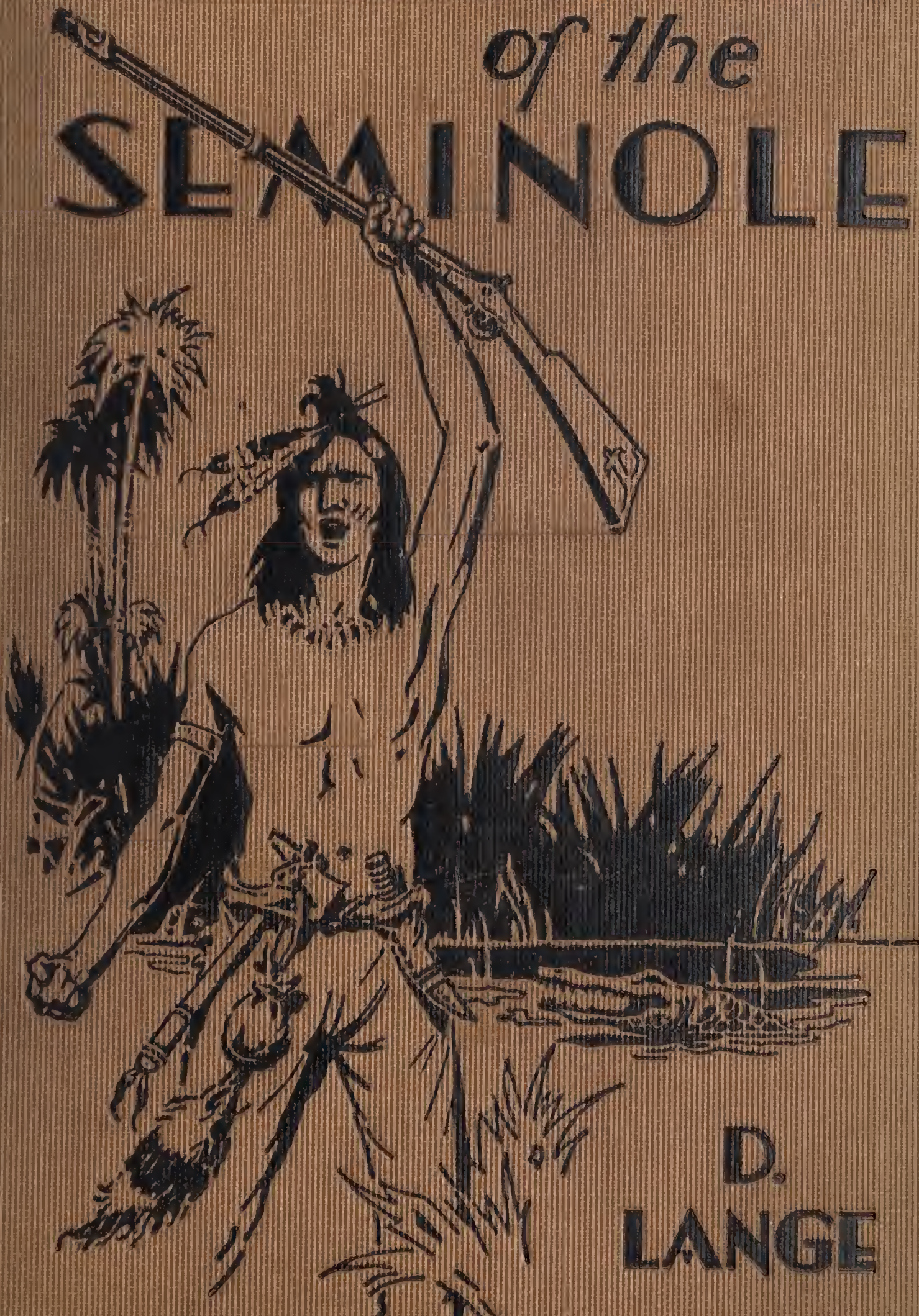


The BOAST of the SEMINOLE



D.
LANGE



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THE BOAST
OF THE SEMINOLE

“INDIAN” STORIES
WITH HISTORICAL BASES

By D. LANGE

12mo. Cloth Illustrated

ON THE TRAIL OF THE SIOUX

THE SILVER ISLAND OF THE
CHIPPEWA

LOST IN THE FUR COUNTRY

IN THE GREAT WILD NORTH

THE LURE OF THE BLACK HILLS

THE LURE OF THE MISSISSIPPI

THE SILVER CACHE OF THE PAWNEES

THE SHAWNEE'S WARNING

THE THREAT OF SITTING BULL

THE RAID OF THE OTTAWA

THE MOHAWK RANGER

THE IROQUOIS SCOUT

THE SIOUX RUNNER

THE GOLD ROCK OF THE CHIPPEWA

THE BOAST OF THE SEMINOLE

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

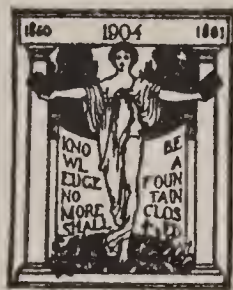


THERE LAY THE GOLD AND SILVER COINS STOLEN AT FORT BROOKE.— *Page 256.*

THE BOAST OF THE SEMINOLE

By
D. LANGE

ILLUSTRATED BY
HAROLD CUE



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LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

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THE BOAST OF THE SEMINOLE

CHAPTER I

HANOWA, the Seminole scout, jumped off his horse on the outskirts of Fort Brooke and entered the cabin of his friend, Sergeant David Munro, just as the eastern sky began to redden, while the sergeant and his son, Billy, were at breakfast.

“*Alaka-ishay*, I have come,” was his greeting, to which the white boy quickly replied, “Ho! *Lagashay*, yes, sit down;” for young Billy prided himself on his ability to speak the Seminole language and use the proper phrase in greeting a guest. Billy was indeed an apt pupil of his older Indian friend, who never tired of teaching the white boy new words and phrases spoken by his own people in the great swamps and forests and the wild Everglades of Florida. No matter how often the inquisitive boy asked: “What is it? What do you call that? How do you say, ‘He is a liar’? or ‘He is a good

man ' ? ” Hanowa never tired and never lost patience. For an hour at a time Billy would send a fusillade of questions at Hanowa as the three friends sat at the red camp-fire in the pine woods, or in their log cabin at Fort Brooke, on Tampa Bay. Never once had the patient Seminole answered, “ *Wykaschay*,” be still, or, “ *Ipuscha*,” go away.

But on this occasion Billy was not given a chance to question Hanowa, for Sergeant Munro, whose enlistment had expired a month before, had too many questions, and his heart was too full of anxiety to turn the Seminole over to Billy.

“ Ho! *Lagashay*,” Munro repeated, arising quickly and grasping the scout's hand, “ I am glad you have come. You have been gone a long time, three weeks to-morrow, and I was much afraid that a white man had killed you or the soldiers had made you prisoner, for dark and evil days have fallen upon the land of your people. But my son has been a great comfort in these days.

“ ‘ They will not see him, Father,’ he assured me, ‘ they can never catch Hanowa. He is a Seminole. He knows the swamps,

the pine woods, and the hammocks.' But, now, sit down to eat. Bacon we have plenty, and beans and corn bread. Your horse looks as if you had traveled all night."

The sad and tired face of the Seminole brightened at the invitation of his friend. He took a chair and began to eat, while Munro sliced more bacon into the frying-pan and made a fresh pot of coffee.

"*Elaha*, my brother," the Seminole boasted. "No white man can see a Seminole, if the Seminole does not wish to be seen. I have traveled a day and a night, through the shehoppa, the saw-palmetto; through the pine barrens, and along the edges of the swamps and the hammocks. I have not traveled on the trails. I knew there was great trouble in the air, because from my hiding-places in the thickets of the hammocks I saw the warriors of my people going north. I am hungry, for I have eaten nothing but the white hearts of tololocko, the cabbage-palm, and a little corn meal I carried in my bag. I could not shoot game, for I wished that no Seminole warriors and no white man should see me, and I have

slept only when my horse had to rest and feed.”

And then Hanowa fell to eating in silence, as only a hungry Indian can eat, while Munro fried more bacon and set out more hot corn bread.

When Hanowa had finished eating and had quenched his thirst with several cups of black coffee, Munro could not restrain himself any longer.

“What have the eyes and ears of my brother learned, while he was away scouting to the south? Has he seen Dan Holtess with the crooked heart, and Sokala who shows him to walk in the crooked path?”

“*Elaha*, I have tracked Holtess, and I have tracked Sokala. To the river Mayakka I have tracked them, which flows into the western sea fifty miles south of the bay called Tampa. On the Mayakka I found them. They were making a big noise with talk and with their axes. It was dark. Then I heard a big tree fall, and I heard the white man howl and shout many words. And then I knew they had cut a tree which *fo-a*, the bee people, had filled with honey.

I knew that the bee people had drawn their daggers that glisten with little drops of poison. I knew that they had stabbed the white man many times, and I knew why he howled and swore many bad words. And then I forgot that I was a scout, and I laughed aloud and cut my face on the saw-palmetto."

"Didn't the Indian howl and swear?" asked Billy, when Hanowa had quit laughing.

"No," replied the scout, "the Seminoles never make bad talk to *fo-a*; it would bring bad luck. Sokala had built a little fire near the bees, and he cut with his ax, and took the white combs from *fo-a*. But Holtess howled more and called out that he would go and get a kettle and boil out some wax to stop the chink, chink, in the pack."

"And what did he do then?" asked Billy, when Hanowa was silent.

"Then he came straight at my hiding-place, swearing all the time at the bees and at the sharp teeth of the *shehoppa*. I lay very still. He came nearer; it was very dark. Pretty soon I knew he would fall

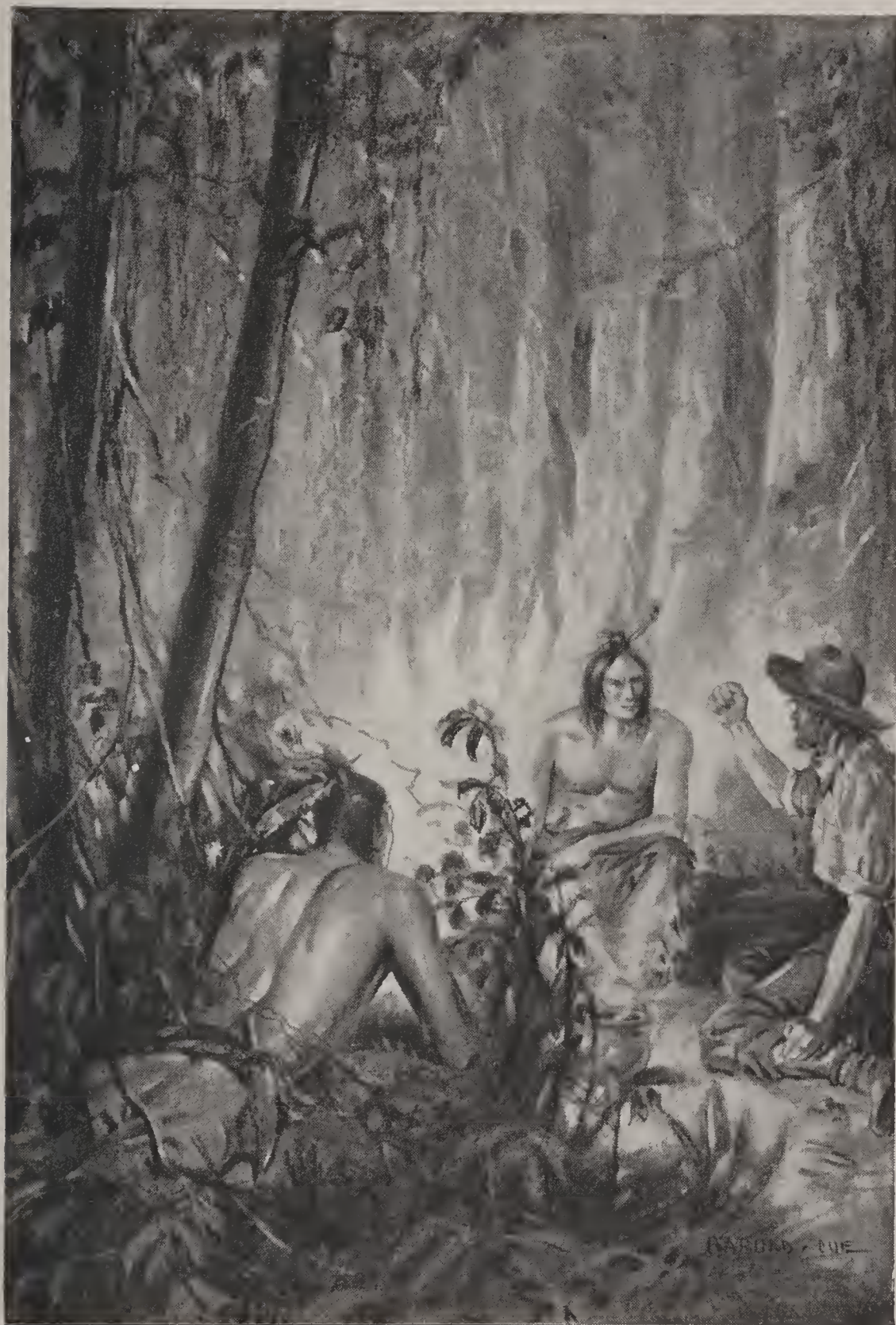
over me. I sprang up like *lokosee*, the bear. 'Whoof, whoof!' I made like a bear, and rushed into the scrub on four feet. He let go a big yell and fell down in the saw-scrub. He swore at the bear and fired his pistol after me,—two, three times. I heard the bullets sing, but I was lying flat on the ground and quickly crawled away like a snake.

"I lay very still, until the two men had built a fire. Then I crawled slowly, very slowly to the edge of the tall scrub so I could hear them talk."

"What did you hear?" asked Billy.

"Let our friend have a little rest," admonished Billy's father. "Give him a chance to catch his breath."

The Seminole smiled. "Billy wants to know. He will be a good scout. The white man was still mad. He could not sit still. He rubbed himself in many places. Then he swore again at the bees and at the bear, and he swore at Sokala for not letting him take a hound along; for with a hound they could have killed the bear. Then I heard Sokala talk.



“I COULD HEAR THEM TALK.”— *Page 12.*

“ ‘ White man,’ he said, ‘ you have made much bad talk. You have made enough bad talk. Now you stop. Tell me, white man, why did you laugh when you swore at the bees?’ ”

“ The white man said he had not laughed; he had not felt like laughing.

“ ‘ I heard somebody laugh,’ said Sokala. ‘ Who was it, if you did not laugh? Did you see the bear?’ ”

“ Then the white man grew mad again and said he knew bears. He had killed a hundred of them, and no fool Indian need teach him about bears.

“ ‘ Now you stop,’ spoke up Sokala, and arose from his log. ‘ You talk more swear at me and I leave you. I leave you to-night.’ ”

“ Then the white man rubbed himself again, and sat down on his other leg and promised to make no more swear talk at Sokala, but he did make some more at the bees.

“ I knew now,” continued Hanowa after a short pause, “ that I must not crawl up to their camp-fire to find out what was in their

pack. For I knew that Sokala would sleep with one eye open, and he might shoot me and I could never come to tell you where I had been; for I knew that Sokala did not believe that the white man had seen a bear."

When Hanowa had taken another cup of coffee, sweetened with brown sugar, Billy could not resist asking another question:

"What would you have done, Hanowa, if they had sent a hound after you?"

"Shot him dead with my pistol, and do it quick."

"But then the men would have come after you."

"No, they would not. No Seminole goes near a man who is hiding in the scrub with a pistol."

"Now, Billy, no more questions," Munro broke in. "Hanowa must lie down for a long sleep. When he has slept enough we shall talk more and make our plans. Holtess and Sokala are the men we should go after. I believe Holtess is the man who planned the dirty deed and carried it out, and I remember now many little things nobody could explain when they happened."

CHAPTER II

IT was not long before the deep breathing of Hanowa in the loft of the cabin told that the young Seminole was making up lost sleep. The loft, with a screened window at each end, was Hanowa's favorite sleeping-place on cool days, and this was going to be a good day for sleeping. The wind blew from the northwest, and the air had a pleasant tang as on a fine October day in the North. His head resting on a small pillow filled with Spanish moss, his lithe, supple form wrapped up in an army blanket and stretched out on a mattress also filled with Spanish moss, that was the way Hanowa liked to sleep. Long and soundly he slept, as only a tired boy, a scout, and a soldier can sleep.

Billy of his own accord took care of Hanowa's horse. First he took him to water and then he tied him in the shed. The fine black animal whinnied as Billy left him.

"Don't worry, Sopa," said Billy, turning around. "I'll be back." Very soon he

returned with a big armful of hay and a bag of oats, which he had begged of the hostler in the mule barn at Fort Brooke.

“Now, Sopa, you are going to have a feast of real hay and oats. This is the first of December, and the wild grass is all hard and dead and no good, but here is some real feed for a horse.”

And Sopa did have a feast, and when he had finished, he grunted and lay down, and like his master fell asleep, but a horse never sleeps as soundly as a man.

It was Billy who had named the horse, Sopa, which is the Seminole word for blue. Billy did not like the Seminole word for black, and he claimed that he could see a bluish sheen reflected from Sopa's glossy coat when the sun was shining on him. Billy had long coveted this horse for his own and had often tried to buy him, and once he had offered to trade his own horse and a cow for him, but Hanowa had smiled at the offer, saying: “*Wauca*, no good. I can catch *waucas* in the woods; plenty of them wild.

“No, *Tewahnee*, my boy,” he had explained, “I raised Sopa, when I lived at the

big sugar mill south of St. Augustine. I cannot sell him or trade him. He is the best horse in Florida. He can travel fast and long without food and rest. He never runs away when I sleep, he knows where I want to go, and he does not talk to horses going by, when I am hiding in the scrub. His ancestors came to our country a long time ago with De Soto, a great chief of the Spanalkays. That is what the big white master, Bulow, of the sugar mill told me. I do not know if it is true."

While Billy was tending Sopa and planning how, some day, he would offer Hanowa a shining new gun for the horse, Billy's father sat in the cabin by himself and let his mind run over the events of the last month. For fifteen years he had faithfully served his country, at first as a private, and for the last five years as a sergeant, loved by his men and trusted and honored by every officer under whom he had served.

But now a terrible thing had happened. His good name had been blackened and dishonored. He had been relieved from ordinary military duties and had served as

orderly and trusted man at headquarters, and at the quartermaster's office. He had been given a key to the building and was a trusted bookkeeper and treasurer. On a dark, windy night, about six weeks before, he had gone to the office about nine o'clock to get some papers on which he wanted to work at his quarters. He had talked to the sentry as he entered, but when he left the building the sentry was at the farther end of his beat, about three hundred paces away.

That same night the building had been entered by somebody who must have had a key. The hinges and padlock of the strong box had been forced, and a tin box containing \$1021 in gold and silver coins had been stolen. One gold piece and a Mexican silver dollar were found next day in a closet where Munro used to hang his overcoat and cap. A few days later the empty tin box was found buried on the edge of Munro's sweet-potato patch. Close by in the scrub palmetto was found a freshly dug hole carefully filled up, but containing no money. Neither of the two sentries on duty during the night of the theft had heard any noise or

seen anybody enter or leave the building, except as already told.

In view of the excellent record of Munro, no formal charges had been preferred against him. He had voluntarily appeared before a Military Court of Inquiry and had frankly answered all questions. The proceedings of the court being entirely friendly and informal, Munro had asked these questions:

“Do you think, gentlemen, that I would have let the sentry see me enter the building, if I had intended to steal the money?”

“Do you think I would have lost two coins in my closet?”

“Would I have buried the tin box in my potato patch and dug a blind hole close by?”

The members of the court laughed and said they did not believe Sergeant Munro capable of such a bungling job; and they rendered a unanimous verdict that the money had been stolen by a person or by persons unknown. A week later Sergeant Munro was given an honorable discharge, for which he had made a formal application some time previously.

Until he had received his honorable discharge, Munro had not felt at all sure that he would not have to face a regular court martial on the charge of having stolen Government money. That easy, informal friendliness of the board of inquiry might have been a ruse. The case had never been a laughing matter to him. If a new commandant were sent to Fort Brooke he might now have him tried before a civil court.

“I wish they had tried me in court martial,” he said to himself. “The military courts get through with a case and seldom make a mistake, and everybody in court would have been my friend. In a civil court of the Territory of Florida I might be under bond or in jail for months awaiting trial. I should have to hire a lawyer, and who can tell how my case would look to the jury? I wish I had asked for a formal trial by court martial. The court would have had to find me innocent. Then I would be through with the case and could have followed my wife and the children to New York State, as Billy and I had planned, and lived happily on our little farm.

“For years, Martha and I had planned that on Christmas Eve, 1836, we would meet all our school-day friends on the old family homestead near Newburgh on the Hudson.

“And where and what am I now? I am a man living under a cloud. Never shall I forget the year and the Christmas of 1836. Billy will not feel like singing ‘Holy Night’ on Christmas Eve as he did last year,—his mother and the two little brothers a thousand miles away, and his father accused of being a thief! Under a cloud, I am living in bleeding Florida, which man’s folly, mostly white man’s greed and folly, has changed from a natural Paradise to a realm of the Prince of Evil. No angel will bring a message of peace this Christmas Eve to either white man, black man, or red man. That terrible Seminole war has been raging a year and is getting worse every month. I did not tell Hanowa what happened on the Withlacoochee about two weeks ago. He would not be sleeping now if I had told him.”

CHAPTER III

IT was late in the afternoon when Hanowa woke up and dropped down from the loft.

“*Elaha,*” he asked, “shall we talk?”

“Let us talk,” replied Munro. “I have much to tell you, but you should talk first, because you have been on a long journey.”

“It has been a long journey,” Hanowa began. “I traveled north, and I traveled south, and then I rode north again. After the white captains had said that my brother had not taken the yellow money, you told me to find the man who had taken it. I went and sat down under a tree near the bay and I saw a white man and a Seminole trying to buy a sailboat from the captain of all the ships in the bay; but the captain would not sell them a boat. I lay down as if I were going to sleep.

“‘Who is that Indian?’ asked the captain.

“‘He is my man,’ replied the white man.

‘I have bought him.’ And he showed the captain a paper, but I think the paper was a lie.

“The captain looked at the paper and said, ‘All right! But you clear out of here. I have no boat to sell. They all belong to the Government.’

“The white man wore a beard and looked like a man whom the soldiers call Cracker. When he started to walk away, I remembered that I had seen him before, because he walks like an Indian with his toes pointing in. Three years ago he worked for the general at Fort Brooke. The general had him show the soldiers how to build houses, where to make their gardens, and the general gave him a tube that stood on three legs. He also gave him a long chain and a pole painted white and red, and he had him show the soldiers where to cut trees and build bridges on the road that leads north to the ford of the river, Withlacoochee, on the road to St. Augustine. The general also had him make shoes for the mules and horses, and fix the iron hoops on the wheels of the big wagons.”

“It is Holtess,” Munro broke in, “Dan Holtess. The general sent him away because he had a bad influence on the soldiers. He played cards with them for money and had them all broke. The men claimed that he cheated them by playing with marked cards, but they could never prove anything on him. All the officers, except Captain Hanisch, were glad to see Holtess go. Holtess had done some repair work in the quarters of Captain Hanisch, and a week later the captain’s wife discovered that her wedding ring was gone. Thus far no evidence had been discovered as to the whereabouts of the ring. When Holtess was sent from the post, the captain concluded that his wife would never see her ring again, and she didn’t. The captain had to order a duplicate from New York.”

At this point Billy appeared. He was as hungry as an Indian, he said, for he had cleaned with a currycomb and brush all three horses, Sopa, and his own, and his father’s. He had bought—he did not say where—a bushel of oats and a lot of real hay. He had also caught a mess of fish in

the Hillsboro River, and he made ready to cook them for supper.

“Look, Father,” he remarked. “Three fine trout, one for each of us.”

“Your trout are bass, my son,” observed Munro, “but everybody in Florida and Georgia calls them trout. You may get supper, Billy, while Hanowa and I take a short walk.”

“Don’t be late,” said Billy. “In half an hour the grub will be on the table. I can eat two fish, if you aren’t here.”

After supper the Seminole continued his story. Holtess and his companion, whom he had soon recognized as Sokala, the son of a Seminole and a black woman, failing to obtain a boat had started north on horseback toward the Withlacoochee. Hanowa had followed them, intending to watch for a chance to find out what their packs contained. On the third day out he had learned from some Seminole women that, on the day before, the two men had made a swing around through the pine woods and that they were again going south toward Fort Brooke and Tampa Bay.

“The white man is trying to leave Florida,” Hanowa reasoned, “and he is afraid of the white soldiers who are holding the country east of the Withlacoochee along the road to St. Augustine.”

“Why don’t the Indians kill the white man?” Hanowa asked of a Seminole woman. “The Seminoles are at war with the white men.”

“The bearded white man has a paper with the marks of the chiefs Osceola and Mickenopah, saying that he is a friend of the Seminoles,” the woman told him, “and he gives sugar to the children and strips of red cloth to the women.”

“How did you find them again?” asked Billy.

“It took me a long time, ten days or more; but it is too long a story,” Hanowa replied.

And then he related that, at the bee camp, he had heard the two men talk of getting a big Indian canoe made of a large cedar log, on which they would travel down the west coast to Key West and find a ship.

“And now I have only one more thing to tell to my friends,” continued Hanowa.

“Please tell it,” Bill snapped in.

“Keep still, Billy,” Munro reprimanded the impulsive boy. “And you might as well close your mouth, Billy. You don’t hear any more with your mouth open.”

“I forgot myself,” Billy replied laughing. “Please go on, Hanowa. What is it you have not told us?”

“Before I left the Mayakka I rode to a camp of my friends. I found only old men, women, and children; the warriors had all gone north to the Withlacoochee. I told them of the white man that swore at the bees. I told them that a boat with soldiers would come down from Fort Brooke to catch Sokala and the white man, when they are paddling their canoe to Key West. The chief of the soldiers at Fort Brooke wants the white man and he has told the soldiers to bring him in dead, if they cannot catch him alive. Dan Holtess and Sokala know that the soldiers will do what their chief tells them to do.

“When I left the camp, my uncle, Tal-lahassee, with some boys started to visit the white man’s camp to tell him of the soldiers

that will be looking for him where the Mayakka flows into the sea. But my uncle will not tell him how he learned that a boat with soldiers is coming to the mouth of the Mayakka. I am done."

"*Iste lockse, Hanowa,*" Billy exclaimed. "That's a lie; it isn't true!"

"*Elaha,* you must make it true," Hanowa replied with a perfectly grave face. "To-morrow you must go and ask the white chief to send the soldiers in a boat to the mouth of the Mayakka."

When in the morning Munro made this request, Major Belton, the commandant, looked at him with unconcealed surprise.

"What in thunder do you expect of me, Sergeant?" he exploded. "You know, that at this time, I cannot spare a boat-load of soldiers to chase one lone scoundrel over the Gulf of Mexico. Just give him rope, and he will hang himself some day."

When Hanowa heard the results of the interview with the commandant there was a smile on his serious face and a strange light in his dark eyes.

"The white chief," he spoke gravely, "is

a great man, and we cannot make him send the soldiers. By this time Tallahassee has told the white man at the bee camp that the soldiers are coming after him, and he will keep off the big salt water. You see, *Elaha*, if Holtess and Sokala had started for Cuba, we should never catch them. So I had to tell Tallahassee that the soldiers were coming in a boat to the Mayakka.”

CHAPTER IV

SINCE the outbreak of the Seminole war a year before, in 1835, Billy had strict orders not to go more than a mile from the fort. He had to tell his father where he was going, and a time was set when he had to be back.

“ I feel sure none of my many Seminole friends would harm you,” Munro had told the lad, “ and I know that Osceola has commanded his warriors not to harm women and children, but I also know, only too well, that no Indian chief exercises any real control over his warriors. When they are out of his sight, they do pretty much as they please, and the temptation to take a scalp without much danger to themselves is often irresistible, especially to the young bucks.”

When nearly a year before, the day of Christmas Eve, Major Dade's command consisting of eight officers and about a hundred men started on their fateful march from Fort Brooke to Fort King, a distance of one

hundred and thirty miles northeast, Billy was wild to join the command as a drummer boy.

“I can play the drum, Father,” he argued. “Major Dade said only yesterday I could play it as well as the regular drummer. Please, Father, go and ask him to let me go with the soldiers to Fort King.

“Private Andrews says he will look after me. You said yourself last week that you were not afraid if I was out fishing with him. You know he would bring me back safe. Please, Father, do let me go.”

“Billy, the soldiers are not going on a fishing trip,” Munro tried to impress the lad. “They are marching on a campaign against the Seminoles, and Private Andrews will have all he can do to take care of himself. It is a most unrighteous war, but it is the duty of the soldiers to go and do their best.

“Most of Florida is still a wild country. Why should the Indians be compelled to settle west of the Mississippi, where they do not want to go? What could I tell your mother if I found you dead and scalped?”

“The soldiers are not going to fight,” ar-

gued Bill, "they are just going to march to Fort King."

"Soldiers have no choice about the time and place of a battle. When they are attacked, they have to defend themselves. No, Billy, I could not let you go, even if I joined the troops myself."

"Would you go, if Major Dade requested you?" asked Bill.

"I certainly would. But even then you would have to stay at Fort Brooke."

It was a hard decision for Bill. He and Private Andrews had it all planned. The men did not expect any fighting, because they believed that the Indians did not even know that the troops were going to move. The command would undoubtedly camp a night at the ford of the Withlacoochee, and that river was just full of fish. Ever since Bill had crossed the river on his trip to St. Augustine, he had wanted to put in a day fishing on this beautiful stream.

Bill was in a bad mood when he saw the soldiers and his friend Andrews march out of the fort the day before Christmas, and the soldiers who had to remain behind under Ma-

gor Belton were not any happier than Bill. The fort seemed deserted now, for only enough men were left to guard the place against an attack and protect the stores and other Government property.

Bill cut a few sprays of holly for Christmas decorations. In the evening he opened a Christmas parcel his mother had managed to get to Fort Brooke a week ahead of time. He and his father had a fine wild turkey roasted for their Christmas dinner, stuffed with dried apples and raisins, as Bill liked it. And the boy did full justice to the bird, and his spirits revived a little when, in the evening, he and his father sat in front of a ruddy pine log fire, while Munro told of his own boyhood spent in New York State, where the winter weather, the ice, and the snow, were always just right at Christmas time, and Bill almost wished that he had gone with his mother to New York. When Munro began to praise the southern winter climate, where you can hunt turkeys and quails and alligators and go fishing without first cutting holes in the ice, Billy looked glum and gave a half-growling answer.

“ Yes,” he mumbled, “ if I were not shut up at this lonely old fort! If I could go with Andrews to the Withlacoochee, or you and I and Hanowa could go and camp on the Mayakka! Oh, yes, then I wouldn’t care if I never saw any ice and snow all my life.”

On the days after Christmas the lad fell again into a gloomy mood; he was lonesome, and the days just dragged. He fished a little in the bay; he and his father did a little target shooting. However, for this sport there was very little ammunition; nor was the lad’s heart in anything he did. His heart was with Private Andrews and the other soldiers. He figured out where they would be each evening, and he seriously thought of running away and following them.

As he lay in bed one evening, he went all over the plan again and again. The troops could not march more than twelve miles a day, or fifteen at the most, because they had taken along an ox team drawing one of the six-pounders of the fort, and Bill knew that oxen will not travel more than twelve or fifteen miles a day.

He felt sure that he could march thirty

miles a day, although he had never done it; twenty miles was the most he had ever made in one day. He felt sure that he could find the command; because an ox team, several horses, and a hundred men leave a trail, which a blind man could follow. For food, he would carry a small bag of corn meal and some cold turkey meat. Water can be found anywhere in Florida, winter and summer. He would go light, carry no firearms. Well, he might carry his pistol; he would feel a little safer, alone in the woods at night if he had a pistol. In the daytime, if he met any Indians, he would talk Seminole to them. They surely wouldn't scalp a lone fellow without giving him a chance to say a few words. Of course, he would build no fire at night. Even the winter nights in Florida are warm enough for a man to sleep wrapped up in his blanket without a camp-fire.

“Yes, sir,” Bill whispered to himself, “I could do it. I would just about catch up with them on the Withlacoochee.”

And then Bill fell asleep, but he did not enjoy his usual sound sleep. He dreamed and tossed about, and talked in his sleep.

He and Andrews had a line out in the river. They had hooked a big one and were pulling him in. Suddenly the goggle eyes and the ugly snout of an alligator showed above the water.

“Pull hard!” shouted Andrews, and Bill pulled so hard that he tumbled over backwards out of his bunk.

“Billy, what are you doing?” his father called.

“‘Doing’?” Bill answered, rubbing his head. “I dreamed that Andrews and I had caught an alligator and the ugly beast snapped his big jaws at me.”

In the morning Bill felt a sore lump on the back of his head. He thought some more about running away, but decided that it would be a foolish, hare-brained thing to do. “It would worry Father half to death,” he concluded. “He would not know what had become of me, and if I left a note telling him what I had done, he would follow me, and then,—well, then, we might both get killed and Mother would be left all alone with Jack and Dave.”

The next few days Bill spent with the

soldiers in the fort, much of it with his friend the hostler. Everybody was anxious for news, but the hostler said there could not be any news, until the commandant at Fort King sent a dispatch-rider.

However, on the afternoon of New Year's eve, just a week after the troops had marched, news did come to Fort Brooke, but it was tragically different from the news expected, and it was not brought by a dashing horseman. A wounded soldier, just able to drag himself along, arrived at the fort late in the afternoon, and his news was of the kind brought by the messengers of Job. All preparations for a celebration of New Year's eve were dropped at once, and word was sent to the few whites who lived outside of the stockade to come within the fort that evening. Bill listened to the story of the man with staring eyes. It was Private Ransom Clarke. Then he ran home to tell his father, who was just lighting the candles and setting the supper on the table.

"Father, Private Clarke has come back. He—he—he is wounded," Bill told, all out of breath. "Major Dade and all the men

and officers are dead. The Seminoles ambushed them, just as the Indians did with Braddock a long time ago. They fought nearly all day. When Clarke was badly wounded he crawled away and lay in the brush until dark. The Indians did not find him. He says he is the only man that got away. The oxen and the horses are all dead, too. Clarke bandaged his wounds as well as he could. He walked at night and hid in the daytime. Only to-day he traveled in daytime. He was afraid he would die if he waited till dark. It is on the other side of the Withlacoochee, seven miles from the river, where all the men are lying dead.

“Major Belton says we should come into the fort right away. He expects the Indians to be here at any time. I am going to help fight, if they attack the fort.”

Sergeant Munro placed the supper in a dishpan. Bill led the two horses out of the shed; Munro blew out the candles, poured a pail of water on the fireplace, hastily gathered up the guns in the cabin; and father and son hurried into the fort. That was New Year's eve at Fort Brooke in 1835.

CHAPTER V

FOR a week Sergeant Munro and his son lived inside the fort. A few soldiers, riding two and two, scouted the neighborhood and a strict watch was kept up at the fort day and night, but Major Belton was less afraid of an attack than he was of the wooden buildings being set on fire.

In our many Indian wars the red warriors have seldom seriously attacked any of the so-called forts, because they never possessed any artillery. The siege of Detroit under Pontiac, the attack on Bryan's Station in Kentucky, and the attack on Fort Ridgely in Minnesota in 1862, are a few of the exceptions, but in no case did the Indians ever capture a fort, either by assault or siege. And, fortunately for the whites, they never attacked at night; their favorite time for a surprise attack was at dawn of day. It is said that they held the belief that a warrior killed at night would have to live in perpetual darkness in the next world.

When no Indians were discovered near Fort Brooke, Bill and his father moved back into their own cabin, but Munro nailed a few boards over the windows and always bolted the door at night; and when the candles were lit in the evening, Bill of his own accord, hung a blanket over the windows. He also took the horses to the stable in the fort every evening.

“No sneaking Seminole is going to steal our horses,” declared Bill. “I know an Indian thinks that stealing a horse is the next bravest deed to taking a scalp.”

Nor did Munro have to warn Bill not to stray any distance from the fort. The lad did most of his fishing in the bay right at the fort, and when he fished from a boat, he was careful not to expose himself to a shot from a thicket on shore. In fact, Bill was the most persistent scout for Indians in the whole fort. When he worked in the garden, he kept one eye on the near pine woods, and his loaded gun was always leaning against a post close by.

When some of the soldiers gibed at Bill's extreme caution, Bill laughed at them and

replied, "Maybe if Major Dade and his men had been better scouts they would not all be dead now."

In this statement Bill was probably right. All the outstanding disasters in our Indian wars, where the facts have become known, have been the result of a lack of proper caution, or of recklessness on the part of the commander.

But to return to our story. On the day after Hanowa had returned from his long scouting trip, Bill did not go fishing, nor did he work in the garden. His father and the Seminole were holding a council of war, and Billy was too much interested to miss anything. If his father and Hanowa were going on any kind of a long trip, Bill felt reasonably certain that he would stand a good chance of going along. He had always wanted to go on a long trip to the really wild parts of the country. He had been to Fort King, near the present town of Ocala in Marion County, and he had once spent a week at St. Augustine, with his mother. He had been on many short hunting and fishing trips with his friend An-

drews and other soldiers, and with his father near Fort Brooke.

Bill had made up his mind that if his father and Hanowa were now going on any trip, he was not going to stay behind at Fort Brooke. He had his arguments all ready. He was a year older now than he was at the time when Major Dade's men left the fort. He had become a good shot, both with a rifle and a pistol; more than once he had beaten his father shooting at a mark. His father had acknowledged that Bill was a cautious scout, and that he could spy a wild turkey or deer as far off as any hunter.

“Is *Elaha* going to catch the white bee man and Sokala?” asked Hanowa, after he and Munro had again talked over the result of the Seminole's long scouting trip.

“God only knows where they are now,” Munro answered in despair. “We shall no longer find them on the Mayakka. To follow them would be like going on a wild-goose chase. How can we ever hope to find two men in all the great wild country of Florida? Remember, Hanowa, these two men do not wish to be found.”

Hanowa smiled. "The Seminoles often catch wild geese," he replied. "Maybe we find the bee man's trail, or my friends tell me where he went."

"Perhaps Holtess does not have the stolen money, or he has buried it somewhere or sunk it in the Everglades. In that case we could not find it in a thousand years," suggested Munro. "It would be worse than hunting for a needle."

"He has it," asserted Hanowa. "Did I not hear him say he had that in his pack which makes 'chink, chink'? He will not bury it and go away, because he will be afraid that Sokala will go back and dig it up, and then he will never see Sokala again and he will never find the white and yellow money."

"But there are other difficulties we must meet," Munro reminded his friend. "The war has grown bad again. While you were away in the month of November, in the Fourth Moon, as your people call it, the Seminoles and the soldiers fought over three days near the Big Wahoo Swamp. Many soldiers and many Seminoles were killed.

The Seminoles are angry, and they will make you go and fight the white soldiers."

For a short time Hanowa sat looking in silence at the red and smoky flames of the pine logs in the fireplace.

"Our big chiefs," he broke the silence, "know Hanowa. Osceola, Mickenopah, and Alligator know me. Many warriors know me. They know that my parents died of the smallpox. They know that the white lady of the big sugar fields near St. Augustine fed me and gave me blankets until I was big enough to hunt and live with my own people. They will not ask me to fight the white people, and they know that I will not scout for the soldiers. *Elaha*, I am done."

"That was good talk, Hanowa," Munro replied. "But my worst fear I have not yet told you. The Seminoles will surely wish to kill me and Bill. Remember they are at war against the whites. Many of them will think I am still a soldier and have come into their country as a spy, and I cannot go and say to my wife, 'Martha, the Seminoles have killed our boy.'"

“ I’ll look out for myself, Father,” Bill broke in. “ I am not going to stay at Fort Brooke.”

“ Keep still, Billy,” the sergeant ordered. “ Who says you are going to stay at Fort Brooke? Let us hear what Hanowa has to say.”

For a long time the young Seminole gazed in silence at the red coals in the fireplace, and Bill saw his brow wrinkled as in deep thought.

“ *Elaha*, you should go to the white captain of the soldiers,” he at last spoke slowly. “ He should give you a paper which says that you are a good white man and a friend of the Seminoles and a friend of the Great White Father; and he should put a big red seal on the paper.

“ If we meet any angry warriors, we show them the paper with the big red seal. I tell them what it says, and maybe I tell them more. I think they will be afraid to hurt you. I say: ‘ This is *Elaha*, my older brother, and this is *Echosee*, my younger brother. They are friends. They wish to find a white man who has a box that belongs

to *Elaha*.' Maybe I tell them less; maybe I tell them more. Maybe we see them and they do not see us.

"If *Elaha* and *Echosee* are afraid to go with me, I shall go alone, if my brother desires me to go. I am done."

That last sentence touched Bill in a tender spot. "Father never was afraid of any white man nor of any ——"

"Wait a bit, Billy," Munro interrupted the lad. "Wait a bit! We have been talking of a very dangerous trip. Brave men and good soldiers must often face dangers, but they first calculate the chances and gauge the danger. They do not rush in like fools.

"We have weighed two of the dangers, but there is a third, which we have not even mentioned. Holtess and Sokala are dangerous men to trail, and there is now no law in Florida south of Fort King and St. Augustine. Do you know what that means, Billy?"

"It means they will shoot us, if they can," Bill asserted promptly.

"It means just that," Munro agreed.

“And the Everglades and the forests will tell no tales.”

“We must be better scouts than they are,” the Seminole observed quietly.

“And we are going to be more dangerous,” Bill exclaimed, seizing his rifle, pulling his pistol from the holster, and brandishing his big hunting-knife as if to scalp an enemy.

“Sit down, Bill,” Munro ordered gruffly, but with an ill-suppressed smile. “Don’t act like a wild Comanche. We are not ready for a war dance. Wait until we have won a great battle.”

For some time the three men sat in silence, gazing at the dying fire. Then the sergeant arose and grasped Hanowa’s right hand.

“Hanowa,” he spoke, “you and I have long been friends, ever since we met in our canoes on the bay and you told me to paddle fast for shore because a big storm was coming. I reached the shore, but three other soldiers were drowned. You know the weather, and you know all the secret trails of the Seminoles in the Everglades and in the Big Cypress Swamp. We will follow

you, Bill and I; we will follow you on the trail of Holtess and Sokala."

"It is well, *Elaha*," replied Hanowa, shaking the hand of his older brother. "We will go and look for the trail of Sokala and the bad white man. On the river Mayakka we shall begin to look for them."

Before Hanowa had finished speaking, Bill rushed out of the cabin, and when Munro called for him, Bill's answer came from the big horizontal limb of a giant live oak, which had long served Bill as a gymnasium.

CHAPTER VI

WHEN Munro asked Major Belton for the paper with a big red seal, the major tried to dissuade him from the plan of trying to capture Holtess and Sokala.

“Sergeant, you will never see those two rascals. By this time they have probably lost the money in the gambling dens of Havana. The Government has already forgotten that thousand dollars. You had better forget it, too.”

“Well, Major,” replied Munro, “the Government can afford to forget a thousand dollars, but you know about half of that stolen sum was my own money, which it had taken me five years to save. It is not so easy for me to forget that five hundred dollars.”

“I can see your point,” the major admitted, “but I think you and Bill are taking a mighty long chance. You will be killed on your treasure-hunting and thief-catching trip. Moreover, as I told you, those two rogues are in Cuba by this time.”

“ I don't believe they are, Major,” Munro began to explain. “ That request I made of you for a boat-load of soldiers was a part of a ruse my friend Hanowa put over on the rascals. He had his old uncle, Tallahassee, visit the camp of the thieves on the Mayakka and in a casual way the old chief told them that a Government boat was patrolling the coast for them. I suspect he has added that you had offered a big reward for their capture and had requested the Governor of Cuba to watch for them and put them in the dungeon of the Mole of Havana. I think Holtess has seen the inside of a Spanish dungeon before, and he will not go near Cuba.”

“ I declare,” the major admitted with a hearty laugh, “ your Seminole friends are pretty good on strategy. I believe you have kept those fellows off the sea. But where are they? They have fifty thousand square miles of the greatest wilderness in the world to hide in.”

“ We have sort of figured it out,” Munro replied, “ that they will keep in hiding in or near the Big Cypress Swamp and along the

northern edge of the Everglades. They will try slowly to work across the peninsula to St. Augustine, where Holtess will attempt to get a ship to New York. Or, if this plan fails, or seems too dangerous, they will try to reach the headwaters of the St. Johns River. They will cautiously work their way down this broad river to Jacksonville, where Holtess will try to take a boat for New York or any other eastern city. We figure that they will take their time so that the robbery at Fort Brooke may be forgotten. Of course, if they have caught a boat for Cuba they have given us the slip, but we don't think they have."

When Munro also told the major what made him believe that Holtess actually had the stolen money, the major grew wildly interested.

"Hang it, Sergeant," he exclaimed, throwing down his hat, "if I were not tied up with this beastly war, I would apply for a year's leave and ask you to let me join your party. You were always a sort of a long-headed, cautious daredevil, Sergeant. I see where you, and Bill, and your Sem-

inole, will have loads of hair-raising adventure, while my men and I are shut up in this dead old fort. Sometimes it is hard luck to be an officer.”

“Major, if you could join us, we could wage quite a little war of our own,” rejoined Munro, “and there would be enough of us so that no enemy would ever catch us all asleep.”

The interest which the major had shown in the venture emboldened Munro to ask if it would be possible to have a few hundred rounds of ammunition issued to his party. It would be a great help.

“Bless your soul, Sergeant,” the major cried, “you can have a thousand,—all you can carry. We have loads of it. If I only had something for my men to do, I should be happy. I had to put three of them in the guard house last night. Just imagine, Sergeant, the scamps were playing poker and started a free-for-all fight about a jackpot of seventy-five cents. American soldiers are the finest men in the world when there is hard marching or fighting to do, but they are like a bunch of rowdy schoolboys when

they have to sit around on garrison duty. When do you march, Sergeant?"

"We wish to get off to-morrow, if possible."

"Well, I will draw up a fine-looking paper for you. I think there is a piece of parchment in the office, and I will attach the biggest red seal you ever saw. And, chuck it all, Sergeant, I will do more than that. I will offer a reward of five hundred dollars for the capture of Holtess, dead or alive."

Munro heartily thanked the big, gruff major, and arose to go. Before he saluted, he remarked, "Billy will be wild when I tell him what you have done for us, Major."

"He can't be any wilder," snapped the major, "than I would be, if I could join you."

Munro found Bill busy grinding his hunting-knife. He had already packed his saddle-bags, and made a list of provisions and utensils to be taken on the trip.

"Why can't we leave to-day?" Bill asked. "They have a big start of us now."

When Munro told of his talk with the major, Bill let out a Seminole war-whoop:

“Yo-ho-eehee, Yo-ho-eehee! We shall have enough balls and powder for a year. If the big major went along, the four of us could lick a dozen men any time. But,” he added soberly, “it would be awfully easy to hit him, and he could hide only behind a big tree. I bet he could lift up Holtess with one hand and shake him like a rat.”

“Easy now, Billy. Go a bit easy,” Munro cautioned. “It may take us the better part of the year to catch the rascals, if we ever get our eyes on them at all. We may depend on it, they will lie low for a month or two, if they bit on the story Tallahassee told them. And you may be sure, Billy, we cannot teach Sokala anything about hiding in the great wilderness of his own people.”

If three men were to plan a long mid-winter journey in the region of the Great Lakes, which would mean Minnesota, Ontario, Wisconsin, and Michigan, they would have to heed a warning which an old Sioux Indian gave to one of the early missionaries: “You must take great care,” he told the white man, “that you do not freeze your

hands and your feet. If you freeze your hands, you cannot build a fire; and if you freeze your feet, you cannot travel.”

Hanowa and his two white friends did not have to worry about the possibility of freezing their hands and feet, for all Florida has a sub-tropical climate, where some flowers are in bloom the year round; while the extreme southern edge of the peninsula and the islands known as the Florida Keys are in the tropics.

In the northern forests, although game might be abundant in places and the lakes might teem with fish, cold weather and deep snows often made hunting difficult or impossible; and being compelled to cut holes through two feet of ice made fishing as difficult as hunting. Our northern Indians suffered much from a scarcity of food almost every winter, and sometimes a hunter actually starved to death, because the weather was too cold to hunt, or because he could not find the game.

The Seminoles of Florida never suffered such hardships. Their country was a paradise for many kinds of game birds and fish

the year round. At the time of our story, they had lived there nearly a hundred years, and naturally they refused to leave and be taken to Arkansas, where the climate was much colder and all conditions very different from those in their own beloved Florida.

Major Belton gave to Sergeant Munro a paper much more impressive than he had promised. The text was beautifully engrossed on parchment. He had affixed a red seal as big as two silver dollars, and the major's wife had tied it up with streamers of red, white, and blue ribbons.

“The thing ought to impress them,” the major spoke, laughing. “Those ribbons were my lady's idea. I have been wondering,” he continued, “why I could not write the kind of letter we talked of to the Spanish governor of Cuba. I would write as a private citizen, of course. Lieutenant Lorenzo can set the thing up in pure Castilian Spanish and it might do you some good. I'll do it, Munro, just for the fun of it. And, Sergeant, I'll do another good turn for you. I will offer a reward of two hundred

dollars for the apprehension of that Seminole fellow, Sokala, I believe you call him. Why should I not? By the time we get through with this war, if we ever do get through, it will have cost the Government about \$25,000 for every Seminole we capture or induce peaceably to leave for Arkansas, so I think it is not very likely that General Jessup or the War Department will disapprove my offers of a total of \$700 for the capture of these two men. If I should think of anything else to further your plans, I shall do it. It is my rotten luck I cannot join you. Send me a message, if possible.

“And now, good-bye and good luck to you, Sergeant! You three men will need all the good luck there is in Florida.”

CHAPTER VII

“ELAHA, are you going to travel in that soldier’s coat?” asked Hanowa, when the packs had been made up and Bill had brought the horses to be saddled.

“I am fond of that old coat; it is just right for cool mornings and evenings,” Munro answered. “I took off the brass buttons and sewed on black buttons so it would not look like a soldier’s coat.”

“If the Seminoles see that coat they will not believe what I tell them, and what the major’s paper tells them,” Hanowa replied. “They will say: ‘*Iste lockse*, that man is a liar. He is not our friend, for he wears the coat of the long-knives.’ The old men and the women and children will all hide in the swamps, but the warriors will fight.”

“How shall we dress, Bill and I?” asked Munro. “It would be no use for us to dress like Indians, for our faces are white.”

“You must dress like Crackers,” Hanowa requested. “*Elaha* must dress like a big Cracker, and *Echosee* must dress like a

little Cracker. In old clothes you must dress."

At this request Munro picked up his and Bill's military overcoats and went to the fort, from which he soon returned with two old civilian coats.

"There, they ought to be old enough," he remarked. "I had a hard time making the hostler believe that I really wanted to swap two perfectly good coats for these rags. If Martha saw us in these togs she would say: 'You two men look like Ichabod Crane and his son.' No Cracker ever wore worse-looking rags."

At last the happy moment arrived for Bill, when, with his father and Hanowa, he rode away from Fort Brooke and Tampa Bay into the great wilderness to the south. The Seminole scout acted as leader and Bill brought up the rear, but a good deal of the time the horsemen rode all three abreast, for in those days there were no roads and very few well-worn trails south of Tampa Bay. The country was a primitive wilderness, inhabited by the Seminole Indians, by deer, bear, wolves, wild turkeys, and count-

less water birds of many kinds. There was also much small game. In the swamps and in the Everglades snakes were not rare, especially during the summer months, and the larger rivers and lakes were inhabited, one might almost say, by herds of alligators, while the waters of streams and lakes, and the shallow bays of the sea, literally swarmed with fish of many kinds.

The three horsemen were not heavily loaded. Each man carried a roll of two blankets and some extra clothing, and a portion of the ammunition. They were well armed. Each one carried steel, flint, and tinder; but of provisions they had taken very little,—plenty of tea, a little green coffee, that is, coffee not roasted, salt, pepper, a bag of brown sugar, a slab of bacon, a small bag of corn flour, and several pounds of dry beans. The bacon and flour were intended for emergency rations; the men expected to live off the country by hunting and fishing. Munro had brought a canvas tent, but Hanowa had said that he would build himself a tent of palm-leaves or grass, the kind his own people lived in the year round.

For some seven hours the red scout led the way southward. Sometimes he followed a trail made by deer or Seminole warriors or by the half-wild cattle of the Indians. Early in the afternoon he struck off straight east through the pines. After they had traveled a mile in this direction, he halted on a dry place behind a hammock densely overgrown with live oaks, hickories, wild figs, magnolias, and other southern trees and shrubs.

“We camp here,” spoke Hanowa. “The Seminoles cannot see our fire from the trail we left, and there is good water in the little creek. The moon will be shining and the stars, so we shall not need a tent.”

Then Hanowa started the fire, watered the horses, and tied each to a separate tree; Bill fetched a pail of water and split an armful of “lightwood,” which is the Florida name for fat pine wood, so filled with rosin that it burns like a torch. Munro acted as cook, and in a short time all three were ready for a feast.

A liberal supply of corn bread brought from home he heated and browned in the

frying-pan; he made a pailful of rich coffee, and there was brown sugar for every one to sweeten his cup to his taste. The second frying-pan was filled with fragrant, sizzling bacon. When the supply ran low, he added more of the red-striped slices, and he set out a bagful of sweet ripe oranges for dessert.

“We do not know what is before us,” he remarked, when he had announced supper, “but to-night we shall have a feast.”

Although no rain was expected, Bill had set up the tent and the Seminole had built himself a brush hut, both for protection from the dew. By the time the meal was finished and the few dishes had been washed, the sun was sinking behind the hammock.

For a while the three men sat around the fire which Bill kept supplied with pieces of lightwood. The flames threw a weird ruddy glare over the faces of the men and the nearby pines, but shut out the forest a few yards off with a wall of black darkness.

When most of Bill's lightwood was consumed, Munro poured water on the fire and suggested that they all go to bed for a good sleep, so as to be ready for to-morrow's long

ride to the Mayakka. Munro and Hanowa being used to camping in all kinds of places soon fell asleep, but Bill, although he was very tired after the long ride, could not sleep, for it was his first experience in camping at night in the wild forest.

The grunting, rubbing, and feeding noises made by mules, horses, and oxen in the stock barn at Fort Brooke had never kept Bill awake. He just loved to sleep in the hay with the hostler, and did so, as often as he could coax his father or mother to let him spend a night in the fort. In this matter Bill was fully as diplomatic as boys and girls are nowadays. If his father said "no," Bill tried his mother for a "yes"; and if his mother had refused, he tried his father for a permit.

But now in the tent in the moonlit woods Bill lay wide awake, listening with a palpitating heart to all kinds of noises. There were two or three creatures nosing around in the brush. "It must be a 'possum or a skunk," thought Bill. "What could I do if a skunk came into the tent?" He listened more intently. The 'possum or skunk was

going away from the tent, but now he heard a smaller noise close to the tent.

“Father,” he called, “a rattlesnake is coming in.”

Munro sat up and listened. “Nonsense, Bill,” he declared, “it is a mouse rustling for the crumbs of corn bread you dropped in front of the tent. Lie down, and go to sleep.”

Bill tried to, but presently he heard other noises. There was somebody walking near the creek! Now he stepped kerplunk into the water! Bill sat up and looked out. There he was, a tall dark shape!

“Look, Father, do you see that Indian? I saw him move just now,” Bill whispered.

“Billy, you are looking at a tall dark stump, and the shadow seemed to move because you moved,” Munro said, trying to quiet the lad. But it did not occur to the veteran soldier to tell the excited boy that a moonlit night in the woods is far more spooky to a novice than a pitch-dark night, when no forms and shadows are visible.

Bill lay down again and wished he could go to sleep. But now a piercing noise cut

the stillness of the night. Although it set Bill wide awake again, he was not frightened, for he knew it was the sharp snort, or whistle, of a buck in the thicket of the hammock. Three or four times the sharp snort cut the silence, before the buck began to stamp and thrash about in the brush on the edge of the hammock.

“Go to it, old fellow!” Bill thought to himself. “It is lucky for you that it is not daylight. I guess I will go to sleep.”

And then came a sound from the hammock, which made Bill jump. A big owl gave vent to his unearthly “who-who, who-who, who-who.” Bill knew that sound. But was it really an owl? Everybody knew how deceptively the Indians could imitate the calls of birds and beasts. Hanowa had often fooled Bill with the calls of owls, wild turkeys, and quails. Again the owl hooted and another one answered him. If Bill had not heard Hanowa mutter, “Owls, big owls!” he would have been uncertain whether he heard owls or Indians.

The fact that Hanowa was not so very dead asleep quieted Bill. “I guess I have

heard all the noises now," he thought. "I might as well go to sleep." But when he was just dozing off, the strangest sound of all awakened him again. Greatly startled he sat up.

"Father," he called, "I heard a cannon or thunder. Or maybe it was a bull. It woke me up."

"A big *allapataw* bull you heard," Han-owa told the boy. "He lives in a pond a mile away."

"Billy," Munro added, "you have heard all the noises now, and you are making more noise yourself than all the animals. If you don't keep quiet now and close your ears and your mouth, you go straight back to Fort Brooke to-morrow morning."

CHAPTER VIII

MUNRO's threat to Bill that he would have to go back to Fort Brooke if he did not keep still had the desired effect. Moreover, the lad felt now assured that he had nothing to fear from snakes or Indians and he knew enough about alligators to feel sure that the old goggle-eyed beast that lived in a pond a mile away, would not come to pay him a nightly visit. So Bill adjusted the blanket-roll under his head and very soon he was asleep.

When he awoke in the morning, he was alone in the tent. His father was sitting at the camp-fire cooking breakfast, and Hanowa had tied the horses in new places so that they could find a little more food, because the winter pasture among the Florida pines is not rich. Hanowa was splitting fat pine wood, and Bill wondered what they were going to do with more lightwood, when the woods were flooded with sunlight.

“Father!” he called. “It's a fine morn-

ing. Look at the dew glittering on everything. It won't be there long, but the brush is certainly wet and I am glad we brought a tent."

By the time Bill had taken a quick morning bath in the creek, breakfast was ready, and the lad had become very curious as to what his father had in the frying-pans, for like all good cooks, Munro always put covers on his pans and kettles, and once more he had prepared a surprise for his companions.

"Billy, guess what is in the pans?" he asked. "If you guess wrong, you go without breakfast."

"I know what it smells like," Bill answered promptly, "but I am afraid to guess, because you cannot have what it smells like."

"A good cook can have anything," the father retorted. "Speak up, Son, I give you three guesses."

"Then I'll take a chance. Beefsteak! Beefsteak and sweet potatoes!"

"Right you are, Bill. Pass your plate. I brought a big piece of the very best steak

from the fort. I put a little salt on it and wrapped it in clean paper. It was my intention to have it for our first dinner on the Mayakka, but the day is going to be warm and I was afraid that by to-night it would be tainted. It will be our last beefsteak for a long time. So eat it slowly, and with the proper devotion.”

By this time Hanowa had also received his portion of the fragrant steak and the browned sweet potatoes, of which he was very fond. He received his share of the food on his tin plate, but according to Indian custom, he preferred to eat without the use of fork and knife.

“Do you understand what it means to eat with the proper devotion?” Munro turned to him.

“Big words for me,” the Seminole replied with a smile.

“It means eat slowly,” Munro explained, “and think you are lucky.”

“I understand. I am lucky,” Hanowa admitted, “but deer meat is just as good as ox meat.”

“It is for the Seminoles,” the sergeant

asserted, "but not for a white man. Beef and pork are the meats for white men, and beef is the best. The soldiers never tire of fresh beef. They also like fresh pork, but pork spoils too quickly in warm weather; that is the reason why the quartermasters do not issue pork to the soldiers in warm weather."

Hanowa's eyes flashed, as if Munro had said something that did not please the Indian.

"*Elaha,*" he began after a brief silence, "you forget that my people do not like to be called Seminoles. That word means, 'Runaways.' The Indians who go to Arkansas are Seminoles. Those of us who stay in Florida are *Kan-yuk-sa Islis-cate*; Peninsula red men, we call ourselves. Some of my people will never go to Arkansas; the soldiers will never capture them all. I shall never go."

"I beg your pardon," Munro spoke earnestly. "You know we white people mean no harm when we use the word 'Seminoles' for your people in Florida. We should call you by your own name, but we are a little

bit dumb about learning the languages of the Indians. We must all,—red men and white men—make ‘Seminole’ a good word. White men cannot learn your name for Seminole; it is too long and too hard for us to say.”

“*Elaha*, perhaps you have heard that our kinsmen, the Creeks, first called us Seminoles. That was about a hundred years ago, when my ancestors left the Creeks in Georgia and went to Florida and found it a good land.

“You use Seminole as a good name, so I shall use it as a good word; and, it may be, that some day it will be a good word in all places and to all men.”

After breakfast Bill washed the dishes and took down the tent, while Hanowa saddled the horses and Munro made the packs ready.

“Boots and Saddles! Boots and Saddles!” he called in long-drawn-out tone, as a modern announcer calls the trains in a large railway station.

After a ride of about two hours they crossed a beautiful stream, which Hanowa

told his companions was the Manatee. On some open prairies and marshes near the river they saw many large wading birds, and on patches of open ponds and the river thousands of wild ducks were having a gay time. Many large white birds were perched on the moss-draped branches and tops of the live oaks and other trees along the river, and Bill wanted very much to stop and hunt for an hour, but Hanowa would not wait.

“We must travel,” he said. “To-night we must camp on the Mayakka. It is bad to make camp after the sun has sunk into the sea, and we have still a long way to go.”

When the sun stood in the south, they halted for half an hour. The horses had a drink and were allowed to pick a little food, while the men ate a few hardtack biscuits and drank some hot tea in the shade of a grove of palms, which grew on the edge of a hammock.

During most of the day, except while the horsemen were near the Manatee, they had traveled through open pine woods, so characteristic of Florida. It always looked as if in the distance they would reach thick

timber, and again and again Bill thought they would have to change their direction, but always the trees seemed to scatter as the riders approached. Not only was there plenty of space between the trees for the horsemen to pass; they would have met no difficulty if they had been traveling in a big army wagon. The pine-trees gave very little shade; the ground was covered with the ever-present low saw-palmetto, but there was no real underbrush such as one finds in nearly all northern forests. The travelers saw a few robins, bluebirds, and blackbirds, but of animal life there was very little. They passed a number of places where the gophers had been digging and saw a few of the animals, but before Bill could dismount and catch them, each animal had disappeared in the loose sandy soil, for they are remarkably fast diggers. It must be remembered that the Florida gopher is a turtle about the size of a large northern mud-turtle. These so-called gophers always live on land, and are vegetarians in their feeding habits.

About the middle of the afternoon the travelers passed out of the monotonous flat-

woods and entered open prairies interspersed with marshes and wooded hammocks. Here bird life became at once immensely abundant. There were flocks of the roseate spoonbills, thousands of large white birds, the snow-white herons and wood ibises, and Munro recognized a few great blue herons he used to meet in marshes in New York State. The open ponds were full of ducks, and Bill again begged for a shot at them. But Hanowa would not hear of firing any guns.

“We have no time to hunt now,” he spoke. “Only fool white men fire guns all the time and shoot at everything they see. They shoot from boats, from wagons, from horses. Then they go away and leave what they have killed. It is very bad and some day the Great Spirit will punish them by taking all the large birds and animals away from them.”

Soon a long belt of broad-leaved timber appeared in view. Hanowa pointed to this dense forest and said: “The river Mayakka flows in that timber. We camp there to-night.”

CHAPTER IX

THE sun was still two hours high, when Hanowa stopped under a large live oak, draped with long dull-grayish beards of Spanish moss. A broad sluggish river flowed in a beautiful horseshoe curve around the camp site on three sides, and only a few rods to the east lay a grassy meadow, where the horses could find a real meal.

As soon as Hanowa had staked out the horses, he called Bill. "Come, *Echosee*," he invited him, "you and I must hunt meat for our supper, while your father builds the camp and lies down for a little rest."

At last the moment had arrived for which Bill had longed. Without delay he and Hanowa walked up-stream so as to have the sun behind them and to their left. They soon came to a place where a large flock of ducks, teal, mallards and pintails were feeding and playing on a shallow pond. The birds showed by their behavior that they had not been hunted since they came from the

North to their southern winter home, because they allowed the hunters to approach within thirty yards, while they continued quacking, flapping their wings, and feeding with their tails up in the air. Bill looked at the ducks and then at Hanowa, but the Indian shook his head and said, "We don't want them; they are not worth a shot. We should find better game in this country."

Beyond the pond and marsh they came to an open glade, where Bill spied a flock of turkeys. These birds, however, were much wilder than the ducks. As soon as they saw the hunters they started to run away from them, and when the hunters followed on a run, the big birds took flight with a loud, rapid beating of wings. Bill raised his gun, but Hanowa touched his arm, saying, "Don't fire, Little Brother, you cannot hit one on the wing with a rifle." One of the birds alighted in the top of a tree, and when Bill had slowly approached it within fifty yards, he fired, but so excited was the young hunter that he never touched a feather of the large bird.

"Buck fever!" said Hanowa.

“No, turkey fever!” Bill exclaimed with much disgust. “I am glad Father did not see that.”

A little later Bill had better luck and brought down two fat turkeys, and the hunters returned to camp in triumph.

Munro greeted them with, “Dress your game, men. The cook is waiting.”

The sergeant had a hot fire going in a hollow, trough-shaped log. On each side of the fire he had set a forked stick. He pushed a slender pole through the turkey and laid the pole in the forks, with the bird over the fire. From time to time he turned the bird, and in a little more than half an hour he sang out in imitation of the soldiers' mess call:

“Turkey, turkey, turkey,
Get your fat and lean.
Coffee, coffee, coffee,
Not a single bean.”

“Eat, men,” he invited his companions. “That turkey looks and smells as good as any bird that Martha ever roasted in a regular oven. And you will find that the coffee

is coffee, for I put in plenty of ground beans. We eat the last of our corn bread and sweet potatoes to-night, and to-morrow we go on an all-meat diet. Billy, you go easy on the coffee, or you will again be seeing snakes and Indians to-night."

Before it grew dark, each man gathered an armful of Spanish moss for his bed. Then Munro put more wood on the fire, Hanowa kept a red flame going with pieces of lightwood which he had brought from the pine woods, and the three travelers stretched out around the fire for a comfortable talk.

"Hanowa, although you have found out for us several things we needed to know very much," Munro began, "there is one more question to which I should like to have an answer. I have turned the question over and over in my mind, but I have no answer. Why does Sokala act as guide to that worthless white man? Did he help him steal the money? And does he expect a share of it?"

"*Elaha*, you know well," Hanowa replied, "that the Seminoles are honest men. There are very few thieves and liars among them,—not nearly so many as there are

among white people. They took no money and watches from the men of Major Dade who fell in the big fight last year.

“I think Holtess has told Sokala a big lie and made him a big promise, which he will not keep. Sokala is a young man. He does not know Holtess and the lies and tricks of a bad white man. His eyes and ears are keen; he is a very good scout in the swamp and the Everglades, but his head is not keen.”

“You mean he is dumb,” Bill broke in.

“Yes, he is dumb,” Hanowa admitted, “but he can find the trails and hiding-places of his people. To-morrow we shall visit the camp of Tallahassee and ask him where Holtess and Sokala have gone.”

All three of the men were tired and sleepy after their long journey, and not long after the sun had set they were ready for bed. But before they rolled up in their blankets, they went to look at the winding, slowly flowing river. Groups of tall palms reached up above the mass of live oaks and other trees, whose branches formed a dense mass and cast a solid black shadow on the

ground. Through this dark sub-tropical forest curved and twisted the broad placid river, and from its smooth surface, moon and stars were reflected so perfectly as to give Bill the feeling that they were set on a firmament miles below. The lad shrank back from the high bank on which he was standing. He felt that he might drop down and down into space if the river bank should give way and keep on falling until he was hurled among the stars near the moon.

“Let us go back, Father; I am afraid in this place,” he confessed frankly. “I shall never forget this night.”

“Little Brother,” said Hanowa, “you will see many things on this trip that you will not forget. You will see some to-morrow.”

As they turned toward their camp, the forest appeared as a world in black bounded by lofty trunks and crowns of palms and by moss and vine-draped live oaks and other spreading trees.

After the darkness of night had fully settled over the forest, there were more noises on the Mayakka than around the camp in the pine woods. Owls hooted in the big trees

above and around the camp; in the distance some wolves were howling; and fish, otters, and alligators, each in their own way, stirred the water in the river; while flocks of ducks passed over the tree-tops on whistling wings. Many other sounds and noises were carried through the air, but Billy heard none of them; he slept as soundly as if he lay curled up in his bunk at Fort Brooke.

CHAPTER X

THE first new experience Bill had in the morning was an all-meat breakfast.

“Get up, Bill,” Munro called, “and see how nicely browned your turkey is. You need not hurry, Billy. The turkey is not very big; he is just a nice fat spring turkey. I think Hanowa and I can manage him without your help.”

“Oh no, Father! I will do my share,” Bill spoke up, wide awake. “But I did sleep! I never heard a sound of anything.”

On account of some repairs that had to be made on Bill's saddle, the three men did not start for Tallahassee's camp until late in the afternoon. After they had ridden southward along the edge of the forest for about an hour, Hanowa halted.

“We are now not far from the camp of Tallahassee,” he said. “Some of the young warriors may have returned from the Withlacoochee, since I was here. If we ride to the camp on our horses, the warriors will see

us first, and I do not know what they may do if Tallahassee is not at home."

"Then let us hide our horses and go to the camp on foot," suggested Munro. "Being fired at by men I cannot see is not at all to my taste."

"But somebody might steal our horses," Bill objected. "It would be awful walking through this scrub palmetto and all the other brush and vines, and through the water in the low places."

"If any Indian finds our horses, he will bring them to Tallahassee's camp," Hanowa declared. "There is no other Seminole camp for many miles around. We must go to his camp on foot."

They might have walked a quarter of a mile, when they came within sight of a dense patch of broad-leaved timber known in Florida to this day as a hammock. A hammock is an island in a swamp or in the Everglades, but in the pine woods a hammock is a large or small patch of broad-leaved trees.

"There is Tallahassee's camp," the Seminole pointed out, "on that hammock ahead of us."

“ I do not see any camp,” Bill answered, “ and I do not see or hear a soul,—just some birds flying around and singing.”

“ *Echosee*, have you forgotten what I told you?” Hanowa reminded the lad. “ Have you forgotten that no white man ever sees a Seminole who does not wish to be seen? You do not see a Seminole camp before you are in it.

“ We must lean our guns against this tree and leave them here. *Elaha*, you must tie your big white rag to a stick and carry it high up. Then we must walk through the water to the hammock, and we must walk abreast, not very close together, so that one bullet can hit only one man.”

“ Is that the way we have to approach a Seminole camp?” Bill grumbled. “ They can shoot us like dogs or make us prisoners. Do we have to hang up our pistols, too?”

“ Don’t be ugly, Bill,” Munro reprimanded the lad, “ and do as you are told.”

“ We can keep our pistols and knives in their cases,” Hanowa said, “ but we must not touch them with our hands.”

Slowly and in the open the three men

waded knee-deep through the water surrounding the hammock.

“Great Scott!” whispered Bill. “Father, this is pretty creepy business. Do you see my hair standing up? I can feel it rising.”

They had now reached the edge of the timber. For two or three rods they walked through a dense forest of live oaks, pond apples, coco plums, poison-wood, and strangling wild figs. Then they stepped suddenly into a clearing of some two acres. Toward one side of the clearing stood a structure of poles with a roof of grass and palm-leaves.

“Look at the hay shed,” whispered Bill, “but the hay is all gone.”

“That is no hay shed,” Hanowa replied with a smile. “It is Tallahassee’s camp.”

The camp was a shed without walls, but it had a floor of split palmetto trunks, raised some three feet off the ground. The place seemed utterly deserted, although a few blankets on the floor, a few pieces of clothing, and a few bags hung from the beams under the roof showed that people had been here recently. Under a smaller shed close by, a

fire was smouldering on the ground, fed by small logs arranged radially and pushed in as the ends had burnt off. A few kettles stood near the fire and under the shed hung the hind quarter of a deer. There was also a log with several mortar holes. The holes contained some white substance, and near the log lay two wooden pestles.

“It looks as if they stopped their work and ran,” Munro remarked.

“That is it,” Hanowa agreed. “They have dropped their sticks and run.”

With those words he took a large ox horn off its peg and with it he gave three long blasts. Bill, who had been looking the other way when the first blast came, threw his hands up to his ears and uttered a yell, while his face was the very picture of a deadly frightened boy.

When the sounds of the blast had scarcely died away, something happened which would have scared Bill still more, if that had been possible. Two young Seminoles with long hunting rifles stepped out of the woods near the main camp. They were not pointing their guns at their visitors, but they carried

them ready for instant action. However, although the two men might be stern warriors, the visitors realized at once that at this moment the two were not thinking of scalps and war, for both were shaking with ill-suppressed laughter.

“Confound those fellows,” thought Bill, when he saw them coming, “they are laughing at me. How can a fellow help getting scared when he is thinking of nothing, and all at once he hears a bull bellowing in his ears? I would like to try it on them. I bet they would be scared.”

The two young warriors approached their visitors, and there was the usual exchange of salutations, Hanowa and his white friends acting as guests, and the two men with the long guns, as hosts. These two young warriors had by this time regained the usual serious expression of an Indian countenance, which may have contributed in establishing among white people the opinion that the Indians as a people are always in a serious and stolid mood; that they have no sense of humor, and that they seldom laugh. The fact is that Indians have a keen sense of fun

and humor, and like to play jokes on one another. That they are reticent to strangers whose motives of visiting them and whose language they do not understand, is quite natural. In that respect they resemble children and uneducated people generally, the world over.

The five men now present at the camp had not been seated long at the fire, when others mysteriously came in. The old chief, Tallahassee, came stalking out of the timber into his melon patch, and a dugout with two women and several children came gliding through the saw-grass. Bill accidentally caught a glimpse of them just before they landed.

Each side was now convinced that the other meant no harm, and the women at once set about preparing a meal for their visitors, as people did in Bible times and long before. In the canoe was a boy about Bill's age, who carried a bow and a quiver full of arrows. He had killed a fat greenhead mallard. His name was Malota, at least that is the way Bill understood it. When the Indian boy learned that Bill could talk Seminole, the

two boys at once paired off as friends, and in a short time Bill had traded his jackknife for Malota's bow and arrows. Both young traders were much pleased with their bargain, for Bill had never owned a bow and arrows and Malota had never possessed a pocket-knife. Bill was a little afraid that Malota might want to trade back when he discovered that the barefooted Indian boy had not a sign of a pocket in his scanty clothes, and he felt much relieved when Malota tied up his knife in the handkerchief he wore around his neck.

While the women were busy broiling venison over the fire and baking some light brown cakes on a piece of tin, the sergeant fried a mess of bacon and made a kettleful of coffee. These two items Munro had brought as his contribution to the feast. He fried the bacon and made the coffee because he was afraid that the Seminole women might put the bacon into a stew and that they might not know how to make coffee. Both hosts and visitors had a real feast. Old Tallahassee had not tasted bacon and coffee for many moons, and he pronounced the cof-

fee, sweetened with cane syrup, "Heap good black drink."

"What is it?" asked Bill, when he had eaten one of the sweetish cakes.

"*Coontie*," Malota told him. "We make it from a root that grows in the ground."

It was dark when the feast was over, and when Tallahassee had lit a pipe, Hanowa asked, "*Solk-go-chee*, my father, where are Sokala and the white man?"

"Gone to the Big Cypress Swamp, maybe," answered the old man, "but the moon is coming up now and we must sleep. I tell my sons to-morrow."

Then each visitor was given a blanket and shown a place to sleep on the floor of the camp. The Indians slept without pillows, but each white guest placed an armful of dry grass under his head. Such was Bill's first visit at a Seminole camp.

CHAPTER XI

AFTER a good meal in the morning and a liberal potion of Munro's black drink, Tallahassee fell into a talking mood.

"*Sop-po-chee*, my son," he spoke, addressing Hanowa, "I went to the camp of the white man; Malota went with me. I told the white man that soldiers in a boat, with guns were going to look for a white man and a red man; because the captain of the soldiers at Fort Brooke wanted to see them. The white man has much hair on his face, but I could see that his face grew red and that his hands trembled, when he lifted a cup to his mouth.

"I told him the captain of the soldiers had written to the chief at St. Augustine and to the big chief of the Spanalkies on the big island in the sea. The white man asked me many questions; but I did not tell him who had told me of the soldiers and of the letters.

"The white man grew angry and talked

bad of the soldiers and their chief; and he talked in the white man's tongue to Sokala. He thought old Tallahassee did not understand his words. 'We fool him,' he said. 'We no go on sea. We go camp long time in swamp. No soldier see us, no white man see us long time. Soldiers can all go 'way down. We shoot him if he follows.' That is what the white man said to Sokala."

After this talk the old man fell into a long silence, as if the talk had exhausted him; but Munro felt that Tallahassee had not yet finished his story, and after some time Han-owa made bold to ask: "What else did my father learn at the white man's camp?"

"We learned many other things," Tallahassee continued his story. "When the sun sank toward the sea, the white man began to cook meat and make tea and Malota sat down and talked to Sokala. He told Sokala that the chief of the soldiers is angry because he has lost something of much value and that he may send soldiers in a war canoe to look for it; but he did not tell Sokala what it is that the white chief has lost.

"When the white man had cooked his

meat, he sat down to eat it and he asked Sokala to eat, but he did not ask me and Malota to eat and drink with him. Our people never let their visitors go away hungry. Malota and I went away hungry from the white man's camp."

After the old chief had again rested for a while he told how he and the boy Malota had started for their own camp, and how, after dusk, they had returned and had silently crept so close to the white man's camp that they could see and hear what was going on.

"And what did my father see and hear?" asked Munro.

"My eyes have grown dim and my ears dull with great age," the old man replied slowly, "but Malota's eyes are keen like the eyes of the sandhill crane, and his ears are as keen as the ears of Echo, the deer, when he hides in the saw-grass from the canoe of the hunter. And this is what Malota saw and heard:

"The white man melted wax of the bees in a kettle over the fire. Into the kettle he poured a bagful of dollars, white dollars and

yellow dollars, and he stirred them with a stick in the wax that was boiling in the kettle. Then he took the kettle off the fire and set it down in the grass, where the dew would fall on it and make the wax and the dollars cool. 'Now,' he said, 'they will keep still and not say "chink, chink" in our pack.'

"That is what Malota saw and heard. Then the white man and Sokala lay down to sleep in their blankets, and Malota and I returned to our camp. I have finished."

At this point the boy, Malota, took up the story. After resting in their own camp for a day, the boy and his grandfather had gone to the camp of Holtess and Sokala on horseback. They had found the camp deserted and the trail of the two campers leading straight east. For a white man it would have been very difficult to follow the trail, but the old Seminole and the lad had followed it without much trouble.

"They are going to cross a creek at a ford at the head of a bay," said Tallahassee. "We need not try to follow their trail every step. We can pick it up again at the ford."

The two scouts now traveled slowly in the

general direction of the trail, keeping a sharp lookout ahead, so as not to betray themselves. In the middle of the afternoon they heard two shots about a mile ahead. They could not be sure who had fired the shots, but they decided to make camp for the night and take up the trail in the morning.

“If they have killed a deer,” said Tallahassee in the morning, “we shall find them in camp smoking the meat, but if they missed, we shall find that they have gone on to the crossing.”

They found no sign of a camp-fire and soon picked up the trail leading eastward.

“They have crossed the creek,” Tallahassee decided. “We can now travel without fear of being seen.”

But when they reached the crossing, they were much disappointed. There were fresh tracks of deer and bear, but there was not a sign of either horse or man having crossed the river.

“My son,” spoke Tallahassee, after he had carefully examined the ford, “Sokala is a Seminole. We must hide our horses and go up the creek on foot to find the place

where Sokala and the white man have crossed."

They found the tracks of the fugitives half a mile up-stream.

"We must not show ourselves near the water," warned the old chief. "They are afraid of being followed, and may be camping in the timber on the other bank. We hide to-night and follow them to-morrow."

They crossed at the ford in the morning and soon picked up the trail of the fugitives and followed it for about five miles, leading almost straight south. At this point the old chief stopped and declared that they had gone far enough.

"They are following the trail to the crossing of the Caloosahatchee," he concluded, "one of the trails that leads to the hiding places of the Big Cypress Swamp. We may now return to our camp, my son. We have seen enough. We are now sure that they are not trying to escape on the sea. They are trying to hide. Kill time."

Munro was now very desirous to obtain from the old chief a general description of the country north and south of the Caloosa-

hatchee, which is the outlet of Lake Okeechobee, the largest lake of Florida.

“It is a long day’s journey from Peace Creek to river Caloosahatchee. Another day’s journey to Big Cypress Swamp. Then all big swamp and big saw-grass water. Then little strip piny woods, then ten thousand islands, then all big sea water and no end.”

That was the old man’s description of the wilderness of Southern Florida as it existed at the time of our story.

“My father,” Munro ventured to ask, “what should we do to find the white man and Sokala in that country?”

“My son, you never find him,” the old chief replied. “Country too big, too wild. Too much trees, too much water, too much saw-grass. No ride, no walk, no canoe. Let him white thief go. Maybe Indian kill him.”

After this discouraging talk from the old man, Munro asked Hanowa to ride on a little scouting trip with him. In his own mind he was wondering if the country was as bad as Tallahassee had described it. If it was, then he had underestimated the dif-

ficulty of capturing Holtess, and perhaps they had better let him go. The Indians might kill him, or a rattlesnake might finish him.

When Munro and Hanowa were alone, the sergeant asked, "Hanowa, is that country really as bad as the old man describes it?"

"Yes, it is as bad," Hanowa admitted. "And in the Big Cypress Swamp and in parts of the Everglades, where the sawgrass is tallest and thickest, it is worse."

"What can we do with our horses, when we reach the Cypress Swamp and the Everglades?" asked Munro.

"We cannot take them," replied Hanowa. "Maybe they will go back to Fort Brooke."

"The horses of Holtess and Sokala ought to give us a clue of the whereabouts of the fugitives. We ought to be able to find the horses," suggested Munro.

"We should be able to find them," Hanowa agreed, "if they have not been killed or sold to the Indians."

CHAPTER XII

IF Munro had not been firmly convinced by this time that Holtess was trying to escape with several hundred dollars belonging to the Government and with the hard-earned savings of years of his own, he would have given up the pursuit. As it was, he lay awake the better part of the night fighting the problem out with himself. It is difficult for an old sergeant to give up anything he has started. His training has all been the other way. If Munro had been the kind of man that is ready to quit, when he finds obstacles in his path, he never would have been a sergeant.

If Major Belton had said to him, "Sergeant Munro, you will find one Holtess and bring him to Fort Brooke. You will select one or two companions and follow him until you get him. He is believed to be hiding now in the Big Cypress Swamp or in the Everglades, and he may try to escape by sea either from St. Augustine or Jacksonville.

Find him and bring him in, if it takes a year to do it," Munro would have saluted and replied, "Yes, sir, I shall bring him in."

And then Sergeant Munro would have chosen his companions, made his preparations, and started after Holtess without loss of time, and he would not have worried about the difficulty of his task. A good soldier obeys orders. He is a fanatic about doing his duty. The difficulty of his job is only an incentive. Those are the qualities which the world has always admired in a good soldier, and an old sergeant in the United States army is perhaps the best of all soldiers.

"Confound this business," Munro said to himself as he sat up in his blanket, "if the major had ordered me to catch that rogue I would just dog him until I had caught him. Why can't I do the same thing under my own orders? Munro, old man, you can't go back to New York State and tell Martha that this scoundrel Holtess was too much for you. We have to get him, unless he and Sokala are better men than Hanowa and I." And then Munro adjusted the grass pillow

under his head and slept soundly until morning.

When he told Hanowa of his decision to take up the trail of Holtess, the young Seminole simply replied, "It will be great fun to hunt him in the Cypress Swamp, or in the Everglades, or in any other place."

"But, Hanowa," the sergeant tried to draw him out, "Tallahassee says we shall never find him because the swamps and the wilderness and the Everglades are too big to hunt down two men who do not wish to be found."

"Tallahassee is now an old man," the scout replied. "If he were a young man, or if he were a soldier, he would try it before he said it could not be done. *Elaha*, we must try it before we give it up."

The two men now set about in earnest to prepare for the most difficult hunt they had ever undertaken. Although they expected to find their food as they went, they knew too much about hunter's and fisherman's luck not to lay in provisions for several days ahead, whenever that was possible. They dried and smoked the meat of a deer and also

a dozen large bass caught in the Mayakka, and they traded a knife for a bag of beans. They had taken the precaution to bring with them a few knives, a dozen awls, a quantity of needles and thread, a small bag of beads and a few other articles for trading with the Seminoles. These trade goods did not weigh much and occupied but little space, but they might prove very valuable in securing the good will of such Seminoles as they might meet, because, on account of the war, the Indians could not freely secure these goods to which they had become accustomed and which they needed very much.

Munro had for some days been secretly hoping that Bill might give up the idea of going along on the pursuit of Holtess and Sokala, and stay with Malota in Tallahassee's camp. The two lads had become fast friends. They left camp in the morning and never returned before evening. Billy was an eager pupil in Seminole woodcraft and was learning to be a good archer. In the evening they always returned with a mess of ducks or fish, and one night they came home with a four-foot alligator which they had

caught alive and carried home tied to a pole, as Joshua's scouts carried the grapes.

"Father, we could have caught a big one, a big old bull," Bill told with a flushed face, "if our rope had been strong enough."

But when Munro broached the idea of Bill staying in Tallahassee's camp, he discovered that the two boys had planned something very different.

"No, Father, I don't want to stay here," Bill objected. "You promised that I could come along, and I am going. But I wish, Father, you would let Malota go with us. Tallahassee and his mother say he may go, and Malota wants to go very much. He knows lots about hunting and fishing in Florida, and he can read tracks and trails and he has a horse of his own. Please, Father, let him go. You will see, Father, he is almost as good a scout as Hanowa."

Bill's request took Munro entirely by surprise and he saw many objections to it, but Bill was ready to answer every objection of his father. Malota, he urged, would be no trouble on the trip. On the contrary, he would be of much help. Hanowa and the

sergeant could make up one party and Malota and Bill could make up another party. "You know, Father, three men are not a good party," Bill argued. "It is always two and one, no matter what you are doing and where you are going. You would not want me to go alone anywhere, and you would not want me to stay in camp alone. If you let Malota join us, you can let us stay in camp or let us go after game and fish, so we don't have to go hungry. Malota can find deer and turtles and gophers. He knows where to find fish and he knows where the *coontie* plant grows, of which the Seminoles make their flour. You know, Father, that you do not like to live just on fish and meat, and Malota can stay awake at night if he wants to, so he can help us watch at night when we are in a dangerous place. You know, Father, that I am no good for keeping awake nights. Please let him go with us, Father. Four men make a much better scouting party than three."

Bill turned several handsprings, when he discovered that Hanowa was more than willing that Tallahassee's grandson should be a

member of the party. He pointed out that any Seminoles they might meet would be less suspicious of a party in which there was an Indian boy, and he also thought that it would be less trouble to look after two boys than to look after one. Two would take care of themselves, he believed.

“I am not at all sure of that,” Munro replied with a laugh. “We white people have a saying that two boys is only half a boy and three boys is no boy at all. But since you all think it is a good plan and Billy and Malota have set their hearts on it, I will consent. Let him go along.”

CHAPTER XIII

AT last the morning arrived on which the four travelers said "*Ay lip-kashaw,*" good-bye, to their friends on the Mayakka and turned their horses east toward the fording place across Peace Creek some twenty miles away.

No soldiers ever entered more light-heartedly upon a dangerous campaign than did Bill and Malota on the hunt for Holtess and Sokala. If Munro had not strictly forbidden it, the two lads would have started a running race eastward before they were out of sight of Tallahassee's camp.

"Did I not tell you," the sergeant spoke to Hanowa, "that two boys are only half a boy? These two scamps will make my hair turn gray on this trip. Some day they will get lost and then we have to quit hunting our men and scour the country for these youngsters."

"The white man's saying is wrong," replied Hanowa with a smile. "They are not

half a boy; *chass-kee-bin*, they are," and he held up the fingers of one hand, "but to-night when they are tired they will be only two boys,—maybe only one boy."

The two men were not so light-hearted as the lads, and after the exchange of opinions on the antics of the boys, very little was said, because each man was busy with his own thoughts. Munro wished that he were still a soldier in the ranks. Then, if he had been ordered to bring in Holtess and Sokala, he would have had no worries and scruples. He would have gone and brought them in or died in the attempt of it. He would have told his son, "Billy, you stay at Fort Brooke. I have to make a long trip on military duty." He would have written to his wife and she would have understood and found no fault. But now he was responsible both for making the crazy plan and for carrying it out. If they should succeed, all would be fine, of course; but if their plan failed, as it was quite likely to do, Martha would probably say: "David, you ought to have known better than to chase a rogue all over the wilds of Florida. But

that is just the way you are. The wilder the scheme, the better it suits you. If Billy had convinced you that he had lost a marble in the Everglades, you would have used a month hunting for it. Here you put in the better part of a year roaming all over Florida and running the risk of having yourself and Billy killed by snakes and Indians. But you would rather roam all over the world than come home to look after your farm and your family. I don't see why you left the army. I always expected you would plunge into some mad adventure, before I should ever see you working a day on the farm."

Yes, that was about what Martha would tell him; and he had almost worried himself into a state of anger against his far-away wife, when Hanowa roused him from his gloomy reverie.

"*Elaha,*" his friend suggested, "the sun is high. We have come more than half-way to the river. The boys are tired and hungry, and are only two boys. Our horses are tired and thirsty. We should now take a short rest and eat a little food."

After eating a piece of dried venison and

resting half an hour, the sergeant was more cheerful. The sun was shining, a few birds were heard twittering, and a gentle wind was blowing through the pine tops. Although it was now the latter part of January, men and horses felt as if they were traveling on a perfect April day in the Northern States. The two boys seemed to have lost all desire for mad pranks, and, while they kept by themselves, they always rode in plain sight of their grown-up companions.

Of danger, not a trace was seen anywhere. The country seemed to be uninhabited. The horsemen saw no Indians, nor did they see or smell any camp-fires, and they discovered no tracks that were not very old. Hanowa had indeed taken the precaution not to follow a trail.

“Going on a trail is always easier,” he observed, “but when traveling through the pine woods, a horse can go everywhere, except in the tangled spots, where a hammock is beginning to grow.”

However, although no signs of danger were visible, the company traveled very

quietly and each man kept up a sharp lookout ahead. As it was their intention to camp for the night near Peace Creek, they lost no time in hunting along the way. Once they heard a wild turkey call not far from their route, and the two boys were set on going after it; but Hanowa insisted that there was no time for hunting.

“We still have a long way to go,” he told the boys. “We wish to camp early as all wise men do, and we should do some scouting at the river, before we make camp. And remember, boys, that nearly all Seminole warriors can make a noise like a turkey or a duck or a goose.”

“Malota says it was a turkey,” Bill replied. “Please let us go and get it.”

“Turkey or no turkey, you fellows come along,” Munro ordered.

Some time later Malota quickly jumped off his horse and pulled something out of a hole. “Gopher!” he exclaimed with a happy smile on his brown face. “I roast him for supper.”

Malota's gopher was in reality a land turtle, which is to this day quite common on

sandy soil from North Carolina to Florida. The animal is probably called a gopher because it burrows in the ground like the different kinds of gophers in the Northern States.

Some time later they passed a gopher mound with about a dozen holes. Bill wished to dismount and also catch a gopher, but when his father told him that he would have to eat his catch for supper, Bill decided that he would be satisfied with a piece of Malota's gopher.

The sun was scarcely two hours high when the party reached the edge of the timber on Peace Creek. They deposited their packs under a big live oak, staked out their horses on an open glade and walked to the edge of the river. Here they saw fresh tracks of deer, otter, and alligators, but they found no tracks of horses or human beings. Since the river was too deep for wading, Malota and Bill offered to swim across. Munro was afraid of alligators, but when both Hanowa and Malota assured him that the *allapataws* never molest a man, he consented to let the boys swim across. The

lads tied their clothes in a bundle on their heads and quickly reached the other bank, where they hurriedly put on their clothes and shoes and quietly disappeared into the timber. They had been told to scout quietly for Indians and Indian signs and be back on the river in half an hour, although they had no watch to measure the time.

“I hope they will not loiter or get lost,” remarked Munro, as he and Hanowa quietly rested in a grove of tall palms.

“Malota would not get lost,” the Seminole observed quietly, “and they will not loiter and play, because the water in the river is not warm at this time and the boys are hungry.”

The half-hour, nevertheless, seemed very long to Munro, who soon began to feel that they should not have allowed the boys to act as an advance scouting party. “They might run into a Seminole camp,” he expressed his fear, “and be made prisoners or even be killed, without our knowing that anything had happened to them.”

“My brother,” replied Hanowa, “the Seminoles are not that kind of Indians.

They would not harm unarmed boys. They would come with them to our camp."

The lads reappeared on the river bank almost on the minute. When they had again crossed the stream, Bill could not get into his clothes quickly enough, for his teeth actually chattered with cold.

"We did not see a thing," he reported. "Malota, I beat you to camp!" And with these words, Bill started on a full run as soon as he had his shoes on. When the other members of the party arrived, he already had a fire going and a pail of water almost boiling.

"Jiminy crickets! I am cold," he exclaimed. "And I am hungry. Oh, I am hungry!"

"Take the big ax," his father told him, "and cut some wood for our camp-fire. That will warm you up. It will not be long before supper is ready."

Fortunately there was plenty of food in camp. Munro heated a big panful of venison with a few strips of bacon. He also heated a batch of *coontie* cakes, which one of the Seminole women had tied up in palm-

leaves, and he made a big kettleful of coffee to be sweetened with brown sugar.

As soon as Munro had called, "Supper," Bill was in his place, nor did the Seminoles have to be called twice. After supper the two boys built a camp-fire of fat pine logs, whose blaze shone as red as the moon, when it rises behind the forest. For a while Bill had many questions to ask about the near future, but the Indian boy looked in silence at the fire without batting an eye. "If they could not ride their horses in the Cypress Swamp, what were they going to do with them," he wanted to know. "If the water was deep in the swamp, how could they explore it, if they had no canoe." But it was not long before Bill's head began to nod, and the tired lad slipped quietly into the tent and crept under the blanket. Owls hooted in the timber, an alligator bellowed in the river close by, and wolves howled in the distance, but Bill heard none of them. A storm with thunder and lightning and a heavy rain passed over the camp, but Bill slept through it all, and did not awake until his father called him at sunrise.

CHAPTER XIV

SINCE the indications were for a warm day, the travelers decided to push on as soon as possible after breakfast, and do no traveling in the afternoon. Some half-mile up the creek from the place where the boys had swum the stream, they found a place where men and horses could wade across. Although they had thus far not seen any fresh signs of human beings, they jogged along with more care and kept up a sharper lookout both ahead and on their flanks.

The character of the country was very similar to that of the region over which they had come. The open pine woods stretched out with sheer endless monotony. Always off in the distance the trees seemed to close into thickets, similar to the jackpine regions of the North, but they never did. However, gradually the country took on a more Southern aspect. The hammocks of broad-leaved trees formed denser thickets; they contained larger oaks, magnolias and fig

trees, a greater abundance of long rope-like vines, and more different kinds of air-plants grew on the trunks and branches of trees. From every tree, except the palms, hung long gray festoons of Spanish moss, which is in reality not a moss, but a flowering plant that bears little fragrant yellow flowers and is distantly related to the lilies. The only places where one sees in northern forests anything like the long beards of Spanish moss are little islands in the Great Lakes and beaver ponds in dense northern forests. In these places one may find, on dead limbs of spruces and tamaracks, beards of gray lichens; but in winter, when the beaver ponds are frozen, the deer pick off the tufts of lichens as high as they can reach.

The air plants which the travelers observed north of the Caloosahatchee were by no means limited to the Spanish moss. Some were evidently ferns, some bore the odd flowers of orchids, and others looked like bunched grasses growing on the bark of trees. These grass-like plants are known to botanists as *Tillandsias*. These are the plants which at the present time one may see

as odd-looking tufts on telephone and telegraph wires all over Central and Southern Florida.

Early in the afternoon the men pitched camp in the shade of a clump of young pines near a large hammock. It was now that Malota cooked his gopher for dinner. On the evening before he had been too hungry to wait for it. Having first killed the turtle, he roasted it whole and in the shell over a gentle fire. He and Hanowa said it was very good and ate it without salt, but Bill looked rather sober when he ate a few bites with a pinch of salt.

“Little Brother,” remarked Hanowa, “some day, when you are very hungry, you will smile when you eat the gopher.”

Munro had expected to travel over much wild, uninhabited country, but he had not expected to travel for days without even seeing a sign of human beings. According to his idea, there were two or three thousand Seminoles in Florida at that time. What had become of them? Where were they? Tallahassee's camp could hardly be the only one in Southern Florida. He began to feel

a bit uneasy about this man-hunt. They were looking for two fugitives in a country, where to all appearances there was nobody living. And they were traveling so slowly, as if they were afraid that they might catch up with somebody.

In the evening when the boys had gone hunting with their bows and arrows, Munro told Hanowa of his worries.

“Where are all the Indians?” he asked. “Why don’t we meet some, or at least see their trails?”

Hanowa seemed surprised at these questions. “It may be that we shall see too many of them pretty soon,” he answered. “We do not need them now. When we need them, it may be that we can find them.”

“Why don’t we discover any of their trails?” Munro repeated.

For a minute the Seminole looked at his friend in silence, as if he were trying to read the white man’s thoughts. “My brother,” he then spoke slowly, “we are traveling toward the river Caloosahatchee and toward the Big Cypress Swamp, but we are not traveling on the trails of the Seminoles. If

a man travels on a trail, he may meet people he does not wish to see. We do not wish to see Seminoles and we do not wish them to see us. That is the reason we travel on no trail. The land is big, and if we do not ride on a trail, no one will see us for many days. That is the way my people travel when they do not wish to be seen."

"Your answer is good," admitted the sergeant, "but shall we ever overtake the men we are hunting, if we do not travel more than ten or twelve miles a day?"

"A good hunter," replied the Seminole, "does not travel fast, when he hunts the deer. He goes slow, he makes no noise. By and by he gets him. We must give plenty of time to our men. They must think that nobody is hunting them. Then some day, maybe, we shall catch them. If we scare them they will run away, or they will watch and catch us. And I know," he concluded, "that they are not in these piny woods. Here the hunting is poor and it is not a good country for thieves to hide. It is too open."

Munro felt convinced by the Seminole's

talk, but he had another thing that worried him. "I still think," he began, "that we should have left these lads with your friends. They will worry the life out of me. Here it is almost dark and there is neither sound nor sight of them. I am afraid they are lost."

"They are not lost," Hanowa asserted somewhat curtly. "*Elaha*, you could no more lose that boy, Malota, than you could lose a wise dog."

"I suppose you are right," Munro admitted, "but I know that they are going to eat us poor, into starvation. I never saw boys eat the way these two scamps eat. Our venison is more than half gone, and they would have eaten more if I had given it to them."

"*Elaha*, we shall not go hungry," Hanowa asserted quietly. "We can always find *coontie* roots," and with a twinkle in his dark eyes, he added, "also gophers and young allagataws."

"You need not call me brother," Munro protested, "if you are planning to feed me on gophers and alligators. We old soldiers

can live on tough beef, salt pork, and beans, but we draw the line on turtles and alligators and snakes. Where are those boys? It is getting pitch dark and those two scamps are still roaming around.”

And then there came a long low whistle on three notes, the prearranged signal for any one approaching camp after dark, and into the light of the camp-fire marched the boys, each triumphantly carrying a big turkey. With much pride and enthusiasm they told how they had watched a flock of turkeys go to roost, and how they had crept up to the birds when it was so dark that they could just see them against the sky, and how each had brought down his bird with one shot.

“Now, Father,” Bill declared, “you cannot say any more that we are going to eat you bankrupt. We go turkey-hunting again to-morrow evening.”

And Sergeant Munro felt as proud as Billy and Malota. For the time, all his worries were forgotten, and he gave each of the lads a big piece of venison.

“We could not come back any sooner,”

Bill explained, between bites. "Malota says, if you try to sneak up on them before it is quite dark, they will fly away to another perch. We were never far from camp. We could have called to you, but Hanowa had told us not to holler. Let us camp here, Father. This is the most beautiful spot I have ever seen."

"I wish your mother could see this grove," the sergeant agreed. "She never loved the Florida scrub and underbrush. Here she could walk as in a garden of Paradise. Yes, we shall camp here."

"But more than one night," the lad begged.

As the travelers had eaten nothing since breakfast, each man had developed a remarkable appetite. The sergeant roasted the two turkeys the boys had brought in the preceding night. Hanowa put up the camps and looked after the horses, and the two lads furnished the dessert. The dessert was of a character of which the famous old Delmonico's of New York need not have been ashamed. It looked much like stalks of choice bleached celery, and it consisted of the

white heart-buds of palms. Crisp and tender were the long white buds, without stringy fibers, and they had an agreeable nutty flavor.

“*Elaha,*” remarked Hanowa, “the two boys are two boys when they hunt turkeys and climb palm-trees.”

The evening was warm, and a peculiar sweet odor of myriads of little flowers of the Spanish moss pervaded the air, an odor which reminded Munro of the fragrant little *Linnæas* in the Hudson Highlands. Along the river, frogs, toads, and alligators filled the air with a great nocturnal din, and among the tree tops countless hylas were piping. Spring had come to the Southern Forest.

“Will the alligators come after us during the night?” asked Bill.

“They do not eat boys,” Hanowa told him, “they eat fish. They are making a big bellow to call their mates.”

But when Bill went to bed he took an ax with him into the tent. “Father,” he said, “if an alligator tries to come into our tent, I shall split his snout for him.”

CHAPTER XV

AFTER the four campers had enjoyed a night's rest, they went to explore the neighborhood of their camp, and again they were struck by the singular beauty of their surroundings.

The Caloosahatchee is a large river, but so luxuriant was the growth of live oaks, magnolias and other southern trees that in many places they formed a great arch over the smooth brown stream, while a veritable garden of air plants, Spanish moss, orchids, ferns, and Tillandsias covering every branch and trunk completed the picture of a tropical forest.

In the river, fish were jumping and giant alligators were lazily drifting here and there waiting for a chance to close their terrible jaws on some prey. On the trees overhead the air was alive with large strange birds. Flocks of the pink curlews passed southward to their nesting grounds in the mangrove swamps, flocks of white pelicans and of

long-necked cranes were passing northward, while snow-white egrets and herons perched among the branches. So numerous were these and other large stately birds, that the explorers hardly noticed the many smaller birds which would have attracted their attention in a northern forest.

The air was pervaded by a strange fragrance and Hanowa pointed to the large white flowers of the sweet bay and the great magnolia, and said, "They make it."

"If we could only stay here a week, or a real long time," was Bill's wish.

"And if only your mother could see these trees and flowers and birds," Munro added, "she would wish to live here always and never go back north where cold and storms are now at their worst, for this is the beginning of February."

Bill and Malota were quite set on swimming the river and scouting through the timber on its southern bank, but Munro would not hear of it.

"This time you boys stay with us until we are all ready to cross," he declared.

"But, Father, we may run into some

hostile Indians," argued Bill, "if we do not scout ahead."

"We might as well run into them now as later," replied Munro. "You boys do not swim the Caloosahatchee. I have seen too many alligators. Look at that big brute sunning himself in the bend."

"All good alligators," Malota asserted. "Only eat dogs and pigs."

"Boys, I cannot believe it," Munro replied. "I fear there may be a bad one among the many good ones; they all look bad to me. You boys stay on this side until we all cross over."

The explorers remained several days in this delightful spot, which Bill called Paradise Camp, because he could not help thinking that the river which issued from the Garden of Eden must have resembled the Caloosahatchee. His father was ready to admit that the river of Paradise might have resembled the Caloosahatchee in the trees and flowers and birds on its banks, but he did not think there were any alligators in Paradise.

"If there were any, they were good alli-

gators," asserted Bill. "Malota says they are all good now."

"Well, they may be good," Munro granted, "but they do not look it; so you fellows find a place to swim where there are none of the ugly brutes. You may hunt turkeys and deer, and Hanowa says you may use your guns."

Bill let out a yell at this welcome news, and he and Malota started on a real hunt at sunrise next morning. Several hours before noon they returned to camp laden with game. Malota carried a fat young buck, while Bill was puffing under a load of four turkeys and eight turkey eggs.

"Father," he pleaded, "let us have fried turkey eggs and a little hardtack for dinner. I tell you we are hungry; two miles at least we carried our game."

"Turkey eggs?" queried Munro. "Do you hunters guarantee that they are strictly fresh?"

"Malota says they are," Bill declared. "The turkey hen lays ten or twelve eggs and there were only nine in this nest. We left one egg in the nest."

The eggs proved strictly fresh, and fried with a little deer suet, furnished an excellent dinner, and since one turkey egg contains about as much food as two hen's eggs, there was plenty to eat for everybody.

"You hunters must cure your meat," Munro told the boys after dinner. "Han-owa and I have other things to do, and it is not more than fair that those who have the fun of hunting should cure the meat so it will not spoil."

Although some of the nights were still decidedly cool, the temperature at noon often rose to summer heat, especially when the day was clear, and most days were clear. The hunters therefore decided to salt and smoke their venison, and then wrapped it up in pieces of cheesecloth to protect it from flies. Flies had not yet become numerous, but both of the lads knew enough woodcraft to realize that it does not take many flies to spoil a piece of meat.

Since the boys expected that two of the turkeys would be roasted for supper in the evening, and that the other two would be used the following day, they did not think

it necessary to smoke the turkeys; but they rubbed a little salt on the inside of the dressed birds, and after partly roasting them over a gentle fire, they tied a piece of cheesecloth around them and hung them up in a cool shady place.

In the afternoon the boys walked upstream about a mile, to a place where the current was less sluggish than it was near the camp; for the Caloosahatchee and all rivers draining the Everglades show rapids and run with a swift current only where they cross the limestone rim which encloses the basin of the Everglades.

The Caloosahatchee in those days would have delighted the heart of every fisherman. The lads had no book of fancy flies; they had no wobblers and plugs, no minnows, not even angleworms, for no man has ever found angleworms in a wild country. Each boy had a line and a few hooks and when they arrived at the fishing place, each cut himself a pole as long and as slender as he could find. They could have caught frogs for bait, but Bill was glad to learn that they should not need frogs, for he hated to kill

frogs, and he had never been able to put a live frog on a hook.

“They bite on rags,” Malota had assured him, so the Indian boy baited his hook with a bit of red cloth, while Bill used a white rag. And the fish did bite on the rags. They bit so fast that the fishermen threw back every fish that was not badly injured, for they had orders not to bring home more than six or seven fish. But the more they threw back, the more came to try the rag baits. And then something happened which gave the fish and one of the fishermen a real scare. Bill had just raised a big bass above the water when suddenly the monstrous head of an alligator shot out of the water. Two fearsome jaws closed with a loud clack on the wriggling fish, line and pole were torn from the hands of Bill, who let out a yell of fright and rushed wildly for the timber and actually started climbing up the nearest palm-tree, as if the alligator were at his heels.

Bill's performance was too much for Malota. When Bill came to his senses, Malota was lying on his back, kicking his

bare feet up in the air, laughing and laughing, and between laughs jabbering so fast in Seminole and English that Bill could only make out a phrase now and then, although he knew pretty well what Malota was saying. But the laugh was not all on Bill, for when the Indian boy arose to take up his pole and line, they were gone. It was lucky that Bill had an extra piece of line in his pocket, or the lads would have had to go home without a fish after they had thrown more than a dozen back into the river.

Munro and Hanowa had not been idle during the day. They had cut a dozen palm-trees and by the skilful use of vines as ropes, had tied the trees together in a raft which had buoyancy enough to hold two men. The banks of the Caloosahatchee are quite high and consist of loose soil or of a whitish marl with many embedded shells, so a landing had to be dug out on both banks for launching or landing the raft and for getting the horses across the deep river in safety and without loss of time.

“ Oh, Father! ” exclaimed Bill, when he

saw what the men had done, "why did you cut down all these beautiful palms?"

"Boys, we could find no other trees suitable for a raft," Munro explained. "The wood of all the other trees is too heavy to float; most of the trees are also too big to handle. We saved the heart-buds of the palms for salad. I think I shall boil some of them with venison and turkey to give us a New England dinner, if you will kindly imagine the turnips and potatoes."

Since only fresh fish are good fish, the campers decided to keep their turkeys until next day and have fish for supper, with crisp white palm cabbage for salad and sweet tea for good cheer.

After supper they ferried all their belongings across the river and pitched their camp on the south side, but they left the horses grazing on the open glade north of the river, where the grass was very good. Travelers in the pioneer days nearly always crossed a stream before they made camp. If any baggage became wet in crossing, it could be dried at the camp-fire. There was also the danger that a river might rise so much from

a heavy rain during the night that it would be impossible to cross it in the morning. This danger, however, was not present in the rivers of Southern Florida.

CHAPTER XVI

AT the urgent request of the boys, the campers spent one day in camp on the south side of the Caloosahatchee. Munro and Hanowa sauntered in the palm groves, watched flocks of birds going north, did a little fishing, amused themselves throwing sticks at the big ugly alligators that lay sunning themselves on the banks, and inhaled the fragrance of the magnolia flowers, which now dotted the green foliage like thousands of white stars.

The boys roamed and hunted at their own sweet will along the edge of the timber and southward, but they had been told not to hunt toward the east, where, within two miles of the camp, a much-used ford crossed the Caloosahatchee.

“We shall find plenty Seminoles,” Hanowa had cautioned them. “Do not let them find you before we are ready.”

The sun had sunk to the level of the tree tops, when the boys returned to camp. The

two biggest turkeys were roasting on a green pole over a hot fire of live oak coals. Munro was squatting on the ground slowly turning the spit, as if roasting turkeys were his favorite occupation. Hanowa, who had put in the day repairing saddles and blankets, was away looking after the horses.

Bill's mouth watered when he looked at the browning and dripping turkeys.

"How soon will they be done?" he asked. "I am hungry, Father. I think I could eat one of them all by myself. We have not eaten a bite of real food since breakfast. I lost our venison lunch, while we were scrambling through the brush of a hammock trying to get a shot at a wildcat, because Malota wanted the skin of it for a bag. But he got away from us, and we had nothing to eat but a palm bud."

And then the boys told of the bad luck they had met hunting. Not far from camp they had flushed a turkey hen and had spent some time looking for the nest. Failing to find the nest, they had followed the turkey and had soon flushed both the hen and a big gobbler, but the birds seemed wild

and at once got behind some trees so the boys could not get a shot at them. While stalking the turkeys, they had come upon a fresh deer-track and had followed it until the deer had jumped up from his bed in a thicket of young pine and saw-palmetto, but again they had not been able to get a shot at their game. For an hour or longer they had slowly stalked the deer, hoping to get a fair shot, but much to their disgust, the deer had at last taken refuge in a bay, which in Florida means a piece of low thick timber with water covering the ground. Then the hunters had sat down on a log to rest, and Malota had whispered to Bill, "Deer in there. We get him. You go around to other side. Sit down on log and watch. I am barefoot. I walk in, bark like a dog and make a little noise. Deer gets scared and runs out. You shoot him. See?"

Bill found a good log to sit on, and Malota barked like a real dog. The deer came out. Bill heard him coming and quietly arose from his log and stood behind a tree, ready to fire. It all worked to perfection, except that Bill never saw the deer,

because the wary animal kept carefully under cover.

“Let him go,” said Malota, when Bill told him what had happened. “He is wild. I think Seminoles hunted him. We go get the turkeys.”

“After a long search we found the turkeys,” Bill continued his story, “but they were even wilder than the deer. Fifty yards ahead of us they arose with a great whirr of wings and sailed away over the pine tops like a pair of eagles.”

“Seminoles hunt them,” Malota spoke in disgust. “We go home. We got bad medicine day for hunting.”

“Those turkeys look done, Father,” Bill remarked, when he had finished his story. “I could eat one raw. I know that Malota is as hungry as I am, although he does not say anything.”

The turkey of the boys was picked clean sooner than Munro had believed it possible, and the lads also ate what scraps the men left of their bird. Munro had never realized until the last few days that a man who lives exclusively on a meat diet may consume

from four to six pounds of meat daily, if he is compelled to take vigorous exercise.

“Hanowa,” he remarked, when the meal was over, “you were right about these two boys. They will take care of themselves; we shall not have to worry about them on that score, but did you notice their appetites? I see us eating alligators, if we ever strike a country where game is scarce.”

“They are good boys. Young alligator is not bad meat.” That was all the Seminole scout replied, as he squatted near the fire and with a far-away look gazed at the red western sky, against which the crowns of distant palms were sharply outlined like black feathery tufts.

The morning star was still shining, when the campers started on their adventurous search for two outlaws that might be hiding somewhere in the wilderness of Southern Florida, a country at that time known only to the Seminoles, to the warriors of Osceola, Mickenopah and other chiefs, but unknown to white men and to American army officers and soldiers.

Most of the time the company rode in

silence. Hanowa took the lead, and although they followed no trail, he kept a sharp lookout ahead. They found as yet no great difficulty in traveling on horseback, but the country became gradually more wet, although the rainy season had not yet begun. There were more hammocks too dense for horsemen; low areas, so-called bays, covered with water, had to be avoided. Only once did they dismount to ease their horses and to let them enjoy a drink. Soon after the sun had passed the noon hour and when the day was getting oppressively hot, Hanowa turned sharply into some tall and dense timber. A few rods in he stopped, looked sharply into the forest and sniffed the air, like a suspicious deer.

“*Elaha*, do you smell smoke?” he asked.

“I smell nothing but magnolias and other flowers,” was Munro’s answer. “I see nothing but trees and vines, and more trees and vines.”

“I see tracks, plenty of them,” Bill volunteered. “Deer and bear and wolf, and one alligator track, but no man-tracks.”

“We are on a game trail,” Hanowa in-

formed them, "but we shall soon be in camp."

Within a few minutes they came suddenly to a clearing and halted on the bank of a small lake, set like a jewel in a ring of dark, dense forest.

"Little Lake, I call it," Hanowa explained. "I think, *Elaha*, you are the first white man to see it."

The shores of the lake, now called Lake Trafford, showed much of the same luxuriance of the southern forest, which had so impressed the two whites on the Caloosahatchee. Thousands of magnolia flowers fairly dazzled the eye. Columns of palms, ancient live oaks with enormous spreading boughs, immense fig-trees, which had long ago strangled and then supplanted their unfortunate host trees, allowed scarcely a stray beam of sunlight to reach the ground. One tree appeared here for the first time in great numbers and large in size,—the weird bald cypress. But the old cypress-trees looked no longer dead; they were just putting forth fresh green shoots with the little narrow leaves, that seem to betray the fact

that this tree of the great southern swamps is a relative of balsams and spruces, the Christmas trees of the North.

“Let us have a swim, Malota!” Bill exclaimed, as the sunlit blue water suddenly burst into view, but he changed his mind when several large alligators rushed from their sunning places into the water and a dozen small ones of all sizes wriggled after them. Bill had to be content with a wash among the knees of the cypress-trees, where the water was too shallow for the large reptiles, and he wished that some curse might fall upon the whole tribe of alligators that acted like so many grim signs of “*Verboten*” on every tempting lake and river.

The boys begged that they might camp an extra day on Little Lake, but Munro told them that the time of just camping for fun had passed. “In May the rainy season will begin,” he told the lads. “And we must scout over as much country as possible before the rains pour down on us every day, after which, we may travel for hours without finding a dry place large enough to camp.”

“We must travel and scout,” Hanowa added. “But some day, when we find a good place, we shall take time to hunt alligators,—hunt them all day, if you like.”

So they were all in the saddle again next day, and now Hanowa led the way straight southwest. They kept a sharp lookout for Indians and examined every trail they crossed. They saw plenty of game, both deer and turkeys and a black bear with two cubs, but Hanowa would not allow the lads to hunt or even fire at game that they approached accidentally.

“We hunt some other day,” he ordered. “Look for tracks now!”

They did look for tracks, until they could almost see tracks that were not there. No matter how they scrutinized every spot of bare ground, they saw no sign of either white man or red; but the character of the country was changing. They passed over a stretch of rough limestone, full of holes, which made the footing for the horses so dangerous that they had to pick their way with the utmost care.

Hanowa was leaning forward in the sad-

dle. His eyes peered ahead among the pines and searched the sky for wreaths of smoke. His action reminded Bill of a pointer slowly stalking the game up wind. But there was neither sight nor smell of smoke, nor sign of either red man or white.

In the afternoon of the second day, after they had left the Little Lake, they rode up a ridge, which reminded Bill strongly of the pine-covered sand dunes of Tampa Bay, and from beyond the ridge came a strange dull roar. On top of the ridge Hanowa stopped, stretched out his right arm toward the sun and called, "*Weva! Big weva!* We shall soon find a good camp."

"We are on the sea, the big ocean," Bill called out. "Father, Malota, hurry up! See the big waves. It is the ocean! I don't see an island ahead, nothing but blue water all the way to the sky!"

There was very little wind, but great waves and more waves rolled and rolled in from the Gulf, and broke roaring and seething on the white sand of the beach.

CHAPTER XVII

WHEN the camp-site had been selected in a spot not too much exposed to the sea breeze, Munro whispered something to Hanowa at which the Seminole laughed and replied, "*Elaha*, I will do it. I will do it good."

The boys wanted to know what Hanowa was going to do, but he only laughed more and said, "You will see. You will see very soon."

As was his custom, he went to stake out the horses, but he staked out only three and came back with one of the ropes wound over his left arm.

"You boys may now have a swim in the ocean," commanded Munro, "and Hanowa will go with you and see that you do not drown and that the sharks do not eat you. Take your clothes off, boys, and be ready for supper in half an hour."

But when Hanowa started to tie a rope around each boy's waist, Bill objected. "I

don't want to swim with a horse rope around my stomach!" he cried. "Take it off, Hanowa."

"Billy, you fellows will swim with the rope on or take a sand bath like the chickens. I am not going to have you carried out to sea by the undertow and eaten by sharks."

"Oh, heavens!" cried Bill, "every river full of alligators and the ocean full of sharks. What luck that there are no lions in the woods."

"Oh, but there are lions in the woods," Munro replied, "at least mountain lions or panthers. Hanowa and I saw a big one sneak into a hammock, when you boys had dropped behind a bit."

The swim in the surf furnished enough fun and was rough enough to have satisfied the most daring boy. Between the push of the breakers, the pull of the undertow, and the counter-pull of Hanowa's rope, the boys swam and kicked and rolled like giant bullfrogs. But when Hanowa thought he really saw the fins of a big shark just beyond the white surf, he pulled his charges in with such speed and energy that they were dragged

up on the beach like helpless frogs at the end of a fisherman's line.

When the swimmers had washed the sand out of their mouths and ears, supper was ready, and it was not necessary to ask the boys to fall to.

“We must not let the boys swim again before supper,” remarked Munro, when he and Hanowa were talking over plans for the future. “In a day or two we shall have to get another deer or depend on fish and small game.”

The two men had expected that the boys would soon go to bed after supper, for the day's trip over wet, low ground and over the stretch of rough limestone had been very tiring. But they had forgotten that some boys of the age of Bill and Malota bear a close resemblance to a perpetual-motion machine during the hours in which they are not asleep, and that they are never ready to go to bed until they are “all in,” as the saying runs in schoolboy athletics.

No sooner had Bill eaten his fill of venison than he called out, “Malota, come on, let us gather some shells on the beach.”

When it grew dark and the lads had not returned, Munro grew uneasy.

“They cannot gather shells in the dark,” he said. “I wonder why the scamps do not come home.”

With these words the men arose and walked briskly to the top of the ridge. And then they saw the boys, running back and forth, picking up a shell here, digging for one there, as busy as a pair of shore birds running up and down the beach in search of food.

“Come, boys,” Munro called. “It is getting too dark and it is time for you to roll in.”

Bill had his hat filled with shells, all of his pockets bulged with shells, and he carried a few large ones in his hands. Malota, who had no pockets, had a load of shells tied up in his neckerchief.

In the light of the camp-fire the lads displayed their find, as if they had just discovered and rifled a hidden treasure of Captain Kidd. They had pink shells and white shells, and shells of all colors,—shells coiled and twisted like corkscrews, tiny shells

almost too small and delicate to handle, big open shells that sang when they held them to their ears.

The lads wished to continue shell-hunting in the morning, but were told that more serious business needed attention. On his scouting trip of some months ago Hanowa had learned that there was a camp of Seminoles located on or near the point of land on which is now located the small town of Naples. Whether Osceola, Mickenopah, or some other chief had ordered this camp to be held, or whether a group of Seminole warriors had of their own accord chosen to occupy this strategic point, he had not learned. A camp located here commanded the only passage past the Big Cypress Swamp southward. In the little bay into which runs the Gordon River and another stream from the big swamp, a dugout could be easily launched and then creeping along the west coast in the shelter of countless islands, it might reach Key West, or it might disappear in the Everglades or the mangrove swamps of White Water Bay. If Holtess and Sokala had escaped into this

part of the peninsula, the warriors in this Seminole camp would know it, provided the camp had not been abandoned.

Could they approach this camp, if it still existed, without being practically made prisoners, and would the Seminoles give them whatever information they might have? These were the questions Munro and Han-owa had been discussing, while the boys had been gathering shells.

If they approached the camp unarmed, they placed themselves at the mercy of the warriors; if they went armed, they might draw the fire of concealed warriors. They decided to go armed, but in case they found the camp, they would employ a bit of strategy to draw the curiosity of the warriors rather than their fire.

They had not gone more than half-way down the narrow point of land which is only about a mile long, when they saw a wreath of smoke rising above the tree-tops near the small bay, which bounds the point of land on the east. Under cover of trees and bushes they approached within easy calling distance of the camp.

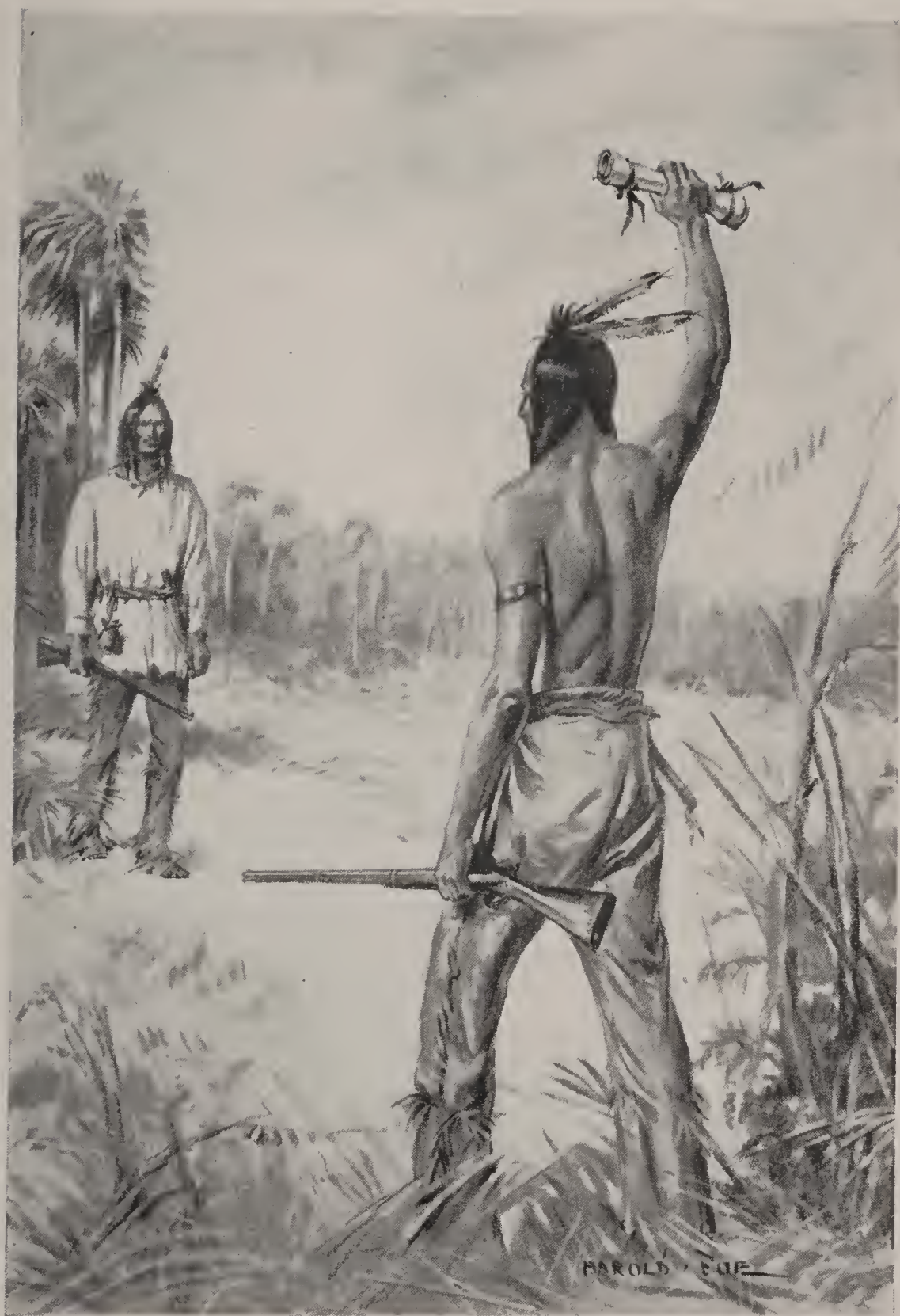
“Here is the place,” Munro whispered. “Everybody march!”

Hanowa, carrying his rifle in his left hand and waving Captain Belton's parchment with the red, white and blue ribbons over his head, stepped into an open space, but the other three travelers posted themselves to Hanowa's left, well concealed by trees and bushes. Then Hanowa, resting the butt of his gun on the ground, began to call in a loud slow voice, “*He-a-wa! He-a-wa! He-a-wa!*” which means, “Come here.”

Had the camp been one of women and children not a soul would have appeared for some time, but it was a camp of warriors, and before Hanowa had thrice repeated his call, his keen senses saw and heard a movement in the brush ahead of him, and he knew that several guns were pointed at him.

Hanowa stood his ground,—he could, in fact, hardly do anything else.

“*Im-po-hitch-carw?* Do you hear me?” he called. “Let one man come to hear what the big letter has to tell you. My men are there,” pointing to his left; “they have good guns, but they are friends.”



A WARRIOR CAME SLOWLY OUT OF THE WOODS. — *Page 151.*

After a little while a warrior came slowly out of the woods. He was barefooted. He wore a kind of cotton shirt, which reached nearly to his knees. On his belt hung a knife and a small bag; a kerchief was tied around his neck, and he wore no hat. Carrying his gun in his right hand, he cautiously approached Hanowa. The bright ribbons of the parchment seemed to interest him more than the message which he could not read. When Hanowa learned that there were only five men in the camp, he felt much relieved and asked the leader to call his men, and he in turn called his friends. There was no formal greeting. The Seminoles were all much interested in the big letter with the bright silk ribbons, and Hanowa told them the contents of the letter and let them feel the red seal, which he had kept carefully intact.

The Seminoles soon became convinced that the four men who had come to them with such a remarkable letter, meant no treachery and did not mean to capture them under a ruse. The presence of Malota and his apparent close friendship with the white

boy, did much to assure them that these four men were not merely the advance scouts of a larger party sent to capture them. The four travelers on their part also felt quite safe in establishing friendly relations with the five Seminoles whose number they felt no reason to fear.

As soon as mutual confidence had been established, the Seminoles invited their visitors to eat, and since the guests had eaten but very little breakfast, all of them ate heartily of pieces of some kind of boneless fish, freshly roasted over the camp-fire.

When, after the meal, Munro produced some tea and brown sugar from his pockets, the cheer of sweet tea soon made guests and visitors talk like old friends. Since Munro felt that Holtess and Sokala were getting a very long start of their pursuers, he broached the object of his journey without delay. Had they seen a white man and a Seminole pass near their camp into the southern part of the Everglades, or had they come upon the trail of the two men or heard of them having been seen in that part of Florida?

To these questions, Tillosee, the man who had come out to meet Hanowa, and who seemed to be the leader of the small band, replied that they had seen no white man or red man since they had built their camp on the Little Bay. They had often sat for hours and looked out over *Wchatka*, the great sea. They had seen the white sails of large ships far off on the blue water, but they had seen no small boat creep along the coast. All of the Seminoles agreed that they had seen no canoe and no small boat on the sea, but one man told that half a moon ago, he had discovered a trail of two bears in the brush south of the creek. He had found it just before dark. During the night there came a wind and a heavy rain and he did not try to follow the trail in the morning.

“I did not see the marks of the feet on the earth,” he closed his story. “I saw the grass and the flowers bent to the south. It may be that the tracks were made by men. I did not think of men. I thought only of bears. If the trail was made by men, the men were walking; they were not riding on horses.”

CHAPTER XVIII

THE information given by one of the Seminoles was very disquieting to Munro. Was there, after all, not a possibility that the two fugitives had escaped into that part of Florida entirely unknown to white men, and but little visited by the Seminoles? A great wilderness enclosed by the Big Cypress Swamp on the north, by the Everglades on the east and south, and by the ocean with numerous mangrove-skirted islands on the west.

“Hanowa, I am very uneasy in my mind,” Munro confided to his friend at the evening camp-fire, when the two boys were sound asleep. “Here we are sitting at the gate, so to speak, of a big wild country that looks to me as if it were made for runaways from justice. It measures, as I figure it out, about sixty miles east and west, and thirty north and south. It must cover about forty townships, as white surveyors measure land. It is unknown, uninhabited, and almost un-

visited. If you and I were fugitives, perhaps we should hide there?"

"*Elaha*, that is the country where I would take you," Hanowa answered calmly. "No white man could ever find us."

"And it is just the country for Holtess and Sokala," Munro replied. "If they discovered that they were being followed, they could disappear into the Cypress Swamp or into the Everglades, or they might escape to one of the many islands and hide in the mangrove swamps, and we could never catch them."

"If they knew we were after them, we could never catch them," the Seminole admitted blandly.

No more was said. The fire had burned low; Munro poured water on the ashes and the ends of the glowing poles, and both men went to bed, but for Munro there was no sleep. He fought and suffered through one of those mental agonies, that come to men who find a difficult and dangerous venture more and more laborious and dangerous as they advance. A voice seemed to whisper: "Sergeant, you were a fool to start on this

mad adventure. You should have reënlisted and forgotten about the money you lost. Or you should have quit this forsaken wilderness and joined your wife and children. You will never see Holtess and your money again. You might as well look for a marble lost in a mangrove swamp.”

At last the weary man fell asleep and did not awaken until the sun was shining in the tent and the boys and Hanowa were setting out the few dishes for breakfast. He felt refreshed and buoyant in body and mind; the cobwebs and the despair of the night had vanished. He ate a hearty breakfast and when the meal was finished, he spoke to Hanowa.

“My friend,” he said, “we must make sure that the fugitives have not passed the Seminole camp and we must begin to-day.”

“My brother is speaking wisely,” Hanowa assented. “Let us go to the Seminole camp.”

It was agreed that Tawfo, the man who had seen the tracks, should go with Munro and Hanowa on a reconnaissance trip for just a day, to make sure, if possible,

whether any humans had passed south of the camp. Bill and Malota were to remain at the Seminole camp.

“You boys may hunt or fish or do anything you like,” Munro instructed them, “but you don’t hunt alligators and you don’t go swimming in the bay.”

Bill tried to beg off from this order, but his father would not change it. “You fellows stay around camp for a day,” he insisted. “You may sleep some more, if you do not want to fish or hunt, but you stay in camp to-day.”

The lads felt no need of any more sleep, nor did Bill care to fish or hunt. “There are so many fish here,” he grumbled, “that it is no fun to catch them. I tell you what we do, Malota. Let us explore a mangrove swamp. I have never been in a swamp of those trees.”

Malota was always ready for anything his white friend wished to do. So the two lads soon were clambering about among the fantastic tangle of roots, which the mangroves send into the mud. A mangrove swamp looks as if all the trees grew on stilts and on

rope-like roots. It looks as if it were the special duty of the mangroves to protect the low coasts and islands against the waves and to build more land. Of all impenetrable jungles and forests, mangrove swamps are perhaps the worst, although a traveler might find tangles of the spiny, rope-like *Cereus* of some hammocks even worse.

Perhaps only boys can enjoy scrambling about in a mangrove swamp, where all is roots and stilts and ropes and wild tangle,—roots growing and dropping from branches ten to twenty feet overhead. The lads had been warned that there are sometimes bad snakes in the swamp, but if there were any, the noise of the lads scared them away. While Bill found it no longer interesting to catch large fish with hook and line, he thought it great sport to catch with his hands the quick little fishes that live in the shallow water among the mangrove roots. But soon both lads tired of catching minnows and gave all their attention to the really funny looking fiddler crabs, whose strange shape and comical behavior incite even more to laughter than the odd sand crabs, which

amuse the visitors at Cape Henry in Virginia and other sandy beaches.

The fiddler crab is provided with one large and one small claw, and he moves the large claw back and forth in a threatening manner suggesting the motions of the arm of a violin player. Bill was watching one of the creatures digging some food out of a hollow in a root and then, with his small claw, transferring it with quick motions to his mouth. The whole performance looked so funny that Bill was convulsed with laughter. Then all of a sudden Bill's laughter changed to a wild yell of pain.

"Did a snake bite you?" Malota called.

"No-o, a fiddler pinched me," Bill called in reply. "It did not hurt very much, but it scared me. I had been teasing him."

After that both boys started teasing the fiddlers, and each boy tried to outdo the other in boldness. The game was for the boys to see how close they could point their forefingers at the fiddler without getting pinched. There were shouts and laughter when the boys won and there were louder shouts and laughter if a fiddler won. When

Malota was pinched, Bill did most of the shouting; and when the big pinchers nipped Bill, Malota supplied most of the shouts. So much noise did the two lads make at their frolic that Tillosee came to the edge of the swamp to ask if they had been bitten by a snake. When he learned the cause of all the noise he shook his head, saying something which Malota interpreted to mean, "Crazy kids! Crazy fool kids."

When Munro and his two companions returned from their reconnoissance, the sergeant was not in the most pleasant frame of mind. The three scouts had indeed found signs of men, but they had not been able to gather any definite information from the signs. They had discovered the site of a small camp-fire in the shape of fragments of coal and burnt sticks on a sandy spot. Hanowa and Tawfo were of the opinion that the signs were from a month to six weeks old, but Munro believed they might be only two or three weeks old, and in that case the place might have been Holtess' and Sokala's camp.

They scouted around the fireplace over a

radius of two hundred yards to discover, if possible, the sleeping-place of the man or men who had built the fire, but they found none. If Holtess and Sokala had been here, they had built only a small fire to roast some game and had then gone on to make camp for the night miles away.

“It means,” Munro decided gloomily, “we have to take a week or two for scouting over that whole region. And we have to slush over the whole of it on foot, for the country is too low and wet for horses even if we could get the horses into it. There would be no sense in our going off to the north and leaving our fugitives safely hidden south of the Big Cypress Swamp.”

By this time it was dark, and Tillosee came to invite his guests to eat before they returned to their own camp. The meal consisted again of the same kind of meat they had eaten in the morning.

“What is it?” asked Munro. “Have the men caught a shark?”

“No shark,” Hanowa answered, smiling. “It is alligator, young alligator tail. It was very good for breakfast.”

As soon as Bill heard the word alligator, his face assumed a strange expression and he got up to leave, but when everybody began to laugh at him, Bill grew a little testy.

“If you all can eat it, I can, too,” he spoke up. “It really tasted good at breakfast, and I am awfully hungry.”

When the boys began roasting their meat at the end of a stick, Munro noticed that each boy had his right forefinger tied up in a rag.

“What have you scamps been doing?” he asked. “I thought you were both old enough to know how to use a knife.”

“We did not cut our fingers,” Bill explained somewhat meekly. “We hunted around among the mangroves and the fiddler crabs pinched us, but we had lots of fun with them.”

“Fiddler crabs,” exclaimed Munro, and stopped eating and everybody stopped eating for a while. But when Tillosee told that the boys had made so much noise that he had thought a cotton-mouth must have bitten them, the merriment broke loose again.

“Boys,” remarked Munro when he was composed enough to speak, “I am glad we took you fellows along. You are pretty lazy in camp, and you are not very much good as fishermen, but you do make a circus clown look like Jeremiah.”

And that was the end of the day in the Seminole camp on the little Bay of Naples.

CHAPTER XIX

TAWFO was a young man, perhaps twenty years old. On the reconnaissance trip he had confided to Munro that he was "much tired" of sitting in camp. He wished that he could go "all over," like Malota and the white boy. When after a few days of resting, hunting and fishing Munro's party was ready to scout the country south of the Big Swamp, Tawfo expressed to Hanowa his wish that he might be allowed to go along. Since Munro had grown quite fond of the youth, he readily consented that the lad might go, on the condition that he would find himself, which means that he would have to procure his own food. Tawfo was quite willing to accept this condition. He knew the country and had hunted over the whole region. If the white man would give him some lead and powder for his gun, he promised that he would also hunt for the white man and his boy. He had a gun, which shot very straight, but his ammunition was all gone.

There was one matter which worried Munro not a little. What could they do with their horses? They could not take them on the contemplated trip, and if they turned them loose, they would probably never see them again. He knew that Sopa would stay near the camp for a day or two, but he could not be expected to know that his master might be gone two weeks.

And what could they do with their trade goods? The quantity was not large, but it would be a hardship to carry the things around with them on their back. However, Hanowa offered a solution of these difficulties.

“The Seminoles will keep them for us,” he proposed. “They will keep the horses and the goods.”

“I have no doubt that they will keep them for us,” Munro granted, “but shall we ever see them again? We may be gone for two weeks.”

There was a gleam in Hanowa's black eyes and a flush seemed to suffuse his brown cheeks.

“*Elaha,*” he spoke slowly, “if the Semi-

noles promise to keep the horses and the goods for us, we shall see them again. The Seminoles do not lie and steal like white men. If they will not keep the horses and the goods for us, they will tell us.”

Munro felt a bit nettled at this blunt reply, but he remembered that the Seminole warriors had taken no watches or money from the bodies of Major Dade’s command and that he had never known a Seminole either to lie or steal.

“I beg your pardon, Hanowa,” he answered. “I believe your people are more honest than many white men. I shall be glad to have you see what Tillosee and his son will do for us.”

“*Elaha*, if you will allow me to make a small gift to Tillosee and his men,” Hanowa divulged his plan—“then I shall talk to them, when we visit them at the camp-fire to-night.”

In the evening, when the men of both camps were seated around the fire, Hanowa produced his gifts. To Tillosee he gave a knife, to one man a belt, to the third man an awl, to the fourth man a piece of green

cloth, and to Tawfo a fishline and a hook. Each man was much pleased with his gift, but the man who received the piece of green cloth seemed to be the most pleased.

After the gifts had been distributed, Hanowa talked to the men in Seminole, not all of which Munro could understand, nor could he make out the reply of the men, because he was not accustomed to their voices. At the conclusion of the talk Hanowa turned to Munro and said in English, “*Elaha*, my brothers will look after our horses and our goods. When we return from our journey we shall find our goods and our horses. My brothers will take care of them.”

“Hanowa, what can the man do with the green cloth you gave him?” asked Bill on the way home to their own camp.

“He will give it to the mother of a girl he likes.”

“Why does he not give it to the girl?”

“Because,” Hanowa explained, “that is not the way my people do things.”

A few days later Munro and Bill with their three Seminole companions started on the great exploring trip south of the Big

Swamp. It was on this trip that Bill learned for the first time how hard and rough a trip in a wild country may be. So disagreeable and various were their experiences that on one occasion, with his face bleeding and tears in his eyes, Bill wished that he and Malota had remained with the Seminoles on the little bay and spent their time in fishing, hunting, swimming, and picking shells on the beach.

Things started in badly the first night, or rather the first morning. The party had been plodding eastward near the southern edge of the Cypress Swamp with the weird-looking trees and their strange knee-roots in sight on their left. The ground was wet and low everywhere; the great primeval cypress forest now garbed in the fresh green of spring and draped with myriads of long festoons of Spanish moss, stretched away to the north and east as far as the eye could reach. When it was time to look for a place to camp, the explorers were wading in water over their ankles, and there did not seem to be a dry spot for miles around. After wading and splashing eastward for an hour or

more, they came upon a small piece of ground almost dry, and decided to camp for the night. Munro and Bill set up their small tent and the Seminoles hastily built a shelter of brush and leaves of saw-palmetto. Both parties spread a mass of brush and leaves on the ground to keep their blankets dry, and made a simple meal of venison and tea. The meal and a cheerful fire, as is nearly always the case, revived their spirits and they made light of their hardships. They were all tired after their long march and went to bed early, promising themselves a long sound sleep. In this fond expectation they were to be disappointed, for an hour or two before sunrise a shower came up with a pouring rain and with a strong wind that scattered the brush and leaves of the Seminoles' shelter and blew down the tent of Munro and Bill in a heap over their heads, because the short pegs they had carelessly stuck into the sandy soil were powerless to hold the tent. Within a few minutes everything was soaking wet, except a few extra articles of clothing and their food, which they had piled up on poles and covered with a piece of canvas. There

was nothing to do but to sit in the rain and wait for daylight.

Munro tried to pass jokes and tell stories, but the jokes fell flat and the stories sounded ghastly. The rain kept pouring down and the wind roared threateningly through the tall cypress trees, while flashes of lightning and crashes of thunder added to the utter desolation and terror of the scene. Wind and rain grew colder, as if the clouds had just passed over a northern snowfield. The half-naked men and boys shivered with cold and ran around in a circle. They tied the tent to a few poles, and under this lean-to they crouched when they tired of running around.

At last the clouds passed over and the sky glowed red in the east. Munro looked at his watch. "It has been raining two hours," he said.

"I believe it!" replied Bill, his teeth chattering with cold. "It—it has—has been the longest night I—I ever lived through."

When the sun rose, the boys were chopping wood and dragging poles to the fireplace, while Munro and Hanowa were try-

ing their woodcraft in starting a fire. Munro's tinder had become soaked, but Hanowa produced a piece that he always carried carefully wrapped up in a piece of oiled buckskin. With the aid of fine shavings and splinters of fat wood they did get a fire started, and then it was not long before they had a blaze to warm their shivering bodies and dry their tent and clothing; and when Munro had for each man a cup of hot coffee with his breakfast, the hardships of the night were almost forgotten. Every man enjoyed a hearty breakfast while seated at the friendly fire, and looked forward to the day's tramp under a sun and sky that reminded Munro of a perfect June day in the North.

The travelers met indeed plenty of hard going during the next few days, but not again did they have tent and shelter blown down over their heads. Munro and Bill set up their tent with real stakes driven into the ground with an ax, and the Seminoles secured their shelter with poles, strings, and vines in such a way that an ordinary wind would not blow it down.

At the end of a week, they had traveled some seventy-five miles, but they had seen no fresh sign of either white men or Indians. On a Saturday evening they discovered a Seminole house on a hammock in the region where the Cypress Swamp and Everglades meet, but the place was deserted and Hanowa said it had not been used for a year.

The explorers spent Sunday at this camp, and it was a real never-to-be-forgotten Sunday. The day began with a long sleep in the morning; then came a hearty breakfast eaten at leisure. Between breakfast and a late afternoon dinner for which Hanowa had brought in two wild turkeys, everybody did as he pleased. The Indians slept much of the time, and Munro and Bill wrote, with pencil on small pieces of paper, letters to their New York home,—letters which they might not be able to mail for months. All were happy that they did not have to set up a camp in the evening, and everybody went to bed early in joyful anticipation of another long night's rest.

On Monday morning all started well rested and with buoyant spirits on the home-

stretch for the Seminole camp of Tillosee on the little bay of the west coast.

The return trip led them along the edge of the Everglades, that great shallow basin, which might well be called a sea of grass and which is one of the unique features of Southern Florida. As the water was low, the rainy season not having begun, they examined a few of the hammocks,—wooded islands in the great wilderness of saw-grass, looking for recent Seminole and white man's camps.

They could take no time for hunting and their provisions soon became exhausted. It was now that the whole party had to depend on the foraging instincts of Hanowa, Tawfo, and Malota. These three natives of the land kept them from starving. Once they caught a mess of fish in a water-hole on the edge of the Everglades, where a white man would not have thought of looking for fish. Another time they raided a gopher mound; one day they made flour of *coontie* roots, and for two days the whole party had to eat roasted alligator or go hungry. They all chose to eat alligator.

One night a rainstorm again passed over their camp, but they suffered only the inconvenience all campers suffer in wet weather, because they had learned their lesson in the first storm and had always made a well-secured camp.

The most serious accident befell Bill and Malota on the last evening out but one. It was the one time that Bill loudly expressed the wish that he had stayed in Tillosee's camp. While Munro was roasting meat for supper, and it was alligator steak for the third night, Bill caught sight of a 'possum ambling slowly toward a hammock, and took after it, blessing his luck, for Bill just could not learn to like alligator meat, if he knew what it was; but he was very fond of roast 'possum. When the 'possum became aware of his pursuer, he got up an unexpected burst of speed and disappeared into the tangle of the hammock, with Bill in hot pursuit, thinking of nothing else but roast 'possum for supper. The next moment he uttered a piercing scream of pain, and yelled at the top of his voice, "Malota, Malota! Come quick. The snakes have got me!"

Malota, forgetting his usual caution, rushed to his friend's assistance, and the next moment he was yelling "Snakes" and "Bloody murder" in Seminole.

Munro seized his ax and gun and ran for the hammock. In his mind he saw the lads in the coils of monster cotton-mouths or rattlesnakes like Laocoön and his sons in Greek mythology. Hanowa and Tawfo ran after Munro, calling to him to be careful, but before they caught up with him, Munro, seasoned old soldier that he was, also gave vent to piercing cries of pain, followed by a torrent of remarks about a couple of fool scalawag kids.

Hanowa and Tawfo, who had approached more cautiously, did indeed find all three of their friends held fast in the coils of terrible snakes, not, however, by the kind that Munro had imagined, but by the horrible spiny coils of the snake cactus, now known to botanists as *Cereus pentagonus*. When the two Seminoles came up and saw what had happened to their companions, they stood and laughed as Munro had never seen an Indian laugh. The laughter of their

companions did not help the captives to take their plight with more good humor, for every motion they made in trying to cut themselves free with their hunting-knives, drove more of the fearful spines into their flesh. When, at last, the captives, with the help of Hanowa and Tawfo, were freed and on their way back to camp, Munro reproached the Seminoles for laughing at him and the boys. Hanowa replied, stifling more laughter, “*Elaha*, we did not laugh at your pain; we laughed at the noise and the motions you all made.”

Supper was late that evening, for it took the three men a long time to pull the snake spines out of their flesh, and many of them they had to leave until morning because they could not see them by the light of the camp-fire. Bill's hands and face looked as if he had come off second best in a big fight, and the poor lad had to lie straight on his back all night, because his legs, thighs, hips, and shoulders still contained so many of the horrible spines that he cried aloud with pain whenever he tried to turn over on his side.

CHAPTER XX

THE explorers arrived at Tillosee's camp in the middle of the afternoon, tired and hungry; in fact, Munro and Bill were completely worn out. The boy had not enjoyed a restful sleep since he had been caught by the spiny snake cactus, and Munro's sleep had been broken by the restlessness and the screams of the lad, whose face looked haggard and who uttered a stifled cry of pain every time a concealed spine was pressed into his flesh.

Bill took off his clothes and Munro and Malota each using two knife-blades, when their finger-nails were not delicate enough, pulled out as many of the small broken spines as they could find. To Munro and Malota, and more so to Bill, who gave many cries of pain, this operation was a serious matter, but to Tillosee and his men the performance looked entirely different. They roared and shook with laughter, and talked and yelled like white boys at a funny vaudeville show.

“ If I were only bigger,” cried the exasperated Billy, “ I would get up and fight them all.”

“ Confound them, Hanowa, what is it they are saying? ” asked Munro. “ I cannot make out their jabbering.”

“ They are saying,” Hanowa interpreted, “ that Billy yelps like a dog that has the porcupine quills pulled out of him.”

“ They are! Are they? ” the sergeant exclaimed, and he dropped his knives and turned up his shirt-sleeves. But Hanowa stepped between him and the men and told the Seminoles to go away. At this request the Seminoles laughed some more, but they turned their backs on Billy and went away.

When the doctors had relieved Bill of all the spines they could find, they rubbed alligator oil on his skin to relieve the inflammation and the tension of the skin, and in a short time Billy was sound asleep on a blanket his father had spread out for him under a scrubby pine, where a gentle breeze from the Gulf kept him cool and comfortable.

When the sun was sinking into the Gulf,

Tillosee sent word that his friends should come to a feast, and to the half-starved explorers no message could have been more welcome. The Seminoles, using the horses of the explorers, had made a great hunt on the preceding day and had brought in a good supply of game. There was smoked venison and fresh venison and several large fish. They roasted venison over the fire and Munro fried both venison and fish in his frying-pans. And in the hot venison suet he baked pancakes of *coontie* flour, which Munro and Billy relished very much after they had lived a week on turtles and alligators.

How long the Seminoles sat around the camp-fire, Munro and his son never knew, for they bade their friends good-night soon after the feast, and Bill did not wake up until it was almost noon, for the day was cloudy so that the heat of the sun did not drive him out of the tent.

Munro and the three Seminole explorers also spent much time sleeping during the next few days. Munro and Hanowa in talking over the results of their trip came to

the conclusion that in one respect the trip had been a complete failure. They had discovered neither sign nor clue of the whereabouts of Holtess and Sokala. In another respect the trip had been very successful. They felt reasonably sure that the fugitives were not hiding south of the Big Cypress Swamp,—that they had not entered the Everglades from the southwest and that they had not gone by sea down the west coast.

“But where are they, and where are they going?” asked Munro, as he was sitting at the camp-fire with Hanowa, after the boys had gone to bed.

“*Elaha,*” replied Hanowa slowly, and with a far-away look, “they may be hiding in the northern part of the Big Swamp. They may be in the Everglades, or they may be on one of the islands in the big Lake Okeechobee; or they may have crossed the Everglades and are now going to the north.”

“My brother,” Munro replied with a touch of impatience, “you might as well tell me that they are probably somewhere in Florida, and be done with it.”

“*Elaha,*” the Seminole came back, “I

have told you the truth. If you want to hear lies, ask a white man."

Munro passed over the rebuke. "What route do you think they will take going north, and what place will they try to reach?"

"I think," Hanowa replied, "that they will travel northward after they have crossed the Everglades. After they strike the river *Hilaka*, called St. Johns by white men, they will buy or steal a canoe and travel on the river. Then the white man will try to go on a ship at St. Augustine or at the mouth of the river *Hilaka*."

"What makes you think that they would travel that way?"

"That is the way I would go, if I were trying to run away to the white man's country," replied Hanowa. "And if I had stolen a bagful of money I would not run very fast. I would hide for several moons in the Big Swamp, in the Everglades and in other places. If I were a white man, I would shave off my beard; I would let the sun brown my face and I should wear the dress of a Seminole. Then when I thought the

soldiers had forgotten about the bag they lost, I would burn my Seminole dress and put on the white man's dress and find a ship to take me to one of the big cities of the white men."

"My brother," commented Munro, "you have spoken well. But I almost fear that some day you will turn crook."

"What is a crook?" Hanowa asked.

"It is a bad man," the sergeant explained.

"Many white men are crooks," Hanowa remarked dryly, "but not many Seminoles. One Seminole chief was a crook, but Osceola killed him ten moons ago."

The stay near Tillosee's camp lasted much longer than Munro had intended. Bill was quite sick for a whole week, and his father was glad that the sick lad could rest in a comfortable camp, where, during the hot hours of the day, a cool breeze blew from the sea.

After Bill had fully recovered, a week more was spent in hunting and smoking venison, because Munro and Bill could not look forward with pleasure to a diet of gophers and alligator. On this hunting trip

they also secured a young bear, which made a most welcome addition to their supplies.

On the evening before their departure, Munro made a feast to both camps. There were three courses of meat: venison, bear, and turkey, but the Seminoles enjoyed most the liberal drinks of sweet black coffee. This coffee might not have been pronounced very good by Billy's mother, for Munro had kept the kettle boiling for some time to give his black drink the required strength. His supply of coffee was running low and he knew that the taste of his guests in regard to coffee was not at all fastidious.

Munro made a speech, and Tillosee made a speech. Munro's party were sorry to leave, and Tillosee's men were sorry to see their friends go.

The happiest man was Tawfo, for it had been agreed that he was to accompany the departing guests. How far he was to go with them and how long he was to remain with them were matters of uncertainty, for the plans of Munro and Hanowa were once more much in debate. That Holtess, if he were still alive and had not, after all, escaped

to Cuba, would attempt to leave Florida at St. Augustine or at the mouth of the St. Johns River, seemed quite probable to Munro, but on the best plan of securing information about him and intercepting him, he was at sea, as he phrased it, but he was getting very impatient to be over on the east side within reach of the Florida East Coast, for which Holtess must be heading.

“I feel that we should either procure a canoe and cross the Everglades,” he had told Hanowa, “or we should keep our horses and head straight northeast for Lake Kissimmee and the headwaters of the St. Johns River.”

Hanowa had not directly refused assent to either plan, but he thought there might be too many Indians on the Kissimmee River and in the lake country to the north, and he said it would be very hard work to cross the Everglades.

“At any rate, let us make a definite plan,” Munro urged, “and do something. This is the month of May, summer is here, the rainy season has begun and there should be plenty of water in the Everglades.”

“Maybe we shall soon find out about the

white man and Sokala and do something," was all he could get out of Hanowa.

"Hang all the Indians!" Munro voiced his impatience to Billy, when the two were taking a last look at the beach and the blue waves of the Gulf. "It is always 'maybe' with them. 'Maybe so, maybe soon.' I do not believe there is an Indian living to whom time means anything. I almost wish, Billy, that you and I had gone into this game by ourselves. We could not have accomplished any less, or know less than we know now."

CHAPTER XXI

MUNRO'S temper improved somewhat, when at last four horses and their riders were facing northeast, but before they were a mile from camp something occurred which again ruffled the old sergeant. Tawfo, who had no horse, had slipped up behind Malota. As soon as Munro became aware of this, he stopped and ordered one of them to get off.

“That's another bit of devilishness of Indian character,” he growled to Bill, as he and the lad were heading the party. “They don't know what it means to be merciful to an animal. We can take turns walking, but I will not have two men ride one of these skinny horses.”

The horses were poor, not, however, on account of maltreatment on the part of Tillosee's men, but because the scrub near their camp furnished very poor pickings for horses.

After several days of slow travel, the party once more made camp on the south

bank of the Caloosahatchee. It was at this camp that Hanowa, who had said but little during the last few days, revealed a definite plan of action to his white friend.

“*Elaha,*” he spoke slowly, “to-morrow at sunrise, Tawfo and I go on a long journey. We go east toward the small lake Hicpochee and the large lake Okeechobee. I think we shall find a Seminole camp. We may be gone five days or six or more, but we shall come back, if the Great Spirit allows us to live; and then I shall tell you where we should go and what we should do.”

“Do not fire your guns in the camp, and do not hunt north of the river,” were the parting words of Hanowa, when he and Tawfo left the camp on foot at sunrise.

For the first few days of Hanowa's absence, the boys were content to remain near camp. They caught as many fish as the camp could use and they even smoked a few, and they amused themselves by throwing sticks and shells at big alligators and catching small alligators with their hands. They even paid some attention to the flowers of the region, of which many kinds were now

in bloom. They made a bet with Munro that they could show him a flower, or perhaps it was a tree, which was growing over a foot a day. When Munro was incredulous, the boys took him to a patch of sandy soil where they set a stake near a plant which Munro recognized as an agave, also called Spanish bayonette, of which several species are quite common on sandy soil in Florida. Munro lost his bet, for when he and the boys visited the agave the next evening the central stalk of the plant had grown two feet in twenty-four hours. Close by stood a dead agave, one that had bloomed last year, which was forty feet high.

On a Friday morning the boys begged Munro to allow them to go on a hunting trip after deer and turkeys.

“Don’t be worried, Father,” Bill said, as they left, “if we are not back before dark. We shall not get lost.”

That hunting trip came very near earning a good switching for Bill, and caused, for Munro, the worst night of the whole trip. It grew dark and midnight came, but no boys had returned. The night was pitch

dark, and because the wind was south, Munro was afraid to fire his gun. So he sat in the dark and was tortured by all the possible horrors of the wilderness. Indians might have captured the lads. A bear, a panther, a rattlesnake, or cotton-mouth snake or an alligator might have killed one or both of the boys, or one of them might have broken a leg.

Just before daybreak Malota came in.

“Where is Bill?” he asked.

“Where is Bill?” Munro repeated with his heart in his mouth. “He has not come in. Where did you leave him?”

“He left me to run and shoot turkey and told me to wait for him,” Malota explained in Seminole and broken English. “I wait long time. I think Bill go home.”

“Why did I ever let you two fellows go?” Munro upbraided himself, while he was getting ready to go in search of the lost boy. “I should have known that you two fool kids would get us all into trouble. Go and get my horse and Sopa. We are going to find him. And a real licking I’ll give him, if I find him alive.”

Just as Munro was tightening the saddle girth, Bill walked into camp. He not only looked scared and tired; his face and his hands were scratched and bruised and covered with blood. Munro forgot about the promised whipping, for Bill looked as if he had been punished enough.

He dropped exhausted at the fireplace. "Why didn't you shoot? You big dummy!" he asked Malota.

"I had no shoots. You had all shoots," Malota defended himself.

"Billy, Billy! You are the dummy!" Munro came in. "Now tell us what happened."

"I ran after a turkey," Bill related, "and told Malota to wait for me. I hit the turkey, but he flew a long way and I saw him drop into a hammock and went in after him. I looked for him a long time, but could not find him. I had set my gun against a tree, and when I went to get it and go back to Malota I could not find it. It had grown dark very fast, and I could not tell which way to go. I called Malota many times, but he did not answer. I was afraid I might

walk into another snake cactus, if I kept walking around and I did not know which way to go to camp. So I lay down under a tree to sleep, but I could not sleep well because I was cold without a blanket.

“After a while I heard some large animal stalk in the brush. It walked kind of softly like a big cat, and I could hear that it was coming nearer. I had only my knife,—no gun and no pistol. I felt my hair rising on my head. I was afraid to holler, and the cat was coming a little nearer all the time.

“I did not know what else to do, so I climbed the tree and found a good branch on which to sit down. Several times I heard the cat prowl in the brush, and then I did not hear it for a long time. And then I guess I must have fallen asleep, for the next thing I knew I was tumbling out of that tree. I guess I let out some awful yells, because I thought the panther was waiting for me and would jump right in to eat me up. I climbed back in the tree as quick as I could, and then crawled away out on a big branch, for I thought the panther was after me. I waited a long time for him and was

ready to jump to the ground and run for the thick brush if I heard him climbing up. But he was gone and I never heard him again. Pretty soon there was a little daylight and I found my gun and came home.

“ I guess I’ll eat some breakfast now and then I’ll take a nap.”

“ You may have some breakfast and you may take a nap, Billy,” Munro told him. “ But hereafter you two scamps come back to camp before dark.”

The fifth and the sixth day passed without a sign of Hanowa and Tawfo. When the seventh day also waned without the return of the two scouts, Munro became very anxious, although he tried to conceal his fears from the boys. The lads had caught a mess of fine bass for supper, but Munro had no appetite, and his thoughts wandered far away to the big lake Okeechobee and to his family in New York State.

“ There they are!” cried Bill, and the two lads dropped their fish and ran to meet the scouts, whose faces the sergeant tried to read for good or bad news.

The men were tired and hungry and

Munro was kept busy frying and baking fish.

“My life!” remarked Bill, “a hungry Indian can eat a lot more than I ever ate at one meal.”

At this remark Hanowa smiled and said, “Little Brother, we have not tasted food since the sun went down last night.”

At last the hungry scouts had eaten enough, and Hanowa began to tell his friends the news.

“We found a large Seminole camp,” he related. “On a hammock in the Cypress Swamp we found it. The war is getting worse. Some soldiers have been killed and some Indians. The white general wants to send the Seminoles away on ships to Arkansas, but the Indians do not wish to go and they do not wish to give up the black men, who have long lived among them. Very soon the Indians will come to the country where we have scouted, and they will hide in the hammocks in the Everglades far to the south, where the soldiers cannot follow them.”

“Have you seen Holtess?” asked Munro.

“ I have not seen him,” Hanowa began to tell, “ but the Indians found him and Sokala in the Cypress Swamp. They held a council and decided to kill the white man in the morning.”

“ Did they do it? ” Bill snapped out wild-eyed.

“ They did not kill him. During the night the white man stole a canoe from the Indians, and he and Sokala pushed into the Everglades to the south, where there are many hammocks in which they can hide. The Indians could not follow, because they had no other canoe, but they found a large yellow dollar on the place where the white man had camped. Now I have told you.”

“ We must follow Holtess and catch him, now that we know he stole the money and know where he has gone,” Munro gave as his opinion.

“ We cannot follow him,” Hanowa replied firmly. “ The saw-grass is too thick and too tall in this part of the Everglades. The Indians seldom cross the Everglades in the north near Lake Okeechobee.”

“ Then we must travel on horseback to

Lake Kissimmee and the headwaters of the St. Johns River," argued Munro, "to head them off, if they ever come that way."

"*Elaha*, I cannot take you and the Little Brother to that country," Hanowa replied. "Too many Indians are there. I could not talk to all of them. Some of them would kill you and they would kill Billy, because you are white men with whom they are at war."

"Then we are stalled,—just plumb stalled," the sergeant admitted gloomily.

"What is 'plumb stalled'?" asked Hanowa.

"It means we are stuck. We are here, but we cannot go anywhere and we can do nothing," explained Munro.

"*Elaha*," the scout replied with a twinkle in his eyes, "we are not plumb and stuck. To-morrow we travel toward the morning sun. On the river Caloosahatchee, a little way above the place where it begins to tumble and sing over the rocks, we shall find a canoe. We paddle it up-stream to the lake Hicpochee, and then we pole it through the saw-grass and the lilies and the lettuce into the big lake Okeechobee. I have finished."

“ Hurrah! ” cried Bill while he began to turn handsprings and somersaults, “ we are going to paddle a canoe. Malota and I can go swimming every day, and we shall go fishing for a big alligator.”

CHAPTER XXII

THE camp near which Bill had fallen out of a tree was located about two miles below the rapids of the Caloosahatchee near Fort Thompson. This fort was built in 1854. At the time of our story, no white men were living on the Caloosahatchee. Hanowa had established the camp some distance below the rapids because the Seminoles used to cross the river near the rapids. Florida rivers generally run with a slow even current, but all the streams draining the Everglades run with a stretch of rapids over the limestone rim which encloses the great shallow basin of the Everglades. Almost anywhere in the Everglades the canoeist can thrust his pole or paddle through a few feet of muck and strike the limestone bottom. Any drainage of the Everglades is apt to make stretches of dry muck which is almost sure to catch fire and leave nothing but a desolation of bare rock.

All the members of the party, including

Tawfo, traveled one day and made camp on the edge of the saw-grass which encircles Lake Hicpochee.

“My friends,” spoke Hanowa, when men and boys were seated around the camp-fire, “to-day we have traveled with our horses for the last time. To-morrow Tawfo must start with the horses for Tallahassee’s camp. He will travel straight through the piny woods and the saw-palmettoes. He will avoid the trails, for if he met any Seminole warriors they would make him give up the horses. Bill gives his horse to Tawfo; *Elaha* gives his horse to Tallahassee, who is getting too old to travel on foot. Malota’s horse he will also give to Tallahassee and the old chief has promised that he will keep Sopa for me until the Great Spirit allows me to return to that part of my country, and if I do not return, Sopa belongs to Tallahassee.”

There were tears in Munro’s eyes when he bade Tawfo farewell, but Bill hid in a thicket and cried, for he had become much attached to Tawfo and to all the horses that had been such faithful servants of the travelers.

When Tawfo and the horses had passed out of sight, each of the four men packed his bundle and Hanowa led the way through the saw-grass to the west end of Lake Hicpochee. The distance was scarcely a mile, but it took them over an hour to reach the lake, where they found a long dugout canoe lying bottom up, on the roots of several large cypress trees.

“Whose is it?” asked Bill.

“It is ours, Little Brother,” replied Hanowa. “I bought it of an Indian. Three fish-hooks, a knife, a handful of beads, three silver dollars, a cupful of powder I gave for it. The Indian had no powder to shoot game. It is a good canoe, and it would have taken us a week to make one out of a cypress log.”

Under the canoe lay two long push-poles. To the lower end of each pole was fastened an iron triangle. The poles were of the same construction as those used at the present time by duck hunters on shallow, reedy lakes in Minnesota, and they are also still in use to this day by the Seminoles in the Everglades.

“But where are the paddles?” asked Bill. “Somebody must have stolen them.”

Hanowa gave Bill a reproving look. “Little Brother,” he spoke quietly, “the Seminoles do not steal, and there has never been a white man on this lake. This canoe was made for traveling in the Everglades, and paddles are useless in the saw-grass. We must now make paddles. Three long paddles we must make, and two short ones for you and Malota.”

Within a few hours, five paddles of dry cypress wood had been rough-hewn with axes and whittled down with sharp hunting-knives. When the travelers began to launch their ship, they discovered that a dugout canoe, even if made out of cypress wood, is a heavy craft. Lake Hicpochee, which is a shallow lake scarcely a mile long, was just the right body of water for the canoeists to get the feel of their craft and their paddles. Once Hanowa steered the canoe around the lake, as if he were looking for the lost opening into the saw-grass. On the second trip around he discarded the paddle, and pole in hand, stood on the stern overhang and

pushed the canoe into a shallow lane that led into the saw-grass from the northeast. Munro stood up in the bow and did his best with the other push pole, while the boys did their utmost, each pushing with a long paddle. Every man's hands were found by the terrible teeth of the saw-grass, but they kept moving, for Hanowa had told them that they were only two or three miles from Okeechobee. After two hours of hard work they emerged from the saw-grass. The vast expanse of Okeechobee was spread out before their eyes, and white men and red men gave shouts of delight. To their right they could plainly see a low wooded island, now known as Observation Island. Toward the north, their eyes could follow the saw-grass shore line until it disappeared in a blue haze, but toward the east and northeast the lake seemed endless like the ocean with long lines of glittering white-caps running before a westerly wind.

But the hard work was not yet all over. It took them fully another hour of pushing, pulling, and wading, through tangles of water-lilies, careless-weeds, and water-let-

tuce, before the heavy dugout floated on the open water of Okeechobee.

The canoe was some twenty feet long over all. It was narrow for its length and cut sharp at the water line of the bow. It was narrowed at the stern and finished with an overhang, on which the helmsman stood when poling through the saw-grass and on which he was seated when he used the paddle in open water.

“We go not far from the saw-grass,” said Hanowa, “where the wind cannot strike us. You all sit still and paddle. Pretty soon you are not afraid.”

Munro and Bill were quite willing to sit still, for they had the feeling that their ship was better adapted for pushing its nose through the saw-grass than for traveling over wide stretches of open water, where wind and waves had a full sweep.

Before long, however, the four navigators felt more confident and they fell into an even stroke by which they made good progress. When after two hours of paddling they came to the mouth of Fish-eating Creek, Hanowa suggested that they push up the

creek a little way and try to find a camping-place.

“If we go on,” he continued, “we may not be able to find a place where we can land when it gets dark.”

To a canoeist accustomed to camp on the lakes and streams of the Northern States and Canada, this first night's camp on Lake Okeechobee would have seemed a miserable place. The ground consisted of soft muck scarcely a few feet above the water. No trees shaded the place, but the campers had to clear the ground of the scrubby growth of papaw and elder, so that they could put up their shelters and build a fire.

Next morning, Hanowa called his friends an hour before sunrise, telling them that they had to pass a long stretch of shore where it would be difficult to find a good camping-place. “The lake is quiet,” he added, “and we wish to pass this part of the big water as fast as we can.”

About the noon hour, they pushed the canoe into the saw-grass so that they might rest a while and eat a little lunch. They drank the water of the lake, which was not

at all bad in taste, although it was brown in color and quite warm. Both in taste and color the water of Okeechobee resembled the water of Lake Drummond in the Great Dismal Swamp of Virginia.

When evening was approaching, Munro and Bill began to be worried about a place to camp, for they had not seen one good and accessible camp-site all day. An hour before sunset, Hanowa solved the problem for them by pushing the canoe into the saw-grass and saying, "To-night we sleep in the boat. I think we are not far from the place where the water from the river Kissimmee runs into the lake, but it is often difficult to find the place because the water comes through the saw-grass. We do not wish to camp near that place because we might meet many Indians traveling south away from the country where the soldiers are."

Munro built a small fire of driftwood and dead stalks of saw-grass on floating muck, and in that way made a kettleful of tea, which every one enjoyed very much after the long and strenuous day.

After supper Hanowa mixed in a frying-

pan some suet of a deer and a mass of powdered charcoal, and melted and stirred the mixture over the fire.

“What is that for?” asked Bill.

“It is black paint,” explained Hanowa, “and if to-morrow or next day I tell you to use it, you must use it as I tell you. You must do as Malota does, when I tell him to do something, and you must not ask this, and that, and something else.”

This information was not at all satisfying to Bill, but realizing that Hanowa did not wish to tell any more, he kept still.

After most of the goods and utensils had been deposited on a pile of cut saw-grass each man arranged his bed. Hanowa lay down with his head next the stern, while Munro's head rested close up against the bow. Bill rolled up a coat for a pillow next to his father's feet, and Malota's head rested next to Hanowa's feet. The night was warm, so each man folded a blanket under him and rolled himself into another.

“Oh, this is not half bad,” Bill admitted, when he had stretched out. “I never thought this old dugout was big enough for

all of us to sleep in. If Malota does not start kicking me, I shall sleep all right.

“But what are we going to do if it rains?”

“If it rains,” Hanowa replied dryly, “we shall all get wet. When it stops raining we shall wring the water out of our blankets and dip it out of our canoe. Then we shall paddle away and let the sun make us and our blankets dry again.”

“Wouldn't that be an awful mess?” Bill replied.

“It would be a mess, Billy,” his father agreed. “But now you had better keep still and go to sleep.”

CHAPTER XXIII

How close the sleepers in the dugout came to having the mess of soaked blankets and enough water in the boat for wading, Bill learned next day. Before midnight a heavy shower with much thunder and lightning passed over the lake south of them, but neither Bill nor Malota awoke until Hanowa called them at dawn of day.

“We must be ready to travel now,” he told his friends, “and eat our breakfast in the boat. Yesterday, just before it grew dark, I saw smoke north of us. That means some Indians are coming down the KISSIMMEE, and we do not wish to meet them if we can help it.”

From time to time Hanowa stood up in the bottom of the stern to look and listen. They might have been traveling an hour and the sun was just rising over the brush and timber now barely visible on the eastern shore, when Hanowa sat down quickly and whispered, “Indians! White men, put on

black paint! Rub it all over face and hair, and over hands and arms. Do it quick, Billy, and make no talk.

“If the Indians see white men in our canoe they will come and ask many questions, and maybe they will want to kill you, because some of their men were killed in the battles with the soldiers. If they see black men, they will not care, because black men have lived with the Seminoles for many years. Some of the black men are the slaves of the Indians, but many of them are free men and the Indians treat them as friends.”

By this time Hanowa had headed the canoe for the open lake, as if he were going straight to the sandy beach on the northeast shore of the lake. It was not long before seven canoes pushed out of the saw-grass. As soon as the occupants saw Hanowa's canoe, they called and motioned to him to come nearer, but Hanowa stood up in the stern and told them that he was going to the next river to catch fish and otters.

“Black men, you keep paddling slowly,” he remarked in a low voice. “Malota, you take in your paddle and sit still.”

Then he told the Indians that the lake was getting rough, which was true. He was afraid, he added, his canoe would become wind-bound, if he stopped to visit.

Although the canoes were all heavily loaded with women and children, two young men, who were managing the first canoe, started to follow Hanowa, but a woman in the canoe scolded them sharply, saying, "Turn back, you young fools! You will drown us all!" and the two young men gave up following Hanowa.

Glad indeed were Munro and Bill to see the distance between their canoe and those of the Indians steadily increase. However, a new fear soon took possession of them. Wind and waves were increasing apace, and the travelers were now so far out on the open lake that they had no longer a choice of routes. The west, east, and north shores were about equally distant. Moreover, to travel east or west with the waves broadside on would have been exceedingly dangerous with the long narrow dugout. So they all plied their paddles with energy and the two white men kept longing eyes on a stand of

bald cypress straight ahead and wondered how far they were away and how long it would take to reach them. For some time the spray of the waves had dashed over the stern, but wind and waves seemed to grow in violence from one minute to another and splashes of water now began to slop over the stern.

“Billy, sit on the bottom,” commanded the steersman. “Keep hands off sides and sit still. Malota, you kneel on the bottom and bail.”

For some time Malota kept the water down, while Hanowa and Munro fairly made the craft fly before the wind, while not a word was spoken. Then the water began to gain on Malota, and Bill was sitting like a statue in half a foot of water.

“Bill, help bail!” Hanowa spoke. “Be careful. Don’t lean over sides. Two miles more.”

The two lads kept the dugout from being swamped and in ten minutes more Hanowa steered the canoe into the mouth of a stream between two walls of cypress-trees while flakes of spume were flying over his head.

And just as they entered the mouth of the creek, a big wave fairly jumped aboard, sousing Bill and Malota and half-filling the dugout.

The old sergeant gave a shout. "Come on, ye rollers! Come on! Steer her around the bend, Hanowa! Thank God, we made it."

"Bad wind. Bad waves. Bad lake! Dugout good ship in saw-grass, no good riding waves," Hanowa muttered in Seminole and pushed the dugout ashore on a spot which looked as if it might be almost large enough for a camp-site.

Blankets were wrung out and hung on a pole to dry, goods and provisions were laid out on roots and logs to dry, and the canoe was turned over. On the advice of Hanowa everybody fell to work with ax or hatchet cutting poles and brush to raise the floor of their camp-site about a foot off the ground. The wind was making the creek flow back into the forest, and Hanowa expected the water to rise during the night.

The scene was one of the most impressive the campers had yet met on their whole long

journey. Gigantic cypress-trees, a hundred and fifty feet high, rose from the edge of the water and formed a wall of solid forest on either side of the creek, and the big trees were draped from top to bottom with long strands of Spanish moss.

The white plumage of great numbers of Florida herons, egrets, and ibises stood out in striking contrast to the somber gray and the dense green of the forest; but the aningas, called snake-birds from their long necks, added to the uncanny wildness of the primeval forest.

Although every one was tired after the hard work and excitement of the day, Bill could not go to sleep for some time that night. The moon flooding the creek with its yellow light could only send stray beams through the foliage of cypress, maple and water oak. It did not seem to be the soft friendly Southern moon, but a kind of supernatural searchlight, which added only to the spookiness of the impenetrable forest. The wind rushed with a dull moaning sound through the tree tops, and in the distance roared the waves as they touched the bottom

of the shallow lake and then rolled over and over like waves on an ocean beach. And, as if all this were not enough to make a man's heart quake and feel its human insignificance, great owls hooted to one another, and herds of bull alligators roared and bellowed as if they meant to drown the roar of storm and waves.

Bill again took an ax with him into the tent. "If one of them pokes his nose in here," he vowed, "I am going to split his head for him. Father, if we stay here long enough, I am going to catch one of those big brutes. Hanowa has shown me how to make an alligator hook, and I am going to make one to-morrow."

It turned out that Bill had plenty of time to catch more than one alligator, for the on-shore wind lasted several days, keeping the travelers wind-bound in the forest, and truly thankful they were that the storm had not caught them on the *Pah-hay-o-kee*, the big grass-water of the Everglades.

Bill made his alligator hook the next day, but Hanowa would not let him use it until the creek again flowed into the lake, for the

storm was still driving the water up-stream. When the wind had subsided Hanowa needed a day or two more to catch a few otters and prepare their skins, which he needed to make leggings for himself and Malota.

At last the day came, when Bill and Malota were to make an attempt to catch an alligator. The boys brought out the stout hook of oak which Bill had made. The thing did not look like a hook at all. It was really a stick about six or seven inches long, sharply pointed at both ends. To the middle of the stick the lads attached a stout wire about six feet long, and the hook was carefully concealed lengthwise in a large fish. The lads had had plenty of time to locate a crawl, which means a place where an alligator is in the habit of coming out of the water to sun himself. Near this place the boys put out their bait by hanging it over a forked stick about two feet above the water. To the wire they attached a strong rope, and the farther end of the rope they tied securely to a large cypress bough, which would yield to a strong pull.

“Where in the world, Bill, did you get the wire and the rope?” asked Munro.

“The hostler at Fort Brooke gave them to me, Father. I told him I was surely going to catch some alligators on this trip.”

“Well, Bill, I certainly think you ought to catch an alligator, if you have been planning for it so long ahead.”

The alligators, however, were evidently not of the same opinion. For two hours, the boys, concealed behind a big cypress, watched their bait until even the patient Malota grew tired of waiting and suggested that he felt it was time for supper.

“They have all gone away. We scared them,” he remarked.

But next morning, when the lads waded up to the crawl, Munro heard at first some wild yells and then Bill’s voice calling, “Come on, Father! Come quick!”

When Munro arrived the boys were tugging hard at the line, which was badly twisted and snarled, and if it had been an ordinary washline it would have been broken, but Bill’s wire and horse rope had been too much for the alligator.

The big saurian had tired himself by pulling and twisting on the line for hours and was quite passive, when with Hanowa's help the fierce-looking snout was raised above the wire, but no sooner did he feel bottom than he began to thrash about like a mad dragon.

"Don't go near him," Hanowa cautioned. "If he hits you a whack with his tail, you are dead boys!"

Munro watched his chance and ended the fury of the giant reptile by a bullet sent into the eye. The boys pulled him out of the creek into shallow water. The creek had no real bank; it simply spilled over into the forest. Hanowa told the boys to leave the beast until morning.

"The 'gator is not really dead now," he explained, "and if he strikes you or bites you, you die."

In the morning the giant bull, that measured twelve feet, was quite dead. The boys cut off the head to keep the teeth as trophies, and towed the body out into the lake for birds and fish to feed on, because the meat of a big old 'gator, Hanowa said, was too strong for people to eat.

CHAPTER XXIV

ALL hands were glad when the time came to leave the camp on Taylor's Creek. That is the name by which the stream, which meanders into Lake Okeechobee at its most northern point, is now known. Hanowa called it Alligator Creek, although he was not sure that the Indians knew it by that name. The campers had followed its branches up for several miles, but had found no place to land, and no real banks or shore. Everywhere the water spread into the endless primeval forest, while water-lettuce and other floating vegetation made canoe travel difficult and toilsome.

The late Professor Angelo Heilprin, who explored certain parts of Florida in 1886, including the Caloosahatchee, Lake Okeechobee, and Taylor's Creek gives the following account of this part of the great Okeechobee wilderness:

“During my first ascent of the stream, which probably consumed in the neighbor-

hood of five hours, I must have seen or heard in my immediate proximity between fifty and seventy-five alligators, and not improbably many more. They appear especially plentiful at about the middle of the day, when the elevated temperature calls them from their aqueous homes. They delight in the masses of floating vegetation that hang matted together on the shore line, whence they can readily see their prey without discovering their own presence.

“ Nowhere along that portion of the creek explored by us did we find a true bank or shore, the water on either side spilling off into the vast expanse of forest-swamp, principally cypress, which here opens out from the lake. The heaviest timber growth is along the eastern tributaries and immediately about the mouth of the creek, where the parallel walls of majestic cypresses, draped from top to bottom in their funereal hangings of Spanish moss, and towering to a nearly uniform height of 125–150 feet, exhibit to surprising advantage the sylvan wonders of this primeval solitude. It would be vain to attempt to depict by word the solemn grandeur of these untrodden wilds, the dark recesses, almost untouched by the light of day, that peer forbiddingly into a wealth of boundless green—or to convey to the mind a true conception of the exuberance of vegetable life that is here

presented. At no time before our visit had I been so thoroughly impressed with the wild grandeur of an untrodden wilderness—nowhere where I so keenly appreciated the insignificance of my own humble being in the sea of life by which I was surrounded.”

The travelers felt as if they were escaping from a dragon-infested forest when at last they emerged through the gap in the giant cypress-trees and saw once more before them the vast expanse of Okeechobee quiet and smiling in the morning sun. With light hearts they pointed the canoe to the southeast, to the only beach of the great lake. Like a long white ribbon, they could see it stretched out only six or seven miles away.

“May we take a swim? May we take a swim?” the two boys begged, as soon as the canoe ground its bow into the sand. Real sand it was, clean sand. It seemed as if they had arrived in a wonderland of sunshine, after spending a long, long time in that haunting wilderness of Mesozoic reptiles and bewitched forests, where the trees

grew from strange, fantastic roots directly out of the water.

“How did these trees get started? Were they ever little baby trees?” Bill had asked, but neither Hanowa nor Munro could answer the lad’s question.

“Boys, you may take a swim, as long a swim as you like. But do not stay in so long that you get sunburnt.”

“If you get sunburnt,” Hanowa told them, “you will be very unhappy, and you will not sleep until you catch a big rattlesnake and rub his oil on your skin. But you may swim and yell and stand on your heads, for there are no alligators and no sharks on this beach, and the water is shallow a long way out.”

And the boys swam and played and gambled like dolphins, until Munro ordered them to come out and put their clothes on, because he and Hanowa would not have time to make rattlesnake oil for them.

No sooner had they arrived at the campsite than they began to clamor for dinner, and were very impatient when Munro told them that the beans were not quite done.

When at last Munro dished out bean soup and venison, the lads ate beans and venison, and more beans and venison until Munro took their dishes away and said: "You have eaten enough, boys. I have known fellows to get awfully sick from eating too many beans. If you get sick, Hanowa will make medicine for you, and I will make you take it."

To this Hanowa nodded assent, with his peculiar subdued smile, saying, "Yes, Seminole medicine is pretty bad,—very bad for a white boy."

Not long after dinner the two swimmers felt a heavy drowsiness steal over them, and lying down in the shade of a spreading oak, they were soon fast asleep. How long they slept they never knew, but when they woke up it was raining cats and dogs, as boys say nowadays, for the rainy season had now begun in earnest. And in the tent sat Munro and Hanowa holding their sides at the contortions and grimaces of the boys who groaned and talked in their sleep before they were sufficiently awake to make a dash for the tent.

CHAPTER XXV

THERE were several reasons why the travelers remained a full week in the camp near the beach. Their blankets, clothing, and shoes needed a thorough drying, because in the flooded forest at Taylor's Creek everything had become damp, and mould had begun to cover all things made of leather. Their powder also needed drying, and they used the utmost care not to have any sand mixed with the powder, for Munro knew only too well that an accidental blow on powder mixed with sand might cause an explosion. Their clothing and shoes were badly in need of repairs, for they were soon to pass on foot through a country where even the Indians would have to wear moccasins and leggings. The tent needed a few patches, for it rained now almost every day. A supply of meat, for at least a few days ahead, was also very desirable if they were not to depend entirely on such chance game as they might be able to secure on their journey. Munro and Bill never took kindly

to a diet of turtles and young alligators, nor did they wish to take a chance on going without food for a day or two, which, however, was something not at all unusual among American Indians everywhere.

And men and boys were in need of rest and sunshine and the fresh breeze that blew over Lake Okeechobee. So much were the boys in love with a camp near a beach, where they could go swimming every day without fear of alligators, sharks or Indians, that Bill wished that they could let Holtess and Sokala go, and camp near the beach all summer.

All too soon the day came, when Munro and Bill had to strike their small tent, and Hanowa and Malota had to desert their little bark-covered house, which had shed the heaviest showers, and when the canoe had to be left behind.

Bill and Malota soon discovered that the party had now entered upon the hardest part of their journey. Every man carried a load. The marching over wet ground through saw-palmetto or other thorny and tangled growth was just plain hard work.

Almost every day it rained for an hour or two, and although they usually managed to set up the tent or hastily build a shelter of palm leaves, it was often difficult to find a dry place for a camp, and quite often they marched for hours at a time through water half a foot or a foot deep.

On some days they traveled only ten miles, while on other days they covered as much as fifteen. Their general direction was north, and Hanowa explained that they would have to keep going this way for about a hundred miles until they struck the river *Hilaka*, now known as St. Johns, the longest river of Florida.

The days were now decidedly warm, but where the country was open there was always a breeze, sometimes from the east and sometimes from the west, for no place in Florida is more than sixty miles from the ocean.

Munro was anxious to travel as fast as possible, for he could not rid himself of the fear that Holtess might reach St. Augustine or Jacksonville ahead of them and escape. Hanowa led his friends with great

caution to avoid meeting large bodies of Seminole warriors. When a camp-site had been selected for the night, he climbed a tree to scan the country for signs of Indian camps, and on two evenings when he saw smoke in the distance, he would not allow a camp-fire to be built, and every camper knows that a camp without a fire is about as cheerful as a camp without water.

However, although the four men traveled with extreme caution and did all their hunting with bow and arrows, they nevertheless fell in with a small party of young Seminole warriors, who were not at all in a friendly mood. They wanted to see what the white man and his companions had in their packs. They wanted presents, and they were much in want of powder and lead. Unless their demands were complied with, they threatened to make prisoners of the two white men, or "Maybe we killum," their leader asserted.

To these men Hanowa showed a firmness and boldness which made Munro realize that Hanowa was not only an excellent scout and guide, but a real man in a grave emergency.

“These white men are my brothers,” he told the warriors. “*Elaha* is not fighting our people, but he has been in many battles. You cannot make him and his son prisoners, for they will fight, and they have better guns than you have, and I shall fight on their side. It may be you can kill us, but if you do, all of you will go with us to the land of spirits. I am going to take these men to St. Augustine. You know that our great chief Osceola wants no injury done to harmless people. If you are men, sit down and be friends; but if you wish to fight we are ready, and we have enough bullets in our guns and pistols to kill every man of you. I have spoken.”

The Seminoles sat down, Hanowa made each a gift of tobacco, while Munro and Bill stood by their guns with their pistols partly drawn out of the holsters.

“Now, go on your way,” Hanowa spoke, when each man had received his gift. “Any man that tries to follow us or spy on us, will be a dead man. Our guns can shoot one bullet through two men.”

The young men did as they had been

ordered, and Hanowa and Munro stood at their guns until the last man was out of sight.

Then the four men marched briskly northward, so as not to give the Seminoles a chance to circle around and attack them from ambush. They also took the precaution of not marching in single file, but they spread out so that each man made as little of a trail as possible.

They marched until dark and made their camp on an open prairie in a clump of bushes without building a fire and without setting up a tent.

“The Seminoles will not attack us here during the night,” Hanowa told his friends, “because they believe that a man who is killed at night will have to live in darkness in the other world. If they have seen us make camp, they may attack us early in the morning. We must now lay down our packs as if we would mark a square place, and near our packs we must throw up some dirt. Then if we have to fight, each man can lie down behind a little wall and the Indians cannot hit us, but we shall quickly

kill every man who shows his head above the grass.”

The two boys, after they had helped to build the little fort, rolled up in their blankets, and being very tired after the hard work and the excitement of the day, they were soon fast asleep.

For Hanowa and Munro there was no sleep. At the first sign of dawn they called the boys. “Take your places and be ready to fight,” Munro told them. “Now is the time.”

A bluejay came out of the woods, perched for a second on a prickly ash over Munro’s head, and returned to the woods with a frightened scream. “That pesky jaybird!” muttered Munro. “There he goes and tells everybody where we are.”

For ten or fifteen minutes every man peered sharply over his pack, with his gun ready cocked. Then a deer came leisurely out of the timber, nibbled a bite of food now and then and passed within twenty yards of the improvised fort.

“Thank God! We are safe,” exclaimed Munro, relieving the tension. “Now let us

get away from here." And every man shouldered his pack, and for two miles the party marched briskly eastward, while not a word was spoken.

At the end of two miles, they again turned north and traveled until the day grew hot. Then they stopped to eat and rest for several hours in the shade of scrubby pines. Munro and Hanowa lay down to sleep while the boys took turns as camp sentinels.

They broke camp early next morning and made good time through fairly open piny woods. All were in high spirits after their escape from serious danger, and Hanowa said they were not very many miles from a lake, where they would stop for a good rest, and perhaps, he said, they might find a canoe or they might make one. For out of this lake ran the river *Hilaka*, large enough for a canoe. At this news Bill would have let out a yell, if all noise had not been strictly forbidden. Bill was a stout boy, and marching in hot summer days, and at times marching in the rain, when the packs grew heavy, was not Bill's favorite way of traveling.

This happy march came to a sudden end, when without warning they almost walked into the midst of a dozen Seminole warriors, mostly young men, who had been lying down for a rest in a grove of large pines. These warriors demanded the surrender of the two white men. They had lost a warrior in a skirmish with the soldiers and they were going to kill and scalp the white man and make the boy their prisoner. Hanowa with his party had quickly backed away from the Seminoles and asked them to let their leader come over for a talk. But the fellows were in an ugly mood. They wanted no talk. They wanted the two white men or they would fight.

“Take trees!” Hanowa spoke quietly to his party. “I think we fight here.”

The four men slowly receded still farther from the angry Seminoles, keeping their faces toward the warriors, while Hanowa continued to argue with them, and each of the four men held his gun in readiness.

“Throw packs!” Hanowa ordered in a low voice, when the four men had reached the place to which Hanowa had been retreat-

ing. Hanowa and Malota dropped their packs close to a large tree, one pack on each side. Munro and Bill dropped their packs at another big tree. It was all done before the Seminoles realized that these four men actually meant to put up a fight against three times their own number.

But now they gave a yell of rage, followed by the piercing Seminole war-whoop: “*Yo-ho-eehee, yo-ho-eehee!*”

If the Seminoles had thought that their yells would cause the hearts of their antagonists to faint, they were much in error, for Bill and his father repeated their challenge and dared the Indians to come on. But Hanowa made a last attempt to prevent bloodshed.

“Do not fight, brothers,” he called to the warriors in Seminole. “My white brothers do not wish to fight. They only wish to leave our country in peace. We will make you presents, but our guns are bad medicine!”

The answer to his pleading was a bullet that peeled a piece of bark off his tree, and another ball struck Munro’s pack with a dull

thud. "I am mighty glad Hanowa drilled us yesterday," whispered Bill.

"It is a fight," spoke Hanowa. "If they get us, they will kill us all."

The Indians were gradually coming closer, but Hanowa had chosen a position where the Indians could neither surround nor flank the four men, who thus far had not fired a shot.

"Get ready to fire," Munro called, "and shoot to kill! We are lost if we give them a chance to rush us." And with those words he fired the first shot.

One Seminole uttered a yell of rage or pain and staggered back into some bushes. But now Munro saw two men crawl toward the left.

"Here, Bill, quick," he whispered. "Load my rifle and hand me your shotgun."

A well-aimed load of buckshot brought a cry of pain or surprise, Munro did not know which, from the two men who jumped up and rushed back for cover as fast as they could go. Munro could have dropped both of them dead with the other load of buck-

shot, but he was glad to let them run. However, he told Bill to fire his pistol with as good an aim as possible, "just to show the rascals that we are never a minute without a loaded gun."

Apparently the Seminoles were no longer in the mood even to think of rushing the enemy. Their shots came from a greater distance and went quite wild.

"You are rotten shooters!" Bill yelled. "Come on! Give Father a peep! He will show you how to shoot!"

And one of the Indians very soon did give Father more than a peep. The fellow had climbed an oak, and if he got up ten feet higher the packs would no longer offer any protection to Bill and his father. "I have to bring that fellow down," Munro whispered. "Hand me the rifle, Bill!"

Some dark body now shut off a speck of light that had been visible through the tree against the western sky, where the sun was just setting. Munro took careful aim, pointing his gun through a slit between the tree and the pack. At the sound of the shot a heavy body either dropped or jumped to

the ground, but there was no call or outcry, telling that a man was hit.

“*Elaha*, I think you killed him,” Hanowa spoke.

“I had to do it,” Munro replied. “That fellow was getting dangerous, and he was a pretty good shot.”

That was the last shot fired in the skirmish. None of Munro’s party had been wounded. Hanowa and Malota had not fired a shot, but the man in the tree had fired two balls that came uncomfortably close to Bill and his father.

Very soon darkness fell, and although Bill and Munro strained their ears, they could not be certain that they had detected any movement of the enemy. Hanowa, however, assured them that the Seminoles would not think of renewing the fight.

“They have had enough fighting,” he assured Munro. “You wounded some of them, and I think one man is dead, maybe two. The others are now carrying away the dead and wounded, for Indians never leave dead or wounded men. They always take them along. We must now take up our

packs and travel toward the lake of which I told you."

It was the first all-night march Bill had ever experienced. Sometimes the going was fairly open, but there were also stretches of brush and ugly saw-palmetto, and several miles of ground covered with water. The night grew very dark and it rained enough to wet the brush, which caused every man to be soaking wet up to his hips.

After midnight the sky cleared, and about an hour before daybreak Hanowa stopped and said, "We are now only a little way from the lake. We make camp here. We build a little fire and eat food. *Elaha*, you and the boys stay here and sleep. When you wake up, you can build another little fire. No Indians will come here, if you do not make a smoke that rises above the trees. When I have eaten, I go away to scout, and I come back before the sun goes down."

CHAPTER XXVI

HANOWA returned before sunset as he had promised, and he brought with him some news,—indeed, he brought almost too much news. He had found, as he had expected, a camp of his friends, but only women and children were living in the camp. The men had all been away for months. The old woman who acted as the ruler of the camp, had obstinately refused to sell him a canoe. She had said they had only two and they needed them both, and her son would be angry if she sold his canoe.

“ I was afraid that it would be difficult to buy a canoe,” Hanowa continued, “ so I had taken with me a few things of which the Seminole women are very fond.

“ ‘ Mother,’ I spoke to her, ‘ my friends and I must have a canoe. We have no time to make one. I cannot steal it, so you must sell it to me. I have here a bagful of beads. Red and blue they are, and I give them to you for the canoe.’

“ ‘It is not enough,’ she replied. ‘My daughter needs more beads. The string must wind around her neck many times.’

“ ‘Mother,’ I told her, ‘we have come to you over a very long trail. We have come from Fort Brooke. We have seen the Big Cypress Swamp and the Everglades. We have crossed many rivers. We have crossed the great lake Okeechobee, where we had to leave our canoe under the trees near the sand beach. Now our feet are sore and bleeding from our long march through the saw-palmetto, over rocks and through much water. I also give you one blue and one green kerchief. We have no more.’

“ The woman looked at the kerchiefs. She took them in her hands and she said, ‘Beautiful! Beautiful! Take the canoe. Take it away early at sunrise, before my son returns. When he sees the red and the blue cloth on his old mother he will forget that he was angry.’ ”

But Hanowa had more news. The women had seen Holtess and Sokala. Two days before, they had been at the camp. The white man looked very haggard. His tent

had many holes, and he had no net to protect him against mosquitoes, which like a white man much better than an Indian. One silver dollar the white man had given to the women, and Sokala had told them that the white man was rich. Many white dollars he had, and many big yellow ones.

At this news, Munro, who had always worried at the leisurely way in which Hanowa had conducted their journey, became much excited.

“Hanowa,” he exclaimed, “I always felt it in my bones that we were traveling too slow. He has given us the slip; he is gone.”

The Seminole seemed to ignore the sting in Munro's words, when he replied quietly, “*Elaha*, your bones told you wrong. He is on the river *Hilaka*, but he is not gone. He cannot travel as fast as we can go. What could we do with the bad white man if we had already caught him? We would have to kill him, or he would run away from us and come back to kill us. Let him go ahead. Maybe we shall catch him at St. Augustine or at some other place.”

“Yes, maybe we shall catch him on a big

ship on the ocean," Munro replied, not at all convinced that his plans had not miscarried.

"*Elaha*," retorted Hanowa with a touch of injury, "if you will be angry, then Malota and I can return to Fort Brooke, and you and boy Billy can travel as fast as you like. You cannot lose your way on the river *Hilaka*."

After this reproof, Munro apologized to his friend, and never again forgot that there could be no absolute certainty about the outcome of the venture in which they had engaged. What, indeed, could they do with Holtess, if they had caught him at this time and place?

A whole book might be written about the two-hundred-mile trip down the St. Johns from Lake Poinsett to a point opposite St. Augustine; but the four men in the canoe had now very little time to enjoy the beauties and marvels of trees, birds, and flowers, which all reminded them much of their camps on the Caloosahatchee. However, it was now the month of June, and the days were hot, although not unbearably hot, be-

cause refreshing showers cooled the atmosphere almost daily, and several times the party traveled all night under the soft Southern moon, which to this day makes a night trip on the St. Johns an event that is never forgotten.

The party lived now almost entirely on fish and water fowl, both of which were incredibly abundant. Once they secured a kettleful of wild honey, not indeed without being badly stung. Wild honey, baked fish, the last of the beans, the last handful of coffee, long hoarded, and wild oranges, furnished them the last Sunday dinner on the St. Johns.

Any fish that took the hook was a good fish, be it called pike, bass, sucker, trout, or gar; the travelers had no time to be fastidious, and long hours of paddling gave them a keen appetite.

At some camping-places the mosquitoes were quite troublesome, but Munro, having learned from previous sad experience, had provided himself with mosquito-netting and cheesecloth to keep any insect pests out of his tent. The two Indians suffered less

from the attacks of mosquitoes, the worst of all insect pests. When the little brutes were too thick, the two Indians built a smudge or pulled a blanket over their heads in spite of the warm night. Why houses and rooms in the South were not screened against flies and mosquitoes, Munro could never understand.

They found the river alive with alligators, although the creatures did not exist in such abundance and did not cause them the annoyance which the English naturalist, William Bartram, reports during 1773 from a region of the St. Johns River opposite the present town of New Smyrna. We shall let the explorer tell his story in his own words:

“The evening was temperately cool and calm. The crocodiles began to roar and appear in uncommon numbers along the shores and in the river. I fixed my camp in an open plain, near the utmost projection of the promontory, under the shelter of a large live oak, which stood on the highest part of the ground, and but a few yards from my boat. From this open, high situation, I had a free prospect of the river, which was a matter of no trivial consideration to me, having good reason to dread the subtle attacks of the alli-

gators, who were crowding about my harbour.”

From his harbor, as he calls the place, Bartram rowed to a lagoon to catch a few bass for his supper and breakfast. He left his gun in camp for fear of dropping it overboard, but he provided himself with a club. In the lagoon he witnessed a fight between two large alligators, and then his story continues as follows:

“ My apprehensions were highly alarmed after being a spectator of so dreadful a battle. It was obvious that every delay would but tend to increase my dangers and difficulties, as the sun was near setting, and the alligators gathered around my harbour from all quarters. From these considerations I concluded to be expeditious in my trip to the lagoon, in order to take some fish. Not thinking it prudent to take my fusee with me, lest I might lose it overboard in case of a battle, which I had every reason to dread before my return, I therefore furnished myself with a club for my defense, went on board, and penetrating the first line of those which surrounded my harbour, they gave way; but being pursued by several very large ones, I kept strictly on the watch, and

paddled with all my might towards the entrance of the lagoon, hoping to be sheltered there from the multitude of my assailants; but ere I had half-way reached the place, I was attacked on all sides, several endeavoring to upset the canoe. My situation now became precarious to the last degree; two very large ones attacked me closely at the same instant, rushing up with their heads and part of their bodies above the water, roaring terribly and belching floods of water over me. They struck their jaws together so close to my ears, as almost to stun me, and I expected every moment to be dragged out of the boat and instantly devoured. But I applied my weapons so effectually about me, though at random, that I was so successful as to beat them off a little; when, finding that they designed to renew the battle, I made for the shore, as the only means left me for my preservation; for, by keeping close to it, I should have my enemies on one side of me only, whereas I was before surrounded by them; and there was a probability, if pushed to the last extremity, of saving myself by jumping out of the canoe on shore, as it is easy to outwalk them on land, although comparatively as swift as lightning in the water. I found this last expedient alone could fully answer my expectations, for as soon as I gained the shore, they drew off and kept aloof.

“ I accordingly proceeded, and made good my entrance into the lagoon, though not without opposition from the alligators, who formed a line across the entrance, but did not pursue me into it, nor was I molested by any there, though there were some very large ones in a cove at the upper end. I soon caught more trout than I had present occasion for, and the air was too hot and sultry to admit of their being kept for many hours, even though salted or barbecued. I now prepared for my return to camp, which I succeeded in with but little trouble, by keeping close to the shore; yet I was opposed upon reëntering the river out of the lagoon, and pursued near to my landing (though not closely attacked), particularly by an old daring one, about twelve feet in length, who kept close after me; and when I stepped on shore and turned about, in order to draw up my canoe, he rushed up near my feet, and lay there for some time, looking me in the face, his head and shoulders out of water. I resolved he should pay for his temerity, and having a heavy load in my fusee, I ran to my camp, and returning with my piece, found him with his foot on the gunwale of the boat, in search of fish. On my coming up he withdrew sullenly and slowly into the water, but soon returned and placed himself in his former position, looking at me, and seeming neither fearful nor

any way disturbed. I soon dispatched him by lodging the contents of my gun in his head, and then proceeded to cleanse and prepare my fish for supper; and accordingly took them out of the boat, laid them down on the land close to the water, and began to scale them; when, raising my head, I saw before me, through the clear water, the head and shoulders of a very large alligator, moving slowly towards me. I instantly stepped back, when, with a sweep of his tail, he brushed off several of my fish. It was certainly most providential that I looked up at that instant, as the monster would probably, in less than a minute, have seized and dragged me into the river. This incredible boldness of the animal disturbed me greatly, supposing there could now be no reasonable safety for me during the night, but by keeping continually on the watch: I therefore, as soon as I had prepared the fish, proceeded to secure myself and effects in the best manner I could. In the first place, I hauled my bark upon the shore, almost clear out of the water, to prevent their oversetting or sinking her; after this, every moveable was taken out and carried to my camp which was but a few yards off; then ranging some dry wood in such order as was the most convenient, I cleared the ground round about it, that there might be no impediment in my way, in case of an attack in the night, either from

the water or the land; for I discovered by this time, that this small isthmus, from its remote situation and fruitfulness, was resorted to by bears and wolves.

“ It was by this time dusk, and the alligators had nearly ceased their roar, when I was again alarmed by a tumultuous noise that seemed to be in my harbour, and therefore engaged my immediate attention. Returning to my camp, I found it undisturbed, and then continued on to the extreme point of the promontory, where I saw a scene, new and surprising, which at first threw my senses into such a tumult, that it was some time before I could comprehend what was the matter; however, I soon accounted for the prodigious assemblage of crocodiles at this place, which exceeded every thing of the kind I had ever heard of.

“ How shall I express myself so as to convey an adequate idea of it to the reader, and at the same time avoid raising suspicions of my veracity. Should I say, that the river (in this place) from shore to shore, and perhaps near half a mile above and below me, appeared to be one solid bank of fish, of various kinds, pushing through this narrow pass of St. Juan's into the little lake, on their return down the river, and that the alligators were in such incredible numbers, and so close together from shore to shore, that it would have been easy to have walked

across on their heads, had the animals been harmless? ”

Thus runs, with some omissions, the story of William Bartram. The account bears all the marks of truthfulness, although it sounds almost incredible. At the present time one is not likely to see more than two or three small alligators on the long boat trip on the St. Johns from Jacksonville to Sanborn. The curse that Bill Munro wished upon them has indeed fallen upon the alligators.

It took Hanowa and his party five days to make the journey from Lake Poinsett to a point opposite St. Augustine.

By keeping a careful lookout ahead, they avoided meeting several small parties of Seminoles, and Munro and Bill resorted once more to the ruse of making themselves look like black men, when they had to pass a large party of Seminole warriors. By keeping close to the other shore, where the river was half a mile wide and pretending that they were trying to flush some ducks out of the rushes, they passed the warriors without being molested or even suspected.

When they had selected a well-concealed camp-site opposite St. Augustine, it became the duty of Munro and Bill to go on a scouting trip to the old town, about fifteen miles to the east, for Hanowa was too cautious to venture into the white man's town, nor would he allow Malota to go.

The fact that they had seen no sign of Holtess and Sokala gave rise to much uneasiness and to several puzzling questions. Could they have passed the fugitives? The St. Johns is a wide, winding river; it flows through several lakes, and to look for two men, who did not wish to be seen, would have been like looking for Bill's lost marble in the Everglades. Munro and Hanowa had not attempted it. They felt that they had been lucky not to fall into the hands of the Seminole warriors. Perhaps Holtess and Sokala had been captured by the warriors. If they had made the journey safely they could not be far ahead of their pursuers. In fact, it seemed quite possible that Munro and Bill would meet them on the streets or in the stores of St. Augustine.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE trip from the St. Johns River to St. Augustine meant a march of about eighteen miles, and it seemed strange to both Bill and his father to be walking on a fairly plain trail to a white man's town, although Han-owa had cautioned them to be on the lookout against lurking Seminole warriors.

Father and son marched briskly as if they were going to an old-time Fourth of July celebration and were afraid that they might miss a part of the doings, the sack races, spoon races, or even the big dinner.

They reached St. Augustine long before the sun indicated noon. What a strange, fascinating thing to see houses, streets, gardens, and white people! Their first visit was to the post-office to mail letters to Bill's mother. It was at the post-office that they had their first surprise. In a conspicuous place of the building, where every caller could read it, hung the poster Major Belton had promised to send to St. Augustine.

There was a good description of Holtess and Sokala. And the reward offered for their capture, "dead or alive" it said, was \$500 for the white man and \$200 for the Indian.

The post-office was in a store and the storekeeper was also the postmaster. He saw at once that his customers were strangers.

"Be ye interested in that there placard?" he asked. "Ye should have been in town yesterday," he volunteered. "A wild-looking stranger came in. He bought a bottle of whiskey and some lead and powder. He paid me with a twenty-dollar gold piece. Well, I don't see many of them, so I looked pretty closely at the stranger and his money. I thought he left pretty quick after he had read that there placard. I know that there card by heart, and that stranger was not out of the store five minutes, when it struck me that he was the man that card describes. My son Jack and I, we jumped on our horses and scoured this old town, every street and alley, and the water front. We followed the trail half-way to the river. We took a run for three or four miles on the

road to Bulow's sugar mill, which the Indians burnt, when the war began, but never a hair or a track did we see of that stranger. I reckon perhaps ye two be after him, too, and I wish you better luck."

Munro quietly stepped on Billy's toes so the boy responded with a loud, "Ouch, Father! Can't you see me?"

"We should not mind picking up a few hundred dollars," Munro admitted, simulating indifference, "if the fellow did not fight too hard. Was he armed?"

"I did not see a gun on him," the man replied, "but he might have carried a pistol in his jeans; he probably did. He looked kind of starved, as if he had been living with the Indians."

Munro knew enough, so he changed the subject of conversation by asking the man for the best place in town to get dinner; and he and Bill agreed that they had never eaten a better meal than was served to them by a lady one square east from the post-office.

After dinner they made a few more purchases in another store, for they feared the

inquisitiveness of their first acquaintance, and then they sauntered slowly to the outskirts of the town. As soon as they were out of sight of the last house, they increased their pace to a brisk walk, and half an hour before sunset they arrived at Hanowa's camp, where a supper of broiled bass and 'possum and boiled cabbage palmetto awaited them.

"We found their camp," Malota told Bill. "Little fire. A white man and a Seminole. We read the signs, Hanowa and I."

"And we are hot on their trail, Father and I," Bill responded with just a trace of brag in his voice. "The bad white man was in the post-office yesterday, and we are going to catch them at Jacksonville to-morrow or next day."

The boys were for taking to the river immediately after supper, but since Bill and his father had walked over thirty miles, Hanowa advised that they all sleep until midnight, when the moon would rise.

"It is bad to travel on the wide river in the dark," he added. "If we wait until the

moon comes up we shall get to Jacksonville just as soon."

They reached Jacksonville at noon next day. Hanowa and Malota hid in the woods, while Munro and Bill went scouting for the fugitives in the town, which at that time was a very small village. They did not catch Holtess, but they learned that he had left early in the forenoon with the intention of flagging a ship at the Point. The Point is a piece of high wooded bluff, which travelers see on their left as the present-day steamers from the North enter the mouth of the St. Johns River.

Major Belton had sent no posters to Jacksonville, and since Holtess had never learned that he was being pursued, he had not taken the precaution to conceal his movements.

But he would not wait for a ship at Jacksonville, although he had been told that he might have to sit on the Point for a month without being able to hail a ship.

The pursuers started after the fugitives without delay and landed on the Point under cover of darkness. At dawn of day they

selected a camp in a place where they could not be seen. They pulled their canoe out of the water and hid it in the brush. Then they sat down to breakfast without making a fire and held what Munro called a council of war.

“ I see,” said Munro, “ that the Point is covered with pine and oak scrub. I think we should advance two and two, about fifteen yards apart, so we can see each other and make signals. We must go slow, make no noise, and see them first.”

“ The plan is good,” spoke Hanowa. “ If they have set up the rag tent, then I think one of them will be in or near the tent and the other will be watching for a ship. *Elaha*, where does he keep the stolen money? Does he carry it back and forth between the sea and the tent? Is it in the tent? Or where is it? ”

“ I think it is hidden not far from the tent,” Munro expressed his opinion, “ but I have no idea how we might find the spot.”

After they had crept up on the high bank and had scouted toward the end of the Point for some two hundred yards, Munro saw

something which made him stop short and signal Hanowa to stop. It was only a little thing, a blaze cut on a tree with a hunting-knife. Bill pointed toward his left. "Father," he whispered, "there is another blaze."

Munro began to wonder why any one should blaze a trail on a point of land of only a few hundred acres between the river and the sea. What could it mean? He looked back and suddenly his eyes caught two other small blazes which the four scouts had passed, because they faced in the same direction the scouts were going. Suddenly Munro remembered that Holtess had dabbled in surveying. Two lines crossing from four different blazes would fix a point. He walked along one of the lines, until he came to the point of intersection with the other line. The ground felt a little different under foot at this point. He bent over and drove his hunting knife into it. The knife struck and pierced something which felt like hide or leather. Munro dug into the ground with both hands and brought out a small heavy bag. Impatiently he ripped it open, and

there lay the gold and silver coins stolen at Fort Brooke. But the coins did not shine like gold and silver; they had a strange and dirty look.

“Bee grease,” whispered Hanowa. “They cannot say, ‘Chink, chink.’”

After the bag was cleaned of dirt, Munro made out the faint outlines of the letters “U. S. A.” and he remembered the bag as having disappeared at the time the money was stolen.

Bill swung his arms over his head and danced like a mad Indian. He could not let out any yells and there was too much brush for somersaults.

“We will take that stuff to our camp,” advised Munro, “and come back to capture Holtess. We must lose no time. If he returns and discovers that his loot is gone, he will accuse and murder that poor Indian, Sokala, if indeed the Indian is still with him.”

“We might watch until he comes to look for it,” suggested Hanowa.

“No, brother, we cannot wait for that,” replied Munro. “We must go and get him.”

And where is Sokala? No one at St. Augustine and Jacksonville had seen him.”

Before they left their camp, every man took a long drink of water out of his canteen, for there was no fresh water on the Point, only the sea on one side and the brackish river on the other. It was Hanowa who had thought of this difficulty and had told his friends to fill the canteens, which had been carried in their packs for months.

A hundred yards beyond the blazed trees they discovered the rag tent; but it appeared to be deserted. Hanowa and Malota crept up to it in a way which only an Indian is able to master. They found Sokala lying asleep behind it. Without a sound being heard, they woke him up and brought him back to the place where Munro and Bill were waiting. The poor fellow looked dazed and half-starved. He did not seem to realize that he was a prisoner, but he pointed at Hanowa's canteen and said in Seminole, “*Weva, weva!* We have no water.” And he almost emptied Hanowa's canteen.

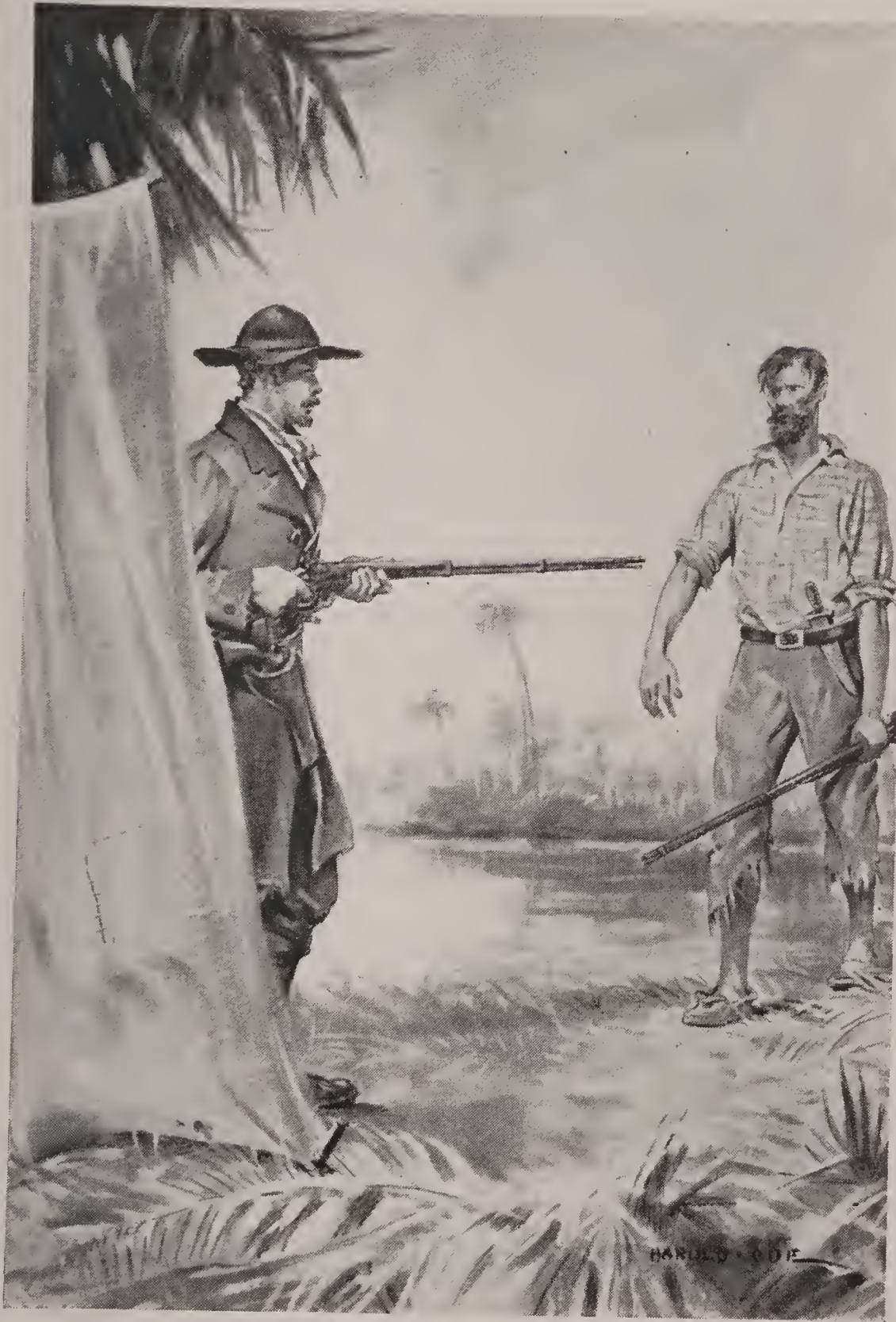
“Hanowa, you and Malota had better take him back to camp and feed him. Bill

and I will try to bring in Holtess," suggested Munro.

After Sokala had told them that the white man had gone to look for a big ship, Munro quickly formed a plan to capture the outlaw. He and Bill concealed themselves in the tent, which had holes enough so that they could watch on all sides.

They had waited only about half an hour, when they heard a man calling, "Hoh, you lazy Indian! Wake up and find some water. Why didn't you tell me there was no water on this blooming point?"

They could see him coming now. If he was trying to pose as a shipwrecked sailor, he looked the part. He had no hat, his beard and hair had not been cut for months, his eyes were sunken and his face drawn and haggard like that of a man half starved, and worn out with hardship and loss of sleep. His tattered clothes hung loose on his body and his feet were encased in crude moccasins made of raw deer-hide. When he had approached within ten paces, Munro stepped quickly out of the tent and said sharply, "Drop that gun and throw up your hands!"



“DROP THAT GUN!”—Page 258.

When the man hesitated a second, the sergeant added quietly, "You are through, Holtess. This gun is loaded with buckshot." And the captive did as he had been told.

"Bill, come and search him for a pistol and take his knife," Munro called, "and then cover him while I tie his hands behind his back."

"You need not look for my pistol," Holtess told them. "I dropped the thing overboard into a water-hole in those terrible Everglades. Take the knife and give me a drink of water. I have not tasted a drop since yesterday morning."

When father and son reached camp with their captive, Hanowa was frying the bacon and Malota was cutting up three loaves of bread which Munro had brought from Jacksonville. The tent had been set up, for a welcome noonday shower was approaching, and in a short time there was enough fresh water in the bottom of the canoe to satisfy everybody.

During the meal the sergeant sat near the entrance to the tent, while Holtess was placed in the rear.

“Sergeant, you need not watch me,” said Holtess. “I could not walk a mile if I tried to. If you will give me another feed like this and let me go I will return the money to you, all except a few pieces. I was a fool ever to touch it. If you had not come along at this time, I believe I should have lain down in that old tent and died like a dog. We had not a scrap of food and not a drop of water.”

“You need not trouble about that money any more,” Munro told him. “We found that before we found you. And we cannot let you go, because we have come after you a long way.”

“What are you going to do with me?”

“We are going to take you to Jacksonville. What they will do with you there, I do not know.”

CHAPTER XXVIII

WHAT to do with his prisoners at Jacksonville proved to be more of a puzzle than Munro had anticipated. The village possessed a jail, but no jailor. The magistrate, who was known as the Judge, and who said that he was a justice of the peace, ordered the town marshal to unlock the jail, but told Munro that he would have to watch the prisoners and feed them, because the town had no funds for such purposes. The Judge also informed Munro that since the case involved more than a hundred dollars and was evidently a case of grand larceny, his court was not competent to handle the case. Here was a pretty mess!

Bill and Malota were put as guards over the prisoners. Bill's gun was loaded with buckshot, and some half-dozen boys of the village promptly joined the guard. Bill and Malota were the heroes of the day, envied by every small boy in town. The prisoners appeared not at all inclined to escape,

for at Munro's expense a good woman furnished them with two meals a day, the like of which they had not enjoyed for six months. A complete rest and two square meals a day were quite acceptable to them.

In the afternoon, Munro and Hanowa took Sokala out under a live oak for a hearing, at which several important points were cleared up. Sokala told that the white man was a magician or medicine man. He had a magic instrument which always told him which way to travel. He also had a little bottle in which was confined the dreaded smallpox sickness. Holtess had said to Sokala:

“If you do not go with me until I find a ship, I shall give to you and all your people the smallpox, and you will all die; but if you stay with me, I shall give you twenty white dollars.”

The money in the bag Holtess had said he had earned by measuring roads and land for the soldiers and for other white people. He had had a fight with a soldier, and now all the soldiers were mad at him and wanted to take the money away from him. He had

a squaw and five papooses at a town called "Baltimore" and he was going to take the money to them. Sokala had seen Holtess bury the money after he had cut a blaze on four trees. He did not wish to leave the money in the tent, because some soldiers might come and steal it.

Munro wrote out this story in the form of an affidavit. He and Hanowa and Bill signed it as witnesses in the presence of the Judge. Under the affidavit Munro placed this signature, "Sokala, X, His mark," and the Judge put a red seal on the paper. Then Munro showed Sokala the parchment Major Belton had given him, and spoke to him in this way:

"Sokala, you are a good Indian, but the white man who is now in jail is a thief, and he has lied to you. He is no magician," and producing the compass and the bottle taken from Holtess, he continued: "Many white men have a compass. This bottle contains a little red ink and water made to smell bad with rotten meat. I now break this bottle and bury the pieces in the dirt."

Sokala looked scared, but as nobody else

prepared to run from the smallpox medicine, he stood his ground.

“ You will not go back to the white man this evening,” Munro continued after a short pause. “ You may have the tent of Holtess, because he will not need a tent for a long time. I now give you twenty white dollars. We return your gun to you, and we give you those two bags. There is powder in one and lead in the other, so you can kill game. To-morrow or next day you must take the canoe in which you and Holtess have traveled and return to your own people. The white man will not need a canoe for many moons.

“ If you ever see the bad white man again, you must not speak to him. He cannot give you the smallpox, but if the soldiers find you with him, they will lock chains on your hands and put you in a room with an iron door.

“ One thing more I will tell you, and then I have spoken. Ten soldier scouts came down the river to-day. To-morrow they will put chains on the feet of Holtess, and they will take him to the big judge at St. Augustine, and the judge will hang him or put him in jail for a long time.”

An hour after supper, when Bill and Malota looked for Sokala, he was gone, and nobody in Jacksonville ever saw him again.

Very much to the relief of Munro, the sergeant in command of the military scouting party, agreed to take Holtess to St. Augustine, where he was later tried before the Territorial Court, found guilty and sentenced to three years imprisonment.

In the evening, when Munro and Hanowa had taken their turn at sentinel duty at the rickety log-house jail in which Holtess was confined, Munro learned from the soldiers, who came to visit with him, about the progress of the war.

There had not been much progress. A few skirmishes had occurred, and both sides were becoming more embittered. Osceola and other leading chiefs had not been captured, nor had they expressed a willingness to surrender.

Munro sent the recovered Government money with the military scouting party to the commanding officer, General Thomas S. Jessup. For the capture of Sokala he claimed no reward, but he wrote Major Bel-

ton to pay half of the reward for the capture of Holtess to Hanowa, which was done, as soon as the money became available.

For a week Munro and his party lived what seemed to them a life of luxury in the old jail, which they had first subjected to a thorough house-cleaning. The two men thoroughly enjoyed the rest after their long, arduous journey, while Bill and Malota fished to their heart's content. Bill might have caught another alligator, but he had lost his taste for alligator-fishing. "What can you do with the big brute," he asked, "after you have caught him?"

Then came the sad day of parting. Bill and his father sailed for New York on a ship carrying lumber, and Hanowa and Malota paddled up the St. Johns River, starting on their long journey to St. Augustine, Fort Brooke and Tallahassee's camp on the Mayakka. Both parties realized that they would probably never see each other again.

The deplorable Seminole war dragged on into a weary length. On October 21, 1837, about four months after the parting of Han-

owa and Munro, Osceola and a number of Seminoles were treacherously captured near Fort Peyton south of St. Augustine, by order of General Jessup. The Indians had come to talk under a flag of truce. The action of the commander was generally and bitterly condemned. It is the only instance of that kind on record in the history of the United States.

Osceola and several other chiefs were at first confined in the old Spanish fort at St. Augustine. Chief Wildcat and a companion made a bold escape from this prison, but Osceola refused to join them, saying that he had done nothing wrong. After the escape of Wildcat, Osceola was transferred to Fort Moultrie in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. At this place the famous traveler and painter of Indians, George Catlin, painted his picture, and Osceola died at Fort Moultrie on January 30, 1838.

The war was at last brought to an end by General William J. Worth in 1842. General Worth was as wise and humane in dealing with the Indians as he was brave in battle. By this time, most of the Seminoles

had been transferred to the West. General Worth estimated that only about three hundred of them were left in Florida. These, he said, could not be captured, and he recommended that they be allowed to remain. They did remain in the inaccessible swamps and Everglades of Southern Florida and their descendants live in Florida to this day.

The descendants of those that were induced to leave Florida constitute to-day one of the Five Civilized Tribes in the State of Oklahoma. The other four civilized tribes are the Cherokees, the Creeks, the Chickasaws, and the Choctaws. These tribes were all removed from their homes in the various States and settled on land which at the time was thought to be worthless or not demanded for white settlers. The total number of Indians in these five tribes is now 101,000, of which 3,000 are Seminoles. Many of these Indians have become prosperous farmers and stock-raisers, and the discovery of oil on their lands has brought to many of them wealth beyond the wildest dreams of their ancestors. That these Indians were forced to abandon forests and swamps of

comparatively little value and were compelled to settle on land, which proved first to be a rich farming and grazing country and has lately been found to be underlaid with vast sheets of gold, is one of the ironies of history.

The sad and tragic chapter in the history of our Indians is closing. The old people and the old order are rapidly passing. Within a few decades the transformation will be complete, and the Indians will be prosperous citizens of the Best Country on Earth, the best in spite of all its faults and shortcomings.

In considering the history of these tribes since the coming of the white man, there comes to mind the words of the Good Book:

“Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good.”

The well-known phrase, “A Century of Dishonor,” might properly be changed to, “A Century of Tragedy and Conflict.” The Indians still lived the life of men of the Stone Age; they were our Contemporaries from the Stone Age. The forces of life and human nature being what they are, tragedy

and conflict were inevitable and beyond human control. The men of the Stone Age and the men of the Steel Age could not live in peace side by side.

Florida is now a land of gardens and homes. It is still a land of flowers and sunshine, of marvelous springs and rivers, of palms and tropical jungles and of long white beaches. Much the white man has ruined by fire and ill-advised drainage, but much is left, and much can be restored; for the white race is learning to love and appreciate the land to which it has fallen heir.

The remnants of the Seminoles still cling to the land of their fathers. They are still a peaceful, truthful, and honest people who ask only to be let alone. A Seminole will lead a white man out of the Everglades; he will never lead him in; but the *Yoh-o-eehee*, the cry of Osceola's warriors, will never be heard again in Florida.

"Seminole" has become a good word, a magic word. Modern hotels use it to invite their guests to visit the fountains of youth for which Ponce de Leon searched in vain.

Great railroads use the magic word to bring to Florida workers and thinkers, who raise out of the soil the golden treasure which De Soto and his host of Spanish conquerors could not find.

May the remnants of the Seminoles live long in the land of their fathers. And may the white man not despoil the land which has been entrusted to his care!

THE END

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