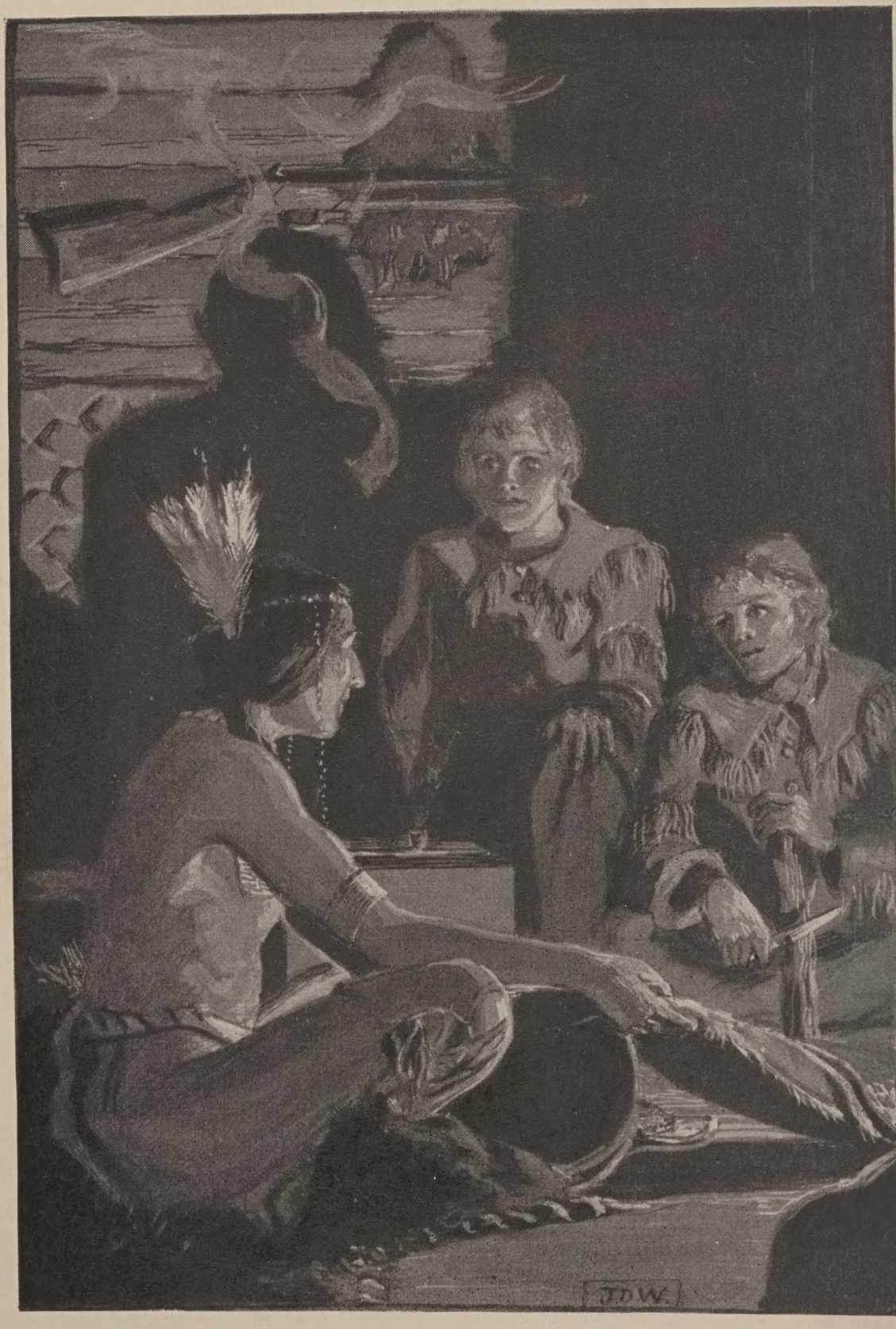
THE RAID OF THE OTTAWA



"I HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE WILLING TO BE MY SONS."—*Page 246.*

THE RAID OF THE OTTAWA

BY

D. LANGE

Author of "On the Trail of the Sioux," "The Silver Island of the Chippewa," "The Shawnee's Warning," "The Threat of Sitting Bull," etc.

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The Raid of the Ottawa

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FOREWORD

THIS story plays at the time of the French and Indian War. During this contest, the American Colonies and England on one side and the French on the other side were engaged in a long struggle for the possession of Eastern Canada, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi Valley east of the Great River.

It is a story of captivity amongst the Indians of three American boys from Western Pennsylvania.

One cannot help admiring the bravery and hardihood of the American frontier settlers, who held their primitive homes on the tributaries of the Ohio against the attacks of French soldiers and countless Indian raiders, who roamed as far as within two days' journey of Philadelphia.

The story tells what befell the three sons of Samuel Hopkins at the hands of Wagooshaw and Winnebogo, two Ottawa warriors,

and how two of the lads were adopted by the good chief Obashay, who lived on Michipicoten Bay on Lake Superior.

The author has tried to tell here another story of the lakes and forests, rivers and mountains of America; and of the wonderful history of our country. He believes that to know America and its history is to love America.

D. LANGE.

St. Paul, Minnesota,
February, 1921.

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The Raid of the Ottawa

CHAPTER I

THE RAIDER

WAGOOSHAW, the Ottawa Indian from Lake Superior, had been watching the cabin of Steve Hopkins all day.

The Ottawas and all the Indian tribes west of Lake Ontario were strong friends of the French in the French and Indian war, which had now been raging for several years; while the Iroquois or Six Nations had taken the side of the Americans and the English.

Wagooshaw had been lucky on his raid into the American settlements east of Fort Du Quesne, the site of the present city of Pittsburgh. He had in his bag the scalp of an Iroquois and that of an American, but he was not satisfied with these trophies, for he had the reputation among the Ottawas and the French

of being a bold warrior, who brought not only scalps but live captives to the French forts, which were located along the trade route on the Ohio, Lake Erie, the Niagara River, and Lake Ontario to Montreal and Quebec.

Now a man came out of the cabin.

"Fred," he called to a boy, "you stay in the cabin till I come back, then you can come and milk one of the cows."

Wagooshaw could have fired at this man and might have secured another scalp, but it would have exposed him to great danger. The man carried a gun on his shoulder, and in his belt Wagooshaw saw a pistol and a hunting-knife. If Wagooshaw failed to kill him, the white man would surely attack the Indian, moreover the boy in the cabin also had a gun.

Wagooshaw had not been in the cabin, but in the morning Steve Hopkins and his nephew, Fred, had worked in the corn-patch near by and each had had a gun.

The Ottawa had not understood what the man had said to the boy, but he knew that the man was going to bring home three cows, for he had found the cows in the woods on the day

before and he had heard a calf bleat in a small log barn. Wagooshaw wanted very much to kill that calf, for he had eaten nothing except a little parched corn for several days, but he refrained from doing so, because he feared that it would ruin his chances for making a captive and it might even expose him to grave danger.

After Stephen Hopkins had been gone a little while, the boy came out and went to the corn-patch and soon returned with an armful of early green corn in the husk.

Wagooshaw watched the boy as a panther watches a feeding deer, but he made no move, because the boy carried a gun and a corn-knife.

Again the Ottawa lay down quietly in the thicket of young thorn-bushes.

"Small boy no fool," he muttered.

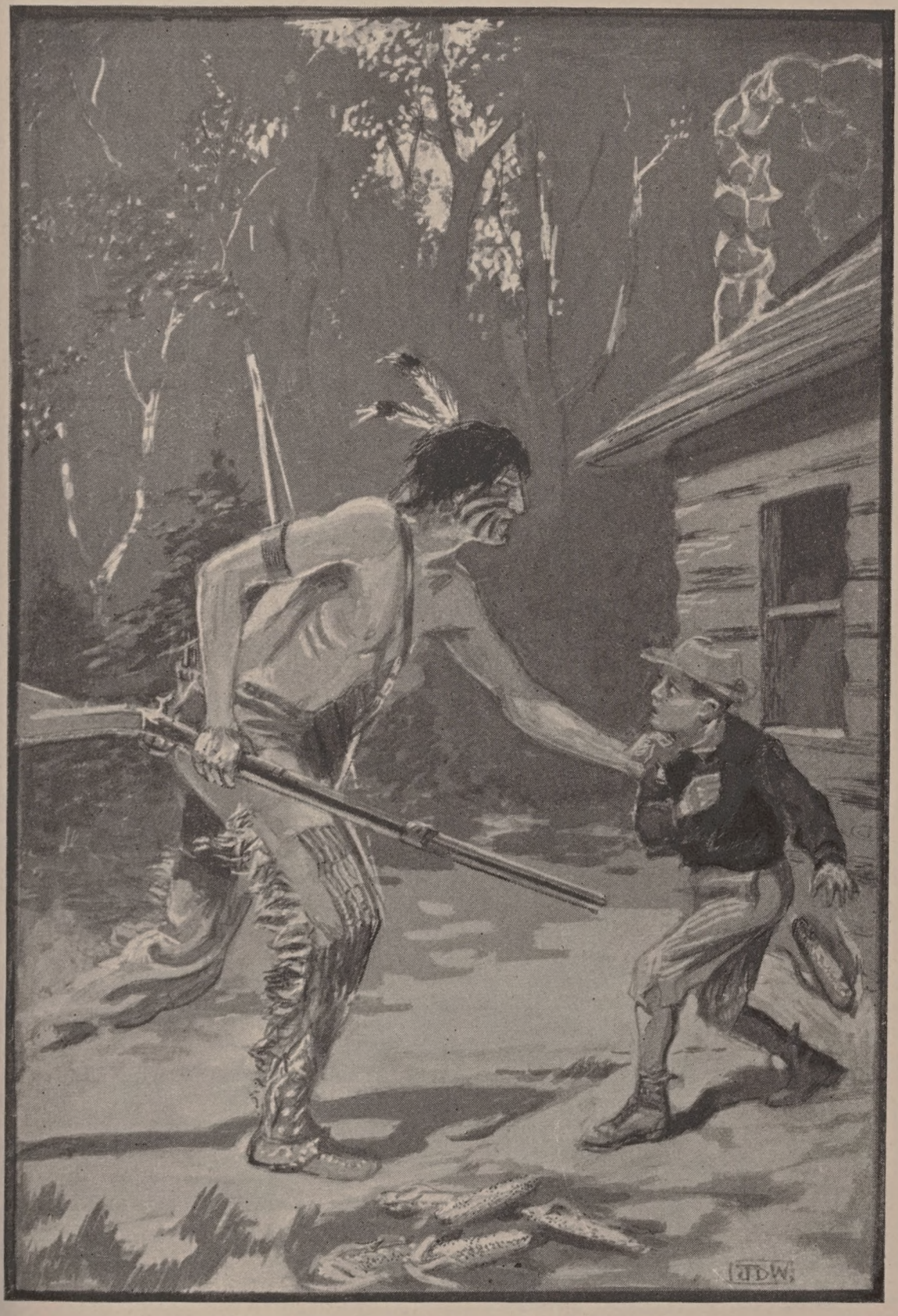
But now the boy came out again and began to strip the husks off the corn. His gun and the corn-knife he had left inside. Wagooshaw quickly crawled up through some weeds to within a few rods of the cabin. Then he rushed upon the boy and called, "Come, come! No yell!"

Before the frightened young lad realized what had happened to him, Wagooshaw had seized him by the arm and dragged him into the timber. Here he quickly tied his hands together with a thong of deerskin and pointing in a northwesterly direction said, "March! March!"

The Ottawa was anxious to get away from the scene of his raid as fast as possible, and the boy, with his hands tied, could not walk fast enough to suit his captor. He could not bend aside any obstructing bushes, he stumbled repeatedly over roots and logs, and several times Wagooshaw poked him with his tomahawk and showed him that he should keep marching toward the sun, which was still about two hours high.

When the boy again almost fell over a root, the Indian grew angry, and the lad thought he was going to be killed. The Ottawa, however, untied the boy's hands, grasped him firmly by the wrist and again saying, "March, march!" he strode forward so fast that the small boy was almost dragged off his feet.

Several times the lad lost his hat, but on



"COME, COME! NO YELL!"—*Page 13.*

each occasion the Indian motioned to him to pick it up.

In this way Wagooshaw walked through the forest till it was almost dark. They crossed some small creeks and several trails, but the Indian, although he made many short loops, never deviated from his main direction except to avoid some rough or low ground or patches of dense undergrowth.

Fred was now beginning to feel faint with hunger and thirst, but when they came to a small stream and the Indian motioned to the boy to lie down and take a drink, the lad was afraid to do so, fearing that the Ottawa would strike him with his tomahawk. Wagooshaw seemed to read the boy's mind, for he laughed and said, "No kill him! No kill him!"

After this, Wagooshaw walked more slowly and Fred thought he was looking for a place to stop for the night. Under a large tree, the Ottawa stopped and sent an arrow amongst the boughs, when, to the surprise of the lad, a large turkey came fluttering down to the ground.

Fred now began to collect his mind, and

thought that he would watch for a favorable moment and break away into the forest. He felt sure that, if he once was out of sight of his captor, he could make his escape in the darkness; and in the morning he would be able to find his way back home, for he had taken careful notice of the direction his captor had taken, and he had often travelled about in the forest, hunting with his two older brothers, Frank and Jack, or looking for strayed cattle and horses.

But the Ottawa seemed to be reading his mind; for before he paid any more attention to the turkey, he tied the lad to a tree.

Apparently he felt himself safe, now. In a little while he had a fire going and threw the lad's hat into it. Then he quickly plucked the larger feathers of the turkey and singed off the smaller ones; and in a very short time the meat of the turkey was roasting on several green sticks over a bed of hot red coals.

The fire looked so cheerful and the roast turkey smelled so inviting that the hungry boy for the time forgot his captivity, and only

wished that he might be given some of the roast turkey.

When the meat was done, the Indian stripped a piece of bark off a tree and on this he laid the meat; then he untied the boy and motioned him to sit down and eat, handing the lad a leg and a large piece of the breast.

Fred felt as if he had never been so hungry in his life, and as he felt sure now that the Indian meant to do him no bodily harm, he ate heartily of the well-flavored meat, although it had been cooked without salt or seasoning.

To eat meat without salt was nothing unusual to the boys of the frontier in those days. Salt had to be packed on horses across the mountains, and sold on the Pennsylvania frontier at from eight to twelve dollars a bushel, which means about fifty dollars a bushel at the present value of money.

Wagooshaw seemed to be as hungry as his captive, and when both the Indian and the boy were satisfied, only a few scraps of the large turkey were left. These the Indian wrapped

up in a piece of tanned buckskin, which did not look any too clean to Fred.

The boy had now entirely regained his self-possession, and with the resourcefulness inbred and developed early under conditions of frontier life, he was again planning to escape. But again Wagooshaw seemed to know what the boy was thinking; for as a first precaution he made him take off his shoes, before he handed him a piece of a blanket for cover. Next he tied a thong around the boy's waist, and the other end of the thong he wrapped around his own body, after he had rolled up in his blanket.

However, the white boy was not discouraged by these precautions. At first he had planned to secure Wagooshaw's hunting knife, quickly cut the thong and slip away into the dark forest. That plan he had to give up, because Wagooshaw kept the knife inside his blanket. He would wait now till the Ottawa was asleep, and then he would quietly cut the thong with his teeth. It might take a little while to do this, but he felt sure that he could do it so quietly that the Indian would not wake up.

A surprised Indian there would be in the morning, when he woke up and found his white boy gone. He had watched where Wagooshaw put his shoes. He would quietly pick them up, and slip away into the woods before he stopped to put them on.

He wondered how long it took an Indian to go to sleep. He himself began to feel drowsy after the hard walk and a big meal, and he pinched himself to keep awake. The Indian must be asleep in a few minutes now. Just a few minutes more, and he would begin cutting that thong. . . .

The next thing Fred knew was that somebody was pushing him and trying to wake him up.

"Oh, let me sleep, Frank," he murmured. "I—I made—made a long run."

And then he woke up. His brother Frank had vanished. But in the gray dawn he saw a tall Indian with a long gun and a bow standing over him.

"March, march!" the Indian called, and pointed at Fred's shoes.

CHAPTER II

IN THE FOREST

THEY had not gone far, when the Ottawa struck a trail leading in a northwesterly direction.

An Indian trail is only wide enough for one person, and the Ottawa could not travel holding his captive by the hand, so he again brought out the deerhide thong, tied it around the lad's waist and to his own belt, and struck out with a long, striding gait, so fast that Fred could scarcely keep up with him. When they came to a spring, Wagooshaw stopped just long enough for a drink and then said, "March!" and again strode ahead at a rapid pace.

The day grew warm and not a leaf moved on the forest trees. Although the trail was well shaded, the boy soon became so exhausted with fatigue and hunger that he began to

stumble and fall over the roots on the trail. Without uttering a word, the big Indian picked him up and walked along without slacking his speed.

It was almost noon, as Fred judged by the position of the sun, when they came to a large rapid river, which Fred knew must be the Allegheny.

The Ottawa looked up and down the stream for a few minutes as if in search of a canoe, but finding none, he cut a stout pole with his hatchet, took off his clothing, except breech-clout and moccasins, lifted the boy on his shoulders and started to wade across. The current was swift, and in several places the water was more than waist-deep, but the Indian seemed to know the ford, and with the aid of his pole, he soon reached the other bank.

He seemed to be less in a hurry now, for after they had leisurely followed the trail for a short stretch, he struck off into the forest and sat down under a large oak, near a small trickling stream. Then he took out of his bag the remnants of the roast turkey and gave half of it to Fred, and after they had eaten and

taken a drink at the stream, the Indian again struck out northward on the trail.

Although Fred was only ten years old, he had already acquired considerable knowledge of frontier geography and history. His oldest brother Frank, when still a mere boy, had spent a summer with two men, who acted as scouts for Sir William Johnson at Albany. Their duty was to watch the doings and movements of the French along Lake Erie and the Niagara frontier and report to the Americans and English in New York and Virginia. An uncle of the Hopkins boys was with the Colonial troops of Virginia, while the parents were now on a journey to Philadelphia. The father, Samuel Hopkins, was in charge of a pack train of horses that was to bring goods over the mountains to the western settlements, and the mother had gone along to visit her old parents near Philadelphia, whom she had not seen for many years. The little Western home had been left in charge of Uncle Steve who was much attached to his three nephews, Frank, Jack, and Fred.

It was now the beginning of July, 1759.

The tide of war, which during the first two years had brought nothing but disaster to the Americans and the English, now seemed to be turning against the French and their Indian allies.

Fort Du Quesne had been wrested from the French, and Oswego on Lake Ontario, once captured by the brave and able French general Montcalm, was now again in the hands of the English and Americans. But the French still held Presque Isle on Lake Erie, on a peninsula now within the city of Erie, Pa.; Fort Niagara at the mouth of the Niagara River on Lake Ontario; as well as Montreal and Quebec, besides a number of other posts.

Important news soon spread even in those days, although there were no telegraphs and but few newspapers. The Hopkins boys eagerly followed the events of the war, and even Fred, the youngest of them, knew the facts just told.

After Fred and Wagooshaw had crossed the Allegheny, the Indian travelled along more slowly, and Fred knew that his captor felt safe from pursuers. The boy also figured out

that he was being taken to Presque Isle on Lake Erie. He still intended to run away from the Ottawa at the first opportunity, if Uncle Steve and his brothers did not come for him; but for the present he only wished that the Indian would stop and let him lie down, for he was getting so tired that he could scarcely drag himself along.

When the sun was still some four hours high, the Indian again left the trail, and in an open spot under some large walnut-trees untied the boy and motioned him to sit down.

Fred had scarcely seated himself, when the Indian tied his hands and feet; and threatening him with the hatchet and saying, "No yell! No yell!" Wagooshaw, taking his gun, bow and arrows went away into the forest.

The next thing which Fred knew was that he felt himself violently shaken. The Ottawa was kneeling beside him and pointing to a camp-fire. He then said something in Ottawa, which, as Fred learned later, meant, "Come, eat turkey."

While the exhausted boy had been asleep, the Indian had shot and roasted a turkey, even

larger and fatter than the one he had killed on the previous day.

Wagooshaw seemed now to be in a more kindly mood, for when the lad approached the fire, he said in a pleasant voice, "Eat, boy, eat."

CHAPTER III

THE DARK TRAIL

On the afternoon of the sixth day Fred and his captor came to a lake, which was so large that they could not see the opposite shore. Fred knew that this must be Lake Erie, although he had never seen the lake before. Here Wagooshaw met another Indian who had a canoe, made of hickory bark, and in this canoe the boy and the two Indians paddled along shore to a stockade fort located on the point of a small peninsula on the site of the present city of Erie, Pennsylvania.

There were about a hundred soldiers and two traders in this fort, who talked French, for this was the French fort of Presque Isle, which means "almost an island."

At this place Wagooshaw received a little powder and a few bullets for the two scalps he had secured on his raid to the English set-

tlements, and he traded an otter skin for a small bag of salt and a blanket. He and Fred spent the night in a log cabin, and the boy was allowed to sleep in the new blanket without having his hands and feet tied up.

In the morning the Ottawa went up in one of the corner blockhouses and talked to a Frenchman on duty there. Although Fred could not understand what was said, he gathered that they tried to make out what would be the condition of the lake, whether the water was going to be rough or smooth.

A little later the Ottawa carried a birch-bark canoe to the boat landing and told Fred to get in. Apparently the Indian had decided that the open lake would be too rough, for he started to paddle eastward along the shore, where the water was very smooth. But far out on the lake, Fred could see white crests on the waves, caused by a strong wind blowing from the south.

Late in the afternoon, Wagooshaw steered the canoe into the mouth of a creek. Then he took some fish-hooks out of his bag and in a little while the two canoeists, using clams for

bait, had caught enough fish for their supper. These they roasted on green sticks, and the Indian seemed pleased to see that the white boy knew how to do this. He handed the bag of salt to Fred and the boy had a very good supper, but the Indian did not use any salt on his fish.

When the sun had set, both lay down to sleep. Fred's hands and feet were not bound, but the Indian merely tied a cord around Fred's waist and wrapped the other end around his own body.

In the morning they caught some more fish for breakfast and then they paddled again eastward down the lake. In the afternoon they could see land to the north, and a little later the Indian steered the canoe across and they landed on what is now the shore of Ontario, straight north of Buffalo. Here they again caught some fish for their supper, and when evening came, Fred was allowed to sleep in his own blanket without being tied up, but Wagooshaw put the paddles under his own blanket.

Fred had hoped that the Indian would sell

him to the French at Presque Isle. In that case he had planned how he would escape. He would get a bow and some arrows, also a piece of steel, a bit of flint and some punk. Perhaps he could also get a knife. Then he would watch his chances, and at the first favorable opportunity, he would run off and make his way back to the American settlements near Fort Du Quesne, which the English had named Fort Pitt.

But he realized now that, for the present, all his chances for escape had vanished. He would have no means of crossing Lake Erie. He did not know anything of the country north of that lake, and he knew that all the Indians in that region were allies of the French. He could do nothing now but follow the Ottawa to his haunts, wherever they might be, probably somewhere on Lake Huron or Lake Superior. But of these lakes and the country around them he knew nothing, except that it was far off and that no Americans or Englishmen lived there.

Cases of whites being made captives by the Indians were very common in those days, and

they continued to occur until all the Indian tribes were finally subdued and settled on permanent reservations.

Very often these captives were ransomed by their relatives or by the provinces or States. Sometimes they made their escape amid great perils. The Indians generally treated their captives as well as the conditions of savage life permitted. Frequently they adopted them as members of the tribe, and these adopted captives, in many cases, refused to return to their white relatives.

There is the story of John Tanner, who, when a boy eleven years old, was captured by a party of Shawnees on the Ohio in Northern Kentucky. He was finally adopted by a Chippewa woman, who always treated him as her own son. When he was grown up, he married a Chippewa girl and became an Indian so thoroughly that he forgot not only the English language but even his own name. He died as an old man near the Sault Ste. Marie, and his descendants are to-day living in Minnesota and Manitoba.

A strange case is that of the negro, Jim

Beckworth, who was adopted by the Crows or Absarokas of the western plains. He was a great curiosity amongst the Indians who called him the Black White Man.

Both Tanner and Beckworth have left accounts of their lives. That of Beckworth contains many tales of adventures, which, according to the best authorities, did not happen to him, but "The Captivity of John Tanner" is one of the most interesting and truthful tales of adventure which the lover of American romance and history can find.

But we must now return to the cabin of Stephen Hopkins.

Wagooshaw had scarcely travelled a mile with his captive, when Steve came back with the cows, and, at the same time, Fred's older brothers, Frank and Jack, came home with a deer. They had been out hunting, because the four inmates of the cabin were badly in need of meat, having lived already for several days on nothing but milk and butter and a few garden vegetables.

"Where is Fred?" asked Frank, when the

lad did not at once appear to see what they had brought, as he usually did.

"I left him in the cabin and told him to stay there till I came back," Steve informed the brothers.

"Steve, if he is not going to mind you, you will have to tie him up in the cabin," replied Frank. "I suppose he is down at the creek fishing. Jack, you had better go and get him, while Steve and I milk the cows and get supper. I wish we had another horse, so he could ride around with Steve, for he will not stay in the house for five minutes."

When Jack returned without finding any trace of the missing boy, the three men became at once alarmed, especially Frank, the older brother, who had personally promised their parents that he would look after the young lad.

Jack and Steve called for the lost boy, but Frank circled around the little clearing in silence. Before Jack and Steve were through searching the barn and the corn patch, Frank's keen eyes had discovered the place in the thorn-bushes, where a man or an animal

had been lying down, and the place where something had crawled through the weeds.

"Come here! Come here!" he called anxiously. "Look at this trail in the weeds!"

In a few minutes more he made out a few moccasin tracks and then the tracks of Fred's home-made shoes, where the Indian had rushed across the clearing with his captive.

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed, his face flushed with anger and anxiety. "The boy is gone! We have lost him! An Indian has carried him off! Look! Here is a moccasin track, and here is another. And here is a track of Fred's shoes. He is gone, men! He is gone!

"Get your gun, Jack. We must follow the trail at once. He cannot be more than half an hour ahead of us. If there isn't a bunch of them, we still may be able to do something."

Frank's experience in the scouting party of a few years ago now proved most helpful. He had little difficulty in finding the trail, but it was impossible to follow it rapidly. The Indian had availed himself of every patch of hard and open ground, where weeds and brush

could least betray his direction. But it was the oncoming darkness, which soon stopped the pursuers of Wagooshaw; for in the dense shade under the big oaks, walnuts, and hickories, it grew dark early. Although it is possible to travel some time after sunset, it very soon grows too dark to follow an obscure trail.

"Jack, that Indian has got us beat," admitted Frank, as he sat down on a log and wiped his face. "We have lost the trail, and I cannot find it again before daylight. That red raider had timed his outrage well. He rushed out in time to make his escape, but too late for us to pursue him. I wish the Indians had captured me! How can I ever face Father and Mother and tell them that Fred is a captive among the Indians?"

CHAPTER IV

INDIAN RUSES

"We were too late, Steve," remarked Frank dejectedly, when he and Jack entered the cabin. "He is so far ahead of us that I am afraid we can never overtake him. I found the trail of only one man but he may meet others at some appointed place. I thought these abominable Indian raiders had cleared out of the country, when the French lost Fort Du Quesne, but they still prowl about in the woods as stealthily as wolves and wildcats."

"Have some venison steak, boys," said Steve, invitingly. "It is very good. You must be starved by this time."

"I was hungry when I came home with the deer, but my appetite is gone now. If the darkness had not stopped us, Jack and I would have trailed that red thief till we had run him down."

There was little sleep in the Hopkins cabin

that night. The three pioneers decided that Frank and Jack should pursue the raider, even if it seemed impossible to overtake him; and when it was barely light enough to travel, Frank and Jack again took up the trail of the Ottawa raider.

Every Indian knew that the telltale marks of all his doings and movements were left on his trail. He was not afraid of being surprised by anything ahead of him, but he was always on the alert for danger that might follow on his trail, and he was master of many devices that tended to baffle an enemy following him.

Frank soon learned that the Indian raider whom he was following was no mere stripling of a foolish young warrior, but a man as wary as an old wolf.

He had always picked out the hardest and most open ground, and from such places he had often started in the wrong direction. Very often he had travelled up or down the bed of small streams, and while he had lost very little time by this ruse, it caused much loss of time for his pursuers; and any one not

an experienced trailer would soon have been hopelessly confused.

After having followed the Indian trail in all its twists and ramblings from the place where they had left it the night before, the lads sat down to talk over what they had observed.

"I think, Jack, I see through his tricks," Frank began to explain. "He is not going to cross Conewango Creek, and he is not going west. He has headed straight for the Allegheny River below the mouth of Conewango Creek. Let us strike out for that point and pay no attention to his loops and twists. I feel sure that is where he is going."

From this time on, the two lads marched rapidly along on a fairly good trail, exchanging only a word now and then. They reached the Allegheny in the middle of the afternoon and crossed the river before they made camp.

After they had refreshed themselves with a meal of venison, without however building a fire, they took up the search for the trail. Frank was soon convinced that no one had stepped out of the river at the usual crossing place.

"I don't see," remarked Jack, "how we can ever pick up in this wild forest the trail of a single Indian."

"He may have eluded us," Frank granted, "but we picked up worse trails than this one, while I was on scout service with Stanfield. Let us work down-stream. The bank and the water seem to be more favorable in that direction. Follow a few yards behind me. Don't talk, but look and listen."

They had not gone far, when Frank stopped and looked to the right. "Something has gone through there," he remarked, "but it is the trail of only one man, but let us follow it."

"Look here," he continued after a little while. "The track of a man and a boy, and here is a track of shoes. The sly raider carried the boy to this place, and he is just one day ahead of us."

The two lads now followed the tracks through the woods, until they led into a well-beaten trail, which headed northward in the general direction of Presque Isle on Lake Erie.

When darkness overtook them the boys turned aside into the forest. Under a large, spreading oak they built a brush shelter and lay down to sleep.

In the morning they again followed the trail cautiously so as to make sure that the raider had really gone north toward Lake Erie and had not turned off westward.

"We don't dare to travel on this trail very far," said Frank. "I think it is a regular Indian trail to Fort Presque Isle, and we are likely to be surprised any moment by a raiding party of Ottawas, Chippewas, or French.

"We must travel north in the forest, but far enough from the trail so that parties on the trail cannot hear us. I am convinced that the raider, whoever he was, has taken Fred to the French fort at Presque Isle, and that is the place we should reach as soon as possible.

"I do not see just now how we can get any further clue there, for if we go into the fort, the French will make us prisoners and send us down to Fort Niagara or to Montreal. Presque Isle is nothing but a wooden stockade, and I imagine they do not care to feed any

prisoners there. But we have to try our best, and see what we can do.

"Fort Niagara, you know, Jack, is a real fort. The French have a big stone house there for the officers and for storing all kinds of goods. They have also a big stone magazine for ammunition, a bake house, hot shot tower, and regular barracks for troops. They also have quite a lot of cannon. I have never been inside the fort, but my scout boss, Stanfield, was all through the place."

"Isn't that the place," asked Jack, "where they run a kind of scalp exchange, and where the Indian raiders generally take their American and English prisoners?"

"That's the place," assented Frank. "It is located on a point of land between Lake Ontario and the mouth of the Niagara River, on the east bank of the river, and it looks like a mighty strong place, but Captain Stanfield said that the French forgot one important thing; they did not plant any batteries on the Canadian side of the river. I know the whole country from Presque Isle to Fort Niagara.

"You remember that Father told us that

General Prideaux and Sir William Johnson of Albany were going to attack Fort Niagara this summer, and they may be there now."

The two lads travelled now toward Presque Isle as fast as possible, and they arrived on the shore of the open lake, just west of the long peninsula which makes Presque Isle Bay, on the evening of the day on which Wagooshaw had left the fort.

They made their way carefully to the place where a trail struck the open lake, and examined the shore of the long peninsula without exposing themselves.

"There, Jack!" Frank whispered. "Do you see that old pirogue on shore? Some Indian or Frenchman abandoned it, but it looks as if it might float."

When they had crept up to the old dug-out, they decided that it would float, and they stuffed some rags and dry rushes into some of the worst cracks.

"But there are no paddles with it," observed Jack.

"That's easy," replied Frank. "We'll go

back in the woods a way and cut two paddles and a pole."

When it was quite dark they returned to the dug-out, and, using their pole as a lever, they managed to launch the heavy craft.

As the lake was quiet, they paddled in the open lake to the eastern point of the long peninsula and hid their dug-out in the bushes opposite the French fort, which was located on a short peninsula, jutting into the bay from the mainland. Then they ate their supper, rolled themselves in their blankets and lay down to sleep.

CHAPTER V

THE FRENCH BOY

WHEN day dawned, they discovered that their dug-out was not well concealed, but they did not dare to move it to a safer place for fear of being discovered by the sentinels in the corner blockhouses.

Both lads realized that they were in a very dangerous place. If they were discovered, they would surely be made prisoners, if they were not shot as spies. Moreover, their provisions were running so low that they had only enough left for one or two days, and their appetites grew every day they were out.

"What can we do now?" asked Jack.

"I don't know," Frank admitted. "Let us go along the point a little way and hide under the bushes. Then we can see what is going on around the fort and can watch any boat that comes out on the bay."

Frank, the older boy, was used to this kind

of work, but to Jack the time passed tormentingly slow.

"Frank," he suggested, when the sun showed that it was about noon, "what is the use of this? We are not finding out anything. Why can't we just paddle across the bay and walk into the fort and tell the commander that we are looking for our young brother?"

"Do you think he would believe that story? He would not. He would take us for American spies. And even if he did not think we were real spies, he would not let us go again, because he would not want us to go and tell the Americans about the strength of his fort."

"But we are just killing time," objected Jack.

"Maybe we are," Frank granted. "We have lots of it to kill. Playing Indian and scout takes patience. If you are not going to be patient, you might as well go home, and let me follow the trail alone."

In the afternoon two Indians left the fort in a bark canoe and paddled east along the mainland.

"Frank, I have a plan," whispered Jack. "Let us try to capture some Indian that comes out of the fort."

"You mean," replied Frank, "to capture an Indian on the road to Le Boeuf Creek? That would not do us any good, Jack, even if we did catch one. We could not understand him, even if we could make him talk."

"Then, what can we do?" Jack asked impatiently.

"Nothing, but just lie still and watch."

The hours wore away slowly. Butterflies and bees were busy on the flowers, a catbird mewed at the intruders of his grape-vine tangle, and a flock of blue jays screamed frantically in the trees above the boys.

"Those pesky jays will give us away," Jack feared.

"Let them scream," Frank laughed. "If anybody hears them, he will think they are mobbing an owl. They will fly away after they have looked us over."

A little later, the fish began to jump for flies; and Jack wished very much that he could go out in the dug-out and try his luck

with them. "It looks like a mighty good place," he remarked.

A little later a canoe left the landing and headed straight across the bay for the point near which the boys lay concealed.

A boy of Jack's age anchored the canoe within a stone's throw and began to fish. Jack became much excited as he watched the French lad pull out large perch and croppies. Now he had hooked some large gamey fish, which almost upset his canoe, as he dashed this way and that, and jumped with a quick silvery flash out of the water.

"He's got a big bass; he's got a bass!" whispered Jack.

Then the boy's pole snapped, and the fish ran away with the line and the detached tip of the pole.

The boy uttered some exclamation in French. Then he pulled up his stone anchor and paddled straight for the point where Frank and Jack were hiding.

"He is coming ashore," whispered Frank, "to cut himself a new pole. Lie still, Jack, and watch me."

It took the French lad only a few minutes to cut and trim a straight ash sapling. When he had put his clasp-knife in his pocket he started for his canoe.

Now Frank arose quickly and stepped between him and the canoe. "Hello, boy!" he said quietly. "They're biting fine. Come here, Jack."

For a second the French boy looked wildly about him and made a move as if he would reach for his knife. But when Frank waved his hand at him and said, "No fight, no fight!" the French boy lost his fear, and consented to sit down and talk.

As Frank spoke a little French and the French boy understood a little English, the three lads got along quite well.

The French lad's name was Alois, Alois Du Valle.

"Have you seen an Indian with a white boy in the fort?" asked Frank.

"*Oui, oui, un Ottawa et un petit garcon,*" Alois told frankly. "Yes, yes. An Ottawa and a small boy."

A few more questions brought out the fact

that the Ottawa's name was Uagusheau, as Alois pronounced it, and that he and the boy had left the fort the day before yesterday. They had started out along the shore, and Alois thought the Indian was going to take his captive to Fort Niagara. That was all Alois knew. The small boy had appeared to be well and not very hungry. He wore brown home-spun trousers, and shirt and home-made shoes, and Uagusheau bought him a blanket. The boy had light hair and blue eyes and red cheeks, but he had no hat.

"I bet he lost his hat in the brush," remarked Jack. "He was always losing it at home."

"The small boy is our brother," Frank told Alois. "We have come to look for him."

"You will not find him," predicted Alois. "*Jamais, jamais!* Never, never!

"Ottawa take him to Fort Niagara, maybe to Montreal or to Lake Huron, to Isle Manitoulin. Indians travel very far, all over," said Alois, swinging both of his hands over his head to emphasize his statement about the wide roaming of the Indians.

Frank was now convinced that they had all the information which Alois could give them, and he was much puzzled how he could feel sure that Alois would not tell all he had learned as soon as he returned to the fort. It would be ungrateful and mean to take Alois along a few days as prisoner and then turn him loose. No, that wouldn't do. They could not let him go back to the fort right away and run the chances of having some French soldiers or Indians set on their trail, and be made captives before they ever got away from the long peninsula.

Jack seemed to read Frank's thoughts and said rapidly, "Keep him till dark and then tie him to a tree. They'll find him."

"Shame on you!" Frank rebuked him. "We shall do nothing of the kind."

Alois seemed to have some idea that his new friends were trying to solve some hard problem, but his guess at the difficulty was slightly wrong.

"Come home with me," he said in French, "and have supper."

"What does he say?" asked Jack, who

judged from Frank's face that Alois had said something which caused Frank to do some hard thinking.

"He wants us to go home with him for supper," Frank interpreted.

"Good fellow!" exclaimed Jack. "I have been starving for two days. I say we go!"

As Frank had not replied either to Alois' invitation or to Jack's prompt acceptance, the French boy added, "I know, I know—a little path. Nobody see us. I fix big eat. You sleep in cabin. Go away early, when sun rise."

Frank recognized that in Alois they had met one of the members of the international, the universal republic of boys, whose straight-faced, big-hearted and clear-eyed members recognize one another wherever they meet, the barriers of race and language notwithstanding. He wanted very much to join in Jack's ready acceptance of Alois' invitation. But he was no longer merely a care-free boy, who lives in the joy of to-day and takes no thought of to-morrow.

The hard problems of frontier life had al-

ready crept into his world. He had felt and taken part in the unavoidable conflict of the two white nations in America, the French and the English. He had stalked and been stalked by those strange, dark-skinned dwellers and hunters of the forest, whose habits and ways of living clashed so hopelessly with the life and habits of the cattle-raisers and farmers on the American frontier beyond the Alleghanies.

He had often listened to his father and other men talking about these things, and always he had come away with the feeling that the American frontier settlers could never be friends with the Indians and the French traders. The settlers must either go back east of the mountains or the Indians, the French traders, soldiers and forts must go. The two could never be friends and peaceful neighbors. As long as savage Indians found protection in the French forts, they would continue their raids in the American settlements, extending their stealing, murdering, and kidnapping even far east of the mountains. American settlers could not forever go on planting corn with one hand and holding a gun in the other.

Frank knew that this was the feeling all through Western New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

These thoughts flashed quickly through Frank's mind. Why had Alois said he would "fix big eat"? Why hadn't he said his mother would give them something to eat?

"Where is your mother, Alois?" he asked. "Is she in Montreal, or in France?"

"*Elle est morte,* she is dead," Alois replied in a low voice. "She is buried at Fort Niagara.

"*Mon père,*" Alois continued, "my father no care what I do. He trade with Indians, and play cards with soldiers."

And then he repeated more urgently, "You come on. I fix big eat. You sleep in little cabin in corner of fort. No soldier see you."

Frank did not distrust the French boy, but the caution of the frontier scout and hunter was too strongly developed.

"No, Alois," he replied, "we can't go into the fort. Your people and our people are at war. We can't take the chances."

On these points Frank's mind was made up.

But what could they do with Alois? They could not let him go back now, they could not force him to go with them for a day or two, nor could they tie him to a tree, as Jack had suggested. That would be black ungratefulness.

Frank sat down to think it over. What in the world could they do with this French boy?

CHAPTER VI

THE PLANS OF ALOIS

"COME with us across the bay," asked Frank, as he took a Mexican silver dollar out of his pocket, and showed it to Alois. "I give you this, if you come with us across the bay."

"Give him now," demanded Alois, "then I come. But I go get eats first."

"No, you don't get eats first," objected Frank, "you come and eat with us in the forest over there," and Frank pointed southward to the mainland.

"*Bien,* all right," replied Alois, "I come."

As it was almost dark, and no boat or canoe was seen on the bay, Frank considered it safe to start. He would skirt, for some distance, in the shadow of the timber of the long, crescent-shaped point, before he would cut across.

"We can all three ride in our dug-out," he suggested.

"Dug-out?" asked Alois surprised. "Is he yours? I thought Indians leave him."

But Frank failed to persuade Alois to ride in the dug-out.

"It is safe," Jack pointed out. "We stuffed rags and grass into the cracks, and it is water-soaked now."

"No, I ride in canoe," insisted Alois. "Take too long to walk home through woods. I fall over roots and logs."

Frank let the French boy lead the way, for he was a little afraid that Alois might change his mind, for he had said several times that he had "*grande faim, grande faim,*" great hunger, great hunger.

When they had landed on the south shore and gone into the forest a little way, Alois took a piece of punk and a steel and flint from his pocket and started to build a fire.

Frank and Jack tried to tell him that it was not safe to build a fire, but he laughed at them, saying, "Frenchmen all in fort or in their cabins. No Indian here. All clear out after English take Fort Du Quesne."

Although Frank knew only too well that not

all the Indians had left the country after the fall of Fort Du Quesne, he let Alois build his fire. For several days he and Jack had not eaten a bite of warm food, and the temptation to eat a meal of fresh broiled fish and drink some hot tea was too strong; for a chilling fog had settled over the lake and the forest.

Alois gave all his fish to his friends, but he finished the last piece of their roast venison.

"I catch plenty more fish," he told his friends, "but Frenchmen no good hunters."

When every bit of food had been eaten, the American boys thought that Alois would now leave them, but they were not yet through with their captive; for Alois, it seems, had now formed plans of his own.

"No boy in fort like you and me," he explained. "I sit round, go fish, go trap, stay in woods all night, but no boy.

"We build big fire now, lie down sleep. Tomorrow I go with you. I can talk little to Indians; Ottawa, Chippewa, Iroquois, Missisaugas. Maybe we find little brother pretty soon and bring him home."

"No, no, that won't do, Alois," Frank pro-

tested. "Your father would think you were lost."

"*Mon père?*" Alois argued with a sad smile on his face, "*Mon père?* He no care. He think I go off find mink and otter to trap by and by. Or go off with Indians, or go off hunt deer, maybe. He play cards and drink wine with soldiers. No, he no care!"

"No, it wouldn't do!" Frank again objected. "We can't sleep near a big fire, and you must not go with us. Here is your Mexican dollar, and now you must go home!"

Alois took the coin. However, his manner showed clearly that he did not want to go back to Fort Presque Isle.

But after a little he turned the coin over and over in his hand, held it near the fire, and at last tested the hardness of it with his teeth.

"Don't break your teeth, Alois!" cried Jack. "You can't bite that. It's real silver. Frank and I aren't a couple of cheats!"

But Alois was not satisfied before he had tested the dollar with his knife. Then a smile spread over his face.

"*Sacré!*" he exclaimed. "*Il est d'argent.*

Sure. It is silver. I make him big. Pound him flat, like this." And he showed his friends by means of two stones how he would make the dollar big, "very big!"

"I trade him to Indians for skins. Maybe get three otter, maybe six beaver."

Then he arose and slowly walked through the dark, wet brush to his elm-bark canoe.

"*Au revoir,* my friends!" he said after he had slowly shoved his canoe into the lake.

"Good-bye, friend, good-bye!" Frank and Jack called in a low voice.

"You no find little brother. Never, never!" Alois said, pushing off with his paddle. "You no can talk to Indians. You come back. I go along and talk to Indians." And then Alois and his canoe vanished into the fog.

For a minute Frank and Jack listened for the stroke of his paddle. Then all was silent except the rippling of the water, as the waves of a gentle swell broke on the shore.

Frank and Jack stood alone in the darkness and the fog. Alois was gone.

CHAPTER VII

THE SIGNAL

"I DON'T see how you could send him away," Jack accused his brother. "He wanted so much to go with us."

"How could we take him?" Frank defended himself. "We haven't a scrap to eat, and I can't tell what he would do if we got into a pinch, because I don't know him well enough. Many of these Frenchmen are pretty lawless and careless."

"I wish we could have taken him," Jack again expressed his liking for the boy. "I am afraid he will get lost in the fog. Let us go and find a place to sleep. I am tired and chilled all through."

"Well, brother Jack," Frank replied seriously, "you have to get over being tired and cold. Before we lie down to sleep, we have to put as many miles as possible between our-

selves and this French fort. There is no telling how many French and Indians will travel to-morrow on the road from the Lake Erie landing to Le Boeuf Creek. And you forget, Jack, that Alois will most likely tell about us in the fort."

"Alois give us away?" Jack questioned. "You know he will not, Frank."

"I am not so sure about it," the older brother answered. "He will not do it in order to harm us. But remember that Alois has some big news for that lonely little fort away out on the point.

"Supposing you had been made prisoner by the French, and you had eaten with your captors, and had learned of their plans, and they had given you a big silver coin, and then you had escaped? Could you have walked into our cabin and never said a word about it? Jack, you know you couldn't, you would have burst to tell us all about it."

"Well," Jack objected diffidently, "that would be different."

"Yes," Frank admitted, "it would be just a wee bit different from the story Alois has to

tell. You know a good many boys can't keep a secret any more than girls. And Alois really has a big story.

"I wager in less than an hour after he gets back, he will have the whole garrison gathered around him and talk French to them faster than they can follow him. He will tell them we tried to shoot him, and how he drew his knife and grabbed one of us by the throat and then pitied us and gave us something to eat, and so on."

"What!" exclaimed Jack. "Do you think he is that kind of a big liar? Then why didn't you let me tie him to a tree?"

"Not such a very big liar," replied Frank, laughing. "The story will just naturally look different with all the soldiers and Indians sitting around, and Alois the hero of a real adventure!"

"Well, maybe," Jack replied, "the French are all big liars."

"Oh, you need not go to the French to find them," Frank retorted. "How about the seven big bass you and Fred caught in Conewango Creek? And the 'possum that was as

big as a dog? But come, let us get away from here."

"Can you find a trail in the dark?" asked Jack. "I couldn't."

"Find a trail? Why, Jack, we are not going on any trail. We are going in our dug-out down the lake."

"I am afraid of that big lake," Jack confessed. "We might get lost on it in the fog. Why can't we travel through the woods?"

"We would only wear ourselves out," Frank explained, "and get soaked from head to foot; and besides, my plan is to travel in that dug-out all the way down Lake Erie to the rapids above Niagara Falls. I think it will be the easiest and safest way to go."

"And where are we going now?" Jack asked.

"Well," explained Frank, "Alois told us that the Ottawa had taken Fred down the lake. So I figure that the chances are ten to one that he went to Fort Niagara. If the French have plenty of provisions, Wagooshaw may be there now. For an Indian loves to hang around where food is plentiful. So I

think we should go to Fort Niagara. But the country from here to the fort is all under the control of the French, and their traders and soldiers are likely to travel back and forth between Fort Niagara, Presque Isle, and Detroit. So you see, Jack, we are in dangerous country, and I think we had better travel at night and lie low in the daytime. Let us get started."

The lake was almost entirely quiet, with a dense fog covering forest and water.

"Steer her along close to shore," said Jack, "so we don't get lost. I am afraid of this big lake."

It did not take very long, however, before the trees on shore were no longer in sight in the dense fog.

"Frank, you are steering us into the open lake," Jack cautioned.

"No, I am not," claimed Frank, "I am just trying to keep out far enough so as not to hit any rocks that are often scattered near shore."

For about half an hour the lads crept along in this darkness. No shore could be seen, and no stars were visible. Frank now turned the

pirogue farther to the right hoping every minute to see the trees on shore or feel the craft grind on the bottom, but he could not even strike bottom with his paddle.

"Stop a minute, Jack," he said. "Which way is the wind coming?"

"There is no wind," replied Jack.

"Well, then, which way is the air moving?" Frank asked. "It was moving from the north when we started."

If nowadays a man becalmed in a fog wished to find out which way the air is moving, he would probably strike a match, but matches had not been invented in 1759, when Frank and Jack Hopkins were trying to find their way down east on the south shore of Lake Erie.

"Wet your hand and hold it up," Frank told his brother. "Maybe we can tell in that way."

"It isn't moving," said Jack, "it is just dead. When we are not moving the air is not moving."

"I guess you are right," admitted Frank. "I can't tell anything about it, either. Let us

lie still and listen for sounds on shore. Perhaps we might hear the wolves howl."

But there was no sound, and after a while Frank suggested that Jack should lie down in the bottom of the dug-out and go to sleep.

"Lie down and go to sleep?" protested Jack. "Do you think I want to wake up drifting over the rapids down to Niagara Falls? Not I!"

"Jack, I am disgusted with you!" Frank replied. "Where is your head and your nerve? I wish we were near the rapids, but we are a hundred miles west of them, so you need not worry about drifting over the falls just yet."

"I guess I have lost my nerve," confessed Jack. "I'm cold and wet and tired out, but I do not feel a bit sleepy."

"You could safely roll up in the blankets and go to sleep," Frank urged again. "I cannot see that we are in any real danger. We cannot be more than about two miles from land, at the most, but it is useless to paddle, when it is impossible to tell where we are going. We should have poled along in shallow

water, if I had not been afraid of splitting the old rotten tub on a rock. She has scarcely an inch of sound wood in the bottom, and I wish very much to have her last till we reach Fort Little Niagara."

"Fort Little Niagara? Where is that?" asked Jack.

"It is a French post, just a small place, with a warehouse, some cabins and stables, about a mile above Niagara Falls, a little way above the rapids. It is the beginning of a seven-mile portage around the falls to Joncaire's Trading House below the rapids, and about six miles below the big falls."

"I am all mixed up now," said Jack. "I thought the rapids were above the falls. Where are they?"

"There are rapids both above and below the falls," Frank explained, "about a mile of them above and about six miles of them below the falls. Boats coming from Lake Erie have to land at Fort Little Niagara, and boats coming from Lake Ontario have to land at Joncaire's Trading Post. The long, seven-mile

portage is between Fort Little Niagara and Joncaire's Trading Post."

Jack was satisfied that he understood, but he asked, "Which rapids are the worst?"

"They are all bad," Frank explained, "but the first stretch below the falls, the Whirlpool Rapids, are the worst. However, any boat that gets caught in the rapids above the falls is doomed to go over the falls; unless, by sheer luck, the boatmen should reach one of the islands just above the falls. But even then a man would be lost, for he could not get off the island and nobody could get to him from land."

"You look out, Frank," Jack said again, "that we don't drift into those rapids! I think we are lost."

"Don't be a baby, Jack," Frank replied impatiently. "Didn't I tell you that we are a hundred miles west of the rapids and the falls? And we are not lost, either; we are just becalmed in a fog. Listen! Perhaps we can hear a sound from land, but do quit acting the baby!"

"I hear a sound," Jack claimed after a little

while. "It's an owl.—No it isn't, either. It is a dog howling and barking."

"It sure is a dog," Frank agreed. "That's our signal. Do you know where we are, Jack? We are headed straight for the landing at the French fort. I don't see how I got turned around that way."

Vessels travelling on the Great Lakes to-day are guided at night by numerous lighthouses; and in foggy weather, great fog-horns sound every few minutes at all important ports. In the days of the French and Indian War there was not a lighthouse or fog siren on the Great Lakes. With the exception of a few forts and trading-posts, the whole country around the Great Lakes was a wilderness, inhabited only by widely scattered tribes of Indians.

Jack was at last assured that he and Frank were not lost and he lay down in the boat and fell asleep.

Some time past midnight a breeze sprang up, and very soon Frank could tell by the stars which way to steer, and when the morning dawned, the brothers had paddled some ten miles down the lake.

CHAPTER VIII

NO FOOD

It would not have been difficult to secure some kind of meat if the lads had not been afraid to use their guns; but in this region, where hostile Indians might be camping anywhere and where parties of Frenchmen might be travelling on the forest trails or on boats along the shore, it was too dangerous to fire their guns.

After they had landed and pulled their dug-out into a safe hiding-place, they rolled up in their blankets and slept several hours, for they were more tired than hungry.

When they awoke they felt keenly hungry. It was the first time in their lives that they had this experience, very common to Indians and all primitive men, of being hungry with no food in sight.

"It was foolish of us," said Jack gloomily, "to run off with so little to eat. We might have taken some flour or beans."

"We could not carry any more than we took, if we wanted to travel fast," objected Frank, "and I thought we might catch that Indian before he got into a French fort."

"I don't see or hear a thing," continued Jack, "but a few small frogs, and we would have to catch about a hundred of them to make a fair meal of frog legs, and I hate killing frogs."

Some years previous in early fall, Frank and one of his American scout friends had lived a week on black walnuts, wild rice, and duck potatoes, but now, in the middle of July, the walnuts were only good for dyeing and pickling, the wild rice was still in bloom and the duck potatoes had only just begun to grow on the roots of the arrow-leaves in the marshes. Not even any wild fruit was to be found, except a few sour gooseberries.

"Don't eat too many of them, Jack," cautioned his brother. "They might upset your stomach, and you will be hungry again as soon as you stop eating. One might get along a few days on ripe huckleberries or blueberries,

but all other wild berries do not satisfy a hungry man."

The lads walked slowly along a small creek, both wondering what they might be able to find to satisfy their hunger. Perhaps, Frank thought, they might find a late nest of grouse or wild turkey. A grouse suddenly whirled away with great noise, as is the habit of all our wild chickens. Both boys threw their sticks at it, but the bird disappeared in the forest like a gray streak.

"Couldn't we snare some rabbits?" asked Jack.

"We could," Frank replied, "if it were winter, but in summer we might not catch one in a week."

"Well, I see," said Jack peevishly, "where we have to go and surrender to the French at Fort Presque Isle or starve to death in these woods."

In the northern forests of pine and spruce, the boys would soon have found a porcupine, which any man can kill with a stick, and which has furnished meat for many a hungry timber cruiser, but the woods south of Lake

Erie are indeed a lean country in midsummer for a man who cannot use some weapon to hunt with.

"Listen," whispered Jack, as the boys were resting a few minutes. "I hear something. What is it? It sounds like the crawling of a big snake, or wildcat. Brr! I wouldn't eat a snake or a wildcat if I am ever so hungry!"

"Stay here," said Frank. "I'll go to see what it is."

"Look out, Frank!" Jack called after him. "Maybe it's a skunk. Don't you go near him!"

But Frank had already caught his game, and Jack heard him strike with his hatchet several times.

"I have got him! I've got him!" Frank called as he returned, carrying by the tail a big turtle, which he had just caught and killed as nearly as you can kill a turtle by cutting his head off.

"You aren't going to eat that horrid thing?" asked Jack.

"It won't be horrid after we have cooked it," claimed Frank. "It will do till we catch

something that is better. You wait and I'll show you."

Dressing a turtle was something new to Jack and he watched with much interest as Frank split the turtle shell with his hatchet and then carefully peeled small strips of some very white and of some dark meat out of the shell.

A turtle is built on a plan of his own. His ribs have been united into a kind of box or case, and many of his muscles are attached to the inside of his shell. In this respect a turtle resembles crabs and insects that have all their flesh or muscles attached to the inside of their skeleton.

It took scarcely ten minutes before Frank had a kettleful of turtle meat boiling over a bright fire, for the boy pioneers of those days were as quick in getting water to boil as the best Boy Scouts are to-day.

"That meat looks good," remarked Jack, "but it smells like fish."

"Never mind the smell of the broth," replied Frank. "I'll pour that off and boil the meat done in fresh water."

In a little more than half an hour the meat was done and the lads had their first meal of meat they had found in the woods. It tasted somewhat like veal, and there was no smell or taste of fish about it.

"I never would have thought that one could make a clean meal on turtle meat," said Jack. "I think I should have starved if you had not been with me."

"It is a very poor scout," replied Frank with a laugh, "who would starve in the woods in summer. There is a lot of good meat to be found, if one can build a fire to cook it. If it were not so late in the season, we might find some eggs of turtles. They are very good eating, scrambled in the frying-pan or on a hot stone, but they do taste just a little bit fishy."

After the lads had finished their breakfast, there was but little left for the next meal. Clearly they could not depend on catching many large turtles; they had to find some other way of securing food.

"We have plenty of time," said Frank, "so let us try to make bows and arrows."

Almost any boy can make a toy bow, but to

make a bow which will kill game is a very different matter.

A good bow ought to be made of dry and well-seasoned wood, but that kind of wood the boys could not secure. The best they could do was to split a young hickory, and whittle out two bows, taking care to select pieces with a straight grain and without knot-holes or other flaws.

For bowstrings Frank gathered the tough fibers of the wood nettle. The fibers of the growing plants were still too green, but the fibers of the dead plants of the previous year were easily separated from the rotten stalks and twisted into strings, which were surprisingly strong and did not stretch.

"Jack, they ought to work," Frank exclaimed with pride, when two bows, about four feet long, were each provided with a string of gray nettle. "But now comes the difficult part. Can we make arrows that will fly straight and bring down the game?"

Frank knew that the Indians took much time and pains in making their bows and arrows, and that they seasoned and dried the

wood for months. But the two brothers had to make usable bows and arrows as quick as possible. So they cut about a dozen straight sticks about a yard long and less than an inch in diameter. These they first peeled and then notched at the end which was to be set on the string. In this way they made a number of fairly straight, blunt arrows; but these arrows had no driving and killing power. The boys had neither stone nor steel arrow-heads, and their problem was to give enough weight and force to their blunt arrows to make them fly straight and bring down small game.

"I don't see any way of doing it," Jack declared. "I guess we have to find some more turtles or something of that kind."

But Frank was not so ready to give up. He split several large lead bullets and hammered the pieces flat. Then he bent them over the ends of the arrows, hammered them down, and tied them firmly in place with twine of nettle.

"I know," he remarked, "the Indian hunters would laugh at these makeshift arrows, but I bet that they will stun and bring down grouse and other small game. If you don't

believe it, Jack, stand up against a tree and give me a free shot at you."

"Oh, no, you won't try any of your arrows on me!" protested Jack. "You stand up and let me try them on you. You put the heads on them. You tried an arrow on me on Conewango Creek once; now it is my turn to shoot."

In the end the lads each made several trial shots at their hats, but Frank decided that it was too near sundown to start in search of game.

"Look for crabs under the stones in the creek," he told Jack, "but catch only the biggest ones. I'll build a fire and get some water boiling."

It was not very long before Jack had caught quite a mess of crabs, and Frank dropped about four dozen of them into a kettle of boiling water.

In a few minutes, to the surprise of Jack, the crabs all turned red, and Frank said they were done and good to eat.

"Aren't they poisonous?" asked Jack. "I never heard of people eating them."

"No; they are good," Frank told him. "I only wish they were bigger, but then, we have a lot of them."

Jack discovered that there was a morsel of sweet meat in the big pinchers and in the tail of each crab, and the crabs together with a few pieces of turtle meat furnished the lads a fair meal.

"It is dark enough now to travel," said Frank. When every scrap of meat had been eaten and water had been poured on the fire, the lads picked up their guns and kettle, their bows and arrows and started in their dug-out down Lake Erie.

CHAPTER IX

UNKNOWN DANGER

THE lake showed an entirely different character from the preceding evening. The sky was clear, but a very considerable swell broke on the shore, in white, toppling waves with a never ending procession, although there was almost no wind. But after the lads had pushed their craft through these low breakers, they could paddle along without danger.

"We had better steer along about a mile from shore," suggested Frank. "Parties of French or Indians may be camping near shore, and it is just as well if they cannot see us. They might hail us and might even take a shot at us, if we do not turn in, when they hail us."

There was no danger now of getting lost or turned around, the big dipper and the polar star stood out clearly on the sky, the shore line of dark woods was in plain sight, and from

time to time the hooting of owls and the howling of wolves could be plainly heard. Now and then a fish jumped playfully out of the water, and the boys wondered if they could make any kind of fish-hooks, for they were painfully conscious that they would have to catch their next breakfast before they ate it.

While the two brothers were thus meeting the difficult problem of finding their food as they went, they were in much greater danger of being captured by the French or by hostile Indians than they realized.

When the two brothers left their home near Conewango Creek, it was vaguely known to the American settlers and probably also to the French at Venango that the Americans and English would try to capture Fort Niagara during the summer of 1759. But so little worried were the French by this report, that they had assembled a force of one thousand Indians and four hundred Frenchmen at Venango with the intention of attacking and retaking Fort Pitt, or Fort Du Quesne as they called it.

It was the twelfth of July. The Indians

had made many bark canoes, and the French had a large number of wooden boats. Venango was located near the present town of Franklin, Pa., at the junction of French Creek with the Allegheny.

The French commander of the fort was holding a great council with the Indians. He made a speech telling them that to-morrow they would start down the river in their canoes and boats and they would drive the hated redcoats and the American farmers away from Fort Du Quesne, and out of the whole country of the Belle Riviere, the Beautiful River, which was the old French name for the Ohio.

As is usual in an Indian council, some Indians were in favor of the proposed plan; others, especially some Iroquois, opposed it. While the great council was in session, two Indian runners arrived with letters from Captain Pouchot, the French commander at Fort Niagara. Letters carried by special runners were important enough in those days to interrupt the greatest council. De Lignery left the council tent to read the letters.

When he returned, his face looked serious,

as the face of one who has just heard bad news. He made another speech to the assembled Indians, saying:

"Children, I have just read bad news. Sir William Johnson, who lives at Albany, is bringing a big army of Americans and Englishmen against our Fort at Niagara. You know that this fort keeps open the trail into your country. If the English take this fort, your Great Father, the French King, can no longer send goods and guns to you. Many warriors of the Six Nations, your enemies, are with Johnson. I have orders to come at once and help my brother Pouchot to drive the Iroquois and the English away from Fort Niagara. So we must go up Le Boeuf Creek and meet our friends at Presque Isle and then fall upon the English and the Iroquois at Fort Niagara and drive them away from Fort Niagara."

In this way the attack to retake Fort Pitt was abandoned, and De Lignery with his Indian allies started for Presque Isle. Had Frank and Jack Hopkins not travelled with so much caution, they would surely have

fallen into the hands of the French and their Indian allies, been made prisoners, and perhaps their scalps would have been brought to Fort Niagara, for neither the French nor the Americans could always restrain their Indian allies from waging war in the old savage fashion to which the Red Men had been accustomed for many centuries.

On one point De Lignery had not told his Indian allies the real truth.

William Johnson was no longer on the way to Fort Niagara. He was there. He had landed his men and boats on the sixth of July at the mouth of a small creek, now known to boys and men of that region as Three Mile Creek, because it is three miles east of old Fort Niagara.

He had pulled his boats into a little pond, which the creek forms just before it enters Lake Ontario. He left his boats and provision there under a guard and marched his men through the woods to the French fort. When the French woke up next morning, the Americans and English had thrown up intrenchments and the French were besieged.

William Johnson had landed his men at Three Mile Creek, because that is the nearest place to the fort, where a fleet of boats can safely land and find a harbor. For many miles east of the fort the shore of Lake Ontario is so steep and high that even small boats find no protection in a storm. In fact, since the days of our story, the waves of Lake Ontario have cut away several rods of the shore, and the old French stone house would now be tumbling into the lake, if the United States Government had not built a strong sea wall to keep the waves from eating into the bank.

In the old days, the French had their garden between the big stone house and the lake, but now the sea wall stands within twenty feet of the old fort.

If Pouchot had been a better frontier soldier he would have met the Americans at Three Mile Pond and prevented them from landing. The pond is surrounded by woods to this very day, and in that case, the Americans and English could have been defeated as easily as Braddock was defeated on his way to Fort Du Quesne in 1755.

After William Johnson had surrounded Fort Niagara he pressed the siege as hard as possible. Every night his men worked in the trenches to bring their cannons up a little closer. The French made a brave defence, but their artillery did but little damage. Johnson had placed a battery across the Niagara River, on the point of land which now belongs to Canada, and in this way he prevented any French vessel from bringing aid to Pouchot.

Why the French did not place a battery and a small garrison at that point has never been explained.

The French soon began to feel hard pressed. The wadding for their guns gave out, and they used hay instead. When the hay was used up, they stripped their beds of straw and even of sheets.

At Montreal and Quebec, the French strongholds, it was not even known that Fort Niagara was besieged. Pouchot's only hope was the relief which might come from Venango, Presque Isle, and Detroit.

This was the situation on the French and Indian frontier while Frank and Jack Hop-

kins were trying to make their way to Fort Niagara, of whose close investment they had no knowledge. Nor did they know of the big relief expedition of French and Indians, which De Lignery hurried to take from Venango and Presque Isle down Lake Erie to Fort Niagara.

The man who was at first in command of the American and English expedition against Fort Niagara was General Prideaux. But when he was killed by the explosion of one of his own guns, Sir William Johnson, who was much respected by the Indians, assumed the official command.

CHAPTER X

AN UNTIMELY CALLER

If the lads were not conscious of the danger surrounding them, they were as little aware of the good luck which had attended their journey thus far.

While they were lost in the fog near Presque Isle, the two Indian runners from Fort Niagara to Venango had passed them and had entered Fort Presque Isle. If the lads had been in the fort at that time, the commander would undoubtedly have made them prisoners. Thanks to the instinctive caution of Frank, they had escaped from this danger.

When they landed at daybreak on the second morning after they had sent Alois back, they hid their dug-out near the mouth of a large creek.

They were now about thirty miles from Presque Isle, and having observed no signs of

either Indians or French, they slept soundly till the sun stood high in the heavens.

"It must be almost noon," remarked Frank, when they awoke.

Before they started to hunt for their breakfast, however, each climbed a tall tree to scout for signs of danger.

"I think this is Cattaraugus Creek," Frank told his brother. "Three years ago we almost stumbled into an Indian village here, and we want to look sharp about us for Indians before we begin to hunt."

The sun had just risen and the lads could see for miles east and west over the big lake.

"Look northeast, Frank," said Jack. "I think I see a canoe going west, up the lake. Three men are paddling it. Are they white men or Indians?"

"They are Indians," decided Frank, after he had watched them a minute. "I can tell by their short, quick strokes. They are headed for Presque Isle and will not interfere with us."

As no smoke of an Indian camp was visible in the woods along the creek the lads felt that

they were safe and began their hunt for food, each walking slowly along one side of the creek.

Before long Jack stirred up a blustering grouse, which alighted on a tree close by. So delighted was Jack, when he brought it down with one of his blunt arrows, that he could not resist giving a shout.

"I've got him! I've got him!" he called.

"Jack, if you don't stop your noise, I'll plunk an arrow in your ribs," he called in a low voice. "Any Indian would hear you half a mile off."

Hunters in those days did not waste much ammunition, they tried to make every shot tell. But Jack had never realized how careful a hunter must be with his arrows when he has nothing else to shoot with. Not only must he get very close to his game, but he must think of retrieving his arrow in case he missed his game.

The lads were delighted that their bows and arrows really worked. Grouse, where they are not much hunted, get very tame, and by careful stalking, and by shooting only when

they had approached within fifteen or twenty feet, the young hunters gathered in a dozen birds, without losing more than two arrows. Most of the grouse were half-grown birds of the season, but Frank said they would make fine eating.

Some of the birds they boiled in their copper kettle, some they roasted over the fire, and half a dozen they wrapped in green leaves to keep for supper and the next breakfast.

"Aren't you afraid to make a fire?" asked Jack.

"Yes, I am," admitted Frank. "But we have to take the risk. I cannot make myself eat raw meat. Even the Indians hardly ever eat raw meat."

"Wouldn't it be great if we just had a few of Mother's biscuits with these birds?" remarked Jack. "I am so hungry now, that I think I could eat half the birds myself."

"Two birds is all you get for breakfast," replied Frank. "But you may drink the broth. It is very good soup, although it has no rice or oats in it. We may not find a covey of grouse to-morrow."

In the afternoon, Jack proposed that they both take a swim in the creek. "We have not had our clothes off," he said, "since we left home, and I feel sticky and dirty all over."

"So do I," Frank agreed, "but I am afraid to go in. Some Indians may be watching us now."

"I see," replied Jack. "You are afraid they would steal our clothes."

"No, not our clothes," Frank answered laughing. "They would make a rush for our guns, and probably for our scalps. But I want to take a swim as badly as you. Pour some water on the fire, and then let us slip up the creek a way."

When they had found a good swimming-hole, Frank told Jack to go in. "I shall watch," he said, "while you are in swimming, and you watch while I go in."

After both lads had enjoyed a swim, Jack said he felt awfully hungry again, and he thought it was time for supper.

"That turtle and those buggy-looking crabs we ate yesterday," he added, "did not have

very much meat, and I am mighty glad we made some bows and arrows."

Thus far the weather had been unusually fine. Some of the nights and mornings had been rather cool, but the brothers had crept close together under their blankets on a bed of dry leaves and grass, and in that way they had every day enjoyed a good sleep and did not feel worn out in spite of scant fare and hard travelling. Nor had the mosquitoes troubled them much, that unspeakable pest, which might have worn them out in the lake and river country of our Central West.

However, a storm was now coming up over the lake. They could as yet hear no thunder, but they could see the lightning flash back and forth over a great bank of black clouds.

Both boys watched anxiously the signs of the coming storm. Not a leaf was stirring, and the air had been exceptionally sultry and muggy all day.

"It looks pretty gruesome," remarked Jack, as they looked out over the lake, which spread out endlessly, till it seemed to join the black clouds in the north. The waves were already

astir, although on the south shore there was as yet not even a faint breeze.

"What do you think of it, Frank?" asked Jack. "Is it safe to start out?"

Frank looked wistfully out over the black expanse of water.

"It might be safe enough," he answered after a while, "but we should get soaked, soaked to the skin. If we had a wide bark canoe, we might land and turn it bottom up and wait till the rain was over, but our heavy and narrow dug-out is no good for that. I think we had better go back in the woods and look for some kind of shelter, before it grows too dark."

The boys had no tent, not even a piece of canvas, so they had to find or make some kind of shelter.

Jack suggested a lean-to of brush, but Frank claimed that a lean-to was a very poor shelter. "It begins to drip," he said, "in about five minutes, and we may have to stay on shore all night."

Jack proposed that they stretch their blankets over a pole in the shape of a small tent.

"Then we would have to sit or lie on the ground all night without blankets around us," objected Frank, "and I know you would be so cold that I would soon hear your teeth rattle."

When it was getting quite dark, and Frank was about ready to put up one of the blankets for a tent, they found a large hollow basswood, which a storm had blown down.

"Here is our shelter," called Frank. "You crawl into one end, and I into the other. You cut some brush for bedding. I will get two large pieces of bark to set into the openings, so the wind cannot beat the rain in on us, but you have to hurry, Jack. The wind is coming over the lake now. The kettle, bows and arrows, and the game you can set under the log. Our guns we have to take inside; we can shove them into a hollow branch."

Any boy or man who has ever made camp late in the evening, with a storm coming up, will know that neither Frank nor Jack was slow about his task. The clouds had now spread over the whole sky, the thunder was already rumbling overhead, and it was fast getting dark.

"You had better crawl in, Jack," suggested Frank. "I think we should sleep with heads together and feet toward the openings. Keep your shoes on, for it may blow in a little at the ends. There is a crack over your bed, but I shall tie a long piece of bark over it to keep you dry."

Before Frank crept into the log, he fastened a round piece of bark at Jack's feet, and then he crept into his own lair, and pushed a piece of bark in place at his own feet.

"Jack, you surely made us a fine bed," he remarked, as he stretched himself out. "That was a capital idea of yours to spread a lot of dry leaves over the brush. Do you hear that dull roar? It is either a big wind or a heavy rain. We are lucky to have found this den."

A few big drops began to pelt and splash down on the log. Now they began to fall faster, and within a few minutes the clouds seemed to open and pour torrents of water mixed with hailstones upon the old log, with a great rumbling, splashing noise.

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Frank.

"Hear it coming down! Wouldn't we get soaked under a brush lean-to? Is your place dry, Jack?"

"As dry as our bed at home," replied Jack. "My place does not leak a drop."

"All right then, Jack. Let it rain. We'll have a good long sleep. This night travel is a pretty hard game."

For a little while the boys listened to the wild music of thunder and rain, and watched the gleam of the lightning through the small openings at their feet.

More furiously crashed the thunder and splashed the rain, as if a cloudburst passed over the forest. A tree close by was felled by the lightning or rent asunder.

"You need not be afraid," whispered Frank. "We are much safer here than we would be sitting up under the tall trees."

The water in the creek near by began to gurgle and roar.

"Frank, how is our dug-out?" asked Jack. "I'm afraid the water will carry it off."

"It is safe," Frank assured him. "I tied it to a tree."

After a while Jack said it felt close and stuffy in the log.

"Push out the bark at your end," Frank told him. "The wind is coming from my end, so we do not need to close our room at your end."

Now the violence of the storm began to subside. However, a second shower soon followed the first, but before this crossed the lake and broke over the forest, both lads were sound asleep in their warm dry bed of leaves and brush in the big log.

The sky in the east toward the great rapids and falls was turning a brilliant red, a soft gray light pervaded the forests and a few birds began to call, when Jack was disturbed by something tugging at his blanket.

"Oh, don't, Frank," he muttered, still half asleep. "It's raining. Let me sleep."

But the disturber would not quit. With a vicious grab he wrenched away the blanket, and Jack felt as if some of his skin was being pulled off by the tines of a rake.

He was awake with a start and yelled at the top of his voice:

"Get out! Get out there!—Frank, a bear is trying to eat me!"

Both lads slipped out of their holes at once. A few rods away a young black bear stood up on his hind feet and looked at the boys with a scared, quizzical expression.

"Move off! You fool idiot!" called Jack, as he threw a stick at the bear, who seemed inclined to come back.

"Fool idiot!" repeated Frank laughing. "I reckon that is what he is thinking of us."

CHAPTER XI

THE GHOST FORT

NEITHER of the boys was any longer sleepy after the bear's visit, and they were very thankful that the bear had not eaten their grouse, which had been hidden under Frank's part of the log.

"That bear must be a foolish youngster," Frank said laughing. "He has probably never seen a man, for an old bear would never have tried to pull us out of bed."

When the boys returned to the log to take out their guns, before they started a fire for cooking breakfast, they found signs, which explained still further this bear's strange behavior. There were many claw marks at both ends of the log which showed that a bear had often entered the hollow log; but in their hurry and in the growing darkness, the boys had failed to observe these bear signs on the previous evening.

The hollow log was one of the young bear's sleeping quarters on his hunting and feeding trail. He had been out on an early hunt for breakfast. Probably he had picked up a lot of stranded fish along Cattaraugus Creek, perhaps also a few benumbed young grouse and turkeys, and now he intended to crawl into the dry, airy log to sleep during the warm hours of the day. When he discovered that some other creatures had in his absence taken possession of his camp, he started to pull the intruders out.

"Well, Jack, you may sleep some more, while I go hunting for meat," said Frank.

"Not I!" protested Jack. "Never again in that log. Ding you, Frank, I think you knew this was a bear's den."

"You need not worry any more about that young bear," replied Frank laughing. "He will not go near this place for a week. He is better acquainted in these woods than you and I, and you may be sure he knows of several other good sleeping-places."

Before they resumed their journey, they caught several large fish, which had been left

stranded, so to speak, in a pool left by the rapid falling of the high water.

Frank had not been any too careful with the dug-out. It had swung around into the timber and was half full of water and mud, and it took much hard work to push and drag it back into the creek. If Frank had not tied it up, the flood would have swept it down-stream into the lake.

This evening the lads made an early start, after scouting along the lake shore for signs of danger.

Soon after midnight they saw the western or rather the northern shore of the lake opposite the present city of Buffalo.

"Frank, we are getting to the rapids," warned Jack, as he felt the dug-out carried along by a swift current.

"These are only the Little Rapids," Frank assured him. "The real rapids are twenty miles away."

They were now running on a broad river, which raced along at the rate of eight miles an hour, but to Jack it seemed much faster.

"Go close to shore!" he urged Frank.

"Hear the noise. We can never stop our boat."

"Jack, we don't want to stop. I have gone over these rapids twice. They are not dangerous and there is perfectly quiet water beyond. Close to shore we might get swamped and lose our guns. Sit still and paddle ahead. The safest route is right in the current, not near shore, where the rocks stick out."

But it was impossible for Jack to paddle calmly ahead as Frank did.

"Thank God!" he whispered, when they had once more reached quiet water. "Frank, maybe I am a coward, but I shall not go through any more rapids. I am afraid of the noise they make!"

The sound of rapids ahead has something awe-inspiring. Even many a brave man has pulled ashore and walked down-stream to inspect a small rapid, which, in the silence of the forest, and more yet in the stillness of the night, made to his keyed-up senses the roar of a great and dangerous waterfall.

"Frank, I hear the falls," claimed Jack a little later.

The elder brother laughed at Jack. "You hear a noise in your ears," he answered. "The falls are over ten miles away, as the crow flies, and they are fifteen miles off the way we are going, east of Grand Island."

As soon as the first signs of daylight appeared, Frank landed on the east shore.

"Why don't we land on the other side?" asked Jack. "The woods look good to me."

"They do," assented Frank, "but they are on an island. That is Grand Island, and I do not like to land on an island. It is dangerous. If there are any Indians or French on the island, or if they see us land there, they would have us in a trap, and they would get us too. The river on both sides is half a mile wide, and wider in many places. If any Indians trailed us to that island, we should never get away."

They now pulled their dug-out behind some willow bushes, and lay down to stretch their legs, for they had to sit or kneel on the bottom, while they paddled their rather tippy craft.

"We shall have breakfast," said Frank, "and you drink some hot chicken broth, before

we find a place to sleep. The hot broth will be good for your nerves."

"If hot wild chicken broth is good for the nerves," retorted Jack, "you ought to drink a lot of it. Do you know that you have been talking about dangerous Frenchmen and Indians ever since we left home? And we haven't seen a single Frenchman but poor Alois, and I am not sure that we have seen any Indians at all. For my part I don't believe there is a Red Man or a Frenchy left in this whole country. I think they have all cleared out.

"Frank, you are the worst scared fellow of Frenchmen and Indians I ever saw. I'm going to give you my share of the hot broth. I am only scared when we come to any nasty, roaring rapids, but you are scared all the time.

"We have been sleeping in a bear's den and crawling around ——"

"Oh, dry up, Jack! Dry up!" Frank interrupted him. "I'll show you a hundred Indians and Frenchmen at Fort Little Niagara, and a thousand of them at the big Fort

Niagara on Lake Ontario, if you are brave enough to go near them.

"I am not afraid of Indians, I am simply careful. It's too late when they jump out of the brush all around you."

Before the lads sought a sleeping-place, they climbed a tall tree to get a view over the river, the island, and the woods on the mainland.

Frank thought he saw a haze of smoke across the southern point of Grand Island on the Canadian shore. "It rises near the mouth of Black Creek, just the kind of place they like for a camp," he said.

"Where are the falls?" asked Jack.

"Straight northwest, about eight or ten miles," Frank told him. "If the air over the river was not a little hazy, we might be able to see the cloud of mist that always rises above them."

"I can hear them," Jack claimed. "It is a dull, deep sound like a storm in the forest far away."

"Jack, you are just nervous on falls and rapids."

"Maybe I am," Jack admitted, "but I can hear the falls."

One of the old settlers of Buffalo claimed that, on very quiet nights, he could hear the great falls at Buffalo. In those days, the air was not filled with the hum of cities and the noise of trains and factories, and while it is a little doubtful that they could ever be heard at a distance of fifteen miles, the distance from Buffalo, it is not impossible that they could be heard at a distance of eight or ten miles.

The lads were compelled to remain several days opposite Grand Island on account of bad weather. The nights were windy and rainy, and so dark that the boys were afraid to take their wobbly dug-out on the big river.

On this occasion they built themselves a shelter of bark and driftwood, for Jack would not sleep in another hollow log.

When the weather again grew calm and clear, Jack would have preferred to abandon the dug-out and walk to Fort Niagara, but Frank would not hear of this plan.

"We shall get plenty of walking," he argued. "Slashing around in the woods at

night is too hard, and we do not want to travel in the daytime, till we have some information about matters at Fort Niagara.

"You needn't worry about the rapids," he told Jack. "As soon as we see the buildings of Little Niagara, we shall land."

"All I say is," Jack replied, "that at the next rapids I shall get out. I don't care whether you call them big or little."

"At the next rapids I shall get out, too," Frank replied quietly, "because they are the big rapids above the falls."

As they were slowly gliding down-stream, close to the right bank, Frank, who sat in the stern, thought he could see how tensely Jack looked ahead and listened for the dull roar of the rapids.

Although the lads did not ply their paddles as they had done on Lake Erie, they glided swiftly past the dark, silent forest.

Frank had expected to see the buildings and probably some lights at the Little Fort about midnight. The hour arrived, and he knew by the increasing swiftness of the current that they should be in sight of the fort,

but not a light from the fort or an Indian camp-fire was visible; there was no beating of drums, not even the barking of a dog.

"Frank, I hear the rapids," Jack broke the silence, and he turned the bow of the craft toward shore. "Let us get out."

"I hear them, too," Frank replied. "But it beats me that we don't see a light or hear a sound from land. We are within half a mile of the Little Fort, and we ought to be able to see even the buildings now, but I can't see a thing. If I believed in witchcraft, and evil spirits, I would say the country is bewitched or some spirit had taken us to the wrong side of the river.

"I know this river as well as you know Conewango Creek at home. I swear the fort is right ahead of us, but I can't see it. Let's get out and scout ahead on land."

There was no sight or sound except the dull foreboding roar of the rapids ahead, and the hooting of an owl in the forest.

"Listen," whispered Frank. "Is that an owl, or is it an Indian?"

"It's a big owl," said Jack. "Can't you

hear the blow in his throat? And he is up in the trees. An Indian wouldn't be perching among the tree-tops. Would he?"

"Hanged if I know, Jack. This is the old trail. The fort should be right ahead of us in that open space at the end of the woods, but it isn't there. Or am I struck with blindness?"

"It is not there!" said Jack. "But what is that straight dark thing sticking up at the other end of the clearing?"

"I see it, Jack," whispered Frank. "That's where the fort ought to be, but it isn't there. Does the ground around it look black to you?"

"Yes, it does look kind of black."

"Let us sit down here and listen," whispered Frank. "Is your gun primed? I am afraid of stumbling into an ambush. If a fort could be a ghost, I'd say Little Niagara has turned into a ghost fort. It was there three years ago, but it isn't there now."

"Frank, do you smell smoke?" asked Jack. "I do. The wind just turned a little."

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Frank. "They've burnt the whole place. That's the

stone chimney over there. They have burnt everything and cleared out. Frenchies and Reds, the whole outfit of them.

"Well, let's go back and hide our boat and then find a place to sleep. I guess I can't show you any Indians and a scalp-dance to-night.

"I wonder if they have burnt Presque Isle and the big Fort Niagara and have all left for Montreal? I am ready for anything now."

CHAPTER XII

PRISONERS

WHEN the lads returned in daylight to the site of the abandoned fort, they were not left in doubt as to what had happened. Every building on the place, including storehouses, stables, and barracks, had been burnt. The stone chimney was the only thing left sta ding.

There was no sign of white man or Indian about the place. There was not even a stray dog or cat. Who had burnt the place? If the English or Americans had taken the place, it seemed to Frank they would have occupied it, because it was the western end of the most important portage road in the whole of North America.

If the French had set the place on fire, why had they done so? And where had they gone with their Indian allies? To Presque Isle, to Detroit, or to Fort Niagara?

Jack suggested that the fire had started by

accident. Perhaps lightning struck it on the night of the bad storm, but it looked as if some carts, tools, and guns had been piled up and destroyed on purpose.

"Well, we don't have to worry about French and Indians," Frank gave as his opinion, after they had scouted over the region and had in several places examined the road leading along the river to Joncaire's Trading Post at t[illegible] present site of Lewiston.

"I tell you something Jack," he continued; "let us have some fun with our old pirogue by sending her over the falls. We shall never use her again. I have always wanted to see a boat go over these big rapids and over the falls. I do not see any signs of either Indians or French, so we might as well have a little fun."

Jack fell in at once with this plan. "Yes, let us do it," he assented. "We have not had any fun since we left home."

They took the dug-out down-stream to the head of the rapids and then pushed it off as far as possible; while they ran swiftly along the bank, carrying nothing but their guns.

They had a hard time to keep up with the wild, plunging rapids, which swept the heavy dug-out along, as if it were but a chip of wood. Several times it struck a rock, but in a second it swung around and once more rushed forward on the crests of wild-rushing waves.

"Run, Jack!" urged Frank. "She will get to the falls ahead of us."

"Ah, she is stuck!" exclaimed Jack, as the craft lodged on a rock a few rods above the falls. "She won't go over."

"Come along!" called Frank. "I think she is going to swing free."

In a few minutes the pirogue swung loose, and as the boys had just reached a point where they could see what happened, the long, heavy dug-out shot headlong over the outer edge of the American Falls and was dashed to pieces on the rocks below, but the roar of the falls drowned all sounds of the breaking up of the heavy boat.

For a moment both lads stood speechless, watching for pieces of their boat to appear on the smooth water below, but they saw no sign of it.

"She is gone," said Frank. "The pieces are sucked in between the rocks."

Both lads wished very much to cross over to Goat Island, called by the Indians Gawanota, the Sounding Island, and believed by them to be the abode of the Great Spirit, but there was no bridge in those days to this fine wooded island, which divides the great river into the American Falls and the Canadian Falls, now generally called Horseshoe Falls; and Frank warned Jack that attempting to cross on foot the wild, leaping rapids would be sure death.

"Even with a stout pole in your hands," Frank argued, "the force of the water would sweep you off your feet and carry you over the falls."

Both lads wanted very much to see the Horseshoe Falls close by, but the best they could do was to gaze at them from a point some distance below the present first Suspension Bridge.

So vast is the mass of water, which rolls here over the cliff and then drops a hundred and sixty feet, that the falls themselves are always partly hidden, during calm weather,

by a cloud of mist rising higher than the tops of the tallest trees.

Jack had now lost his fear of the great river, and proposed that they look for a trail into the gorge and try to find a canoe to cross over.

However, Frank would not listen to any such idea, and he laughed at Jack's suggestion that they could swim across the stretch of quiet green water between the falls and the Whirlpool Rapids.

"We surely could not swim across with our guns," he objected, "and we are not going to take a chance on being carried into the Whirlpool Rapids. We are going to Fort Niagara and find Wagooshaw and Fred."

It was hard for the lads to break away from the view of the deep chasm and the sight of the falls. When they did leave, they carried their packs and a young turkey, which they had shot with an arrow the day before, to a secluded spot about a mile east of the Portage Road, and in this place they cooked and ate their supper and made their bed for the night. After an exciting day, they rolled up in their

blankets at sunset, and soon fell asleep, listening to the distant, even thunder of Niagara.

Having a feeling that a part of their dangerous journey was practically accomplished, they slept with a greater feeling of security than on any other night, and when, as usual, they awoke at daylight, they only pulled their blankets over their heads to sleep some more.

From this extra sleep, Jack was the first to awake.

"Listen, Frank," he called, "I think I hear shooting."

Frank sat up, rubbed his eyes and listened.

"There!" called Jack. "There's another and another!"

"Man," cried Frank, "that's cannons at Fort Niagara. The Americans and the English are fighting with the French. We must hurry up and get there."

Jack was for leaving at once, but Frank insisted that they must first eat some breakfast.

"I did not mean that we should rush off like that," he said. "Remember, Jack, that shooting is not just around the corner; no, we

are still fifteen miles from Fort Niagara and we do not dare to follow the Portage Road, but have to pick our way through the woods."

"Why can't we march along the Portage Road?" Jack asked somewhat impatiently. "You did not drink enough hot broth; you are just plain scared of Indians."

"I am scared of these that I can't see," Frank admitted freely. "If there is fighting at Fort Niagara, then I am more sure than ever that Indians are passing back and forth between that fort and the French forts and Indian villages farther west. Most of the Six Nations are against the French, only the Senecas were inclined to favor the French; but if the war goes against the French, the Senecas are likely to desert them, for Indians, like most white men, try to be on the winning side. Most of the Western tribes like the Hurons, Ottawas, Shawnees, and Illinois are with the French, because the English have not reached their country. So you see, Brother, the Indians are as much interested in this war as the whites, and I know that their scouts are going

back and forth, informing the tribes of what is going on. And I also know that they are travelling with as much caution as we are, for that is Indian nature.

"Let us finish our turkey, for it will be near supper-time when we reach Sir William Johnson's camp."

Frank had begun to feel uneasy about Jack. The high-strung lad, who had never gone through anything of this kind, was looking thin and haggard. He had never complained of feeling tired or worn out, but Frank judged that it was only the excitement of the trip that kept him going.

Travelling through the forests along the Niagara was indeed not as hard as going through the woods of Wisconsin and Minnesota, where the young trees and the underbrush over large areas are so thick as to be almost impenetrable, but even in the fairly open forest of big oaks, walnuts, beeches, and basswoods, travelling is quite tiring, when one cannot follow a road or a trail.

For several hours the boys could hear the booming of cannon.

"What do you think they are fighting for?" asked Jack.

"Just now they are fighting for the possession of Fort Niagara," explained Frank. "But if the French lose Fort Niagara, they lose the whole country around the Great Lakes and along the Ohio clear to the Mississippi and St. Louis.

"If Fort Niagara is taken, the French settlements at Montreal and Quebec are shut off from the West, and the Western fur trade and the whole Indian trade of that region will fall into the hands of the Americans and the English."

It was late in the afternoon when the boys caught sight of Fort Niagara and of the American outposts.

Fort Niagara is located on a point of land between the mouth of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. For a quarter of a mile in front of the fort, the French had long ago cleared away all the timber, so that no Indians could creep up under cover. The besieging army of Americans and English had cut down some more of the forest, and had pushed their

trenches within easy and effective range of the fort.

Frank took in the situation at a glance. He thought there were more than one thousand white men and five hundred Indians besieging the fort. How many Frenchmen were in the fort, he could not tell.

"Why don't they come out and try to drive the Americans away?" asked Jack.

"I guess they are afraid," replied Frank, "to risk a pitched battle. If they lost, our men would take the place by storm, and the Indians would rush in and scalp every man they could get hold of. The Iroquois have always hated the French ever since Champlain had a battle with them, a hundred years ago; and it would be impossible to restrain them. Those Indian warriors are all a murderous lot. It is too bad that they cannot be kept out of this war, but if we do not let them fight for us, they will fight against us with the French."

The question now was how to get through the line of sentinels into camp.

"We must take our hats off and leave our guns here and walk into the open and call to

that nearest sentinel," Frank advised. "I hope the fellow is cool enough to look before he fires his long gun at us."

When the lads advanced unarmed and called, the sentinel turned sharp around, looked at them and motioned them to advance.

"Heavens alive," he exclaimed, when the lads came up. "Two starved white boys. Where are you from? Did you run away from the French and the Indians?"

"No, we are from Pennsylvania, from Conewango Creek," Frank told him.

"Well," replied the sentinel, looking sharp at them, "I left two boys like you at Albany on the Hudson. I have to turn you in as prisoners, but I reckon I'll take you with me to the mess tent first. There comes the corporal and the guard to relieve me. You fellows look more'n half starved."

"We have been on short rations most of the time," Frank admitted. "We shall be glad to be prisoners in the mess tent for a while."

CHAPTER XIII

THE CLASH

THE captain of the regiment sent word that he was too busy to see the lads that evening. Private Atkins should take care of his prisoners. They were not to be allowed to leave the camp, for they might be French spies in disguise.

The lads did not look to Atkins like spies; moreover, everybody could hear that they spoke English without a trace of French accent. After they had given their word of honor that they would not try to escape, Atkins rustled an armful of hay and made them a bed in his tent.

"I had to grab the stuff pretty quick," he said laughing. "If the stable sergeant had caught me, he would have turned me over to the guard, because hay is a little scarce around here. But you boys look as if you needed a

good bed, and they can turn the horses out on grass. The cavalry has nothing to do, anyhow; we infantry men and the artillery have to do all the fighting."

The boys surely enjoyed a bed that was not wet with either dew or rain, and they had scarcely touched them when both were sound asleep.

When the bugler called the reveille in the morning, they felt like new men; but all that day they did little else but eat and sleep.

On the following day a report ran through the camp that some Indian scouts had come in and had reported to Sir William Johnson that 1,400 French and Indians were on their way from Presque Isle to relieve Fort Niagara, and that Sir William was going to send a part of his army up the river a mile or two to give battle to this host before they had a chance to attack the camp.

Early next morning a part of the army marched quietly up the river and took a position in the timber on both sides of the road.

Frank and Jack were allowed to join the command on their promise to Atkins that they

would remain close at his side and take no chances of falling into the hands of the enemy.

Indian runners brought word early in the morning that the French and Indians had landed at the site of Fort Little Niagara and were coming down the Portage Road with a "heap big noise."

It seems almost unbelievable that Frenchmen and Indians so well versed in frontier warfare should travel with a "heap big noise." But the strange truth is that they really did come, not as a well-led army, but as a wild rabble, shouting and yelling, down the heights of Lewiston and on along the road to Fort Niagara.

Near the present village of Youngstown, where the land is now covered with orchards of the finest apples, cherries, and pears that any boy could wish for, the Americans and English were posted in the woods and behind intrenchments awaiting the noisy mob.

In less than an hour it was all over. In a wild flight the French ran back to their boats, hotly pursued by the Americans and their al-

IN A WILD FLIGHT THE FRENCH RAN BACK TO THEIR BOATS.
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lied Iroquois. Many of the fleeing rabble were killed and others were made prisoners. Those that escaped, both Indians and French, fled to Detroit, to the Illinois country and to Montreal.

Late in the evening, after the Americans and English had returned to their camp around Fort Niagara, a boy appeared in camp asking for help to bring in a wounded Frenchman.

"He get shot," the lad told in broken English. "I see Iroquois coming, painted all black. They come to scalp us all. Everybody run away. I drag man into thorn-bush. We hide. Two Indians come and look around. They no see us. They see other man run. They follow him. Wounded man and I lie under thorn-bush all day till dark. Once I get him water from river. He no can walk, maybe he die pretty soon."

A group of men had collected around the boy. Some would not believe his story and a corporal was just going to turn him over to the prisoners' guard, when Frank and Jack joined the group.

"Alois! Alois! Where do you come from?" they called as with one voice.

The French boy, wild-eyed, and getting still more excited, repeated his story and asked help to bring in the wounded man.

Frank and Jack volunteered to go with Alois, and the lieutenant of the company ordered four men to go with them.

"Look out for an ambush!" he warned as they marched off.

"No ambush! No ambush!" Alois exclaimed indignantly. "I no lie. Man pretty near dead, I think."

It was not long before the men and the boys returned and carried the wounded man to the surgeon's tent.

Jack took Alois to the mess tent, and if Alois had any regrets about being a prisoner in the American camp, his appetite did not show it, for he had eaten nothing since early in the morning.

Private Atkins now had three prisoners in his tent, and as soon as he was off duty the lads told him their whole story, for which there had been no time thus far.

"Boys, I think I have good news for you!" he exclaimed, after Frank had briefly related Fred's capture by Wagooshaw, and their fruitless effort to overtake him. "Boys, you may recover your brother to-morrow. The rumor is that the French will give up to-morrow. Pouchot will surrender the fort and give up the prisoners. They have a lot of American prisoners, men, women, and children.

"If we capture that miserable Wagooshaw, we'll just string him up. No, I guess we can't do that. But leave him to me, lads. I'll just point him out to my Iroquois friends; they will soon have his scalp. Wagooshaw is one of those red panthers, who have been killing and robbing in the western settlements, and we'll soon hang up their pelts."

CHAPTER XIV

A HARD BLOW

ATKINS had been well informed. On the next day, the 25th of July, 1759, the French Commander, General Pouchot, being almost out of food and provisions, with a garrison worn out by daily bombardments, and with all hope of help from outside vanished, prepared to surrender to Sir William Johnson. The last day had come of French dominion on the Great Lakes.

It was well known in camp that there were many American prisoners in the fort.

"I reckon," Atkins told the boys, "you will find prisoners there from all over, for during these years of war, the Indians have been raiding the frontier as far as Albany and almost to Philadelphia. It is a wonder to me that not all the settlers west of the mountains lost heart and moved away."

"Where could we go?" asked Frank. "We could not leave our homes and our land, and return as beggars to our old homes in the East.

We just had to stay and protect ourselves as well as we could."

The boys could hardly await the time when they could enter the fort and look for their lost brother.

At last Atkins secured permission to take them in. They had no eyes for all the strange sights; they were looking just for one person. There were prisoners of all ages; men, women, and young children.

There was a woman from somewhere in New England who had been a captive amongst the Indians four years. One man had been captured near Halifax, Nova Scotia. A man sixty years old had been a captive at Fort Niagara fourteen years. There were children whose parents had been killed by the Indians. Some of these children were too young to know their own names or to be able to tell where they came from. There were boys and girls from Virginia, New York and Pennsylvania; but Fred was not amongst them, and none of the captive boys had seen him or knew anything of him.

Frank and Jack sat down in despair. Per-

haps they had been following the wrong trail. Very likely Wagooshaw had never gone to Fort Niagara, but had struck off into the wilderness north of Lake Erie. In that case it might be years before any one could find out where he lived. Perhaps Fred had died or had been killed, and nobody would ever know anything about him. It was a common thing in those hard days that Indian captives were swallowed up by the big forest. They were sold from one tribe to another, till they had travelled hundreds of miles from home. Sometimes boys and girls were adopted by some tribe and when, years afterwards, they were discovered by their parents or relatives, they had grown so fond of the Indians and their way of living that they would not return to their own people, for after a white person had been adopted into the tribe, he was generally well treated. This was especially the case with young boys and girls, who were nearly always adopted by some Indian woman, who had lost one of her own children through sickness or accident. In such an event the red foster parents also often refused to part with

their adopted children, to whom they had become much attached.

When the two Pennsylvania boys with Alois and Atkins had searched in vain for Fred through the whole fort, Alois was the only one who did not lose heart.

"I go talk to 'habitants,'" he said. "No use feel bad. We hunt some more."

The "habitants" were Frenchmen born in America. Many of them had Indian mothers, and nearly all of them spoke one or more Indian languages, and they generally lived on terms of friendship with the Indians.

Alois joined a group of these habitants, who were roasting over a camp-fire some beef, which an American had given them.

"*Bon jour!*" Alois greeted them. "*Bon jour!*" replied the dusky campers, and soon invited Alois to share their unexpected feast.

Alois had asked Frank and Jack to stay away. "The habitants," he said, "will tell me more if I am alone and talk French to them."

After the men had eaten and lit their pipes, Alois watched his opportunity for leading the

talk to Indian and Indian captives, which was not a difficult thing to do, for the habitants themselves were now captives, and were wondering where they would be sent. They were not at all downcast, for they did not like the soldiers and officers from France, who looked down upon them. The only thing they were afraid of was falling into the hands of the Iroquois.

"The English and Americans," the speaker said, "are gentlemen, but the Indians are all red devils in war. They don't know how to fight like gentlemen; they want to take scalps."

"Sir William Johnson would not let them," suggested Alois.

"Monsieur Johnson?" replied the Canadian; "we are afraid he can't help it, my boy. Look! There are two hundred tepees outside the fort, with a thousand Indians in them. Ah, the red devils! Did you see how they stole in the fort? Everything they took. Our furs, our blankets. Even the caps and coats of the officers. Everything they stole that was not locked up in the powder magazine."

"Why are there no French Indians in the fort?" asked Alois.

The Canadian laughed. "Don't you know, boy, that no Indian will stay where there is fighting with cannon?"

"There was Ouagusha, the big Ottawa, a brave man, too, in the woods, and one not afraid of waves and rapids, when he paddles his bark canoe."

"Jacob, you know Ouagusha?" the speaker asked, turning to one of his friends.

Jacob laughed, and said that he knew the big Ottawa warrior.

"He came here," the Canadian continued, "about two weeks ago. He brought a white boy with him. He was talking to some officers. It was near the stone tower. Boom! goes a cannon. The big ball hits the block-house, and some stone and mortar flies around. Ouagusha grabs the boy by the hand and runs for the bake-house. Ah, my friends, he runs like a scared rabbit. Victoir, the baker, is Ouagusha's friend. Ouagusha hides the boy in a flour-barrel all day, for he is afraid the English will see him through their

spy-glasses and shoot at his captor with a cannon. Then he goes and hides behind the big house on the lake shore.

"When it is dark he goes to the bake-house and eats up two big loaves. '*Bon jour!* my brother,' he says, 'I leave this place. English camp is bad medicine. All country bad medicine. I paddle to Montreal. I go hunt beaver. White men make heap plenty bad medicine.'"

Alois had not spoken a word, for fear that the Canadian might not finish the story.

"Did he go to Montreal?" he asked now. "It is a long way to paddle."

"He disappeared from the fort that night," continued the speaker, "and he took the boy with him. He will not come back to Fort Niagara for a long time."

Jack gave a shout of joy when the brothers heard that Fred and the Indian had really been at Fort Niagara only about two weeks ago, but his face fell when he learned that the distance from Fort Niagara to Montreal was three hundred miles and that a canoe would have to pass over miles of bad rapids in the St. Lawrence River.

Alois was ready to start for Montreal as soon as they could secure a good boat or canoe, but Atkins reminded the lads that the war was not over, and that the French still held Montreal.

"Would Wagooshaw paddle clear to Montreal all alone?" asked Jack.

"Ah," cried Alois, "he paddle all way to France to get away from cannon. He fight hard with gun and bow and tomahawk, but he run like rabbit from cannon."

The Ottawas and other Indians allied with the French had indeed been wise in not remaining in the fort, for it was with difficulty that the Iroquois were restrained from killing even the French prisoners. Sir William Johnson had allowed the French soldiers to keep their guns and bayonets, for fear of an Indian massacre, and General Pouchot had instructed his men to "punch the Indians in the stomach" if they become troublesome, but to avoid bloodshed, if possible.

Johnson's Indians had done valuable work as scouts on the march and in repelling the French rescue expedition near the present site

of Youngstown. But during the siege most of the 800 Iroquois were a great nuisance, and ate up an enormous amount of beef and other provisions; and after the surrender, they caused much worry and anxiety to Sir William.

The morning after the surrender, the French prisoners were sent in boats to Oswego, down Lake Ontario; and the released American captives were also sent east.

The three boys, Alois was now one of them, remained at Fort Niagara; because for the present they neither knew what to do nor where to go.

On the evening of the surrender the American and French officers were invited to dinner in the big stone house by General Pouchot. It cannot have been a joyful meal for the French, because it was the last dinner French officers ever ate in the old stone fort, which had been the key to the French dominion on the Great Lakes, on the Ohio, and the upper Mississippi, but Pouchot and the brave defenders of Fort Niagara certainly showed themselves good losers.

CHAPTER XV

THE WILY OTTAWA

For a week the lads were much in doubt as to what to do. Should they ask to be released so they could go to Montreal as soon as possible, or should they go to Oswego and join the English expedition against Montreal? But this expedition would probably not start until next summer. Whatever they did, it looked as if they had lost the trail of Wagooshaw in the great Canadian wilderness. Where would Wagooshaw go from Montreal? Probably up the Ottawa River to Georgian Bay. But everything was uncertain. He might go on to Quebec. But Quebec was besieged by the English under Wolfe and defended by the brave and able Montcalm, the bravest and ablest French general in Canada. What was happening at Quebec, nobody knew at Fort Niagara.

Frank was almost ready to return to Pennsylvania and await the end of the war; but the French boy never lost heart. That he was really a prisoner did not worry him at all. He was with his chosen boy friends, he was well treated in camp, and it made no difference to him who ruled at Fort Niagara or on the Ohio. Every day he mingled freely with the soldiers, the Indians, and the French in and about the fort.

One evening he came to mess in a specially happy frame of mind.

"I meet two habitants across the river," he told his friends, "who come from Toronto. They camp one night at the place, where the French burnt their fort at that place. They met big Indian at that place who had a little white boy. They give Indian plenty food and little tobacco, and then the Indian begin to talk. He tell them where he catch white boy. He is mad at French officers, because they will not buy white boy. He say he no go to Montreal, because Englishmen will lick Frenchmen with big guns. He say Frenchmen and Englishmen just make hell of whole country.

Buy no scalps, buy no prisoners, give no presents to Indians. He say he go home over trail to Lake Aux Claies, and Lake Huron. He been away from squaw and papoose a long time. He say he go home to Ottawa country near Sault Ste. Marie. He say, maybe he give white boy to squaw, maybe he kill him.

"Habitants, they like white boy. They tell Indian, he kill white boy, red-coat soldiers find him and hang him.

"Indian get mad. He say Englishmen can't find him in big woods at Sault. He say no Englishmen ever come to Big Sault. Only French traders and one French Blackcoat. He say he do not know what Blackcoat wants in Indian country. He buy no fur and want no land. He tell Indians not to take scalps, not to burn captives, and not to get drunk and fight; but to go catch beaver and hunt deer and raise corn, or the Great Spirit of the white men will send them all to a bad place."

There could be no doubt that the two Frenchmen had camped with Wagooshaw and had seen the captive brother of Frank and Jack. Of the captive they had noticed that he

looked hungry, but he was not wounded nor sick and he had a blanket to sleep in.

It was plain that Wagooshaw had changed his plans. Instead of going to Montreal for the purpose of selling his captive for a reward, he was going to cross the neck of land between Lake Ontario and Georgian Bay of Lake Huron.

The distance on this route to the Sault was only some four hundred miles. By taking the route from Toronto to Lake Aux Claies, now called Lake Simcoe, and Georgian Bay he would avoid meeting any of the dreaded Iroquois, and he would have to pass no American or French forts, where he might run into trouble and danger as had happened to him at Fort Niagara.

If he met any human beings at all, they would be Ottawas of his own nation or friendly Chippewas or Crees, to whom he could brag of his exploits in the settlements and show his live captive or the captive's scalp.

The route to Lake Superior by way of Toronto Bay and Lake Simcoe was well known to

the Indians and the old fur-traders. But it was not much used, because it involved travelling by land and carrying furs and goods over a distance of about thirty miles between Toronto Bay and Lake Simcoe.

In the summer of 1764, five years after the events of our story, the famous American fur-trader Alexander Henry came over this route with his Chippewa and Ottawa delegates to the great council of all the Western Indians, which Sir William Johnson had called at Fort Niagara. Henry and his Indians took this route, so as not to pass Detroit and to avoid falling in with the hostile tribes who were besieging Detroit under Pontiac, who was himself an Ottawa.

It is possible that Wagooshaw had another reason for taking the Toronto route. On this route he could safely travel in broad daylight without fear of meeting many inquisitive or dangerous travellers, either whites or Indians, and on this route he felt entirely safe from pursuit.

The lads talked over the news of Wagooshaw with their friend Atkins. A new spirit

had come into them. They secured an elm-bark canoe in which to paddle on Lake Erie to Toronto, a distance of some sixty miles along the shore.

"This is real travelling," remarked Jack, as they glided along smoothly under the lee of the shore. Out in the open lake, the white-capped waves were dancing merrily, for a breeze was blowing from the northwest, and it takes but very little wind to stir up the sleeping waves on Lake Ontario.

"Frank, this is lots more fun than the way you made us sneak along," Jack continued after a while.

"Yes, it is much more fun," Frank admitted. "But if we had travelled this way, some Ottawa or Chippewa warrior would now wear our scalps on his belt, or we would be captives at Detroit or somewhere out west."

"No, Frank go right," Alois came in. "You travel in daytime to Fort Niagara, Indian sure catch you."

Jack and the French boy wanted to make the sixty miles to Toronto in one day, but Frank prevailed upon them to camp in a beau-

tiful spot near the present town of Hamilton, Ontario, where the Welland Canal now enters Lake Ontario from Lake Erie.

They made camp early in the afternoon and had a fine supper of the good things they had brought along from Fort Niagara. Fresh beef, broiled over the coals or fried in the pan with strips of bacon, eaten with an unlimited allowance of bread from the French brick oven, with wild black raspberries for dessert, made good enough a meal for any hungry boys.

It was now the month of August, the most pleasant month to travel and camp in the woods. The mosquitoes and black flies were gone, and when the stars came out, the lads spread their blankets at the foot of an old elm and soon were fast asleep.

On the second night they camped on the shore of Toronto Bay. There was no sign of Indians or white men on the bay, and the lads used no precaution to conceal their camp.

Jack could not forego expressing his opinion that Alois was a much better quartermaster than Frank.

"With him I had to live on turtles and bugs," he told Alois, "and he made me sleep in a bears' den."

"You wait," retorted Frank, "till we strike dangerous country again and see what Alois will do. We are eating the last of the beef and bread to-night, and to-morrow we shall begin to live again like Indians."

"Oh no, not yet," objected Jack. "We still have almost two sides of bacon and three bags of corn. But I don't see why we did not take two or three more bags of corn and some more bacon."

"You will see it to-morrow," Frank replied, "when we make up the packs to carry to Lake Simcoe."

Pack-sacks, which woodsmen and canoeists use so much nowadays, were not known at the time of the French and Indian War. In those days both Indians and white men carried their packs by means of straps which fitted over the shoulders and the forehead, and the packs were tied up in any suitable manner, or were put into a wooden carrying-frame.

Jack was surprised at the weight each boy

would have to carry. There were three guns and ammunition for them, two small copper kettles, three light axes, a piece of canvas for a shelter, extra shoes, about twenty pounds of Indian goods, and some forty pounds of food. A number of articles they abandoned together with their bark canoe, but even then each lad had to carry about fifty pounds, which is a big load even for a man, unless he is hardened to carrying a pack.

"We will go slow," said Frank, "on the first day; and when we get tired we shall stop and make an early camp."

Jack discovered very soon that by "going slow," Frank did not mean to loiter and just saunter along. Very soon each lad had struck his gait. Alois, who had carried packs since he was a small boy, took the lead, Frank followed at some distance, and Jack had to scramble his best not to be left too far behind. One cannot walk along leisurely with a heavy pack, and while each man will strike the gait easiest for him, a speed of between two and three miles an hour is easier than a slower gait.

"Look here, boys," Frank cautioned when all three of them were taking a short rest at the end of the first mile, "we shall all get killed, if we travel in this careless manner. We have to stay close together and make as little noise as possible."

The trail they followed was not bad as wild trails go, but the packs seemed to be getting heavier every mile, and, although the trail was easily followed, carrying a heavy pack over it was hard work. Many large trees had fallen across the trail, but no Indian would think of cutting them and dragging them aside. In other places large roots caused the boys to stumble, and in a low wet place, the trail led through deep mud and over many slippery roots.

In the middle of the afternoon they came to a small stream, and Frank suggested that it might be a good place to camp. "Unless you would rather march a few miles farther?" he asked, turning to Jack.

"Not I," Jack replied promptly, putting down his pack. "I couldn't go another mile!"

"Oh, shame on you, Jack!" cried Frank. "Don't act like a baby. If you kept on, you would soon get your second wind, and you could go again as far as we have come."

"Perhaps I could, Frank," the younger brother agreed. "You and Alois know how to carry a pack, but I had a hard time to keep my first wind. I don't care a bit to catch the second. I think the Indians are wise not to use this route to Lake Superior. I bet poor little Fred had a hard time to keep up with that long-legged Wagooshaw. How much farther do we have to haul all this stuff?"

"About thirty miles more," replied Frank carelessly. "We have made only about ten miles. You squatted down on every log we passed."

"Thirty miles!" exclaimed Jack. "I'll be dead before we get there."

"Jack, if you don't stop whimpering," Frank threatened, "Alois and I will tie you down to a log and liven you up with a hickory switch."

"You try it," Jack challenged them, "and you will see me liven up before you get me

tied down. I feel as light as a feather now. You couldn't catch me."

"All right then," said Frank. "Take up your pack and come along, for we must not camp so close to the trail."

When the lads had selected a camp for the night, Frank took a forked stick and carefully righted all the weeds and brush they had trodden down on their short march from the trail through the woods.

"What do you do that for?" asked Jack.

"To hide our camp," explained Alois. "So Indians cannot follow us, when they walk along the trail."

"But there are no Indians here," objected Jack.

"We see none," admitted Alois, "but you can't tell when they come. Indians travel everywhere all the time. Indian see a trail, he follow it every time, just like a blood hound.

"Now we make a little fire and cook supper, but keep pretty quiet. No shout, no yell. Indian all have ears all over."

When it was getting dark, the lads carried

their packs about ten rods farther into the woods, before they lay down to sleep.

"Bad medicine," said Alois, "to sleep near fire place, when bad Indian is around. He smell fire. He crawl up. 'Hi, Hi, Hi,' he yell and jump up and has caught you. He take you long. Make you run gauntlet, maybe tie you to stake and burn you. All dance round, and yell like devils."

"Is Wagooshaw going to make Fred run the gauntlet and burn him at the stake?" asked Jack with his eyes flashing. "We'll kill Wagooshaw if he does."

"No, not little boy like Fred," protested Alois, "but big boys like Frank and me and you, he make run maybe, or tie us to stake."

CHAPTER XVI

A STRANGE FIND

THE night passed without any alarm. Wolves howled around the dead camp-fire, and a snorting buck awoke the boys before daylight. But Alois said these were good signs, for the wild animals would have left, if there were any Indians prowling around.

Soon after daylight the boys continued their journey toward Lake Simcoe, and Jack found carrying a pack a little easier and he did not sit down on every log. The travellers made about fifteen miles, before they camped near a fair-sized creek, which Alois declared emptied into Lake Simcoe, but the water in the creek was so low that, in many places, it would not carry a canoe.

The boys now had the experience, which has defeated many large and small Indian war-parties. They had to stop and hunt or go hungry.

"Boys, this won't do," Frank said, when they had made camp on a small brook away from the main creek. "Our bacon is almost gone, and in a week our corn will be gone. We have to hunt for meat to-morrow, so we can save our corn for a time when we can find no game or have no time to hunt. There seems to be some game here and no Indians, so let us lay up a few days to stock up with food."

Alois proposed that each man should hunt by himself and that all be back in camp about five in the afternoon.

But Frank did not like this plan. "It is dangerous," he objected, "and I should be uneasy about you and Jack all day. No, we must stay close together, even if we bring in less game."

"There are no Indians here and no white man," claimed Alois.

"How do you know, Alois?" Frank protested. "Wagooshaw came this way and other Indians may travel over this route. Nobody can tell where and when he will meet Indian hunters or war-parties. No, we will just spread out a little and hunt west of our

camp, away from the trail and the creek. Use your arrows on grouse and small game, but use your gun, if you have a chance at a deer or elk. We have to take some risk, and I know we shall never get a deer with an arrow. But don't fire at a deer unless you are sure of your game."

For about an hour the young hunters advanced straight west without bagging anything bigger than a few grouse. Then Jack gave a low whistle, which had been agreed upon as a signal that the other two hunters should come his way.

"What do you see?" asked Alois, when he met Jack.

"Look at that grove of oaks," whispered Jack.

"Ah!" cried Alois. "Pigeons! Many pigeons! But they are gone. We came too late."

When the boys had walked over a few hundred yards, a sight met their eyes such as no American boy will ever see again. They had found a nesting and roosting place of the large passenger pigeon.

There were tens of thousands of nests. Every small twig had been picked up by the birds for nesting material. Many branches had been broken by the countless hosts of the birds that had nested and roosted here. Although the nesting season was now past, enough belated birds were left, so the boys caught a hundred fat squabs in half an hour. The roost stretched away for a mile, and Frank said that a million birds must have occupied it. After the hunters had dressed the squabs, they hung them up so the bears could not reach them, and then they went in search of deer.

"Don't shoot at does or fawns," Frank told his companions. "I don't like to kill the does and little spotted fawns. Let us try to get a fat young buck."

The boys had looked over the pigeon roost for signs of Indians, and as they had found no sign of the red hunters, even Frank felt satisfied that there were no Indians in the neighborhood.

The Indians used to be as fond of pigeons as the white settlers, and when the hunters

located a nesting-place, the whole village moved to the roost and feasted on pigeons. The squaws smoked and cured thousands of them, and the young warriors took smoked squabs on their long raids.

About noon, a shot was heard. Frank had brought down a deer.

All three of the lads stopped hunting and carried their game to camp. Here they put up several frames of green sticks about three feet high. On these sticks they spread out their pigeons and venison after they had cut it up in thin slices. Then they built fires under the frames, and in this way all their meat was smoked and cooked over a slow fire. Meat prepared in this way is very nourishing, is light in weight, and will keep a long time.

White hunters often put the meat in salt for about twenty-four hours before they smoked it, but the Indians always cured their game without using any salt.

Care must be taken not to use too much salt, and fish may be prepared in the same way as game.

About midnight all the meat was cured, and

the tired lads were glad to seek their blankets. So tired and sleepy were they, that it was easy for them to follow the teachings of the Good Book, not to worry about the troubles of the next day.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BEAVER DAM

NEXT morning the lads began to live like Indian hunters and warriors. Their breakfast consisted of fresh broiled squabs and venison, and water from the brook. The corn was to be used only in case of emergency, when they had no time to hunt or when no game could be found. They had each a little tea, coffee, and sugar in their packs, but these luxuries were reserved for special occasions or to help them gain the good will of some Indians, whose assistance they might need to accomplish the object of their journey.

The provisions which they had secured would last them about two weeks, but a new problem now arose. The stock of dried meat added about one hundred and fifty pounds to their loads, compelling each boy to carry about one hundred pounds. This meant that

they would have to carry their goods in relays to Lake Simcoe, leaving the first load at the lake, while all three of them returned to their present camp for a second load. But such a plan would delay them at least a day, and it would greatly increase the danger of their being robbed and attacked by hostile Indians.

After they had talked it all over, and examined with much care the stage of the water in Holland Creek, they decided to adopt another plan.

They would build a canoe near the creek and carry all their baggage down the creek to Lake Simcoe by canoe. If necessary, two of their number could walk along the bank, and they could all portage the boat and goods past shallow stretches of the stream. At their present camp, good canoe trees were common, but at the mouth of the creek, Alois told his friends, most of the good canoe trees had been cut down by the Indians.

They soon discovered a large straight red elm, and began at once to cut it down. The Indians and frontiersmen of Western New York and Southern Ontario were compelled to

use elm bark for their canoes, because no large birch-trees were found in those regions.

It was hard and tedious work for the boys to fell the big tree with their light axes; and taking off the bark, without cutting it, was almost as difficult, because the bark would no longer peel as freely as in June and July.

It was dark when the log was peeled, and it took another day to close the ends of the canoe, to put in the cross-pieces, ribs, and gunwales necessary to strengthen the craft and to prevent it from warping.

When, at last, the craft was finished, they had a canoe about twenty feet long. It was much stronger than a similar birch-bark canoe, but it was also much heavier and slower, for the bark of the elm is very rough, and does not glide smoothly through the water.

No sooner had they launched their new ship on Holland Creek than a new difficulty appeared. The canoe was so much heavier than they had expected that it would not carry more than half their goods on the shallow water of the creek.

Frank and Jack looked at the heavy canoe and the shallow creek in despair, but Alois said he had an idea that might help them out.

"See here," he said, "this little stream that comes into the creek no looks right. It looks like a deep ditch that had plenty of water, maybe last month. It is all dry now. All other little streams still run. I ask, where is the water of this little stream? I say, we go up little stream and find out. Maybe we find plenty of water, and bring it down to Holland Creek."

It was not at all clear to Frank and Jack what Alois had in mind, but they followed him up the dry stream.

As they proceeded, Alois grew even more cheerful. "I think we find plenty water," he said. "I once find plenty water long time ago, and float canoe down like duck."

"Say, Frank," whispered Jack, "what's the crazy Frenchman trying to find, anyhow? If there was plenty of water in this stream, wouldn't it be coming down of itself?"

"Never mind, Jack," replied Frank; "come

along. Perhaps he knows a few woodsmen's tricks that you and I have not learned."

Pretty soon Alois began to call aloud:

"Aho, my friends! Come here, come here quick!" he cried. "I find him! I find him! I told you maybe we find him!"

"What in the world has he found?" asked Jack, as he and Frank hurriedly scrambled through the brush.

"Look there, look there!" Alois cried standing on a dam of brush and mud. "The beaver pond, the big beaver pond!

"Lots of water, lots of water!" he continued, as his friends came up.

"Big pond!" Alois repeated. "Maybe half-mile long. Lots of water all dammed up. Plenty water to float canoe!"

There was a strange sight indeed, a large deep pond right in the forest. Many of the trees standing in the quiet water were already dead and others were dying. A small floating island lay a few rods away in a patch of open water, and a flock of ducks disappeared behind a jumble of dead-and-down logs, as the boys started to walk up along the edge of the

pond, which filled the little valley for half a mile back from the dam.

Near the bank, about a hundred yards above the pond, they discovered a structure, which looked like a very big muskrat house, but it was built of peeled sticks and poles. "The beaver house," Alois explained. "The old beavers live there with the little beavers. In daytime they are all asleep. In evening they come out and eat roots and poplar bark. When beavers get scared, they hide in the house or in holes in the bank."

It was all wonderful and half unreal to Frank and Jack, who had heard old trappers tell of beaver dams and beavers, but had never seen any of their works.

"Alois, do you mean to tell us," asked Jack, when the boys had returned to the dam, "that the little animals built this big dam?"

"Sure, the beavers built it," Alois replied with a grin. "They aren't very little. A big old beaver, he weigh fifty pounds, maybe sixty. And he can cut down big trees, as big as our canoe elm."

"It looks as if big and little boys built the

dam," persisted Jack. "Look at all the brush and poles and mud they used!"

"No boys! No boys!" Alois protested. "The beaver people, they did it all. They drag brush and float poles, and scoop mud with their little hands."

It did seem hard to believe. "Animals can't build a dam like this," Jack objected. "I think the Indians built it."

"No, Jack. The beaver people do it all," Alois repeated. "They drag brush and cut trees with their teeth, and they use their fore-feet like little hands when they dig the mud."

In the middle of the narrow valley the dam was seven or eight feet high. Then it ran out gradually to both slopes. Wherever the water had begun to escape in a depression, the animals had continued the dam, adding mud, sticks and brush, as was required. Where the dam ended, on the slopes of the valley, it ran out into little ridges of mud, that looked more like the work of Indian children at play than like the work of animals.

"I don't see," said Jack after a while, "how

this beaver pond is going to help us to go down Holland Creek."

Alois looked as if surprised at Jack's stupidity. "Listen," he began, "I tell you. I go sit down with paddle in canoe. You and Frank take axe and pole and break the dam. You work hard and quick and make a big break in the dam. The water all come out. It rush into creek and float canoe. I paddle quick and keep canoe on high water. You and Frank run down along creek. By and by I strike deep water. I wait for you and we all paddle down to Lake Aux Claies."

Jack looked questioningly at Frank and Alois.

"It ought to work," Frank agreed. "But I think I will take the canoe myself. You and Alois may break the dam, and run along the bank."

"But where will the beavers go if we break their dam?" asked Jack.

"The beaver," replied Alois laughing. "He don't care in summer. Old beaver, he hear water run. He come swimming along pretty soon to see what make the noise. He see dam

broken, he swear with his tail two three times. Then he swim away and tell his children to hide in holes, because the dam is busted and the bears and wolves can get into the house pretty soon.

"Then at night, he and other old beavers they come and fix up the dam. And by and by the water rise again and close the doors of the beaver house, and all the little beavers come back home."

"All right, boys!" Frank agreed. "To-morrow morning we break the beaver dam, and see if we can't get off to Lake Aux Claies. If we make that plan work, we shall soon be on Lake Huron and once more on the trail of Wagooshaw."

"Alois, how can the old beaver swear with his tail?" asked Jack.

"He bang the water with his tail, when he dive," Alois explained. "You hear him long way off, maybe a mile. He make big noise like Englishman swearing."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE QUARREL

ALOIS was quite willing to help Jack break the dam. If he felt that Frank did not quite trust him and thought that he might run away with the canoe and the goods, he concealed his feelings at the insult.

It was just after sunrise when Frank was ready in the canoe, paddle in hand and with his gun ready for instant use; for he felt that he would be a good mark for any enemy concealed in the woods.

Jack and Alois did not find the breaking of the beaver dam an easy job. The mud on top of the dam was scraped off easily enough. But then they struck big poles, buried in more mud and brush; and it was difficult to work in the water, which at once began to rush through the gap. Now one and then the other slipped and tumbled into the rushing current,

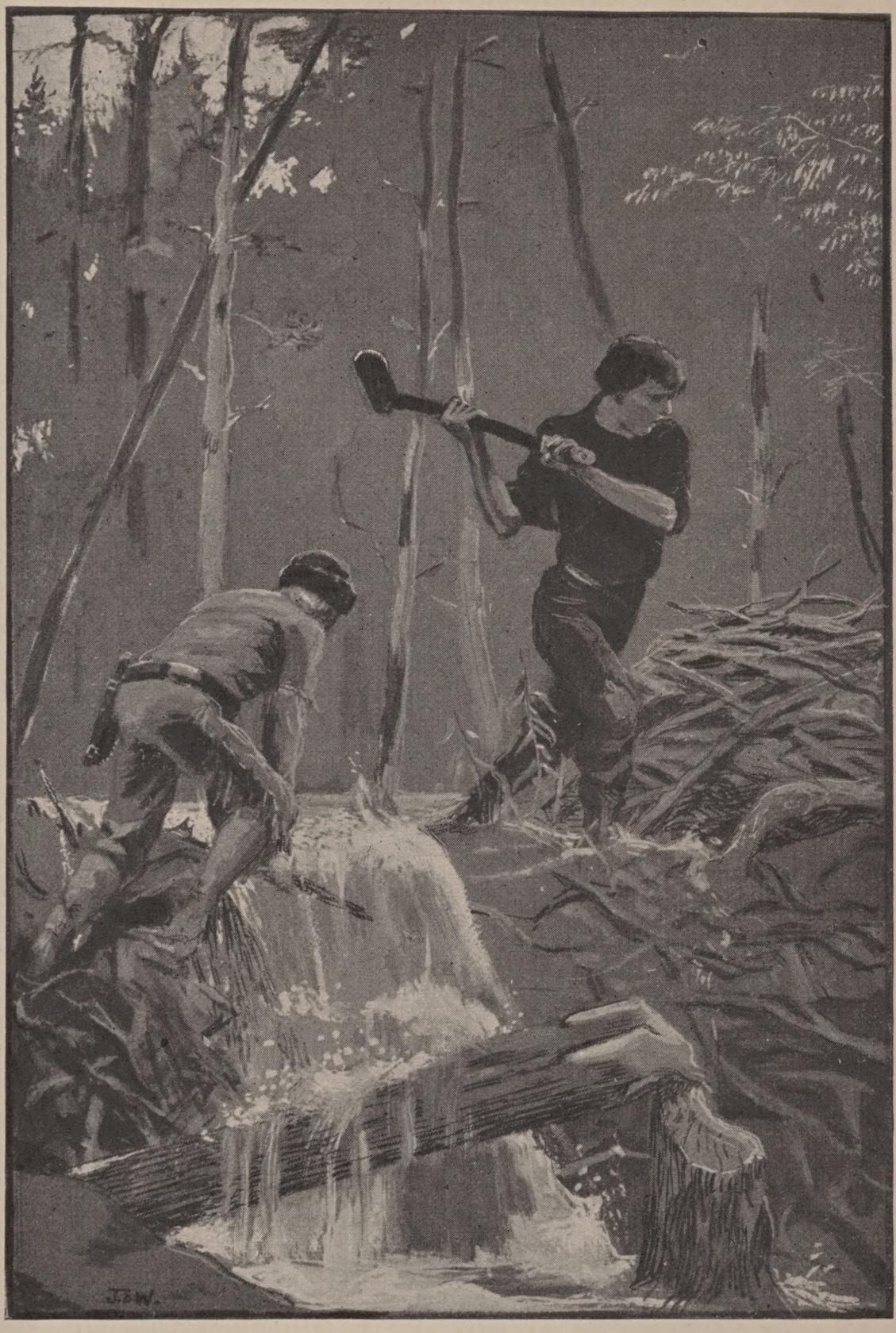
till both were as wet as if they had been swimming in a mill-race with their clothes on. They pulled at the brush with their hands, they used poles to lift up a mass of big sticks, they tried to cut some big poles with their hatchets; but it took fully fifteen minutes before the breach was so deep that they could no longer work in the water, which now rushed out of the pond, and with a great noise rolled and tumbled down the stream.

They picked up their guns, and ran toward the creek, but the flood from the beaver pond had reached it ahead of them. The creek, very shallow a few minutes ago, now ran high, as if it had been suddenly swelled by a cloudburst, and Frank and the bark canoe were gone.

Jack and Alois took a short cut to the next bend of the creek, but Frank and the canoe were not in sight.

Jack became frightened and said he feared that Frank was drowned.

"Ah, Jack, you are poor little Indian," Alois exclaimed with a laugh. "He no drown! He paddle fast to keep going on high



JACK AND ALOIS DID NOT FIND THE BREAKING OF THE BEAVER DAM AN EASY JOB.—*Page 165.*

water. Pretty soon water get low again, and he get stuck on mud and rocks. No use running. We find him by and by."

The argument of Alois seemed very reasonable to Jack, but his faith was nevertheless severely tested during the hour following. He did no longer try to run along the creek; on the contrary, he was quite willing to walk, for it was hard enough to travel through the brush at a walk and carry a heavy gun.

Every time the two lads approached a bend in the creek, Jack expected to see his brother with the canoe. But he was disappointed a second and a third, even a fifth and sixth time; and then he lost count of the bends and curves.

It did not seem possible that Frank could be so far ahead, for Alois and Jack had been pushing their way through brush and over fallen trees for an hour, at least it seemed that long to Jack.

"Take rest," said Alois, seating himself on a log. "We find him by and by."

"We won't find him!" Jack cried in despair. "He is drowned, or the Indians got him."

"He no drowned!" protested Alois. "Where is canoe? He float. No Indians here. You get scared and tired. Come! We march on. We find him by and by."

And again they picked their way from bend to bend; but no boy or canoe came in sight. However, the creek was getting deeper and a little wider, and Alois, all cheerfulness and confidence, tried to assure Jack with his quaint: "We find him by and by. He all right."

In this way Jack and Alois had travelled some three miles, although it seemed to Jack that they had come twice that distance.

Another small creek now joined Holland Creek, and at the mouth of this stream, a large elm spread over a stretch of smooth deep water. As they approached this smooth water, they heard a low whistle.

"Listen! Indians!" whispered Jack.

"Ah, no Indians," replied Alois. "They no whistle!"

And then Frank gave a lusty shout and called, "Hello, you bush runners! Get aboard for a ride.

"You fellows are slow," Frank continued. "I have been here half an hour, and began to fear that you had missed me. I tell you, boys, that was a wild trip. I had to wind and twist, and paddle like a madman. Three times I got stuck on a log, but by jumping into the water and pushing and lifting I got her afloat again. Alois, if you hadn't broken the beaver dam, I never could have made it."

By noon the lads rode out upon the blue surface of Lake Simcoe and landed in a shady spot for a good lunch. In the morning they had been too excited to eat much breakfast, and now they all felt very hungry. Before the meal they took a swim in the lake, and while they were eating and resting, they had their wet clothes spread out to dry in the sun.

Frank was strongly in favor of hiding during the day, and then creeping along the west shore during the night.

"I am afraid of straggling war-parties of Chippewas and Ottawas," he told his friends. "If they see us crossing the lake to-day, they can ambush us anywhere along the crooked

channel and pools of the Severn River to-morrow."

But Jack and Alois were strongly opposed to night travel.

"Why can't we travel so as to enjoy it?" asked Jack. "We have not seen an Indian or Indian sign since we left Niagara. The war never extended into this country; and if we do meet Indians they may be quite friendly," he pleaded. "So please, Frank, let us travel in daytime!"

"You will be a good lawyer some day," Frank granted. "I would feel easier about the disposition of the Indians we may meet if all three of us were French like Alois."

"They can call me French or Dutch, or anything they like best," Jack argued.

"They will call you what you look like," retorted Frank. "They will call you Englishman, Scotchman, or Dutchman, but no Indian will take you for a Frenchman."

Then Alois began to add his plea to that of Jack.

"My friends," he said, "let us travel in the sunshine, when we can hear the birds call and

see the loon dive in the lake. Much travel by night makes men weak and sick, and we shall have a long way to go. No Indians are in these parts, and all the wood signs tell us this land is at peace."

"We will do as you wish," Frank yielded. "But I am ill at ease, for I know that the red warriors often lie in wait, where no wood signs tell of their presence."

So the lads travelled rapidly along the wooded shore of Lake Simcoe, and the land seemed to be indeed at peace. All afternoon they saw no signs of Indians and no smoke of their camp-fires. The pearl-gray seagulls floated lazily over the canoe, big dragonflies darted about as if playfully passing and returning. A mother duck hurriedly concealed her half-grown flock in the bushes on shore, and from a tall dead pine an eagle bolted into the clear water and brought out a big wriggling fish for his supper. That was the nearest thing they saw to remind them of the world of war and bloody strife, which they had left behind on the Niagara only a week ago.

Toward evening they landed on a pleasant spot, near the foot of the lake, where quite a mass of driftwood had piled up among the rocks.

Jack and Alois proposed that they cook their supper on the beach and then leave all their goods and food in the canoe over night. Alois said that he would tie the canoe in such a way that it would swing out into the water so bears and wolves could not get to it. Then after supper they would build a big fire of driftwood and he would put up their canvas in such a way that they could sleep near a warm fire all night.

At first Frank was disposed to laugh at this plan good-naturedly. "Do you fellows think," he asked, "that we should leave our canoe so that a thieving Ottawa simply needs to cut the rope to run off with everything we have? A nice mess that would leave us in. We would be like starving dogs left stranded in the wilderness. No, boys, we must carry our stuff ashore and hide our canoe."

"But Alois and I do want to build a bonfire," Jack insisted.

"You will *not* build a bonfire," Frank bluntly refused. "Do you think I want to keep a signal fire burning near my camp all night for all the Indians of Canada?"

"Ah, this isn't your camp, and you aren't the boss of it," retorted Jack angrily.

Frank's face flushed, and he turned his sleeves up a little higher.

"I am going to be the boss of this camp," he spoke firmly, "and if you two fellows don't believe it, I am ready to show you right now. We shall all get killed if we don't have a boss. You two fellows are just a couple of fool boys."

Jack had turned pale and also started to roll up his sleeves. "Alois!" he muttered angrily, "are we going to take that?"

But Alois saw things in a different light. With a laugh on his dark brown face, he pushed Jack away. "You are like two,—like two cock-a-doodles," he expressed himself. "But I say, you no fight here. Good camp have boss. No boss, no good. Men fight and make much swear talk. No good, no fun. I say Frank boss this camp. Come on, Jack!

We hide stuff in woods. Just little while, we got him all done."

Whenever Alois was excited or much in earnest, English words refused to come to him, and he struck out on short-cuts through all the snarls of English syntax and grammar, but so effective was his plea in this case that Frank and Jack hardly knew whether they laughed at themselves or at the quaint language of Alois's peace talk.

In a very short time all the goods were carried to a safe spot on shore and the canoe was hidden in a place where no Indian was likely to find it.

CHAPTER XIX

THE WAR-PARTY

ALTHOUGH the boys had thus far seen no Indians, Frank could not make himself believe that the Indians had all deserted a region which was naturally a very good Indian country.

He knew that Indians easily took fright on rumors of an approaching enemy, and he thought that perhaps they had left the country when they heard of the capture of Fort Niagara by the Americans and English. They might have been afraid that a war-party of Americans and Iroquois would now pass from Toronto to Lake Aux Claies, and possibly they had all withdrawn to the smaller Lake Couchiching and the Severn River north of Lake Aux Claies, where they could not be so easily surprised.

"Don't you remember," Frank asked Alois,

"if there were Indians living on the Severn when you passed over this route?"

"I was a pretty small boy then," Alois told, "but I think we passed a small village of Missisaugas somewhere on the Severn River."

"They are just the people I am afraid of," replied Frank. "The Missisaugas are a band of Chippewas and the Chippewas are friendly to the French and also to the Ottawas, who are enemies of the Americans and English. I am afraid that we shall have trouble before we reach Lake Huron. Now remember, boys, you are not to shoot unless I shoot, or tell you to shoot. If we kill an Indian, every warrior in his tribe becomes our deadly enemy. But whatever happens, don't be scared and don't whimper!"

In order to avoid running blindly into danger, the lads put in a day scouting on foot. They passed the Narrows, which connect Lake Simcoe with Lake Couchiching, the Lake of Many Winds. They walked up along this lake until, from the top of a tall tree, they could see its outlet, the Severn River. But no tepees or smoke or other signs of Indians were visible.

So they started north next morning. They passed carefully through the Narrows, where they found many stout poles driven into the bottom.

Alois told them that at this place the Indians often made fish-traps out of poles and wattle.

"Les Claies," he said, "I think you would call fish-traps, and after these fish-traps, the French call the big lake which we have just crossed, Lac Aux Claies."

When they had slowly passed over Lake Couchiching north of the Narrows, they landed on an open spot near its outlet.

Frank intended to scout again for hostile Indians and to take a look at the Severn River which flows out of this lake. Alois remembered that there were some bad rapids in the Severn, but he had forgotten their exact location.

Lake Couchiching is only ten miles long, but the boys had stopped at several islands to look for recent Indian signs, and it was long past the noon hour when they arrived at the foot of the lake. Jack and Alois were very hungry

and Alois built a small fire to boil some corn to eat with their smoked pigeons and venison.

Frank's mind was still uneasy about the dangers ahead of them.

"I almost wish," he said, while the corn was boiling, "that we had gone by way of Detroit. We could have passed the fort at night.

"Now listen, Alois!" he began again after a little. "If we fall in with any Indians, don't you start in to jabber Chippewa or Ottawa to them!"

"But I think I go along to talk Indian," Alois answered, wondering what Frank had in mind.

"No, you are not to talk Indian," Frank repeated. "You talk French to them or English. Many of them understand some French and a few understand a little English; and we can make signs to them if they don't understand what we say."

Alois looked puzzled and disappointed. He had hoped to shine in the important rôle of interpreter, and now he was forbidden to make use of his knowledge.

"You don't let a word of their lingo escape from your mouth, but you keep your ears wide open and listen to what they say. Then as soon as you can, you tell me what their plans are. But be careful, Alois! Don't let them catch you at this game! You know these red warriors are very suspicious and are mighty sharp observers."

"Oh, I see, I see!" Alois replied. "You want me to be,—to be scout. A sharp spy. Ah, I fool them all right. It will be much fun. I listened many times to them. They don't talk many words like English do. Just a few things they say many times. 'Kill him, shoot him, get deer, catch fat bear, make scalp, burn him, make him run gauntlet, bad Englishman,' that is what they talk.

"I know them plenty in Iroquois, Shawnee, Ottawa, Chippewa, and Cree. Ottawa and Chippewa and Cree are pretty much all same. Ah, my brother, I make good spy for you. We fool them plenty."

"Well, I hope you will," Frank cut him short. "Now don't get wild and forget your part."

"Listen! Wasn't there a noise in the woods?"

"It's a big gray squirrel," Jack pointed out. "I see him. Let me go and get him. We can boil him with our corn."

"No, don't go, Jack," Frank interposed. "But I shall step down to the canoe and bring our guns. We must always keep them handy."

Just as Frank arose, there was a noise, a big noise. Four naked Indians, with guns aimed at the campers, rushed out of the woods, yelling: "Bad Englishmen! Bad Englishmen! We got you. We burn you! Bad Englishmen!"

Before the lads realized that they were captives, one of the Indians had taken the guns of the boys from the canoe and had hidden them in the woods.

"We are caught," Frank told his friends. "Don't be scared and don't whimper."

Two of the Indians tied Frank's and Jack's hands and feet with strips of bark, while the other two looked on.

Then two of them went to plunder the canoe and Alois was ordered to help them land the

things. When they saw how much food and other things they had captured, they yelled and danced like real wild Indians.

The leader pointed to the fire and said something to Alois, and made signs that the Indians were hungry.

Alois knew what was wanted of him. He was now cook for an Indian war-party.

Jack, as he watched Alois stirring the fire, did not know what to think of him, but Frank leaned back against a rock and looked on with a smile, as if he enjoyed to see Alois at work and felt sure of getting his share of the feast.

As for Alois, he went to work as if he was making a feast for dear old friends. When the leader pointed to a bag of corn and said: "Mundahmin," Alois at once emptied one of the bags and filled two kettles of the Indians with corn. He even went so far as to put pieces of bacon in with the corn, at which the Indians acted very much pleased.

"Hang that Frenchman!" Jack thought. "He never worked like that for us."

As soon as Alois thought the corn and bacon were done enough to suit the taste of his cap-

tors, he set the kettles before them, and said: "Eat. Good samp. Good samp. Awful hot."

By this time, each of the Indians had finished three or four pigeons and now the corn and bacon went quickly.

Jack was afraid to say anything, but he looked on with ill-concealed anger and wondered if the red devils would continue their feast until they had finished the whole boatload of meat and corn.

They did eat up the whole stock of smoked pigeons, but when they had finished these with the boiled corn and the bacon, they could do no more.

After the feast they sat down to smoke and talk. Their conversation was held in a rather low voice, but Alois, who had been ordered to keep the fire going, sat close by and had little difficulty to catch the drift of the conversation.

They talked Ottawa and Alois soon learned that they lived south of Lake Superior. They had intended to go on a long raid into the Iroquois country or into Western Pennsylvania, but when they had learned that the French

had lost Niagara, their courage had failed them. But their leader had dreamed that they would capture some Englishmen and now his dream had come true and they exulted at their good luck and bragged of their bravery. But they were in doubt what to do with their captives. The two youngest warriors, scarcely as old as Frank, were in favor of killing them and taking their scalps home. It was a long way home, they argued, and they were afraid the Englishmen would run away.

After a while the leader began to ask Alois about Fort Niagara, the number of English soldiers and the state of the war.

Now the time had come when Alois had to show how he could hold his own as scout and spy. Frank was sitting close enough to guess what the talk meant, and he listened anxiously to Alois's answer and furtively watched his behavior. Would Alois forget himself and start talking to them in Ottawa or Chippewa?

But Alois pretended to have understood only the word Niagara. He started to tell them in French that Sir William Johnson had

taken the French fort with a thousand soldiers and Iroquois. And then he spread out the fingers of one hand to make them understand that Sir William Johnson had five times a thousand soldiers and Indians.

Frank could not tell what impression Alois's story made upon the Indians, but he thought Alois was doing well. But what would he say next?

Of course Frank did not know what the Indians had asked, but he had no difficulty in understanding what Alois told them.

Alois took pains to assure them that no soldiers and no Iroquois were coming this way. When Frank heard that he was much pleased, because he knew that Indians quite often killed their captives if they were hard-pressed by pursuers.

Then Alois started on another track. Sir William Johnson, he said, intended to punish all the Indians who had killed English prisoners, but if the prisoners were alive and well treated, Sir William would buy them.

Evidently Alois had gained the confidence

of his captors, for the leader now asked him in broken French about Montreal, Quebec, and Detroit.

Alois told that he thought the French still held these places, but that the English would soon take them, because they had many more soldiers than the Governor of Quebec. He added that the English would soon fight a great battle at Quebec as they had done at Niagara, for the English had so many big war canoes on the big lake that the French king could send no more food and soldiers to Quebec.

Frank was pleased to hear that Alois told this story as he had heard it from Atkins at Fort Niagara.

This talk seemed to satisfy the leader and he motioned Alois to go and eat and take some food to the Englishmen.

Alois and the Indians did not speak of Americans, because the Northern Indians in those days distinguished only two kinds of white men: Frenchmen and Englishmen.

When Alois handed the food to his friends, he made as much noise as possible, while he

whispered, "No kill you. I tell them good stories."

To be captives was, however, by no means pleasant. While Frank and Jack were eating, with their hands tied, the Indians chopped down two young trees. In each tree they cut four notches. Then they made Frank and Jack lie down with their ankles in the notches of the lower tree. Next they laid the second tree over the first one, and firmly tied the ends of the trees together. Before they lay down near the fire to sleep, they allowed Alois to cover each of his friends with a blanket.

Alois himself they did not tie up, but they made him sleep between two of the Indians, and they wound a string of buckskin around him, the ends of which passed under their own blankets.

CHAPTER XX

ALOIS AND WINNEBOGO

THAT night seemed endless to Jack. In the forest the wolves howled and the owls hooted, and on the lake the loons cried in those long-drawn-out wails, that sound as if the tortured spirit of a red warrior had come back to earth.

The Indians seemed to be fast asleep, but some animal was prowling about in the woods.

"Frank, there's a bear coming to eat us up," Jack whispered.

"Don't be a baby, Jack," Frank tried to console the tortured boy. "That's no bear. It's a harmless skunk nosing around among the leaves. Keep still and try to go to sleep. Do your ankles hurt?"

"Yes, and my back is cold on the ground."

"Pull part of your blanket under you and try to go to sleep," urged Frank. "It will soon be morning. You must not talk to me again."

To be in the stocks was hard enough for Jack, but not to be able to talk to his brother was harder still. At last, however, he dozed off from sheer weariness.

At daybreak the Indians arose, and Alois, without waiting to be told, built a fire and boiled some venison for breakfast.

Indians even to this day do not keep regular meal hours, but eat whenever they are hungry. Alois feared that the Indians would start without eating any breakfast, but he thought Jack and Frank would be so cold and hungry that they would be glad to get a little hot broth and warm meat for breakfast.

Alois had lived and camped with Indians so much that he understood their ways and moods as if they had been his own people.

As he had expected, the Ottawas did not at all object to having another feast before they continued their journey.

While the meat was boiling the leader released Jack and Frank and a little later, Alois gave them each a drink of hot broth and a piece of warm meat and then some more

smoked meat, to all of which none of the Indians made any objection.

After breakfast, while the Ottawas were distributing among themselves the small supply of trade goods which they had found in the canoe of the boys, Alois gathered up some wood near his friends and told them in a low voice:

"No look sour. Be happy, and Indian like you. We no care, Indian go same way we go. I think pretty soon we can talk more."

Alois was rather surprised that even after they had helped themselves to the goods, the Ottawas did not prepare to move. The two youngest lay down again to sleep and the other two sat around and smoked, and Alois told Jack and Frank to lie down and sleep. "Make 'em see," he added, "you don't care to run away."

In the afternoon, however, the warriors put their own birch-bark canoe and the canoe of the boys in the water and the leader said to Alois in French, "We travel little way and find better camp."

They had not gone far when clouds began to

gather in the northwest, and Jack and Frank began to wonder if their captors would travel on during a storm and would make them lie in the rain during the night.

After they had travelled about ten miles on a swift stream, which is the outlet at the Lake of Many Winds, they came to another small lake, which is now known as Sparrow Lake. The Indians steered for a point toward the north end of this lake. This point was sheltered by woods against northwest winds, and a set of tepee poles left standing by some party of Indians indicated that it was a favorite camping place of the Missisaugas and other Indians.

The Indians always select good camp-sites. Wherever white travellers and canoists find their tepee poles, they may be sure of shelter, plenty of fuel, good water, and comparative freedom from mosquitoes, that great summer pest of northern lakes and woods.

At this spot the Ottawas landed both canoes and at once began to complete the tepee by winding a roll of deerskin around the poles, while Alois built a fire and began

to make another feast of boiled corn and venison.

Frank noticed that Alois was absolutely reckless in the use of provisions. "Hang that fool Frenchman," he thought. "He is as improvident as an Indian. He keeps these lazy red bucks feasting all the time and in three days we shall not have a scrap of food in camp," but he had no chance to tell Alois what he thought of him as a cook.

At the suggestion of Alois, Frank and Jack each rigged up a fish-pole, and using for bait pieces of bacon rind, which Alois had saved for that very purpose, they had soon caught a mess of bass and pike. These Alois fried in some venison fat and the Indians were very much pleased with their three white boys.

After supper all three of the boys cut dry wood for a fire in the tepee, and the Indians began to think that these white boys were going to be as useful as if the warriors had taken their squaws along.

When they had cut enough wood for the night, Alois picked up courage to make a little

speech to the leader, whose name he had learned was Winnebogo.

"My father," he said, "my brothers are very tired. Their ankles hurt and they are not used to travel like warriors and Frenchmen. They ask that they be allowed to make their own tepee and sleep on the little island near this camp. I will take them over and come back with the canoe, and I will not go behind the island. The rain will come down tonight and I wish my brothers to sleep in their tepee with a little fire to keep them warm, so they can travel, when our father wants to travel."

The leader, after a little while, told his followers about the request of the boys and after they had talked it over, Alois was told that he might take his brothers to the island.

While Alois paddled Frank and Jack across the narrow channel, the four Ottawas stood outside the tepees closely watching them.

"If they try to paddle around the island," the leader had told his men, "you may shoot them and take their scalps."

Alois had not heard these words, but he

knew that the Indians would feel sure that their prisoners could not escape, and that for that very reason they would be likely to grant his request.

It was not long after Alois had returned that Frank and Jack put up their shelter in plain sight of the Indians. They stretched out their canvas slantingly like one side of a roof, and the open space between the ground and the canvas on the windward side they closed with brush.

Then they built a fire of driftwood in front of the lean-to, thus making the kind of camp in which many a northern trapper, woodsman and hunter has passed the coldest winter night.

Neither Frank nor Jack had slept much the night before, and any one who has ever missed a night of sleep knows how badly a boy wants to go to sleep the evening after a restless night.

No sooner did the gentle warmth of the fire radiate into the primitive forest-shelter than both lads rolled up in their blankets and Jack could barely stay awake long enough to take off his wet shoes.

The Indians, who had slept not only through the night but also during the day, sat around the camp-fire and talked over their good luck and asked Alois about himself and his English brothers.

About himself Alois told a true and simple story. His father, he said, was Pierre Du Valle, Indian trader at Presque Isle. The French had burnt that fort and had all gone to help General Pouchot at Fort Niagara. There he had become a prisoner.

"Where did you find the English boys?" asked Winnebogo.

"They were also prisoners at Niagara, and they helped me to carry a wounded Frenchman in from the woods and take him to the white doctor."

"Where are you going now?" asked the Indians.

"To visit friends at the Sault Ste. Marie, if no English soldiers have gone there."

"Where were the English boys going?"

"With me to Sault Ste. Marie."

"The English boys are our prisoners now," declared Winnebogo, "and my two young men

wish to kill them. They have never taken scalps and they wish to be counted as warriors."

Now was the time for Alois to prove that he could be true and useful to his friends. He knew how eager young Indian warriors were to return with scalps from their first war-party and how difficult it would be to persuade them to spare his friends. But he had been present at many an Indian council, and he was determined to make the case of his friends as strong as possible.

"The English boys are not warriors," he pleaded. "Will my father, who has met the brave Iroquois in battle, bring home the scalps of children? Shall the Ottawa women say, 'Winnebogo's heart has grown faint; he was afraid to fight the Iroquois and the English soldiers, and he brought in only the scalps of young boys'? Why does my father not give the English boys to his squaw? They will make good sons and will soon learn to hunt. Let his young men take scalps in battle with the Iroquois, as he did himself, as did the great Ottawa chief Pontiac, and as is the cus-

tom of all Ottawa warriors. The French have always told that the Ottawas are brave warriors. Shall Winnebogo's men scalp boys, who were prisoners and had no weapons?"

At these words Winnebogo's face looked dark, but Alois could not tell whether he had spoken too boldly or whether Winnebogo was angry at his young men.

"Will the English soldiers come to Kitchigumi?" Winnebogo asked after a long silence.

"Sir William Johnson will soon march to Detroit and then to Sault Ste. Marie with ten thousand soldiers," replied Alois, honestly believing that he told the truth. And he held up the fingers of both hands to make sure that Winnebogo understood that he meant to say ten times a thousand men. "But when the French and English have made peace, Sir William Johnson will give many beaver skins, blankets, and guns for the English boys."

Alois did not press his plea any farther, knowing that Indians like to take plenty of time before they decide anything.

Very soon the storm came up. The Ottawas withdrew into their tepee, and Winnebogo

asked Alois to come in and spread his blanket between the door and the fire. This was not the place assigned to an honored guest, but it showed Alois that Winnebogo did not treat him as a prisoner.

In the tepee, Winnebogo told his young men what he had learned from Alois, but the young men still desired to kill the American boys so they might be honored as real Ottawa warriors.

CHAPTER XXI

GRAVE DANGER

NEXT morning, when Alois paddled to the island to fetch Frank and Jack, the Indians did not seem to watch him at all, but he was nevertheless careful not to arouse their suspicion. He did not leave the canoe, but as the two boys came down to the landing he urged them again not to look sour, but to be happy.

"And you go plenty fishing," he added, "and take swim and holler like boys when they have good time. I think Winnebogo like that.

"But you no go hunting with young men," he resumed after a pause, while he looked earnestly at Frank. "You no stay behind and no paddle ahead in canoe with them. You know nothing, I say nothing, but, Frank, you watch 'em, I say. They are young men and never brought scalps home."

After the party had camped for several days

on the point in Sparrow Lake and had eaten up nearly all the provisions, they started down the Severn, which is a very swift stream with one big fall and many rapids. On all the portages the French boy managed to travel close to Frank and Jack, whenever Winnebogo was not with them.

Alois had learned that there was a village of Missisaugas on this stream. He had expected that the Indians would stop there to show their prisoners, and he had dreaded the reception they would be given and the abuse to which they would be exposed. But to his surprise the Ottawas timed their journey in such a way that they passed the Missisaugas after dark, and then they did not stop at all, till they made camp in a secluded spot on Sturgeon Bay, which is a part of Georgian Bay of Lake Huron.

Here they stopped several days to fish and hunt, but they did not allow Alois to build a fire after dark. Frank and Jack were allowed to fish all they wanted and to sleep unbound under their own canvas shelter. Alois occupied his usual place in the tepee of the Indi-

ans, who always took all guns and paddles into the tepee.

The Indians seemed to feel sure now that Frank and Jack could not escape, but they did not let them touch any weapons, not even their hunting knives and axes, except when fish were to be cleaned or wood was to be cut.

Alois, on the other hand, was more and more treated as one of their own. He could go where he wanted to, and was even allowed the use of a gun.

It was at this place that Alois learned why the Ottawas had quietly passed the Missisauga village at night. This tribe had lost several men in the war against the English and Americans, and the Ottawas feared that at the sight of their prisoners the Missisaugas would become enraged and would try to kill them in revenge for the men they had lost.

From now on Winnebogo travelled very slowly, and from time to time the party stopped to hunt and fish.

As none of the boys had made the slightest move to make their captors think that they would try to escape, they were given more and

more liberty. Even their knives were returned to Frank and Jack, but guns they were not yet allowed to handle.

About the middle of September Winnebogo had made camp on one of the islands at the mouth of French River. This river is the outlet of Lake Nipissing, and is a part of a canoe route from Lake Huron to Montreal and Quebec. The route was much used in those days by both Indians and French. From Quebec to Montreal they travelled up the St. Lawrence. Near Montreal they turned into the Ottawa River, and from the head waters of this river they portaged over to the head waters of Lake Nipissing.

By using this route the French avoided the dreaded Iroquois altogether and entered the Upper Lakes, Huron, Michigan and Superior, so to speak, by the back door. The route was much shorter than the Lake Ontario and Lake Erie route. It involved, however, several long and difficult portages, but its main advantage was that it avoided all danger from the Iroquois, or Six Nations, who had been hostile to the French ever since the days of Champlain.

While Winnebogo was in camp at the mouth of French River, two Chippewas coming direct from Montreal brought the most exciting news of the war: The English had taken Quebec. All the French soldiers had been made prisoners. The great French General, Montcalm, had been killed, and Quebec now had an English governor.

The Ottawas would, at first, not believe the story, but the Chippewas told it again and again with so much detail, that the Ottawas had to believe it.

The great fight had taken place on the ninth day of the Month of Turning Leaves, the Chippewa name for September. The English had not taken any scalps of their prisoners, but they had given them food and were going to send them away on ships. This last part of the story the Ottawas refused to believe, but the Chippewas insisted that it was true.

The story of the fall of Quebec added to the reputation of the Little Frenchman, as the Ottawas called Alois, much more than he himself realized. The Chippewas also repeated Alois's story that Johnson had marched or

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sailed with a big army to Detroit and to the Sault. They were so much afraid of this army and believed the story so firmly that they were not going to stop either at Michilmackinac, now called Mackinac, or at the Sault. They were going directly to Grand Portage on Lake Superior, and then to their homes in the wilds of the present State of Minnesota. Into that far-off wilderness, they felt sure, the soldiers of Sir William Johnson could not follow.

Winnebogo wanted the Chippewas to travel with his party, but they said they wanted to hurry home to see if their squaws had gathered enough wild rice for the winter and to find a good winter camp where deer and moose would be plentiful.

On the next day Winnebogo also broke camp. When he reached the Sault Ste. Marie he made the boys abandon their elm-bark canoe, and the whole party of seven men travelled along the north shore of Lake Superior in the large birch-bark canoe of the Ottawas, which they had carried past the rapids on the Canadian side of the "Soo."

From the time they came down the Severn

until they met the two Chippewas the four Ottawas had been in no hurry about anything. When they travelled they let the white boys do the paddling, and in camp they did nothing but sleep, lie around, gamble with plum-stones and eat the fish which the boys caught and cooked for them.

But since they had become convinced that the greatest French stronghold had been taken by the English, they could not travel fast enough. They hardly took time to eat and sleep; and each man paddled as if the enemy was close behind him.

Alois began to fear that they might kill his friends in a frenzy of fear and told them that no English soldiers would come along the north shores of Lake Huron and Superior, but they did not slacken their speed till they reached a beautiful, quiet bay with high rocky cliffs on both sides and a large island some twenty miles out in the lake, and just barely visible on the horizon to their left.

When Alois was quite a small boy, he had gone with his father to Mackinac and the "Soo," and to several points on the south

shore of Lake Superior, but with the north shore of this lake, the largest of all American lakes, he was acquainted only from hearsay.

He learned from Winnebogo that the Michipicoten River flowed into this bay, and that the large island, ten leagues long and two or three wide, off in the big lake, was known to the Indians as Michipicoten Island.

Alois could not understand why these Ottawa Indians, whose tribe lived south of the lake, should want to make camp on this secluded bay north of the lake; but he did not think it wise to ask any questions.

A little way up the river in a sheltered spot they came upon a deserted Indian camp. Alois heard from the talk of the Ottawas that they were much disappointed to find this camp deserted. They had expected to find here a small village of friendly Muskegoes or Wood Indians, from whom they had expected to learn if there were any Englishmen at the "Soo" and on the south shore.

At first they were inclined to think that the Muskegoes had fled because they also were afraid of the English, and Alois tried his best

to persuade them that they need not be afraid of any Englishmen or Americans coming to this part of the country.

He was sure, the Little Frenchman explained to them, that no Englishmen would follow them along the Ottawa River, Lake Nipissing and Georgian Bay route. The English would now try to take Montreal and perhaps Michilmackinac and the Sault Ste. Marie, but they would certainly send no soldiers to the wilderness on the Michipicoten.

And he remembered, Alois told further, that the Muskegoes on Michipicoten River sometimes took their furs across the Height of Lands and paddled down the Missinaibi River to trade with the English on Hudson Bay. So the Muskegoes would not be afraid of the English.

But the Ottawas were so panic-stricken that they carefully examined the camping place of the Muskegoes and followed their trail upstream to the nearest portage before they were convinced that the Little Frenchman had told the truth, and that the Muskegoes had not left

their camp in flight but had gone off to hunt rabbits or caribou.

Alois now thought that the Ottawas were convinced that they were in no danger, and that they would not plan to do anything desperate to their prisoners.

But that same evening he had to listen to a council which made him fear greatly for the safety of his friends.

The Ottawas decided that they would soon go on a caribou hunt up the Michipicoten River. The young men then argued again that it would be much safer for all of them if they killed their prisoners. This should be done when they had returned to camp with a supply of caribou meat. In this way they would be honored as warriors, but the English would never know that Winnebogo's warriors had taken English scalps. If they took the prisoners to the Ottawas' own country some other Ottawa might kill them and take their scalps. Or the prisoners might run away, or the Blackcoat and the Ottawas, who prayed to the white man's God, might compel them to give up the prisoners. Perhaps Sir

William Johnson would take the prisoners away without paying for them, and then all the Ottawas, both women and warriors, would laugh at Winnebogo and his young men.

Winnebogo did not consent to this plan, but he did not object to it as strongly as he had done on the Severn.

Alois lay awake all night making plan after plan to avert this terrible danger to his friends.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PLOT

Of course the Ottawas did not go on a caribou hunt the next day. That is not the Indian way of doing things. A matter of such importance had to be talked over a few days, and in the meantime they lived on the fish which the white boys caught at the mouth of the Michipicoten River, where the fishing was unusually good.

All three of the boys were now permitted to do very much as they pleased. They were even allowed to use guns and hatchets as they pleased. Frank had earned the good-will of Winnebogo by repairing his gun. For such emergencies Frank had brought from Fort Niagara a few simple tools such as a screw-driver, a file, and a few pieces of wire and a few nails. When the other three Ottawas saw how handy Frank was, they also had him repair their guns.

In matters of this kind the Indians were slow to learn from the white men. Sir William Johnson earned much good-will among the Six Nations by keeping a few blacksmiths among them.

The boys put in most of their time fishing. They caught a few brook trout and pickerel, but their meat-fish were the large and well-flavored lake trout, for which at this time of the year they fished with bait in deep water.

The lake trout, or Mackinac trout, is to this day the most valuable food-fish of Lake Superior; and in the days of Winnebogo and his white prisoners, the lake teemed with these fine fish, which are one of the best fresh-water fish of North America.

On the first fishing-party at the mouth of the river, Alois told his friends with much earnestness of the great danger to which they were still exposed. He also told them of the plan he had formed for their safety.

"They want to kill you!" he said savagely. "But we kill them first. Kill them all!

"You fix the guns," he told Frank, "and load them. When they sit around the fire,

we run to the guns and kill them all. Pouf; pouf! Quick, like that! If we don't kill them, they sure kill you."

Frank was too well acquainted with Indian character and customs to flout Alois's warning, but he strongly abhorred adopting the treacherous methods of the savages.

"We can't shoot these men in the back," he objected. "They have treated us pretty well, as Indians treat their prisoners. And how could we ever go amongst the Ottawas to look for Fred with the blood of these men on our hands?"

"You kill them, or they kill you!" Alois exclaimed. "I tell you no lie, I tell the truth."

"Alois, I believe that you tell the truth," Frank replied. "But I would feel like a murderer if I killed these men when they were not looking."

"You feel dead pretty soon!" Alois argued excitedly, "if you don't kill them."

The French boy had witnessed so many scenes of Indians slowly torturing their prisoners to death that he could not understand

why Frank was not willing to turn unexpectedly on his captors and just kill them.

"Your people do it many times," he persisted. "Your father kill one Indian that way when he cross the mountains."

"Yes, he did, but it was done to save my mother."

"You kill Ottawas to save Jack and yourself."

"Don't talk about it," cried Frank, the perspiration standing in drops on his forehead. "I could kill them in a fair fight if they attacked us, but how can we shoot them down in cold blood? It would be murder, black, brutal murder!"

"You know Indians?" argued Alois exasperated. "You are big fools if you think they give you fair fight. You say in the English speech, 'All is fair in love and war.'"

"Yes, we say it, but it is a lie, and we don't believe it."

"All right," Alois concluded. "I tell you. They sure kill you, unless you kill them first."

"Can't you see, Alois," Frank argued again after a short silence, "that we would never

dare show ourselves amongst the Ottawas if we murdered these men? The whole tribe would hunt us down."

"The Ottawas?" Alois replied with a laugh. "Sir William Johnson is there with 10,000 men."

"Alois, you're a child, just like an Indian," Frank retorted with impatience, "when it comes to understanding the war. Johnson never had 10,000 men. He couldn't march a thousand of them to the Sault, nor could he build ships for them on Lake Erie. The Americans and English will first take Montreal before they send a man to Detroit or to the Sault. They won't have to take these places after they take Montreal. All these western forts will have to give up without a fight, because they will be cut off. I don't believe a word of that whole story."

"I believe it," Alois maintained obstinately. "And the Indians believe it."

"Oh, fiddlesticks," exclaimed Frank impatiently. "The Indians are children and superstitious heathen. The more crazy a story, the more firmly they believe it. Alois, I bet

you a new gun against a bunch of blueberries that there isn't an Englishman within a thousand miles of us.

"No, Alois! We can't murder these men. We have to find some other way. Now let us return to camp, or they will get suspicious again and watch us more closely."

In the afternoon the Indians proposed that they should shoot at a mark.

"You shoot a little bad, and load your gun right away again," Alois whispered to Frank and Jack as they went to fetch their guns.

The young Indians proposed that the white boys should shoot first, but Alois appealed to Winnebogo saying that it was fit that a warrior should open the match and that then they should take turns.

Jack, after taking very careful aim, did not come within a foot of the mark. Alois did a little better, but Frank, appearing nervous, did not even hit the tree on which the target was painted.

The next day they all went on a caribou hunt, and Alois prevailed upon Winnebogo

that his white sons should go with him that they might learn to hunt and to shoot.

They had gone about five miles from camp when Winnebogo killed a young caribou, and when the meat was cut up into three portions, the boys carried it to camp.

The three young Indians came home in the evening very hungry, but without any game except two rabbits.

On the following day the boys went fishing again, and when they were off on the bay, Alois once more broached his plan of killing their captors as their only means of safety and escape.

"We throw them all in the river," he concluded, "and the Ottawa people will never know what happened to them. Many Indian warriors never come back, and nobody knows who kill them."

Frank was convinced that the young warriors meant mischief, but he would not hear of killing them by surprise.

He laid before his friends a plan of his own, by which he believed they could escape from the Ottawas.

"It won't work," Alois insisted obstinately. "We have to kill them first. Frank, you held your gun at me at Presque Isle," he argued.

"Yes, I did," admitted Frank, "but I did not intend to shoot you."

"You looked as if you would and scared me very bad," retorted Alois. "I pretty near threw my big knife at you."

"You would have been a dead Frenchman if you had," Jack broke in. "I wanted to tie you to a tree, but Frank wouldn't let me."

"Ah, Jack, you are a bad friend," Alois replied laughing. "Now I sure let the Ottawa bucks take off your hair."

Finally Alois consented to try Frank's plan.

"To-night I fix some guns again," said Frank, "and I see that all the guns are loaded. Then we all slip a little powder in our pockets for the priming pans. If it does not rain, and is not windy, I give you the signal to-morrow.

"Alois, you make a big meal, and after the Indians have eaten and sit around the fire, we try our plan."

"But if it does not work, we kill them first," insisted Alois.

"I agree," Frank promised. "If my plan miscarries, we shoot them all and throw them in the river. We shall have to. We can't take chances staying with them after we have tried to escape."

As the boys had expected, the Indians, still tired from their hunting trip, slept long in the morning, and when they came out of their tepee, Alois had a big meal ready for them.

Jack had a hard time to conceal his excitement, but as he watched the Indians he thought they would eat up the whole caribou calf at one meal.

When they could eat no more, Winnebogo sat down to smoke, while the young men stretched themselves out near the fire and prepared to go to sleep again. Alois and Jack also lay down.

When they all had been silent for about half an hour, Frank quietly arose and put some wood on the fire, including a stick with a few green leaves on it.

That was the signal agreed upon.

The three white boys sprang to a near-by tree against which the guns were leaning.

"March to the canoe!" Frank shouted in French.

The surprised Indians sprang to their feet, but they hesitated to obey the order.

"March! march!" cried Alois, "or you are all dead men!"

The Ottawas realized that they were completely outwitted and marched slowly down to the canoe, in which Frank had placed four paddles.

The boys walked close behind them, each carrying two guns.

"Get in and paddle home!" Frank ordered.

"Let us have our guns," requested the young men.

"No," replied Alois in French. "They are our pay for the food you have stolen from us!"

But Frank ordered Jack to fire off Winnebogo's gun and hand it to him. "Because," he said, "Winnebogo has really saved our lives from the young men."

No sooner had the Ottawas pushed off than the young Indians began to use vile language and said that they would go and kill the brothers and parents of the English boys, and

one of them, in his rage, threw his tomahawk at the lads on shore.

At this Alois lost his temper and fired at the young Ottawa, narrowly missing his head.

When the young Indians saw that the lads were not to be trifled with, they paddled quickly out into the lake.

The boys watched them until the canoe disappeared from view, but Alois could not restrain himself from going through all the motions of the scalp dance before the Indians were out of sight.

Jack and Alois went back to camp to eat some more caribou. Alois said he had only pretended to eat in the morning. Frank walked down the shore southeast a way to make sure that their Ottawa friends did not come back.

A few miles down the bay, he climbed one of the high cliffs from which he watched the canoe for an hour.

The Ottawas were going straight down the lake, and were keeping well off from shore. It was evident that they had no intention to re-

turn to the white boys, who had beaten them so badly at their own game, and who could have killed them all and thrown them in the river.

"You fool Little Frenchman, you!" Frank greeted his friend in camp. "You came near spoiling my plan at the end. Don't you know that if you had killed that man, his companions would have been in duty bound to come back and avenge his death?"

"Won't they come back now?" asked Jack, to whom this had been the most exciting day in life.

"Not very likely," Frank answered. "I think they have seen enough of us."

"No, they will never come back," Alois declared. "And their people will never know that they have been at Michipicoten, and how they lost their guns. They will tell that they lost them in a storm or in the rapids on the Severn. Indians are all big liars."

"It seems to me," Frank began to banter his friend, "that some Frenchmen are pretty good liars, too. How about that story of 10,000 men marching to the Soo?"

"I make no lie about that," Alois defended himself, "I think it was true."

"Alois, where is your head?" Frank asked laughing. "How could 10,000 men march a thousand miles through the forest? How could they transport their baggage? On what could they live? It is impossible, Alois. Johnson had a hard time to feed two thousand men at Fort Niagara.

"You scared those Ottawas so with your crazy stories that they came near killing us, but you are a good scout and a good cook. Now broil me some caribou meat, please; I'm hungry."

"Frank, how will those Ottawas live now?" asked Jack. "They can't kill any game."

"The Ottawas?" cried Alois laughing. "They catch them a porcupine, and roast him, with the stickers on. They won't starve."

"Boys, you may have a bonfire for a while," said Frank, when he sat down to eat. "Then you can roll in, but I shall keep watch when you go to bed. We must not be careless again."

CHAPTER XXIII

TROUBLED BOYS

FRANK let the camp-fire go out soon after Jack and Alois had crept into the tepee, where they built another fire to take the chill out of the place, for the autumn nights were growing cold.

For some time Frank sat leaning against a tree. From his position he could see the tepee and the canoe-landing at the river. After a while it occurred to him that if the Ottawas came back they would not land at the usual place, but farther down on the bay, and then creep up through the woods.

He wrapped a blanket around himself and sat down under an old yellow birch, whose big trunk looked as dark and rough as that of an old elm-tree. Overhead the stars glistened and the moon stood high over the lake and made the great cliffs across the bay stand out in bold relief.

A hare thumped the ground close by, being

alarmed by the strange creature under the tree. From the distance came the wild cry of a lynx. A flock of noisy loons played and called on the water and hundreds of wild ducks passed over on whistling wings and dropped splashing into the bay.

Thoughts of his far-away home passed through the boy's mind. He had given a letter for his parents to Atkins at Fort Niagara. If this letter had reached them, they would know how far he and Jack had traced Wagooshaw, and that with a French lad they had started for the Ottawa country. Since that time it had been impossible to send word home.

Finding and releasing his lost brother seemed as difficult a problem as ever. For the present Frank himself and Jack were free from immediate danger. But would it not be madness to cross over into the Ottawa and Chippewa country? He was convinced that there was not an Englishman or American south of Lake Superior, and if Frank and the other two lads did dare to enter that country, he and Jack would at once be made prisoners

again as Englishmen, and most likely they would be killed by some Indian who had lost a relative in the war.

The fact that the English had taken Quebec and Fort Niagara would make it only more dangerous for any one of English blood to go amongst the hostile Ottawas and Chippewas, few of whom had ever seen English regulars or American colonial troops. These tribes, Frank felt quite sure, still adhered firmly to the French, who had traded with them and lived amongst them for a hundred years.

And there was another trouble to which Alois and Jack seemed to have given very little thought, but which weighed heavily on Frank's mind. Since they had driven the Ottawas out of camp, they had no canoe. On their hunting trip and short excursions near camp, Frank had seen neither elms nor white birch suitable for canoes.

The yellow birch grows abundantly near the north shore of Lake Superior, but its bark is too thin and shreddy when the tree is young, and too rough and brittle when the tree is old.

Perhaps, Frank thought, they might find

suitable birch or elm trees farther away from the lake, but even if they did it would not help them now. It was now so late in the season that the bark would not peel. Nor did Frank feel at all sure that they could make a serviceable birch-bark canoe, even if they had the bark. He was woodsman enough to realize that most of the simple arts and crafts of the Indians are not simple at all for a white man.

"Hang it all," the lad said to himself. "We are rid of the Ottawas, but now we are marooned in this wilderness with winter coming on."

It was about midnight when he returned to camp and aroused Jack and Alois.

"Get up, you sleepy heads!" he called as he shook the drowsy boys. "Get up now and do your turn at guard duty. Put on all the clothes you have and wrap up in your blankets. It is beastly cold, and the hoarfrost is on the brush!"

"May we build a fire?" asked Jack as he sleepily tied his leggins.

"Build a fire?" repeated Frank. "Brother Jack! You are to keep the Ottawas away, not

light them back to camp. Patrol the bay, or sit down on shore, but don't you dare to build a fire!"

When some six hours later Frank awoke and saw the sun shine bright on lake and river and on the golden forest of birch and poplar, his spirits revived.

"Boys," he called, "let us have a good warm breakfast, and then let us go and explore.

"Those Ottawa raiders kept us in a sort of outdoor jail. We have been here a week and know almost nothing about the country around us. We may have to stay here a long time."

The first thing the boys examined was the old French trading-house. It was a small log building consisting of two rooms, one larger room used as a storeroom for furs and goods, and the smaller room, provided with a fireplace, used as the living-room by the trader. There was nothing in the building but a few pieces of crude furniture made out of logs with no other tools than an axe and an auger, a few steel traps, and two full-sized axes.

Frank gave a shout when he saw the axes. "They are just what we want," he said. "I always hated to cut wood with these little hand-axes and Indian hatchets. They are all right for the squaws, but no good for a white man."

Frank and Jack would have liked to know where the trader had gone. Alois suggested that the French might have given up the post, or the trader might have gone with the Indians on their hunting or fishing trip.

"I think, maybe, the Muskego Indians come back pretty soon," suggested Alois. "Indians are always moving. Sometimes they hunt or fish, then they pick blueberries or gather wild rice. Sometimes they go to trap beaver, and in spring they go off to make maple sugar. They like to travel around, I think."

"They have to travel about," Frank added. "They must go where their food is found at the different seasons."

Within a few days the boys knew the country around camp pretty well. The Michipicoten River brought down the water from several lakes and from a number of side streams,

some of which also drained lakes. The whole country was a wilderness of lakes, streams, rocks, and forest. From some high points the lads could see half a dozen lakes. Some of these were several miles long, others were mere ponds. There were so many that it was impossible to visit them all.

Every day the lads found something new. The general atmosphere of the country, its trees, its scenery, all were different from anything they had ever seen. And the weather was so delightful as if made for a boys' exploring trip. The nights were cool, but the days were warm and summery, and gone were all the pests with which an evil spirit seems to have cursed the Northland, the mosquitoes, blackflies, deerflies, no-see-'ems, and detestable wood-ticks.

Although the lads did not know it, they were now camping in the region of North America, which might well be called "The Land of Hundred Thousand Lakes and Countless Streams."

No man has ever counted the clear lakes and streams within a radius of three hundred

miles of Lake Superior and no man ever will count them. A goodly portion of the land they drain the Good Lord in His wisdom has not made for the growing of corn and potatoes, but for the growth of forests and for an asylum for wild animals and birds to make the earth interesting to all men whose eyes can see beyond profit counted in dollars, and whose ears are not deaf to the music of streams and birds. As long as rain and snow shall fall from the clouds, the rock-basin lakes will fill and the streams will sing to the music of the wind and wild birds and the fish will leap from the silver mirrors. And the men and women, who shall dip their paddles in those waters, and carry packs and make camps on the old trails, shall find the Fountain of Youth. For this is the Magic Land, where men and women shall be boys and girls again.

Frank thought it would be fine to lay in a supply of nuts if they had to stay at that camp for some time. It would be a change from nothing but meat and fish. However, he was disappointed in his search for nut-bearing

trees. In New York and Pennsylvania, he could easily have found large trees of black walnut, butternut, shellbark, hickory, and chestnuts, but not one of these trees could he find on the Michipicoten. Of hazel brush there was plenty, but the chipmunks and red squirrels had gathered all the nuts. Isolated groves of sugar maples contained the only trees the boys had known well farther east. On low land everywhere they found aspen and yellow birch mixed with balsam firs and spruces. The higher lands, where they did not consist of bare rocks, were covered with pine, and in many swamps grew dense thickets of black spruce as well as patches of tamarack and cedar. The lads felt that they were in a world very different from that around their home on the Conewango.

But the trees and rocks were not the only signs of a new and strange country. In the forests south of Lake Erie there was an abundance of game; the region north of Lake Superior, although it seemed uninhabited, harbored very little game. There were no wild turkeys, no gray squirrels, no racoons, not

even any deer. There were, however, plenty of rabbits, of a kind bigger than the cottontails of the East. There was a fair number of two kinds of grouse, or partridges, as the boys called them. Both were very tame, but the kind they found in the spruce and tamarack swamps were so tame that they could kill them with a stick.

On some small streams they found again that miracle of the forest, beaver dams and beaver houses. In some of the lakes they also found beaver houses, but in the lakes there were no dams. The boys discovered many places where the beavers had cut down poplar trees, some of them a foot in diameter, but they saw only a few beavers. Those swam with their heads just out of the water, and dived with a big banging splash. The American boys learned now what Alois had meant when he said the beavers swore with their tails. Alois did not know how to catch the beavers, but they were good to eat, he claimed, and the Indians knew how to catch them.

Of caribou they found no trace, and Alois

said the caribou travelled a good deal just like the Indians.

A whole week the lads put in exploring, hunting, and fishing. Of the Ottawas, whom they had sent away, they did not see a sign, although they were constantly on the lookout for them.

CHAPTER XXIV

MAROONED ON THE MICHIPICOTEN

WHEN day after day passed without the return of the Muskegoes, the boys became very much worried.

They had no food but the fish and rabbits and grouse they secured from day to day. The nights grew very cold, and one day there was a flurry of snow, although it was now only the last week of September.

They were afraid that the supply of small game would give out, and they did not know that fish might be caught through the ice.

Alois told that he had heard of other places on the North Shore where there were villages of friendly Muskegoes; at Pic River, on the Nipigon, and on the Kaministiquia. But when he added that the nearest of these villages, the one on Pic River, was a hundred miles from the Michipicoten, and the other

two places each a hundred miles farther, the American boys were in despair.

"How can we ever get to one of these places on foot?" asked Jack.

"We can't do it," Frank decided. "There is no trail along this lake, and the country is the roughest I ever saw."

"No, there is no trail along this lake as along the Lakes Ontario and Erie," said Alois. "The Indians always travel along the shore in canoes."

"Well, that settles it," Frank declared. "We have to camp on the Michipicoten till spring, when we must try to build a canoe, unless we happen to fall in with some friendly Indians."

"I tell you what we will do. We will move into the old French trading-house. We can fix the roof and chink up the walls with moss and mud, and that room with the fireplace ought to be warmer than the tepee."

"Now let us get busy. Frank and I will cut wood, and to-night we shall move into our log cabin."

"Alois, I wish you would go and hunt rab-

bits. You are the best woodsman of us three, and I know you will not get lost."

"No man get lost here," Alois replied laughing. "If you get turned round, you just travel down hill or down little stream, till you come to big lake. You can't lose the big lake. It run along six hundred miles, maybe more."

"Six hundred miles, and all one big lake?" Jack exclaimed.

"Yes, six hundred miles, Frenchmen say, if you paddle along shore from Sault to Fond du Lac," Alois insisted. "Maybe it is seven hundred miles, if you go into the bays. Fond du Lac, that means foot of lake."

"And where do you come to if you pass Fond du Lac?" asked Jack.

"I don't know," Alois answered. "I guess more rivers, more Indians, more lakes, and more woods."

"Is that so!" exclaimed Jack. "The French must be great travellers!"

"They are," Alois assented smiling. "Frenchmen go everywhere. Same as Indians."

That evening the lads spread their blankets in front of the fireplace, where a gnarly log of maple glowed in a friendly manner. The lads had no candles, but some dry pine knots furnished light, by which Frank could read aloud from "Robinson Crusoe," the only book the lads had in camp. They enjoyed the old book very much, for there were few things which they had not already talked over many times. The American boys suffered a touch of homesickness when Frank closed the book as the fire had burned low.

Alois, on the other hand, seemed perfectly happy. He had brought home three rabbits, already partly turned white. That they might have to starve during the winter, that their clothing and shoes were almost worn out, and that they were marooned in a wild northern country, with an Arctic winter near at hand; none of these things worried him. For the present they had enough to eat and a warm place to sleep, and wherever he laid his head down he felt at home.

The next day Alois proposed that they go to explore Michipicoten Island.

"It is very big," he said. "Five leagues long and three wide, and it stands up high, maybe a thousand feet above the lake.

"I think," he added, "we find caribou there. They go on ice in winter, and can't get off when the ice melts."

"How can we get there?" asked Frank. "We can't even see it from here. It must be forty miles away."

"We travel west along shore," Alois explained, "till we come opposite the island; Winnebogo tell me it is only ten miles from shore. Then we build a raft and paddle over. It will be great fun."

"Ten miles on a raft on Lake Superior?" questioned Frank. "Alois, that's a pretty dangerous trip just for fun. You know the water in Lake Superior is always like ice water. If our raft broke up or a storm caught us, we would all drown, as sure as you live, Alois."

"Yes, that Lake Superior is pretty beastly cold all time," Alois agreed. "But it would be lots of fun. I think we can do it. We start on nice day, and paddle over in four

hours. We get little wet, maybe, but that wouldn't hurt."

When they were still discussing this venturesome trip, Alois and Jack arguing for it and Frank against it, they heard a noise up the river, and all three sprang to their feet.

"Indians!" whispered Alois. "I hear them talk."

The next moment three canoes came in sight on the river. As soon as the Indians saw the white boys they stopped their canoes and began to paddle up-stream in great haste. But the white boys held up their hands and Alois called in Ottawa, "Come ashore! We are friends!"

CHAPTER XXV

CHIEF OBASHAY

THE Indians, seeing that the white boys had no weapons, were soon persuaded to land, but, true to their native caution, they lifted their canoes ashore on the opposite bank. After they had taken some time to look over the strangers from a safe distance and convinced themselves that no enemies were hidden in the woods, three men came across to shake hands with the strangers.

After a while all the Indians, including women and children, came across the river, and all the men shook hands with the strangers. In a surprisingly short time the women had set up two tepees, Alois having told them that one family might use the tepee which the white boys had been occupying.

While the Indians were unloading their

canoes, Alois said to Frank and Jack, "They are our visitors now, and we must give them something to eat."

By the time the Indians were settled, Alois, with the help of Frank and Jack, had a feast ready for their visitors. It worried the American boys a little to see all of their rabbits go into one big kettle and all of their fresh fish into another, but to Alois this matter caused no uneasiness.

"They are hungry now," he remarked. "And to-morrow we eat with them. But we tell them nothing of the Ottawas and nothing of Wagooshaw and Fred. We must learn first who they are."

The Indians had been much pleased when they had been told that the white boys were going to make a feast for them. Each Indian, and there were about fifteen of them, brought a birch-bark bowl and a wooden spoon to the feast. The warm broth, which Alois gave them, they drank out of their bowls, and the meat they took in their hands. It was the general custom among Indians to take home with them any portions of meat they could not

consume at once, but of Alois's feast nothing had to be taken away.

Obashay, a fine-looking, middle-aged man, the chief of the party, sat to the right of Frank, and Frank saw to it that the chief was well supplied.

Jack was afraid that they did not have enough food to satisfy the whole party. But Alois said it was enough. Moreover, Indians had as much sense as white men. Their guests knew that they had not been expected, and they would be glad to eat whatever the white boys had to offer.

One special treat Alois offered his guests. He had managed to conceal a small package of tea and sugar from the Ottawas. Some of these Indians had become acquainted with tea and sugar at the Hudson Bay Post of Moose Factory on James Bay; and when they found that the Little Chief, referring to Frank, was going to conclude the feast with a big kettleful of sweet tea, the whole company was much pleased. They smacked their lips and said, "Good! Big heap good!"

Alois learned at the feast that most of these

Indians understood Ottawa, and the next day he learned that Chief Obashay was an Ottawa, who had married a Muskego woman, and was living with the relatives of his wife and was respected by them as their chief.

The Indians were very curious to learn where the English boys had come from, but good manners forbade them to ask. Alois, they took to be the slave of the English boys.

Obashay understood a little English, and Frank told him that the three boys had come from Fort Niagara in the company of four Ottawas. The Ottawas had gone home to their own people. He had been afraid to take his young brother, Jack, into the Chippewa and Ottawa country, and had decided to stay on the Michipicoten and wait for the Muskegoes to return to their camp. Alois was not the slave of the English boys, but was a friend, whom the English had taken prisoner at Fort Niagara, but had later released.

Obashay and all the Muskegoes were much interested in the news about the war. The chief and a few of the men had been to trade with the English at Moose Factory, but the

news they had was a year old. And so the boys had to tell again and again of the big fights at Fort Niagara, and of the surrender of Quebec. In all this story telling Alois was in his element, talking in French, Ottawa, or English, and told in gestures when his hearers failed to understand his words.

"Don't you tell them any wild lies!" Frank cautioned him. "Obashay will tell me if you stuff them with that big lie about 10,000 Englishmen marching to the Sault."

"I tell that no more," Alois promised. "But when I tell it, I think it was true," he again defended himself.

"You can begin at Fort Niagara and then tell that we started for the Sault and came with the Ottawas to this place," Frank continued. "Everything else I shall tell Obashay when the right time comes."

Of the friendliness of these Indians the boys could not be in doubt. The men took them along hunting and fishing, the women made moccasins for them and repaired and washed their clothing. The boys had recaptured most of their property when they had

driven the Ottawas out of camp, and they gave to each family a knife, and a small quantity of beads. In return each of the lads was given a hunting-shirt, made of the tanned skin of young caribou. But neither the grown people nor the children ever took a thing that belonged to the boys.

Jack could hardly believe that these people were real Indians. "They are more honest," he claimed, "than most white people. The boys don't even take a fish-hook. The women treat us as if we were old friends, and Obashay's squaw looks after us just like Mother did at home."

Obashay, especially, had been very friendly to the American boys from the first day. He often came to the boys' cabin in the evening and had the lads tell him of the war and of the Indians and white people on the frontier, west of the Alleghanies. The boys, on the other hand, were always glad to have Obashay tell of his journeys to Moose Factory down the turbulent Missinaibi River, and how he had hunted moose and caribou and had caught beavers.

Through these visits the American boys learned much about the life and customs of the Indians and also heard of many of their strange superstitions, such as their belief in dreams and witchcraft. On these matters, Alois had earnestly cautioned his friends.

"You must never," he said, "laugh at anything an Indian tells you. If you do, he will be offended and never tell you anything again. If he tells you things, he is your friend; but if you laugh at him, he will be your friend no more."

One evening, after the boys had been living with the Indians about two weeks, Obashay, carrying a large bundle, came again to the cabin.

For a while he sat down in front of the fireplace and smoked in silence, then he began to talk in a very earnest manner.

"Last summer," he said, "I went all alone to a place on the river Missinaibi. I fasted for a week, and then the Great Spirit came to me in my dream and told me that I would meet two young Englishmen with red cheeks and fair hair. He told me they would be good

Englishmen, that I would like them very much, and I would adopt them as my sons.

"I hope," he concluded, "that you will be willing to be my sons, and that you will accept the presents I have brought for you."

Then he unrolled the bundle he had brought, and gave each of the American boys a fine blanket, woven of strips of rabbit skin, a pair of moccasins and leggins and a warm coat of tanned beaver skins.

"You will need these," he added, "when the winter grows cold."

Frank had by this time learned enough Ottawa to understand what Obashay meant. And although he was much surprised at the request of the chief, his many experiences of acting quick in emergencies came to his aid.

He arose and told Obashay that he and his brother felt very much honored by the words the chief had spoken and that they would be happy to be his sons.

"We cannot give our father," he continued, "a great present, because we are far from our home, and we have lost some of our goods. But we shall be very glad if he will accept

this hunting-knife for himself and this red cloth for his wife and daughters."

Then Frank and Jack both shook hands with the chief, and from now on all the Indians at the Michipicoten considered them members of Obashay's family.

CHAPTER XXVI

A WINTER HUNT

A FEW days after Frank and Jack had been adopted by Obashay, the chief told them that they should prepare to go with him and his two sons, Ahtekoo and Bowitigo, on a long hunt.

"Your mother," the chief told them, "and the two little girls will stay in this camp, because it would be too hard for them to travel with us after bear and beaver and caribou. Esquasayway is a good woman. She does not spend her time gossiping, and she does not talk evil of the other women, and never quarrels with them. She is a good mother to her children. She teaches them what is right and wrong, and she makes warm clothing for them, so they do not freeze and sicken during the long winter.

"You and my other two sons will go on a long hunt with me. Several other men will

go with us, but the old men and the women and children will remain in this camp.

"I will teach my white sons to catch ahmik who grows fat on bark; and negeek, who makes a strange wide trail on the snow. And Manitou may send ahtik from the north, and you will follow him far over the hills.

"We must hunt diligently, so we can make a good trade with the English at Hudson Bay or with the French at the Sault."

According to Indian custom, Frank and Jack should have lived in the tepee with Obashay, but Obashay's tepee could not house more than the six members of his Indian family, and for that reason the two American boys continued to live with Alois in the trader's room.

Both Jack and Frank were glad that Obashay wanted them to go along on a winter hunt. Jack, especially, had grown tired of fishing and of hunting small game around the camp. Alois had persuaded them that it would be useless and foolhardy to look for Fred in the Ottawa country in winter.

"We might freeze or starve to death," he

had explained. "When the snow is deep, we can only travel on snow-shoes, and an Indian could easily follow us, and he would travel faster than we could go."

There was one thing that made both Frank and Jack unhappy. Obashay had not invited Alois to go on the long hunt.

"We can't go away," said Jack, when all the hunters were getting ready, "and leave Alois here with the women and the old men. Frank, you must ask Obashay to take Alois along, too."

"I don't know," replied Frank, "if it would be proper to ask him. It might offend him."

"He is our father now," Jack replied, "so he should not be offended if we ask a little favor of him."

That evening Obashay again visited with his white sons in the log tepee, and when Obashay was comfortably seated before a warm fire of birch logs, Frank gathered up courage to put Alois's case before the chief.

"My father," he began, "we are very glad that we can go along on a big hunt. But our hearts are sad, because we have to leave our

French brother behind. He has been a good brother to us and has shown us the trail from the Big French Stone House at Niagara to Lake Teyoyagon, which his people call Lake Aux Claies."

After a brief silence Obashay replied: "The Little Frenchman is a good brother to my sons. He is a good hunter of wahboos and spruce-birds and he gave my people food when we were all hungry and tired. I could not make him my son, because the Great Spirit did not show me a Frenchman in my dreams, but only two Englishmen. But he shall go with his brothers, and I will teach him to catch beavers and to hunt caribou, and he shall sleep in my tepee."

When Alois returned from his visit to one of the Indian lodges and learned that he was to join the hunting-party he was very happy. He thanked Obashay, and promised that he would be a good hunter and obey Obashay as his chief and father.

When the hunters left camp, the small lakes were beginning to freeze over and there was a little snow on the ground.

The hunters took food for a few days, and each man carried a pair of snow-shoes, his blankets and gun and a pair of extra moccasins and leggins. Some of the Indians also carried bows and arrows, and the boys took along a large axe, and a few steel traps from the trader's cabin.

After a march of two days, they camped for the night near the head of a small stream at the head waters of the Michipicoten.

Obashay told his men that this was a good beaver country. The Indians had not hunted here for several years and it was now the right time to catch beavers in the Indian way before the ice grew too thick.

The next day Obashay asked his men to put up two warm tepees, one for himself and his sons and one for the four Indian hunters.

"Put them up well," he said, "like the tepees of the Ottawas and Chippewas, not like the brush tepees of the Muskegoes, in which the hunters are cold and get wet. We have enough of caribou skins for two tepees. Then cut plenty of brush for our beds, and some dry wood for our fires. We left the women

at home, and now we must be our own squaws.

"If we had come here in summer, we could have built warm bark houses like those of the Chippewas, but now the bark does not peel, and we must live in tepees.

"You must also build a good brush house, where we can keep our meat and skins and other things, so the snow will not cover them up.

"I shall go and learn where the beaver people are, and when I return, we shall begin to hunt them, for we have not much meat in camp and we need skins to sell to the traders."

The white boys took turns cutting spruce tepee poles with their big axe. The Indians put up the poles and covered them with skins. When they had enough tepee poles, the lads cut brush and poles and forked sticks for the brush house, and, when that was done, they cut a lot of firewood.

When Ahtekoo saw how hard the white boys worked cutting dry wood, he smiled and said:

"That is good wood in the tepee, but it

burns too fast outside under the kettles, but green birch, and green spruce and pine," he added, "is good wood for outside and burns plenty fast."

When the tepees and the brush house were built, the Indians went to fill their kettles at a near-by brook. In front of each tepee they hung a kettle on a tripod of poles and began to boil some rabbits they had caught in snares the night before.

Jack had thought that Ahtekoo and Bowitigo would not eat till their father had returned, but each of the two lads helped himself to a big piece of rabbit as soon as the meat was done, and they told Frank and Jack to eat.

When the sun disappeared behind the rocky hills and distant groves of pines, Jack became very uneasy and expressed his fear that Obashay was lost.

But the Indian lads seemed not at all worried. "Obashay has hunted on the Michipicoten and the Missinaibi many years," Bowitigo told his white brothers, "ever since Ahtekoo and I were little boys. He knows the

faces of all the hills, the course of the streams, and the shape of the lakes. He will not get lost."

When an hour passed and Obashay had not returned Jack could no longer suppress his anxiety.

"We should go and look for him," he said to Frank, "if we only knew where to go. He must be starving, too, for I know that he took no food and no kettle."

"Our brothers need not worry," Ahtekoo took the word. "Obashay will catch him a rabbit, or a spruce-bird or a young porcupine; or he will eat when he returns to camp. Obashay is a strong man, he will not starve; and travelling is easy, because the snow is not deep."

"But I am afraid that our father will freeze to death," Jack replied. "The night is going to be cold. I wish he were home!"

"Obashay carries a warm blanket," Ahtekoo answered. "He will make a shelter, so the wind cannot find him. He will build a fire and sleep near the fire till morning."

"But the wolves and the bears will eat

him!" cried Jack. "A bear tried to eat me on our way to Niagara."

Ahtekoo and Bowitigo both laughed good-naturedly. "Little Brother, the bears are asleep now," said Bowitigo, "and the wolves will be much afraid of Obashay's fire."

For several hours the five boys kept the camp-fire burning; but Obashay did not return. When midnight drew near, even Frank became uneasy and wished that he had gone with Obashay. He was not afraid that the hunter had lost his way or that the wolves would eat him; but he might have met an accident in travelling over the rough country. However, Obashay's sons and the other Indians were so unconcerned about their leader that Frank did not express his fears.

But Jack could not go to sleep for a long time. He tossed about, and listened to every sound. Now the wind broke down a dead tree, and Jack sat up to listen. Then he heard a "thump, thump" on the ground.

"Listen, brothers!" Jack whispered. "I hear somebody walking."

"It is wahboos," said Bowitigo. "He

makes a big noise when he strikes the earth with his feet. We shall catch him in a snare before morning."

"We ought to get up and yell," persisted Jack, "or fire our guns. Obashay cannot follow the trail on this dark night."

"Oh, keep still, Jack, and go to sleep!" Frank said sharply. "Don't be a baby!"

The Indian boys had not understood the English words of their white brothers, but they both laughed and said in Ottawa:

"Obashay is all right. He is asleep before a warm fire. He will come home to-morrow."

CHAPTER XXVII

AHMIK AND KOOKOOKUHOO

THE campers were astir early in the morning. Several rabbits had been caught during the night, and a little way down the wind were found the tracks of several large wolves, who had circled all around the camp.

Naturally all were looking forward to the return of Obashay, but none so eagerly as Frank and Jack. The two white boys learned now that Obashay had probably not intended to return in one day.

"He not come home after two more sleeps," said the leader of the other hunting party; "maybe we go and hunt him little bit. Maybe he catch many ahmiks and walk slow."

"Say, Frank," Jack exploded when he heard this talk, "did you hear that? After two more sleeps, when Obashay has caught so many ahmiks that he can't carry them all, maybe they will go and hunt him little bit. Frank, I should like to lick the whole bunch.

We had better not get lost. We should be dead before one of these lazy bucks went to look for us."

Ahtekoo and Bowitigo were as little worried as the other Indians. They told that Obashay generally went exploring by himself, because he walked so fast that no one could keep up with him, and that he often stayed away two or three days.

The forenoon passed, and the Indians cooked the rabbits they had caught and set the snares for the night. The sun stood again low behind the pine hills, and Obashay had not returned.

The white boys had started to cut wood for the night, when they heard a shout up the trail. Jack dropped his axe and ran up the trail, and after a few minutes Obashay walked into camp carrying on his shoulders a big lynx, whose nose almost touched the ground.

After Obashay had put on dry moccasins and leggins, he sat down near the fire and began to eat, and the way he ate showed plainly that this was his first meal since he had left camp.

When he had finished his meal, he began to talk.

He had travelled many miles and visited many lakes and streams. The ahmik people had built many dams and houses, and he had also seen tracks of ahtik, which the boys took to mean caribou. He had shot the big peeshov as the animal tried to catch a wahboos under a fallen tree. To-morrow they would start hunting ahmik, because the ice was now thick enough so the hunters could travel over his ponds.

The next morning they started early without taking time to eat breakfast. After they had travelled an hour, they saw, at some distance, a clearing, where a good many trees had been cut down, perhaps a hundred or more. Of some they could see the stumps, of others the tops lay on the ground, and a few had become "hung" in the tops of other trees.

When Frank and Jack, who had been allowed to lead on the trail, saw this clearing, they stopped and waited for Obashay.

"My father," said Jack, "there are some In-

dians camping on the trail a little way ahead. We saw a place where many trees are cut down, the same as near our big camp on the Michipicoten."

Obashay's face looked serious as he took the lead and cautiously followed the trail. Was it possible that other Indians were going to hunt in this region? When he came in sight of the clearing, a smile passed over his face as he turned to Jack and said:

"My son, that is not an Indian camp. It is a place where the ahmik people have cut their food for the winter."

Frank and Jack could hardly believe that animals not larger than beavers could have cut down so many trees if the stumps had not all plainly shown the tooth marks of the animals. White chips, as long as a man's finger, lay in piles and rings around the stumps. Some of the trees, all poplars, were a foot or more in diameter, but most of them were smaller. Most of the branches and small trunks had been carried or dragged away; and a few trees, cut only half through, were still standing. Obashay pointed to these and said:

"Peeshov or negeek scared them away."

Several deep paths, like furrows, led to a small pond close by. At the lower end of this pond, the water ran out from under the ice and fell into another pond, a little larger. But neither on this nor on a third pond did the hunter find any lodge or house. But on the fourth pond, which was very large, they discovered a large house, in shape like a muskrat house, but three or four times as large.

The Indians now all stopped and Obashay told his men to open the ahmik house.

With Frank's big axe and with several small axes and poles, the roof was soon broken, and there appeared a large cavity, the bottom of which consisted of wet poles and was covered with a few chips and a few weeds and rubbish.

"Oh, they are all gone!" cried Jack. "How can we catch them? Shall we set our traps on the floor?"

"No, my son," Obashay told the excited boy, "the ahmik people never stay when the hunters break into their lodges. We must now go and find them."

The Indians now scattered along the margin of the pond, where with poles and axes they tested the ice. Soon Ahtekoo and Bowitigo had found a wash, or burrow, in the bank; but when Obashay looked at the place, he shook his head and said: "No good, my sons. The ahmik people are not there."

By this time the other hunters had found another wash. When Obashay looked at this, and noticed the muddy water at the entrance, and saw a few bubbles rising from the water, he cried, "Ahmik is in there!"

The young men now quickly cleared away the ice and opened the burrow as far as they could. Then Ahtekoo lay down and reached into the burrow, and before the white boys realized what Ahtekoo was trying to do, he pulled a big beaver out of the burrow, and without getting up he brought out two more.

After Ahtekoo had opened the burrow a little farther, Frank was going to try his luck, but Obashay would not let him.

"No, my son," he warned, "ahmik will bite you. Let Ahtekoo pull him out. His arms are long and he knows how to take hold of ahmik."

In a short time the young Indian had brought out three more.

"That is enough," said Obashay. "Now we must go home to prepare the skins and take care of the meat before the sun goes away."

The beavers weighed from thirty to fifty pounds each and were all very fat.

When the hunters arrived at the camp, some more hard work had to be done before the hungry men could eat. The beavers had to be skinned, and skinning a beaver is different from skinning a rabbit. The beaver skin does not pull off easily, it has to be cut off with great care, but the Indians did the work very quickly. After the skins were off, they had to be scraped clean of every bit of fat, and when that was done they were stretched on large hoops and hung up in the brush house to dry.

The work of a trapper is by no means all fun. It is the hardest kind of work, much harder than farming, and much of it not very pleasant. Often the game has to be carried many miles to the nearest camp. Small animals, like mink and martens, are generally

frozen stiff and have to be thawed out before they can be skinned.

When at last the work was done, the hungry hunters were ready for their meal, the only one for the day. Every man had beaver meat boiled and roasted, broiled and fried, just as he liked it. The Indians considered the fat tails a great delicacy, and the white boys soon learned to like this part of the game. The meat was very fat, but men who work and march in cold weather like fat meat, and the rabbits, on which the hunters had lived thus far, are always lean. To the white boys beaver meat tasted a little like chicken, but all agreed that it was very much better than rabbit.

This was the first time that Frank and Jack had seen a beaver close by and they were most curious about its flat tail and its big sharp teeth.

"How does the beaver use his queer tail?" Jack wanted to know.

"He steers himself right and left and up and down," Obashay told them, "and he slaps the water when he gets scared, and in that

way he tells all the other beavers to look out for some enemy."

"But why is it scaly, almost like a fish, and without hair?" asked Jack.

"The tail is ahmik's paddle," said the chief; "he doesn't need fur on his paddle."

Then Jack took up the skull of a beaver that had been boiled and cleaned of all meat. The skull showed four brown front teeth, almost as sharp as knives. In shape and setting they resembled the teeth of squirrels and gophers, but they were very much larger; and when Jack pulled one of them out, he was astonished to find it as long as a man's finger, and curved like a small horn.

"Look!" he cried. "It went clear back to his ears. Frank, it must hurt awfully to have the toothache in a tooth like that!"

"How does he keep them sharp," he asked Obashay, "when he uses them for cutting up trees and branches?"

"The teeth grow all the time," the Indian explained. "They wear down in back, but in front they keep as sharp as knives, and ahmik can cut big chips with them."

The white boys had been so much interested in their first beaver hunt, that they forgot that they were tired; and Obashay answered all their questions as patiently and seriously as their own father might have done in front of the fireplace in the cabin on the Conewango.

The Indian hunters had all retired into their tepees, when Obashay with his white sons still sat around the camp-fire and told them tales of the forest and of hunting, and answered their questions, many of which must have sounded foolish to the red hunter.

A big owl, attracted by the red glow of the camp-fire, uttered his wild guttural hoot close by.

"My sons," said Obashay, "there calls kookookuhoo. He is looking for the white wahboos, and he tells us to seek our blankets. It is time to sleep. To-morrow we look for another lodge of ahmik and we shall try to find the trail of negeek, who catches the fish of ahmik's pond, and eats his children, if he can catch them."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE TRAIL OF NEGEEK

NEXT morning the boys saw more of Indian ways. On the previous day, the hunters had not eaten until they had returned to camp in the evening and had stretched and scraped all their beaver skins. To-day they would not start without first eating.

Obashay said this was not a good way to prepare for travel; but there were three fat beavers left hung up in the tree, and the hunters refused to start till they had picked clean the bones of two of them.

When they finally did march, Obashay led the way on a rough and long trail; and the young men, who had eaten a heavy meal, found it hard work to keep up with the long stride of the big chief.

About noon they came to a lake, on the margin of which there was a very large beaver house, but Obashay would not let the hunters open this house.

"The ahmik people," he told his men, "are not living in this house. They live a way back in the bank, and it would take too much work to dig them out. Go and look for ponds, which they have made behind their own dams."

The hunters scattered, Frank and Alois going with Ahtekoo and Bowitigo, while Jack said he was going to explore the other side of the lake, where he could see a beaver clearing, a place where the animals had cut many trees. Obashay said he would stay near the big beaver house on shore, and pray to Manitou to let him find plenty of game and fur on their winter hunt.

As Jack was crossing the lake, carefully testing the ice with a stout pole, he came upon a strange trail. It looked as if a man had dragged some heavy animal, the size of a beaver, over the soft snow; but strange to say, no footsteps of the hunter were visible.

Jack followed the winding trail for a quarter of a mile, where it disappeared in a hole in the ice. But on the other side of the hole it came out again. The young hunter, much puzzled as to the kind of trail he had discov-

ered, followed it toward the beaver clearing. Here he found a beaver lodge surrounded partly by very thin ice and partly by open water, and Jack had a narrow escape from breaking through the ice. The strange trail disappeared into the water, but came out again and crossed the beaver lodge, and then led away into the woods.

"It is the trail of a ghost hunter," thought Jack. "The spirit of a dead Indian hunter has caught a beaver and dragged it over the ice."

Jack had heard so many tales of Indian superstition, and had seen the Indians leave tobacco and food on several graves, that he had come more than half to believe the tales about the spirits of dead hunters.

In the afternoon the Indians and white boys returned to Obashay's camp. The party had not found any beavers, and Obashay told them they had had bad luck because they had started after eating a big meal.

Ahtekoo's party had caught four beavers, and the boys were very proud of their success. But Alois had his right arm bandaged and tied up in a sling.

"The Little Frenchman tried to catch ahmik like an Indian," Bowitigo told. "But he was too slow and was afraid, and ahmik bites every hunter who is afraid."

The Indians all laughed at Alois's bad luck. Ahtekoo had taken some bark and roots out of his medicine-bag, chewed them into a pulp, and placed this on the badly bleeding wound, and had bandaged the arm with a piece of caribou skin.

"Little Frenchman all right pretty soon," he had said. "No scared, he catch ahmik like Indian."

When Jack told about the ghost trail he had followed, Frank rebuked him sharply, saying: "Jack, you are turning Indian. If you believe all these ghost tales, I am going to leave you here in the woods. Mother would not want any heathen Indian in the house."

But Obashay did not laugh or scoff at Jack's story.

"My son," he said, "Manitou has heard my prayer. You have found a good trail. It is the trail of negeek. My hunters cannot catch negeek as they catch ahmik, because negeek

is a great traveller, and we do not know where to find him. Sometimes he sleeps in an old house of ahmik, sometimes he drives wah-shushk out of his house of mud and rushes, and sometimes he sleeps in his own burrow in the river bank.

"But we will go and set a white man's trap for him and we shall bait it with beaver meat I have brought in my bag, and it may be we shall catch negeek before morning."

Then Obashay went with Jack and helped him set the trap near one of the holes of the otter. He rubbed beaver fat on the trap and chain, put out several pieces of bait, and had Jack brush loose snow over the trap.

As the weather was mild, the hunters did not return to their camp for the night. The chief had told them that each man should take a blanket, and when night came, they sought a sheltered place in the forest, where they were surrounded by a thicket of young spruce and balsam firs. Here they built a fire and lay down to sleep under a lean-to of boughs.

About midnight Frank awoke.

The birch logs were still giving out a warm silent glow. Tiny sparkling crystals were dropping upon the camp-fire, thousands of them. As the lad became fully awake, his ears caught a low whispering sound in the spruces and firs. It was the still small voice of the snowflakes sifting through the green boughs. Mother nature was covering up the flowers and little trees of the Great Wild North for their long winter sleep. The wind had died down, and wahboos and the big kookookuhoos and the gray wolves were all asleep.

But the boy lay wide awake, listening to the still small voice of the snowflakes. And the problems and troubles which he had almost forgotten for a few days rose up before him like ghosts.

Where was his brother, for whose rescue the three lads had undertaken the long journey? Had they not lost heart at the dangers of the venture, and were now thinking too much of their own safety? Perhaps Fred was no longer alive? Of the hundreds of white captives, taken by the savages during this war, many had lost their lives through some whim

of their captors. Would it not have been wiser to push at once into the Ottawa country, regardless of personal danger? Where was Wagooshaw? Could they expect to find him next summer? The Ottawa and Chippewa warriors roamed over half a continent from Quebec and Montreal to Lake Superior. And how could he explain everything to Obashay and the Muskegoes, who had treated them with so much kindness?

Would Obashay be willing to give them any aid? He might not even be willing to let them go and to lend them a canoe. Supposing he turned enemy when he heard the story of Fred and how they had driven the Ottawas out of camp? Obashay was an Ottawa. Would he be willing to incur the hatred of his own people for freeing a strange white boy, whom he had never seen?

For an hour the young man lay awake, wrestling with these ghosts of the night.

Only one clear thought came to him from all the confusions of doubts and problems: He must talk to Obashay.

CHAPTER XXIX

ROCK TRIPE

In the morning it was found that the otter had in some way sprung the trap, but had not been caught.

A few hours later two of the hunters returned to camp and reported that they had seen a band of caribou far off, going in a northeasterly direction. All the hunters at once prepared to follow this band, for both Indians and white men prefer the rich meat of fat caribou to rabbit and beaver.

The hunters divided into three parties. Obashay and his Indian sons, being considered the best hunters, were to follow directly on the trail, the other Indian hunters were to travel between a mile and half a mile farther south, and the three white boys were to strike out north of the trail. By this method it was thought most likely that at least one of the parties would secure some of the animals. As

the wind was from the northeast, there was no danger that the caribou would get the scent of the hunters, and it would be easy to follow them silently over the fresh snow.

"You must all take your blankets and food for two days," Obashay told the hunters, "for ahtik travels many leagues between sleeps, and many good Muskego hunters have brought no game to their camp, because they had taken no food, and could not follow ahtik over many hills and lakes.

"And you must not lose your way and must not let ahtik see you. For if ahtik sees the hunter, he will run to a country where we have never been, but if he does not see us, we may bring home much good meat."

It took several hours before the hunters struck the trail, and separated into three parties.

"When you hear our guns," said Obashay, as they separated, "you should turn toward the trail, and look sharp for ahtik running among the trees. But you must not shoot at any other game."

For several hours the white boys travelled

straight against the wind, without seeing either caribou or signs of Obashay's party.

"Let us turn a little farther to the right," suggested Frank, "or we may become too far separated from our friends."

Again they travelled for hours without seeing anything but an endless wilderness of rocky hills, lakes and forests. When they had crossed a large lake, it was growing dark, and they began to look for a good place to camp.

In a spot where a small brook fell into the lake, they built a shelter and made camp. Frank and Jack cut and gathered wood, while Alois boiled a kettleful of beaver meat and made a bed of green boughs.

In the morning they started like true Indian hunters without eating, and about noon they caught sight of Obashay half a mile to their right. He motioned them to keep off a little farther and then disappeared into a growth of tall jack-pines.

On the evening of the third day, the wind had grown very strong. They had travelled fast all day and had held well to their right as they thought, but they were somewhat

alarmed, because all day they had not caught sight of Obashay.

When they made camp they discovered that Jack had lost the only remaining piece of meat. So they drank some hot water to give them warmth and rolled up in their wahboos blankets before the fire, thinking that they would surely find Obashay in the morning.

But when daylight came the wind had grown into a raging snow-storm, against which it was impossible to travel.

They cut some more wood for the fire, and again rolled up in their blankets. The wind would soon die down, they thought, and Obashay would come to look for them.

But hour after hour passed. The violence of the storm increased, Obashay did not appear and all three of them were tormented by a raving hunger.

"I run up to bare hill," said Alois, "maybe I find some '*tripe de roche.*' Or maybe we all starve to death. I think we go wrong way."

When Alois returned he had his game bag filled with a black lichen, one of the kinds of

the so-called reindeer moss which is the principal food of the barren-grounds caribou.

After Alois had boiled this rock tripe a long time, it turned into a jelly-like substance and Alois said, "Now we eat like Muskego Indians, when they have no meat."

"Brr!" exclaimed Jack, "that stuff is bitter."

"Yes, it is little bitter," admitted Alois. "But it is good food. You eat him, or you go die."

For three days the lads were storm-bound. Jack and Frank kept the fire going, and once a day Alois gathered and cooked a meal of rock tripe. This food, although it was bitter, kept the starving lads alive, but they could eat only a little of it, and always felt hungry.

On the fourth day the sun came out, and the lads realized to their horror that on the day they came to this camp, they had been travelling first straight north and then northwest.

What should they do now? Should they strike out south for Lake Superior, or should they stay in camp and wait for Obashay?

Frank decided that they should wait, at least, one day for their father to find them, for all three of them were very weak, and he was afraid that they might not be able to find either one of their camps.

About noon the following day, when Alois was again boiling a kettleful of rock tripe, while Frank and Jack were asleep, Alois heard footsteps on the frozen snow. He sprang to his feet and cried in French: "*Voila! Voila!* Our father has come!" Then he ran and kissed the tall hunter, who laid down a load of meat near the fire.

"I throw away the black '*tripe de roche,*'" declared Alois. "It is little bitter. I broil some caribou meat."

Obashay saw to it that the starving boys did not eat too much.

"When the sun goes down," he told the boys, "we shall make a feast, but now you must eat only a little or you will get sick and will not be able to travel."

Obashay and his sons had killed five caribou on the day that the boys had turned north; and the Indian hunters were now on their

way with loads of meat to the camp on the Michipicoten.

"Our women and children," said Obashay, "will grow thin if they have nothing to eat but wahboos and the fish of the big lake, but now we have plenty of meat for many days. Namegons, the big trout, and adekawmeg, the whitefish, are good food, but it is cold work for the women and old men to catch them through the ice."

The lads were deeply touched by the kindness of Obashay; and they wondered much at his ability to find them.

He said that Manitou had told him in a dream that his white sons would go the wrong way when the wind changed, and that from a high hill he had seen the smoke of their fire.

When all had eaten a big meal of delicious caribou meat and, wrapped in their warm rabbit blankets, were sitting around the fire, Frank plucked up courage to unburden his mind to Obashay.

"My father," he began, "you and Esquasayway and all your men have shown us much friendship since you made us your sons.

"But when we follow ahtik and ahmik, my heart is often heavy, because my thoughts fly far away.

"Jack and I are your sons, and our father brings us food when we are lost and hungry, and Esquasayway gave us warm blankets that we may not be cold. But we have a little brother, who was carried away by the Ottawa warrior Wagooshaw, and we do not know if he is still alive and where he is."

Then Frank related briefly how the three lads had followed the trail of Wagooshaw, how they had been captured by the war-party of Winnebogo and how they had forced him and his men to leave.

When Frank began to tell of Winnebogo's departure, Obashay's face darkened as if with fear or anger.

"Did my sons," he asked, "shed the blood of an Ottawa?"

When Frank told him truthfully everything that had happened on that occasion, Obashay looked pleased and replied:

"It is good that the Little Frenchman did not shoot straight. Now Winnebogo cannot

say that he must kill you for the blood of his man."

Then Obashay began to laugh and said: "The Ottawa and Chippewa warriors will laugh much when they hear that my sons have made Winnebogo and his bragging young men walk to the canoe and paddle away without their guns. But Winnebogo and his bragging young men will never tell them. They will tell big lies, yes, many big lies. And as soon as they have bought new guns, they will leave for Detroit to fight for the French, so the young men may return as warriors with scalps or prisoners.

"Wagooshaw and Winnebogo are bad Indians," he continued after a brief silence. "They do not obey the Blackcoat Father, who lives among the Ottawas, and tells them of the white man's God. And now they have gone and made war on the English, who have never come to their country."

"What does the Blackcoat teach the Ottawas?" asked Jack.

"He teaches them many things. He tells them to stay in their country in summer and

plant more corn, so their women and children will not go hungry in winter. He tells them not to drink the white man's crazy water, and he tells them the ten laws of his God."

"The Ten Commandments?" Jack asked. "Our mother taught them to Frank and me when we were little boys."

"The Ottawas and Chippewas have more than ten laws," replied Obashay. "My father taught me twice as many, and our old men taught them to the children long before a white man came to our country. But the white men do not even keep ten laws. There are many bad white men."

"My father," asked Frank, "will you teach us some of the laws of the Ottawas and Chippewas?"

When Obashay saw the earnest faces of the three white boys turned up to him, a smile passed over his grave storm-beaten features.

"It is right," he began, "that I should this night teach my white sons some of the laws which Manitou taught our fathers many winters ago; for Manitou has heard my prayer

and has led me to my sons, who were hungry and lost in the storm."

Obashay paused, but soon began once more, speaking in a low voice: "These are some of the laws my father taught me, when I was a little boy and lived with my parents in a tepee on Lake Nipissing. It is a long time ago.

"'Look up to the skies often, by day and night; and see the sun, moon, and stars; and think that the Great Spirit is looking upon thee always.

"'Thou shalt not mimic or laugh at the cripple or the lame; for thou shalt be crippled, if thou shouldst provoke the Great Spirit.

"'Thou shalt not answer back if thy father or thy mother or any aged person reproves thee for thy wrong.

"'Thou shalt never tell a lie to thy parents or thy neighbors.

"'Thou shalt not steal from thy neighbor, nor covet anything that is his.

"'Thou shalt always feed the hungry and the stranger.

"'Thou shalt not commit murder while thou art in dispute with thy neighbor.

"'Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land.

"'Thou shalt honor the gray-haired persons, that thy head may be like unto theirs.'"

Obashay stopped and gazed into the fire.

"My father," requested Frank, "teach us more of the laws of the Ottawas. We have plenty of green logs of the pine and birch for the fire, and our eyes are not sleepy."

"I will teach my sons some laws," Obashay resumed, "which the Blackcoat Fathers do not know, and which the white people may not need; but they are good laws for the Indians.

"'Thou shalt not mimic nor mock the thunder of the clouds, for they were made to water the earth and to keep down all evil spirits that dwell under the earth.

"'Thou shalt not mimic nor mock any mountain or river or rock of the earth, for they are the habitations of some spirit, and thou shalt not arouse the anger of the spirits.

"'Thou shalt paint thy face black and fast ten days or more, before thou art twenty, that

Manitou may show thee the future in thy dreams.

"'At certain times, thou shalt clean out thy fireplaces, and make a new fire with thy fire-sticks for the sake of thine and thy children's health.

"'Thou shalt not be lazy, nor be a vagabond on the earth, to be hated by all men.

"'Thou shalt be brave, and not fear any death.'

"These are the laws my father taught me in the tepee on Lake Nipissing. And when I grew up and learned to hunt ahtik and catch ahmik in his washes, he taught me more of the ancient laws of our people.

"My parents grew to be very old people, and when they died my brothers buried them on the river Manistique in the country of the Ottawas.

"And now, my sons, we must lie down to sleep, for to-morrow we must travel a long way. We shall each carry a load of meat, and it will be hard travelling."

CHAPTER XXX

INDIAN DREAMS

THE boys had been wondering how the Indians would carry away all the meat of the five caribou, and they were surprised that so much of it had already been taken away that Obashay and themselves could take all of the remainder, Obashay himself carrying about a hundred pounds, while Jack was given a pack of about forty pounds.

"It is a long way to our camp," said Obashay, "and my sons must not carry too much."

On this long journey of five days from the place where Obashay had killed the caribou, the boys became much better acquainted with their Indian father.

On the first evening they proposed to make camp on a small lake, well sheltered from the wind, but Obashay would not stop at this place.

"My sons," he told them, "this lake is a

place of bad medicine for the Indians. They never fish in the lake and they never camp on its shore.

"A long time ago, three Indian boys were fishing on this lake. One of them caught on his hook a monster, who started to run away with the canoe, and when the Indians tried to stop and pull him out, he upset the canoe, and the three boys were drowned. Their bodies never drifted ashore, and the Indians believe that the monster swallowed them. When the wind sings in the pine trees, the spirits of the lost boys may be heard calling from the water, but nobody has ever seen them."

When Obashay and his sons made their evening camps, strange birds often visited them. They came in small flocks and were so bold that they took scraps of meat out of the hands of the boys.

"They are whisky-jacks," Obashay told them. "They live in the spruce swamps and build their nests and lay eggs in them long before the snow is melted. In winter whisky-jack is often hungry and then he comes to our camps where our children feed him."

"I never saw him in our country," remarked Jack. "He looks like a gray-headed priest. Is he a good bird?"

Obashay smiled. "Our children like him," he said, "but when they do not give him enough meat, he slips into our tepees or flies to our caches and steals for himself."

One evening Obashay, of his own accord, referred to Fred. "Last night," he said, "Manitou showed me your little brother. He is now the son of Wagooshaw. He is not cold or hungry; and if we go to look for him, it may be that we shall find him."

When the boys were getting wood for the fire, Jack asked, "How could Obashay see our little brother, who is on the other side of the big lake?"

"I take it that in his dream he saw Fred as the adopted son of Wagooshaw," replied Frank.

"Do you believe Obashay can tell the future from his dreams?"

"No," said Frank, "I do not believe anybody can do so. The Indians are often alone with their thoughts, and they naturally

dream about the things they have on their minds.

"Father says people who have learned to think don't believe in dreams and signs and in telling the future from the stars. Father says that is all heathen superstition, and he says a good many white people are as superstitious as the heathen Indians, when it comes to doing a little clear thinking."

"But how could Obashay dream that he would adopt two English boys?"

"In the most natural way in the world. He had been to Moose Factory to trade with the English, and he had seen there several young Englishmen working for the Hudson Bay Company. Obashay has never seen a black man, and therefore he would not be likely to dream of adopting a Negro."

Jack did not reply, but he showed plainly that Frank had not quite convinced him.

Alois now took Jack's part, and declared boldly that he believed in dreams, and that he was sure the dreams of the Indians often came true.

"Of course you believe in dreams," Frank

turned on him, "and in all that nonsense about the stars and the number thirteen and a lot of other rot. You Frenchmen live and travel so much with the Indians, that I'm not surprised you have almost turned heathen."

"Well, some things bring bad luck," Alois maintained. "All the voyagers know that a cabin of aspen logs brings bad luck."

"Sure it does," Frank retorted laughing. "If they would go inside and build a warm fire, it would bring them good luck; but on account of some silly superstition they camp outside and freeze. That's bad luck enough.

"If beavers did not eat the poplar bark, it would bring them bad luck; but when they eat it, it makes them fat."

Alois and Jack could not think of any argument against Frank and applied themselves to pulling some dry wood out of the snow.

"Look out, boys," Frank chaffed them, "don't bring any dry poplar. It will bring you bad luck. It will burn your moccasins, if you sit too close to the fire."

"I am not worried," Frank added, as they gathered up the dry wood, "about dreams and

bad medicine lakes, I am worried about Fred. How are we ever going to find him? The country south of Lake Superior is not only as big and wild as the country on this side of the lake, it is also full of hostile Indians, Ottawas, and Chippewas."

"Perhaps," suggested Jack, "the American and English soldiers will be there next spring."

"Oh, Jack," Frank exploded, "do you still believe that foolish story?

"Most of the American soldiers have gone home to their farms and families. Next summer the English will try to take Montreal, and when they have done that, the war is over, and by and by France and England will make peace.

"I hope Canada will not be returned to the French, for there will never be peace as long as the country is half English and half French, and each nation bids for the friendship of the Indian tribes, and encourages them in the worst kinds of outrages against the other white people."

"But if Canada and the Great Lake forts

are not returned to the French, English soldiers would come to Mackinac and the Sault, wouldn't they?" asked Jack.

"Yes, they would," Frank said. "But Heaven knows when. It might take two or three years, and we cannot wait for that. And it would not help us at all, for they could not find Wagooshaw."

"Maybe," Alois put in, "Fred would not wish to come away. Some white boys like to live with the Indians. I like it myself."

"I'll see to that," Frank declared. "If we find him, he'll have to come along."

"But what are we going to do with Wagooshaw? Do you think he will want to give him up?" asked Jack.

"Wagooshaw?" repeated Frank. "I don't know how we can handle him. I must ask Obashay. I know that his thoughts are much with Fred and Wagooshaw, but it is hard to get him to talk."

CHAPTER XXXI

OBASHAY TALKS

THE return of the hunters laden with game was an occasion of great joy in the camp on the Michipicoten. It brought a kind of Christmas cheer to these people who lived in a lone world of their own. The Mukegoes never were at war with their Indian neighbors, the Ottawas and Chippewas; for these tribes did not covet the great wilderness of lakes, rivers, rocks and swamps over which roamed a few hundred families of "Swampies" as these Indians were sometimes called.

In fact the Swampies or Wood Indians live in that wild country to this day as their forefathers have lived for centuries. Once a year they bring their peltries to some trading post of the Hudson Bay Company, then they vanish again into the wilderness.

A few weeks Obashay and his hunters rested and feasted in the home camp on the

Michipicoten, then they went once more to hunt lynx and otter, beaver, marten, and caribou. But the snow was deep now, so they had to travel on snow-shoes, and Obashay was proud of his white sons, who quickly became good hunters and travellers.

Toward the end of April they all returned to the Michipicoten.

"In the Moon of Flowing Sap, we must go and make sugar," Obashay told his white sons, "for we are too poor to buy the white man's sugar."

About the first of May the whole camp, including women and children, moved to a sugar-bush a day's journey from their home camp.

The weather was now quite warm, but snow lay still deep in the woods.

The Indians cut slits and holes into the trees, and into these they inserted chips of wood or tubes of elder to let the sap trickle into bowls and buckets of birch bark. They boiled the sap in kettles of iron which, together with many birch-bark vessels, they left in the sugar-bush from year to year.

When Frank and Jack wondered if these valuable utensils would be safe in the open brush sheds, Obashay told them smiling:

"My sons, the Muskegoes do not steal, and there are no white men in this country."

So great was the reputation of these Indians for honesty that the American fur-trader, Alexander Henry, a few years later trusted them with goods to the amount of three thousand beaver skins. In the spring the hunters all came in and paid their accounts in full, except one man who had died, but his relatives offered to pay for the thirty skins which he owed the traders.

During the winter the Michipicoten Indians had lived entirely on fish and game, to which they occasionally added some blueberries, which they had gathered and dried during the summer. Now they all ate little else but sugar.

"The Ottawas and Chippewas," Obashay told his white sons, "gather much wild rice, and also raise some corn; but in the Muskego country there is but little wild rice, and the summers are too short to raise corn. So we

must live on wahboos and fish, and sometimes we eat beaver, or we find caribou, and sometimes we kill a big moose or find a fat bear in his den. The Ottawas and Chippewas kill many deer, but there are no deer in the country of the Muskegoes."

After the Indians had returned from the sugar-bush, Obashay made a talk to the white boys.

"My sons," he said, "when I was alone on the hunting trail, I prayed much to Manitou for your little brother. Now the ice is melting in the Big Lake, and in the Moon of Strawberries, when the days are long and the nights are warm, we should cross the Big Lake to find your little brother, for I think that Manitou has heard my prayer and that your little brother is alive in the country of the Ottawas."

Obashay was silent and looked into the fire, but Frank made no reply, because he did not think that Obashay had finished.

"When the new moon shows in the sky," the chief began, after a little, "I shall go with Ahtekoo and Bowitigo to the land of the Ot-

tawas and Chippewas. If Manitou hears my prayer, we shall find your little brother, and bring him back with us. You should write your brother a letter in your own speech. You should tell him that you are my sons and that he need not fear to come with me, and that he will find you in my camp on the Michipicoten."

Again Obashay was silent while Frank put another log on the fire.

"The Ottawas and Chippewas," Obashay continued, "have many warriors. They know the laws I have taught you, but they do not obey these laws when they meet their enemies, because their fathers have taught them to make war against their enemies. They are friends of the French, but they are enemies of the English, and they will kill you if you go with me to their country. So you, my sons, must stay in my camp and hunt for my people till I return with your little brother."

"My father," Frank now replied, "we have heard what you have said. Our father and mother have been very good to us. We have never gone hungry and when the storm rushed

over the forest we have been warm under the blankets our mother made for us. Our father is wise and knows the warriors of the Ottawas, and if he says that we cannot go with him across the Big Lake, we must remain here till he returns."

Obashay seemed to be pleased with Frank's answer, but he made no reply, and in a short time he arose, bade the boys good-night, and went to his own tepee.

When Obashay had left, Jack could not remain silent any longer.

"Frank," he said, "we can't stay here and let Obashay do all the dangerous work for us. Why didn't you tell him so?"

"You should both stay here," Alois came in, "but I can go with Obashay. The Ottawas will see that I am a Frenchman, and they will not harm me. But they will kill you, because they can tell by your looks and your hair that you are Englishmen. You can't fool Indians on looks. I often wondered how they can tell one tribe from another, but they can."

"Ah, you fool Frenchy!" Jack cried. "We aren't Englishmen, we are Americans."

"*Sacré!* Now you listen and stop your big talk," Alois exploded. "Ottawa and Chippewa he know two white men, good Frenchman and bad Englishman. He know no American. You get killed last summer pretty near quick; but I talk to Indians and tell them 10,000 soldiers are coming. They hang and shoot all Indians who kill Englishmen. They get little scared and don't kill you right away. Now you say to me fool Frenchy. I say to you big fool Englishman! I say Ottawa will say, 'Bad Englishman come to our country. We don't want him.' They kill you and pull off your hair. *Voila!* I tell you."

"Here, you two fighting cocks," Frank took the word, "go outside and have a wrestling match in the snow. That will cool you off. If Obashay says we can't go, then we can't go. That's all there is to it."

In his heart Frank was loath to remain behind, while Obashay went in search of his lost brother, and he thought hard how he could best make a plea for himself and Jack and Alois.

Next evening Obashay came again to the trader's cabin and seated himself before the fire, as if ready for another council. After he had drawn a few whiffs from his pipe, he made another talk to the boys.

"My sons," he began, "to-day the north-west wind has made the last ice to sail for the Great Rapids. After three sleeps I shall paddle with Esquasayway's sons past the high cliffs of the shore to the Great Rapids. We shall visit the white trader at the Sault, for we have caught many beavers, and we shall visit my friends amongst the Ottawas, and I shall pray to the Great Spirit that he will let me find the trail of Wagooshaw and your little brother. My heart will be sad, because my eyes shall not see my white sons till I return. But I am afraid to take my white sons along, because I fear that the Ottawas will kill them."

Now was the time for Frank to make his plea.

"My father," he began, "our hearts are sad at the thought of letting you go into danger without your white sons, who have grown

strong and have learned many things you have taught them.

"If we were children or were afraid of danger, we should not have come on the long trail from the waters of the Ohio. If we stay here and sleep under our warm blankets, we shall feel like a man who hides in a safe place when his brothers meet the enemy. Have you not taught us to be brave and not to fear any death?"

Frank was silent a minute.

"Does my father wish to hear what is in his son's heart?" he asked after a short pause.

"I will hear what my son has to say," replied Obashay.

"If we remain here," Frank continued, "our mother, Esquasayway, will think, 'Obashay's white sons are not brave like Ahtekoo and Bowitigo.' When we return to our white father, shall we say to him, 'We followed our little brother on a long trail, but we were afraid to go into the country of the Ottawas, and we let our father, Obashay, go into danger without us, while we stayed in a safe camp with the women and children'?

"I have finished. We shall hear what our father has to say, and we shall do as he tells us; for we remember the law of the Ottawas which he has taught us: 'Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother.'"

For a long time Obashay sat as if lost in deep thought or silent prayer.

Then he arose and faced the three lads.

"My sons," he spoke, with his eyes flashing, "you have spoken well, and I know what is in your hearts.

"After three sleeps, we shall carry the big canoe down to the river, and you shall go with me to the land of the Ottawas. And when we find Wagooshaw I shall show him the scalps which I took long ago, when the Sioux invaded our country, and I shall tell him that an Ottawa warrior does not go on the war-path against little boys."

CHAPTER XXXII

THE TRAIL OF WAGOOSHAW

ALTHOUGH the boys had had more than a taste of the hard life of the Indians, they had been very happy.

And what a number of things they had learned to know and do! They felt so much at home in the wilderness that a journey from Lake Superior to Hudson Bay either on foot and on snow-shoes would not have frightened them. They had learned like the Indians to wrest food and shelter from the wilderness at all seasons. Sickness had been unknown in Obashay's camp, and they had grown strong and hard through constant exercise in the open, although they had been compelled to live almost entirely on meat.

Besides growing strong through daily walking, running, and snow-shoeing, they had become supple and quick through many a friendly wrestling match with Ahtekoo and

Bowitigo. And many a friendly battle they had fought with muffled tomahawks and padded war-clubs.

They would have liked to pit their skill in marksmanship against the Indian boys, but for such contests, powder and lead were altogether too costly in this wild country.

Now, however, the happy days of camping and hunting were over, and they were to follow Obashay into the dangerous country of the hostile Ottawas and Chippewas.

They left the Michipicoten in a large canoe, in which Chief Obashay and his five boys could make good speed.

When they struck the broad swell of the open lake, Obashay laid down his paddle and in a loud, deep voice began a prayer to the Great Spirit.

He prayed Manitou to hold back the west wind and to let the big waves sleep till he and his sons should see the great swirling rapids, and had safely lifted their canoe on shore. He asked that Manitou might make their eyes clear and their limbs strong so they might be able to discover and follow the trail which

Wagooshaw had taken with the little white boy. Then he dropped some tobacco and a piece of caribou meat in the lake as a sacrifice to the Great Spirit.

On the evening of the second day, some time after dark, Obashay hid the canoe in the woods and with his sons followed a trail to the house of the French trader. About half a mile from the house he pointed to a thicket of spruce-trees, saying: "My sons, you must now hide in the woods till I return. You must not talk in a loud voice and you must lie still, as if you were asleep, till I come back and tell you what to do."

To the white boys it seemed a long time before Obashay returned, but when he came he told the boys that he had seen his old friend the trader, and they would now all go and sleep in the loft of the trading-house. This was the only safe place for them, because many Indians were camping near his home, and others were still coming in every day to trade their furs.

They approached the rear of the trading-house through the woods and when they

reached it, they found a ladder by means of which they all climbed to the loft. Then they pulled the ladder up after themselves and hooked the door from the inside. As they had slept only a few hours the night before, and were all very tired from their long journey, they soon fell asleep on their bed of deerskins.

Before it was daylight Obashay woke them up and told them of his plan.

"My sons," he said, "listen to your father and do as I tell you. Ahtekoo and Bowitigo will go with me. I shall go and talk with the Indians and I shall seek the trail of Wagooshaw and find his camp. You, my white sons, must give me a letter to your little brother, so he will not be afraid of us."

"My father," Frank replied, "we cannot give you a letter to our little brother, because he has not yet learned the white man's way of reading letters, and we wish very much to go with you to help you find the trail of Wagooshaw."

But on this point Obashay was inflexible.

"My sons," he told them, "you cannot go with me. Only my Indian sons can now go

with me. My white sons and the Little Frenchman must stay here. The Indians still talk much of war, and say if any Englishmen come to their country they will kill them all. If my white sons go with me, all the Ottawas will say that I have brought two Englishmen to their country and they will not let me look for the trail of Wagooshaw.

"You, my white sons, and the Little Frenchman, must stay in this house. The trader will send you meat and water, and you must be very still all the time, and not make many big noises with fighting and wrestling as white boys love to do. You must only leave this house a little while at night, you must not have the ladder standing on the ground and you must always keep the little door closed.

"If you hear a noise of Indians fighting and shouting you must not leave this place to see the fight, for the Indians may be mad from drinking the white man's water, and if they find your hiding-place they will come and kill you. The trader cannot help you and I cannot help you, for the Ottawas and Chippewas are of my own people, and I have taught you

the law that a warrior shall not kill his brother in a quarrel."

When the stars had almost faded from the sky and the little white-throats began to whistle in the trees, Obashay and his Indian sons left their hiding-place and disappeared in the forest.

Some time after daylight an Indian woman entered the trading-house, came up a narrow stairway and opening a trap-door to the loft, brought a piece of smoked venison and a jug of water for the boys. A little later the trader came to the store with several Indians, who each carried a pack of furs.

The floor on which the boys had their bed was also the ceiling of the store. It was made of boards split from logs and there were so many cracks and chinks in the floor that the boys could not help seeing and hearing everything that went on below.

Alois had grown up in Indian trading-houses, but Frank and Jack were much interested in watching the Indians and their squaws barter their furs for blankets, knives, beads, needles, red cloth, little mirrors, lead,

and powder, and many other things that made up the stock of the French fur-trader.

The trader used no money, but he used many little wooden chips as we use tickets or metal checks to-day. Each chip represented one beaver fur.

One Indian was given fifty chips for his furs. That meant that his furs were worth fifty beavers. Out of these chips the Indian first paid his debt to the trader, and for the balance he selected some more goods. But this Indian wanted a new gun and some traps after all his chips were gone, and the trader counted out thirty chips, but he did not give them to the Indian. When the Indian went away with his gun and his traps, Alois whispered, "That man owes the trader thirty beavers. The trader will put it down in his book, but the Indian just remembers it."

Once during the forenoon the boys accidentally made a little noise moving about. Hearing this, the trader, saying something to the Indians about the pesky red squirrels stealing his corn, rushed noisily up-stairs and kicked at piles of corn and birch-bark sugar

vessels and called in a loud voice in French, "Get out of here! Get out, you little thieves!" To the boys he did not say a word, but he pressed his forefinger on his lips, and made the gestures of an Indian killing a man with a tomahawk and scalping him.

About noon the trader locked up his store and went away and the boys could once more move about and converse in a whisper.

"This squirrel game is a hard game!" remarked Jack. "It wouldn't be so bad if we could make as much noise as the squirrels make."

When at last night came, the lads heard the weird sound of an Indian drum, and Alois told his friends that the Indians were having a dance.

"Let's crawl up and watch them," suggested Jack. "I have never seen an Indian dance."

"You can crawl with me to the woods for a while," Frank warned him, "but you don't go near that Indian camp. Do you want them to dance around our scalps?"

Two more days the boys passed in the same

way, playing squirrel without being allowed to make any squirrel noises.

"Frank, I am afraid Obashay has been killed," said Jack, when the third night came and the chief had not returned and had sent no word to the boys. "If we have to stay here much longer the Indians will surely discover us. They pretty nearly did yesterday, when you started to talk in your sleep, but I pinched you just in time."

About midnight Alois was awakened by some sound outside the building. He sat up and listened. Yes, there it came again. The clear whistle of a white-throat. Alois answered the call, and after a few seconds the call was repeated outside. Alois arose quietly, opened the door, and looked into the night.

Below in the little garden he could see three men. Alois gave his two friends a push and called, "Get up, boys! Obashay is here!"

Before Alois had time to put out the ladders, Frank and Jack had dropped to the ground and hugged and kissed the big chief as if he were really their own father.

Obashay himself was so much moved that for a while he could not utter a word. Then he sat down and motioned the boys to sit down also.

"My sons," he spoke, "it is good that you are here. My heart has been with you all the days that I have been away. I have not seen your little brother, but the Great Spirit has heard my prayer, for I have found the trail of Wagooshaw and I know that Manitou has preserved the life of your little brother.

"We must now make haste and take away all our things from the store of the white trader, who has been your good friend, for we must reach our hiding-place in the forest before the sun shines on the Big Lake, and there we must prepare to go and take away your little brother from the camp of Wagooshaw."

When they reached the place which Obashay had selected before he came to the trading-house, the boys learned that he had left here some dried venison and a bundle of goods and other things.

After they had all eaten a meal and refreshed themselves with a drink from a small

stream, Obashay told the lads what they should do.

"My sons," he spoke, "you must be very quiet at this camp and you must not make a fire. You must not walk toward the rising sun, for not far off that way runs an Indian trail. If you go near that trail some Indians may see you, or their dogs may smell your tracks and follow you to our hiding-place.

"My Indian sons and I have walked many leagues, we have talked to many Indians, and we have slept very little. We must now lie down to sleep, but one of you must remain awake. When we have slept, I shall prepare you to go with me on the trail of Wagooshaw."

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE FIGHT

WHEN Obashay awoke, he at once prepared the boys in a way no white boys ever prepared for a journey. Their long hair he cut according to the custom of the Ottawas and he painted it black so it looked like the hair of his Indian sons. When he had also painted their faces and hands and dressed each of them in an Ottawa hunting coat, only the most careful observer would have suspected that Chief Obashay was travelling with two Indian sons and three white sons.

Although the boys realized that they were now entering upon the most dangerous part of their long journey, they were so much amused at their make-up, that they could not refrain from laughing and from telling Obashay that he would not be able to tell his red sons from his white sons.

But Obashay smiled and replied, "I can

tell all of my sons a long way off by their walk." And he added, "I know my white sons love to make much noise like all white boys, but they must now learn to travel quietly like Indians on the war-path."

Some time after dark, Obashay told his sons that it was now time to leave.

"We shall travel on a good trail all night," he added. "It is hard work to travel through these woods without following a trail. I think we shall not meet any Indians. Those who are camping near the trader's place have been drinking fire water, and they will sleep to-night in their tepees and under the bushes like sick dogs."

The boys could tell from the moon and the stars that they were going in a southwesterly direction. But all night Obashay never spoke a word in general talk, and the white boys were impressed by the silence in which half a dozen men in Indian file could wind along the trail.

Three or four times Obashay stopped, and motioned his followers to listen.

"It is mawkwa, the bear," he whispered,

when some large animal crashed through the woods. "Mawkwa is much scared, when he smells Indians." Once Obashay nearly stepped on a porcupine, and Frank almost gave a yell when the startled creature noisily scrambled up a tree near the path. An hour later they met a skunk leisurely ambling along the trail. "Step out of the trail and let him go by," whispered Obashay. "A wise man does not pick a quarrel with zhegawk."

When the sky began to turn gray, a buck suddenly snorted at them from a near-by hollow, and Jack felt all his hair rising up, in spite of grease and paint, although he knew quite well that the sound was only the danger call of the red deer of his home forest.

"We must now leave the trail," said Obashay, when they had passed the hollow. "But each must follow his own path, and you must walk over open spots and you must be careful not to turn the brush and the flowers so they point to our camp."

During the day Obashay and his sons kept quiet. They built no fire and did not hunt. The chief had brought smoked venison and a

little parched corn from the Sault, and this corn they soaked in water and ate with the venison. They also found plenty of wild strawberries, and as the weather was warm and dry, they did not suffer from the lack of a fire. Their clothing had become soaked with the dew in the brush, but they had plenty of time to dry it in the June sun.

When evening approached Obashay told his sons that they would again travel through the hours of darkness. "The Indians," he added, "do not like to follow a trail after dark. Sometimes it is too dark in the forest to follow the trail and when the moon and the stars shine down on the earth, the cold dew falls on the bushes and the flowers, and it makes our clothing as wet as if we had passed through a rain storm."

The second night on the trail passed much like the first, but Obashay seemed to travel with still more caution, and examined very carefully two places where the trail forked.

When he came to the third fork he stopped. "The trail is now so dim that we cannot follow it in the dark," he told his sons. "We

must go a little way into the woods and lie down to sleep till the sun rises."

When Obashay called the boys it was broad daylight. The white-throats were whistling, and the hermit thrushes that live only in wild places were singing in the tops of the spruce-trees.

"Arise, my sons, and eat some meat and corn," said Obashay, "for it may be many hours before we can eat again."

The meal was eaten in silence, and when it was finished the chief spoke again.

"My sons," he said, "we are now not far from the camp of Wagooshaw. I shall paint again the hair and faces of my white sons, so Wagooshaw will not know you are white men. If your little brother sees you, he will not know that you are his brothers. You must not speak to him, but must listen to the words I speak to Wagooshaw. If you speak to your little brother, Wagooshaw or his squaw will take him away and we shall never find him again."

After an hour's walk on a dim trail, they came to a little clearing on the shore of a small lake.

Obashay stopped well back in the timber and pointed to a tepee.

"That is the camp of Wagooshaw," he said. "The man who sits under the birch smoking is Wagooshaw. The little boy who is shooting with an arrow is your little brother. My eyes can tell that his hair is not the hair of an Ottawa boy. I shall speak to Wagooshaw, and my sons must not quarrel with him, if he will not let your brother go. Wagooshaw is a bad man, but he is of my people, and the Great Spirit has commanded our fathers that a man should not raise the tomahawk against his brother."

Wagooshaw shook hands with Obashay and the strangers and then all sat down in silence, the five boys a little way off. Then Obashay lit his pipe and passed it to Wagooshaw.

"My sons are not warriors," remarked Obashay. "They are too young to smoke with warriors, but I wish them to listen to our council."

Frank thought Wagooshaw looked angry, but he made no objection.

"We have come a long way from my camp

on Michipicoten," Obashay finished, "and I have a message and some presents for my brother."

"Wagooshaw will hear what his brother has to say," replied the Ottawa sullenly.

"The Great Spirit has let me know that Wagooshaw is a brave warrior, who goes on the war-path for many months. He has brought home a prisoner from among the white people. Two of my young men I have made my sons. They are the brothers of your prisoner, whom you have just told to go off and play." Here Obashay pushed up the sleeves of Frank's and Jack's hunting coats. "The Great Spirit has sent us to you, and we give you these presents to let the little white boy go away with us."

Wagooshaw looked greedily at the blankets, the tobacco, the bag of beads, the new hunting-knife and the shining new pistol, all of which Obashay spread out before him.

"The white boy belongs to my squaw," he answered. "I cannot sell him."

"It is the custom amongst the Ottawas," replied Obashay, "that a warrior can do as he

pleases with his prisoners. Does Wagooshaw have to ask his squaw what he shall do with his prisoners? We have brought beautiful beads and a roll of red cloth for her, such as no other women can buy."

"Go and take him away," said Wagooshaw. "I shall silence the tongue of my squaw."

Obashay arose and shook hands with Wagooshaw and the boys did the same.

When Frank at Obashay's request called Fred's name in English and told him to come along, the small boy stood and stared, as if rooted to the ground. Before he realized what had happened, Frank and Jack had lifted him up and carried him to the trail in the timber.

Obashay now seemed a different man.

"We must march as fast as the small boy can walk. Wagooshaw's squaw has more than one bad tongue, and when she comes home she will be very angry and it may be she will tell Wagooshaw to follow us and bring your little brother back to her. I also know that Wagooshaw is angry because we surprised him and gave him no chance to fight or to hide the white boy. Indians do not like to

do things quick like white men, but we could not wait and hold a long council with many Indians over your little brother."

"My father, why did you give Wagooshaw a pistol?" asked Frank. "It is a dangerous weapon, and if Wagooshaw ever wishes to harm you, he can conceal it under his blanket and kill you with it."

Obashay laughed. "My son," he answered, "I gave Wagooshaw a very good new pistol, but I took a little pin out of it, and it will not shoot before Wagooshaw takes it to the trader and gets the little pin. I know that Wagooshaw is a treacherous man, and that is the reason why I took the little pin out of the pistol. Wagooshaw camps alone most of the time, because he has very few friends, and because all the women know that his squaw has more than one bad tongue. When she comes home and finds the little white boy gone, Wagooshaw will have hard work to silence her bad tongues. And maybe," he concluded, laughing, "Wagooshaw will go away again on a long war-path, so he will not hear the voice of his squaw for many moons."

When they came to a pleasant open spot, Obashay painted Fred's hair and face, so as to make him look like an Indian boy.

"When we meet people on the trail," he said laughing, "they will not go and tell that they have seen a little white boy."

A small party of Indians did meet them in the afternoon, but so well had Obashay disguised his four white followers that the suspicion of the Indians was not aroused.

In the evening Obashay made camp. "We must all eat now," he said. "And we shall drink some tea and I have brought some of the sugar we made on the Michipicoten. It will taste good after our long walk. To-night we shall not march, but you can all sleep in your blankets. I shall not sleep for a while, and when I lie down to sleep one of my sons will keep watch, so that Wagooshaw cannot creep up and carry the Little Brother away again."

The night passed quietly, with Obashay and his two Indian sons taking turns at watching.

When the morning dawned, Obashay told his boys that they had better begin their march now. "We shall take a trail," he ex-

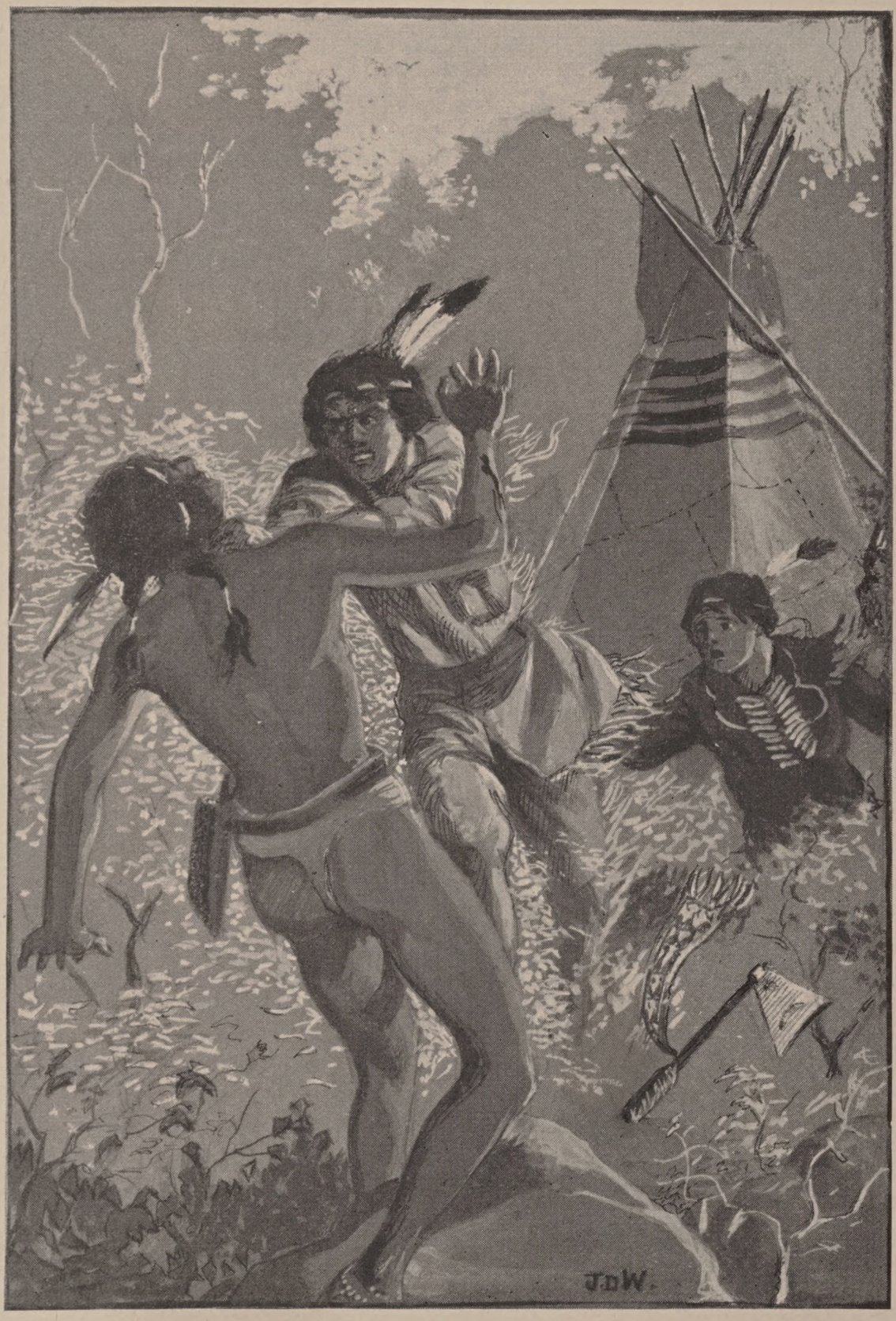
plained, "which the Indians do not use much, so that we shall not meet many people. The dew will make our clothes wet, but when the sun rises high, we shall soon be dry."

He had just finished speaking and was pointing out the direction they would take to find the old trail, when a shot rang out from a thicket close by, and Obashay fell forward on his face.

"Wagooshaw!" exclaimed Frank, and rushed into the thicket guided by a puff of black smoke.

Jack sprang after Frank and found his brother in a fierce hand-to-hand fight with a mad Indian, each trying his best to strike the other down with his hatchet. Frank had not stopped to pick up a gun, and the Indian had not been given time to reload.

The Indian found that his enemy knew how to handle the deadly weapon of the red man. Every blow Frank warded off or dodged, and before Jack had a chance to strike, Frank got in such a hard blow on Wagooshaw's right arm that the tomahawk dropped from his hand, and now the white boy sprang at him



JACK FOUND HIS BROTHER IN A FIERCE HAND-TO-HAND FIGHT.
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like a panther and secured a strangle hold on Wagooshaw's throat.

"Jack, get his knife!" Frank called. "Be quick! He's trying to stab me. I can't let go of his throat!"

For a few seconds the three turned and twisted in the brush like wolves in mortal combat, then Jack got hold of the dreaded knife and flung it away. But now the Indian made a last desperate effort to break Frank's hold, and the weight and strength of the man began to tell against the boys; and as Jack was trying to pinion the arms of Wagooshaw, the Indian, mad as a struggling wolf, set his teeth deep in Jack's left arm. To break away was impossible, so Jack struck his enemy on the temple as hard as he could.

That blow finished Wagooshaw. He lay limp and helpless on the ground and in a few minutes the boys had him securely tied up.

When they ran back to Obashay, they found that Alois and the two Indian boys had bandaged Obashay's shoulder and had almost stopped the blood which had gushed from the wound.

"Wagooshaw made a poor shot," said Obashay. "His bullet made a bad wound but it did not break my bones, for I can raise my arm.

"My sons," he continued, looking at Frank and Jack, "you are wounded, but you are good fighters."

Then he told the boys how to bandage their wounds, and for Jack's left arm he made a kind of poultice of herbs and roots. "The bite of a mad Indian," he said, "is as bad as the bite of a mad dog."

"Let me run and kill that dirty murderer!" cried Alois, picking up a hatchet and starting for Wagooshaw.

"No, my son!" urged Obashay. "Is Wagooshaw not dead? Then, my sons, we will not kill him. Manitou has punished him. My white sons, who are not warriors, have stretched him out like a dog. All the Ottawas will hear what my sons have done and they will say, 'Wagooshaw is no warrior. Boys have taken away his tomahawk and his knife and have tied his arms with a belt.' Manitou has punished him. We must not take his life.

His heart is black, but his father was an Ottawa."

Before they struck across the woods for the old trail, Obashay sent Ahtekoo and Bowitigo to bandage Wagooshaw's arm.

"You shall not harm him," he commanded the boys, "for Manitou has punished him; but you shall see that he is tied well, so he cannot follow again on our trail."

The boys wondered much about the fate of Wagooshaw. Would he starve to death, or would the wolves come and eat him?

Obashay did not answer their questions, but only told them to march along and not make any loud talk.

Toward evening they came to the tepee of a hunting party, and Obashay told his boys that they need not be afraid, that these men were his friends, who had told him where Wagooshaw had made his camp. Then he told the boys to rest, while he spoke to his friends.

"My brother," he said to the leader, "we have found the camp of Wagooshaw. We have had a quarrel with him, and my sons have bound him at the place where we slept

last night. When the sun has risen, you must go and set him free. I fear that his squaw may not find him, and if he remains bound more than one night, the wolves may become bold and kill him. Manitou has punished him, for my white sons, who are not warriors, have overcome him, and have tied his arms with a belt."

Then Obashay told his friends in detail everything that had happened, and when he left them, they gave him a load of fresh venison for his boys.

An hour later Obashay led his boys to a fine camping-place, where they built a fire, and made a feast. And after the feast, Obashay told stories of his battles with the Sioux, and of wonderful adventures on his long journeys to Hudson Bay and to the great river Mississippi, where it flows through the countries of the Sioux and the Chippewas, where very few Indians, at that time, had ever seen a white man.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE GREAT COUNCIL

THE white boys had expected that Obashay would leave them at the Sault, but when Frank asked him where they could buy a canoe or find good trees to make one, Obashay looked surprised and asked:

"Is there not room enough for my sons in my long canoe?"

"Yes, my father," replied Frank, "there is plenty of room in the long canoe, but you are going to the Michipicoten, and we must now start home with our little brother, for we have all been gone a long time."

"I am going with my sons for a way, so they will not get lost or be killed," the chief declared. "To-night we shall carry our canoe past the Big Rapids and to-morrow we shall paddle toward the rising sun on the Lake of the Hurons."

On the journey Obashay told the boys that

he thought the war would yet last a long time. The Chippewas and Ottawas, he said, still talk much of war and threaten to kill any Englishman who may dare to come to their country. He had heard that an Ottawa chief was going to unite all the Indian tribes in a great war against the English; but the name of this chief he had not learned, but he thought it might be Pontiac, the best-known war chief of the Ottawas.

To the boys war seemed to be a long way off, for in Obashay's company they felt entirely safe. They fished and hunted along the route to their heart's content, but Obashay kept them all painted and dressed like Indians. They met and passed many Indians and talked with them, but Obashay never camped with any of them. They returned the same way the boys had come, by way of Georgian Bay, the Severn River, and Lake Simcoe, for Obashay said they would meet too many Indian warriors if they travelled by way of Detroit.

On the Holland River they hid their canoe and then walked to Toronto Bay. Here

Obashay bought a canoe of some friendly Indians and started up Lake Ontario.

In the month of July, 1760, after a journey lasting almost a year, they reached Old Fort Niagara, which was now held by English soldiers under General Gates. But it seemed to the boys that they had been gone many years, for they had faced so many dangers, and had seen so much of land and water and forests and innumerable streams, that it seemed impossible that one year could hold all of these experiences. Even the old stone house, which to this very day stands as a monument of the vanished French empire in America, did not seem quite real. Was it possible that they had witnessed here a great battle only a year ago?

After a few days of rest, Obashay and his Indian sons started on the return journey to far-off Michipicoten, while the three Hopkins boys and Alois could not travel fast enough to reach their home on the Conewango.

During the same summer, Montreal surrendered to the English, but real peace was still far off.

The rumors, which Obashay had heard, proved only too true. Two years later, in the summer of 1763, the Ottawa Chief Pontiac began the most formidable of all Indian wars. Of all the western forts that had surrendered to the English only Detroit and Fort Pitt were not retaken by the Indian warriors.

When, at last, the Indians saw that they could not win, the great Conspiracy of Pontiac collapsed, but hundreds of white men had lost their lives, and many had been made prisoners.

In the following year, in the summer of 1764, Sir William Johnson convened at Fort Niagara the greatest Indian Council ever held in North America. Almost all the western tribes were represented. Even the Sioux, the Chippewas and the Ottawas from Lake Superior sent delegates.

With the Ottawas came Obashay and the American trader, Alexander Henry, whose life had been miraculously saved in the bloody massacre of Fort Mackinac on June 3rd, 1763.

Obashay sent a runner to the Conewango

with the message that he wished to see his white sons once more before his eyes grew dim and his hair white.

And the boys came, all four of them: Frank and Jack, the Little Frenchman, and the Little Brother, but only the Little Brother was still a boy.

Four years ago, they had been too poor to thank Obashay with more than words and tears, but now they loaded his canoe with everything an Indian could use and desire, until Obashay said, "My sons, it is enough. My canoe will carry no more."

Never could the boys have imagined, when they first started on the trail of Wagooshaw, that amongst the Red Men of the forest there could live such a man as Obashay.

From time to time they sent with the traders tokens of their affection to their Indian father, until word came that he had died peacefully of old age, and that his sons had buried him, as he had requested, on a high cliff overlooking the wild Bay of Michipicoten.

And here ends the story of Wagooshaw, the savage warrior of the Stone Age, and of Chief

Obashay, who kept the ancient laws of the Ottawas better than many white men keep the laws of their Good Book.

THE END