# TALES of KANKAKEE LAND

by

CHARLES · H · BARTLETT

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The Indian drew his hunting-knife.

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CHARLES H. BARTLETT

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL VAWTER

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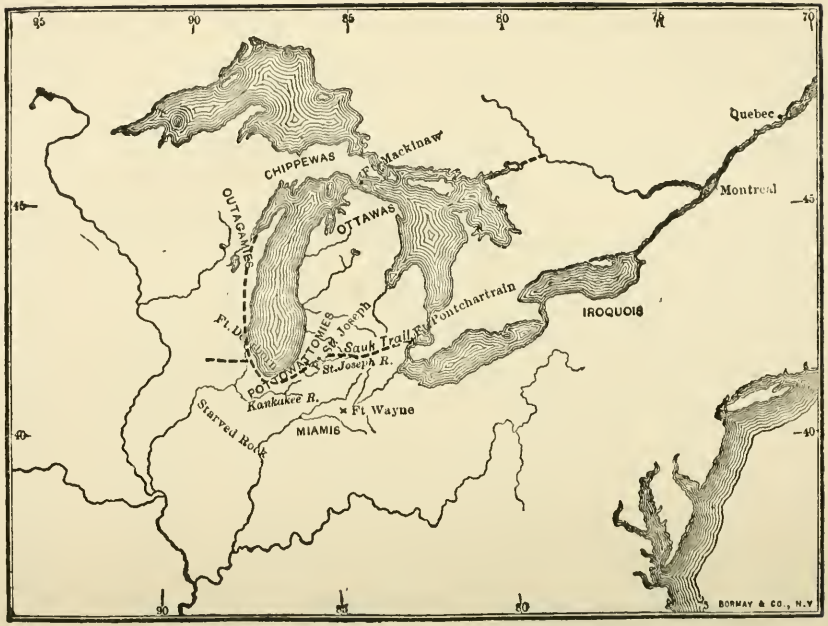
*From Drawings by Will Vawter*




Kankakee Land and the region of the Great Lakes.

# TALES OF KANKAKEE LAND

## I

### KANKAKEE LAND

More than a million acres of swaying reeds, fluttering flags, clumps of wild rice, thick-crowding lily-pads, soft beds of cool green mosses, shimmering ponds and black mire and trembling bogs —such is Kankakee Land. These wonderful fens, or marshes, together with their wide-reaching lateral extensions, spread themselves over an area far greater than that of the Dismal Swamp of Virginia and North Carolina. Their vastness, their silence, their misty haze, and their miry depths make them the very realm of forgetfulness and oblivion. In the remote glacial times, however, all this spacious plain was the scene of the mightiest activities, for it was swept by deep swirling currents and torn and scarred by moving mountains of ice and rock. But within the historic period the river has been a mere thread of silver meandering through the sloughs, the lily-

beds, and the rice; now trending over to the ancient bank on the right, and now wandering far off to the left; here creeping around and between the members of a group of islands, and then quite losing itself in ten thousand acres of rushes and reeds.

It was a fair vision, indeed, that unfolded itself before the French explorer whose eye first of all surveyed this strange and marvellous land. What were his emotions when he stood among the tender grasses of the old pasture-slopes along the margin of these marshes and saw the tumultuous herds of buffalo—the "huge wild oxen," as he called them? Was he not breathless with amazement when he beheld the long lines of antlered elk venturing forth in the moonlight and stalking through the woodland paths? What did he think of the herd of deer that, mute and motionless, gazed down from the hill-top, or the does with their fawns working their way through the thickets that bordered the numerous tributaries of the Kankakee? Where would he go to find such a scene as that of the countless millions of water-fowl—ducks and brant and geese and swans—settling over the vast fields of wild rice? What did he say to himself when he saw the beaver towns that

lined all the watercourses? Here it was no longer possible to refrain from some expression of wonder and joy, so that he wrote back to his friends in France that this region above all others was the "home of the beaver."

One thinks of these early explorers, and knows something of their astonishment and wonder, whenever a big buck comes down from the Michigan woods and seeks to thread the ancient runway, and when a panther now and then follows in the same course. Instinctively the mind's eye sweeps over the thrilling scenes of the old life when the hunters declare that the wolf's hungry brood is still at home in these wilds, that the fox has by no means relinquished his ancestral domain, that the mink is still looking after his precious skin, and that all the vicissitudes of the present added to those of the past have not been enough to drive the otter from the fine fish preserves of the Kankakee. The coot and the grebe are still numerous among the limitless acres of lily-pads; the bittern stands on every solitary shore; and now, as of old, the ancient heronry in some detached grove of water-elms is still crowded with young birds in the nesting season. What did the early French think of the blue heron? or

its cousins and companions, the snowy egrets? What ejaculations of delight must have gone up from the canoes on the river at sight of a flock of the great white birds.

For all men of our race and for the Indian, as well, the islands have possessed a peculiar charm. No one can overlook them. They are hummocks of sand rising boldly out of this sedgy plain, and were cast up by the wintry flood ages ago at the close of the glacial epoch. Their soil is therefore very different from that of the region in which they are found. Yet, they are by no means sterile tracts, for, mingled with these sands, are lime and other mineral foods for plants; and the vegetation enjoys also a great advantage in the unfailing water supplies drawn in from the surrounding marsh. Hence, in general, the islands are heavily wooded with oak and elm. The vine, too, with its powerful root finds these conditions very favorable. There is a large, luscious grape that thrives on the islands and is said to be peculiar to them. Other grapes, the blue, the red, and the white, have been abundant on the contiguous mainland, as well as here; but this large one, peculiar to the latter places, has attracted the attention of many, and is supposed by some people

to be a survival from a cultivated variety brought from France by the earliest white people who entered the region.

Some of the islands seem to have been a favorite place of residence. Plum-trees and those of the wild crab-apple probably indicate the wilderness homestead. This homestead, however, may often have been that of primitive man. One may observe that thickets of crab-apple, plum, and the red haw, as they occur on the mainland along the river, almost always, if not invariably, indicate the near presence of mounds or ancient village sites; and one can with difficulty resist the feeling that they are survivals of the old-time gardens of the mound-builders. The clumps of rose-bushes in the same vicinity are also pleasantly suggestive.

These little islands will not be forgotten in history. They were admirably located as places of safe retreat during times of peril. For the level area stretching away on all sides gave a wide outlook, affording opportunity for timely warning to those sojourning here. And then, too, very many of them are difficult of approach, since the quaking bogs around offer no footing for man or beast, nor yet sufficient water for the passage of

any canoe. To know the hidden windings of some secure channel among the reeds and to keep the secret to himself, was all that was necessary for the refugee who would make his home quite secure in such a place. The islands, therefore, at one period became an asylum for a sorely persecuted race. What the Everglades of Florida were to the poor Seminoles, these secluded spots became to the remnant of the Mohicans, from whom our fathers so cruelly wrested the regions of Narragansett Bay. Those who have inferred that the Mohicans perished in New York and New England, may correct that impression in the knowledge of the fact that the survivors of this notable race fled far to the west, and to bury themselves from the sight of Englishmen, made their abode in these island fastnesses of the Kankakee. It is a comfort to know that in the great Kankakee Land of Indiana, far from the sounding tides of their native shore, these unhappy men—who were in truth the "last of the Mohicans"—found respite from their heavy sorrows. But it was the final act in the drama, for here the camp-fires of their tribe went out forever.

Among the more vivid recollections of my early childhood is that of a certain dread, or awe,

aroused at that time by the mere mention of the land of the Kankakee. It was a place of mystery and peril. Our town, or village, was located just beyond the very tip and source of the eastern arm of the Kankakee—where the ancient paths of the Pottowattomies came up out of the great marsh-land and passed over into the valley of the St. Joseph. Especially in the late fall, when the marshes were burning, was the sense of alarm extremely acute, for the smoky atmosphere and the smell of fire quickened within me lively notions of danger. Nor was I alone in my fears. At such times, if it happened that a dry fall had followed a season of very luxuriant vegetable growth, my elders, too, were much disturbed, lest a rising wind should drive those flames far beyond the lowlands—as had always occurred at an earlier period. All night long the heavens in the south-west glared in the red light of the glowing plain, where miles and miles and miles of flaming billows rolled.

Sometimes on a bright summer morning I went with an older brother and the neighbor boys to drive the cows to the rich pastures that skirted the marshes. As we approached the lowland, the path led through a delightful open grove of tower-

ing oaks. My companions were accustomed to leave me here to play, while they went on to see that the cattle were safely stationed beyond a set of bars that stood somewhere far away on the border of a wet meadow. In this meadow were clumps of alders, and on certain higher points of land scrub oaks sheltered patches of wintergreens. Quite generally the boys stopped long enough to gather a hatful of leaves, and sometimes they brought back to me a few of the red berries. I longed to see those beds of evergreen, but I was afraid to go farther than the big oak-grove.

The path beyond—or paths, for there were many of them—led under very high overarching bushes, forming curious arbors that curved in every direction, with black earth beneath and with dense sloping walls and interlacing boughs above—avenues that were cool and inviting enough, except for the heavy damp air and the darkness into which the footsteps of the boys wound away and disappeared. Once, when I heard voices and knew that my companions were returning, I ventured a little way into this huge thicket and just missed stepping on a curious creature, the size of a man's hand. It was of vivid yellow, with great black eye-spots on its outstretched wings. Lying

against the black earth and in the strange, uncertain light of the place, its wings seemed heavy and fleshy, but some of the boys said that it was only a great butterfly, or a "big marsh miller." It must have been one of the giant moths, two or three species of which are common enough in this region. But such at the time was the state of my mind, my thoughts and overwrought feelings, that the creature which I had just missed stepping on seemed more like some curious flying lizard that could bite or sting or in some way wound a little boy. Thus even the insect life of the Kankakee might be something prodigious.

One night the boys came home late and in great distress of mind. They had searched the meadow far and near, had climbed trees and scanned the outlying swamps for miles away, and had beaten through every alder clump and called and called, but could find no trace or sign of neighbor C——'s brindle cow Bess. The animal was never found. It seemed probable that it had wandered out into the quaking bog and had stepped incautiously on to one of those treacherous areas where Nature has so dexterously roofed over with living green a deep pit of boiling quicksand. But some weeks later a hunter, returning from far down the Kan-

kakee, told of finding the carcass of a cow with the flesh stripped off clean and the bones gnawed by wolves. Some thought the wolves were not now numerous enough, and at this season of the year not bold enough, to attack such an animal as a cow, and that the unfortunate creature on which they had feasted must have died a natural death. But others shook their heads in doubt when they recalled the depredations committed in other days by the big timber wolves that ranged through the outskirts of the valley, and even to this hour are sometimes encountered in the deep fastnesses of the boundless swamps. Whatever had been the fate of our neighbor's cow Bess, thereafter I could not refrain from begging my brother to stay with me in the oak-grove; lest, if he should go farther, he, too, might be engulfed in the dreadful morass or might be pounced upon by some fierce animal lurking in the dark avenues of the thicket.

That very fall the horrors of those mysterious watery plains were greatly augmented for me by the untimely death of poor Peter Ernst. He was one of two workmen in my father's bakery—a German boy full of affection for children and abounding in quaint and delightful fatherland stories. At early dawn of a holiday he had taken

his dog and gun and pushed his boat far down the Kankakee. As we afterward discovered, the morning hunt had been very successful. There were many ducks piled in the end of the boat, together with a wild goose and a great white swan. But that night Peter did not return. The next morning the dog came back without him. A searching party set forth, following the lead of the dog.

Hurried along under the impatient guidance of the faithful creature, and marvelling at the animal's noble intelligence, they came at length to one of the few spots where the marsh-land presents a sandy beach. There in the reeds not far from the shore was Peter's boat, and within could be discerned the outline of his recumbent form. The men waded out and lifted his head and shoulders. He was alive, but expired in their arms without disclosing the nature of the appalling calamity that had overtaken him. There were those who believed that he had been bitten by some venomous serpent. Others said that it was the heat that had overcome him, and such must have been the truth of the matter. On those days of early fall, when the air is hushed and still over all the marsh-land, the sun's rays not only smite from above with

sickening force, but are reflected from beneath as from burnished brass. Under these conditions the exhalations are sometimes heavy and stifling, and such as the human frame can ill abide. An armful of water-lilies found in his boat were preserved and laid on his casket, and below them were spread out the snowy pinions of the white swan. The other particulars of the event have faded from recollection, but thereafter all my childhood thoughts of the Kankakee involved in some manner the memory of Peter Ernst. In daytime musings and before I slept at night, I saw his prostrate form in the boat with the upturned face and the delirious eyes, and the dead swan at his feet.

Even yet there are hours when I cannot think of this land of shining pools and reedy wastes and boundless acres of lilies and rushes—with the flocks of wild fowl rising on fluttering wings or whistling by or dropping into favorite haunts with sweep and plash, and circling waves that go rustling through the rice—without the blue eyes and kindly face of Peter Ernst as features of the scene. And a kindred spell, I am sure, has held the thoughts and emotions of many another, whose aching heart has longed to know some death secret

He was alive, but expired in their arms.

hidden in the fen-land or locked in the peaceful bosom of the shining river, pathetic mysteries, which only the heavens that bend above these silent realms may ever unfold.

## II

### HICKORY-NUTS AND POTASH

My father was one of the earliest of those Anglo-Saxons who came into this region with the purpose of living the white man's life. He conducted a general store in the village at the head of the east fork of the Kankakee. A general store in those days carried in stock merchandise of a nature so varied as to meet nearly every personal want of any and every possible customer. Therefore, it would have been difficult to find an adult individual in all the country for miles around whose face was not more or less familiar at his counters. But of all the motley throng that entered there, none were more characteristic of the region, and perhaps none more interesting, than those that came up the Pottowattomie trail—an ancient path skirting the north shore line of the Kankakee marshes throughout the entire length of the river.

Very many of them were Indians, and not a few were half-breeds. The others were French, Scotch,

English, and Irish, in large degree the lineal descendants of trappers and fur-traders, who for more than a hundred years had represented the white man in this paradise of the hunter. Among them was one, Doctor Sandy Illicott, of Scotch descent, though it was hinted that he had more than a little touch of Indian blood in his veins.

Our family and the people of the region knew him as Doctor Sandy. His father, like the grandfather before him, had been a trader among the Indians and was sufficiently prosperous to educate his children, a numerous brood. All of them, enamored of civilized life—all, excepting Doctor Sandy—had renounced the wilderness forever. The latter, finding that the volume of his father's business was rapidly declining, had embarked in a more congenial and more profitable line of labor. He had come out of the schools an expert botanist and well versed in medicine. To these acquirements he subsequently added an extensive knowledge of the medicinal properties of native plants —a store of wisdom which he had derived wholly, or in part, from his Pottowattomie neighbors. He was thus well equipped for searching out and preparing for market numerous roots and barks and leaves and berries abounding in the marshes, and

on the neighboring uplands, and at that time much sought after by the drug trade of our land and others. In fact, it was the matter of these medicinal plants that brought Doctor Sandy so often to my father's place of business.

It came about in this way. The travelling salesman of our time had not then been heard of, and so, the merchant annually found it necessary to make the long journey to some of the centres of trade in the East to select and purchase those wares essential to his wilderness traffic. During the fall, therefore, and sometimes in the spring, my father was accustomed to set out for New York and Boston. The route by which he travelled was the Great Lakes and the Erie Canal. The goods purchased in the East, following the same line of water communication, found a comparatively safe, though very tedious, transit to the southern extremity of Lake Michigan and the mouth of the St. Joseph River. If their arrival was delayed—as sometimes happened—until river-navigation was closed for the winter, there was no alternative except to carry the goods by wagon fifty miles or more through the woods and across a series of little prairies, and so, finally, to our village.

But this seldom occurred, for the ice was not

often a hindrance on the St. Joseph in early winter, and there were numerous lines of barges and spacious canoes by which merchandise was poled up the river. There were also many miniature sloops, and later small steam-boats plied regularly, touching at piers that were strung along the current's course for three hundred miles or more. The incoming of any of these vessels with a stock of goods for a local merchant was an event in the village, and was duly celebrated at the landing by an unusual bustle and excitement, in which wellnigh every inhabitant participated.

But this bringing in of the annual supplies for trade and traffic was, in truth, less interesting than those affairs that invested the merchant's setting forth for his eastward journey; nor was it so significant of the peculiar conditions of the place and time. Although the days and weeks consumed in such a journey were an important matter, yet the item of cash expense, during this period when trade was mainly by barter and only a little money came into one's hand, long remained a factor for very grave consideration. How to twist and turn things so that the immediate profits of the trip might pay for his passage, was the first and the last thought of the thrifty tradesman who would so-

journ for a brief season in those distant marts of Mammon. Consequently, he was on the lookout for weeks and months beforehand, collecting and stowing away for the eastern market any choice commodities which the environment of a wilderness village might supply cheaply and abundantly, always discriminating in favor of such articles as might find ready sale, and were not shut out by the limited facilities of transportation on our river.

Thus, if nothing else offered, the cargo which my father took with him would consist of maple-sugar, cranberries, and dried huckleberries—such goods being derived chiefly from the Indian trade that came up from the Kankakee. The sugar was packed in pococks, a peculiar cylindrical vessel made of elm-bark. Great quantities of wild honey were quite generally a conspicuous part of these treasures gathered for the eastern market. One year, being unable to collect any adequate quantity of salable supplies, he employed the Indians to gather a barge-load of hickory-nuts. The latter seemed of superior quality that season and were very abundant. The venture proved a success, the nuts finding an easy market in New York. Often there was a large shipment of potash, which the soap-makers of New York were

at all times glad to secure. A little colony of industrious Germans had settled in the village, and finding nothing else to do, began to make potash under my father's direction, the abundant hardwood of the region supplying ashes that tempted this peculiar line of manufacture. Furs and hides were but a small part of these goods, although considerable consignments of such peltries as the trappers were still bringing in, were often accepted; and when disposed of at good prices, liberal commissions were to be derived therefrom.

The day having finally arrived for embarking on this important journey, the goods were conveyed to the landing and stowed away in the big barges belonging to what was then known as the Red Dog Line of Keelboats. Our entire household and all the family's intimate friends were at hand on such an occasion; and, in fact, few in the village would miss the sight of these barges pushing out from the pier, swinging into the current, and gliding swiftly around the bend and away. In the harbor at the mouth of the river the goods were lifted into a sloop, whose plan it would be to work out into the lake well beyond the fishing-banks and then, if a good breeze was blowing, scud before it or tack from side to side. Touch-

ing at this harbor and that in the ship's course, there were prolonged delays before the maple-sugar, the hickory-nuts, the potash, and what not were all laid down safely on the docks of Niagara River and the Erie Canal.

It will be remembered that some of the goods were such as others had consigned to my father's care and keeping, with instructions concerning their sale or disposition. And it is this particular fact that explains the intimate and lifelong friendship between him and Doctor Sandy Illicott. My father marketed the entire product of Doctor Sandy's toil—the medicinal plants which had been gathered through the forests and on the hillsides and around the pools of the Kankakee. These transactions were important items in our business when I arrived at such an age as to be of some service at the store. Shortly before the time set for my father's journey, it was my duty and delight to spend a few days at Doctor Sandy's house, helping him in the assortment and packing of the roots and herbs, and seeing that each bale and box was in fit condition for safe shipment. I remember that there were many bales of snake-root, and that we weighed it very carefully, knowing that it would bring at least a dollar per pound,

and perhaps much more. There were great quantities, too, of ginseng, whose value, however, it was not so easy to estimate. The size of the larger roots would determine their selling price.

I do not recall the names of many other plants which had their places in these garnered treasures. Most of them were designated by botanical terms or Indian words, both of which were then Greek to me. My reward for these labors, which were severe enough for some very real compensation, was a day's hunt on the Kankakee with Doctor Sandy.

## III

### EAGLE POINT

In our hunting expeditions, we repaired always to the same place, reaching it invariably by the same route. The plan was to saddle our horses before daybreak and ride straight for the Pottowattomie trail, and then follow that path many miles down the river to an Indian village, where we could leave the horses and pursue our journey farther by canoe. The objective point was one of the delightful islands, or groves, peculiar to the strange sodden plains of Kankakee Land. Strictly speaking, they are not islands, but only great sand masses elevated some fifteen or twenty feet above the surrounding bogs. The one which was the favorite resort with us at that time, any person might easily distinguish from the rest, even now. It is three or four acres in extent, and unlike many of the islands, stands near the present bank of the river; that is to say, the stream touches the point of the island. This fact should help one to find it;

for at the very point is a huge bowlder, and the latter is also on the river-bank, where the current makes a sharp turn to the right. The great mass of rock is worthy of more than a moment's thought.

In its presence one comes face to face with fifty thousand years; for such a period of time has elapsed, we are told, since the rock broke away from the clutch of some mountainous iceberg that scoured the valley during the glacial epoch. Once established here, neither the power of the mighty floods that in the ancient days swirled through all this plain, nor the raging elements of innumerable storms; neither heat nor cold, nor any other agencies, though oft invoked, have availed to urge from its firm base this enduring monument, which still proclaims that these lands were once the Frost King's realm. The rock's position in the ancient glacial river doubtless determined the island's location and its heart-shaped outline.

The Kankakee of that remote age was like the Yukon not only in the volume of its cold and raging floods but also in its tendency to create these "heart" islands. Where the seething currents were parted by an immovable obstacle, they whirled into the quieter waters behind it and

dropped their heavier burdens. And thus the mass grew behind the obstructing object and along lines radiating from it, assuming from the first a three-sided contour. The longer it grew, fewer and fewer were the contributions received by those parts near the centre of the triangle's base, so that the finished work was heart-shaped. Many of the islands of the Kankakee that were originally heart-shaped have received a tapering touch at the hands of gentler currents in later times, as may be seen from the low-lying points in which they terminate. And all of them are fringed with bush-covered flats cast up from the lake that inherited the ancient river's bed, when the foaming currents had utterly died away.

This island, whose quiet haunts we loved to invade, was covered in most parts with an oak-grove, with here and there a giant shell-bark hickory. The soft turf spread beneath this grove was screened from view on all sides by the tops of dense thickets of dogwood, and marsh maples and soft willows that rose from the low ground surrounding the island, their upper branches glancing over into the higher plain which they could not invade. Here and there, over the interior, was a clump of sassafras or a billowy area of wild roses.

There was a place where a few white birches lifted their graceful, though ghostly, forms—a rear-guard of the forest flora that flourished here at the close of the ice age, but long since retreated to the far north, seeking the congenial conditions of colder soil and keener winds. Where a boggy indentation at the base of the island completed the latter's heart-shaped outline, there stood a dark, compact mass of tamaracks. The delicate foliage of their tender green rose in exquisite contrast against the dull gray wall of massive oak-trunks that leaned from the top of the bank and far on high spread out their leafy branches, as if with solemn invocation of peace. The surface of the island was in general a smooth, level floor. The great trees stood far apart, lifting their lowermost boughs thirty and forty feet in the air, conditions that prevail only in those forest tracts through which annual fires find their way. For these reasons the place was everywhere full of light, and everywhere one could look under the foliage and across to the opposite side of the island and see through to the narrow strip of blue sky beyond. And how sweet were the soft, cool airs that drifted through these vistas that were never dim, these shades that knew no gloom!

Near the point, or upper part of this island, was a circular, or slightly oval, depression, the bottom of which could not have been much above the level of the marsh-land. A powerful spring at the centre fed a pool whose shallow margins, as they receded from the brink, shelved down to dark and unknown depths. The waters were discharged by a rill that gurgled through a cleft in the embankment and made its way swiftly to a patch of flags in the outlying marsh. Long ages ago, before the waters of the spring had found their way to the surface of the ground, some vigorous vine had laid claim to this spot, and had driven its great tap-root down deep through soil and sand and gravel, on down and down to the clay-beds that underlie the marshes, that so it might daily quench its thirst on the living waters that there abide. A century or more it drank its fill, then threw off its leaves, snapped its tendrils, fell prone on the earth and died.

The great root, yielding to sure, though slow, decay, shrivelled and shrank from its tapering mould in the earth, and through the tiny corridor left vacant by its natural tenant, the waters had stealthily crept and then burst forth with joy into the light of day. With such vigor the little

tide came forth, and from day to day its pent-up energies waxed so great and strong, that it tore away the sand and soil and fashioned for itself in the forest there a great bowl; and this, for an age, its sparkling flood filled to the beaded brim. But now, itself grown old and its life-currents running with a feebler pulse, the waters have fallen back to the narrow compass of a shimmering pool, girt about by rushes that lean from its circling brink, but with its heart still glad in the smiles of the blue sky. Here bird and beast and man may refresh the spirit and linger for pleasant meditation.

And surely, none who stand here in a thoughtful mood could overlook the ancient grass-grown hearths of the red man that a few paces back from the water's edge are drawn in a rude circle about the pool, themselves bowl-shaped depressions a few inches in depth and three to six feet in diameter, and paved with stones the size of your two fists. You must dig for the pavement with your cane, for the stones are now deeply embedded in thick turf and leaf-mould. Each fireplace stood at the centre of a lodge. Doctor Sandy was wont to declare that these hearths had been in use before the arrival of the white man. When the Indian had come into the possession of flint and steel and

a swinging kettle, the light of his fireside might be kindled in any convenient place. But in the old days "the seed of fire" was a sacred thing and must be guarded with greatest care. Slumbering on the hot stones of the spacious fire-bowl, the carefully covered embers would hold fast through one moon, and more, the life of the smothered flame.

But, alas, no more may those dancing fires rise and fall on the ancient hearth to light up the dark features that once knew the joys of this place. No more may they show forth the sloping walls of deer-skin with the lodge poles and their swinging burdens of cradle and otter-bag, of quiver and bow and war-club. Never again may the soft and pleasant voices, now long since hushed and forever gone, rehearse for mortal ear the glory of the war-path or the tales of the chase or the traditions of their people and the legends of their gods. But the oak-leaf flutters down on the pool, as of yore; the snow-flake falls and melts away; the moon and the white stars, in turn, still keep their solemn vigils with the faithful fountain of the isle. And if the spirits of primitive men ever neglect the joys of the eternal shore to speed down to an earthly spot to fond memory dear, those who

once knew the charms of this peaceful haunt must sometimes stand together here to softly chant a spirit's song, softly whisper a spirit's tale, or sweetly breathe a spirit's love.

The island was well known to many of us, nor were our experiences confined to any particular season of the year. During the school holidays of midwinter we sometimes skated down to the place, following all the windings of the river—unless during a time of exceptionally high water, when we preferred the ice on the open marsh. But it was a hard push and demanded an early morning start; for every skater must be back again and off the ice before night-fall. Both the river-ice and that on the marsh were peculiarly treacherous, since springs rise at frequent intervals in the river-bed and elsewhere, and where they are of sufficient volume the ice does not form, or quickly melts away. In other places, where some mere trifle of a bubbling current has kept steadily at work, the frozen surface is gradually thinned out from beneath, threatening a cold plunge, if not a terrible disaster, for the incautious footstep of man or beast venturing thereon. But the practised eye is able to detect a tell-tale change in the shading of the surface; and as an extra provision against

danger, we were accustomed to carry a staff, or pole, strapped to one wrist. Therefore, in the winter time there were no moonlight expeditions on the Kankakee, and as soon as the dusk of evening had fallen, the skaters knew that to be safe one must be away.

Yet we felt that we were repaid for the severe labor, and for the danger which we had braved. Nowhere else could we find such flocks of cedar-birds, nowhere so many cross-bills; and here, if nowhere else, there were sometimes a few white buntings mingling with the linnets and chickadees that infested every tangled thicket of weeds and briars. Here in the marsh it was not unusual to find a snowy owl dropped down on some dead limb or on the first convenient stake he could find when overtaken by the daylight. It is not easy to distinguish him where the frost has powdered thick every bush and heaped a crystalline clump on every earth hummock. Nor would one be apt to dream of his presence, had not the sharp eyes of the blue-jays caught a glimpse of the strange, animated snow-tuft. Blind and almost helpless, the startled and angry owl must submit to their jeers and taunts and even their buffets, in which they may almost throw him from his perch. They are the

worst dare-devils of the marshes, as you may see; for they will not desist until the most reckless one among the flock has softly winged his way to a point in mid-air some distance above and a little behind the owl, and then dropped like a stone on the hot head of old Bubo, giving the latter's neck a very uncomfortable twist. The jays will then make off with a most outrageous clatter of self-satisfaction that furnishes a very near approach to derisive laughter. There will be a fierce glaring of fiery, though sightless, eyeballs, much uneasy stepping about on the perch and a furious snapping of the hard, white mandibles—demonstrations that bode no good to the impudent jay that is caught on the perch when darkness has set in once more. The snowy owl is ravenously hungry now, for he has been frozen out of the far northland and has descended on the Kankakee to see what he can find. Ten to one he will wring the necks of more than one blue-jay before his ire is appeased and his appetite fully satisfied.

The winter birds on the marshes show many varieties. An occasional duck whistles by or drops into a pond which the springs have kept open. During the very dead of winter these open pools gather to themselves many strange migrants that

are not to be found in the region during any other season of the year. The red duck of San Francisco Harbor and the canvas-backs of Chesapeake Bay are sometimes found huddled together in the same pool. The wonderful pinions that have swept the continent in search of hospitality, have settled at last among the unfailing comforts of Kankakee Land. Sometimes a bevy of plump bob-whites rises before you on whirring wings, sails off beyond the bushes, drops to the ground and runs away. At noon the ruffed grouse leaves his fallen tree in the woods and finds delicious pickings in the frozen huckleberry-patch. The crows are everywhere—in the distant tree-tops, on the wing far up against the sky, or pacing the icy floor with stately tread. On the big eagle-tree near the point of the island are the downy woodpeckers working industriously over a great spread of warm bark, which they must surrender in the spring to the red head and the golden wing.

Mention of the eagle-tree calls to mind that it is said to have been for a period of many years the nesting-place of a pair of bald eagles. The great bird which supplied us with the national emblem is still at home along the Kankakee, and was formerly a common feature in its life. We can be-

lieve that in the old days the young eaglets were indeed nestled in their traditional tree. The latter is a white oak of monstrous size, rising from a spot in plain view of the river, and the great naked arm which it still lifts high in air has always remained a favorite lookout for the birds of prey that scan these fields. The island as a whole seems never to have been distinguished by any name or title, but those who fared this way knew the spot from the circumstance of the tree, and called it Eagle Point.

There was still another tradition associated with this venerable oak, and, in fact, inscribed upon its massive shaft. Doctor Sandy would point to a broad scar on that side of the tree which was turned toward the river, a spot at one time plainly visible from that direction, though now obscured by intervening foliage of recent growth. The scar—so he maintained—was an Iroquois sign made by a war-party of the Five Nations during one of their memorable expeditions against the Illinois. The Iroquois had left a message to their friends coming after them, and its terms had been cut in the white wood and were doubtless sometimes renewed or changed in after years. The Kankakee was the favorite route by which, for a long period of years,

that cruel and relentless foe made its disastrous incursions into the lands of the less warlike tribes of the West—the Miamis, the Illinois, and the Wisconsin Indians. It therefore seems not improbable that the old eagle-tree was also the "witness-tree"—as Doctor Sandy was wont to say.

What dreadful import may have lodged in the message inscribed and painted thereon, and how it froze the hearts and palsied the utterance of the captives brought back from the Illinois, or what new anguish it may have foretold for them, not any record may now reveal. But full well we know that the signs emblazoned here contained no honeyed phrase for the western tribes; for never did an eagle in all the life of this aged tree pitch from the heights above on its cowering victim in the grasses below with half the vengeful fury that impelled the murderous onslaught of the Iroquois. Long ago the rains from heaven washed out the colors in the fatal sign; long ago the life-currents of the tree drew the nice folds of the new growth over and across the hated mark; but the scar must ever abide, like the white man's memory of the Iroquois' cruel heart.

## IV

### THE FLAMING SEA

By the side of an ancient path leading down to the big bowlder that formed the very point and beginning of the island, was a small plot of ground, a natural terrace, whose surface was covered by the plum-grove. Overtopping growths of the fox-grape made still denser the thick shades of the interwoven plum branches. The place afforded a fine covert for the hunter, who was screened by the ample canopy overhead and by the tops of the willows in front rising from the lower ground farther down the slope. He could sit back in the shade and, glancing over the willows, find it easy to watch the marsh on either side and all the plain through a wide sweep for miles and miles away down the stream. Stationed here when ducks and geese were on the wing, one could know long in advance what birds were coming, and could have his nerves all steadied down and be ready to step out on the grass in front of the plum-trees

and draw a bead on the flock as it passed over or swung to either side. And the grove was also his camp, a single sheet of sloping canvas furnishing a water-shed. Along one edge the canvas was made fast to the boughs, while the opposite border was secured near the bottoms of several of the small tree-trunks. A few armfuls of dried reeds spread on the ground beneath this sloping roof were covered with blankets. These simple arrangements left little to be desired for the comfort and convenience of the hunter. Advantages like these were worth going a long way to find, and when found would be kept in mind and sought out again and again. It was the plum-grove with its fortunate location and natural convenience that more than anything else had made Eagle Point a favorite resort for Doctor Sandy and myself. The hunting—or rather the shooting—was left to me.

The doctor was something of a hunter, too, but it was the remarkable floral wealth of the island that moved him most, rather than the bird-life or that of other denizens of the parts. While I was intent in watching the movements of the ducks, he was busily at work searching for some rare flower or gathering his store of roots or herbs. I recall that he found pipsissewa more abundant here than

elsewhere. It is a small plant with evergreen leaves, and was formerly well known as an Indian remedy for rheumatism and kindred ills.

On the occasion of one of our visits to this spot, Doctor Sandy, having finished his labors early in the afternoon, returned to the inviting shades of our camp. It was a hot day and no ducks were on the wing. So we sat in our cool retreat beneath the plum-trees and the vine, watching three marsh harriers. Throughout the day hawks of this species are unremitting in their careful patrol of these regions, bog and pool and the rustling rice. The harriers were circling over one of those immense tracts of reeds that thrive so wonderfully in this place, the stems standing very thick and attaining often a height of seventeen and eighteen feet. The heavy frosts had left every leaf-blade dead and sear. The remark that a firebrand dropped into this tinder-box of withered foliage would spread speedy havoc, was confirmed by Doctor Sandy with something more than his usual emphasis.

No other man understood more thoroughly how awful might be the fury of such a conflagration; for a lifetime he had studied the power of these flames and their effects on the fortunes of the Kankakee. He began to speak of these effects and to

show that the rank vegetation would long since have filled up the entire valley and made it dry land, had it not been for the annual ravages of the flames burning great holes and veritable gulfs in the deep peat-beds during a dry season. Talking in such a strain as this, Doctor Sandy ran on, until his memory, jogged by the conversation, finally gave up a detailed account of one of those great marsh-fires such as from time to time have ravaged the wide, watery plains of Kankakee Land. Not the least of the charms in the tale's rehearsal was a certain simplicity of statement comporting well with personal experiences such as few have ever sustained or would wish to, and from whose shock a man might never entirely recover. Indeed, all the minor details, as well as the more startling facts, gave the account such an air of reality that no listener could fail to receive them as the calm, though very forcible, statement of one of the many real and fearful tragedies enacted in this wilderness through ages past.

"That green pool of deep water over there at the left," said he, "was dry land in 1835. It was covered with grass like that on the upland prairies and was firm enough to walk upon; and although there were no trees on its surface, the ground

seemed as substantial as this island. But on that date the ground went out of sight, and ever since deep cold water has held the place."

"About this time in the fall of that year," thus Doctor Sandy continued, "I came here with The Black Feather, an Indian boy of your age, or, it may be, older by a year or two. I had found him useful in my work, and it was now my intention that he should gather calamus-root down there beyond the tamarack swamp. The sweet-flag roots which grow there are not always so large, but they are finer and firmer and seem more pungent. I intended to dig sassafras in those clumps along the side of the island. Before we began our tasks, The Black Feather dropped the remark that old Poco had a great deal of ginseng which he and his family had collected and were holding until I should call for it. Poco was a half-breed who lived many miles down the river where the stream begins to widen into one of the long narrow lakes. I would need the ginseng in a few days, and therefore I determined to change my plans and have The Black Feather paddle down to Poco's lodge and return with the roots as soon as possible. I would get out the sweet-flags and let the sassafras go; that would be just as well, too, for the fall of the

year is not the best season for taking the sassafras.

"So The Black Feather folded a deer-skin into a sort of cushion, which he laid in the end of the canoe. Kneeling on this, he took the paddle and was soon rounding that bend in the river. I watched to see his head emerge from behind a fringe of bushes that covered the bank nearly as far as the next turn. I would see him while he was making the turn. I must admit that I was struck with a feeling of loneliness and wanted even a last glimpse of that Indian boy. I watched closely, but saw nothing of him. I waited for some time, wondering why he did not appear. Presently, I saw him returning, and, just as he was stepping lightly from the canoe, I observed the cause of his action. We both climbed upon the bowlder there and stood for some minutes studying the obscure outline, the color and the slight movement of a little cloud that rose far, far beyond the place where the marsh and the sky meet. Then we came up here by the plum-grove to get a better view. The Black Feather thought that it would be prudent for him to stay, but the danger seemed slight and I wanted the ginseng at once, if ever. The store was very valuable and would find immediate sale.

I told him to hasten, to look out for himself, and to return with all possible speed, and that he should tell any Indian he might find fishing on the river below to come with a canoe at once to Eagle Point. If I felt lonesome when he first set out, this time I almost trembled at my own rashness. I watched the cloud for a long time. I thought I could see it change color. For a few minutes I was faint with fear, and then I grew calmer and looked around me to see how I might protect myself from threatened danger. When I came to look the matter squarely in the face, I quite recovered from my state of trepidation. There was not any so great risk, nothing more than a slight possibility of serious harm, I said to myself. Then my fears took hold of me again.

"There was a vine at that time encircling the eagle-tree and winding out of sight among its branches. With its help I mounted to the lower limbs and then climbed quickly to the top, catching a glimpse of The Black Feather and his canoe as I went up. He was making haste, indeed; he could not have gone faster. How beautifully he twirled the light paddle and how deliberately he held on to each stroke just long enough to derive the fullest and best effect from his effort, and how like a run-

ning deer the canoe glided from bend to bend! The sight was a relief at first, and then it filled me with a new fear. Were there causes for alarm which the Indian had not fully disclosed before he went away or had since perceived? And then I saw him turn the prow on to the mud flat at that place where the river approaches near the firm land. There was something there to help him, a dead limb, perhaps, on which he could stand and push the canoe along over the surface of the slough. Standing alternately on the object and then in the canoe, he worked his way to soil that would sustain his weight, and so reached the solid shore-line of the marsh. I saw him draw out the canoe and hide it in the alders, and then he shot into the forest and was gone. Of all this I heartily approved, and was devoutly thankful for the boy's wise thoughtfulness. I understood his plan. An Indian lived near this place. The Black Feather would desert the canoe for the rest of the journey, secure a horse, and make a dash through the woods. A beaten path all the distance would enable him by dint of a few hours of hard riding to reach a ford that cut an angling way across the marsh. Once safely on the other side, it was but a little run to old Poco's lodge.

"In traversing the ford, he could not use the horse; for there are places where the animal would find no footing. He would tether the steed in the woods, and stripping off his clothing, would wind it in a convenient bundle, so that he might hold the latter above his head in those places where the water is deepest. The ford is made of sand, spread on the bottom of the marsh in a location where the water is distributed at nearly an even depth from shore to shore. It angles in several places so as to avoid springs whose currents would be an inconvenience to the traveller, and might also disturb the sands so carefully laid down. The white man may well marvel at the ingenuity of the hand that constructed this firm trail through the waters, choosing the devious line that alone of all made such a pathway possible and permanently secure. Some of the ancient races must have toiled at this task, some that had never heard of the horse; otherwise materials had been used that would sustain his weight, as well as that of man. But The Black Feather's steed will not have long to wait for that impatient rider's return.

"Seeing clearly my Indian boy's plan of action, I might have descended at once from the eagle-tree; but I stopped for an hour or more and held

my eyes on the place where he had vanished from sight. Each moment I hoped to see someone appear with a canoe sent for my relief. No one came. Then I knew that The Black Feather had found an empty lodge in the place where he had hoped to obtain a horse. The inmates of the lodge had doubtless gone over into the valley of the St. Joseph to prepare for the winter hunt, as was their custom at this season of the year. Although this was a new source of anxiety to me, since it wellnigh cut off all hope of relief for myself, which I might sorely need, yet it would scarcely delay my messenger. He would find a horse without difficulty. Hundreds of them were roaming through the woods and dry meadows that skirted the Kankakee. Before I descended I scrutinized with greatest care all the winding loops and turns where the river draws its thread of silver through the varied carpet of summer's green and autumn's gold that now o'erspread this strange expanse. From behind that tiny island far to the east and north the slender current first came forth; and thence I held it fast with my eye, intent for the slightest evidence of human life, until pursuit was lost in the dim haze that now commingled plain and sky in the west. I was alone in a vast sea.

"How desolate, how utterly forbidding, appeared this sodden and quaking floor that stretched away in unending bog and black ooze and bottomless pools! There was a fascination in the scene, it is true, but at this moment it was the fascination of horror. Sick at heart, I began to let myself down to the lower branches of the tree. I had descended only a little way, when a number of yellow finches that were perched for a moment's rest on the topmost twigs, spread their wings and burst into joyous song as they fled away. I watched the peculiar undulations of their flight, until my senses could no longer distinguish song or singer. It was a most trifling episode, but it stirred within me a new courage. In my inmost soul I blessed the happy hearts that were glad in this evil hour because God had given them wings. He had given me reason, and without further delay it must exert itself for my deliverance.

"I slid down the vine, but before I had reached the ground I had determined to abandon all further efforts to gather the sassafras or sweet-flags, and to apply myself at once to the construction of a raft. It would be foolhardy, if not criminal, to brave the dangers of this place while such a means of escape could be provided. But search as I might, I was

not able to find the axe. The Black Feather had stowed it away in some place unknown to me, or had taken it with him. The situation was desperate, but I found a way out of the trouble. Down near the tamaracks was a clump of alders. I gathered dead brushwood and placed it around such of them as were large enough to furnish suitable timbers for the raft. Setting fire to the brush, I fed the flames until the green wood of the trees was deeply charred. I then pulled away the embers, and with the mattock which I had for digging roots, chipped off the charred wood and then kindled the fires again. Repeating this process many times, I finally brought down the trees. This was the old Indian way of felling a tree in the ancient times, when they had no better tool than a stone axe. I had often heard it described and found that it worked as stated, though the method now proved a very slow one.

"I was much absorbed and know not how long I toiled in this way. I had not noticed that clouds were drifting across the sky; but when I looked up again, it rained. At first it was only a drizzle, but even that seemed a blessed promise of relief. Then rain-drops came down big and fast and hard. As I stood by, resting and meditating, it occurred to

me for the first time that I might have rendered the island a comparatively safe retreat by firing the dry grasses on all sides. This would have established in a gentle way a wide zone, across which the fiercer flames could not have reached. This, too, was a device of the red man's. I was greatly chagrined at thought of my stupid neglect. It was now too late, since the dead vegetation was thoroughly drenched. The rain ceased after a time, and the clouds in part disappeared. When the grasses had dried, I would apply the torch. I went on with the building of the raft. Fires were lighted under the prostrate tree-trunks, so as to sever them in lengths proper for the purpose intended.

"It was while thus engaged that I observed the tree-tops on the island beginning to bend and sway under the pressure of a powerful wind. In the same moment the air was laden with the whirr and whistle and flutter of innumerable wings, and the quick calls of little birds, and the affrighted cries of vast flights of the wild-fowl. I ran to the nearest high point on the right side of the island and beheld a huge cloud hanging low in the west and spread along so as to shut out the sky-line for some distance. It was miles and miles and miles away,

but it was there; now black and ugly with fearful portent, now glowing with the dull deep red of internal heat, and now paling into ashy gray. The wind was rising into a gale, but it bore along the odor of lilies and flags and sweet grasses aflame, the choicest incense that ever rose to the nostrils of the Fire King. Not until a considerable time thereafter was the atmosphere tainted with smoke of any degree of pungency. And the birds were everywhere a darkening cloud, jostling each other in mid-air or settling in the reeds for a brief stay and then rising again in mad haste, teel and plump little butter-balls and mallards and swift spirit ducks and wild geese and an occasional swan and bitterns and herons and cranes sailing on ponderous wings; and, now and then, a resplendent throng of snowy egret and hawks of every size and species and the osprey and the eagle; and borne along by the feathered tide, thousands and tens of thousands of little birds. The commotion was much increased by the hesitating flutter and momentary pause by which nearly all showed that they were searching for some convenient spot where they might settle down. It seemed strange, indeed, that any living creature blessed with the power of flight should

be endowed with such feeble reason as to hover near these haunts that soon must be given over to death and destruction.

"I knew instinctively what must be done. The labor necessary for the completion of the raft would consume the precious time in which alone escape by such means was possible. To be caught on the narrow river in a whirlwind of fire would be an awful fate. I ran back to the alders for the mattock, resolved to provide a safe retreat by digging a cave. But where? The low ground around the island would not do, since the excavation would fill with water, and the materials removed, when once dry, were themselves inflammable. To cut into the side of the higher bank of the island would be to suffer from exposure to scorching flames and suffocating smoke and the intense reflections from the burning plain. I heartily wished that the deep depression in which the spring rose had been at the lower end of the island; but even located as it was at the point, its sloping wall seemed to offer the best promise of speedy and sure success. I chose the bank on the side toward the approaching flames, and devoted my utmost energies to the task of constructing a cave.

"The mattock served me well. A straight and narrow cleft was made, cutting down from the top. When these walls had been carried in to such a depth that to go farther would almost compel one to pass under the hill, it was necessary to stop, lest the earth should cave in from above. The walls were sloped and then hollowed out a little. I ran quickly for sticks and light brush, which I spread over the top of the excavation. One of the sacks which I always carried with me for holding small roots was then filled with mud from the pool around the spring and the contents spread over the brush. Above the mud I heaped up some of the loose earth. I had not thought it desirable to carry the roof down in front so far as to prevent my looking out. I wanted an open door and plenty of ventilation. To that end I had even left a small aperture in the roof. The smoke could not be kept out, but its effects could be overcome in another way. A way that I knew of was to cut a pair of eye-holes in one of the root-sacks and to slip the latter over my head and tie it securely at the neck. The parts covering my mouth could then be dampened, and the smoke drawn through such a wet screen would be cleansed of all injurious elements. All these preparations

"At that moment a dead bird fell through the branches."

were through with in what seemed a short space of time. I thought that I even had time to look about me and study the probable danger with more deliberation. But at that moment a dead bird fell through the branches overhead and dropped into the pool. I hastened to the high ground above the little basin and found many birds with feathers in part burnt away and dying of fright and their wounds.

"The scene was quite changed. The cloud in the west was now double, each part a great writhing, stooping, whirling monster of black smoke and red flame. Now they were widely separated and now rushing madly together, apparently crossing over to opposite sides or falling into each other's arms. A moment later they tore apart and whirled away. There were two of these giants of smoke and flame, because the river stood between them. It held the one on the right for a time, while the one on the left shot away to ravage some peaceful meadow of waving grasses. The one on the right then turned his evil eye on some great gulf of towering reeds and bore down upon them with his hurricane of flame. And now each monster stole softly to his consort's side. At times, one lagged far behind, exploring the re-

cesses of some great estuary of the grassy sea. And wherever the burning feet of this Gog and Magog of destruction trod the trembling plain, a flaming sea was left behind, whose billows rose and fell with the wind, and for days thereafter nothing might effectually lay the tempestuous dashings of this fiery flood. And what a spectacle was the heavens—a vault of burnished copper! I was scarcely conscious that the day was gone, for darkness came not with the night.

"A wind-driven fire sweeping through the length and breadth of the Kankakee resembles in many features the dreaded prairie-fires of the Western plains. But on the plains when the cyclone of flames has whirled away, there remains indeed a glowing field, yet the ruddy tints soon grow dull and disappear, while in our Kankakee Land—as we know full well—the persistency of the raging fires is not the least of their horrors. There are two reasons why the agony is here so intense and so prolonged. After a season of drought a layer of the spongy soil, in some parts of considerable thickness, becomes as dry as dust and is highly inflammable, and it is over such a surface that the fires long rage with furnace heat. Another reason is found in the exhalations from the deep

and vast areas of decaying vegetation. When high winds bear down on the quaking lands, great volumes of these gases are given off, and contribute not a little to the lurid glare of the annual conflagration. Even in the ordinary marsh-fires, that are peaceful enough and little to be feared when no wind is blowing, the escaping gases add much to the flames and greatly prolong them.

"From my position here at the point of the island, the scene, while indeed appalling, was grand beyond the power of words to describe. Although the regions now engulfed in this elemental fury were many miles distant and the gale in its onward progress was often checked, or somewhat diverted, by the rising columns of hot air, yet at times the fires would leap forward with terrible accession of fury. It seemed that only a little delay could be hoped for ere they would bear down upon the place. Light ashes and charred bits of reed were falling in a continuous shower, the smell of smoke was growing more and more acrid, and I began to experience the stifling effects of the hot exhalations from the flaming sea. I speedily donned the tight-fitting mask made from the root-sack, having first dipped it in the waters of the spring. I then gathered up my possessions—a bucket, a

teapot, the mattock, and a ball of stout cord—and having filled the receptacles at the spring, retired to my den. I was not a little astonished to discover that in my brief absence the place had been seized by several foxes. However, they yielded to my prior rights without a whimper and sat down just beyond the doorway. My coat spread on a heap of reeds which I had thrown in the end of the little apartment served for a seat. Having taken my place thereon, I glanced through the entrance to see what the foxes were doing.

"A very unwelcome vision met my eyes. There on the farther side of the pool, and near its brink, three wolves sat on their haunches. At that moment the place was darkened by a cloud of smoke; in the next, a burning reed came trembling down from above and fell into the pool. But neither light nor darkness could divert for an instant the stony gaze of those yellow eyes turned straight on me. Yet the stare, though fixed, was in some degree impassive. It might be, however, the composure which came from nerves steadied down for a leap across the pool and the bloody struggle for possession of my retreat. Just then a mass of burning embers fell in the high reeds in front of the island. They flared up as though a coal had dropped on

a heap of powder. I kept my eyes fixed on the wolves, and, reaching for the mattock, held it up where they could see its smooth bright blade. Without so much as a look to the right or to the left, two of the ugly visitors settled down on the ground at full length, while the other still sat upright between. Their action seemed to say, "'Tis a bad time for you and ourselves; let us be at peace!'

"Whence they had come and when, I did not know: they must have been sitting there during the most of the work of my preparation. And they may have come from some dry spot down in the midst of the tamaracks. I have seen wolf footprints in that vicinity. Your marsh-wolf is a wise old fellow and takes every careful precaution against danger. When I became convinced of the good intentions of these strange companions of mine at the spring, I could not think of molesting them. On the contrary, I felt consoled, if not flattered, by their presence; for their coming meant that their animal instinct and their marvellous cunning had guided them to the spot which I had selected for my own safety. They knew the whole region; no better place could be found; I could rely on their judgment. Or, pos-

sibly, they had been watching me and were relying on mine.

"At all events, we understood each other and were at peace. I was even bold enough a few minutes later to step up to the high ground to see what had happened to the reeds. They were gone, and dancing fires were eating deeper and deeper as the intense heat dried out the lower parts of the stalks and the surface earth. When the falling embers had ignited the reeds near the island, the greater conflagration in the rear had sucked the blaze toward itself and through all the vegetation in front of the island, accomplishing at a stroke what my forethought and diligence should have brought about before the rain began to fall.

"The blaze was now running around the entire island and reaching up into the dry grass. The forest seemed to be on fire, but it was only the reflection from the autumn leaves. The dead trees would go, but other things on the island seemed now comparatively safe, since the dense growths in the surrounding marsh vegetation were being laid low in advance. This clearing away of the plain in all the vicinity was a most fortunate event. Few could experience its benefits and fail to regard it as a providential deliverance. The

heat was so intense that I could not have endured the scene from my exposed station on the high ground, had not the root-sack covered my head. Fortunately, I could remain long enough to witness one of the countless tragedies of that memorable day. An egret that had taken refuge in the reeds not far from the island rose before the approaching fires, veered to the right and then to the left in uncertain flight, a bird of spotless snow all radiant against the golden flames. Bewildered and terrified, it strove to win its way on high, and thus hung on fluttering pinions, the very phœnix of the marshes. A moment more the rolling smoke drew a black curtain across the scene and hurried me to my covert.

"As I ran down, I noted that a pair of raccoons were settled near the pool, and several other creatures were scurrying about at the top of the embankment. They had been driven in from their burrows on the sides of the island, having been smoked out or burned out. But so blinding was the heavy, suffocating atmosphere that I felt the way to my abode rather than looked to see where I was going or what new companions were gathering to my side. Then came one of the most frightful events of all this direful expe-

rience. It was an outcry, the terrified's blood-curdling appeal, that filled all the plain and the wood and seemed to shake the foundations of the solid isle. For a moment thereafter my palsied sense was deaf to the roar of the flaming tempest, and then every creature about the pool gave voice to the emotional shock. The wolves sent up a prolonged howl, the foxes barked in chorus, the raccoons whimpered and whined, and there was a clattering babel in and about the place apprising me of the fact that many poor creatures had stolen near, unbidden and unobserved. But of them all, I am sure that none had ever before heard that dreadful cry. What could it be? I had almost wished that a bear would creep in from the marsh and share our asylum. They were sometimes to be found floundering around among the lily-pads in search of roots. What would the wolves and foxes have to say at bruin's approach? But none came, and if any such animal had been overtaken in the marsh, by no possible exertion could its deep guttural have mounted into that sonorous and appalling cry. Nor could the united scream of a hundred panthers have sent up that vibrant call for mercy. From what breast could it have pealed forth in that place and at that hour? The

hot smoke was so galling to my eyes that I kept them closed, except to glance from time to time across the pool or to look about in search of sparks that were continually drifting in at the door and settling on my clothing. Indeed, the black smoke now poured over us in such a dense cloud as to shut out the light and completely cut off vision, only as an occasional lull or shifting of the gale let in the full splendor of the flaming land and sky.

"At such a time I looked down to stamp out a glowing cinder, when I beheld a pair of eyes. Some wretched denizen of these wilds had crept to my very side. I reached out and touched it gently with my foot, and I could see that it was white, at least in part. It made no resistance, until suddenly, with lightning celerity, the creature sprang on to my knee and mounted to my waist and to my breast, and was convulsively snatching at my clothing, ere I could grasp its soft fur in my hands. A flash of light came and I saw that I held in my arms a common domestic cat! Mousing for field-mice and birds among the reeds had brought her to such a pass as this. I was glad to have her with me, when her nature and intentions were understood, but I shall hope never again to make the acquaintance of a cat under such cir-

cumstances. It is impossible for me to impart to another any adequate conception of the state of my nerves during my imprisonment on the island. So it will be understood that to have a cat leap into my arms gave me a shock from which I was slow to recover. Speaking of the state of my nerves, leads me to say that by this time my clothing had been badly burned in several places and my skin terribly blistered, and yet I scarcely felt the pain, and in no sense realized my condition. My body ached—was full of agony—but I supposed it came from the tension of excitement, the stress of my anguish. The cat lay on my breast and shoulder in sweet content. Such was the roar of the elements that I could not hear her purring, but I could feel it. So pussy and I had a heart-to-heart time of it quite appreciated by both of us.

"Suddenly, the animals grew restless. There was whining and whimpering and there were a few suppressed growls and some running about, while hitherto there had been that strange patient submissiveness with which the brute stoically endures the severe ills of flesh. It was then that the terrible outcry pealed forth again. It came distinctly from a place in the river not far above the angle

at the big bowlder. Thereafter we heard it no more. At the cry, the cat on my breast rose trembling and shook with fear. The roar of the burning had been steadily growing louder and louder, and whether or not it was a delusion of the senses, it seemed now to take on a thunderous rumble, like the furious tattoo of some horrible war-god. The crisis was at hand. At this moment I must needs run to the spring for a bucket of water. I had used every drop to keep the root-sack wet, and the stifling air was parching my throat. The cat swung round and clung to my back. I stooped and thrust my whole head into the pool and rose refreshed. As I opened my eyes, I saw the wolves: they moved not a muscle.

"The atmosphere was the breath of a volcano. I turned for one deliberate survey of the burning land and the towering flame. The brazen scintillations filled my eyes with tears; an acute pain shot through my throbbing temples, a pang so violent that I sank to my knees. I rose to look again, but for me the scene had vanished, the blinded sense could endure no more. Feeling for the vessel of water, I groped my way to the den. My swollen eyelids found delicious refreshment in the icy-cold bath, and soon vision

returned again; but any look beyond the narrow confines of my abode filled my head with pain.

"Nearer and nearer crept the horrible thrumming of the conflagration. Suddenly, a thick hail of burning embers descended on the island with a fury that seemed to sound the fate of every living thing. Fortunately, there was not another such visitation; for had it been oft repeated, neither tree nor plant nor any living thing could have survived its desolating energy. Great tongues of livid flame then shot through the forest-trees from right to left and were as quickly withdrawn; then from left to right, but fled away. The autumn foliage crisped at the touch, flashed into still more brilliant hues, and vanished in thin air. The Gog and Magog of awful passion were on either side and bending near. Then, as I could plainly hear and faintly see, they began their swift but heavy trampling, the one afar off to distant regions on the right hand, and the other away and away to those on the left. When these monsters sped back to join hands again, they stood on the river's brink a mile beyond this island's shore. Nor could they take one backward step. Fainter and fainter came the sound of their going. A strange peace crept over the scene. The wind

was still blowing a gale; there was the crackling of flames and the surging of smoky billows and the tinkling of dead cinders falling everywhere; but I could hear the cat purring on my breast, and I knew that my life would be saved. I leaned back against the earth-wall and fell asleep from sheer exhaustion.

"When I awoke, my body was full of pain and I could not open my eyes. At my side was a muttering and growling and the sound of gnawing and crunching of tender bones. I stooped and picked up the cat, but she twisted and writhed to escape my grasp, and there was the smell of burnt flesh about her, and I knew that she had been feasting, like a cannibal, on the body of one of our companions and fellow-victims. I threw her from me in horror. There was another sound—or was I mistaken? Was it a sense-delusion to vex my worn spirit? I stumbled through the entrance and put out my hand, and lo, it was true, it rained! I threw off the root-sack and knelt at the pool and bathed my eyelids again and again, until I could force them open to catch the light of day, for it was morning. After a time the use of the cold water and the more vigorous circulation of my blood made it possible for me to hold

open my eyes so as to glance through a narrow rift and look about me. The three wolves were there, and their wild yellow eyes stared straight before them, though not at me. The two raccoons were where the reeds had been, and the foxes were huddled in a heap. Several young opossums and an old one were crouched near the entrance to my cave, and rabbits and squirrels, driven from their retreats, had taken their last stand here and were scattered everywhere, singly or in twos and threes, in any position or place so as to be within the protecting walls of my depression.

"It was a strange sight, indeed, where common perils had fixed a truce in animaldom. And the truce was a lasting one for them, since the shafts of flame and smoke had shot them through and through, and one and all had succumbed to the fatal breath of fire. Now for the first time I saw the cat distinctly—a horrible misshapen creature with loose-jointed frame and huge muscles unnaturally developed, and with a thick rough coat of grizzled gray, that replaced what had been one of black spots on a snow-white surface, and with torn ears surmounting a swollen and brutish face. Such was the cat-monster that now with

ghoulish eagerness was leaping about among the dead. I seized a handful of stones and drove the hateful thing from the place. The agony of the hour had driven the creature to my place of safety, and, with the instinct of the happier and better days in the home of its youth, it had leaped into the arms of a human being. Danger gone and daylight come again, it had relapsed into the savagery of its degenerate state.

"While the rain fell, the fires would be held in check, but the smouldering flames would burst forth again when the sky cleared. So, with all possible despatch, the timbers and other materials for the raft were drawn out of the mud where they had been buried for safety. I bound the logs together with tough leather-wood bark, and, having secured the long pole and gathered up my utensils, I dragged the rude float into the river. I wet the root-sack and fastened it over my head. As I was pushing off, I observed a white horse up the stream a few paces lying dead against the bank. I could not stop to investigate in what possible manner the animal could have come into the place. There was a blue rift in the clouds near the horizon. Should the rain cease, the fires in the peat-banks of the narrow river would

burst out afresh, and might suffocate or consume me.

"To my great joy the drops continued to fall until I had reached a place where the river widened and its low, plashy margins contained no food for the flames. All in safety I came to the point where The Black Feather had lifted his canoe from the water. I found old Poco there. He had observed my approach and had built a causeway by throwing alder branches on the bog. The waters near his abode—as he reminded me—were of such a depth as to present only a scanty growth of those reeds that were food for the flames. It was therefore possible for him to cross the ford within a few hours after The Black Feather had passed over. He declared that he had found the bundle of ginseng-roots in the woods by the ford where The Black Feather's horse had been tied. The Indian boy had thrown down the heavy burden and hurried over the trail on foot, having found that his horse had taken fright at the near approach of the flames and had broken away. Poco had observed that a piece of the rawhide thong was still attached to the tree. We reflected for a moment on these disclosures of the half-breed, and then both of us turned to look for the canoe

which The Black Feather had hidden in the alders. It was gone! We stared at each other without a word, struck dumb by consternation and dismay. Where was the Indian boy?

"As we started to walk away through the woods, I began to experience an excruciating pain in my feet. I then discovered that my shoes were badly burnt and were falling to pieces. I removed them and found my feet covered with blisters. It was impossible for me to walk, except with great suffering. Poco therefore took me on his back and bore me to a spot on the high ground where the flames had not been felt. I stretched out on the cool grass and breathed a sigh of sweet relief. But immediately a thousand thoughts filled with fresh alarm began to rack my brain. My new companion and benefactor gave me a curious look and bade me lie very quietly, while he went in search of a horse. I remember that he started away on a run and that something roused the feeling within me that I very much needed his help and that he was deserting me. Three days later I roused to consciousness and slowly brought myself to understand that I was lying on a couch in Poco's lodge. The half-breed's wife was bending over me and applying a cooling ointment

to my wounds. She was talking to her daughter, and then I knew where I was; for I remembered their voices and, also, I recognized the smell of the sumach and willow leaves in Poco's pipe. But I could see nothing, since my eyes were swathed with soft bandages. Wounds from burning are ugly ones and they heal slowly; mine were no exception to such a rule. I recovered, however, in time, and my nervous system regained its healthy tone. But the restoration of my eyesight was a most delicate piece of work. It bade fair, I thought, to be a hopeless struggle. The triumph eventually was due solely to the skill and the patience of my rude Indian nurse, who was a woman of much plain wisdom and of great goodness of heart.

"The Black Feather's name, I was told, was often on my lips during the hours of my unconsciousness, and thoughts of him and his fate were ever present in my mind through the period of convalescence. I felt sure that he had crossed the ford and found his horse gone and had then hurried over the trail. Someone removed the canoe. Had he taken it and pushed toward the island in the hope of rescuing me? Was he too late? and did he perish miserably, overwhelmed by the sea of flame?

These questions have never been answered. Although Poco went again and again to search the place for any tell-tale bit of evidence, neither he nor any man has discovered the facts which should set forth beyond peradventure the fate of The Black Feather. The secret of his taking off is one of those mysteries that so commonly, and often so sorrowfully, mark the affairs of the great Kankakee Land.

"I am convinced that the terrible outcry heard twice when the flames were near at hand must be charged to the white horse whose carcass was seen on the river-bank when I was making my escape. Such was the opinion of Poco and his wife. The cry is seldom heard, and is uttered only in a moment of great fear, when some awful and impending danger forces itself on the intelligence of the animal. The half-breed's family assured me that under such circumstances the voice of the horse is the most appalling cry in all nature. They also stated that the animal sometimes acquires a strong liking for certain sweet grasses that grow only in the water, and, going in search of them, will flounder about in the mud and ooze far from land. Should a firm footing be found, he remains there, afraid to return. At

last, a step farther plunges him into a region of boiling springs, or he may be drowned in some sudden rise of the waters. The anatomy of the horse in old geological ages shows that the animal once found in the bogs and swamps the most congenial conditions of its life, and this keen relish for the sweet grasses may be nothing less than a survival of the ancestral appetite, whose gratification demands a return to the habits of the horse primeval. The voice, too—is it the survival of powers developed through fierce encounters with the monsters of the ancient world?"

# V

## WILD HONEY

HONEY has been mentioned as one of the articles of merchandise which my father gathered with such care in preparation for the annual expedition to the East. To one at all intimate with the conditions of primitive times in this part of the world, it seems strange that the later historian should so often ignore this important resource of the pioneer—the vast accumulations of wild honey sealed up in the forest-trees. To this day it remains—especially in Kankakee Land—the most delicious of all the tributes that man may exact from the forest-regions that lie contiguous to the Great Lakes.

We are not surprised that James Fenimore Cooper should have found not far beyond the borders of the Kankakee the actual personage whose interesting skill suggested that famous character, the bee-hunter, so unique and so striking in the fiction of the renowned novelist. For,

it may be said, this was *par excellence* the land of the wild bee—not only because it was the land of sweet gums and sugary saps, the land of violets and daisies, of blackberries and May-apples, of golden-rod and clover, of the grape, the plum, the black haw and the wild cherry; but also because of the varied character of the country. The cool depths of the big timber-lands, the rich grasses of the oak openings, the heavy turf of the rolling prairie, followed each other with an uninterrupted succession of buds and blossoms; and to these offerings were added, in this fair domain, a million acres of lilies and flags and pickerel plants lining the water-courses, or basking in all the sunshine of the Kankakee, or circling the little lakes that lie beyond the hills. These conditions spread for the bees a feast that offered the first nectar sippings while the snows were on the hillside, and that continued to proffer the sweetness in their tinted cups until most of the autumn leaves had left the bough. This uninterrupted supply of flowers and fruits rewarded diligence with perpetual opportunity. Therefore, this is the land of the thrifty hive.

A cooper kept my father supplied with casks and stout boxes, in which the honey, when received, was carefully laid away and sealed tightly

with wax. Several local characters were known as bee-hunters, but most of our stock was purchased from Doctor Sandy. The latter's success in gathering these rich stores of liquid sweetness was due both to his own habits of keen observation while collecting his roots and herbs, and in a still greater degree to the sharp eyes of several Indian women who were employed to mark the trees for him. When a bee-tree was found, it was customary for the finder to cut away the bark and write his name or initials, or make his mark, on the white wood. The contents of the bee-tree were then his property, and it had always been the strict law of the border that no man might then gainsay the right thus acquired, or in any way interfere with the title. But while it was easy enough to put your mark on any of these living beehives, it was often very difficult to find one when you were looking for it. In those days the bee-hunters were so few in number, compared with the vast range of the undisturbed forest, that a bee-tree quite generally stood unnoticed for many years, and when found was apt to contain enormous accumulations of honey. After a day spent in felling the trees and gathering the contents, it was not an unusual occurrence for the bee-hunter's wagon

to come home with three or four barrels filled to the brims. Sometimes an aged tree, when it came down, would break asunder, and a fountain of the precious contents pour out on the grass. A portion of this flood could be caught or recovered. It was placed in a separate vessel, and when they reached home a quantity of water was added. Most of the foreign matter would then rise to the surface so that it could easily be removed. The honey was still farther cleansed by boiling and straining through flannel. It was then boiled again until slightly thickened. In this manner the good housewives of the neighborhood had discovered that "cooked," or boiled, honey, possessed a relish of rare delight, a refined joy, such as the experienced palate might know but the human tongue could never express. Quite beyond the dream of any epicure, for example, is that famous dish where the edgy tartness of cranberry sauce is smothered in boiled honey—so those old-time people will yet freely maintain.

To find a bee-tree, the hunter, some day in early fall, waited until the sun's rays had warmed the dead leaves on the ground and had filled with a mellow haze the high arched avenues of the deep wood. He then began to set out the bee-bait in

some convenient place on the border of the wooded land, or where the widest patch of sunshine spread itself on the forest-floor. The bait consisted of a few drops of maple-syrup, or any other sweet substance, diluted with water and held in a cup, or scattered over a clean chip, or dropped on a piece of paper. To make sure of the prompt attention of the bees, the knowing ones would fix a piece of honey-comb on the end of a cedar-splint which was set on fire. By these means the air was loaded with an incense sweet and aromatic—a lure very seductive to insect-life.

But Doctor Sandy knew of an artifice still more potent. It was a compound whose ingredients and their nice proportions he was accustomed to dwell upon in a very particular manner. "Oil of anise, twenty parts"—he would say with eyes half-shut and then wide open—"Citronella, thirty parts; rosemary, ten parts; lavender, five parts; mix well. Place only a drop of the compound on the outside of the cup; fill the cup with honey and water, one half each." The Doctor's method of procedure was indeed very effective; for if there was a bee within a radius of a half-mile, it rose on wing to find the cup. How marvellous the subtile emanation that could work its strange spell through-

out so vast a sphere! and how refined—almost spiritual—the sense that could know such a charm and answer with responsive thrill! A common house-fly or a big blue-bottle fellow or a colony of ants might be the first to attack the sweetened water, and then a wasp would hover about. But soon, or it might be later, a real honey-bee, one and then another and another, would drop from above, and all hasten to feast themselves at this banquet laid for them. The next was the critical moment, as the bee rose to fly away home. With plainly apparent effort it struggled up a few feet, and then circling about for its bearings darted away along the traditional bee-line, whose direct and unerring course was the shortest distance to the hollow tree-trunk where the accumulated products of prolonged toil were securely concealed.

To note most carefully that line of flight and to follow where it might lead, was the nice task of the hunter, the cunningest of all the arts that woodcraft may show. It might be that the hunter could run but a little way without fearing that he had turned aside from the trail; but, if so, he had but to stand and wait, assured that others hastening to the same hive would soon mark anew by their flight the lost line of direction. In

this way, holding to a straightforward course, in time his practised eye would discern the aged tree where a hazy cloud of the honey-makers revolved perpetually before some knot-hole, the open door to the hive.

One day Doctor Sandy and I were returning home along the Pottowattomie trail. We had spent the morning and a part of the afternoon at a certain huckleberry-patch where the berries were always large and fine, and each of us had brought away a full basket. We stopped to rest at a point where the path approached very near to the marsh. Stepping aside into the woods a few paces, we came to the top of one of those sand-knobs that here and there rise boldly from the edge of the bog-land. We sat down on a log where we could enjoy a good breeze and at the same time take in a wide view of the Kankakee. Far off in the marsh lay a small island with a few large trees and an area of pawpaw shrubs. The Doctor smiled, as he began to recount his experience in that place years before. In those days he had observed that whenever he had set out his bee-bait along this part of the trail, the bees would invariably rise and strike across the marsh in the direction of this particular island. The latter was too far away

for him to know that the bees actually stopped there, and the approach was of such a nature as to make it extremely difficult to reach the place. The bog was of just that consistency that will not support the human foot, and yet was so dense with matted vegetation and loose soil that no one could urge a boat through the mass. The Doctor had been foiled several times in the attempt to reach the island, until one day, stopping on this very sand-knob to rest and enjoy its elevated view of the region, he chanced to observe a she-wolf not far away parting the reeds at the margin of the wet land. With now and then a little leap or hop, it worked its way by a zigzag course far out into the marsh and toward the island, apparently walking in the water without difficulty. He had not previously thought to notice that a narrow belt of pickerel plants, arrow leaves, and lizard tongues—that seldom grow well except in shallow water—extended as far as he could distinguish them, and he thought to the island itself. The wolf was making her way where they grew.

Doctor Sandy felt inclined to try the place and see whether there was not a path there which he himself could traverse in safety. But he had no gun with him, and he feared that the wolf's den

was in the island. If her young were there, an encounter with the excited and angry dam would call for arms. However, he came another day in company with an Indian, this time fully prepared to investigate the wolf's path and to secure the honey, if his surmise concerning the location of the bee-tree should prove correct. He found that shallow water covered a firm ridge of sand and gravel, affording safe and easy passage by a meándering line, whose location could be determined quite readily by a slight variation in the color, or tint, of the vegetation. The path was also marked by the evidences of its having been much used, and recently by some animal that might have been a cow, judging from the deep impression made in the vegetation. Most of these matters were cleared up as soon as Doctor Sandy and his companion had set foot on the island. As for the honey, the smell of it was in the air; and the bee-tree itself, or what was left of it, was in plain sight.

But they had come a day too late. Another hunter had discovered the rich stores and had knocked off patches of the dead bark, and although he had not written his name, he had plainly left his mark. In fact, the one that had profited by the Doctor's

delay was even then at hand and busily at work. The tree containing the hive was an old one, now dead, and, indeed, so far gone in decay that a strong wind had broken off the top part. The trunk had given way in just the place where the hive was located, so that a portion of the honey had come down to the ground. A little black bear had followed his nose all the way from the mainland and had at once entered his claim to the contents of the tree. The bear had found the bees actively engaged in transporting to a place of safety the precious treasure now so rudely exposed to the weather. He had evidently lost no time in making up his mind to assist them, and thereupon had devoured the portion that had fallen to the ground with the upper part of the tree. He had then climbed the stump and dived in at the top. Only a little of that part of the bear that had gone in last was visible when Doctor Sandy and the Indian arrived.

They soon saw that it was a half-grown cub that had robbed the bees' nest. The little fellow was so absorbed in his feasting that he had failed to observe their approach. And in truth, when he had worked himself up out of the hive in response to their heavy pounding on the tree-trunk,

he was not in any condition to see, or even hear, what was going on. His head was so completely plastered over with honey and dead wood and bark and even grass and leaves, that his eyes were sealed shut and his ears quite effectually stopped; nor could the vigorous use of his paws at once relieve him of blindness and deafness. The Indian continued to pound on the tree-trunk, begging that the bear should not be shot; and the latter, notwithstanding the bad mix-up in its affairs, began to descend tail first—if anything without a tail could be said to come down in that way.

The Indian drew his hunting-knife. With such a weapon his fathers had met Bruin, and he would follow their example. It was an easy task, and yet it required a well-delivered blow. When the animal, growling and whining, had descended to a point within easy reach, the blade was driven home to the hilt. The bear, clutching at the weapon, lost its hold and rolled over on the grass, but could not rise again. Had it not been for its blindness, it doubtless would have dropped to the ground before coming within reach of the Indian's knife; the latter might then have had a very different task. But, as the event transpired, the

bear was not hard to deal with, and quickly lay still in death.

"It was a strange sight," said Doctor Sandy, "for surely no stickier little cub ever turned its toes in air!" They divided the bear-meat between them and left the bees to do what they could with such of the honey as might still remain in the ruined hive. Before leaving the place the Indian discovered that the footsteps of the wolf led across the island and in the direction of a big sycamore that rose from a little knoll in the marsh far beyond.

# VI

## PE-ASH-A-WAY THE MIAMI

When I was old enough to handle a gun, I sometimes went down the Pottowattomie trail to their village. Even more delightful than the subsequent pleasures of the hunt was the study of the old Indian landmarks to be seen along the way. One could not easily forget the peculiar features of this old trail, its bright vistas, its weird shades, and its charmed atmosphere—especially if he had followed its winding course a few miles in company with Doctor Sandy. Much food for thought was to be found in the latter's pleasant discourse concerning the stirring scenes of the old life—the stories and traditions, one or more of which each turn in the way was sure to call to mind.

This Pottowattomie trail coming up from the Illinois country and skirting the entire marsh region, passed over to the St. Joseph and was merged with the great Sauk trail. Throughout its course

it was an Indian path, with all the features that the term might indicate. It never crossed over a hill which it might go around; it crept through the hollows, avoiding, however, with greatest care, those conditions in which a moccason could not be kept dry and clean; it clung to the shadows of the big timber-belts, and when an arm of the prairie intervened, sought to traverse such a place of possible danger by the route which was shortest and least exposed. At every step the ancient path tells the story of wilderness fears. Yet the precincts of this venerable avenue of the old life had also their own peculiar delights. A warm and sheltered path in the winter-time, its fragrant airs were cool and soft in the summer days. All the woodland flowers crowded to its margin, the blue violets and the white ones, yellow honeysuckles, the fringed gentian, the roses, the ox-eyed daisies—and, where the shades were damp and dark, yellow ladies'-slippers and purple ones. When the heavy foliage above parted wide to let the sunbeams fall on some gentle slope, there was the strawberry-bank all white with promise, or glowing with the ruby red of its luscious sweets, or throwing abroad the tender leaves of its pink stoles to make sure the feast of coming days. The birds loved the

red man's path, stationed their homes in the thickets that bordered its course, sang their morning songs beneath those rifts where the blue sky looked down, and there, while the twilight lingered, warbled their evening hymns.

And, then, to the Pottowattomie this, above all others, was the ancient highway of his people. All the pageant of their life was there in the springtime and in the moon of Falling Leaves. Along its course he saw the war-parties filing away to find the enemy in distant lands and among strange peoples—the Kanzas on their wide plain, the Osages by their river, the wise Omahas, the lordly Mandans, the fierce Arickarees. And when the forest-walls of the old path were aflame with autumn's glory, he heard them re-echo the exultant cry of the returning band, saw the unhappy captives schooling their hearts to a stoic's calm, or following with proud disdain in the footsteps of their conquerors, or nursing thoughts of grim vengeance by glaring scowls and mutterings vain. At such an hour the Pottowattomie, standing by the path of his fathers, rejoiced to know that the name of his people was terrible in the land of the enemy. When these scenes were over, the old men loved to wander along this path and rehearse

the stories of the past, and tell of the times when they with their people in tumultuous throng hurried home from the chase. With trembling voice and solemn gesture they pointed out the spot where a chief with warriors brave once fell victims to the deadly ambush; or, this was the tree where the children had been lured to their death by the mocking wail of a panther; or, in that place the Great Spirit with a countenance of light had spoken to his children in a voice of thunder. Thus on the old path they told off, as on a rosary, the sacred traditions of their people.

When I went down this Pottowattomie trail for a hunt in those boyhood days, one of the Indian boys at the village would take me in his canoe to the south side of the marsh. The latter was narrow at this point and covered with a good depth of water from side to side. Ordinarily it was possible to find a great many prairie-hens around the hills on the south side of the marsh, especially during those seasons of the year when the birds had deserted the rolling grassy plains coming down to the Kankakee from the north. On one occasion, as our canoe ran up to the shore on the south side, we observed Pe-ash-a-way, a Miami Indian, standing at the summit of a sand-

knob, or bluff, that juts out boldly near this place, with the marsh sweeping quite to its base.

I knew him well, for his home was on the St. Joseph, and not so far from a farm which my father owned. Pe-ash-a-way often came to trade at our store, where he was quite willing to linger over one or more pipefuls of tobacco; and at such times we had found him a man of intelligence and more communicative than most Indians. On this occasion, his superb physique, outlined against the scrub-cedar that everywhere overtopped the sand-bluff, made him for a moment a perfect picture of the ideal red man taking a last farewell of the land of his fathers. His attitude was, in reality, an invitation for us to join him. But we were bent on other diversions, and so went on our way.

When we returned to the canoe, however, some hours later, finding that the Miami had not left the sand-bluff, we climbed to his side and showed him the game we had taken. In return he told us why he had remained so long in this place, stating that the graves of some of his people were in the side of the hill, and that on this account he sometimes visited the spot. He pointed out the burial-place of his grandfather—whose name was Petapsco—and then showed us the evidences of an

old encampment on the bluff. During his boyhood, it had been the custom of two or three Miami families, his own among them, to come here from their home on the Wabash and encamp for the winter among the cedars. One winter could never be forgotten, because it was a year of famine. A prolonged and unbroken drought during the summer had been followed by very early and severe frosts in the fall, so that the ordinary resources to which man and beast looked for support were almost completely withdrawn. The corn was withered and dead before it was half-grown; where rich grasses were wont to clothe the earth in living green that even the snows could not bleach out, the ground was now baked hard and cracked, like a fire-burnt stone; and even in the marshes the wild rice was killed by the frost before its grain had matured. Therefore, the wild herds had deserted the land, and the birds, too, had sought other fields. The woods, the prairie, and the marshes were still and dead. But there were fish in the streams and lily-roots in the bogs, and so the little Miami encampment had struggled through the terrible winter.

So far as the question of food is concerned, people sometimes write and talk as though they

supposed that the Indian had but to put forth his hand and appropriate nature's bountiful supply. At certain times this was indeed the case, but the Indian's normal condition was one of starvation. From infancy through life, he was forever threatened with the curse of hunger. To suffer daily want for months, and to be driven at last to subsist on such roots as he could find under the snow, or to eat the frozen berries that still hung on the thorn-trees; to see the weak and tottering steps of his friends; to look into the gaunt faces of his family and hear the plaintive cries of the children; to call to memory many of his people, both the brave and the fair, who in other days had perished from famine, such was the inevitable experience of the common Indian in all the tribes. These ills were not due solely to their improvidence, but largely to their laws of hospitality. While any had food, all had food. The frugal were thus compelled to suffer from the habits of the reckless. The Indian was most generous. He fed the hungry and clothed the naked, even when the petitioner was his open and avowed enemy. Not to do so was with him an inconceivable meanness and a violation of what he esteemed as sacred, the laws of hospitality.

But it was often impossible to obtain food of any kind. Dried venison would keep through the winter, yet it was not always possible to accumulate it in great quantities. As long as deer and other animals were to be taken, no pains were spared to find them. But it often occurred that a season unfavorable to certain forms of plant-life compelled the deer and the wild-fowl to desert their old haunts. These conditions meant famine and death for the children of the wilderness. At such times the Indian band was compelled to break up in small parties. These wandered off through the dreary woods, and the cold and cruel winter found them dispersed through a wide tract of country. Possibly they may thus snatch from the frozen wilderness the occasional comfort of a chance morsel of food. But some will never raise again their lodge-poles in the encampment of their people. One says to himself that he would not starve where any living plant was growing. If he could do nothing else he would tear up the grass-roots and eat them. Certainly he would, and so did they. They even gathered the frozen lichens from some old tree-trunk, and, rubbing them into a coarse meal, strove to cheat their useless kettles with this faint semblance of food. At

such times they tested the qualities of every species of plant-life, if so be that the Great Spirit would grant that they might only live.

Thus the extremities of famine led the Indian to a knowledge of the properties of plants. He knew what seeds and roots and barks and buds and leaves and tender shoots would ease the hunger-pangs even a little. It need not then seem strange that he came to know intimately the medicinal properties of plants. And what a wonderful fund of knowledge his necessities led him to acquire! Your druggist will let you read his dispensatory. Turn over its two thousand pages and you will discover that in a large number of cases where mention is made of an American plant with medicinal qualities, our information concerning the same has been derived from the Indians.

When the white man came, the aborigines were able to tell him that the common dandelion plant and the leaves of our little trillium and the bark of the wild cherry afforded the best of tonics; that the leaves of the common plantain would heal a wound, and that those of the white lettuce would cure the rattlesnake's bite; that blue gentian would allay a fever; that pipsissewa would some-

times cure rheumatism; that thorn-apple and wolf's-bane and the mountain-laurel yielded deadly poisons. From his own materia medica the Indian was ready to prescribe for a long series of the white man's afflictions and his every-day accidents, his flesh-wounds, sprains, bruises, dislocations, and broken bones. When headache and indigestion and fever would not yield to any of the common remedies, the Indian told the white man to take a bath and showed him how; showed him how to take a vapor bath, and then how to take care of himself when the bath was over. We cannot help but feel toward the Indian a profound respect when we consider his materia medica, founded as it was in experience and reason.

One day in early spring, the grandfather, old Petapsco, and his little grandson, this man Pe-ash-a-way, whom we met on the hill-top, determined to do what they could to help the hunters gather something for the famished inmates of the lodges. The old man could not see very well and the little boy did not know very much, but by uniting their powers they might accomplish something. Then, this combination of old man and boy was quite in the natural course of events, for the Indians were very careful to teach their boys every trick

and device by which success might be achieved through the hunter's art. The one would be an instructor, the other a pupil; and their friends sincerely hoped that they might bring home something to eat.

There was some snow on the ground, lying here and there. They had not gone many miles before they found to their great delight the tracks of a deer plainly defined across a little patch of snow. At the point where the tracks left the snow there had been two tufts of dried grass, one on either side of the tracks. They stooped down and examined the tracks very carefully, and then went around the patch of snow to the point where the deer had stopped to take a few hurried bites from the tuft of grass on the right side. The old man, after one or two quick glances across the beautiful crystalline sheet, turned to the boy and almost in a breath softly read the record left by that strange printing-press, a deer's hoofs.

"The deer is a big buck," said Petapsco; "he is old; he is tired; he is wounded; he is lame; he does not see well with his left eye; he is near at hand, and unless the wind changes, he will soon be ours, providing another does not get him first."

The boy was already enough of a hunter to

know how the old man had read such a record. The deer was a buck, as could be seen from the shape and size of the tracks. It was a big one, because of the depth of the impression. The animal was old, because of the distance between the right-hand tracks and those of the left side. The deer was tired, because it had dragged its feet slightly in the snow, although walking rapidly. It was lame, because one impression was not as deep as the other three. It was wounded about the head, because the boy picked up beside the tuft where the deer had cropped the grass three or four hairs matted together by a few drops of half-dried blood. The deer did not see well with its left eye, because it had missed a tuft of grass on the left where it entered the plat of snow, and also the tuft on the left where it had gone off the snow. It was very near at hand, because during the night a thin crust had frozen over the mud about the patch of snow, and this had been broken by the feet of the deer. It was plain that another hunter had pursued this animal. The wound about the head suggested wolves. It looked as though a wolf had sprung on to the neck of the animal and bitten at its tender antlers, which at this season of the year were just growing and were conse-

quently very sensitive. But wolves hunt in packs, and some of the pack will follow a wounded animal to its death. Yet plainly none had come this way. Were they yet to follow? The man and the boy hurried forward, glad that their good fortune had enabled them to cut in ahead of the enemies that might be pursuing the deer.

They had found the footprints near the border of an arm of the marsh, and they now followed them to the end of the arm and around to the other side. Here the tracks turned at a right angle into the surrounding woods. Petapsco and the boy followed the deer's footsteps through the bushes bordering the marsh and on to the higher ground in the margin of the woods.

"If the wolves are coming, why do we not hear them howl?" said the boy.

"The deer was not wounded by a wolf," Petapsco replied.

And as the old man spoke, the boy, who had been looking backward, saw a movement in the thicket on the opposite side of the marsh, and a moment later a full-grown and powerful panther leaped up on a log and stood motionless, for a long time, scanning carefully every clump of bushes on the margin of the marsh. It seemed motionless except

for the very end of its tail, which moved gently from side to side.

Now the animal started forward a step on the log, every muscle drawn up taut. It was only a false alarm — nothing but a flock of snowbirds that rose in a cloud and flew away. Then the panther drew back into a sitting posture, yawned a deep yawn, threw out its great red tongue to adjust the hairs on its upper lip, stretched out its front paws on the tree-trunk, distended its claws to their widest compass, and then scratched up the loose bark on the log. Petapsco's eyes were too dim to note all these motions, but the boy reported every movement. "We are safe," said Petapsco. "The panther yawns and stretches because it has slept. If it slept well, it is because it had a good supper the evening before. So it is not very hungry, not hungry enough to attack human beings. Now that it has got along to the place where we struck the deer's trail, it will see our tracks, and then it will keep back and not follow us so closely. But when we have killed the deer, the panther may try to get a part of it."

The panther had now stretched out in the sunlight, as if inclined to take a nap. So the man

and the boy very cautiously slipped off into the dark woods.

Farther on, they found the deer and killed it. It seemed that the deer had been attacked by the panther the day before and had in some way succeeded in shaking it off. The panther had seized the deer by the left ear and had horribly lacerated the skin over the left eye, and these wounds bleeding profusely had closed the eye. The work of the panther's terrible claw was also plainly visible on one of the forelegs of the deer. The skin had been torn into strips, laying bare the tendons. Petapsco cut off the head of the animal and left it for the panther. The carcass itself was slung on a pole, after its hindfeet and forefeet had been tied together in a bunch. In this way they managed to get home with their fresh venison.

## VII

### THE PITIFUL QUEST

In a few Eastern cities, fifty years ago, excitement had begun to run high concerning land values in the Northwest. In those days the rich border regions of the Kankakee were becoming well known, and were considered a very desirable species of property. For some time previous to that date, it had been a common thing for a group of well-dressed people from New York to alight from the stage, when the latter had rumbled up to the door of the tavern in our village. They were speculators seeking a profitable investment in lands. Some of them came for a prolonged stay, while others stopped only for a change of horses and to get a good dinner. But while large tracts of land were still in the market, these people quite generally discovered that shrewd investors had long preceded them and had secured the choicest portions of this exceptionally rich domain.

An enchanting region, known as The Great

Island, had found favor in the sight of one of these early land-buyers. The tract was often the topic of conversation at our fireside, for the place was well known to all of us and to our friends. It scarcely deserved the name of island, lying so near the mainland as hardly to be disjointed therefrom. Containing between two hundred and three hundred acres of land, it stretched along contiguous to several hundred more identical in character to that of the island itself. One reason why the spot seemed peculiarly attractive was found in the fact that we saw in it the conditions that had once prevailed in all the upland woods of this region; it had preserved the state of the typical Indian forest as observed by my father and others who were the first of our race to make their homes in this solitude.

As described by these early witnesses, the Indian's forest in this part of the American wilderness was like a park, and the little prairie like a lawn. Such conditions were made possible through the instrumentality of the annual fires. When the leaves had dropped from the boughs and the heat of the late summer and the fall had reduced the dead herbage to a condition of tinder, then the flames stole up from the marshes, and the

blaze swept over the land far and near, creeping slowly through the forest, running quickly across the meadows, and rushing wildly over the prairies, like a mad hurricane. The fallen branches were thus consumed, any low-hanging bough was withered and scorched so that it died, and the tender saplings of a summer's growth were destroyed. And what was left alive when these waves of flame were gone? Only a great tree here and there. Those with massive trunks were able to survive, since they lifted their tender twigs far up out of harm's reach. In the spot where an exceptional condition of moisture in some degree exempted a young shoot from the fiercest rigors of this baptism of fire, a new candidate now and then struggled up for recognition in the forest brotherhood. But this brotherhood in general consisted of little more than giant trees standing far apart, like a straggling orchard, lifting their lowermost branches forty or fifty feet from the ground and overarching therewith stately avenues that wound in every direction. Over a level tract, one could see any creature, such as a fox or a wolf, moving through the forest a mile away.

In this manner the woods and open tracts were purged once a year of every troublesome growth.

And when the spring rains began to fall, a pale tint of green shot over the open landscape and through the uttermost depths of the forest. In a few days a soft rich turf carpeted the plain and wood, affording a scene of sylvan glory such as one could find in no other land beneath the sky. The atmosphere of spring drifting through the Indian's clean, balmy woods—how sweet to him its breath must have been!

Such was this primitive forest of The Great Island, where the Kankakee fires, long after they were shut out from the uplands, perpetuated those charms that once had been the glory and the common heritage of all the green woods and the sunny plain. The first of the land-buyers to mark this spot for his own, was a young man whose name grew to be almost a household word in the village. He spent an entire summer as a guest at the tavern, and his face and form and his black horse were familiar to all the towns-people, and to those who came and went along the trails of the Kankakee and the St. Joseph, and to the few who dwelt beside the stage-routes. If nothing else had made this man conspicuous in the life of the village and the surrounding country, he must have been known and remembered for the power and fine quality

of his rich baritone voice. This voice made its presence felt in the church-service, and sometimes it was heard in the public school mingling with the children's treble. But its richness and power were best known to those who met the singer in the paths of The Great Island forest or on the highway after dusk; for such was the freedom and simplicity of life in our quiet neighborhood that all who could sing never hesitated to do so in the open air.

This young man who rode along our highways and sang his way into the hearts of the people, talked with many concerning the delights of The Great Island, really desiring to make his home there. It was known, too, that he possessed abundant means; yet the title to the land never passed into his hands. It was supposed that he was awaiting the consent of someone at home and that the consent was withheld. Whatever may have hindered the consummation of his evident purpose, it was surely with a sad and downcast look that he one morning left the tavern, having instructed the landlord to send his baggage by the next stage, two or three hours later in the day. He intended to walk along the road that here skirted the high banks of the St. Joseph,

and to step into the stage when it should overtake him.

The driver was enjoined to be on the lookout for his man, nor did he fail in his duty. He even stopped the coach several times and as often called aloud and sounded his horn—an extremely sonorous instrument, as all who ever heard it might testify. The woods and the river gave back the echo again and again, but the driver and the passengers listened in vain for any other response.

It is true, a woman in the coach thought that some heed should be paid to a sort of moaning call which she once heard, or thought she heard; but the others knew that it was only the notes of a turtle-dove. The stage-coach dropped the man's baggage at the next station, where it lay unclaimed for so long a time that the matter of its owner's disappearance began to be talked about. At length, those who had been most interested in him organized a party to search the woods along the stage-route and look into every patch of grape-vine shade on the river-bank and every tangled copse in the near-by fields. But nothing was learned throwing any light on the man's strange taking off.

There were many French and Indian half-breeds working back and forth on the river at that time,

and it was well known that some of them were ready for any desperate deed. Suspicion fell on these and grew much stronger when it was learned that the valuable papers and a considerable amount of money known to be in the man's possession were not in his carpet-bag or travelling-chest, and—so it was thought—must have been on his person. But no one was able to bring the matter home to any of these desperadoes of the river, for there was no substantial evidence against them. The man himself was never seen again or heard of. His father appeared in our village in due time and himself prosecuted another vigorous search, but was unable to discover the slightest circumstance tending to reveal the facts of the sad mystery.

Years went by, but the incident did not pass from the memory of those who were acquainted with all of its painful conditions. Therefore, such people one day felt much interest to see the father on the streets again and still in quest of the lost son, but now much broken by the weight of sorrow and of advancing years—though with a strange light in his eyes, as of a new hope. Sometimes he rode off to The Great Island to spend a few hours in the delightful shades, as his son had so often done before him. Frequently he was seen

in the morning walking out along the stage-route, or leaning heavily on his cane as he returned in the twilight of the evening. To those who stopped to speak with him and offer a word of sympathy, he replied almost cheerily, and occasionally expressed the belief that he should "soon know the truth." The total absence of any new evidence whatsoever created the feeling among those who conversed with him that his confident expectation signified some slight lapse in his mental powers. But his gentleness and his serenity of spirit, as well as his lively hope—at times buoyant and always secure, though apparently born of a disordered fancy—won the kindly interest of all. By and by, he began to fail visibly, and later he was seldom able to leave his room; and, when at length he took to his bed, it was known that the end was not far off.

One day, however, he began to rally, and after a time, contrary to expectations, was seen once more about the inn and even on the street. It was in the fine days of early November, whose clear cool airs and bright sunlight had doubtless effected the restoration of his vigor. He began to venture again along the stage-route by the river's bank. On one occasion he failed to return at

night-fall. When an hour had passed and then another, some of his friends walked down by the river-bank to look for him. A few who continued long enough in the search found him without difficulty a mile or two away sitting in the bright moonlight on one of the high bluffs by the river. Greatly excited in mind, he was yet calm in demeanor and deliberate in speech, though there was a strange tale on his lips. He began to narrate his experience, but stopped with the first words, so that all might listen attentively to a peculiar and exceedingly beautiful voice that even at that moment broke on the still night-air. Perplexed and astonished, no one could discern from just what source the sweet sound proceeded. Nor could any of them either affirm or deny that it was a human voice they heard. It seemed like two or three varied strains of a song, yet no words could be distinguished. Some thought it was like a series of notes from softly pealing bells; others were reminded of the mellow tones of a flute, rippling soft and low and then rising loud and full. There was a note here and there that suggested to all the rich baritone in the voice of this man's son—gave them an irresistible feeling that it might be a spiritualized form of those melodious

Sitting in the bright moonlight on one of the high bluffs of the river.

accents. The father himself plainly shared these thoughts, which, however, neither he nor any of them expressed in words. The voice having spoken once to the assembled group, was silent thereafter.

When they felt certain that they would hear nothing more, the aged father explained that his absence had been prolonged by his weariness. He had wandered too far and, during the return, exhaustion had compelled him to stop often for rest. He had paused in this very spot, and while waiting for his strength to come back to him, this wonderful voice had broken in on his musings. He had stolen cautiously toward the small tree from which it seemed to proceed, only to hear the heavenly strains in a clump of shrubs as far away to the right. Supposing that he had at first mistaken the direction of the sound, he went thither, only to find the voice still farther removed. Seeing nothing, he had thus followed the alluring melody—whether the notes of a bird, the call of a human being, or the sweet song of a disembodied spirit, he knew not—until it had lured him on through a wide circuit and back again to the very spot from which he had set out. Here he had remained bewildered and distressed, with his hands pressed to his

temples in the effort to clear his mind and know whether he was indeed in the flesh, or whether it was not all a cruel hallucination, in which hope long deferred was now mocked in the tones of his son's voice. The group walked home in silence, nor was any of them thereafter able to determine beyond peradventure whether or no he had listened to the salutation of a messenger from the spirit-world.

It was Doctor Sandy that cleared up the matter in a manner quite to my satisfaction. One night some years after this strange incident, we were returning home together from a visit to one of the old Indian fields on the St. Joseph, when prolonged and rapturous peals of melody assailed our ears from some point not far removed from the path. It was a moonlight night in this same month of November. Surely, this was the very voice that others had heard in this particular locality and under similar conditions. Doctor Sandy had no doubt that the notes were those of a bird. He pronounced its Indian name, and stated that of all feathered migrants it was the last to leave our region. The Indians had the tradition, said he, that this bird was never known to utter a note after it had winged its southward

flight across the marshes of the Kankakee, and its melody at night on the banks of the St. Joseph was, therefore, its parting song. Waiting for all others to quit the haunts of the north-land, it sang the requiem of summer joys and summer melodies. We call this little tuft of marvellous ecstasy the hermit-thrush, a creature possessed of the most wonderful, the most spiritual, voice on the continent. As the Doctor and I stood in the soft light of the November moon and listened breathless, the heavenly accents seemed to have strayed into our sphere from some choir of souls. The region of the St. Joseph is the southern limit of the bird's habitat, and while well known in the South during the period of the winter migration, it is voiceless there.

And so it is a matter of little surprise that such a father mourning such a son should have listened to the hermit-thrush in wonder and amazement, and should have stood trembling, as in the presence of a messenger from the spirit-world. He was seen no more on the street, for each day found him feebler than before. As he approached the end the little community felt more and more solicitous for his welfare. The tale of his sorrows—and especially this new experience—was indeed

known to all. But there had been something in his character and conduct that had in a particular manner drawn the attention of little children, who would often go a little way with him in his walks; and of older boys, who would subdue their voices as he passed by, or would come close to his side for the pleasant word awaiting them. Therefore, to the last there was for him, although a stranger in our community, an increasing tenderness of feeling, that gentle balm of sympathy which good hearts reserve for the afflictions of a friend. Sometimes this delicate appreciation of his sorrows expressed itself in the compassionate look and quivering speech with which old and young dwelt upon his pitiful and hopeless quest. Sometimes, it was a bunch of wild-flowers which a child had gathered on the river-bank and had brought home for him. Again, it was a few clusters of white grapes, which were wont to thrive in the region and which the boys knew how to find. Or, it was a hatful of plums which they had selected for him from the purple tribute of those trees where he had rested in his walks along the stage-route.

Finally, he passed gently away, repeating in his last breath, and with the bright light in his eye, the expression of hope which had so often fallen

from his lips, "I shall soon know the truth!" And then his friends understood that his cheerful expectation had never been the vagary of a disordered mind, but the prophetic intuition and intimation of his own approaching demise.

# VIII

## LEGENDS OF LOST LAKE

If one should go down to the site of the old Indian village on the Pottowattomie trail, he could readily find the spot where in the ancient days the canoes were drawn up on the bank. The place is at the margin of an open sheet of water leading down to the little river in the midst of the marsh-land. And were it now possible for a person to take one of those canoes and follow the current of the river only a little way, he would arrive at a locality where for a distance of some rods a wall of bulrushes several feet in height replaces the usual tufted bank of the Kankakee. The region covered by these rushes and by those standing behind them—an area of several acres—is, in fact, the mouth of one of the river's tributaries, though a person unacquainted with the peculiarities of Kankakee Land would never suspect such a thing. The current of the tributary being so widely diffused throughout this mass

of rank vegetation, the passer-by does not perceive that a considerable volume of water is here oozing through the long wall of rushes and mingling with the sluggish tide of the greater channel.

The stream that in this manner loses itself in the Kankakee is known in our day as the Barkosky; now, however, a mere canal straight and deep. They have taken out all the sinuous curves and loops by which the ancient water-way crept from its source, Lost Lake. In ancient times, its Indian name was one derived from that of the parent body from which it proceeded; a name well applied, since both the lake and its outlet were completely hidden in the vast morass. The latter is one of those extensive regions where thousands and thousands of swamp acres lie contiguous to the Kankakee marshes and are linked therewith by many streams. The latter are fed by floods that well perennially from the secret depths of these strange lands. In the red man's day no human foot ever ventured on to the surface of this great morass. In the midst thereof were spread out the gloomy shades of a dense forest of tamaracks in plain view from the distant shore.

But no one on the highest of the upland points, however carefully he might view the scene, would

ever entertain the slightest suspicion that embosomed deep within these tamaracks slept the quiet waters of Lost Lake. In the old glacial times, an iceberg stranded here had been twisted and twirled by the surrounding floods until it had ground its way deep down in the underlying gravel and clay. Into the ample basin fashioned thus and left behind when the iceberg was dead and gone, the springs had poured their sparkling tributes. To the circling margin the tamaracks had crowded in close array, from on high casting their long shadows o'er the fair expanse, and with the thick soft folds of their beautiful robes drawing about the place a dark screen effectual against every curious eye.

Lost Lake was one of the tribal secrets of the Pottowattomies. Its conditions were to them a matter of supreme importance. It was a hiding-place, a secure retreat in the times of extreme peril. It could be approached only along the waters of the Barkosky, a stream which was itself buried away in the great swamp, and accessible only where it entered the Kankakee through the wall of bulrushes. In the old days this wall of bulrushes was never intact. Much of it was cut away, and other parts were rudely broken down,

and for the space of an acre or more it could be seen plainly that the Indian women had been here to gather the material for their rush mats. The mats were used in carpeting their lodges and often in the construction of the walls of the latter, especially during a season when the deer and the elk were hard to find and the few skins taken were needed for clothing. There were a thousand places where the women might gather rushes, but throughout the season they continued to take a few almost daily from the mouth of the Barkosky. These were removed to the village, where they were spread out to dry until a partial evaporation of their watery juices had rendered them tough and pliable. But why were one or two of the women always so careful to gather a few rushes at the mouth of the Barkosky, the secret doorway of their asylum?

It quite generally happened that those of their enemies that cherished designs against the lodges of the Pottowattomies planned the attack for such a time as at least a few of the bravest of the latter's warriors should be absent with their own war-parties. No matter how numerous the ranks of the enemy, the approach would be in secret. If the attacking party numbered only a few, they

would seek to strike a sudden blow and then escape by running away; if there were many of them, they must approach with more caution, so that their victims might not escape by running away. For a large party to approach unannounced was all but impossible. Therefore, they often came in small detachments, protesting friendship and passing on; yet with the purpose of turning back a day or two later, when others of their band had arrived at the village. But when the first of these enemies had come and gone, it was then the duty of the Pottowattomie runners to fly along by secret paths and both ascertain, beyond any chance of error, whether any more of their enemies were approaching, and likewise keep a strict watch on the movements of the party, or parties, that had come and gone. If there was grave danger, signal-fires flared forth; the flame at night, and the pillar of smoke by day, told the story with unerring certainty. At such a moment a watchman at the point of the high sand-knob across the marsh, having read the fire-signal, sent up the prolonged howl of a wolf and followed this with the cry of a bird, as agreed upon with those in the lodges. Answering bird-notes from those stationed throughout the whole region in the vicinity of the lodges

informed the people whether the immediate vicinity was clear of any lurking emissaries of the foe.

If it was found safe to do so, all the women and children of the village, when night had come, slipped out of the lodges without so much as a whisper. The burden, such as a bundle of clothing or an infant in its cradle, rested secure on the shoulders and neck, and was held in place by a band passing over the forehead. The limbs and body must be free. All ran to the landing where the overturned canoes were drawn up along the bank, and one by one, stepping on the fine hard gravel of a made beach, waded cautiously into deep water, swam very quietly through the lagoon that led off to the little river, rounded the bend, and glided away down stream. The Indian woman was the strongest and most adroit swimmer in all the world; the necessities of her life compelled such skill.

But how was it possible for any human being to make progress through a water-course which, in some parts, was filled from bank to bank with entangling mosses reaching up to the very surface and waving with the current; or, in other parts, was nothing more than a wide bed of black mire with

only a few inches of clear liquid shooting across its forbidding surface; or, in still other places, was too shallow for swimming, and yet with a bed of boiling quicksand where no living creature could walk? Such difficulties they had by no means lost sight of. A winding channel had been made through these obstructions, and this they had carefully kept open at all times. Nor could any swift-darting pickerel thread the mazes of that devious way with easier grace than that of the Indian women and girls, whose supple bodies, gliding through the channel, fretted the current less than the soft undulations of its native moss. The slumbers of the little papoose, riding safely in the rocking-cradle above its mother's head, must not be disturbed by a single drop of water or a dash of the thinnest spray; the outcry of a frightened or fretful child might be fatal to all of them. By "treading water"—as we say—the body of the mother was kept so nearly vertical that the head and shoulders, with their precious burden, were well above the surface. Never touching a leaf or reed on either bank, the swimmers paused from time to time in the places where the water in mid-stream was not too deep and the footing firm; the little children needed a moment's rest.

In this way they came swiftly and noiselessly to the place where the bulrushes had been cut away.

Now, if that wall of rushes had been left intact, the first swimmer that passed through the thick mass of vegetation could do so only by leaving behind a tell-tale track of broken leaf-stalks. The first stranger that went by on the river would not fail to note that someone had entered there. On this account, the women had kept an acre of the rushes, or more, in part cut away. All could now enter the place with ease, and the stranger would pass by, saying to himself that here the mat-makers had been at work. He might push inside to see whether any human being was lying concealed behind the mound-like banks of the river. He might make his way around the entire circle of the wall of standing rushes, but he would search in vain for a broken leaf where woman or child had penetrated the living screen. Should he pass up to the village site, the canoes in line on the bank would assure him that those who had deserted the lodges had gone off through the forest.

And yet these swimmers did, in fact, come to a particular spot along the circling wall of reeds, where the first one was careful to plant her foot in front of a certain lily-pad that floated by the side

of the rushes. The foot found a firm foundation just under the floor of the black mud. Standing erect, she parted the rushes very gently, stepped over the lily, and found another place of secure footing within the leafy wall. Stepping over another mass of thick vegetation, she turned where she stood to receive a child from the hands of the woman following her. The children could not be trusted to take a step among the plants that grew on the border, so important was it that no leaf should be moved or disturbed. The first woman advanced several paces with the child, which was then set down to follow in her steps. She was walking on a log planted firmly underneath several inches of mud and water, and with the surrounding vegetation drawn carefully over it. Other logs disposed in a similar manner led the way through the rushes to the mouth of the Barkosky. Here a rude platform of old tree-trunks, apparently stranded in the place, allowed the women and children to step out of the water, while one of the former drew a small boat from a hollow sycamore-log and hurried up to Lost Lake for the canoes hidden there and by means of which all could be conveyed to that safe retreat.

It is said that originally the shores of Lost Lake

were nothing more than a confused mass of tree-roots and dead-wood with the water lying between, and that the unhappy creatures imprisoned here by their terrible fears employed themselves in drawing sand from the bottom of the lake and laying it down in one place. Thus they constructed a strip of beach on which they could raise their lodges. Indeed, the sand had been heaped up until there was sufficient depth for the fire-holes, by which the light of the blaze could be more easily concealed. Taking care to burn away the grasses outside of the tamaracks before the annual fires had come up the Kankakee, a dense undergrowth among the trees had been secured. Once within this retreat, they were as completely lost to the world as though the earth had opened and received them. The muskrat and the beaver were here in large numbers, and the lake was full of fish. The penalty was death for man, woman, or child that should seek to enter or leave the Barkosky by daylight; and while the enemy was in the land a guard was stationed on the platform at the mouth of the stream to enforce the stern decree. The secret of Lost Lake was never betrayed while the Pottowattomies held the land; nor was the lynx-eye of the savage enemy ever gratified with aught that should

supply the faintest clew to the mystery of the hiding-place. But on one occasion, a calamity, in itself sufficiently dire, barely stopped short of the exposure so long and so carefully guarded against.

Among the winter stories told at night around the fire in the Pottowattomie lodges, was one that dwelt with very careful particulars on a certain invasion of the land by a band of Iroquois. The thrilling experiences thus rehearsed happened during a far-away summer in years so remote that no one pretended to say just when the event had occurred. It seems that the irruption of their dreaded foe was a peculiarly severe disaster, since it took place just after a large party of Pottowattomie warriors had left the village, and just before another had returned. With the exception of a few boys and old men, the homes were almost without protection. After prowling about the region for some days, the enemy had suddenly vanished. So, the scouts at night gave the signal for the retreat of the women and children. The message came at an unexpected moment, but it was none the less thankfully received and none the less promptly obeyed. There was a scurrying to and fro, and then, one by one, they ran to the

landing and stepped cautiously into the water and sank from view in the gentle flood and thick darkness, without so much as a ripple in the water to proclaim their departure. Soon the entire channel was filled with this strange school of swimmers, the Indian women and children.

When the foremost one had darted through the broken bar of bulrushes and rounded a great tuft of standing reeds, she was brought to a sudden stand, one of the long twisting masses of her hair having apparently caught in some projecting snag. She turned and reached out to disengage her tresses, when, to her amazement and horror, she found her hair and then her wrist in the firm grasp of a powerful hand. A war-club was held close to her eyes, and above was a fierce and threatening countenance motioning silence with a most imperative scowl. She now discovered that she had made her way into the midst of a fleet of canoes filled with Iroquois warriors, lying motionless there in the darkness. One by one the women swam into the clutches of the enemy, in every case silence being enforced by the threat of instant and certain death, while strong arms drew each of them aside to make room for the unsuspecting victim that followed next in line. Thus a blood-

less and complete victory was gained for the Iroquois, one of supreme interest for them, since it brought into their hands all the children of the village. Thrice happy was the warrior who carried home a little boy or girl; for the red man was passionately fond of children, and there were seldom more than a few of them in the lodges.

But this easy conquest was no more of a surprise to the women than to those who had set the trap for them, for the latter had done so all unwittingly and with an entirely different purpose in view. They had discovered that the Pottowattomie war-party, whose return the village had awaited in bitter anxiety, was coming up the Kankakee. To lie in wait for the latter and fall upon them from this covert in the rushes, was the carefully laid plan now responsible for this remarkable fortune of war. They had delayed their attack on the village for some days that they might determine the time when the approaching band would certainly arrive. They had known well enough that the lodges were completely at their mercy, but they had feared to encumber themselves with captives before they had encountered and destroyed the warriors.

They now found, therefore, that their very suc-

cess was a new and serious embarrassment. They might destroy the women and children and continue to wait for the men; or they might dash up the Kankakee, hurry over the path that led across the prairie on the north, and strike the old Sauk trail, the ancient highway which was their homeward path. The latter course was quickly decided upon, the precious spoils offering an irresistible temptation. The canoes, loaded down to the water's edge, were quickly turned into the river, where a few strokes of the paddles speedily brought them to the village landing. While a part of the band led the captives over the path toward the prairie, others conveyed the canoes to a distant spot up the river to conceal them far off in the marsh-land.

It was in the earliest light of the dawn that the returning Pottowattomie warriors came up the river, and found a little boy shivering in terror on the bank, just below the limits of the bulrush-wall. He had been the last of the line of swimmers, and having caught a glimpse of what was occurring, had continued down the stream until compelled to stop by the entangling moss. The boy's ready tongue soon disclosed to the warriors all the sad misfortunes of the village. If this band of tardy

braves had been a party of white men, doubtless nothing would have restrained them from dashing over the prairie to engage the Iroquois there in a pitched battle. But such are not the ways of the red man. The warriors did not even stop for a parley; each seemed to know as by instinct the only prudent thing that remained to be done. They hurried to the landing, and then flew along the Pottowattomie trail that skirts the marshes to the last foot of their spongy soil and then crosses over to the St. Joseph. There, in the place where the trail comes down to the river's brink, a shallow ford stretches to the farther bank. Once safely across, they sped swiftly along the path that held its way down stream for a few miles. It brought them to a defile in the hills where the old Sauk trail crossed the stream by another ford. This ancient highway was the way home for the Iroquois. Concealed in the dense growth on either side of the defile, they waited in dead silence the coming of the hated foe that had robbed the wigwams of wife and mother and sister and child.

The story-teller in the firelight of the lodges never failed to dwell on this situation with all the possible ecstasy of Indian glee. By strange and peculiar modulation of tone, and by mobility of

features quite as strange; by eyes that glittered and flashed or buried their fires beneath a deep scowl; by fearful contortions of the body or a gentle rocking of the frame to and fro; by hands that snatched and brandished furiously an imaginary weapon or with lifted palms moved softly up and down; through such a devious and significant pantomime they led along the thoughts of the rapt listeners to the critical moment when, with a perfect scream of fury, the blow was struck.

One needed to catch here and there but a word of the vernacular, as more by action than by speech the story-teller passed in review the whole chain of events, link by link. Now, the Iroquois were coming through the tall grass on the border of the prairie, crowded in close array and with tumultuous haste, and yet with many a nervous backward glance; and now, they hurried the women and children down the high bank and with impatient gesture begrudged even the moment's pause at the water's edge, where all made ready to stem the swift cold current of the St. Joseph. Now, they are cautiously picking their way over the ford, at each careful step bracing the body against the swirling waters; and now, the foremost ones are advancing on the strand of fine gravel to which

this secret way through the swift tide had led them. They wait for a few of their companions; and then, in single rank, they glide along the path into the defile, relieved to know that at last the St. Joseph lies between them and the despoiled village of the enemy.

Not until the last captive is on the shore, do the Pottowattomie warriors leap from their covert with a war-cry that makes the defile seem the very gateway of destruction—a cry that one would think might wake the dead, as it runs with quick reverberations from bank to bank and dies away far down the St. Joseph. The Pottowattomies themselves believed that the spirits of their dead friends would obey such a summons, and hasten to take their stand where they might rejoice in the valor of the living. The Iroquois first encountered were quickly overcome, and the captive women following in their train released and armed. The enemy all in a breath found itself in the possession of its own prisoners, and at such a time the Indian woman was the fiercest of all antagonists. So swift was this tremendous reversal of misfortune that only the merest remnant of the Eastern foe escaped from the scene. Even those of the rear-guard still in the water were in many

instances unable to make good their escape. They cast themselves into the powerful arms of the current, but a bloody stain marked their course for an instant, and then many a lifeless form, pierced by an arrow or struck by a spear, whirled round and round in the dark pools below. Nor did the story-teller ever fail to rehearse at least a few of the savage shouts of exultation that went up from the lips of man, woman, and child, as they held their homeward way through the tall grass and out on to the bright prairie and down to the village by the Kankakee.

It is said that in more modern days Lost Lake was the home of a trapper, and that in still later times it was seized for the operations of a band of counterfeiters. There can be no doubt that it was well known to many people of criminal instincts, and that their nefarious plans sometimes led them into its secret shades. But long after the red man had ceased to trust in it as an asylum, the place once proved a safe retreat for the persecuted both of his own race and those of another. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the war-parties of the Pottowattomies were still invading the lands of their hereditary foes in the far South, and by way of reprisal those from the

far South came hither and were sometimes encountered on the outskirts of the Pottowattomie villages. In those days a Southern band once succeeded in carrying away to their homes a number of women from this encampment near the mouth of the Barkosky, the famous outlet of Lost Lake. Many years thereafter one of these women—only one—found her way back to the scenes of her youth.

A maiden when led off by her captors, she was given in marriage to a negro who was a voluntary exile among the Indians, a fugitive from a Tennessee plantation. She became the mother of three sons. When these were nearly grown, she prepared to set out for the home of her childhood, supposing that the Choctaws—whose prisoner she was—would not seriously oppose her plans, seeing that their espionage of her and her ways had long since entirely ceased. Yet she preferred that her going should be unannounced, and so slipped away stealthily with her entire family. But the woman and her family failed to understand that the Choctaw was not yet ready to forget the past. They were pursued, overtaken, and brought back. Their going was looked upon as a serious offence to the tribe in which the father had found a secure

refuge, and the mother and her offspring had been treated with kindness. The old men in council finally decreed that the family should be punished in a manner that should forever be a warning to both the captive and the fugitive. Since these people had wished to be away, they should go forthwith. Their departure, however, should not be for the old home in the far North, but for the plantation in Tennessee from which the father had once escaped. Thus the family were conducted to the slave-owner, who by the laws of that State could claim them as his property. The tobacco-fields of Tennessee must be the abiding-place of those who had presumed to set their hearts on the cool woodlands that skirted our Kankakee. How the years of toil wore away we are not informed. It is only known that the hope once kindled in the heart of the Pottowattomie woman still survived and, finally, on the glad day of her life, nerved her to attempt the delivery of herself, her husband, their sons, and the wives and families of the sons.

Her plans this time were laid in wisdom, and they were carried out with such consummate skill that the prompt pursuers in all the journey across most of the width of two States and through

the length of another were baffled at every turn by the wood-craft and the sleepless energy of the Indian woman. As the fugitives approached our town, they were taken in hand by those who in that day were accustomed to assist the runaway slave. A dark room in the rear of a barber-shop was their hiding-place for a day. The shop itself was a small building, one of an L-shaped mass of low structures that cornered at the intersection of the two important streets of the town. In their rear was an open space with the remains of a scattering grove that in other days had often witnessed stirring scenes. One of these low structures was a commodious log building which had been in those other days the trading-post for the agent of the American Fur Company. In the grove at the rear of his storehouse and dwelling, hundreds of Indians often set up their lodges for a prolonged visit, which might or might not end in the exchange of their Kankakee furs for such commodities and on such terms as the trader should be able to offer. Although these affairs had long been consigned to the oblivion of remote history, yet traces of the old conditions were still to be observed from time to time. Two or three half-breeds with their squaws and children would

tie their ponies to the few remaining trees during the fine days of late spring and proceed to spread out their stores of muskrat skins. Such a sight would sometimes stir the memory of one of the old inhabitants, and the gossipy group about him would listen to incidents of the days when the Pottowattomies were still playing an important part in the life of the region.

Whether by preconcerted arrangement or through the merest chance, a line of these Indian ponies had filed into the space at the rear of the buildings in the early morning, and scarcely an hour after, the fugitives from Tennessee had been safely stowed away in the barber-shop. No one saw the Pottowattomie woman who was the leader of the runaways clamber to the top of the high board fence at the rear of the barber-shop; or even peer through its crevices for a conference with her fellow-tribesmen; nor was she seen with them at any other time or place. It is true that these Indians went away without offering their furs for sale, but anyone acquainted with the peculiar traits of the red man would think little of such conduct on the part of those whose race never hurries in a matter of business. At midnight three wagons came to the rear of the barber-

shop. A section of the fence, so constructed that it could be lifted from its bearings, furnished a secret gateway; and one of the men, stooping down to the threshold, tapped out gently thereon a series of signals, as previously agreed upon.

There was no response. The front entrance was tried with similar result, although the signal was repeated several times. Then the rear door was forced open, only to show that the cage was empty; the birds had flown. In such a manner the nervous trepidation of the runaway slave sometimes balked and perplexed those who were striving to help him; but often, as in this case, the peculiar instinct of the hunted served him well. For the men from the wagons were scarcely done with their expressions of astonishment ere a pair of blood-hounds, growling as they crouched over the doorstep, sniffed their way through the narrow hall and into the very apartment where the fugitives had lain concealed through the day. Men on horseback were the next moment leaping down and securing their steeds to the fence. In vain those from the wagons, confronted by the agents of the slave-owner, protested their ignorance of the whereabouts of the runaways. High words followed after the premises had been ransacked

and the hounds had taken up their stand by the side of the fence from whose summit the fugitives had apparently spread wing for parts unknown.

A crowd of towns-people soon gathered at the place, and the pursuing party quickly learned that the men from the wagon were prominent citizens. The latter were placed under arrest and the pursuit given over at this point. The Tennessee people preferred to look to the courts for a bill of damages against those giving aid and comfort to these fleeing human beings, who in the eyes of the law should have kept their places with the other unfortunate bondsmen of the Southern plantation.

It was the general belief in our community that those who escaped from the barber-shop on that eventful night had fled to the North, across the State line; and, having buried themselves in the deep recesses of the Michigan woods, had pressed on to Canada in safety. Before their day, and after, a vast number found freedom along such a path. But in truth, as Doctor Sandy could explain, the band, led by the Pottowattomie woman, never left our vicinity, and some of their descendants are even yet at hand and still preserve faithful traditions of the strange deliverance of their ances-

tors on that night in the long ago. These accounts agree, too, with the story which Doctor Sandy had to tell, but which for many years he guarded as a grave secret and, in fact, never spoke of, except in the most guarded manner. According to his narrative, it was a line of Indian ponies that filed up to the fence in the rear of the barber-shop and bore away the fugitives, striking at once into the trail that led off to the Pottowattomie village, from which one of their number, when a maiden, had been carried away as a Choctaw captive.

Nothing more than a pitiful remnant of the once populous village still survived. The friends and relatives of the Indian woman had been deported long since to points in the far West. But there was one aged crone who held a torch close to the face of the returned captive and was able to recall the past and find in those worn features the face of the girl that once had disappeared, when the enemies of their people were raiding the land. It must have been a sad fruition of the long-delayed hope and all but desperate struggles of the woman whose devotion and heroism had finally led back her numerous brood to this spot, once the fair land of her fathers.

But on this night there could have been but

little opportunity for mournful recollections, since the ponies were allowed to pause only for a brief moment before the lodges. Nor was any rider permitted to touch foot to the ground. They pushed ahead down to the old landing, and rode their steeds out into the shallow water, and then descended into canoes that were in waiting there. They were soon gliding down the Kankakee to the wall of bulrushes at the mouth of the Barkosky. Their destination was that ancient asylum of the Pottowattomies, Lost Lake. Here they remained for weeks and months, assiduously cultivating every species of disguise by which in the future they might come to be known as children of the red race. It was not difficult to compass such an end in the case of the sons of the woman.

It is known, in fact, that after a while they sometimes appeared in the streets of our town and were passed off by their Pottowattomie friends as a part of a visiting band of Indians from the West. Tricked out in moccasins, fringed leggings, blankets, and the red man's headgear of eagle feathers, or the one made from the thick bristling coat on the neck of an elk, they bore themselves with all the native dignity of the ancient lords of the soil. Proud and serene, they surveyed the field where only a

few weeks before they had been ready to sink down with terror and fatigue, and as runaway slaves had been forced to skulk and hide from the subtle enemy that had long followed close on their heels with manacles and the lash. And when those who had been caught in the attempt to aid and abet the cause of these unfortunates were finally brought to trial, there appeared one day among the excited crowd in the court a group of Indians, among whom were these sons of the Pottowattomie woman. Their presence even drew the attention of the counsel for the prosecution, one of the lawyers contrasting the native manliness of their free bearing with the cringing cowardice of the African, a human being marked, as it were, by Heaven for the low estate of the slave.

The trial went against the accused and stripped them of all their possessions. They had strong friends in our household, and of all the tales rehearsed at our fireside, the saddest was the story of their losses.

Those interested in the archæology of the Kankakee have recently discovered that there was a rich mine for them in the long mound, or mole, of sand constructed by the Indian women on the shore-line of Lost Lake—the spot where they were

wont to raise their lodges and build their fires. The place seems to be stuck full of those relics that reflect so vividly the peculiar conditions of that remote life in the dim past—a fragment of a broken bone fish-spear, or an iron one from the fur-trader's stores; weapons of stone and ornaments of slate and shell; a sprinkling of wampum beads and thousands of glass ones of all colors and shades; the shining tusks of the black bear and his cruel claws; stone arrow-points and those from sheet iron and hammered copper; long smooth pestles for grinding wild rice, corn, acorns and lily-roots; pipes of red catlinite, and steel dagger-blades.

Only the other day two of us visited the spot. Someone had been digging in the sand and sifting it with care. A sheet of paper weighted down with a stone held the recovered treasures: a few gun-flints, a handful of beads, and a broken dagger-blade. Their owner was out in the middle of the lake, leaning over the side of a tilting canoe, where he had dropped a long line down to the margin of the great hole left by the mighty foot of the ancient glacier. The slanting rays of the sun were lighting up the glowing bronze of his cheek with a ruddier tinge. But, heedless of the finny tribe toying with his hook, he fixed his steady,

patient, black eyes on us, not a little disturbed at our intrusion on the precincts sacred to the memory of the Pottowattomies. Drawing in his line and seizing the paddle without once turning his gaze from our direction, he was soon making swift progress toward our shore. We knew him well, Malachi Sarka Brown, a young man of muscle and sinew, of powerful yet clear-cut mould, with the profile of the red American and something of his hue, one who in fact styled himself a Pottowattomie. In the court record *Malachi Brown* is designated as one of the runaway slaves to whom our citizens lent aid and paid so dearly for the privilege. And Doctor Sandy says that *Sarka* was the maiden name of the Pottowattomie woman, the fond mother who so eagerly braved a thousand perils that she might lead back her dear ones to the secure retreat of this ancient asylum of her people, and to the free airs of the wooded isles, the sunlit shores, and all the fair plain of the Kankakee.

# IX

## ALONG THE SAU-WAU-SEE-BE

LYING between the forks of the Kankakee, and sweeping across to the banks of the St. Joseph, and then holding its way down the course of the latter stream for a distance of several leagues, a sunlit prairie unfolds its fair charms to the blue sky. Its metes and bounds encompass less than fifty square miles. For what it lacks in area there was once full compensation in its pristine glories that included not a few of the exquisite touches of nature's hand. Its original outline was much like that of the human foot, and at the toe was located the village of the Pottowattomies, hard by the mouth of the Barkosky. From this village a path meandered through patches of hazel bushes, dog-wood, and redbud, and then crept over the turf where a brotherhood of aged oaks lifted their ponderous arms and touched hands against the sky. Beyond, the path held to the border of several tiny meadows, slipping over the

low hills that divided them one from the other, and then mounted by easy gradations up on to the warm bosom of the bright prairie. The prairie was a network of such paths, some of them a mere thread among the tall grasses, while others were a yard or more in width. These broad furrows, as venerable as the plains they traversed, had been worn deep in the soil by trampling hosts, those ancient tribes of men that once knew the charms and the terrors of this wilderness.

The band of white men that first invaded this fair solitude, the illustrious La Salle and his companions, found one of these deep paths that ran over the prairie from side to side. In 1679 they followed its course from the banks of the St. Joseph straight across to a series of pools, the very tip and source of one of the forks of the Kankakee. It was the famous portage path from which the plain has ever been known to our race as Portage Prairie. A thousand years, two thousand years, or more, had sunk deep in the soft, rich earth this famous trail that came up from the basin of the Great Lakes, and in the brief span of a league and a half passed down into lands tributary to the Mississippi. It is well remembered how aged pioneers of this region were accustomed to declare

that in their boyhood, when riding a horse over this old highway, they were on the lookout not to strike their feet against the turf on either side. Thus, deep in the prairie-soil, many races through many ages had set the seal of their presence on this plain. The aboriginal American was a great traveller, and the wayfarer of ancient days might well have remembered the tranquil beauty of the scene that met his gaze, as he peered over the wall of turf and swaying grasses on the one side of this path, or the hedge-row of wild roses on the other.

The plain was not a smooth expanse of waving grasses, but one gently rolling. Here and there a knoll, or hillock, rose abruptly—a few square rods of elevated ground—the work of the elements in some capricious mood during glacial times. Such a spot was one on which a buffalo might stand and lord it over his fellows, or a panther or wolf steal up to eye the distant herd and lay his plans.

And there were sudden depressions where for a half acre the bottom seemed to have dropped out of the prairie and let down the surface thirty or forty feet, such a place always showing a pool of living waters at its centre with encircling flags and water-grasses. But the beauty-spots of the

prairie were the little tufts of woodland, as Father Charlevoix called them when he passed over the portage path in 1720. The forest clumps dotting the great field bestowed on the scene a peculiar and impressive charm. They might consist of fifteen or twenty enormous white oaks, or a like colony of black ones, or three of these trees might stand together, or a solitary burr-oak might crown a tiny hillock. Such a lone sentinel would be found stoutly braced against the storm, from whatever point of the compass the latter might descend; and the outermost branches often hung low, even to the grass-tops. But, in general, these tiny forest areas scarcely obstructed the vision, for the individual trees stood apart, with their branches lifted high, and only occasionally was there any undergrowth. A chance depression within the area of these oaks sometimes sustained a plum-thicket overgrown with vines, and in such places were the lairs of the wild beasts of the plain—the panther, the wolf, the black bear.

Many of these "little tufts of woodland" still survive, and happily, too; for they were in the old days, and still continue to be, the most striking feature of the region. They became the door-yards of the first settlers, and several generations

of children have filled hats and aprons with blue violets, May-apple blossoms, wood anemones, and Jack-in-the-pulpits where the she-bear had rollicked with her cubs, and the kittens of the panther had tried their young claws on the bark of the plum and the wild crab tree.

It was in one of these tiny groves of a few great trees, where the shade was ever full of light and warmth, that some children were once at play. They were smoothing off a little plat of the soft turf to lay out with sticks and stones the apartments of a doll's house, when they met an obstruction not so easily dislodged. It was a small rough slab of limestone such as one sometimes finds about the water-holes on the prairie. It had once stood on edge but now was lying prone, buried in the turf, except for a jagged edge and corner. The children worked the flat stone loose from the grass-roots and soil, when, lo! there were found on its face the rude letters of a strange inscription cut deep and with a care that quite made up for the plain lack of skill. Beneath a cross were the words:

HELOISE FEMME DE ADRIAN ROBERT
1718
TOULOUSE LANGUEDOC

Men dug in the place and found a grave with the crumbling remains of a woman, as they had expected. The hands had been decently disposed on the breast with the fingers clasping a crucifix. Nothing further of interest was found, except a finger-ring and a few beads. Who was Heloise, the wife of Adrian Robert? Why had she come here in 1718 to die in this lonely, though beautiful, wilderness, so remote from the happy home in France—the fond friends in fair Languedoc? Had she, perchance, crossed the sea as a bride to find a place in the life of the rude hamlets on the St. Lawrence? Were the rigors of the first Canadian winter more than the delicate frame could support; and was she, when death overtook her, seeking a new lease of life in the balmy airs of some fragrant grove in the far-away Southland? Was the new home to rise on the pleasant shores of one of those peaceful bayous where the great river draws nigh to the sea? Strange and sorrowful fate, to have fallen here on the very line dividing the vast domain of New France on the north from the vaster and more hospitable realm in the valley of the Mississippi!

Only a few miles away on the St. Joseph dwelt a considerable colony of French traders; but at

this period they were fierce, lawless spirits, whose unrestrained license had disheartened the Jesuit missionaries and for the time being driven them from the scene. The spot dedicated to the cause of the church and made safe as a dwelling-place for the white man, deprived of the pious ministrations of the clergy, was now given over to violence and crime. It is not, then, a matter of surprise that the travellers should have withdrawn from the presence of these desperate men to seek a sanctuary in the solitude of the prairie, where the weary one might die in sweet peace and be at rest with the flowers, the birds, the pleasant leaf-shade, the blue sky by day, and by night the watchful stars. And what an awful anguish must that have been that wrung the heart of Adrian Robert, as he worked out the inscription and set up the feeble memorial where Heloise had left his side in these remote depths of the boundless wilderness!

There is no more bitter moment than the one in which we turn from the resting-place of the beloved dead and force our feet to find again the paths of common life. But to turn from that lonely grave on the prairie and stumble forward on such a journey must have shaken the soul of Adrian Robert with a stress of grief that could

have declared itself in none of the languages of men. And whether his wanderings carried him far away on the southern rivers or back to the cold Canadian wilds, what surging emotions must have swept over his soul as he thought of the voices of this wilderness ever chanting the requiem of his dead! In moments of sorrowful musing, down to his latest hour, his eyes must have been fixed on the fair vision of this sunny plain. The mighty oaks, so grandly calm—standing still while the very centuries went by; the quiet paths where the silent red men strode forth, or the wary step of the soft-footed fox found a way; the smooth sea of swinging grass-tops furrowed by the whirring wings of the prairie-hen; the earth trembling beneath the tread of trampling herds; the storm-clouds rolling in from the wide, watery wastes of the Kankakee; the splendor of the fires in the sunset sky; the dreamy spell that holds the scene when the moonbeams slanting from the tree-tops have spread over the prairie the enchantments of spectreland—conditions like these remembrance must have supplied as the earthly realities among which the spirit of Heloise had taken its final stand spread its pinions and fled away with the parting whispers of love.

But this lonely resting-place is, in truth, only one of many such; for, a line of them—sweeping all the way from Quebec around the lakes and down the great rivers to the gulf—furnishes silent witnesses of the memorable, and often pitiful, struggle of Gallic life in America. Sometimes it is a cedar cross that marks the spot where the dead are sleeping; sometimes it is only a great bowlder; and sometimes they did as the Indians were wont to do—planted a cedar-tree above the grave that it might spread its warm palms over the soil, and in its red heart hold forever the memory of the departed.

The path that led up from the Pottowattomie village on the Kankakee passed within a stone's throw of the grove that shaded the tomb of Heloise, as Doctor Sandy remembered well. Indeed, his testimony is still corroborated by a few yards of the original depression that even yet survive, showing where it crossed such of those fence-rows as from the beginning have never been changed. And one may easily find the place where the path approached the banks of the St. Joseph. Sumach and the elderberry bend above it, as doubtless they did in the old days, and the cool turf has spread a decent screen over the ancient footsteps. But noth-

ing else invades the place, except here and there a solitary flower from the border of violets reaching down from the brink. And, truly, the region into which the path here descends has an enchantment which is all its own. The French were accustomed to call the slopes and the lowlands along the St. Joseph the Parkovash (Fr., *Parc aux Vaches*), or cow-pastures, because the buffalo-cows led their calves into these places when the summer's heat was on the prairie. The Parkovash yet retains many of its historic charms. The huge white sycamores still rise from the water's edge and look across a slender strip of wet meadow to a fringe of willows and blackthorns. On the higher ground above are the tenderest of green grasses spreading through an open walnut-grove or running from the shades that lie around the massive trunk of one giant oak to those of another fifty yards away. In the primitive days the strange and beautiful pattern of leaf-shade and sunshine held all the slope to the distant glacial hills whose low, rounded tops encompass the upland prairie.

The Parkovash was peculiarly the home of the French *habitant*. The landing-place by the river, the cool spring in the bank, the path to the dwelling, the old fireplace, and the garden-plat are yet to

be discerned at frequent intervals through the entire length of the region and still exhibit faithfully the conditions of life in the wilderness abode. The natural charm of these conditions was often lost, it is true, in the sudden alarms, the extreme perils, that any moment might bring. But years of hardship and danger had inured the French adventurer to unusual trials; and thus he might bear with fortitude, and even indifference, the threatenings of misfortune, while he was allowed the freedom from all restraint, together with the fascinating allurements of wild nature and the abundant creature-comforts in this ideal solitude on the banks of the St. Joseph.

Well might he rejoice in the beauties and comforts of such a land. The rich soil promised an abundant return from the garden-beds, the vineyard on the hillside, and the apple-tree that leaned over the roof. The fringe of wild rice that everywhere followed the banks of the St. Joseph was free to the harvester. Fish swarmed in the river and myriad flocks of wild-fowl floated on its bosom. When the morning mists began to lift, an elk herd was seen on the opposite bank, or a number of deer with their fawns. When the sun was hot on the prairie the "great wild oxen" filed over the bluff to

stand in the shade or nip the fragrant herbage along the sweet waters of the meadow springs. When evening came, thousands and hundreds of thousands of wild pigeons approached certain points of the Parkovash so that the sound of their coming was like the roar of a tempest, and where they settled on the forest even the mightiest trees sometimes sank down with the weight of the feathered host.

The red man, too, was under the spell of the Parkovash, for many of his favorite haunts were here. The historic record points out a wide bench of land everywhere roofed over with a magnificent canopy of spreading boughs as the rendezvous of all the Pottowattomies in the moon of Wild Geese. They met here for the feast of ripe corn and to apportion the land for the winter hunt. Up and down the river many council-grounds are still remembered. Such a place was the ample expanse of smooth turf hard by the Sauk trail ford. It was here that Black Hawk addressed the assembled chiefs of the Pottowattomies, imploring them to make his cause their own. Would the Pottowattomies stand with him in a last bitter struggle against the encroachments of the white man? It seemed that they would consent to do such a thing, when the head chief, Pokagon—from

whom their plans had been concealed, but who now had been secretly apprised of what was going forward—suddenly appeared in their midst. Understanding the wicked purpose that was in their hearts, he denounced it in measured, though unsparing, terms, warning his people that it was madness to entertain for a moment any thought of war. Turning to the wavering chiefs that had favored an appeal to arms, he so overpowered them with contemptuous ridicule and scorn that they cast their eyes to the ground and then covered their faces with their robes. Finally, as his reproaches grew more and more severe, they leaped to their feet, turned their backs to the speaker and then fled through the forest and disappeared over the hills. The words of the good and wise Pokagon had prevailed; once more there was peace in the heart of the Pottowattomie, and Black Hawk went his way.

The view of the river from the spot where the cool turf of the council-ground spread its soft carpet in the old days is one to impress the beholder. Breaking forth from between the hills far to the right, the flood, broad and deep, swings forward swiftly, velvet shadows bordering the shining path of its course. Advancing proudly to the ford, it

ripples by, checks its eager going in a wide bay, and rounds off among the hills on the left, its course a line of beauty whose charm is not easily defined, but, once known, is never forgotten. All the rivers that drain the great glacial hills of northern Indiana and southern Michigan are in many particulars quite different in type from the muddy, sluggish streams of lower latitudes.

But of the water-courses in this region the St. Joseph is the one that most strikingly unites those features characteristic of them all, with a few noble traits peculiar to itself. Until the very hottest days of midsummer its sparkling waters are always cold, because its currents are fed not only by the drainage of upland and prairie but chiefly by innumerable springs that bubble from the clay beds underlying the bluffs along the shore. The channel is cut deep into the vast strata of sand and gravel left by the Ice Age, deeper and deeper as the flood draws nearer and nearer to the great fresh-water sea. Therefore, the waters ever run swiftly with dimpled eddy and sparkling swirl, pausing only for a touch-and-go at every pebbly beach or where some bold promontory has planted a foot on the shore. In those first days what pictures of leafy branch, blue sky, and whistling wings were mirrored here

beneath these headlands! It was a sight to move a poet's soul, here where gigantic forest-trees leaning from the hillside or bending down from its summit flung the shadows of their great arms far across the ford, or spread a denser gloom on some deep, dark pool where the hesitating current circled softly round ere it sped away.

The Pottowattomies called the river the Sau-wau-see-be, a name softened down from Sauk-wauk-sil-buck. The title had a singular origin, for it refers to the death of two Indian women who were drowned in the stream. It was an unheard-of thing that an Indian woman should be drowned, so expert were they as swimmers. But that two should perish at the same time seemed astonishing, if not a prodigy. And when it was known that these women were sisters and the sisters twins, the old men shook their heads and thought it plain that the Spirit of the River had done this thing, that he had taken these women to himself. It was believed that the Spirit of the River—the tutelary divinity presiding over the affairs of the stream—ever looked longingly on the soft bodies of the children, the stout limbs of the young men, and the fair forms of the women. The legend further declared that since that time

the Spirit of the River had demanded an annual sacrifice of two victims, a cruel tribute whose payment not even our race has been able to evade. Doubtless a frequent cause of death for the weary swimmer is to be found in the very cold waters of certain springs gushing forth here and there in the river's bed.

On some of the headlands the aged monarchs of the ancient forest still survive, and even in their picturesque decay turn the thoughts most forcibly to the primeval glories of the Parkovash. For years the dead top of one of these great trees was the favorite haunt of an old osprey. Over the quiet waters of a tiny cove at the base of the bluff a friendly beach had spread a low-hanging tent-cover of living green, a safe retreat for a boat when the river grew black under the threatenings of an approaching storm. None who have taken refuge here could forget the great bird. When the storm came rumbling across the prairie, or rolling up the channel of the St. Joseph, the old fish-eagle never failed to swing in with the first fierce gale that blew, and striking the perch, to wheel about, ruffle up his proud crest, slant his half-spread pinions, and scream defiance to the blast. An echo of the past is this wild cry of the osprey, an echo of the furious

struggle with which through dim, unnumbered ages here in the valley of the St. Joseph bird and beast and man have fought through the span of life, exulting to surmount an adverse fate, or perishing at last beneath the stroke which their hot hearts had oft defied.

The islands, too, that fret the currents of the river, what secrets are hidden away in the seclusion of their silent shades? As you draw back the dense growth to peer into the mysteries of one of these miniature solitudes, a sudden flutter and whir of wings may set your nerves a-tingling—the swift wings of a woodcock-hen and her bevy of fledglings. Or, in such a place you may come upon a long-forgotten grave. There was a time when it was easy to find, now and then, these lone islands where a cedar cross lifted its eloquent arms to claim the spot as one sacred to the dead. But to-day even these mute witnesses have dropped into the current and glided away, just as everywhere the sea of oblivion engulfs at last even the more imposing memorials of mortal man.

From the sheltered cove beneath the fish-eagle's tree the journey by the gliding current is a short one to a locality once well known in Quebec and New Orleans and the Palace of the Tuileries.

Even before the white man's day—long, long before—the place had been a populous centre for those who dwelt in these enchanted wilds, since an Indian town occupied the favorable site on the left bank of the river. The town was there when La Salle invaded the region, and doubtless the spot had been held by many races through many ages past; for this part of the stream was one of the famous fishing-grounds. Here at a place where the waters were shallow, the aborigines had paved a strip of the river's bed from shore to shore with great slabs of limestone. Just who they were that labored at this task, or when they toiled, no one will ever know. These slabs of limestone are a characteristic of the surrounding glacial hills, having been dropped here and there by some iceberg, parts of the monstrous booty which the Frost King had stolen from rich quarries far to the north. The purpose of dragging these huge, flat stones into the river and disposing them so as to form a paved path through the waters was an important one, since thereby the people might more easily take the great fish with which the river at certain seasons was fairly alive.

The canoes were accustomed to go up stream some miles, and then, descending in an open line


Stood with uplifted spears.

that reached from bank to bank, so agitated the waters as to drive before them the finny game. Companions, who in the meantime had taken their stations at frequent intervals across the limestone floor, stood with uplifted spears awaiting the moment when the form of the rolling sturgeon or the catfish or the swift pickerel or the quick-darting pike should be outlined against the underlying pavement. Those who sometimes witnessed these operations have left the record that when the spearmen were at work, the boats went frequently to the shore, and were often weighted down to the water's edge with the burden of fishes. It was nothing strange, therefore, that just above this renowned fishing-place a great Indian village should have survived from remote times down to a period within the memory of men now living.

It is well known that the first French fort in all the region west of Niagara Falls stood on the bluff at the mouth of the St. Joseph. And many believe that La Salle, attracted by the unfailing food supply at this fishing-place, and by the opportunities for traffic in the Indian town, built his second fort at this point, some fifty miles from the mouth of the river and fourteen, or fifteen, miles below the portage to the Kankakee. Or, it may

be true, as others suppose, that the fort followed a mission which Father Allouez is known to have established here, in 1694. But whatever its origin, it is one of the historical verities that in the field just opposite the Indian town stood old Fort St. Joseph, the stronghold of the French, their secure asylum for nearly a hundred years in a wide and bloody wilderness. On the higher ground beyond its walls rose the virgin forest; in front, circling around a curving shore, rolled the bright waters of the St. Joseph.

The fishing pavement of the aborigines has fared better than the work of the white man, since much of the former is plainly visible, while it is difficult to find a single vestige of the old fort. Doctor Sandy and, likewise, many of the early settlers were wont to assert that the burnt stumps of a part of the palisades were to be seen as late as 1840. But, to-day, little may be affirmed concerning the spot where the block-house rose, the lines along which the sentries paced, and even the location of the single entrance where the ponderous gate, heavy with spikes and bars, held fast against the foe but swung wide for those who came in peace. Yet, in this place even a tame fancy must supply itself with conjectures that are both pleas-

ing and plausible. For throughout the entire area within and around the fort one can hardly find a spadeful of earth that does not contain some reminder of that life now so remote and so utterly extinguished. It may be only a glass bead with surface paled from the slow oxidation of long exposure; or it may be a piece of wampum, the Indian's tiny cylinder wrought from some pearly shell; or it may be the lost member of a rosary string, worn smooth by the affectionate touch of pious fingers that long ago ceased to express the heart's emotion or obey the will's behest.

Hand-wrought nails are common, and occasionally one may find a long slender awl. There are many gun-flints and some bullets, buttons of brass or pewter, finger-rings of bronze or silver, buckles, earrings, little hawk-bells and small pieces of sheet-metal twisted into slender cones for a tinkling fringe on the sleeves—curious and suggestive objects that one picks out of the diggings, this spadeful or that. At intervals—always too long—one comes upon a large, highly ornamented bead or a broken pipe-bowl of red catlinite, or a lead seal.

These seals are extremely interesting. The traders brought over from France and England

large quantities of expensive cloths. To prevent anyone from cutting off a few yards while the goods were in transit, it was customary to pull out the inside end of the bolt and catch it up with the outside end. A hole through the two parts then received a piece of soft lead which when set in a die was pressed flat on the cloth; while at the same time the maker's trade-mark or name or place of business, together with numbers and dates and peculiar fanciful designs, were stamped on the surfaces of the soft metal. The lead was indeed so soft that often the imprint of the two layers of cloth between the heads of the seal may be easily distinguished on the latter. Crucifixes have been found. Parts of guns are seen frequently; so, also, are tomahawks and broken knives.

And in this place the spade discloses, from time to time, the osteological remains of every species of animal whose cries were once heard in this wilderness, cries that sounded the whole gamut from the trumpet-call of the whooping crane or the bellowing of a buffalo bull to the appalling voice of the screaming panther, whose accents sometimes rent the midnight air, hushing into silence every other tongue.

The mission had been named St. Joseph after

Father Allouez's patron saint. The fort naturally assumed the name of the mission, and the river also inherited the same title. Fort St. Joseph doubtless bore a close resemblance to all these wilderness strongholds, which consisted, in general, of a commodious block-house built of logs, and sometimes of stone, with a widely encircling ridge of earth surmounted by palisades. The fence was no light affair. Its heavy posts stood high and in close contact, and were sunk deep in the earth, while their tops were sharply pointed. Sometimes there were two rows and even three rows of posts, those in the second row covering the spaces between those of the first. Scattered about within the enclosure were many small dwellings where the soldiers lived with their families. The professional trader settled among them, and the soldiers themselves were encouraged to engage in the fur traffic. As the peaceful years succeeded each other, the white men—especially those having Indian wives—were emboldened to build for themselves more commodious abodes outside the ramparts; and, finally, to push out into the inviting spots up and down the Parkovash.

The Frenchman was far more skilful than his English brother in discovering the natural con-

ditions and fixing the exact terms of an enduring amity between himself and the red man. He had a softer tongue and was himself more pliant to the savage will. He had also a better understanding of the hardships of Indian life and a better appreciation of its joys. The severe lessons of his own experience had schooled the Canadian to a genuine sympathy, which the Englishman learned very tardily or not at all. Yet, for the former, too, the forest had its awful terrors; and often some sudden alarm spreading through the valley must have hurried the inhabitants within the ramparts of Fort St. Joseph. War-parties from distant regions were apt to come and go along the Sauk trail, and while here to stop for a friendly visit. If their stay in the valley was too prolonged, it might result in some open rupture or in the renewal of some ancient and wellnigh forgotten feud, if the red man could be said ever to have forgotten a cause of enmity. The Sauk trail passed around the southern end of Lake Michigan and penetrated to the aboriginal highways of Central and Northern Wisconsin, so that the adventurous and warlike elements from hostile tribes straying into this pathway were doubtless unwilling at times to concede and respect the rights

which the French had acquired in the Parkovash of the St. Joseph.

Thus the spring of 1712 was marked by an exhibition of savage frenzy long remembered in the valley of the St. Joseph, and leading to consequences very terrible for some of the Western tribes. A band of Mascoutins had wandered into the land along the Sauk trail and had spent the winter in the Parkovash. They were the friends and allies of their relatives, the blood-thirsty Outagamies. Supposing themselves secure in the protection of this powerful and warlike tribe, the Mascoutins were in no way careful to restrain their young men from acts of studied insolence. The conduct of the latter finally became so outrageous as to draw upon the band the severe displeasure of the people at the fort, as well as the contempt and hatred of the Pottowattomies, in whose lands these strangers were making themselves very much at home. When the Mascoutins first appeared in this region, it was observed that there were captives among them—three Ottawa women. The Ottawas lived near the Straits of Mackinaw and were the firm friends of the Pottowattomies, so that the presence of such captives must have resulted at once in an open rupture

between the visitors and the natural lords of the soil, had it not been for the fact that the three women suddenly disappeared, the Mascoutins insisting that these unfortunate ones had been restored to their people. It was believed, however, that the captives had been put to death, or were kept in hiding. The latter opinion prevailed among the Pottowattomies, since some of their people who had at times crept near the encampment of their visitors believed that on several occasions they had caught sight of the Ottawa women. The Mascoutins, however, stoutly maintained that the captives had been sent home.

Such was the state of affairs when spring opened and a party of Ottawa warriors appeared one day in the chief town of the Pottowattomies. The new-comers were led by Saguina, a noted chief, who declared that the captives had not been restored and that one of them was his wife; nor was he mild in his reproaches of the Pottowattomies, who had done nothing while women of his tribe were suffering captivity on the banks of the St. Joseph. The Pottowattomies, having grievances of their own, had already determined to force the Mascoutins to leave the land; but Saguina's revelations now excited them to a pitch of anger nothing

short of fury, a violent rage—to which, in truth, their belligerent spirit was ever prone. The warriors rose up as one man and cried loudly for the blood of the Mascoutins. Saguina led the attack. So carefully planned, so sudden and so unexpected was the fierce onslaught that all the men in the band of the enemy perished in the struggle before they had time to seize their weapons, while the maidens and the children with their mothers were led away to the camps of the Pottowattomies. But the Ottawa women could not be found.

It was known at the time that a very large number of Outagamies and Mascoutins had been encamped through the winter on the banks of Detroit River and close to the palisades of Fort Ponchartrain. The Ottawa captives might be concealed in that place. Therefore, Saguina hurried thither with his warriors by the easy path of the old Sauk trail, many joining his forces on the way. It is said they emerged from the woods in front of the fort with more than six hundred warriors in their ranks, and that they advanced in regular divisions, like troops of white soldiers. In fact, Saguina had fallen in with bands from many Western tribes who were hastening to the

Detroit River, having heard the rumor that the Outagamies were laying siege to Fort Ponchartrain. They discovered at once that the rumor was true, and learned also that the Ottawa women were in the Outagamie camp. The commandant of the fort, however, was sufficiently adroit to arrange a parley with the enemy, through which the captives were restored to Saguina before the siege was turned against the Outagamie encampment.

This help which had come to the French cause from the friendly tribes was extremely fortunate, for it was doubtless the intention of the Outagamies to destroy Fort Ponchartrain and then join their friends on the St. Joseph for a similar enterprise against French interests here. In the end, however, the Outagamies suffered the fate of the Mascoutins, their friends on the St. Joseph.

So dreadful was the carnage, when the combined forces were turned against this hostile tribe, that many supposed the Outagamies had been silenced forever. But such persons reckoned without knowledge of the conditions in the populous hive hid away in the Wisconsin woods. Here by the banks of the Fox River this very warlike people had established a stronghold that seemed impregnable, whence in these times their

bands were setting forth to distress the tribes that were friendly to Canada. But now, it was hoped and believed that if any strength yet remained in the Outagamie's right arm, the lessons taught on the St. Joseph and the Detroit would forever after restrain that arm. The calamities which they had suffered might tame the pride and cool the passion of any people. But these anticipations were not realized. The report of the affairs in and around the two forts was promptly received at Quebec, only to be followed shortly after by tales of further disturbance on the part of the crafty and insolent Outagamies. Vaudreuil was then governor of Canada. He wisely concluded that the belligerent race must be utterly cut off without delay, if other Western Indians were to be held to a policy of peace—the only hope of security for the French settlements. To such an end he planned wisely and for two years spared no exertions by which he might subjugate, or extirpate, the malignant Outagamies. Yet such were the difficulties of the undertaking that in the end Vaudreuil failed, or was compelled to content himself with uncertain pledges of good-will.

The governor did, however, accomplish his purpose in one way. He impressed all the tribes

and those at the Western posts with the fact that it was a matter of first importance that the Outagamies should be destroyed. The old annals are therefore crowded with chronicles, traditions, tales, rumors, covering a period of many years and detailing bloody encounters with these savage fighters from the Wisconsin woods. But of them all the only record that sets forth results in any degree commensurate with the hopes and desires of the Canadians and their red allies, is the story which reached Quebec just as the first snows of winter were transforming the landscape of the St. Lawrence, in the memorable year of 1730. It was a boy that brought the fearful, though truly welcome, tidings—Coulon de Villiers, the son and proud messenger of the Sieur de Villiers, the commandant of Fort St. Joseph. Years afterward this son had a fort of his own, played his part in the French and Indian war, and played it so well as to defeat George Washington at Fort Necessity, July 4, 1754. But in 1730, this boy messenger, Coulon, brought to the governor and council at Quebec the details of marvellous exploits in which there had been a grand expedition, a fierce encounter with the Outagamies, and an overwhelming victory for French arms.

Late in the summer just past, tidings had reached Fort St. Joseph and the Pottowattomie town across the river to the effect that a great many Outagamies had entered the Illinois country with their women and children, had set up their lodges near the base of the great eminence called by the French Le Rocher, but since known as Starved Rock, and had surrounded their encampment with rude but strong palisades. The Illinois Indians were occupying the Rock and some of the land at its base. When the visitors had thoroughly fortified their own village, they began to quarrel with the Illinois and, finally, drove the latter up on the Rock and proceeded to reduce them by the starvation process. Anyone venturing down the difficult path by which alone descent was possible, was shot to death. The Outagamie squaws and children, eager for their part in the work of the siege, stationed themselves in canoes where the river sweeps past the perpendicular wall of this wonderful eminence. Whenever those imprisoned above let down a bucket to draw water, these cruel guards of the place cut the ropes or thongs.

If it was intended that an alliance with the French should mean anything to a tribe ever

faithful in its adherence to Canadian interests, this moment was the one above all others for an effectual test of that meaning. Nor was the Sieur de Villiers the man to hesitate in the discharge of the duties imposed by the horrible distress of the unfortunate band. When the tale of their sufferings reached his ear, he knew what Canada and France would expect of the commandant of Fort St. Joseph. Runners trom the Indian town across the river were therefore despatched in all haste to every trapper throughout the Parkovash, and to all Pottowattomies in the valley, to the Miamis on the Wabash, to the Ottawas in the north, and to the garrisons at the Straits of Mackinaw and Fort Ponchartrain. Weapons of every species were put in the best condition for active service, ammunition was carefully packed for safe conveyance, and even the small cannons in the block-houses were taken down and made ready for the journey. It was said that the number of Indian warriors responding to the call was between twelve and thirteen hundred. The forts emptied themselves of all able-bodied defenders, and every hunter and trapper within reach rushed gladly to the defence of the common cause against the hated Outagamies.

Wonderful, indeed, must have been the procession of canoes that pushed off from the strand at Fort St. Joseph and held its way up against the river's swift current. The commandant Villiers advances foremost of all, with the lilies of France lighting the way for his wild host. A canoe follows in line with a priest standing erect and raising the crucifix on high, while his upturned vision and the prayer on his lips begs the mercy and blessing of Heaven. Everywhere the stroke of the gleaming paddles keeps time with the blithe rondeau of the boatmen, and as they circle the headlands the men from the Straits cry aloud to those from Ponchartrain, rousing the echoes along the shore and beating back the silence that for infinite ages has held these wilderness shades.

And what must have been the exultation of the painted warriors sweeping forward to the succor of their old-time friends and the destruction of their old-time enemies? A thrilling spectacle was that which one might have viewed, had he taken his stand on the high bluff where the prairie approaches the river and gazed down upon the canoes sweeping forward in twos and threes and gliding gently to the portage landing. Then came the heavy task of transporting the equipage—the

light floating craft and the munitions of war and all the aids to their safe-keeping and comfort. Every back must bend under a heavy burden while this little army of Frenchmen with its red allies covers nearly two leagues of prairie-path in their approach to the head-waters of the Kankakee.

It is said that there are two thousand bends in the tortuous channel of this stream ere it reaches those plains where it is known as the Illinois River. Now, if never before, the tedious delays of the serpentine course, no less than its muddy shallows, its floating mosses, its bewildering forests of reeds, might have sorely vexed these eager spirits burning for the fray. But at length they emerged from the land of lily-pads and wild rice and looked abroad on the firm plains of the Illinois country.

Here they met with Saint-Ange and his son, who had brought their forces from the fort farther down the river. Together they proceeded to Le Rocher. The Outagamies, observing the approach of this host, fled within their barricades and made the wall firm and fast on all sides. The wigwams had been set up in a grove, and this had been surrounded by palisades standing thick and high. The French found these defences bullet-

proof and, for their small guns, cannon-proof. There was nothing to be done except to pick off any one of the besieged rash enough to show his head. Thus the matter stood for some days—those who had entrapped the Illinois on the big Rock being themselves ensnared within their own wooden walls; while the Sieur de Villiers and his grim multitude stood watching and waiting. But the besiegers knew that they had not long to wait, for the foe had little to eat and nothing to drink; and, therefore, the Frenchman was on his guard from sunset to sunset.

Finally, one dark night a portion of the wall was removed with utmost silence, and the Outagamies, with softest tread, stole out of their ramparts. There was one chance in ten thousand that they might find safety in flight. But even that chance was now taken away, for the guards were watching them. When the fugitive band was quite outside of the wooden enclosure and was just breaking into the prairie, the alarm was sounded, and the next moment the night air rang with the shouts of the soldiers and the pealing war-cries of the red men, and the din and roar of flashing guns. The pursuit was so prompt and furious that the poor Outagamies' hope was a

forlorn one from the beginning. Weak from starvation, they were speedily overtaken and easily overcome, the women and children first of all sinking down on the plain pierced by the swift arrows or torn by whistling bullets.

But if fortune favored the men for an instant, they, in turn, succumbed to the awful stroke of the Frenchman's revengeful arm. The pursuit began and terminated in a horrible butchery, the midnight darkness cloaking the terrors of death in a thousand ghastly forms, where the tomahawk and the spear vied with the gun and the broadsword in ridding the land of a scourge that all through many years had felt or feared. When the morning sun looked down on the plain, the dead were everywhere, eight hundred having perished in the flight. Of this number it is said that six hundred were found to be the bodies of women and children. The Indians from Le Rocher could find neither acts nor words to express their great joy, as they viewed the complete destruction of their cruel foe. The allies mused thoughtfully on the scene and called to mind their own friends who had perished through the Outagamies' wanton cruelty. The Sieur de Villiers and Saint-Ange paced back and forth

across the field of death, and their sons walked behind them. Now and then, the group paused to exchange views, or surmises, concerning the rewards which the government in France had promised to those who should do this deed.

These resolute Frenchmen from the East, having achieved their difficult and hazardous enterprise, then hurried back to the St. Joseph, well satisfied that the loitering bands of Outagamies—if indeed any of them still survived in the old Wisconsin nest—would not soon again venture to shoot the tame doves and poultry or feast on the calves and pigs or drive off the horses and oxen, or steal the scalps of Frenchmen and Pottowattomies, during the summer visit to the region of those vine-clad homes along the beloved Parkovash. And what must have been the feelings of the boy Coulon when he made the journey to Quebec to tell the Marquis de Beauharnois—then governor of Canada—and the intendant Dupuy and all the numerous officials of Church and State, what his father and he, together with the two Saint-Anges and all the others, had accomplished in the Illinois country for the glory of France and the safety of the cause? He arrived so late that he must have remained to

spend the cold months on the St. Lawrence. Surely, when he danced that winter with little Mademoiselle Marie, or Madeline, or Mathilde, it must have been with a light heart and a proud one. And when he told the story over and over for the hundredth time, it must have been with a full heart, for he had fought bravely in the thick of the fight. How tenaciously his boy's memory must have held on to every minute detail in all the horrors of that terrible night on the dark plain by the side of the great Rock in the land of the Illinois!

We are not informed how often it seemed necessary for the officer who ruled at Fort St. Joseph to gather his retainers about him and sally forth on one of these wrathful incursions into the lands of their enemies near or remote. But it seems probable that the commandant de Villiers' expedition stands quite alone. The truculence of the Outagamies and their friends was exceptional, other tribes lending a most willing ear to those soft accents that so skilfully promoted the ends of peace and sweet accord. Warlike measures were least of all in keeping with the American policy of the French Crown and the careful planning of the government at Quebec. That policy,

and those plans, contemplated nothing more than the development of the fur-trade, the discovery of the vast wealth of precious minerals in which these lands were supposed to abound, and the winning over of pagan peoples for the glory of the faith. Except at a few isolated spots, the country might remain a solitude. The magnificent realm now apportioned to the great commonwealths of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois might be made to yield a certain number of bales of fur and hides, but its possessors seemed not to have had the faintest dream of the actual resources abiding in their marvellous prize.

But the fur-trade itself was something tangible and, indeed, bade fair to prove one of the important supports of the French treasury. And this trade through an extensive area of the country, together with the activities thus aroused, centred at old Fort St. Joseph. The hunter, or the trapper, from time to time, stole out from the seclusion of his abiding-place in some leafy dale or dark ravine and hurried to the fort with the wealth which his patient toil had wrested from nature's wilds. To this gate came the bands of red men with enormous accumulations of these coveted treasures, the rich pelts of the beaver, the mink, the otter, the shining

robe of the black bear, the soft folds of deer-skin, and the woolly coat of the buffalo. To the shore in front of these palisades swept the voyageurs, whose songs had kept time with their paddles as they journeyed up the Illinois and the Kankakee, penetrated to the utmost sources of the tributaries of Lake Michigan, or worked their way through all the bright waters of the Wabash.

When old-time faces were seen at the fort on such a day, we may not doubt that the echoes on the river were wakened far and near by wild song and the hoarse voices of boisterous revelry. But after the wilderness had again claimed for itself these spirits bold and free, there was little to break the serene calm of the long hours, except the waters rippling by or the screams of the eagles far above the tree-tops or the sweetly solemn tones of matin bells and vesper hymns. Sometimes a travelling priest with his retinue came up the St. Joseph and rested for a short season with his brethren. It is even recorded that Englishmen from the Atlantic coast had been known to follow around to the mouth of the Mississippi, and having toiled up against its mighty flood, to hold their way through the length of the Illinois and the Kankakee and to find the portage path and so

come to spy out this stronghold that floated the lilies of France, and in the name of that proud banner held all the land. Yet, in general, strange voices were seldom heard at Fort St. Joseph. Days and weeks, and even months, went by when no unfamiliar face or form appeared on the river's bank or came through the forest-wall.

Thus the years wore on, down to the Frenchman's sad hour, the hour that saw his opportunity in the valley of the St. Joseph pass forever, together with his just title to all that splendid American empire for which through a century and a half he had labored and hoped and dreamed and put up his prayers. Englishmen had swept the plains of Abraham, Montcalm lay dead within the walls of Quebec. And so, the men that came round the lakes and up the St. Joseph pulled down from the fort the insignia of France and set up the British arms, to the consternation of those who dwelt in the Parkovash and to the amazement of all red men in the West. For a period of only twelve years might the lion and the unicorn hold sway in this land of the buffalo and the beaver, yet such a space of time was enough for several disastrous events in the place, and, finally, for the destruction of the fort itself.

One day while we were wandering over the field formerly occupied by Fort St. Joseph, Doctor Sandy chanced to pick up a metal button on whose face was a design composed of the letter K and the figure 8. "Ha, the King's Eighth!" said he, "the Eighth Regiment, whose men were stationed here at the time of the massacre." Some of the Doctor's Scotch ancestors had been among those who were engaged in the fur-trade in this region even before the days of the Revolution, and certain important traditions concerning the spirit of the French people living here had come down to him. He proceeded to disclose these traditions, together with an account of the memorable attack that had resulted in the death of so many Englishmen.

It was on the morning of a summer's day in 1763—before the sun was high, according to Doctor Sandy's statement—that a few Pottowattomie warriors entered the gate of the fort, and, having exchanged friendly greetings, scattered over the premises and mingled with the garrison. These things occurred at the time when Pontiac's forces were laying siege to Detroit. That wily chief had sent the Pottowattomie braves on a terrible mission, one which for many reasons was peculiarly acceptable to themselves. They were to

take the old Sauk trail from Detroit to the St. Joseph, and then turn down the path that led to the fort. It had been the custom to allow small bands of Indians to enter the gate and gratify their curiosity by wandering over the place. So Ensign Schlosser, who commanded here at the time, did not seek to restrain his visitors or put any careful watch on their actions. He had not heard of the Indian uprising and the condition of affairs at Detroit. Suddenly the fort rang with a great cry, and a chief springing on the commander bore him down to the floor. The followers of the red leader, hearing the signal, each struck down his chosen victim. Only two members of the garrison survived, one of these being Ensign Schlosser. They were led off to experience the horrors of captivity in the Indian camp.

As one saunters across this field that witnessed these strange historic conditions, he recalls that Fort St. Joseph, although hidden away in the vast forest depths of the great continent, did not escape its part in the Revolutionary struggle. For the citizen soldiers of Kaskaskia on the lower Illinois twice marched up, and, having overpowered the garrison, plundered the place. But the final fate of the ancient stronghold was not only such as no one

would dream of, but it was also highly dramatic. It marks the *farthest north* in all the conquests of Spanish arms on the Western continent. As an act of retaliation against the English, because of their conduct on the Mississippi, the Spanish authorities at St. Louis, in 1781, organized an expedition that rapidly marched in the dead of winter across the frozen prairies of Illinois. Stealing cautiously through the forest they surrounded the fort before any intimation of their approach had aroused the inmates. The commanding officer was absent at the time, his duties having called him to the Straits of Mackinaw. A half-hearted defence, in which only one man, a negro, was killed, and he by accident, terminated in capitulation. The Spaniards looted the place and then burned it to the ground. Afterward, Spain consented to waive her rights to the region, and the territory came back to the English. But the latter failed to rebuild the fort, realizing that it must soon fall into the hands of the Americans, as of course it did according to the terms of the treaty of Paris.

Doctor Sandy, however, was well aware that there were other considerations sufficient in themselves to prevent the restoration of this important

defence of the white man's interests in the land. The French inhabitants begged their conquerors that the ancient ramparts should be set up once more. Their petition, however, was promptly refused, and the traders, who had long relied on the protection of the fort, were told to go and live with the Indians or leave the country. The English had much positive evidence—so Doctor Sandy's family averred—convincing them that the massacre of the garrison during Pontiac's savage war had been consummated with the French inhabitants' full knowledge of the proposed attack, if not with their connivance and substantial aid. To go and live with the Indians would be no hardship for the French trader, except for the danger which the red man's village ever feared from the approach of its own enemies. And it is not improbable that the presence of the trader's stores would invite the enemy. So he neither left the country nor sought a home in the red man's village, but built for himself a stronghold, together with his brethren, along the Parkovash. One was even bold enough to set up his establishment on the south bank of the St. Joseph, and just where the Sauk trail crosses the river.

An American trader, William Burnett, of New

Jersey, may have been one of those who suffered from the loss of Fort St. Joseph. If not, he was one of the first to follow our flag into the valley. A mile above the mouth of the river the Kalamazoo trail made use of one of the natural fords. A deep cut through a steep bluff on the west side shows where the trail ascended to the higher ground. Following down the cut one comes out upon a smooth terrace of land of just sufficient elevation to be beyond all danger from the overflow during the spring freshet. And here, where the trail came up from the river, once rose the stanch walls of Burnett's thriving trading-post.

The place was well chosen. If the frowning embankment behind the post added somewhat of gloom to the evening hour, there was cheer in the sunrise, since the glory of the new day fell full on the spot, while the sheen of a swift current and the merry ripple at the ford kindled the spirit with fresh resolve. And, following the course of the stream below, the eye swept over a great bay-like expanse, where tufts of wild rice and other water-grasses alternated with quiet lagoons and the various channels into which the river there divides before gathering its floods for the greater depths of the harbor's basin. This brave

establishment, snug and stout, was thus stationed where all who travelled by land, as well as all who journeyed by the river, must pass its gates. Its master was surely a man of iron nerve who knew not the tremor of fear, since he maintained his own through a score of years, and more, in this place of grave and constant peril.

A motley crew it was that came and went. Solemn red men filing out of the forest on the farther bank stepped cautiously over the ford; or sweeping around the river's curve, lifted their canoes from the water and gently inverted them on the stony beach. With these were numerous half-breeds—surly fellows, ever ill at ease—and villanous white men whose crimes had cut them off from the fellowship of their kindred. The wretched presence of these outcasts had found tolerance here, if not sympathy, because of the Indian's strange law of hospitality, a law that compelled the red man to feed and clothe and shelter all who came in peace. Such was the will of the Great Spirit! Sometimes the canoes that glided by the post held the crew of a rival trader, and their grim salute might be the ping of their bullets on the palisades. At length, after weeks of disappointed hope, came the day of rejoicing when a

sloop, the Hunter or the Iroquois, stood in from the lake, tacked up the river, and dropped anchor in mid-stream just below the ford. Casks and boxes and sacks and huge bundles of merchandise were hoisted on deck and let down into the stout punts that plied between the ship and the landing. The vessel's hold, relieved of these burdens, was then filled with great bales of furs, the rich tribute wrested from the wilderness through many months of toil and severe vicissitudes, in which many human beings wore out their lives along the lakes, the rivers or the great marsh-land or in the deep forests or on the wide prairie.

Until quite recently a circular foundation of heavy stone-masonry marked the location of Burnett's post. This wall, set up with much care, seems to have been a part of the block-house. Men still remember the time when this stanch foundation was roofed over with the remains of what had been the heavy oaken floor of an upper apartment. The ground room thus surviving to our time was found to contain a chest with huge lock and strong iron bands. The rusty lock was easily forced open and the heavy lid thrown back. But one object was found in the chest, a book marked *Ledger B.* The pages of the latter were

covered with accounts and with an occasional note of relevant facts, all spread out in a clear and careful hand and still plainly legible. Names of people and places as recorded here have little significance now, but the reader cannot easily conceal a strong curiosity in the price of a gun or a copper kettle or a yard of red broadcloth.

*Ledger B* shows certain items that refer to a trade in cider, and with startling confirmation of its record the stumps of a few aged apple-trees still survive, doubtless the source of the post's supply of this beverage, and suggestive of the fact that hard cider in the wilderness might bring the price of brandy. But brandy itself was at hand, and whiskey, too, and New England rum; for this was the particular spot on the St. Joseph where in the day of its influence boisterous spirits held high wassail, and the son of the forest forgot his sorrows in copious draughts of the water that is also fire. It is not hard to understand the secret of the fur-trader's enormous gains, for it was the common practice that a gill of poor whiskey should be diluted and drugged and then sold for a dollar.

Nor were other commodities to be had on more favorable terms. The price of a gun was determined by spreading out the skins of beaver, mink,

and otter, and then laying them one above another until the pile pressed down should equal in height the length of the gun. To increase still further this enormous cost, the barrel was made of great length, the dimensions of the gun being often more than seven feet. The shot-gun and the rifle of our day stand from three feet to three and a half feet high. In those times it was highly important that a man should hit what he aimed at, and it is a fact—and was then an unquestioned belief—that there is a little advantage in the sight drawn over a long gun-barrel. Therefore, the excessive proportions of their fire-arms was tolerated as a necessary burden both in the purchase of the article and in its daily use. Doctor Sandy often spoke of this old trading-post, calling particular attention to certain deep depressions in the ground near the block-house, and these he supposed were the remains of the wine-cellars and pits for the storage of vegetables. He referred, also, to the tiny grove of wild asparagus, which is still to be seen and is the lineal descendant of the old garden-bed. Wild parsnips, too, are there; but left to the self-assertion of their own nature, they have degenerated into poisonous plants.

Burnett's place doubtless inherited most of the trade that once had centred at old Fort St. Joseph. Evidences of his extensive traffic are not wanting nor hard to find, quite independent of the ample testimony on the pages of *Ledger B*. Throughout Southern Michigan and Northern Indiana and down the Kankakee are many old Indian graves that contain a wealth of beads, silver bracelets, earrings and ornamental buckles, guns, scalping knives and tomahawks. In many cases these things are supposed to have come from Burnett's post, because with them is found an occasional porcelain bowl decorated within and without like broken fragments of pottery which one may easily find on the site of the post, and the manufacture of which belonged to the period of this man's operations in trade. These objects, so precious in the eyes of the savage, have come back to remind us of the ancient traffic in those first days when there was a market for furs in this far-away spot on the wild bank of the beautiful St. Joseph. The thrift of those who labored here was, however, in some degree unfavorable to American interests, though the trader himself was doubtless unconscious of his service to our enemies. There can be little doubt that the Potto-

wattomies, in making their preparations for the war of 1812, equipped themselves largely from the stock at Burnett's post. Burnett himself was no longer there. Apprised of the gathering storm, he had taken warning, and having disposed of his interests in 1808, had left the country.

It was a dark hour in the valleys of the St. Joseph and the Kankakee; the red man's heart was full of hate. Maddened by the encroachments of our race, and remembering well the fate of Eastern tribes, he was nursing his wrath and making ready to strike an awful blow, and then, if need be, to perish forever on the soil that held the dust of his fathers. Burnett had little liking for the silence of these bands of red men that filed across the ford; he read a warning in their angry scowls; and their mutterings as they passed up the trail magnified his shrewd forebodings, already dark. Sitting in his arm-chair when the twilight shadows of the bluff lay black on the river, he listened to the whip-poor-wills calling from the opposite bank and weighed carefully in his mind the growing evils with which the times were rife. He pondered well on these things and wisely concluded to retreat from the wilderness of the St. Joseph

before his stronghold should become his prison, and possibly his tomb.

The antiquarian who wanders over the site of Burnett's post is apt to linger thoughtfully over the place now known to some as The Cursed Spot. Just at the top of the bluff and by the side of the deep cut that marks the old trail, they point out a space of one or two square yards where nothing will grow. It is bordered by a heavy turf, and its soil seems identical with that of the surrounding area. But from the seeds dropped on its surface no buds of life will spring, and adventurous rootlets that work their way into its rich loam shrivel and die. This is The Cursed Spot. "What happened here?" one must perforce inquire. Some will tell you that it was a crime, black and horrible, so that even the leaves and grass trembled and shrank away. Others will say that some good angel standing here spurned the ground with indignant foot and cast a blighting spell on the spot from which he viewed below some unrighteous orgy. And still others will declare that the Indians sitting here to mix their paints, flung on the ground the dust of strange dark minerals whose potency was such that it still survives to quench the glory of bud and leaf and flower.

# X

## THE FIRST CITIZEN OF THE PARKOVASH

BURNETT received a sure warning of the impending danger; indeed, the sources of his information were finally such as to leave no doubt in his mind. The Black Partridge, a chief who lived on the lower Kankakee, was accustomed to cross over to Lake Michigan and follow the coast-line around to the harbor of the St. Joseph. At such times he built a fire in one of the warm pockets of the neighboring sand-hills and awaited the arrival of two of his friends. The thin column of white smoke continued for some hours curling up from that particular spot in the hills. It was a signal to any Indian that might be fishing in the harbor or loitering about the landing of the trading-post, and the intelligence that The Black Partridge was at hand quickly sped up the river to places fifty miles away. It came to the lodge of Leopold Pokagon, the civil chief of the Pottowattomies on the St. Joseph. This lodge stood

in the midst of Pokagon's village and by the side of a spring whose abundant waters descending rapidly along a quiet and deeply shaded vale received through its course of a mile or more the offerings of a hundred other springs, and then slipped softly into the currents of the St. Joseph. The time was when the trout-stream that flowed from Pokagon's spring joined the St. Joseph at a place near the west landing of the Sauk trail ford. Now the points are some distance apart. The trail itself bordered the vale to Pokagon's town, and then held its direct course across the prairie.

Whenever it became known that The Black Partridge had kindled a fire in the sand-hills by the lake, the chief Pokagon hurried over the trail to the landing, turned his canoe down stream, and was soon approaching the ancient village presided over by Tope-in-a-bee, the war-chief of the Pottowattomies. This is the village that from time immemorial had held the pleasant field opposite the site of Fort St. Joseph. Tope-in-a-bee, in waiting for his friend, stepped into the latter's canoe without a word, and the light craft, impelled by two powerful paddles, swept from headland to headland, like some bird skimming the waters

in careful search of its prey. They would pause, however, to kindle a fire on Moccason bluff and again at Big Bear hill, so that The Black Partridge might know that they had received his message and were on the way.

One morning in the spring of 1808, the signal-smoke went up from the accustomed place in the hills. Its slender column for a time attracted no one's attention at the trading-post and might have died away unobserved by any white person had it not been for a pair of dark-blue eyes that were looking sharply from the gate. He who gazed so attentively was perplexed somewhat over the conduct of an Indian boy whose canoe had shot out of the reeds below the ford and had pushed up stream and past the landing with something like precipitance. The youth, in fact, looked neither to the right nor to the left before he reached the bend and passed on out of sight.

The inquiring eyes were then turned toward the reeds, and so on far beyond to the light plume that curled above the distant sand-hills. It was the figure of a tall man standing in the gateway of Burnett's post, a man whose limbs were those of a schooled athlete, and whose broad shoulders supported a well-poised head, with abundant locks clustering

in thick curls on his neck, and with a complexion where a smooth olive had been deepened by long exposure. This man of stalwart frame read with joy the signal of The Black Partridge, and only hoped that its summons would reach willing ears and be obeyed. What might he not accomplish through a secret conference in the sand-hills with Pokagon, Tope-in-a-bee, and The Black Partridge?

He read the message with joy, for this man was John Baptist Chandonnai, an Indian scout in the secret service of the United States Government, one whose duty it was to promote the ends of peace in the camps of the Pottowattomies, and to report any of their plots and plans that might be hostile to American interests. He was also to observe carefully the movements of those emissaries sent out by the British Canadians and now working industriously to further estrange and embitter our Indians. Well known to all who dwelt in the Parkovash and on the Islands of the Kankakee, and familiar to every red man in the region of the Great Lakes, and with racial antipathy to Englishmen, Chandonnai was an ideal guardian of all interests involved, both those of the white man and those of the red one. Moreover, he had spent most of his life in the woods between Detroit,

Fort Wayne, and Fort Dearborn, knew all the secrets of the wilderness, knew well the Indian's daily life and conversation, his habits of thought, the excellencies and the weaknesses of his character. And beyond everything else—even beyond his keen discrimination and his clear, cool judgment in these affairs—was the fact that this Frenchman of the old school was a man of sterling worth, just and genuinely honorable, a thoroughly good Catholic, devoted to the real principles of his faith. In times that called loudly for the good man and the hero, this brave soul was easily the first citizen of the Parkovash.

When night settled on the river, it found the scout peering through the loop-holes of the block-house where he had been for an hour or more, anxious to know whether the signal-fire had been heeded and who would respond. His careful watch was rewarded, but too late for him to determine with certainty who had answered the call. Indeed, the canoe that passed by clung so close to the shadows of the opposite bank, and moved so sluggishly, that even this man's experienced eye found it difficult to distinguish the object as anything more than a drifting log. However, the last faint reflections of twilight still lingered on the

ford, and as the object passed over, they outlined dimly the canoe with the motionless forms of two men crouching low. The scout drew back from the loop-hole quite satisfied with the knowledge acquired, and, descending to Burnett's supper-table, he ate the evening meal in silence.

The hours wore away; the lights were put out; the watch-dogs lay dreaming in their kennels; the inmates of the post were fast asleep; no sound broke the stillness, save the swirl of the current in front of the landing and the howling of a pack of wolves miles and miles away, where a deer was straining forward to reach the river and put the barrier of its swift waters between herself and her pursuers. The gates of the trading-post had been closed and bolted and barred, but the scout stood outside, leaning against the palisade-wall. His rifle rested on his arm. The scene had changed, for the moon had risen full-orbed, and Chandonnai, before venturing forth, was only waiting until its beams should most nearly counterfeit the day. Finally, he stepped down to his canoe, pushed across to the other bank, drew the light craft into the thicket, and pursued his way through the forest.

To follow his path would be to make the detour

of a swamp. Afterward, one must cross a stream and then strike into the dry bed of an ancient water-course that opens out on the lake-front a mile above the rendezvous of The Black Partridge and his friends. Having reached the shore of the lake, Chandonnai raised his powerful voice in one of the old songs of the Canadian boatmen, a carol whose lines he remembered since the days when he had held his place in the long canoe of the voyageurs. As he sang, he walked down the shore, advancing rapidly along the hard sands near the water's edge. The high embankment that in this place fronts the lake for a half mile reflected the great wave of melody far out on to the floor of the lake, but allowed scarcely the faintest echo to creep through the overtopping verdure and into the forest beyond. But these conditions in no way hindered the rich tones from reaching those for whom they were intended, the three friends around the fire in the pocket of the sand-hill down the shore. Before the first strain had died away, the three men leaped to their feet and listened intently. Long before the stalwart form of the singer came in view, they recognized his voice, and then these red men knew that he who was approaching came with full knowledge

of their presence, that he desired to participate in their deliberations, and that it might be neither a judicious thing nor an easy one to put off the Frenchman who could read their secret thoughts and whose counsel had ever been wise and good. And it might be that the white man could speak the word that should lift the burden of anxiety now weighing down the spirits of Pokagon, Tope-in-a-bee, and The Black Partridge.

The singer walked forward into the full moonlight, lowered his voice, and then came on in silence. He sat down on a log that lay just beyond the reach of the waves and immediately in front of the great white sand-pile near whose summit was the depression marked by the signal-smoke in the early morning. The scout held a handful of pebbles which he cast one by one into the face of the advancing wave. The Indians above were peering down through the branches of some of the dwarf cedars with which the sand-pocket was lined. But neither the human form at the water's edge nor the three friends at the hill-top gave any other signs of conscious life, until the moon had traversed a considerable arc of her farther journey through the skies. The red men must first determine and fix in their minds what information they

are willing to impart freely, and what secrets they will endeavor to withhold. At length The Black Partridge leaped across an outer branch of the cedar and slid down the yielding sand to the level of the beach, as noiseless in his descent as the hill's shadow in which he now stood. This Indian was happy to be known by the name of a bird which we of this day call the ruffed grouse, a proud, beautiful, and singularly intelligent creature, whose most peculiar characteristic is the habit of perching on a log in the moonlight during spring-time and attracting its fellows by drumming on the log with its wings. So, the Indian by some strange skill of articulation, a nice art which long practice had enabled him to acquire, gave the low, booming sound of this grouse, or partridge. The scout, perfectly familiar with the call of every creature in the wilderness, perceived the meaning of the gentle summons, smiled at the ingenious welcome, turned, and then came forward with both hands extended to greet the Pottowattomie chief.

Chandonnai and the red men were soon seated on the evergreen boughs with which the ground was thickly strewn on all sides of a glowing fire-hole, or hearth, at the centre of the sand-pocket.

The Indians discovered that the Frenchman had brought with him a handful of pink flowers, the fragrant buds and blossoms of the trailing arbutus, a plant sacred to the Pottowattomies and to all native tribes that dwelt in the region of the Great Lakes. The flower was associated with certain of their legends revealing the Great Spirit's interest in their welfare. Chandonnai knew well a bank rich in the spicy odor of the arbutus, and he had gathered the flowers in passing, since he wished to appeal to the religious instincts of these red men. Each of the latter received a strand of the fragrant blossoms and pressed it to his lips and nostrils. Then all sat in silence while a carved pipe-bowl with long decorated stem was filled again and again and passed many times from one to another. At length the scout began to say that he had recently returned from Detroit where he had conversed with the priest who formerly had visited from time to time the villages of the Pottowattomies. He then drew from his bosom a small packet which the priest had sent to Pokagon and which was found to contain a bottle of holy-water and, also, one of sacred oil for anointing the body of a dying person. The priest had, moreover, written out certain careful directions for a

burial-service, and the lines of a simple prayer which the children might be taught to repeat.

From his youth Pokagon had striven assiduously to comprehend the Christian faith and to follow its teachings, and the instructions of the priest were in response to the Indian's request to be shown what course to pursue in order that the truths of the white man's religion might be kept alive in the hearts of the people. Tope-in-a-bee and The Black Partridge—who had been in the past only slightly submissive to Christian influence—were greatly moved at sight of the oil and the holy-water, and begged to be allowed to test the efficacy of the former and to touch a drop of the latter to their tongues. But the scout insisted that these things must not be put to such use, that their purpose was not to refresh the body but to sustain the spirit. Withholding these visible and tangible elements only stimulated the natural curiosity of their simple natures.

They were in a frame of mind to look into these mysteries. The arbutus flowers had turned their thoughts toward the spiritual ideas of their own people, and while musing thus they might heed more carefully those of the Christian faith. In explaining the use of the symbols provided through

the kindness of the priest, the Frenchman was led on to say that he had often thought that the Great Spirit whom their fathers had worshipped was none other than the God of the Christian. "Therefore," said the scout, "you and all good Indians should help the chief Pokagon in his pious efforts to instruct the people. So, your children may be happy in this life and prepared for the life to come; and so, worshipping the same great God, they will wish to be at peace with their white brothers." Tope-in-a-bee and The Black Partridge took the chief Pokagon by the hand and pledged him their support.

Chandonnai had spoken from the heart, and yet, had he studied his part with even greater care, he could not have hit upon a more cunning policy. This appeal had been to their best and deepest instincts. Not deeming it expedient, however, that he should then follow up the advantage gained, he turned abruptly to The Black Partridge and asked: "Are the hearts of your young men now inclined to peace?" At this the Indians moved uneasily. The chief from the lower Kankakee averted his glance as he confessed that his people were not so inclined.

"Last summer," said the Frenchman, "the

Great White Father sent you many blankets. Since then the snows have come and gone; did not the blankets keep you warm?"

"The Great Father sent us good blankets," said The Black Partridge.

"I have not heard," the scout continued, "that the trader Burnett returned to you a small price for your furs."

The Indians shrugged their shoulders, as though some ground of complaint might here be found, if looked for. But the scout—not forgetting the hint that Burnett was in disfavor—knew well that there must be some more substantial reason why the young men were not now inclined to peace. So he continued his interrogations, hoping to draw out some explanation of the causes that were leading up to the threatened Indian revolt.

"Has the English Father sent his servants from Malden," said the scout, "to whisper evil words in the ears of the young men?" The Indians glanced from side to side, but they neither moved their bodies nor uttered a syllable in response. The silence of some minutes was finally broken by the war-chief of the St. Joseph, who avoided the question, volunteering, however, an important

disclosure. With a scowl of disapproval, showing his own feeling in the matter, he hissed out, "Tecumseh, the Shawnee!"

"Tecumseh," laughed Chandonnai, "and what has he been able to do?"

"He has made my people hate The Black Partridge!" said the Kankakee chief. "For half a moon he tarried in our lodges. Sitting in the council of the old men, he begged them to show the people that he was wrong, but no tongue could deny his word. He called the young men about him and spoke in words soft and low, declared that the Great Spirit would help them to drive the pale face beyond the mountains in the East, and that it was the will of the Great Spirit for none but his red children to possess the land. The women and children ran forth and gathered in the midst of the warriors that they might hear the voice of the Shawnee. When all stood in silence, he spoke again; but now his face was a thunder-cloud, the flashes of his eye were the fiery glances of Pauguk, his swift words had wings. And I, I alone, withstood him. I warned the people that Tecumseh had stolen away their reason, that they were beside themselves with a hope that must fail, that when Tecumseh's folly

had kindled the anger of the Great White Father, the children of the pale face would cut us off utterly from the land. But my people scorned me, for my utterance is weak, and the sayings of the Shawnee were pleasant to their ears. I could do no more, for he who deceived the people turned on me with his swift speech. He stamped on the ground, and the warriors stood still, the women shed tears, and the children cried out in wild alarm. He stamped on the ground again, and all the lodges shook. He stamped again, and a fierce blast swept in from the lake, whistled and screamed through the reeds, and tore the green leaves from the village oak. Then the young men declared that the words of Tecumseh were the promises of the Great Spirit!"

The chief paused to study the effect of his words. But the set features of the Frenchman completely masked his real emotions. He knew that the region whose interests he was seeking to safeguard might soon be face to face with one of those semi-religious uprisings, such as Indian communities have been prone to from very ancient times. In the old days, these fanatical eruptions, where the prophet's vision has aroused the warrior's zeal, seem to have united at certain periods a con-

federacy of many tribes against any or all others, and within the historic era have several times turned the whole force of the wilderness against the Anglo-Saxon border-land. Chandonnai might confidently hope that some means would be found to check for a time this wave of savage frenzy, though no man could say what loss humanity might suffer before these mad energies had spent themselves. He would do what might be done, yet it did not seem that such ends could be furthered by augmenting in any way the alarm with which it was evident the three chiefs were now sorely distressed.

"Is Tecumseh still with your young men?" he asked of The Black Partridge.

Being answered that the Shawnee had departed a few days before for the villages of their people in the Wisconsin woods, he urged the Kankakee chief to return home and continue his prudent counsels in the hope that reason would regain its sway in the minds of some. "I will come to your lodge on the third night," he added. "Together we must win them back."

"The Shawnee has promised the young men," said Pokagon, "that they shall come with him to this place to help him rouse the towns on our

river, after our people beyond the lake have received his words."

"When he enters the Parkovash," said Chandonnai, "my shadow shall dog his steps until he has departed from the land. We must stand together firmly and have our answers ready for his artful speech. We may yet confuse him, so that the warriors will stand aloof from his lies and his wicked cause."

Tope-in-a-bee and Pokagon, comforted by the scout's firm words, each seized one of the Frenchman's hands and pressed it fervently, while tears of gratitude shone in their eyes. The scout then turned away, climbed up the outer wall of the sand-pocket, leaped over, and descended in safety to the beach. He passed up the shore, and returned as he had come, musing deeply and pausing now and then with a sigh that told of sad fears and forebodings from which the heart of Chandonnai would not soon be free.

# XI

## THE RESCUE

LATE in the afternoon of August 16, 1812, a woman lying in the bottom of a long Indian canoe raised herself on one elbow, and then turned her head from side to side searching for some glimpse of land. The frail vessel was riding on the waters of Lake Michigan and just out of sight of the southern shore. The woman was the wife of Captain Heald, the late commander of Fort Dearborn, whose garrison had this day suffered the extreme horrors of Indian warfare and had gone down under the terrible blow so long threatened and for which the red man had carefully prepared.

Having finally caught sight of the low cloud of smoke in the West marking the location of the ruined fort, Mrs. Heald drew a deep sigh as the horrible reality of their cruel fate forced itself on her reviving consciousness. She dipped one hand in the water and bathed her forehead and eyes, sighing again as she did so; for she had been

in a heavy stupor for some hours, the result of nervous exhaustion and many severe flesh-wounds. She had been aroused by her companion, who needed a blanket from the pile on which she was lying. A light wind had sprung up, drifting out on to the lake from the Illinois prairies, a most welcome breeze, since it would help them across these dangerous waters. A sail could be improvised out of the blanket. Two other canoes were drifting by the side of this one, and their occupants were also rigging up a few yards of canvas to catch the inviting airs which Heaven seemed to have sent this way.

"Where is he?" were the first words that broke from the lips over which reason had now regained its sway.

"Your husband is safe," said her companion. "The Black Partridge and his band have taken him with others to their lodges on the Kankakee and will conduct him to your side in a few days."

The speaker was Chandonnai, the American scout. As he talked he worked on at the task of putting up the rude sail. Those in the other canoes were listening attentively, for the scout proceeded to give the details of the woman's rescue from the hands of the savages who had been about

to take her life. An old horse, together with a jug of whiskey from the fort and a few beads and other trinkets—these things had been the price of the woman's ransom. Mrs. Heald was then informed that they were now endeavoring to cross Lake Michigan; that they had pushed far out into the open sea with all haste to avoid pursuit, and because such a route, though hazardous in rough weather, was safe enough in present conditions, and was a direct line to the harbor of the St. Joseph. A secure asylum in the lodges of the St. Joseph was offered by the chief Pokagon and his friend, the war-chief, Tope-in-a-bee. The former was now rigging a sail in the canoe on the left, and the industrious paddle of the latter had brought the remaining one thus far in their journey. The passengers with the two Indians were the trader Kinzie and his family.

The little vessels were soon on their way again. Broken food—which some of their number had snatched from the wreck of affairs at the fort—was passed from one to another. Then all, except those tending the sails, fell asleep, soothed by the breeze and the easy motion of the canoes, and by a sense of heavenly relief to escape, at last, from those awful scenes at the ruined fort. The day

wore along, evening came, and the sun spread a fiery floor over the cool blue waters of the sea, and then dropped from its place in the sky.

Slowly the stars stole out one by one, and the gentle breeze blew on. The shifting constellations in the dark vault of the heavens alone marked the flight of the weary hours. The East had begun to purple in the presence of the new day, when the dim outline of the Michigan woods rose on the grateful vision of the waking refugees. Slowly, all too slowly, the canoes crept over the intervening distance, until the individual trees began to stand out and apart from their fellows and each bolder prominence to rise higher and higher. It was in the full light of day and with the wind dying out of their useless sails that they pushed cautiously over the bar, and then swept most eagerly within the protecting arms of the high bluffs and low sand-hills that encircle the harbor of the St. Joseph.

They paused on the shore while the scout ran to the top of the bluff and paced up and down with his glass, searching the smooth floor of the sea and every point of the sky-line to know certainly that they were not pursued. But the evidence of their entire safety was not as conclusive as he might have wished, for in places heavy clouds of

mist were lifting slowly. Still, it was felt that they must risk the danger of a brief delay at the Burnett trading-post; wounds must be dressed and nourishing food must be had at almost any hazard.

So the canoes passed on to the landing above the ford, while Chandonnai remained on the bluff to give timely warning of any approaching foe. To tarry at the post more than a few hours was not to be thought of, for this place had been referred to by the Indians at Fort Dearborn as the next point of attack. When the time for its destruction would arrive, no man might declare; but should the attack be made, the place must surely fall. Therefore, the slanting rays of the afternoon sun saw the travellers once more on the river, and still another afternoon had wellnigh slipped away before they passed the homes of Tope-in-a-bee's band. But not even in this place could they remain and hope for peace and security. The town was too much exposed, and among its inhabitants were many sorely disaffected warriors. But when they reached the landing at the ford of the Sauk trail, they gladly left behind the watery highway of their wearisome and perilous journey. Thoughts of the awful tragedy from

whose scenes they had fled must have weighed heavily on the spirits of these rescued ones, as they filed up the trail from the ford and then wound through the hills toward the lodges of Pokagon's town. And then, after all, might it not prove untrue that this Pokagon's heart knew no guile?

All such doubts were dispelled, however, when the village had found an opportunity of adding to its generous hospitality many of the truly tender ministrations that spring so freely for those who have won the sympathy of the red man. They had found faithful friends and a place of safety. Here Captain Heald joined them in a few days.

Fields of grain now cover the spot where this village of the Pottowattomies once stood. When heavy rains have washed the freshly ploughed ground, the antiquarian will show you where a few blue glass beads may be found, or an arrow-point, or perhaps a fish-spear. On a neighboring rise of ground he will brush aside the fallen beech-leaves to point out a slab of limestone, like those in the river at Fort St. Joseph. The stone was once the threshold of a church—a Christian church, albeit one made of logs—which Pokagon and his friends built in this place with much care and great labor. One may trace the building's ample

dimensions from the depressions in the soil where the wooden foundations, as well as all other parts of the structure, have succumbed to complete decay. This church edifice was the work of fond hearts—Indian hearts. Pokagon himself had kept up at least the outward form of Christian worship during a period of many years after the missionaries had left the country. And, finally, because of his earnest entreaty, a priest was sent to them. Their sires had taught them much about the Great Spirit, but the Christian had taught them much more, and the new faith must not perish from among the people. Americans may not forget this spot, since it is one where the love of Christ found permanent lodgment in an Indian's bosom; and for that reason the red man's home became an asylum for our unfortunate countrymen in the season of their dire distress. One may walk down to the springs again and refresh himself from their cold floods, which now, as in the past, have never been known to fail. But he will find little else to suggest the old life, unless it be the shocks of Indian corn that stand where the lodges once tapered up at this old town of the good and wise Pokagon.

The Kinzies were conducted by Chandonnai

far to the north and east, and finally brought by secret and roundabout paths to friends in Detroit. But Captain Heald and his wife lingered until they might recover from their wounds. Neither they nor their host, however, felt that perfect security would long be possible in this place. The great Sauk trail was near the village, and strange red men were coming and going. The story of the rescue of this white man and his wife could not fail to reach the distant camp-fires of their foes.

Nor did such forebodings prove groundless; for one day the rumor came that the young men in one of the Wisconsin villages were about to strike the trail, and that it was their hope to seize again these trembling refugees and lay fagots at their feet in the far-away towns of their conquerors. Not a moment must be lost. Pokagon hurried his *protégés* down the trail to the landing, where the canoes, quickly launched and manned, shot down the current and sped away and away to the harbor at the river's mouth, and out into the waves of the great sea. When they were quite across the heavy swell from the lake, the prows turned north. The line of the canoes held to an even unvarying speed until they had rounded the first bold promon-

tory a few miles from the harbor, and then all stood still while the last of the line swept past. "*Bon voyage!*" cried out some of the boatmen in soft, low tones, while others called on a Christian saint. Not a few, however, mentioned the names of heathen divinities, some of the tutelary gods—such as the Spirit of the Great Fish, the Great Turtle, the Great Swan—into whose care and keeping they desired to consign their friends now speeding on their perilous journey.

The three occupants of this last canoe were the Captain and his wife and Chandonnai. The scout had insisted that all others should yield to him the difficult task of conducting the refugees to Mackinac Island, the sacred spot where no Indian might take the life of any human being. By dint of tireless energy at the paddle and the blessed fortune of light winds favoring their course, they worked their way down the whole length of Lake Michigan. In the forest-wall bordering the lake were certain clefts where one might find the mouth of a river, the Kalamazoo, the Grand, the Muskegon. They would not venture past these places except under cover of darkness. If no open enemy should be lurking in the neighborhood, they were still the places where the flight

of the fugitives would certainly be observed, and no one could foretell the effect of the rumors thus set in motion. This dangerous headland, whose angry waters they avoid, is Point Au Sable, and that one is The Sleeping Bear, with the mysterious islands of the Manitou on the faint, far-off sky-line of the West. Here are the twin bays, and just beyond are the villages of the Ottawas. At length they turn into the straits and come all in safety to the beach of Mackinac Island, where they find Captain Roberts of the English army. Delivered into his care, these grateful survivors of the Fort Dearborn massacre were promptly sent forward to their friends in the East.

Chief Pokagon having parted with his white friends on the lake, held his way back to the harbor, returning to his forest-home. Let us follow him. He is in a meditative mood, as the canoes standing in near to the bank work their tedious way up the St. Joseph. He cannot shut out some thoughts of the wrongs his race has suffered at the hands of the oppressor; he thinks of the unequal contest, whose issue is now each day more plain; he thinks of his part in shielding these victims whom an avenging fate seemed to have dedicated to the fury of the red man. But something tells him

that his deed of mercy has been a worthy one. Is it the voice of the Great Spirit that he hears? or is it only the breeze rattling the stems of the wild rice that everywhere fringe the banks and swing their tasselled tops high in air? Yet, when his feet stand once more on the venerable Sauk trail, the ancient path of his fathers, there comes o'er his soul the old longing that wakes in every Indian breast—not a hope but only a deep desire—that the Great Spirit would cause the white man to fade away, and that none but moccasoned feet should approach the river's brink or stand in the cool aisles of the forest. He wishes that the cattle, the sheep, and the swine might go to their heaven, and that the buffalo cows might come again to the Parkovash. But at this moment his eyes fall on the high cedar cross that rises from the hill-top where the dead are sleeping, and he thinks of the good priest who first taught him a Christian prayer. Then he knows that these things cannot and must not be. He pauses in the path until the others have passed on. They think that he waits to offer a pious salutation to the spirits of the dead, as red men are wont to do. But when he is alone, this Pokagon, chief of the Pottowattomies, facing the symbol of the new

faith, crosses himself and, turning his eyes to the sky, begs the Blessed Virgin to touch the hearts of his people and warm their bosoms with enduring love for the white brother.

## XII

### THE STORY OF THE FIRST WAGON

To-day, as for fifty years past, the Sauk trail bears the name of the Chicago Road, having received such a name when the Government had smoothed and straightened its course from Detroit to Chicago. By such means it became one of the mightiest of those great arteries through which in the early days the vigorous currents of Anglo-Saxon life began to run toward the remote parts of the far West. But the first wheels to sink a furrow on either side of the old path were not those of the white man's wagon. Priority in this matter must be conceded to Pokagon's wagon that first rumbled out of old Pokagon Town and along the sinuous course of his people's ancient highway. As proud as any conquering monarch in his golden chariot was this red chieftain trundling through the forest and across the prairie in his brave contrivance which, he trusted, should convince the world that the Indian might master the arts of the pale face.

Just when this wagon was built we do not know, except that it was in the first years of the nineteenth century and probably before the Fort Dearborn massacre. The vehicle continued to do service for many years, and was at the time a matter of no little astonishment to the early inhabitants of the region. One of the latter was accustomed to recall "a day back in the twenties" when he had beheld a strange apparition moving across the prairie at a good, vigorous gait. As the equipage drew nearer, it proved to be Pokagon's famous wagon, and the chief himself was holding the reins over a horse and a steer that had been harnessed together and were working as submissively as one could desire. The royal car rolled away to the south; for in that direction and near at hand lay the Dragoon Trace, a kind of rude military road, or path, that led from Fort Wayne to Fort Dearborn. A troop of United States cavalry, or dragoons, as they were then called, was coming up the path, and the chief doubtless desired the soldiers to know that there was one red man who had learned how to make a wagon and how to use it.

On this occasion there happened to be with the troops a clergyman going through to Fort

Pokagon's famous wagon

Dearborn, and on his account they halted for a close inspection of Pottowattomie workmanship. The surprise of these and all beholders was not alone because an Indian had worked out the device, but because the design of the wagon was totally different from every other manner of vehicle to be seen in the country. It was not one of those huge "arks" such as rolled out of Pennsylvania and Virginia in the early days; nor was it the lighter conveyance of a "York State" gardener; nor yet was it a chaise, or gig, such as an official dignitary might sometimes have used even in the wilderness. The clergyman declared that the curious construction was in many ways the counterpart of the ancient carts depicted on the old Egyptian tombs and still used in Oriental countries.

And such, indeed, was Pokagon's wagon; for it consisted of a stout frame, not unlike a low wood-rack, surmounted by a comfortable seat and supported on a strong, heavy axle. Nicely fitted to this axle were the two massive wheels, each from six to seven inches in thickness and not less than two and a half feet in diameter. They were cross-sections of the trunk of a great white oak. A close examination of the wheels showed that they

had not been worked out with a saw, but had been dressed to shape by alternate burning and scraping, just as the aborigines have for ages shaped and hollowed out logs to make their light shell-canoes. And this Indian's wagon was painted red, as any Indian's should be.

The soldiers riding away speculated long on the origin of the strange device. What had suggested the Oriental pattern to this Indian far off in the forests of the Northwest country? On this point, unfortunately, the chief had always maintained a dogged silence. He would tell no man why he had made his wagon thus. Nor was his conduct without sufficient reason, if we may trust what tradition says of him. For, when he was a youth—so it is said—he cared little for the arts of the pale face. It was as a warrior that he would win renown. Thus had his fathers done. Yet in this stormy period of his young manhood it was that his mind had seized upon this pattern for a wagon. But when or where he had found his model no man could learn from him, since any discussion of the matter must call up the days and the scenes which now he would have all men forget.

It cannot be denied that this same wise Pokagon

when a young man led his braves on the war-path. And what pains they were at to find the enemy! The length of the red man's war-path seems almost incredible. The Iroquois of Central New York often found their foes beyond the mountains of Georgia. The Comanches of Northern Texas rode over a trail whose length was more than twice the distance from Chicago to the mouth of the Hudson River, while our Pottowattomies often sought a field for their warlike manœuvres along the banks of those rivers that are tributary to the Arkansas and the Missouri. When Lieutenant Pike was sent out by our Government, in 1806, to explore the Arkansas River, he took with him as guides a band of captives, fifty-two Osage Indians. He had found these unfortunates languishing in the camps of the Pottowattomies, many hundreds of miles from their native plains. Tradition has not disclosed what part our Pokagon played in bringing these poor creatures to his northern home. But we do not doubt that his enemies had full cause to think him brave.

The encampments of the Osage tribe were at that time near the head-waters of the Neosho, a country now included in the State of Kansas. Through the confines of their territory meandered

a well-known path which was the forerunner of the great Santa Fé trail, the famous highway connecting Santa Fé with the old French and Spanish city of St. Louis. An occasional troop of soldiers rode over this trail, and often one might see the caravans of Spanish merchants and petty traders coming and going. Sometimes a band of Comanche horsemen turned into this well-beaten roadway and followed its course for a time, or a group of Pawnees concealed themselves behind the low hills that in some places skirt the path. And here, too, we may not doubt that our Pottowattomies were sometimes in hiding, when the Osages came down the path to traffic with any passing caravan of traders. In such a place Pokagon and his warriors could lie in wait until they should find and overcome the foe. A remarkable panorama was that which the life of the trail supplied for these red men from the far East. But of all the sights he saw, the one which most profoundly moved the chief Pokagon was the old Mexican wagon with its limitless capacity for goods and chattels, its ponderous wheels, each wrought from a solid piece of timber, and its draught-animals, which were sometimes half-wild oxen and sometimes a yoke of steers with horses and mules as co-laborers.

And, indeed, that venerable type of a wagon might well excite the attention of the red man. The Spaniards brought the device into Mexico from Spain. They themselves had received it from the Moors. It had come down to the latter by natural inheritance from the tribes of north Africa which from the earliest times have hung on the borders of the civilization of the Nile. In such a wagon as this Joseph brought his father up out of the land of Egypt. Such a wagon as this bore all the burdens of the Oriental world in all the ages of the past. Even the Greeks and the Romans had not sufficient inventive skill to escape from this device, for even their war-chariots were scarcely a departure from these lines. And so, at length, this old pattern of the wagon of ancient Egypt had come round to the other side of the world and now had fixed the wondering attention of an American Indian. As the chief Pokagon fled homeward along the old war-path, many thoughts filled his fancy, thoughts that in no way pertained to the victory won or the Osage captives that followed in his train. He would emulate the white man. He would know the white man's art. He would build a wagon!

Well remembered is the day when the farmer-

boys drew out of the spongy earth around one of the springs at Pokagon Town the last surviving remnants of the chief's famous wagon, the broken parts of the huge wheels. It was a most fortunate recovery of a glorious relic of the past. When the mud and grime of three-quarters of a century had been washed away, here and there a spot of red paint showed itself to tell of the glory in which this wilderness chariot once flamed forth on the old Sauk trail, announcing to the solemn forest and the sunny prairie that the influence of the Pharaohs had come at last even to the far-away region of the Great Lakes. These fragments of the broken wheels seemed to teach their lesson plainly; for were they not the visible testimony of the Indian's struggle with the white man's art?

Though the day was far spent, we still lingered in the precincts of this deserted village, unwilling to quit the scenes that could so forcibly testify to the character of the red man, could testify how he sometimes comprehended the plain, though doubtless unwelcome, fact that "his feet must tread the white man's path," if he would prevail in the modern world. We were turning over these thoughts, while gazing into the bowl of one of the springs that bubble now for us, as they have done

for them of yore through ages past, when a soft booming sound arrested our attention and called us back to the affairs of the living moment. It was the far-off blast of the steam-whistle at one of the great wagon factories whose product has made the valley of the St. Joseph famous in many lands. The breath of steam on the whistle's lip of bronze proclaimed that labor's day was done. The miles of atmosphere that lay between this quiet vale and that world of the forge and the hammer had softened the tones of the powerful voice, until one might have mistaken it for the moan of an Osage captive or the ghost of the old warcry, as some spirit-band once more hurried down the ancient trail.

But no, the voice came not from the dead past; it swelled from the bosom of the living, triumphant, exulting present. And it, too, told the story of the wagon—that burden-bearer for all the world, the American wagon—clothed in all that perfection by which American industry and American genius are now prevailing so mightily in the markets of civilized lands. It would seem that no one could listen to this voice and then turn his eyes upon these relics of the ancient wheelwright's labor without finding a peculiar fitness in the choice

of this locality for the scene of the primitive wagon maker's triumph. Nature had marked the spot. At the beginning the wagon-maker's spirit was in the air, so that even the Indian felt its influence and deserted the war-path for the nobler fame of building the first wagon.

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