met him with the secret resentment we bear an interloper.

He looked me over from head to foot with more interest than he had ever before shown.

"We are getting on, we are getting on! Is it Doctor Chantry, or the little madame, or the winter housing? Our white blood is very much in evidence. When Chief Williams comes back to the summer hunting he will not know his boy."

"The savage is inside yet, monsieur," I told him. "Scratch me and see."

"Not I," he laughed.

"It is late for thanks, but I will now thank you for taking me into your house."

"He has learned gratitude for little favors! That is Mme. de Ferrier's work."

"I hope I may be able to do something that will square our accounts."

"That's Dr. Chantry's work. He is full of benevolent intentions—and never empties himself. When you have learned all your master knows, what are you going to do with it?"

"I am going to teach our Indians."

"Good. You have a full day's work before you. Founding an estate in the wilderness is nothing compared to that. You have more courage than De Chaumont."

Whetner the spring or the return of De Chaumont drove me out, I could no longer stay indoors, but rowed all day long on the lake or trod the quickening woods. Before old Pierre could get audience with his house accounts De Chaumont was in Mme. de Ferrier's rooms, inspecting the wafer-blotched letter. He did not appear as depressed as he should have been by the death of his old friend.

"These French have no hearts," I told Dr. Chantry.

He took off his horn spectacles and wiped his eyes, responding:

"But they find the way to ours."

Slipping between island in water paths that wound as a meadow stream winds through land, I tried to lose myself from the uneasy pain which followed me everywhere.

There may be people who look over the scheme of their lives with entire complacence. Mine has been the outcome of such strange misfortunes as to furnish evidence that there is another fate than the fate we make ourselves. In that early day I felt the unseen lines tighten around me. I was nothing but a young student of unknown family, able to read and write, to talk a little English, with some knowledge of history, geography, mathematics and Latin. Strength and scope came by atoms. I did not know then as I know now that I am a slow grower, even when making gigantic effort. An oak does not accumulate rings with more deliberation than I change and build myself.

My master told me a few days later that the Count decreed Madame de Ferrier must go back to France. He intended to go with her and push her claim; and his daughter and his daughter's governess would bear them company. Dr. Chantry and I contemplated each other, glaring in mutual solemnity. His eyes were red and watery, and the nose sharpened its cone.

"When are they going?" I inquired.

"As soon as arrangements for comfortable sailing can be made. I wish I were going back to England. I shall have to save twenty-five years before I can go, but the fund is started."

If I save a hundred and twenty-five years I could not go anywhere; for I had nothing to save. The worthlessness of civilization rushed over me. When I was an Indian the boundless world was mine. I could build a shelter, and take food and clothes by my strength and skill. My boat or my strong legs carried me to all boundaries.

I did not know what ailed me, but chased by these thoughts to the lake, I determined not to go back again to De Chaumont's house. I was sick, and my mother woods opened her arms. As if to show me what I had thrown away to haunt the cages of men, one of those strange sights which is sometimes seen in that region appeared upon the mountain. No one can tell who lights the torch. A thread of fire ran up like an opening seam, broadened, and threw out pink ravelings. The flame wavered, paled by daylight, but shielding itself with strong smoke, and leaped from ledge to ledge. I saw mighty pines, standing one moment green and the next columns of fire. So the mass diverged or ran together until a mountain of fire stood against the sky and stretched its reflection, a glowing furnace, across the water.

Flecks of ash sifted on me in the boat. I felt mself a part of it, as I felt myself a part of the many sunsets which had burned out on that lake. Before night I penetrated to the heart of an island so densely overgrown, even in spring when trees had no curtains, that you were lost as in a thousand mile forest. I camped there in a dry ravine, with hemlock boughs under and over me, and next day rolled broken logs, and cut poles and evergreens with my knife, to make a lodge.

It was boyish, unmannerly conduct; but the world had broken to chaos around me; and I set up the rough refuge with skill. Some books, my fish line and knife, were always in the boat with me, as well as a box of tinder. I could go to the shore, get a breakfast out of the water, and cook it myself. Yet all that day I kept my fast, having no appetite.

Perhaps in the bottom of my heart I expected somebody to be sent after me, bearing large inducements to return. We never can believe we are not valuable to our fellows. Pierre or Jean, or some other servants in the house, might perforce nose me out. I resolved to hide if such an envoy aproached and to have speech with nobody. We are more or less ashamed of our secret wounds, and I was not going to have Pierre or Jean report that I sat sulking in the woods on an island.

It was very probable that De Chaumont's household gave itself no trouble about my disappearance. I sat on my hemlock floor until the gray of twilight and studied Latin, keeping my mind on the text; save when a squirrel ventured out and glided bushy tailed and sinuous before me, or the marble birches with ebony limbs drew me to gloat on them. The white birch is a woman and a goddess. I have associated her forever with that afternoon. Her poor cousin the poplar, often so like her as to deceive you until ashen bough and rounded leaf instruct the eye, always grows near her like a protecting servant. The poor cousin rustles and fusses. But my calm lady stands in perfect beauty, among pines straight as candles, never tremulous, never trivial. All alabaster and ebony, she saw another figure glow through the loop-holes of the woods.

It was Madame de Ferrier.

VIII.

A leap of the heart and dizziness shot through me and blurred my sight. The reality of Madame de Ferrier's coming to seek me surpassed all imaginings.

She walked with quick accustomed step, parting the second growth in her way, having tracked me from the boat. Seeing my lodge in the ravine she paused, her face changing as the lake changes; and caught her breath. I stood exultant and ashamed down to the ground.

"Monsieur, what are you doing here?" Madame Ferrier cried out.

"Living, madame," I responded.

"Living? Do you mean you have returned to your old habits?"

"I have returned to the woods, madame."

"You do not intend to stay here?"

"Perhaps."

"You must not do it!"

"What must I do?"

"Come back to the house. You have given us much anxiety."

I liked the word "us" until I remembered it included Count de Chaumont.

"Why did you come out here and hide yourself?"

My conduct appeared contemptible. I looked mutely at her.

"What offended you?"

"Nothing, madame."

"Did you want Doctor Chantry to lame himself hobbling around in search of you, and the Count to send people out in every direction?"

"No, madame."

"What explanation will you make to the Count?"

"None, madame." I raised my head. "I may go out in the woods without asking leave of Count de Chaumont."

"He says you have forsaken your books and gone back to be an Indian."

I showed her the Latin book in my hand. She glanced slightly at it, and continued to make her gray eyes pass through my marrow.

"How did you know I was here?"

"Oh, it was not hard to find you after I saw the boat. This island is not large."

"But who rowed you across the lake, madame?"

"I came by myself, and nobody except Ernestine knows it. I can row a boat. I slipped through the tunnel, and ventured."

"Madame, I am a great fool. I am not worth your venturing."

"You are worth any danger I might encounter. But you should at least go back for me."

"I will do anything for you, madame. But why should I go back?—you will not long be there."

"What does that matter? The important thing is that you should not lapse again into the Indian."

"Is any life but the life of an Indian open to me, madame?"

She struck her hands together with a scream.

"Louis! Sire!"

Startled, I dropped the book and it sprawled at her feet like the open missal. She had returned so unexpectedly to the spirit of our first meeting.

"O if you knew what you are! During my whole life your name has been cherished by my family. We believed you would some time come to your own. Believe in yourself!"

I seemed almost to remember and perceive what I was—as you see in mirage one inverted boat poised on another, and are not quite sure, and the strange thing is gone.

Perhaps I was less sure of the past because I was so sure of the present. A wisp of brown mist settled among the trees spread cloud behind her. What I wanted was this woman, to hide in the woods for my own. I could feed and clothe her, deck her with necklaces of garnets from the rocks, and wreaths of the delicate sandwort flower. She said she would rather make Paul a woodchopper than a suppliant, taking the constitutional oath. I could make him a hunter and a fisherman. Game, bass, trout, pickerel, grew for us in abundance. I saw this vision with a single eye; it looked so possible! All the crude imaginings of youth colored the spring woods with vivid beauty. My face betrayed me, and she spoke to me coldly.

"Is this your house, monsieur?"

I said it was.

"And you slept there last night?"

"I can build a much better one."

"What did you have for dinner?"

"Nothing."

"What did you have for breakfast?"

"Nothing."

Evidently the life I proposed to myself to offer her would not suit my lady.

She took a lacquered box from the cover of her wrappings, and moved down the slope a few steps.

"Come here to your mother and get your supper."

I felt tears rush to my eyes. She sat down, spread a square of clean fringed linen upon the ground, and laid out crusty rounds of buttered bread that were fragrant in the springing fragrance of the woods, firm slices of cold meat, and a cunning pastry which instantly maddened me. I was ashamed to be such a wolf.

We sat with our forest table between us and ate together.

"I am hungry myself," she said.

A glorified veil descended on the world. If evening had paused while that meal was in progress it would not have surprised me. There are half hours that dilate to the importance of centuries. But when she had encouraged me to eat everything to the last crumb, she shook the fringed napkin, gathered up the lacquered box, and said she must be gone.

"Monsieur, I have overstepped the bounds of behavior in coming after you. The case was too urgent for consideration of myself. I must hurry back, for the Count's people would not understand my secret errand through the tunnel. Will you show yourself at the house as soon as possible?"

I told her humbly that I would.

"But let me put you in the boat, madame."

She shook her head. "You may follow, after I am out of sight. If you fail to follow"—she turned in the act of departing and looked me through.

I told her I would not fail.

When Madame de Ferrier disappeared beyond the bushes I sat down and waited with my head between my hands, still seeing upon closed eyelids her figure, the scant frock drawn around it, her cap of dark hair under a hood, her face moving from change to change. And whether I sat a year or a minute, clouds had descended when I looked, as they often did in that lake gorge. So I waited no longer, but followed her.

The fog was brown and capped the evening like a solid dome, pressing down to the earth and twisting smoke fashion around my feet. It threw sinuous arms in front of me as a thing endowed with life and capable of molding itself; and when I reached my boat and pushed off on the water a vast mass received and enveloped me.

More penetrating than its clamminess was the thought that Madame de Ferrier was out in it alone.

I tried one of the long calls we sometimes used in hunting. She might hear, and understand that I was near to help her. But it was shouting against many walls. No effort pierced the muffling substance, which rolled thickly against the lungs. Remembering it was possible to override smaller craft, I pulled with caution, and so bumped lightly against the boat, that by lucky chance hovered in my track.

"Is that you, madame?' I asked.

She hesitated.

"Is that you, monsieur?"

"Yes."

"I think I am lost. There is no shore. The fog closed around me so soon. I was waiting for it to lift a little."

"It may not lift until morning, madame. Let me tie your boat to mine."

"Do you know the way?"

"There is no way. We shall have to feel for the shore. But Lake George is narrow and I know it well."

"I want to keep near you."

"Come into my boat and let me tie the other one astern."

She hesitated again, but decided, "That would be best."

I drew the frail shells together—they seemed very frail above such depths—and helped her cross the edges. We were probably the only people on Lake George.

Tinder lighted in one boat would scarcely have shown us the other, though in the sky an oval moon began to make itself seen amidst rags of fog. The dense eclipse around us and the changing light overhead were very weird.

Madame de Ferrier's hands chilled mine, and she shook in her thin cape and hood. Our garments were saturated. I felt moisture trickling down my hair and dropping on my shoulders.

She was full of vital courage, resisting the deadly chill. This was not a summer fog, lightly to be traversed. It went dank through the bones. When I had helped her to a bench, remembering there was nothing dry to wrap around her, I slipped off my coat and forcibly added its thickness to her shoulders.

"Do you think I will let you do that, monsieur?"

My teeth chattered and shocked together, so it was impossible to keep from laughing, as I told her I always preferred to be coatless when I rowed a boat.

We could see each other by the high light that sometimes gilded the face, and sometimes was tarnished almost to eclipse. Madame de Ferrier crept forward, and before I knew her intention, cast my garment again around me. I helped the boat shift its balance so she would have to grasp me for support; the chilled round shape of her arm in my hand then sent waves of fire through me. With brazen cunning, moreover, that surprised myself, instead of pleading, I dictated.

"Sit beside me on the rower's bench, madame, and the coat will stretch around both of us."

Like a child she obeyed. We were indeed reduced to saving the warmth of our bodies. I shipped my oars and took one for a paddle, bidding Madame de Ferrier to hold the covering in place while I felt for the shore. She did so, her arm crossing my breast, her soft body touching mine. She was cold and still as the cloud in which we moved; but I was a god, riding triumphantly high above the world, satisfied to float through celestial regions forever, bearing in my breast an unquenchable coal of fire.

The moon played tricks, for now she was astern, and now straight ahead, in that confusing wilderness of vapor.

"Madame," I said to my companion, "why have you been persuaded to go back to France?"

"She drew a deep breath.

"I have not been persuaded. I have been forced by circumstances. Paul's future is everything."

"You said you would rather make him a woodchopper than a suppliant to the Bonapartes."

"I would. But his rights are to be considered first. He has some small chance of regaining his inheritance through the influence of Count de Chaumont now. Hereafter there may be no chance. You know the fortunes and lands of all emigres were forfeited to the state. Ours have finally reached the hands of one of Napoleon's officers. I do not know what will be done. I only know that Paul must never have cause to reproach me."

I was obliged to do my duty in my place as she was doing her duty in hers; but I wished the boat would sink, and so end all journeys to France. It touched shore, on the contrary, and I grasped a rock which jutted toward us. It might be the point of an island, it might be the eastern land, as I was inclined to believe, for the moon was over our right shoulders.

Probing along with the oar I found a cove and a shallow bottom, and there I beached our craft with a great shove.

"How good the earth feels underfoot!" said Madame de Ferrier. We were both stiff. I drew the boats where they could not be floated away, and we turned our faces to the unknown. I took her unresisting arm to guide her, and she depended upon me.

This day I look back at those young figures groping through cloud as at disembodied and blessed spirits. The man's intensest tenderness, restrained by his virginhood and his awe of the supple delicate shape at his side, was put forth only in her service. They walked against bushes. He broke a stick, and with it probed every yard of the ascent which they were obliged to make. Helping his companion from bush to log, from seam to seam of the riven slope, from ledge to ledge, he brought her to a level of high forest where the fog was thinner, and branches intelaced across their faces.

The climb made Madame de Ferrier draw her breath quickly. She laughed when he ended it. Though I knew the shores as well as a hunter, it was impossible to recognize any landmark. The trees, the moss and forest sponge under our feet, the very rocks, were changed by that weird medium. And when the fog opened and we walked as through an endless tunnel of gray revolving stone, it was into a world that never existed before and would never exist again.

There was no path. Creeping under and climbing over obstacles, sometimes walking briskly across lighted spaces, we reached a gorge smoking as the lake smoked in the chill of early mornings. Vapor played all its freaks on that brink. That edge had been sharply defined. But the fog shut around us like a curtain, and we dared not stir.

Below, a medallion shaped rift widened out and showed us a scene as I have since beheld such things appear upon the stage. With the round changing frame of wispy vapor two men sat by a fire of logs and branches. We could smell wood smoke, and hear the branches crackle, convincing us the vision was real. Behind them stood a cabin almost as rude as my shelter on the island.

One man was a grand fellow, not at all of the common order, though he was more plainly clothed than De Chaumont. His face was so familiar that I almost grasped recognition—but missed it. The whole cast was full and aquiline, and the lobe of his ear, as I noticed when light fell on his profile, sat close to his head like mine.

The other man worked his feet upon the treadle of a small wheel, which revolved like a circular table in front of him, and on this he deftly touched something which appeared to be an earthenware vessel. His thin fingers moved with spider swiftness, and shaped it with a kind of magic. He was a mad looking person, with an air of being tremendously driven by inner force. He wore mustaches the like of which I had never seen, carried back over his ears; and these hairy devices seemed to split his countenance in two crosswise.

Some broken pottery lay on the ground, and a few vessels, colored and lustrous so they shone in the firelight, stood on a stump near him.

The hollow was not a deep one, but if the men had been talking, their voices did not reach us until the curtain parted.

"You are a great fool or a great rascal, or both, Bellenger," the superior man said.

"Most people are, your Highness," responded the one at the wheel. He kept it going, as if his earthenware was of more importance than the talk.

"You are living a miserable life, roving about."

"Many other Frenchmen are no better off than I am, my Prince."

"True enough. I've roved about myself."

"Did you turn schoolmaster in Switzerland, Prince?"

"I did. My family are in Switzerland now."

"Some of the nobles were pillaged by their peasants as well as by the Government. But your house should not have lost everything."

"You are mistaken about the losses. The Orleans Bourbons have little or no revenue left. Monsieur and Artois were the Bourbons able to maintain a court about them in exile. So you have to turn potter, to help support the idiot and yourself?"

"Is your Highness interested in art?"

"What have I to do with art?"

"But your Highness can understand how an idea will haunt a man. It is true I live a wretched life, but I amuse myself trying to produce a perfect vase. I have broken thousands. If a shape answers my expectations, that very shape is certain to crack in the burning or run in the glaze."

"Then you don't make the things to sell?"

"Oh, yes. I make noggins and crockery to sell in the towns. There is a kind of clay in these hills that suits me."

"The wonderful vase," said the other yawning, "might perhaps interest me more if some facts were not pressing for discussion. I am a man of benevolent disposition, Bellenger."

"Your royal Highness——"

"Stop! I have been a revolutionist, like my poor father, whose memory you are about to touch—and I forbid it. But I am a man whose will it is to do good. It is impossible I should search you out in America to harm my royal cousin. Now I want to know the truth about him."

Mme. de Ferrier had forgotten her breath. We both stood fastened on that scene in another world, guiltless of eavesdropping.

The potter shifted his eyes from side to side, seeming to follow the burr of his vessel upon the wheel.

"I find you with a creature I cannot recognize as my royal cousin. If this is he, sunk far lower than when he left France in your charge, why are two-thirds of his pension sent out from New York to another person, while you receive for his maintenance only one-third?"

The potter bounded from his wheel, letting the vessel spin off to destruction, and danced, stretching his long mustaches abroad in both lands as the ancients must have rent their clothes. He cried that he had been cheated, stripped, starved.

"I thought they were straitened in Monsieur's court," he raged, "and they have been maintaining a false dauphin!"

"As I said, Bellenger," remarked his superior, "you are either a fool or the greatest rascal I ever saw."

He looked at Bellenger attentively.

"Yet why should you want to mix clews—and be rewarded with evident misery? And how could you lose him out of your hand and remain unconscious of it? He was sent to the ends of the earth for safety—poor shattered child—and if he is safe elsewhere, why should you be pensioned to maintain another child? They say that a Bourbon never learns anything; but I protest that a Bourbon knows well what he does now. I feel sure my uncle intends no harm to the disabled heir. Who is guilty of this double-dealing? I confess I don't understand it."

Now whether by our long and silent stare we drew his regard, or chance cast his eye upward, the potter that instant saw us standing in the cloud above him. He dropped by his motionless wheel, all turned to clay himself. The eyeballs stuck from his face. He opened his mouth and screeched as if he had been started and could not leave off—

"The king!—the king!—the king!—the king!"

IX.

The fool's outcry startled me less than Madame de Ferrier. She fell against me and sank downward, so that I was obliged to hold her up in my arms. I had never seen a woman swoon. I thought she was dying, and shouted to them below to come and help me.

The potter sat sprawling on the ground, and did not bestir himself to do anything. As soon as my hands and mind were free I took him by the scruff of the neck and kicked him behind with a good will. My rage at him for disregarding her state was the savage rage of an Iroquois. The other man laughed until the woods rang. Madame de Ferrier sat up in what seemed to me a miraculous manner. We bathed her temples with brandy, and put her on a cushion of leaves raked up and dried to make a seat by the fire. The other man, who helped me carry her into the ravine, stood with his hat off, as was her due. She thanked him and thanked me, half shrouding her face with her hood, abashed at finding herself lost among strangers in the night; which was my fault. I told him I had been a bad guide for a lady who had missed her way; and he said we were fortunate to reach a camp instead of stumbling into some danger.

He was much older than I, at least 14 years, I learned afterwards, but it was like meeting Skenedonk again, or some friend from whom I had only been parted.

The heartening warmth of the fire made steam go up from our clothes; and seeing Madame de Ferrier alive once more, and the potter the other side of his wheel taking stock of his hurt, I felt happy.

We could hear in the cabin behind us a whining like that uttered by a fretful babe.

My rage at the potter ending in good nature, I moved to make some amends for my haste; but he backed off.

"You startled us," said the other man, "standing up in the clouds like ghosts. And your resemblance to one who has been dead many years is very striking, monsieur."

I said I was sorry if I had kicked the potter without warrant, but it seemed to me a base act to hesitate when help was asked for a woman.

"Yet I know little of what is right among men, monsieur," I owned. "I have been learning with a master in Count de Chaumont's manor house less than a year. Before that my life was spent in the woods with the Indians, and they found me so dull that I was considered witless until my mind awoke."

"You are a fine fellow," the man said, laying his hands on my shoulders. "My heart goes out to you. You may call me Louis Philippe. And what may I call you?"

"Lazarre."

He had a smiling good face, square, but well curved and firm. Now that I saw him fronting me I could trace his clear eyebrows, high forehead and the laughter lines down his cheeks. He was long between the eyes and mouth and he had a full and resolute chin.

"You are not fat, Lazarre," said Philippe, "your forehead is wide rather than receding, and you have not a double chin. Otherwise you are the image of one—. Who are you?"

"I don't know."

"Don't know who you are?"

"No. We heard all that you and the potter were saying down here, and I wondered how many boys there are in America that are provided for through an agent in New York, without knowing their parents. Now that is my case."

"Do you say you have lived among the Indians?"

"Yes; among the Iroquois."

"Who placed you there?"

"No one could tell me except my Indian father; and he would not tell."

"Do you remember nothing of your childhood?"

"Nothing."

"Did you ever see Bellenger before?"

"I never saw him before to-night."

"But I saw him," said Mme. de Ferrier, "in London, when I was about seven years old. It made a stronger impression on me than anything else that ever happened in my life, except"—she stopped. "Except the taking off of my mother and brothers to the guillotine."

The man who told me to call him Louis Philippe turned toward her, with attention as careful as his avoidance when she wished to be unobserved. She rose and came around the fire, making a deep courtesy.

"My family may not be unknown to his royal highness, the Duke of Orleans. We are De Ferriers of Mont-Louis; emigres now, like many others."

"Madame, I knew your family well. They were loyal to their King."

"My father died here in America. Before we sailed we saw this man in London."

"And with him—"

"A boy."

"Do you remember the boy well?"

"I remember him perfectly."

The wailing in the cabin became louder and turned to insistent animal howls. Instead of a babe the imprisoned creature was evidently a dog. I wondered that the potter did not let him out to warm his hide at the fire.

"Did you ever see the boy again?"

"I did not see him again until he was brought to Count de Chaumont's house last summer."

"Why to De Chaumont? Le Ray de Chaumont is not one of us. He is of the new nobility. His chateau near Blois was bought by his grandfather, and he takes his name from the estate. I have heard he is in favor with Bonaparte."

"Even we of the old nobility, Prince, may be reduced to seek favor of Bonaparte."

"Heaven forbid, madame. I say nothing against him; though I could say much."

"Say nothing against Count de Chaumont. Count de Chaumont befriends all emigres."

"I have nothing to say against Count de Chaumont. He is not of our party; he is of the new. Fools! If we Princes had stood by each other as the friends of the Empire stand by their Emperor, we could have killed the Terror."

The animal in the cabin by this time was making such doleful cries I said to the potter.

"Let him out. It is dreadful to be shut in by walls."

The potter, stooping half over and rolling stiffly from foot to foot in his walk, filled me with compunction, and I hurried to open the door for him. The animal clawed vigorously inside, and the instant I pushed back the ill-fitted slabs, it strained through and rushed on all fours to the fire. Madame de Ferrier fled backward, for what I liberated could hardly be seen without dread.

It was a human being. Its features were a boy's and the tousled hair had a natural wave. While it crouched for warmth I felt the shock of seeing a creature about my own age grinning back at me, fishy-eyed and black-mouthed.

"There!" Bellenger said, straightening up in his place like a bear rising from all fours. "That is the boy your De Ferriers saw in London."

I remembered the boy Madame Tank had told about. Whether myself or this less fortunate creature was the boy, my heart went very pitiful toward him. Madame de Ferrier stopped and examined him; he made a juicy noise of delight with his mouth.

"This is not the boy you had in London, monsieur," she said to Bellenger.

The potter waved his hands and shrugged.

"You believe, madame, that Lazarre is the boy you saw in London?" said Louis Philippe.

"I am certain of it."

"What proofs have you?"

"The evidence of my eyes."

"Tell that to Monsieur!" exclaimed the potter.

"Who is Monsieur?" I asked.

"The eldest brother of the King of France is called Monsieur. The Count de Provence will be called Monsieur until he succeeds Louis XVII and is crowned Louis XVIII—if that time ever comes. He cannot be called Louis XVII"—the man who told me to call him Louis Philippe took my arm, and I found myself walking back and forth with him as in a dream while he carefully formed sentence after sentence. "Because the dauphin who died in the Temple Prison was Louis XVII. But there are a few who say he did not die; that a dying child was substituted for him; that he was smuggled out and carried to America. Bellenger was the agent employed. The dauphin's sister is married to her cousin, the nephew of Monsieur. She herself believes these things; and it is certain a sum of money is sent out to America every year for his maintenance. He was reduced to imbecility when removed from the Temple. It is not known whether he will ever be fit to reign if the kingdom returns to him. No communication has been held with him. He was nine years old when removed from the Temple; he would now be in his nineteenth year. When I last saw him he was a smiling little Prince with waving hair and hazel eyes, holding to his mother's hand"—

"Stop!"

The frenzy of half recollection came on me and that which I had put away from my mind and sworn to let alone, seized and convulsed me. Dreams, and sensations ,and instincts massed and fell upon me in an avalanche of conviction.

I was that uncrowned outcast, the King of France!

BOOK II.

WANDERING.

I

A primrose dawn of spring touched the mountains as Mme. de Ferrier and I stepped into the tunnel's mouth. The wind that goes like a besom before sunrise swept off the fog to corners of the sky, except a few spirals which still unwound from the lake. The underground path to De Chaumont's manor descended by terraces of steps and entered blackness.

A rank odor of earth filled it; and I never passed that way without hearkening for the insectlike song of the rattlesnake. The ground was slippery, and thick darkness seemed to press the soul out of the body. Yet I liked it; for when we reached the staircase of rock that entered the house she would vanish.

And so it was.

She did say—"Good night and good morning."

And I answered, "Good morning and good night."

We were both physically exhausted. My head swarmed as with sparkles, and a thousand emotions tore me, for I was at the age when we risk all on chances. I sat alone on the steps, unmindful of that penetrating chill of stone which increases rather than decreases, the longer you sit upon it, and thought of all that had been said by my new friend at the camp-fire, while the moon went lower and lower, the potter turned his wheel and the idiot slept.

The mixed and oblique motives of human nature—the boy's will—worked like gigantic passions.

She had said very little to me in the boat, and I had said very little to her; not realizing that the camp talk, in which she took no part, separated us in a new way.

Sitting alone on the steps I held this imaginary conversation with her.

"I am going to France!"

"You, monsieur?"

"Yes, I."

"How are you going?"

"I don't know: but I am going."

"The Duke of Orleans did not mention such a thing."

"Bother the Duke of Orleans!"

"When are you going?"

"Now!"

"But it may not be best to go at this time."

"It is always best to go where you are!"

"Monsieur, do not throw away your future on an unconsidered move."

"Madame, I will throw away my eternity!"

Then I went back through the tunnel to the beach, stripped and took a plunge to clear my head and warm my blood, rubbing off with my shirt.

On reaching my room, the first thing I did was to make a bundle of everything I considered necessary and desirable. There was no reason for doing this before lying down; but with an easier mind I closed my eyes, and opened them to find sunset shining through the windows and Doctor Chantry keeping guard in an armchair at my side.

"Nature has taken her revenge on you, my lad," said he. "And now I am going to take mine."

"I have slept all day."

"Renegades who roam the woods all night must expect to sleep all day."

"How do you know I have been in the woods all night?"

"I heard you slipping up the tunnel stairs without any shoes on at daylight. I have not been able to sleep two nights on account of you."

"Then why don't you go to bed yourself, my dear master?"

"Because I am not going to let you give me the slip another time. I am responsible for you; and you will have me on your back when you go prowling abroad again."

"Again?" I questioned innocently.

"Yes, again, young sir! I have been through your luggage, and find that you have packed changes of clothing and things necessary and unnecessary to a journey—even books."

"I hope you put them neatly together"—

"Nothing of the kind. I scattered them."

"Do you want me to go bare into the world?" I laughed.

"Lazarre," said my master, "you were a good lad, studious and zealous beyond anything I ever saw."

"And now I am bad and lazy."

"You have dropped your books and taken to wild ways."

"There is one thing, dear master, I haven't done; I haven't written poetry."

He blinked and smiled and felt in his breast pocket, but thought better of it and forebore to draw the paper out. There was no escaping his tenacious grip. He sat by and exercised me in Latin deciensions while I dressed. We had our supper together. I saw no member of the household except the men, Pierre and Jean. Doctor Chantry ordered a mattress put in my room and returned there with me.

We talked long on the approaching departure of the Count and Madame de Ferrier. He told me the latest details of preparation, and tremulously explained how he must feel the loss of his sister.

"I have nothing left but you, Lazarre."

"My dear master," I said, patting one of his shriveled hands between mine, "I am going to be open with you."

I sat on the side of my bed facing his armchair, and the dressing glass reflected his bald head and my young head drawn near together.

"Did you ever feel as if you were a Prince?"

Doctor Chantry wagged a pathetic negative.

"Haven't you ever been ready to dare anything and everything, because something in you said—I must!"

Again Doctor Chantry wagged a negative.

"Now I have to break bounds—I have to leave the manor and try my fortune! I can't wait for times and seasons—to be certain of that! I am going to leave the house to-night—and I am going to France!"

"My God!" cried Doctor Chantry, springing up. "He is going to France! Rouse the servants! Call De Chaumont!" He struck his gouty foot against the chair and sat down nursing it in both hands. I restrained him and added my sympathy to his groans.

"Have you as much as a Spanish real of your own, my lad?" he catechised me, when the foot was easy.

I acknowledged that I had not.

"It costs dear to travel about the world. It is not like coming down the trail from St. Regis to Lake George. How are you travel without money?"

I laughed at the very uncertainty, and answered that money would be found.

"Found! It isn't found, I tell you! It is inherited by the idle, or gathered by the unscrupulous, or sweated and toiled for! It costs days and years, and comes in drops. You might as well expect to find a kingdom, lad!"

"Maybe I shall find a kingdom, master!"

"Oh, what a thing it is to be young!" sighed Doctor Chantry.

I felt it myself, and hugged my youth.

"Do you know how to reach the seaport?" he continued.

I said anybody could follow the Hudson to New York.

"You're bitten, my poor lad! It's plain what ails you. You might as well try to swim the Atlantic. De Chaumont intends her for himself. And in the unjust distribution of this world, your rival has the power and you have the feelings. Stay where you are. You'll never forget it, but it will hurt less as years go by."

"Master," I said to him, "good sense is on your side. But if I knew I should perish, I would have to go!"

And I added from fullness of conviction—

"I would rather undertake to do something and perish than live a thousand years as I am."

Doctor Chantry struck the chair arm with his clenched fist.

"My lad, so would I—so would I! I wish I had been dowered with your spirit! I'm going with you!"

As soon as he had made this embarrassing resolution my master blew his nose and set his British jaws firmly together. I felt my own jaw drop.

"Have you as much as a Spanish real of your own?" I quoted.

"That I have, young sir, and some American notes, such as they are, and good English pounds, besides."

"And do you know how to reach the seaport?"

"Since I came that way I can return that way. You have youth, my lad, but I have brains and experience."

"It's plain what ails you, Dr. Chantry. And you might as well try to swim the Atlantic."

My poor master dropped his head on his breast and I was ashamed of baiting him and began to argue tenderly. I told him he could not bear hardships; he was used to the soft life in De Chaumont's house; while my flesh had been made iron in the wilderness. I intended to take a boat from those hidden at our summer camp, to reach the head of Lake George. But from that point to the Hudson River—where the town of Luzerne now stands—it was necessary to follow a trail. I could carry the light canoe over the trail, but he could not even walk it.

The more I reasoned with him the more obstinate he became. There was a wonderful spring called Saratoga, which he had visited with De Chaumont a few years before as they came into the wilderness; he was convinced that the water would set him on foot for the rest of the journey.

"It is twenty-nine miles above Albany. We could soon reach it," he urged.

"I have heard of it," I answered. "Skenedonk has been there. But he says you leave the river and go into the woods."

"I know the way," he testily insisted. "And there used to be near the river a man who kept horses and carried visitors to the spring."

The spirit of reckless adventure, breaking through years of extreme prudence, outran youth.

"What will you do in France?" I put to him. He knew no more than I what I should do.

And there was Count de Chaumont to be considered. How would he regard such a leave-taking?

Dr. Chantry was as insensible to De Chaumont as I myself. Still he agreed to write a note to his protector while I prepared my quill to write one to Mme. de Ferrier. With the spirit of the true parasite, he laid all the blame on me, and said he was constrained by duty to follow and watch over me since it was impossible to curb a nature like mine. And he left a loophole open for a future return to De Chaumont's easy service, when the hardships which he willingly faced brought him his reward.

This paper he brazenly showed me while I was struggling to beg Mme. de Ferrier's pardon, and to let her know that I aimed at something definite whether I ever reached port or not.

I reflected with satisfaction that he would probably turn back at Saratoga. We descended together to his room and brought away the things he needed. In bulk they were twice as large as the load I had made for myself. He also wrote out strict orders to Pierre to seal up his room until his return. The inability of an old man to tear himself from his accustomed environment cheered my heart.

We then went back to bed, and like the two bad boys we were, slept prepared for flight.

II.

"This is fine!" said Dr. Chantry, when we descended from the rough stage which had brought us across a corduroy trail, and found ourselves at the entrance of a spacious wooden tavern. "When I passed Saratoga before there were only three log houses, and the inn had two rooms below and one above. It was lighted by pine torches stuck in the chinks of the wall—and see how candles shine through these windows!"

The tavern stood in a cleared place with miles of forest around it, and a marsh stretching near by. Dusk could not prevent our seeing a few log habitations, one of them decorated with a merchant's sign. We entered among swarming crowds, a little world dropped into the backwoods. This was more surprising because we had just left behind us a sense of wild things gathering to their night haunts, and low savage cries, and visions of moose and deer through far-off arches.

A man who appeared to be the host met us, his sprightly interest in our welfare being tempered by the consciousness of having many guests; and told us the house was full, but he would do what he could for us.

"Why is the house full?" fretted Dr. Chantry. "What right have you, my dear sir, to crowd your house and so insure our discomfort?"

"None at all, sir," answered the host good-naturedly. "If you think you can do better, try for lodgings at the storekeeper's."

"The storekeeper's!" Dr. Chantry's hysterical cry turned some attention to us. "I shall do nothing of the kind. I demand the best you have, sir."

"The best I can give you," amended our host. "You see, we are very full of politicians from Washington. They crowd to the spring."

My master turned his nose like the inflamed horn of a unicorn against the politicians from Washington and trotted to the fireplace, where blazing knots cheered a great taproom set with many tables and benches.

And there rested Skenedonk in silent gravity, toasting his moccasins. The Iroquois had long made Saratoga a gathering place, but I thought of this Oneida as abiding in St. Regis village; for our people did not come to the summer hunting in May.

Forgetting that I was a runaway, I met him heartily, and the fawn eyes in his bald head beamed their accustomed luster upon me. I asked him where my father and mother and the rest of the tribe were, and he said they had not left St. Regis.

"And why are you so early?" I inquired.

He had been at Montreal, and had undertaken to guide a Frenchman as far as Saratoga. It is not easy to surprise an Indian. But I wondered that Skenedonk accepted my presence without a question, quite as if he had himself made the appointment.

However, the sights to be seen put him out of my head. Besides the taproom crowded with men there was a parlor in which women of fashion walked about, contrasting with the place. They had all been to a spring to drink water; for only one spring was greatly used by them; and they talked about the medicinal effects. Some men left the stronger waters, which could be had at a glittering portcullised bar opposite the fireplace in the taproom, to chat with these short-waisted beauties. I saw one stately creature in a white silk ball costume, his stockings splashed to the knees with mud from the corduroy road.

But the person who distinguished himself from everybody else by some nameless attraction was a man perhaps 40 years old, who sat in a high-backed settee at a table near the fire. He was erect and thin as a lath, long faced, square browed and pale. His sandy hair stood up like the bristles of a brush. Carefully dressed, with a sword at his side—as many of the other men had—he filled my idea of a soldier. And I was not surprised to hear his friends sitting opposite call him General Jackson.

An inkstand, a quill and some paper were placed before him, but he pushed them aside with his glass of toddy to lift one long forefinger and emphasize his talk. He had a resonant, impressive voice, with a manner gentle and persuasive, like a woman's; and he was speaking of Aaron Burr, the man whose duel had made such a noise in the newspapers.

"I disagree with you, Mr. Campbell. You are prejudiced against Mr. Burr on account of his late unfortunate affair. Even in that case I maintain every man has a right to honor and satisfaction. But he loves the Spanish on our southwestern borders no better than I do—and you know how I love the Spanish!"

The other man laughed, lounging against the table.

"You can't believe anything ill of Aaron Burr, general."

I might have given attention to what they were saying, since here were men from Washington, the very fountain of government, if Dr. Chantry had not made me uneasy. He chose the table at which they were sitting and placed himself in the seat nearest the fire, with the utmost nicety about his own comfort. He wiped his horn spectacles and produced his own ink and quill and memorandum from a breast pocket. I had begged the doctor to keep strict account between us, that I might pay back from my pension whatever he spent on me, and with fine spider-like characters he was proceeding to debit me with the stage fare, when another quill barred his entrance to his ink-horn.

He took off his spectables and glared pink-eyed at the genial gentlemen with sandy upright hair.

"Sir!" he cried, "that is my ink!"

General Jackson, absorbed in talk, did not notice Dr. Chantry, who half arose and shouted directly at his ear.

"Sir, that is my ink."

He knocked the interloping quill in the direction of its owner

The genial sandy gentleman changed countenance in a way to astonish beholders.

"Have I disputed it, sir?"

"No, sir, but you have dipped into its without asking leave."

"By God, sir, what is a fip'ny bit's worth of ink?"

"But it's mine, sir!"

"I see, sir; you're a Yankee, sir!"

"I'm not, sir; I'm English—the finest race in the world!"

General Jackson looked him up and down as they rose fronting each other and filled