ARIEL,

Half-Breed.

nance of Colonial Days.

BY ROBERT A. CUMMING.

CHAPTER I.

FORT OSWEGO.

le stamps his foot, and nations feel ock."—Byron.

WHERE the Blackwater river pours its tributary tide into Lake Ontario, on the site of the present city of Oswego, stood the stone fort from which it derives its name. On the opposite side of the river was a smaller fort or use named Ontario, perhaps its neighbor, and built for a st and a refuge for the settlers ion when threatened by sav-

ion jack of England floated stone structure, and the can- y pointing from its walls, the tramp of sentinels, attested nce of the garrison. It was of the year, and a cold wind the lake, piling the cakes of of each other with monotonous ng sound; and the forest, which wide semicircle behind the still bare of leaf and blossom. ach in front of the fort two n were standing, one of whom musket on his shoulder; at y half a dozen canvas back

ntly in answer to a remark of anion he said: "I beg pardon, ut surely the monotony of gar- y in a wilderness like this use a little temerity, as you d you yourself could not object son steak or a nicely-cooked t to vary the vulgar menu of or beef. Believe me, I have ater risks for less satisfactory

t it not," replied the Colonel, gravely; "but in view of the ich I think is approaching I fford to exchange a brave man a mess of pottage."

prize, however," said the first "cost nothing but powder and hot them as they flew over the morning on their annual tran- north."

ust not be lulled to a false se- said Colonel Mercer, unheed- ast remark. "Yonder sea of ice us from open attack, but we ard against surprise from the

uck-hunter pointed with his a long triangular line of emi- wl just clearing the trees in ht and making for the lake. ," he whispered, "tired and w. They will come within

's quick eye perceived some- ich the more eager sportsman

"GEESE," HE WHISPERED.

note—one of the birds, appar- ore exhausted than his fellows behind the line, yet striving to e it and sinking lower as he .

short, plaintive cries and heavy of wings the flock passed over- A sharp report, and one came g down.

Marden," said Mercer, pointing ird which first attracted his at- and which now came fluttering ly to earth, displaying an arrow g in its breast, "the redskin who hat shaft is not far off, for the ld not have flown far with such d."

retreat is cut off!" exclaimed , impetuously.

" responded the commandant of t, with Puritan solemnity. "Our in God."

us be thankful, however, that ngo's arrow has given warning of sence and added a fat goose to ommissariat department," said , cheerfully.

drums beat for parade and drill, e soldiers of New England began m by companies on the level in front of the fort.

ed to hardship and danger from y, the men, though young, were ns, a match for the savage in his forest and the Frenchman in the eld. True to their home train- ey were grave and decorous in deportment, and whether on the or in garrison, no profane jest or song mingled with the toil or ss of the Puritan soldiers.

r parade the men amused them- with athletic exercises until sun- hen the sound of a bugle brought within the walls and the gates losed for the night. As the even- epened and the stars came out, rroundings of this isolated strong- ecame more marked in their sav- ernness. The forest rose like a impenetrable wall, forming a rcle, the extremes of which d the lake; the dark river gliding between fort and block-house and catching evanescent beams of light from the windows and loop-holes of those dim and ghostly sentinels of a plutonian shore.

The shadow of a dream without its silence. The never-ceasing wash of the waves upon the strand, the crash and grinding of the ice floes, the sighing of the wind in the tree-tops, and the baying of wolves in pursuit of prey, lent a demoniac reality to the picture.

The interior of the block-house presented a scene in strong contrast to that without. By the light of a fire of resinous pine women were knitting, children sleeping peacefully on blankets or bear skins, while men smoked and told stories of adventure or speculated on the probabilities of the future if the royal troops should or should not come to their relief.

"I wish it was Colonel Washington and his rangers instead of them sassy red coats that was coming. The grass wouldn't grow under *his* feet.

"Mind, I don't doubt that we can whip the Frenchmen ourselves, and then I vote that we go and hunt up the English troops and lick *them* for not getting here in time." This suggestion was favorably received, the popular belief being that one ranger was a match for three Englishmen.

"I served under Johnson at Crown Point," continued the speaker, a weather-beaten and soldier-like man.

"General Dieskan commanded the French and Indians, and, if we had been English troops, led by thick-headed English officers, I wouldn't be here to tell the story. As it was, we fell into an ambuscade and the advance guard was thrown into confusion. Johnson said he was wounded, but he wasn't hurt bad enough to stop him from running away. But we didn't miss him, for Lyman was there, cool and quiet as if he didn't think it was much of a shower after all. The Indians were firing under cover, and the Frenchmen coming on in line of battle with bayonets at the charge. It was a ticklish moment; but Lyman called to the stragglers to drop, and the front rank fired over them. It was the Frenchman's turn then. Then Charley Selwyn gathered up the stragglers and charged the Indians in the woods, driving them out and piling them on to the French, while our main body poured volley after volley into the struggling mass. But Dieskan was a lion, and he flew around among his men, and while the Indians skulked to the rear, firing at us as they went, he got his regulars into order and led them to the charge himself, shouting: 'En avant, mes enfans! Vive le France!' The men took up the cry, and came on shouting: 'Vive le France!'

"But we stood firm; our front rank knelt, the second stooped and the third fired over their shoulders, and poured a storm of bullets into them at short range. Their front rank and most of the second fell in piles. Dieskan himself staggered, ran a few paces, calling to his men to follow, and tumbled head first on the ground, which was wet with blood. Then the French line wavered, and Lyman led us to the charge. The French tried to rescue their leader, but our boys, firing as they advanced, drove them back, and George Marden captured two of their cannon and turned them on their owners. Then they began to break, and although they kept up a running fight for awhile, they finally gave it up. We took a lot of prisoners and boat-loads of arms, and Lyman said we had gained a great victory and that King George would thank us for it."

"But he didn't, did he, Jabe?" asked one of his listeners.

"No, nor Lyman either; but he made run-away Johnson a baronet, as they call it, and sent him a lot of gold and silver clothes, and called him the hero of Crown Point," added Jabe, with a smile that proved that he appreciated the royal sagacity, though not in a way to flatter his majesty.

"Tell us, Jabe," said a woman with a child in her arms which bore a strong resemblance to the orator and was making silent but effective efforts to reach him, "tell us how Master Marden got that Indian boy that follows him about like his shadow."

"Well, you see, there was two of them;" said Jabe, transferring the infant to his own broad bosom, where it presently fell asleep. "After the battle I've been telling you about, Marden chased the Indians until it was too dark to see them, and on his way back to camp he found two young half-breeds, a boy and a girl. They might be twins, they were so like in features, size and every thing. The boy had been hit by a bullet, and his sister was trying to bandage his wound with leaves and strips from her blanket. Our boys haven't much love for the redskins, but the look that the girl gave Marden out of her big black eyes melted his heart like a lump of sugar, and he gave orders to bring the boy along. We made a kind of stretcher with our rifles and coats and laid him on it, the girl walking beside him, holding his hand and saying a few words in French now and then almost in a whisper, but it seemed to help him to bear the pain. We brought him into camp and the surgeon—he was a French prisoner—extracted the bullet—the girl holding his hand all the while and never flinching. Marden used to visit the hospital sheds every day to talk to the wounded, and he was so gay and cheerful that the men got to look for him, and their pale faces would light up when they saw him. The Frenchmen called him the Chevalier Joyeuse, for he could speak their language as glibly as any of them, and he would sing French songs until the poor fellows almost fancied themselves at home. Dieskan loved him for his kindness to the prisoners, and wanted to give him the cross of St. Louis which he wore, but Marden would laugh and turn it off with a compliment. They were both interested in the young half-breeds. I never heard what their history was, only that they had been made prisoners by a hostile tribe and rescued by French soldiers after the boy's tongue had been cut out. But if you had seen the way the girl followed Marden with her eyes, you would say it was as good as a love story. Dieskan promised to do something for them when he got his liberty, but he was sent to England because the French had no prisoner of equal rank to exchange for him; but all the others were sent to Montreal in exchange for men, women and children captured by the Indians in their raid across the border."

"Well, Jabe, what became of the girl? and how did the boy come back to Mr. Marden?"

"I don't know where the girl is," said Jabe. "The boy looked sick and weak when he went to Canada, but he must have found his way back to Marden about six months later."

"And Marden kept him for his sister's sake?" asked a listener.

"*He* wasn't in love with her," said Jabe emphatically "You don't suppose a gentleman like Mr. Marden would fall in love with a poor half-breed girl, if she *had* a pretty face. No; he is a tender-hearted man and he pitied them both—that's all."

Some of the men were occupied in playing cards, others in cleaning guns and accountrements: all the women had been listening attentively to the narrative, and now that it was ended, rather unsatisfactorily, as some thought, the silence which followed was due perhaps to profound speculation on the mysterious part of it. A familiar signal from without diverted attention to a small but heavily-barred postern door, which being cautiously opened gave admittance to the subject of Jabe's story—the half-breed boy—on whom all eyes were turned with an awakened curiosity. His lithe and graceful form, set off to advantage by the green hunting shirt and leggings of the rangers, was surmounted by a head resembling those Italian studies so familiar to the public of the

HE WENT STRAIGHT TO JABE.

present day—the dark hair descending to the shoulder, framing a face of oval form and olive coloring, small red lips and flashing black eyes; his age might be seventeen, his height below the standard. With a glance and a smile of salutation to the inmates, he went straight to Jabe and gave him a slip of paper on which a few lines were written. The ranger glanced over it, and handing the sleeping child to his wife, whispered in her ear that he was sent for by the commandant; then, by way of soothing the anxiety in her face kissed her and the child and departed, followed by the half-breed.

Continued in our next issue.

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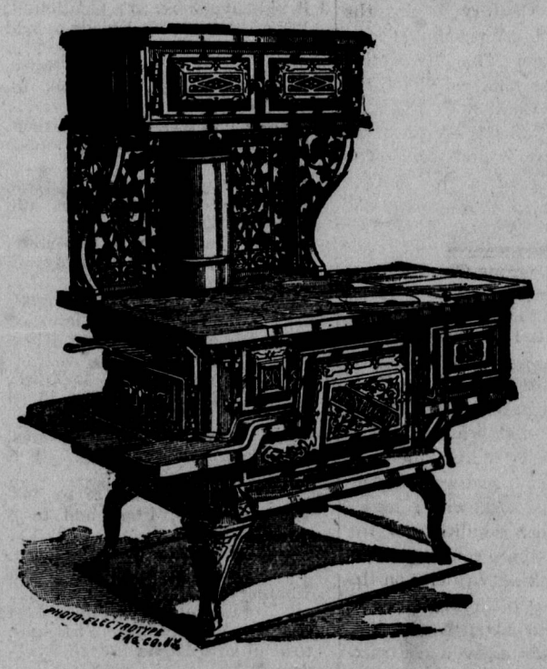

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