used in its construction, and the rough workmanship was not calculated to attract an admirer of beauty, but it floated, and that was all which the men required.

Seating himself in the stern, Abner directed the course

of the unwieldy craft diagonally across the river, while four stout rowers sent it at quite tolerable speed over the silvery waters. The course which they had taken screened them effectually from any observation upon the part of the Pennamites, the palisades interposing between the entire route and present position of the rabid foe.

Abner had noticed these facts before setting out, and he had also planned that his entire route should be beyond the reach of their vision. Bidding the men in charge of the boat to return at once, and agreeing upon signals whenever he should desire to recross the river, the bold adventurer separated from his wondering comrades.

Still keeping upon the same general course, and giving every suspicious object in his path a close scrutiny, the young man reached the borders of a woodland, distant half-a-mile from the river. But the tract of ground over which he had passed recalled sad memories. Here his people had settled six years before, and here they had calculated upon building up a flourishing colony. But the savages had fallen upon them, many had perished, and the remainder were driven forth.

He, too, had been one of that unhappy band, and, as the horrible scenes which had been then and there enacted recurred to his memory, he dashed away a tear. But mastering his emotion, he muttered:—

“Never mind what’s past. Maybe we shall fare worse than that body did, though it’s a mercy that there are no women along with us to suffer if we suffer. True, woman’s society is more tolerable than that of men constantly.”

Then he thought of the proud Pennamite’s daughter whom he had rescued from drowning, and who had rewarded him so promptly, even at the risk of unpleasant consequences to herself.

“Bless her!” he murmured, “she’s a noble girl, and if I could see her for a few moments I would delight to tell her so in person. Besides, I wonder what became of the honest old negro! I trust no harm befell him, though I should really prefer not to be found in a corresponding situation.”

While these thoughts had been passing through his mind, Abner had made his way quite rapidly in the direction he had taken. The forest in which he was now travelling stretched around in the segment of a vast circle till it touched the river bank nearly opposite the Pennamite village and block-house. Then it lined the shore for some miles above in an unbroken stretch, the character of the wood giving indications of the fertile nature of the soil.

He had now reached a position nearly opposite that in which the enemies of himself and people were fortifying themselves, and here he paused to listen. All was silent within the dull line of palisades, which seemed rising from the water. But at a short distance above he could hear the sound of axes, and occasionally discern a moving form among the trees.

Satisfied that his followers were in no immediate danger he proceeded upon his route, keeping near the open land, so that he could note all that might transpire upon either bank. His gaze was turned anxiously towards the block-house, from which he had scrutinized the very ground over which he was treading for several hours of the previous afternoon. He was struck by the deserted appearance of the place. Not a living being seemed moving, nor could his eye detect a single form lounging about. Of course he had supposed the majority of Bradbury’s men were at work upon the fortifications, but he did not look to find the place so utterly deserted.

So busily occupied was the young man in observing appearances across the river that he did not observe danger lurking nearer. He noticed not the movements of a person who was gliding from one tree to another, gradually approaching the course of the young captain. At length the strange figure paused, and having satisfied himself that the other must pass within a few feet of him, cocked his rifle, and peered carefully around the trunk which afforded him shelter.

“Hillio,” he shouted, emerging from cover when Abner was within a half-dozen paces of him. “Who have we here?”

“I would ask the same question,” returned the Yankee, though somewhat surprised at the appearance before him.

“But ye see I’ve asked mine fust, and I want it answered,” persisted the stranger, with an accompaniment of oaths. “Jest say whether yer Yank or Pennamite—that’s all that’s required in these times.”

“If you had spoken more respectfully I might choose to answer you,” was the cool reply. “As it is I do not!”

“It’s all the same,” remarked the stranger. “I know you well enough. You are a confounded Yank, come to spy out our land; so look out for yourself!”

As he spoke the last words he threw his rifle into the air, and when the sight rested upon the form of Abner Ainsworth he pulled the trigger! But there was no report. His flint failed to strike fire.

The young captain had expected this movement, and, as the weapon was brought to bear upon him, sprung quickly to one side. He was quite as much relieved as the other was disappointed when the weapon failed to explode. His own rifle was slung over his back, but two trusty pistols were in his belt, and to one of them he had already applied

his hand. Cocking it as the murderous stranger rushed upon him with weapon uplifted, he raised it towards the latter's shoulder and fired!

The wounded man uttered a deep oath as his left hand dropped to his side, and his rifle fell to the ground. But the murderous propensity was not yet extinguished. With the remaining hand he drew a knife from its sheath, and sprung upon the young New Englander. The latter was even less prepared for this assault than he had been for the former. Very naturally had he supposed that so severe a wound as he had purposely given would terminate the conflict.

He sprung aside, avoiding a tremendous lunge, and endeavouring to trip his assailant as he went staggering by. But the latter turned as quickly, and struck a powerful back-handed blow, slightly cutting Abner in the shoulder. As the blade passed him a second time the young man grasped the hand that held it. With almost superhuman strength, the wounded man wrested away his arm, and sprung upon his natural enemy again.

"Tough Dan never yet found his match," he hissed, brandishing the knife aloft. "I tell ye I never met my match yit, and it's tew late to begin now!"

Reluctantly Abner drew his remaining pistol, for his better nature revolted from the murder of a man already fearfully wounded. But he saw that the bully was blind, and that nothing save the death of one of them could satisfy him. In that case he dared not hesitate longer.

But he had no need for the weapon. As the frantic man dashed towards him, his feet caught in one of the running vines with which the forest abounded. He endeavoured to save himself, but in so doing brought the knife directly beneath his body. He fell to the earth with

a plunge, and the man whom he had sought to destroy saw the keen blade of his own knife pass completely through the wretched Pennamite's body and protrude from his back!

With a cry of horror he sprang forward, anxious to save the life of his adversary, but was too late. The maddened man had brought destruction upon himself by his rashness. There was a groan, a struggle or two, and then all was still!

For some moments Abner stood and gazed upon the sad spectacle, reloading his pistol meanwhile. Then, with a cold shudder at his heart, he turned away, and pursued the course he had been following, and which would bring him to the brink of the river in the edge of the forest, and almost exactly opposite the Pennamites' block-house and dwellings upon the other shore.

CHAPTER VI.

A BOLD ENTERPRISE.

BEFORE reaching the river's bank Captain Ainsworth had a good opportunity for surveying the opposite shore. He was satisfied now that nearly if not quite all the male inhabitants were below, engaged in the operations which were being directed against his own handful of followers. Now and then he saw women and children moving about, and occasionally the low notes of a song were wafted across the silvery waters to his ears.

Despite his solitary situation, the fatal scene through which he had just passed, and the dangers which might be lurking about him, the young captain could but pause and listen as the sweet melody reached his ears. In a moment he seemed transported to the lands of his boyhood, and

listening to the sweet songs which had soothed his early years. True, there was a spice of sadness in the notes, but that very fact adapted them all the better to the young man's mood.

Rousing himself from the momentary abstraction into which the dulcet tones had plunged him, the solitary explorer applied himself to that which had brought him to the spot. As he cast his eyes about, to make sure that no lurking foe was stealing upon him, they rested upon the very object of all others that he would have coveted. A small canoe, evidently of Indian manufacture, lay upon the bank, with a couple of paddles in it, just as it had been left by some person, apparently not long since. Upon the soft sand still remained the traces of footprints, two or three persons having passed, as the young man at first supposed. But, upon looking closer, he saw that the tracks had all been made by a single person, who had returned to the canoe after leaving it. Of this he soon satisfied himself. It followed, then, almost as a matter of course, that the infuriated man who had assaulted him in the woods, and paid the penalty of his rashness with his life, must be the person.

While this course of reasoning was going on Abner had given the canoe a cursory examination, and saw that it was nearly new and well built. He had earnestly longed for an opportunity to reconnoitre the opposite village from closer quarters than the broad river allowed of upon one hand, and the jealous Pennamites upon the other. Were not the means placed at his disposal? With this boat he could cross the river and make whatever investigations seemed consistent with his purpose and his safety. He would also be provided with the means of return, and if he could convey the boat to their retreat, it might be made

useful upon other occasions. True, it would be dangerous, in a measure, but he knew that a faint heart never accomplished any worthy purpose, and his resolution was at once taken to make the attempt.

He had already placed his hands upon the boat when a thought flashed upon his mind. Stealing back into the wood to the place of his late encounter, he exchanged the slouched hat which he had borrowed from Jonas for a bearskin cap, which his antagonist had worn. This would prove a partial disguise, since any person at a distance would not suspect him of being other than the rightful occupant of the canoe.

This transformation being made, he hastened back and boldly launched the boat. He was not well used to the management of such craft, his boating experience having been somewhat limited; but he soon learned to ply the oars with good effect. Moving directly up-stream for some distance, he cast frequent matter-of-fact glances towards the Pennamite shore, but discovered no forms of men in or about the place.

Ascending to a point where his debarkation would be covered by a small patch of woodland, which still flourished, despite the onslaughts of warring settlers, he drew the canoe to land in a nook sheltered somewhat from observation. Here he secured it in a manner to cast loose at a moment's notice, and took his way in the direction of the settlements.

Of course the fields were especially bare at this season of the year, and all the protection he found from the gaze of the curious consisted of such fences as divided the various inclosures. Pausing in a corner where he was tolerably well screened from observation, yet almost within speaking distance of the nearest house, he waited for some

time, watching and listening. The young captain had a purpose beyond that of mere adventure, and it was not idle curiosity alone which prompted him to encounter the great danger which he was now braving.

He was upon the point of moving away when the sound of a female voice, singing snatches of an old love ditty, reached his ears. He immediately recognized the voice as being the same which had reached him, when upon the other side of the river, with such effect. He also noticed that the singer was in the house nearest him. Might it not be possible for him to catch a glimpse of her face?

At that moment the warbler seemed approaching the door, and the refrain of her simple song fell distinctly upon the young man's ear:—

My bonnie true lover
Is afar on the sea ;
I'll mourn for him absent
Till he comes back to me.

As the last notes died away, Charlotte Bradbury came into view, and, pausing in the doorway, threw her eyes carelessly over the fields. He could see that she was looking very pale, though, it seemed, even more beautiful than upon the preceding day. Possibly a feeling of gratitude may have enhanced her beauty on this particular occasion.

And then a painful thought rushed through the young man's mind. She was singing of a lover at sea—what more probable than that she should have a lover, either in the Pennamite camp or elsewhere? It was not to be denied that the thought cost Abner a pang, though it was not so plain why such should be the case.

But the sadness was only passing, and the next moment a resolve was taken on the young captain's part that really began to savour of rashness. He would see Charlotte,

speak to her, and return thanks in person for the signal service she had rendered him! No sooner conceived than carried into effect.

He sprang over the fence, and rapidly approached the dwelling. The maiden was upon the point of re-entering the apartment when she beheld a strange figure moving towards her. Pausing for a moment she regarded the comer intently. Almost immediately she seemed to recognize him, for an expression partaking both of happiness and anxiety crossed her features. Once she seemed upon the point of turning away, but remained, and extended her hand as the Yankee came up.

“Excuse me for this intrusion,” he said, lifting his cap with natural grace; “but I could not resist the temptation to call and thank you for past services, and also to inquire of your health.”

“I consider it far from an intrusion,” the maiden returned, frankly; “my only fear is for your own safety. Should you be caught again it might not be so easy to escape. True, my father and all the men are away, but some of them are liable to return at any time. I would not advise you to linger one moment longer than may be necessary.”

There was something so earnest in the manner of the speaker as to preclude the idea that she found his presence distasteful. Upon the contrary, it was evident that she was pleased at the meeting, though alarmed at the risk he ran.

“I will not expose myself unnecessarily,” was the reply. “I repeat my thanks for the liberation I received. I trust you experienced no ill effects from the cold bath in the river?”

“None of consequence,” she replied, warmly. “The

excitement, and other emotions, gave me a severe headache yesterday, but it passed away when I found that you had escaped. My father used you very unjustly, sir !”

“And the honest negro—I hope he received no harm from being found in my place.”

“I think he received a pretty severe whipping for his supposed carelessness, but his agency was never suspected. The whipping he was used to, and hardly regarded it when I gave him the assurance that he had done well.”

“I am really sorry the honest fellow should have suffered upon my account,” Abner remarked. “My only hesitation in leaving him thus was the fear that harm might come to you or him. But he assured me to the contrary ; and as I knew my companions would require my services, I availed myself of the opportunity to rejoin them.”

“I hear that your command still retains its ground, though having lost many men ?” the maiden pursued, half-inquiringly.

“We hold our position,” was the answer ; “and all our loss, thus far, is but a single man very slightly wounded in the shoulder.”

“Thanks for that !” Charlotte said, earnestly. “I have been torturing my mind all the day with thoughts that those who saved my life had, perhaps, lost their own ; and that upon my father’s shoulders the blame must rest.”

“You do not seem to sympathize with your father’s purpose of driving us from the valley,” said Abner, who hardly understood how such a state of affairs could exist.

“Why should I ?” was the artless response. “Surely in this world there is room enough for all. And I know that my father is not the same man he was before this matter of tenantry began to agitate. He has no kind words for us now”—a tear dimmed the lustre of her eye

—“his sole ambition seems to be the amassing of wealth and lands, and dominion over his fellow-men. I cannot think that the system which produces such results can be good; so I think that if your people were settled here, and every man was a freeholder, it would be better for all of us.”

“Those are truthful views, and nobly spoken,” said Abner. “They give me new life to continue the struggle. And yet it causes me pain when I consider that it must be carried on against your own people.”

“I regret that it is so,” Charlotte replied. “Yet you are not to blame. The conflict was forced upon you—”

A quick step, close beside the speakers, caused each to turn quickly in that direction. The movement revealed the flushed and wrathful features of John Bradbury, who, sword in hand, had stolen around to learn the nature of the conversation which had reached his ears. His surprise at finding the Yankee captain, whom he at once recognized, was much greater than that of the latter at being found.

But the Pennamite saw his advantage, and sprung upon the unprepared captain, brandishing his sword.

“So you dare to play the spy, Sir Yankee!” he shouted, noarse with rage. “I’ll teach you to keep within your own bounds!”

Had the worthy man spared his breath he might have won the conflict. But while he was venting his anger in words, Abner snatched a pistol and levelled it at his head.

“Hold!” he shouted, moving back, and keeping an eye upon his antagonist. “I am better armed than you, John Bradbury. Now listen to me. I am not a spy—I have the same right to tread this ground that you possess. True, you have opened war upon us without just cause,

but I don't wish to fight you, personally. Now let me go my way, and you may go your own. What do you say?"

"Then how came you here, if you are no spy?" demanded the incensed Bradbury, who dared not rush upon the pistol's dark muzzle still staring him in the face.

"I answer no questions," returned Abner. "You see that I have the advantage at this moment. Put up your sword, and I will retire peaceably. Ha! don't dare to touch a pistol. Put up your sword, I tell you!"

"How do I know that you will not shoot me where I stand?" demanded the crestfallen blusterer.

"If I would shoot you in any ease, I might shoot you now!" was the firm answer. "But I do not war upon unarmed men. Come, no more dallying, for time is precious."

"Ha! ha! You think so, eh?" laughed the dark man. "You really speak with wisdom. Perhaps your eye-teeth are cutting, since you are getting so profound!"

Something in the man's manner, which had changed so suddenly, gave Abner premonitions of fresh danger. If he had any doubts upon the subject they were dispelled by hearing footsteps in his rear. Turning his head, though keeping his pistol in the former position, he saw that two men were stealing upon him with clubbed muskets.

His previous experience, and the tolerable certainty that he would be treated as a spy if taken, nerved the young man to more than ordinary daring. Whatever he did must be quickly done, for the men were almost within striking-distance of him already.

Wheeling in his tracks he discharged his pistol at one, who sank to the ground from the effects of the shot. No sooner was the weapon empty than he hurled it at the

head of the other, with such precision as to stagger him for the moment. Before he could recover himself, Abner had grasped his musket, and a sharp struggle ensued for the possession of the weapon, which was discharged in the *melée*.

The Yankee, being much the heavier and stronger, speedily proved victorious, the Pennamite being blinded by the blood which trickled from his forehead. Still the affair was but half disposed of, for John Bradbury had taken the time to draw a pistol, with which he pressed forward to the conflict. But the stern leader found an unexpected obstacle to his progress.

Two white hands grasped his arm, and a white face looked up into his own, as a tender voice said, imploringly :—

“Father, you would not injure him! He saved my life!”

There was something so mutely eloquent in the look which she cast upon that stern man, that he desisted from his purpose, and stood irresolute for a moment. But that tender grasp was shaken off, as the parent became swallowed up again in the warrior.

“Go into the house; this is no place for you! Go, I say!”

The maiden obeyed the injunction; but the interposition had given the fugitive time to flee. Leaping over a fence, he started through the fields with the speed of a deer, followed but uninjured by a parting shot from Bradbury’s pistol. Looking back, he saw commotion and consternation among the women and children, many of whom were hurrying from house to house, and some seeking the lock-house, as though in fear of a general attack.

Still he saw no more warriors, nor was any pursuit at-

tempted. Those who had just engaged in the conflict seemed to have had quite a sufficient taste of the Yankee's metal, and, very fortunately, no others seemed to be at hand.

Reaching his boat he pushed it into the water, sprang in himself, and paddled with all his strength towards the opposite shore. In a few minutes he reached the bank, leaped upon the sand, and drew the boat up after him. Then he paused for a few moments, undecided how to proceed.

CHAPTER VII

“SINK OR SWIM.”

FOR some time Abner stood irresolute. He wished to appropriate the boat to his own purposes, but as he could not do this now he would be obliged to leave it behind.

“I can at least make an effort to obtain it,” he thought, pushing it from the shore, and out into the stream. “Possibly it will float down. I can keep a watch over its movements, and if the Pennamites endeavour to get it I can send them a reminder that it is not a lawful prize.”

He still carried the musket which he had wrested from the man near the village opposite, and this, with his rifle, would give him two shots at tolerably long range.

Some unknown influence seemed drawing him towards the place of his first encounter, and as the body of his fallen enemy lay near the margin of the wood, his steps naturally turned in that direction. He paused when within a few paces, for it seemed to him that the body had been disturbed since he left it. But he was not certain, and advanced a little nearer to satisfy himself upon the point. As he did so there was a rustling upon either side

of him, and almost intuitively the young adventurer realised that he had fallen into a trap.

“ Reckon ye’d better hold on, chap, afore we let a streak o’ greased daylight through ye ! ” sung out a harsh tone upon the left at the same moment.

“ Yas ! ” howled another voice, upon the other side. “ I karkolate ye’re luggin’ around tew many shewtin’ irons for yer own comfort. Jest drop ’em, will ye, or we’ll be under the necessity of droppin’ yew along with ’em ! ”

The young man glanced upon either hand, and he saw that resistance would be useless. Both of the men had guns, which they held within a few inches of his head, and the personal appearance of the men constituted a standing guarantee that they would not pause at the shedding of blood.

“ Come, drop yer gun,” added speaker the first, pressing a pace nearer, and putting the muzzle of the gun close to his head. “ Down with it ! ”

Abner could not choose but obey, for life is dear to all, and he had some hope that he might escape by stratagem. There being no appearance that he could move from the spot without meeting an instant death, as they were now situated, he dropped the musket to the ground, and then he who had first spoken continued :—

“ Now jist hold up yer arms ; won’t trouble ye to take out them things,”—indicating the remaining pistol and knife which graced his belt.

Fain to comply, the young captain held his arms aloft while the twain rifled his pockets, after taking all the weapons from his person.

“ Now jist put yer arms behind ye,” was the next command, which he was in no condition to resist.

A piece of stout cord was produced by one of the

villains, which they proceeded to use in tying his hands behind him. When these were secured beyond all possibility of loosening, one of them remarked:—

“ Now keep a sharp eye on him, Bill, and if he tries to move, do yew jist blow a hole through his body about the size of an ounce ball! I’ll go and bring back that canoe he was so careful to send down-stream ! ”

He darted away towards the river as he spoke, Abner following him with his eyes till lost to view. Then he turned them upon the savage-looking guard. Had there been a possibility of success, the prisoner would not have remained thus patient a single moment. But he knew very well that instant death would result should he make any attempt. There sat the sullen guard, with his finger upon the trigger of a musket, which he held at full cock. Even the prisoner could not help thinking how unpleasant would be the result if any savage fancy should prompt him to press the deadly spring !

Yet even now a plan was working in the young man’s mind for escape, and it was in accordance with that plan that his speech was framed. Thus far he found no necessity for addressing a word to the men who had surprised him. When he did speak it was in language and manner far different from that which they might have anticipated.

“ What yer spect’ll be did tew ye for killin’ Tough Dan ? ” the guard finally demanded, seeming to become tired of the silence. “ Don’t ye reckon yer long neck’ll be stretched, eh ? ”

“ Who’s Tough Dan ? ” the prisoner slowly demanded. “ Wot d’ye mean ’bout killin’ him ? ”

“ Why, that feller over thar’ Yew knew wall enough who he is, and who killed him ! ”

"Swan, mister, guess you's mistaken. I karkilated the feller fell down and hurt hisself; don't yew think so, mister?"

"Ruther guess not. Yew hain't got on his cap, suppose? How did ye come by that?"

"Come by it easy 'nuff. Went along this 'ere way, and thort I'd go crost the river. So I swopped caps. Knew my hat would dew wall enough for a ded man, and wanted his'n myself, so't wouldn't blow off intew the drink. I's coming back tew change ag'in 'cos I didn't know but the feller might hev' lice; my hed agun to itch tarnally; but yew fellers scart me so I didn't know nothin' about what was the matter. Won't yew jest swop these hats, 'cause I'll be derved if I like tew hev' sech an itchin' hed and narry a hand tew scratch it with?"

"Guess not, stranger," returned the guard, who began to fancy that they had found a "specimen;" "yew'll jist wear the cap ye've got on till yer case is decided."

"I swow, chap, it's purty hard tew make a feller wear a lousy cap. Won't yew jest scratch my head, right three-quarters of an inch behind the top, jest on the side of a leetle boll place ye'll find?"

"I'll put a bullet in thar' some'rs if ye don't shet up!" the fellow returned, seeing his companion approaching.

"Come; I've got the boat," the other exclaimed, as he drew near. "Take yerself aboard on't, and mind ye don't cut up any o' yer capers with us, or ye'll go to the bottom of the river, and no questions asked!"

"Gracious Peter!" said Abner, as he stopped near the boat. "Ye don't karkilate we're all three on us goin' tew git inter that little kanew? My stars sakes alive! I do believe we shall all be drowned! Kin yew swim, mister?"

"Never you mind the swimmin'," was the careless reply.

“Git in, and if it’s likely to be too much of a load we kin jist dump you overboard!”

Me! No, sir; I can’t swim a whumper with my arms in this yere fix!” the Yankee replied, bound to have the last word. “I guess yew—”

“Git in thar’, and shet up, or we’ll blow yer brains out!” was the sharp command, which he dared not disobey.

The little craft settled to the water’s edge, and threatened to dip at every stroke of the oars. Still it floated, though Abner could see that both of his guards were much frightened.

“See here, Bill,” one of them said, at length, “we should be in a darned purty fix if this thing should sink with us. Nobody knows how deep the pesky river is hereabouts.”

“Can’t ye swim?” persisted Abner.

“No, we can’t,” was the short reply. “What’s that to yew?”

“Nothin’, only I reckon ye’d better ondew my arms, so’t I could take keer of ye if the kanew should tip over!”

“If you say anything more about it we’ll knock you on the head and throw you overboard!” was the fierce response.

“No ’casion,” was the rejoinder. “I’ll git out!”

So saying, he gave a spring, which had the desired effect of overturning the too heavily-loaded canoe, and in a moment the three men were struggling in the water.

This was the very object for which Abner had been aiming from the moment that he learned that his captors intended crossing the river with him. Throwing himself upon his back he floated easily down the stream, while his late guards made frantic endeavours to cling to the inverted boat. Presently one of them sank from sight,

and did not reappear. The other waited for a short time, then pushed the canoe towards the Pennamite shore, which he reached in due time. Indeed, all thoughts of his late prisoner seemed to have left his mind. Without pausing to look behind he rushed in the direction of the settlement, and was soon lost to sight.

Abner, meanwhile, left to himself, floated down the river, moderately urging himself towards the shore from which they had started. At length he ceased to float, and, upon making the effort, found that he could stand upright. He lost no time in wading to shore, where he shook the water from his garments, and then shaped his course towards the woods.

Although wet, cold, hungry, weaponless, hatless, and bound, Captain Ainsworth felt unusually well satisfied with himself upon reaching the forest shades and turning his face again towards the encampment of his fellows. He felt that quite a sufficiency of adventure had fallen to his share for one day, and he only rejoiced that he was enabled to return alive and sound.

The sun was getting low—no doubt his command had been anxiously expecting his arrival for several hours. From his present position he could see the grim palisades rising above the smooth surface of the Susquehanna, and it required but a little stretch of the imagination to bring out the more embryo fortification just above, which was calculated to starve the Yankees from Wyoming.

Satisfied that all still remained quiet, he scated himself upon a fallen tree and endeavoured to free his arms. But the damp cords clung too tightly, and after a short time he ceased the attempt. A signal would bring his own men with a boat, and then he would be released without further effort.

Nothing was more natural than that he should wander back again in fancy to the scene which, of all he had that day witnessed, had given him real pleasure—his interview with the Pennamite's daughter. The other events were in more or less of a whirl, but every word she had spoken, every gesture in fact, was clearly and indelibly stamped upon his mind. The reader well knows that he was falling hopelessly in love, but the young captain himself had no such idea. The only thoughts in relation to the matter which passed through his mind found a low utterance in words :—

“ It's a pity we couldn't all live here in peace, so that neighbours could visit each other as they do in Connecticut! I am sure Charlotte Bradbury must be a most worthy and sensible young lady, and I know of no more pleasant pastime than—”

He did not finish the sentence aloud; perhaps he had his doubts as to what would be most pleasant under the circumstances, for at that moment he happened to recall the little love ditty she was warbling when he approached the house.

A heavy sigh broke from his lips; he rose to his feet, and moved away, following the same route he had taken in coming. He felt worn and exhausted, but congratulated himself that he could rest for several hours upon reaching camp.

There are numerous time-honoured maxims afloat, which have passed from lip to lip and from pen to pen for many hundred years; worthy, every one of them. It is not necessary that we repeat them. Any one is applicable to the case of Abner Ainsworth which teaches the fallibility of human calculations.

The young man had moved but a few paces when he be-

come conscious that some person was dogging his footsteps. Upon turning round he beheld three forms, which he saw in a moment were strange to him. In that case it followed at once that they were enemies!

How to meet this new danger? Clearly if they were disposed to make war upon him, he must fall into their hands most naturally. With arms bound behind him, and greatly exhausted by the various adventures through which he had passed already, it was not to be supposed that the adventurous Yankee could elude those three men, who appeared to be fresh, and certainly were well armed.

He walked on a dozen steps, and then looked back again. The trio had scattered, and were bearing down upon the pinioned man quite rapidly. It was evident that they meant business.

"You'd better hold on, old boy!" shouted one, seeing that the Yankee had looked around. "Better heave to, or I shall be cuttin' away yer runnin' gear!"

Had Abner's arms been free he never would have thought of submitting, great as were the odds against him. But he could do nothing now, and he had made so many escapes that he began to believe a fate hung over him.

Leaning against the trunk of a large tree, he waited for the coming up of his foes. They were beside him in a moment, and began to pour in questions with triple speed.

"Course you're a Yank," said one, who seemed to exercise something of authority over the others. "We don't know who ye be, though likely enough we may mistrust."

"All I've got to say is," put in a second, "that if you're the fellow I took for Black Jonas last night, you gave me one of the hardest welts it ever was my fortin to take."

Abner saw that his identity was more than suspected, but he was not prepared to admit that their suppositions were correct.

“ I’m sure,” he remarked, looking at the fellow who had spoken, “ that the man who would take me for a black must be struck by something in his upper story. Can you tell me where that resemblance may lie ? ”

“ I ain’t at all sartin,” was the response. “ But you are a Yank, that is positive ; so we will take you over to Captain Bradbury, and he can settle the howabouts of it.”

“ Yes, we’ll go over to John with him,” said the leader, who might have borne rank as a corporal in the Pennamite force. “ If this is the Yankee captain—and I’m sure I didn’t see him, so I ean’t tell—but if this is him we shall make a good mark for ourselves by bringing him over. John is down on him—you know what he said last ! ”

The three exchanged sly glances as they assented, and then sought to discover the impression their hints had made upon the prisoner. But Abner did not allow his features to express anything, though he was agitated internally to a greater degree than he had previously been.

The idea of being taken back again to share the tender mereies of John Bradbury, whom he well knew to be doubly incensed against him by the scenes of that day, was far from being a pleasant theme for contemplation. His momentary belief in fatality was fast deserting him. Was it at all probable that he should escape from the power of the Pennamite leader if he were again delivered up ! He looked at the matter in various ways, but could glean no hope. The sun was sinking lower, and he began to blame himself that he had not attempted running. Possibly he might have distanced his pursuers, and eluded them in the end.

From these reflections he was aroused by a hand upon either arm, while the hopeful subaltern remarked :—

“Come, sir ; we'll go over the river. It's plain we can do nothing for you here.”

CHAPTER VIII.

A C R O S S T H E S U S Q U E H A N N A .

IF Abner had hoped to attract the attention of his own men, and thus give them a key to his non-return, he was disappointed in that as in other matters. The party having him in charge took their way directly up-stream, and travelled back nearly half the distance he had come. Here they were concealed from all observation on the part of the Yankees, a bend in the stream interposing between their present standpoint and the palisades.

Fastened beneath some willows, was a rude raft, quite large enough to float the four, but with little buoyancy to spare. Upon this the prisoner was placed, and when the guards had produced a couple of setting-poles, they stepped on with him. Abner was pleased to find that he was treated with respect and consideration, but he could not help reflecting that there might be a deadly purpose behind it all.

Instead of pushing directly across the stream, the Pennamites moved down obliquely, until they landed a few rods above the strip of wood in which their brethren had taken up their new position. The last beams of the sun, as he sank to his western couch behind the distant mountains, lighted up the surface of the river as they pushed slowly along, and illuminated the valley upon all sides. Abner gazed around upon these beautiful scenes, and inwardly he felt that never had anything so splendid fallen

to his lot to witness before. And then there would come another thought, which sent a chill to his heart. Might it not be that this most beautiful sunset of all was ordained to be his last? Would he ever again behold the monarch of day sinking behind the crest of those blue-tinted mountains? These were questions he could not answer, but an inward hope would rise, despite all the probabilities which seemed against him.

Though kindly treated, he was closely watched, and not the slightest opportunity for escape had thus far presented. Still he lived in hope, resolving to adopt any chance, however unpromising.

The cautious challenge of a sentinel was satisfactorily answered, and then they pushed to the shore. Abner was taken by the arms again before the craft touched land, and led quietly up the bank. Not having learned from the sentinel the whereabouts of Bradbury, the leader of the party, whose name was Timothy Jenkins, left Abner in charge of his two confederates, while himself went in search of the dark-browed commander.

Again the Yankee captain felt hopes of being able to dart away, and the growing twilight would favour him now. But not for a moment did his watchful guards relax their vigilance, and all his endeavours to induce a momentary disregard upon their part were futile.

Presently Jenkins reappeared, and a smile of triumph lighted up his features.

“All right, boys,” he said, upon drawing near. “John was down below, and says he’s no doubt we’ve got the feller. He’s comin’ right along in a minute, but we might as well take the fellow down towards the fort. I tell you, boys, he feels satisfied!”

They moved down towards the fortification, and had just

entered the forest when Bradbury made his appearance, coming towards them. His manner was nervous and excited, and he muttered to himself as he came. Abner nerved himself for the meeting, common sense teaching him that he had nothing to expect from the man whom he had thus repeatedly foiled and braved.

The Pennamite leader strode directly up to him, and peered intently into his face, before addressing a word to anyone. Then he turned to the anxious Jenkins and demanded :—

“Where did you find this fellow?”

The one addressed proceeded to relate the events of his capture, and when they were concluded, Bradbury rubbed his hands with unqualified satisfaction.

“Good, good, Jenkins; you’ve made your name this time!” Bradbury exclaimed, with enthusiasm, slapping the subaltern upon the shoulder. “Jest think o’ the race this feller’s run to-day. Killed Tough Dan, as he’s called, to start on. Then came over to my house, and I found him talking with Charlotte. Shot another man over there, and got away, no matter how. Got across the river, and two men found him, and undertook to bring him back in a canoe. Neither of ’em could swim, so he kicked over the boat and got away again. Poor Bill Rawson got drowned, and his companion managed to reach shore. How many deeds he’s done between that and this I don’t know, but presume not many by the way you found his arms tied. Now what shall we do with such a villain, my men? You have an interest in his disposal.”

“That is not for us to say,” meekly returned Jenkins. “We are under your authority, and whatever you command we will endeavour to execute. While the invader is here we know no will but your laws, sir!”

"Well, Jenkins?"

"Here, sir!"

"Do you think you can keep this fellow safe to-night, with these two men to assist you?"

"Yes, sir!"

"And if you fail in it you'll be willing to take his place yourself?"

Jenkins looked a trifle uneasy, but finally replied that he would.

Then you may take him up to the block-house, or some place where you'll be sure of him, and keep him till morning. Then we'll relieve you of him, and pay him according to his deserts. But, mind you, I shall hold you personally responsible for his safe keeping. If he is not forthcoming in the morning, your own head will be in danger."

"You're welcome to it, eap'n, if he ain't on hand any time you want him. I think I'll take him to my own house. That's neat and strong, and I've a room just built 'specially for such purposes."

"Very well; I leave all the details to you. Only recollect your responsibility in the matter. And now take him away, for I have other matters under consideration."

They separated, Bradbury returning to his people, while Abner was led away towards the block-house. What he had heard and witnessed had not been of a nature to give him ardent hopes for the future, but the fact that he was to be left in custody for the night gave him something of comfort. The lines—

"Never give up! There are chances and changes,
Helping the hopeful a thousand to one"—

had not then been put into immortal verse, but in spirit were perfectly felt and exemplified by Abner Ainsworth.

The singular good-fortune he had experienced thus far, and the knowledge that he possessed a friend in Charlotte Bradbury, who would help him if help were possible, served to lend him hope. True, it was not much that a feeble woman could do to quell the stern purposes of such men, but she had already saved him twice—why might it not be effected again ?

He did not reflect how improbable it was that she should hear of his arrest, and that men whose heads were to pay the penalty of any dereliction from duty would guard him with more care than had been exercised before.

The party proceeded in silence until they reached the outskirts of the village, passed the block-house, and halted. The worthy Jenkins paused, and regarded the cold walls with a shudder.

“I’d take him in there, boys,” he finally remarked, “but it is so cold and open that I really believe we should half freeze before morning. I have a snug little room in my house, just as secure, and a great deal more comfortable. We can have a little fire there, and take a nice two-handed game while the third stands with a musket. What say—I want to do as you think best—which place shall we try ?”

“Take ’im to your house, by all means,” said one. “There’s no use of freezin’ ter death for the sake of one Yankee.”

“Then that settles it,” and the speaker led the way towards his own dwelling, which was at some distance from the block-house.

It was dark now, quite as dark as it would be during the night. Abner was earnestly alive to all that was passing about him, for he realized that if once shut in a close room with his three captors, the chance of leaving it before morning would be infinitely small.

They soon reached the house, and Jenkins entered without ceremony, leaving his two satellites to bring in the prisoner. One of the latter also entered, while the other pushed Abner forward. "But it is a long lanc that has no turn." The young captain felt that he was doomed if once across the portals of that house. His arms were confined and useless, but not so his feet.

As though by chance, he stumbled upon the doorstep, and managed to break the hold upon his arm. The guard behind him muttered a curse, and groped for his sleeve, but only received a powerful kick in the chest which sent him half-a-rod, rolled up like a hedgehog. While he was recovering his scattered senses, and replacing his lost breath, Abner sprung for the nearest corner, which he succeeded in turning.

Of course he had anticipated an immediate pursuit. It came, and as his footsteps revealed the route he was taking, it scarcely seemed possible but that he would be overhauled most speedily. Suddenly there came a bright flash upon the darkness, followed by a loud report, then another and another.

Abner knew that he was being fired upon, but did not pause or swerve from his course. He felt a sharp stinging upon one of his wrists, followed by a numbness. He had no doubt that it was shattered by a bullet, but did not pause upon that account. It was a race for life or death.

A moment later he was surprised to find both hands dangling at his side. So excited was he by the race that he hardly thought of this fact for a moment, but soon knew that they had been freed by one of the shots from his pursuers. He could scarcely realize his good fortune, more especially as he found, upon examining his wrist, that

only a trifling piece of skin had been taken away by the ball. The knowledge that his hands were free, gave him renewed zest and strength. Springing forward with fresh speed, he soon began to distance his pursuers, who had lost ground by stopping to fire at him.

Hope reigned in his bosom again, and visions of freedom danced before his eyes. But new dangers presented themselves. Just as he was about breaking from the confines of the village, he heard steps and voices approaching directly in advance of him. As they could not be friends, it followed that they were foes.

A high fence ran to the left, which it would be dangerous attempting to scale, and he was forced to turn to the right. This direction took him back to the village, but anything was preferable to a renewal of captivity. As he dashed along a door was thrown open directly in front of him, and the rays of a candle streamed out into the gloom. To enter the radius of that light would be more than dangerous, but he saw no way of avoiding it.

At that instant he discovered a tall well-sweep, faintly outlined against the sky—thanks to the friendly candle. In a moment he was beside it, and had descended into the well till his head was below the surface of the ground. Here he paused to listen.

Presently one body of his pursuers came sweeping around the nearest corner, the direction in which he had come.

“He must be somewheres here,” said the foremost of the party. “I hearn his steps turn off this way!”

A moment later, and the three from whom he had broken loose came into sight around an opposite corner. Both parties paused in consternation as they met. Each endeavoured to ask the other where “he” had gone, and

each found themselves equally at fault. They listened intently for any sounds which should indicate the continued flight of the fugitive, but none reached their ears.

Considering that his present quarters were too near the surface for safety, Abner made his way rapidly down till his feet touched the water. Here he paused, hearing footsteps above, and presently a man's head approached at the mouth of the well.

"Bring a candle, some of you," he said. "The Yankee may be in here. He's hid somewhere hereabouts."

Abner was not above fifteen feet below the surface, and very unpleasant effects might follow the introduction of light to the well. Possibly he could lower himself beneath the water, and thus escape detection.

Moving very carefully, so as not to attract the notice of him at the opening, the fugitive let himself into the water. Presently his feet rested upon something firm, which he soon discovered to be the solid earth. The water scarcely reached to his waist, and though decidedly cooling in its temperature, the young man preferred its embrace to that of the Pennamites above.

Presently the beams of a coming light began to dance overhead, and he sank beneath the water, though still keeping an eye above him. The darksome aperture was lighted up, though rather feebly, and several anxious faces peered down.

"He ain't in there," said a voice, which Abner recognized as belonging to Timothy Jenkins. "'Course he ain't. How can a man with his arms tied get down in a well? More likely we salted his broth for him, and he's dropped somewhere, so we went by him in the dark. I've seen men run just so afore when they've been shot and done for."

The light and heads disappeared, and Abner thrust his breathing apparatus above the water. He could distinctly hear them scattering about, and searching in the vicinity; shouting to one another occasionally with assurances of continued non-success.

“It’s just possible he may have darted into one o’ these houses,” shouted Jenkins. “Come on here, four or five of you, and we’ll give these two an overhauling!”

Fancying no immediate danger, Abner drew himself up towards the surface of the earth, where he could hear the movements about him more distinctly. For a few moments there was a continued clattering about the two houses which had stood within a short distance of the place of his disappearance. In vain the old negro, who had displayed the candle, stoutly asserted that no one had come that way save themselves. Both parties had heard the footsteps plainly, and were sure that the one they sought could not be far distant. Every nook and cranny of the two houses was searched, but nothing came to light. Crestfallen and justly alarmed, the party gathered near the well.

“I tell you there can’t be but one of two things, now,” said Jenkins, whose tones differed materially from those which he had used an hour before. “Either we wounded the fellow, and he’s crawled away somewhere to die, or else—or else he’s clean gone! There’s no mistake of that.”

“Ye’re right in that,” remarked the leader of the other party. “I feel purty sartin that ye’ll find him rolled up somewhere, because we lost his footsteps all of a sudden. We’d better get lights and look around here awhile, I fancy.”

“Yes, you’re right, Butler. And if we don’t find him dead there’s one thing we can do; that is to surround the Yankees so that he can’t possibly get back to them. If we

fall in with him again I say shoot him wherever we find him, for he's a dangerous chap, and no mistake."

"There's no danger but we can keep him," said Butler ; "just put the bonds right onto him, and carry him anywhere you wish."

The party now separated to procure lights, and Abner sank back again towards the bottom of the well, for he knew, in reason, that they would not pass without giving another look for him in its depths. In a short time he could see torches dancing about, and more than once their rays were flashed down into the darkness of his concealment. But the dark bosom of the water reflected back the light, without giving up its secret.

Far and near the search spread, until the most sceptical became convinced that the wily Yankee had really escaped uninjured—perhaps had rejoined his fellows, while they were conducting the futile search.

CHAPTER IX.

EVENTS OF A NIGHT.

ABNER AINSWORTH was shivering with cold. The night was chilly, and gave promise, but for its heavy clouds, of a keen frost. The water in the well was especially cold, and the young man's confined position allowed but little or no movement. While the immediate excitement of the pursuit and search had been upon him these matters were scarcely noticed. But now that his enemies seemed to have departed, and it did not appear that it was really necessary for him to remain in that uncomfortable bath longer, he was anxious to be up and away.

Still he did not wish to risk recapture by being too

forward in the matter, and busied himself with rubbing his hands together and listening carefully for at least half-an-hour after all sounds of the Pennamites had ceased. But his teeth chattered violently, and his frame was convulsed as by an ague. He determined to climb up, and if there appeared any danger he would defer his projected departure till some more promising time.

Step by step he made his way upward, and was finally enabled to peer over the kerbing of the well. It was very dark, though his eyes were getting so accustomed to it that he could discern outlines quite readily. He saw nothing to occasion alarm, and after listening for a few minutes he stepped forth.

How grateful seemed the open air, with freedom of limbs, and no armed guard to direct his movements! Drawing up his frame to its utmost height, Abner moved away into the fields, and when at a considerable distance, paused to shape his course.

Now that he was free again it became something of a question how he was to reach the palisadoed camp. He had heard the Pennamites discuss the project of surrounding it, so that his return might be cut off, and this he had no doubt was already done. If regained during the night it must be accomplished by stratagem, since he had no force, save that of muscle, to assist in his schemes.

How to do this was the all-important question. If he swam the river, experience had taught him that he was quite likely to fall in with foes, besides repeating the plentiful wettings he had already received. If he attempted the passage by land he would be obliged to run the gantlet of numerous watchful and bloodthirsty enemies.

But the latter course would admit of more silence, and after carefully considering all the points in the case, he de-

cided to attempt that route. All that he had travelled thus far was diametrically wrong, and his first object must be to gain the opposite side of the village. This required some time, but when it was effected, and nothing but blank darkness lay in front of the young man, he breathed more freely, and began to gain renewed hope.

His first purpose was to take a route which would be least liable to bring him in contact with wandering parties of the enemy. The best course, as he judged, would be to make a wide circuit, and come up the river to the palisades. He hardly fancied that this move had been anticipated by his foes; if so, he must trust to skill and strategy to evade them.

For two miles he walked freely and rapidly. The exercise gave warmth and vigour to his benumbed limbs, and sent a glow over his entire frame, despite the wet and chilly garments which clung to it. He was nearly opposite the two camps, and, pausing in his course, he gave them a close scrutiny. No beam of light came from either, and but for his knowledge of the locality it would have been a very difficult task to approach any particular place in the thick gloom. There was no light; not even the remains of a defunct fire appeared at this distance, to show that two hundred men lay upon their arms, with determination to fight and die in what they deemed a just cause.

Pausing a little longer to take the bearings of his course more exactly, the young adventurer bent his steps forward again. But this time he proceeded more cautiously, since every step was taking him nearer the enemy as well as his friends.

At length he reached the margin of the river, and thus far he had neither seen nor heard aught of foes. Possibly they might still be lurking in his path, but he would do

his best, by care and caution, to avoid falling into their hands again.

Crawling along upon all-fours, hardly moving a pace at a time, he scrutinized every object which lay in and beside his pathway. So slow and noiseless was his progress that it scarcely seemed that he moved at all. But move he did, and was certainly drawing nearer to his destination. Soon he could distinguish the dark, tooth-like palisades rising from the earth, and knew that but a few yards separated him from friends.

Once more he looked carefully upon all sides, but saw nothing to excite suspicion. At length the desired goal was to be reached! A few moments more and he could clasp friends and comrades by the hand, listen to their greetings, and relate to them his own adventures.

Still preserving the former caution, he crept up till his hands rested upon one of the stakes. Then, raising himself so that his voice might reach those who were certain to be posted behind the breastwork, he called in a gentle whisper:—

“Open the gate!”

“Who’s there?” demanded a voice from within.

“Abner Ainsworth! Be speedy, for I am hunted!”

An instant murmur ran through the line within, and a single voice replied:—

“Come on, cap’n; the gate’s jest to the right of ye!”

Thus much Abner heard distinctly, but he heard no more. He turned to move in the direction indicated, and had taken one or two steps, when he experienced a sensation as of a thunderbolt having struck him. His head seemed whirling round and round, a multitude of parti-coloured lights seemed to fill all space, and he knew no more.

Of course the Yankees were more than astonished upon opening the gate to find that no captain responded to their call. Once, twice, thrice his name was spoken, and yet there came no answer. What could it mean? Oliver Billings had hastened to the place upon hearing that the captain had arrived. But when nearly a minute passed, and he failed to appear, he ordered the gate to be replaced.

“It couldn’t have been him,” he said, after calling several times and receiving no answer. “You could not tell the voice of any man by his whispers, and no doubt it was some ugly Pennsylvanian, who thought to have a little sport at our expense. It is possible they calculated to rush in and take us by surprise. They’ll be up to all manner of tricks, and we cannot be too careful of them.”

The men were loth to relinquish the idea that their captain was near, and more than one persisted that the voice could have belonged to none other. But in the bare fact that he did not come, lay an unanswerable argument against his identity. When the most sanguine were forced to admit that they had been deceived, they could not but feel that he must be in the hands of their enemies. How else could they have practised such a deception upon them?

They were not far from right in their conclusions, though wrong in the premises.

After satisfying himself that Abner had escaped beyond all doubt, Timothy Jenkins hastened to John Bradbury, and related the facts as they had occurred. At first the commander was utterly beside himself with wrath, and ordered the veracious Jenkins under arrest. But, after a little second thought, he concluded to hear his plan for recapture.

This seemed so plausible that he finally consented to let

it be undertaken, giving Jenkins till morning light to redeem his pledge and produce the Yankee captain. He even consented that Butler, with half-a-dozen men, should cross the river, and lie in wait upon the opposite shore.

Timothy at once proceeded to take up his position, creeping forward and posting his little force within three paces of the very spot where Abner reached the palisades. He reasoned from general principles that the young man would pursue the very course he did; and when his men were carefully placed he had little doubt of being able to remove the ban which had been placed upon them before morning dawned.

The cautious approach of Ainsworth was at once noted, and, holding his musket clubbed, the delighted corporal waited the moment when his victim would be unguarded, and a treacherous blow might place him in their power.

He did not have long to wait. Abner stepped towards him—the musket was swung aloft, descending upon his head with terrible force. As he fell to the ground three strong men seized and bore him from the spot. His arms and legs were securely bound, and then Timothy hastened to head-quarters again, while his two tools stood with “ready” muskets to make sure that their bound and insensible prisoner did not escape again.

“I’ve got him, captain!” was Jenkins’ proud announcement, as he entered the presence of his superior.

“Then take him to the block-house, and see if you can keep him till morning,” was the snarling response. Bradbury was in close conversation with a friend at the time, and a half-emptied bottle denoted the cause of his surliness. “Go! I’ll talk with you then.”

Not caring to irritate the man upon whose pleasure hung his worldly honour and preferment, Jenkins took

himself away, and, regaining his companions, they carried the heavy body of the prisoner to the block-house. It was quite natural that by the time they had reached that place none of the party felt in the best of humour. Abner had partially recovered his senses, but this was no advantage, as they dared not trust his feet beyond the cords which bound them.

"I'll tell you what 'tis, I'm goin' to take him to my own house," said Jenkins. "I'm cold and wet and well fagged out. I'm goin' whar' I can have a fire and take a very little comfort the rest of the night."

"That's good!" ejaculated his followers, who were well worn by their continued hardships.

"There can't be more than three or four hours till daylight," continued Jenkins, "and I don't fancy spending them in that old barn of a block-house when one has comfortable quarters of one's own!"

"Jenkins, you are a trump!" was the decided exclamation of one of his companions.

They soon reached the house, and here they took care to set the prisoner in at the door before any of them entered. Then he was passed into a small and really comfortable room, stretched upon the floor, and a guard stationed over him.

"Shoo!" grunted the proprietor, shrugging his shoulders, "how confounded chilly 'tis here. Jest keep an eye on that feller, and I'll soon have it warmer."

The apartment boasted a small fire-place, and in this a cozy blaze was soon curling upwards, diffusing a very agreeable heat over the room.

"Now we can take some comfort," said Jenkins, producing four chairs, which he placed about the hearth. "I suppose you, Captain Yankee, won't refuse to take a scat

at the fire with us, seein' you've been in the water, and can't feel any of the warmest?"

Abner did not refuse the proffered seat, though he really felt an indifference at that moment whether he was warm or cold. The severe blow which he had received gave him an intense headache, and the transition, from hope almost realized to utter despair, was so great that he scarcely felt energy enough to care for comfort now. But he allowed them to place him in an advantageous position near the fire, and soon the cheerful heat began to work a change in his personal feelings. The violence of his pain began to diminish, and a feeling of drowsiness stole over him.

"There ain't but one thing we really need now," said Jenkins, after a long silence. "Only one thing I can think of that would do us real, hearty good."

"What is that, Tim?"

"A good stiff horn of old Jamaica! I tell you that would give us more life than any other thing I know of."

"You're right, Tim," returned one. "Though I don't keer much for liquor myself, I wouldn't mind makin' a spy-glass of a bottle just now."

At that moment there came a low rap at the door. Holding a rifle in his hand, Jenkins carefully opened it, and was somewhat surprised to find the honest negro, Jonas, standing upon the threshold.

"Wal, here, you son of tar!" he exclaimed, pushing the negro back as he attempted to press in beside him, "what d'ye want here? We don't hev' niggers runnin' round this house to-night! Speak it right out if thar's anything wrong, 'cause I can't wait here an hour."

"Sof'ly, sof'ly, masser Jinkums," whispered the negro, with a mysterious look. "De good lady Charlotte sen' me

ober wid a message 'specially fo' you. But I'll nebber be sayin' it on de doo'-step—fac', I won't. 'Twouldn't do!"

"So it's the lady Charlotte sent you, eh?" returned Jenkins, assuming a different tone at once. "Come in, you feller, and we'll talk it over by ourselves."

The negro was not slow to comply, and soon the door was closed behind him. Unfortunately Jenkins had no "spare" room, and the twain were soon seated in a corner, the white drawing up to the despised negro with the most confiding interest depicted upon his features. The facts in the case were these: Timothy was one of the many admirers of Charlotte Bradbury who dared not approach her presence with professions of their love. They were quite content to worship at a distance, and seek by every possible service to John Bradbury to obtain an opportunity for hope.

So it will be readily seen how naturally his tones changed when he ascertained that the sable Jonas bore him a message from her.

"You won't speak ob dis outside of what may be in dis room," the black began, after they were comfortably seated, as before described.

"No, certainly not," was the immediate reply. "Why should I babble such things?"

"Dat's de berry t'ing. 'Cos de good leddy war 'fraid you'd be a-speakin' ob it, an git her in trouble."

"Bid her dismiss all fears on that score at once," said Timothy, with a wave of the hand, "And now I am ready to hear your story."

"Yer scc," the darkey began, "de leddy knowed dat you's had been out all night, and hab a berry hard time."

"Bless her considerate heart," put in Jenkins.

"Well, hole on, dar'; don't go for to 'rupt me so much.

So she says to me, 'Jonas,' dat's w'at she say, 'you take ober dis bottle ob rum, and tell masser Jinkums dat I send it. 'Vise him to take quite good stiff horn of it, 'cause it'll dribe out cole. 'But,' say she, 'don't leff him go for to drink too much, so dat my fadder'll fin' out I send him de rum.' "

As he thus spoke, the black produced, from beneath his coat, a large black bottle, which he placed in the hands of Jenkins, The latter received it eagerly.

"Bless her noble heart!" he repeated, holding it up to the light. "You can convey hearty thanks from all of us, Jonas. It is the very thing, of all others, that we needed."

He partially turned away, expecting that the negro, for for whom he entertained a decided aversion, would take his leave. But the latter remained seated, gazing in a vapory kind of way into the fire upon the opposite side of the room.

"Perhaps you had better go now," he said, at length. "Your master may come in, and then the old boy himself would be let loose."

"No, sar, masser ain't afeard ob me," pursued the negro, "and missus tole me to stay an' bring back de bottle, arter you' all tuk a good stiff horn, so't masser wouldn't miss it, 'g'in he should come in and take a drink."

Jenkins would have thrust the negro from the room, but he dared not venture upon so rash an experiment, since he had been sent by Charlotte, whom he would not for the world have offended.

"Come, then, boys; we'll drink a good bumper to the lady Charlotte Bradbury," said Timothy, swinging aloft the bottle and taking a long pull.

The example was followed by his two companions, and the bottle returned again to the corporal's hands. He

raised it to the light, and saw that about half the contents had disappeared.

“ There’s enough in here for another good lift,” he said, “ I propose that we drink all round to the confusion of the Yankees! What say to that boys? ”

“ Agreed, agreed! ” was the quick response. “ Jest pass her ’round, Tim, arter ye’ve took yer own sip! ”

Timothy did not delay, but speedily poured down quite onc-half of the remaining contents before removing the bottle from his lips.

“ A thousand blessin’s on Charlotte’s head! ” he exclaimed; “ but that is the best Jamaica I’ve tasted in ten months of Sundays! The man that gits that gal gits a regelar treasure and no mistake.”

“ Yer’ right, Tim; and here’s to hopes that ye’ll be the lucky one yerself! ”

Very speedily the bottom of the bottle was reached, and then Jenkins slowly returned it to the African.

“ De leddy said dat if dar’ was any mo’ dan you’s wanted, de Yank might take a little ob it,” remarked Jonas, hesitatingly, and pushing back the bottle.

“ You’ll have to tell her there’s none left,” said Jenkins, with feigned reluctance. “ You’d oughter spoke about it afore.”

“ Nebber mind; I kal’late ’twon’t make much difference to missus by what I hearn her say ’bout you an’ dis Yank dis ebenin’,” said Jonas, with a sly rolling of his white eyes.

“ About me?” queried Timothy, all interest.

“ Sartin, sar.”

“ What was it?”

“ Fac’, I dunno as I orter tell ob it,” said the negro, glancing about the room mysteriously. “ I’s berry sartin

dat missus wouldn't want to hab it git out roun', an' a fellah can't always tell a secret an' hab it stay."

"I know that, Jonas. But you needn't be afraid to trust me." Here his voice was sunk to an indistinct whisper, as he proceeded, "To tell you the truth, Jonas, I love the lady Charlotte, and you need be afraid to tell me nothing, for I have too deep an interest in her to betray anything."

Being thus pressed, Jonas partially consented to reveal the important secret—then thought better of it, and concluded to be reticent. Repeated urging and expostulation, however, finally brought the negro up to the point of communicativeness, and he began, by a slow and roundabout method, to relate some fancied incident which had occurred in the course of the evening.

The length to which the narrative was spun, or some other cause, operated powerfully upon the listener. He nodded fearfully, and finally pitched from his chair directly upon the negro. Jonas did not seem at all surprised at the turn events had taken. He carefully lowered the inanimate form upon the floor, at the same moment that one of the guards tumbled from his chair upon the hearth.

The other had taken a seat in the chimney-corner, and was now past all human sounds or sights, snoring away musically with his head leaning against the jamb.

Jonas pulled the fallen one from his dangerous proximity to the fire, and then satisfied himself that both the others were sleeping soundly. Producing a keen knife from his pocket, he quickly cut away the cords which confined Abner Ainsworth, and threw them upon the fire.

"Come 'long," said he, in a whisper, taking the late prisoner by the arm. "Missus sent me ober wid dis bottle, and told me to bring you back wid it. S'pose a gemman

from de laud ob 'Nectient wouldn't refuse to do de biddin' ob a leddy like Missie Charlotte."

Abner had really suspected the mission of Jonas, but his unqualified success had been so unexpected that the former still moved as in a dream, from which he might wake at any moment, and find himself doomed to an ignominious death.

But Jonas acted without any delay or hesitation. Opening the door, he bade the prisoner pass out, while he carefully closed it after him. The cool air struck upon Abner's heated brow, and dispelled the feverish oppression from his brain. At length he began to realize his good fortune!

Jonas grasped him by the arm, and together they hurried away in the direction of John Bradbury's dwelling, which was distant but a few rods.

CHAPTER X.

LOVE'S TRIUMPH.

IN order to fully understand the cause of Jonas's strange mission, and the manner in which he had secured the liberation of Captain Ainsworth, when that person had almost given up all hope, it will be necessary that we return to the cabin which John Bradbury had occupied since leaving the lands upon which the Yankee settlers were expected to locate.

Dividing his household, and bringing with him Charlotte and Jonas, with a negro woman of all work, he hastened to the scene where we now find him. As his time was chiefly employed among his soldiery, Charlotte was left much of the time alone. Nor did she regret this, since their feelings were far from being in harmony.

Thus it was that the instinct of gratitude in the

daughter's nature triumphed over any allegiance she was opposed to bear to her father's commands, and she did not hesitate to assist the daring young Yankee, who had saved her own life, whenever she found an opportunity to do so.

It might readily be supposed that after the interference of Charlotte, which had allowed the young captain to get beyond the reach of her father's pistol, a scene would have taken place of no ordinary nature. But, however enraged the latter may have been, he only uttered a threat or two, took an equal number of drinks from a large decanter, and returned to camp.

The day passed slowly and painfully to Charlotte. Sitting by the window, she looked out upon the lovely valley around, and reflected upon the causes which led her to feel such an interest in the young Yankee. It was easy to speak of it as gratitude—was that the proper name for the feeling?

Charlotte would admit nothing else—she thought she would believe nothing else—but in her own mind there rose a doubt. Was not human nature running away with her heart? She hardly dared think of such an idea, and strove to dismiss it from her mind.

But when she learned from the veritable Jonas that Ainsworth was again a prisoner, and being brought to the village for safe keeping, she began to consider means for procuring his release a second time. The commotion which soon followed showed that her calculations had been forestalled by the prisoner's own efforts. Honest Jonas was kept upon the watch till satisfied that he had really gone, and then a feeling of thankfulness arose from the maiden's heart.

“Jonas, I wish to ask a favour of you to-night,” she said, as the darkey finished his recital.

“Well, what am he, missus? Me’ll do anyfing.”

“I wish you to keep watch, Jonas, and see if he is caught again. If so he will probably be brought here to the blockhouse, and I wish to know it.”

“Golly, I’ll do dat, missus!” was the ready response.

“I shall retire now,” she said. “Should he be brought in, you eall me.”

She withdrew to her sleeping apartment, and, without removing any of her clothes, threw herself upon the bed. Some time had passed, though it is probable that she slept but little, when a cautious step approached her door, and a low rap succeeded.

“Is it you, Jonas?” she asked.

“Yes, missus. Dey’s got him!”

She rose from the couch, all her hopes that he had reached his fellows fading away into nothingness.

“Tell me all about it,” she said, on joining her servitor.

The negro proceeded to relate all that he had discovered.

“Who has charge of him?” she asked.

“Missur Jinkums, missus.”

“That is good,” she replied. “Jenkins will only be too happy to serve me, and I shall be pleased to have his service for a short time.”

Her plan had been formed in advance. Stepping to a cupboard in the room containing a plentiful stock of liquor—for John Bradbury belonged to no “temperance” order—she took thence a bottle half filled with the fiery liquid. Hastening to an adjoining room, out of sight of all, she took a small phial from a little medicine-case, and with a steady hand poured a portion of its contents into the liquor. Replacing the phial, she shook the bottle vigorously, and then hastened back to where the wondering Jonas was awaiting her return.

“Take this,” she said, placing it in his hands, and giving him those instructions which he subsequently followed to such good advantage. “Most men, after drinking rum and having undergone exposure, fall asleep. If such should be the case, bring the prisoner away, and bring him here to me; I wish to see him. You understand?”

“Yi!—golly, yi!” responded the negro, whose faculties were not fast locked. “Me understan’ dat all; me do him like a book!”

As the honest servitor took his departure, Charlotte sank back into the nearest chair, and, bowing her head upon her hands, she sat for some time in deep meditation.

“It may be that I do wrong,” she said, finally. “Perhaps duty to my father should outweigh all other considerations. But I am sure he is wrong. I am equally sure that this Yankee is noble and manly. Then, did he not brave the greatest danger in coming to inquire for my health, when the venture so nearly cost his life! and at my father’s hand, though I should blush with shame to say it. Why did he come?”

And again she wandered away into the regions of fancy and speculation. Very evidently it was no ordinary passion which had animated the adventurer—it could hardly have been ordinary friendship. What, then, was it? If love—and she could hardly admit the possibility—why was it? and where would it end?

And then she tried to scout the idea of love altogether. But there was her own heart, which would be heard, and when she finally strove to banish such conflicting ideas from her mind she was in a greater maze than ever.

Only one thought she could not banish. “If the Yankee captain loves me, and by any possible chance I should come to love him, and we should both live, how will it all end?”

This was a riddle she could not begin to solve ; neither could she drive it from her brain. What possible fancies may have crossed her mind with regard to the future it is not our province to discuss.

Presently she heard steps without, the door opened, and Jonas entered, followed by Abner Ainsworth, who could not repress a sensation of curiosity, although he well understood the secret of his liberation.

"I's got him, missus—safe, suah!" said the overjoyed negro, as the door closed behind him. "Dat ole rum acted jest 'spec'ly as you reckon him would. Golly! nebber seed men drop 'sleep so easy, and sleep so sound!"

"Very well, Jonas," replied the maiden. "Now you will keep a lookout that nobody approaches the house for a few moments, while I make our Yankee friend a cup of tea."

"I'll do dat," said the delighted African, taking his stand near the door.

"I assure you no such preparation is necessary," said Abner, considerably embarrassed, as he moved towards the maiden with a finger raised by way of deprecation. "Allow me to thank you for what is already done, and do not let the debt of gratitude swell to such a fearful amount. I certainly never can repay you for what you have already done in my behalf!"

"Indeed, sir, you very recently saved my life, when you had no call to do so. I owe some of it to you, certainly, and if I can repay the debt in a manner so easy, I pray you allow me to do so. It will be no trouble. See, I have already a fire, and the teakettle is singing over it. You shall eat a few mouthfulls, and the strength you will derive from it will more than compensate for the trifling loss of time."

A brisk fire, which illuminated the entire apartment, was blazing, and a teakettle singing merrily above it. Before Abner could have suspected it possible, a small table had been supplied with various viands, a cup of tea was steaming beside them, and Charlotte had placed a chair for the fugitive."

"You will excuse the absence of a light," she said after inviting him to a seat at the cosy table; "for they are too apt to reveal secrets. A prying pair of eyes, guided by such a light, would be very apt to create confusion among us."

"You are right, dear lady," said Abner, who was deeply affected by such continued devotion. "I really wish to return to my comrades, though a few moments since I had actually given up all hopes of being able to do so. But through your kindness—"

"Say no more of that, please," urged Charlotte, "but eat such portions of the food as you find possible. I really do not wish you to delay a single moment to praise or thank me for anything I have done; it was but my duty."

Abner would have delighted to converse with the maiden for hours, but he knew that time must be precious. Morning was drawing near, and after the first rays of dawn he doubted if it would be possible to reach the palisadoed fort under any circumstances.

The tea was excellent, and he drank several cups with gusto. The food was good, and he eat a little, but the severe shock he had lately suffered prevented him from feeling any great degree of appetite.

Charlotte stood by, and watched the pale, pain-marked features with sorrow and interest. It touched her tender heart to think that one who had already suffered so much

must go forth again, perhaps to suffer further—perchance to die! The last thought was too fearful, and she turned away to hide a tear.

“I will trespass upon your kindness no longer,” he said, rising from the table. “If there are no foes near I will take my departure, and seek to rejoin my companions. But before I go allow me to repeat my thanks, dear lady, and assure you that my earnest prayers shall ever be given for your welfare.”

“I assert that no thanks are needed. I have been but too happy in doing what I have done for you, and even had the risk been much greater, I should not have hesitated at setting you free.”

“I’ll go out an’ see if dar’s anybody roun’ de house,” said Jonas, at that moment.

He slipped through the door, muttering as he went, “I reekin dis darkey hab no bizniss hearin’ w’ot dose folks want to say. ‘Spec’ if I’s out here dey can say jes’ what come in dar’ minds!”

As Jonas disappeared, Abner approached the maiden, and fixing his eyes upon hers, he said:—

“Will you allow me to ask you a single question, Miss Bradbury?”

“Most certainly; only do not call me by that formal name. I prefer Charlotte, for that is what my friends call me.”

The question trembled upon his lips, but how should it be spoken? For a full minute he stood, unable to find words which were unexceptionable.

“I will tell you bluntly,” he said at length. “Peace will some time visit this disputed land. If I should live may I not hope? You surely would not save my life to make it more miserable in the future?”

The only answer he received at first was a soft palm placed within his own, and a pair of loving grey eyes turned upward towards his. Then the lumbering tread of Jonas sounded without the door, and the maiden whispered:—

“You may hope!”

“Heaven bless you!” fervently exclaimed Abner.

Their lips met for a single instant—an instant which had in it enough of bliss to atone for a lifetime of pain, and then the door slowly opened.

“’Spee’ it’s all right out here,” said the negro, before his form became visible. “Done see noffin. Dey’s all right ober at Jinkumsiz, an’ I’s brought ye a gun, if dar’s one wantin’.”

As he finished speaking, the African drew himself in at the door, and extended to Abner a musket, powder-horn, and pouch which he had taken from the sleeping guards.

The young man took them, thanking the negro for the gift. He knew that they might be of service to him—in any case it would increase the confusion of the guards whenever they should chance to awake.

Charlotte accompanied him to the door, to enjoin upon him strict care that he did not fall into the power of her father’s people again.

“In that case I shall be, very likely, unable to assist you.”

“I will be careful,” he said, “very eareful. And now, my dear one, my own, good-bye!”

He pressed the hand she extended to him, heard her faltering farewell, and then stepped forth to fresh danger, and into blacker darkness.

Morning light was not yet at hand, and the clouds had risen in even denser masses than before. Only the sharpest outlines were distinguishable, and even those at no great

distance. At first he attempted to move off promptly, but found his way beset with numerous impediments, and himself really in danger of losing the way.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MORNING ATTACK.

JOHN BRADBURY sat in the little cabin which had been constructed for his head-quarters, and drank and mused and planned and drank again till morning was near, and he had worked himself into a belief that the dislodging of the enemy was one of the simplest things in nature.

Filled with visions of conquest, he proceeded to rouse up his under officers, and together they drank and planned till all were convinced that it would be only the merest pastime to eject the obnoxious Yankees, take possession of their oxen and waggons, and send them back a melancholy troop to their New England homes.

As it was near morning, and darkness being an indispensable accessory to their attack, the lines were formed with all speed, and silently moved up to the vicinity of the palisadoed stronghold. Everyone had been warned to use the utmost caution, and to the best of their ability all had followed these directions. Section after section moved slowly into place, and the men with ladders crouched close beneath the stakes.

Not a sound from the dark inclosure denoted that any person was aware of their coming, and as every one of the Pennamites bent anxious ears, which failed to catch any sounds of danger, they began to grow impatient to scale the barriers and rush upon their foes.

At that moment a faint gleam of light appeared behind the Yankee breastworks. But it revealed nothing. Before

half-a-dozen eyes had caught the sight, a mass of flaming material was hurled high in the air, falling in the midst of the crouching forms without.

Confusion reigned among the startled Pennamites. Half-a-dozen of them sprang to extinguish the blazing ball of tow, but it had been prepared especially for its present use; all efforts in that direction only served to raise the glare higher.

Before the officers could regain their presence of mind sufficiently to order an assault, a full volley was poured into their crowded ranks from behind the Yankee breastworks; followed by a scattering fire which dealt sure death.

John Bradbury saw that his nicely-laid plans were all a failure, and with precipitate speed he withdrew, until comfortably sheltered by his earthworks in the woods. Here his defeated followers came slowly in, many of them wounded, and all disheartened. The victory was complete for the Yankees. Scarcely a man among them was wounded.

Meanwhile, where was Abner Ainsworth?

Fortunately he caught a glimpse of the block-house faintly outlined against the black sky. Moving in that direction he soon satisfied himself of the location of the camps. To reach his followers before morning now became his sole object.

It seemed he must be near the palisades when he heard something moving in advance of him. Satisfied that it was a body of men, his next speculations were as to their identity and object. He was not required to remain long in doubt.

The pyrotechnic display which had startled the Pennamites gave him an equal though far different surprise. By

the glare of its red flames he saw that an attack upon his friends was not only contemplated, but in actual progress ! Now he understood perfectly the movements which he had heard in front of him.

Quickly a rolling sheet of fire burst from the bosom of the palisades, and the leaden messengers swept through the crowded ranks of the assaulters with sad havoc. One, indeed, ploughed up the dirt between the watcher's feet, filling his eyes and nose, and causing him to think seriously of quitting so dangerous a vicinity.

As he was moving away, the young man felt a twinge in his left thigh, just above the knee ; a numbness pervaded the entire limb, and he fell to the ground. It needed no oracle to convince Abner that he was shot by a bullet from his own men.

He endeavoured to crawl from the place, but pain and faintness overcame him. Half insensible, he sank to the ground, and remained for some time before he was sufficiently recovered to make any exertions in his own behalf.

When he was able to do so, he tore away such portions of his coat as would best serve in place of a bandage, and applied the improvised dressing to the wound. The flow of blood was at once checked, though not entirely stopped.

By this time it was light enough to discern the outline of objects near him, and even see the palisades of his own camp. He began to think of endeavouring to reach it, but just then a Pennamite officer rode up with a flag of truce. He comprehended his purpose, and knew that the request would be granted.

There was but one hope. As he lay somewhat apart, it was possible they might gather up the fallen and not notice him. To make the probability greater, he endeavoured to crawl nearer the river-bank. But the effort

was so painful that he desisted, awaiting his fate, whatever it might be.

Soon the waggons approached, but before they came several Pennamites were upon the ground, counting up the wounded, and arranging the dead in a ghastly pile.

"Hello! What we got here?" demanded one, approaching our hero. "Seems they took you at long range," he continued, bending over and noticing the wound. "Bone broke in yer' leg?"

"I cannot tell," Abner replied, faintly. "I only know that it's bled until I'm so weak I can't move."

"Never mind! You're fightin' in a good cause, and we'll see't ye hev' good care," was the comforting reply.

The waggon was soon at hand, and Abner placed in it. Then the ghastly load was filled out, and the slow journey to the Pennamite village taken up.

As the waggon passed the block-house, crowds of weeping women and wondering children gathered about it to ask questions and look for familiar forms. Such as were claimed by friends were given into their care, and soon Abner was left alone. But not long.

Among the anxious ones who flocked about, was Jonas, the honest negro. He saw and recognized the Yankee captain at a glance, and then hastened back to his mistress. The result of all was that Abner Ainsworth was safely stowed beneath John Bradbury's roof a few moments later.

Dismissing all the idle ones, who were few in number, Charlotte and Jonas proceeded to dress the wounds and administer stimulants. The ride, with all other causes, had tended to weaken Abner very much. But under the kind ministrations of those two faithful ones, he speedily recovered his strength, and began to converse more freely.

"Really, Charlotte," he said, "I fear you will bring

trouble upon yourself and others. I shall certainly be discovered here, and I fear for your—”

“Never mind me, sir,” was the quick response. “I am your nurse now, and you must be patient! Besides, the chances of your being discovered are not nearly so great as you may imagine. This room is very seldom visited, save by those who will keep the secret. In addition, I shall take the liberty of disguising you pretty effectually. Jonas is quite a barber, and he shall remove your beard, crop your hair, and put a scar upon your cheek. This, with a change of clothing, which I will procure at once, will metamorphose your appearance so that I shall not fear to bring my father himself into the room to see you. With rest and good care your wound will soon be healed so as to allow of your walking, and then we will abide the aspect of events. You have not yet told me how you came to be injured. It seems you were not a prisoner again.”

Abner then related how he had approached the supposed retreat of his friends; how he had nearly fallen into the hands of the Pennamites; and how he had lingered behind their lines till he was shot by his own men. How he had been taken up by the excited gleaners of death's harvest and brought to that place in the waggon.

“It is very fortunate for me that I was brought back here,” he said, in conclusion. “My fate might have been unpleasant had I been recognized. But I feel that a few days at most will enable me to leave the roof where I shall be such a perpetual source of danger.”

“Say no more about danger,” urged Charlotte. “I have no duty more strongly marked out than this—to make such return as is possible for the favours I have received at your hands. But I will leave you now for a

time. Jonas will attend to any wishes of yours, and I feel sure you will find him skilful and faithful. I suppose you can adopt a name and history which will correspond with the circumstances under which you were found?"

"I can arrange that," Abner returned, with a smile, "if you will assist me in fixing the place of my nativity, and the relation I bear to the cause."

"That I will certainly do," she replied, and then withdrew.

Abner did not see her again during the forenoon. Jonas, however, was in almost constant attendance, and under his supervision a wonderful change took place in the young man's appearance. His hair was cropped short, his beard shaven away, and an artificial scar ran from one eye nearly to the ear upon the same side. He would not have known the features which he beheld when a small mirror was presented to his gaze. Consequently he was not fearful that others would do so.

CHAPTER XII.

A MONTH LATER.

A WEEK passed, and Abner was unable to step upon the wounded limb. We do not need to say that he received every attention from those who had his welfare in charge, nor will we dwell upon the many pleasant hours passed beside his couch.

He was just beginning to amend perceptibly when misfortunes in a shower fell upon him. His followers were obliged to steal away from the valley by night, and make the best of their way back to Connecticut. His own identity, too, was discovered. He was seized and cast into the same strong prison he had once before occupied, and

so strict a watch set over him as to preclude all possibility of escape or rescue.

A month more passed away, and during all that time not a friendly face had Abner seen. Not even one of Bradbury's family had he been able to discover through the narrow loopholes which alone gave him connexion with the outer earth.

The thirty-first day was drawing to a close. It was a dull, rainy afternoon, and the smiling green earth seemed wrapped in a mantle of gloom.

Abner stood beside one of the narrow openings, gazing forth. Not that the spectacle which met his eye presented any agreeable features—save by contrast. It was infinitely more dark and gloomy within that prison abode, and the tranquil face of the Susquehanna had in it something cheering when viewed from such a standpoint.

While standing thus, and reflecting upon the varied scenes through which he had passed through the short years of his life—of the strange and unknown circumstances by which he now found himself surrounded—and wondering what the future would bring forth, he was startled at hearing a horseman gallop into the village and an instant commotion ensue. Wondering at the cause of it, he moved across to one end of the room, and took a position which gave him a partial view of the scene, and enabled him to hear more distinctly.

The guard, who was within the cell at the time, moved to his side, and both waited to hear what tidings had arrived to create such confusion. The first words which reached their ears were quite sufficient in themselves to excite the listeners powerfully.

“I tell you I want another hoss, and I must have him in just ten minutes less'n no time!” said a loud, harsh voice.

“The Yankees are comin’; they’ll camp in this valley to-night sure as fate, and I must see John Bradbury with the news in just the quickest time that can be made!”

The excited messenger passed from their hearing as he finished speaking, and the twain regarded each other in silence for a moment.

“Thank heaven! My time of imprisonment is nearly at an end!” said Abner.

“Reckon not,” was the brutal response. “Ye don’ know the plan old John has got for your special benefit, I conclude!”

“I don’t know his plans,” the young man replied; “but I know the nature of my own people, and they will not allow me to remain here after they learn of my whereabouts.”

The fellow laughed a venomous, bitter laugh, and turned away. There was something in his manner which Abner could not comprehend, but which gave him an assurance that some fiendish scheme had been concocted, of which he was to be made the victim.

The tumult and bustle of preparation rather increased than diminished during the rest of the day, and into the night no sounds reached the anxious ears of the prisoner save those of men hurrying about, entering and departing from the block-house, and occupied with preparation generally.

Of course their proceedings left no doubt in the mind of Abner but that a decided resistance was contemplated to the advance of his countrymen. Still he knew their bravery and determination, and could not doubt but that they would finally succeed in their efforts, whatever his own fate might be. For hours he continued pacing the apartment

—his wound having healed sufficiently to allow of moderate exercise upon the injured limb. He reflected that in all probability he should continue a prisoner, since his former companions had left the place under the impression that he had been killed, and his keepers would be very careful to maintain the secret among themselves till such time as their purpose with him might be fulfilled.

At length he threw himself upon his couch, and endeavoured to sleep. Vain effort. When the more exciting topics had been driven from his mind, the object of his love, Charlotte Bradbury, took the place of them. Where was he? Should he ever see her again? These were the questions which constantly presented themselves. The first of them he could partially answer. He had heard Bradbury spoken of as being away. He knew that he had a residence several miles up the river, and it was most probable that there he had taken the maiden. When and where they would ever meet was something too deeply shrouded in mystery for his divination.

Darkness had settled over the earth, and finally Abner slept—a nervous, fitful sleep. The guards had been changed, and all was fearfully still, when a sharp sound, which could not be mistaken, broke upon the air. It was the report of a rifle! The sound was near, and with the dying away of its sullen echoes came an instant bustle and commotion. The inhabitants of the village, soldiers and citizens, sprang to their feet and out into the street to learn the cause of the alarm.

Nor had they long to wait before the mystery was changed to a surprise. For rushing through the streets came a determined body of armed men, led on by Oliver Billings! The few men who had gained their arms and ought to oppose the triumphant advance were either

knocked down with muskets, or fled—none had the temerity to fire their pieces, knowing that certain death would be the result.

Right on towards the block-house swept the wave of victorious Yankees. A few of the Pennamites had gathered about the place, and, as they saw the turn affairs were taking, they hastened in and closed the door.

“Surrender!” shouted Billings, as his command paused in front of the building. “Give up that block-house in peace, and go where you are a mind to!”

There was no response for some moments, and the impatient leader repeated his summons in louder tones.

The only answer was a volley from the loop-holes, which severely wounded one man and slightly injured another. Shouts and curses broke from the lips of the assailants, and a few rashly returned the fire.

Seeing that they but exposed themselves in vain, the leader drew them away, and formed them in column behind one of the buildings near by. Then he addressed a few words to them.

“We must take that block-house,” he said, “at all hazards. We cannot stop to build fortifications from which to be driven as we were a month since. Let us find something which will batter down the door, and then we shall have them at our hands. There can’t be many of them in there, not above a dozen. Now, then, four of you men hunt for a heavy beam of timber, and we will lose no time in dislodging them.”

Those indicated at once set off upon the mission required, and in a short time returned with the report that they had found the very thing. The timber, which was a long and heavy beam, was grasped by more than twenty stout men, who clamoured to be led forward to the assault. But Bil-

lings had been reconnoitering the block-house, and said:—

“They have placed a light so that it shines over the doorway. Of course it will not do for us to move up under its rays, since they would pick off a man at every shot.”

“Jest let me go and fix it, cap'n,” said Zeph Jones, who had returned with the second expedition. “I'l larn 'em not to put up any sech moonshine!”

“Well, go,” was the reply.

The old sharpshooter stole away, and his companions awaited the result of his enterprise. He had been gone but a few moments when something of a commotion was heard in another direction. Of course any unusual disturbance attracted immediate attention. Billings hastened in that direction, and as he did so heard the tramping of horses. Evidently fresh foes were coming upon them, though the pale starlight which had succeeded the rainy afternoon did not render objects distinct at any great distance.

“What have we here?” demanded a harsh voice, which more than one recognized as belonging to John Bradbury.

“What is the meaning of all this?”

“Surrender!” thundered the Yankee leader.

“What for surrender?” contemptuously exclaimed Bradbury, drawing a pistol, which he discharged at the speaker.

The ball just passed over Billings' shoulder, grazed the arm of a man beyond him, and buried itself in the ground. An instant discharge of pistols and musketry followed, which the Yankee commander strove in vain to arrest.

The Pennamite leader strove to turn his horse from the spot, but was doomed to pay the penalty of his rashness.

Three of the balls which were discharged found their mark upon his body, and he tumbled from the horse with a muttered curse. One of his followers fell, too, and the others put spurs to their horses, and dashed from the scene. They saw the situation at a glance, and wisely concluded to leave the Yankees in undisputed possession.

“Now for the block-house!” said Billings. “After that is gained we will see about the wounded.”

Just then came the loud crack of a rifle, and Zeph Jones made his appearance with a joyful expression.

“I’ve stopped the light, cap’n!” he said.

“Then, forward; and lose no time,” was the command, as the men raised the heavy timber to their shoulders. “Strike the door square, and with full force.”

The men dashed forward, and though one or two of them were wounded by the volley which greeted them, they did not falter for a moment. The heavy beam struck the door, and forced it away as though it had been a barrier of paper. In at the opening poured a solid column of men, which it would have been folly for the handful there assembled to resist.

The victors quickly spread over the building, the helpless occupants were driven into one corner of the upper room, and disarmed, after which a guard was set over them. Seeing that all these matters had been attended to, Billings was about to leave the place, with the intention of seeking the wounded and dead below, when Zeph Jones touched him upon the arm.

“I hearn suthin’ in this room, cap’n,” he said, indicating the apartment where Abner Ainsworth was confined. “I karkilate we hain’t ferretted ’em all out yit!”

“What have you in that room?” Billings demanded, of the prisoners. But no reply was received.

“ Very well, it'll not take long to find out,” he added.

A man endeavoured to rush by them as the door was opened, but he was instantly secured, and placed with the other prisoners. A light having been produced, the explorers pushed into the prison. The first object which met their gaze was the pale, yet joyful, countenance of their former captain, Abner. With a cry of joy the men who had known him, and among them the present commander of the emigrants, rushed forward with outstretched hands.

“ Heavens !” exclaimed Billings, as he realized whom he had encountered. “ Is it possible that you are still alive, Captain Ainsworth? We all thought you dead. John Bradbury told us we should see you no more.”

“ He intended keeping me as a check upon your actions in future,” said Abner.

“ Thank fortune his checking is done with,” said Billings. “ He lies in the street !”

“ Not dead ?”

“ I do not know. My men fired a dozen shots at him, and he fell; we didn' stop to examine any further.”

“ Let us hasten to him,” said Abner. “ Much as he has misused all of us, I would save his life, if possible. He may be but wounded.”

They hastened into the street, and repaired at once to the place where the Pennamite leader had fallen. Several men and women were gathered there, who fell back respectfully as the Yankees approached. They saw that he still lived, though it was only too apparent that the tide of life was ebbing low. He breathed gaspingly, and with considerable exertion.

“ He is dying !” said Abner, solemnly. “ We can do nothing to help him.”

At the sound of his voice the drooping eyes were opened for a moment, and the sufferer gasped forth :—

“Yankee, you’ve got ahead of me at last. I didn’t mean to let you do it.”

The effort was all that his waning strength would bear. For some minutes he lay, breathing heavily, and then endeavoured to speak again. But it was not to be. His last words upon earth had been spoken. The blood gushed from his mouth, and with a rattling in the throat he expired!

With saddened faces they bore him to the block-house, and there his remains were placed beside those of his deluded follower and the single Yankee who had been slain. Articles of comfort were brought from the nearest houses, and the wounded were cared for in the same place.

Towards morning the waggons and families of the settlers came in, and the entire night was spent in preparation and bustle.

After the sun had been above the eastern mountains for an hour, a single horsewoman, attended by a negro, rode into the place. It was Charlotte Bradbury and Jonas, the faithful attendant. She pulled up her horse upon seeing that the village had changed owners, and inquired where her father might be found.

A rough but kind-hearted Yankee broke the news of his death to her as gently as possible, and conducted her to the block-house, where his remains were lying. Her grief was such as the tender-hearted must ever feel. If the past had not been all harmony, it was forgotten, and tears, bitter and scalding, fell upon the pallid features as she bent over and kissed the cold lips.

As she turned away from the deadly spectacle her eyes fell upon a pale but handsome face, and noble, manly form.

With a low cry of mingled sorrow and pleasure, she sank upon the arm outstretched to support her, and leaned there for several minutes while the tears flowed thick and fast.

At length she checked them with an effort, and gazing up into the features which beamed lovingly upon her, she murmured :—

“He is gone, but I am not left alone in the world!”

“Not while I have life, dearest,” he whispered, in soothing accents.

Honest Jonas, too, came forward for a due share of congratulations. He was rejoiced to see the young officer, whom he had vainly sought to free, again at liberty. His joy at that event was only tempered by sorrow for the death of his master, and the consequent grief of his young mistress.

During the day those of the prisoners who chose were set at liberty on giving their word of honour not to take up arms against the Yankees until properly exchanged. They were anxious to accompany the remains of their late leader to his final resting-place, and under their escort the mournful procession set forth towards his late home.

Abner Ainsworth did not join in the long struggle which followed between the rival factions. His health was too fearfully shattered, and a few days after the mortal part of John Bradbury had been committed to earth, he set out for the land of steady habits.

No sooner was his health restored than he hastened again to the lovely valley, where his heart was now unalterably fixed. During the season the conflict was kept up, but the persistent New Englanders finally succeeded in their purpose, and established their colony.

Late in the autumn there was a joyful, though subdued group gathered at a newly-erected house in the most ple

sant portion of the village, for upon that day Abner Ainsworth took to his own hearth and home his newly-made bride. She whom he had assisted in the moment of peril, and who had assisted him so repeatedly, found now the fruition of that love which nothing had been able to conquer.

THE END.

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