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RETOLD STANDARD ENGLISH CLASSICS

THE LAST OF  
THE MOHICANS

BY  
J. FENIMORE COOPER

ABRIDGED  
FOR USE IN INDIA, CEYLON AND BURMAH

E. M. GOPALAKRISHNA KONE

MADURA & MADRAS.

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1930

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# CONTENTS

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*CHAPTER	SUBJECT-MATTER	PAGE
I.	Troops depart from Fort Edward ...	1
II.	Sly Fox leads Munro's daughters ...	4
III.	Hawkeye and Chingachgook ...	9
IV.	Hawkeye and the Mohicans meet the Travellers ...	13
V.	The Treacherous Guide ...	16
VI.	At the Glenn's Falls ...	19
VII.	A Strange Inhuman Cry ...	24
VIII.	The Hurons attack the Travellers ...	28
IX.	In Despair ...	32
X.	The Hurons capture the Travellers ...	35
XI.	Cora pleads before Sly Fox ...	40
XII.	The Travellers journey along... ..	45
XIII.	The French besiege Fort William Henry..	49
XIV.	Montcalm interrupts Webb's letter ...	54
XV.	The Massacre of Fort William Henry ...	60
XVI.	In the Ruined Fort ...	64
XVII.	The Search (Continued) ...	67
XVIII.	A Strange Village ...	71
XIX.	In the Camp of the Iroquois ...	76

XX.	The Adventure with the Bear	...	85
XXI.	The Escape of Uncas	... ..	94
XXII.	In the Camp of the Delawares	...	100
XXIII.	The Pursuit of Sly Fox	... ..	112
XXIV.	The Final Battle	... ..	113
XXV.	Cora and Uncas are slain	..	118
XXVI.	The End : Hawkeye and Chingachgook left alone in the world!	... ..	120
APPENDIX	I	... ..	125
	II	... ..	126
	III	... ..	128

# The Last of the Mohicans

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## CHAPTER I

### Troops depart from Fort Edward

A wide and apparently an impervious boundary of forests stood between the hostile provinces of England and France, in North America, towards the end of the eighteenth century. And before the adverse hosts could meet, the toils and dangers of the wilderness had to be encountered. They spent months in struggling against the rapids of the streams or in getting through the rugged passes of the mountains. The hardy colonist, and the trained European who fought at his side, emulated the patience and self-denial of the practised Indian warriors, and learned to overcome every difficulty.

The Colonial warfare was savage, cruel, and fierce; and especially so, during the year 1757. And the worst of such happenings was seen in the beautiful country which lies between the headwaters of the river Hudson and the adjacent lakes.

Lake Champlain stretched from the frontiers of Canada, deep within the borders of the neighbouring province of New York and formed a natural passage across half the distance that the French had to travel over in order to strike their enemies. Near its southern end, it received the waters of another lake, called *Horican* by the natives, *Lake George* by the English, and *Holy Lake* by the French.

Winding its way among countless islands, and embedded in mountains, the 'holy lake' extended a dozen leagues still further to the south. With the high plain that there interposed itself, commenced a portage of as many miles. And this conducted the adventurer to the banks of the Hudson, at a point where the river with the usual obstructions of the rapids, became navigable to the tide.

The French, with their proverbial acuteness, took ample advantage of the natural advantages of the district just described. They erected forts at the different points that commanded the facilities of the route; and these were taken and re-taken, raised and rebuilt, as victory alighted on the hostile banners.

It was in this scene of strife and bloodshed that the incidents related here occurred.

On the shore of the 'holy lake' was a forest fort named William Henry, and less than five leagues from it was another called Fort Edward. A veteran Scotsman, named Munro, held the first, and General Webb was at the other. Munro had a small regiment of regulars and a few provincials; while Webb had a body of more than five thousand men and he could easily have doubled his force.

Towards the decline of a day in midsummer, an Indian runner arrived at Fort Edward and brought the intelligence that the French commander Montcalm had been seen moving up the Champlain with a very large army. He also bore an urgent request from Munro for a speedy and powerful reinforcement. The distance between the two places was less than five leagues. While the sons of the forest could cover the distance in two hours, a detachment of troops with their unavoidable baggage would take a whole day for the journey.

The next morning, under a soft, bright, and cloudless sky, a detachment of fifteen hundred men were ready to set out for Fort William Henry, which stood at the northern extremity of the portage.

The scouts departed ; strong guards preceded and followed the lumbering vehicles that bore the baggage ; and before the first rays of the sun appeared, the main body of the combatants wheeled into column and left the encampment with a show of high military bearing. In less than an hour, the notes of their fifes grew faint in the distance, and even the latest straggler had already disappeared.

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## CHAPTER II

### **Sly Fox leads Munro's daughters by a treacherous path**

But there still remained the signs of another departure. In front of the log cabin where sentinels, who guarded the person of the English general, paced their rounds, were gathered some half-dozen horses. They were caparisoned in a manner which showed that two, at least, were destined to carry women. A third wore the trappings and arms of an officer of the staff; while the rest were evidently fitted to bear the persons of menials.

Presently, a general movement amongst the domestics, and a low sound of gentle voices told the approach of the persons who were to leave the fort.

A young man in the dress of an officer led to their horses two women, who were both very young and pretty. Alice, the younger of the females, had fair golden hair and bright blue eyes; while Cora, the elder by about four or five years, had black hair and brown eyes. They were the daughters of General Munro and were being taken to their father at Fort William Henry. Major Heyward, the young officer, assisted them into their saddles and himself sprang lightly on the back of the horse waiting for him. All the three bowed to Webb who stood on the threshold of his cabin and bade goodbye to them. Then they set out on their journey, followed by the servants. The Indian runner who had brought to the camp the alarming tidings of the previous evening, glided by Alice unexpectedly and led the way along the road in her front. The look of the runner alarmed Alice and she inquired from Heyward :

‘Are such spectres frequent in the woods, Heyward? If so, both Cora and I shall have need to draw largely on that stock of hereditary courage of which we boast.’

‘Yon Indian is a “runner” of the army,’ said the officer. ‘He had offered to guide us to the lake, by a path but little known but which will take us there in a much shorter time.’

‘I like him not,’ said Alice, shuddering. ‘You know him, Duncan, or you would not trust yourself so freely to his keeping?’

‘I do know him,’ replied Heyward; ‘or, he would not have my confidence, and least of all at this moment. He was brought amongst us by some accident in which your father was interested; and I have heard that he was severely punished. But it is enough that he is now our friend.’

‘If he has been my father’s enemy, I like him still less!’ exclaimed Alice with much anxiety.

‘He stops,’ said Heyward; ‘the private path by which we are to journey is doubtless at hand.’

Major Heyward’s conjecture was true. The Indian stood, pointing into the thicket that fringed the military road; and when they reached the spot, a narrow path became visible. Alice was very reluctant to follow. ‘If we journey with the troops, though we may find their presence irksome, we shall surely feel better assurance of our safety,’ she said.

‘Should we distrust the man, because his manners are not ours, and that his skin is dark?’ coldly asked Cora. Alice hesitated no longer; but was the-

first to follow the runner along the dark and tangled pathway.

Here the party broke up. The servants, at the suggestion of the guide, continued on the main road, pursuing the route of the column ; while the sisters and Heyward one by one followed the Indian runner. The route was so intricate that for many minutes they rode silently, but they soon entered under the high but dark arches of the forest. Heyward had turned to speak to Cora, when the sounds of hoofs, clattering over the roots of the broken way in his rear caused the party to draw their reins. They came to a halt and in a few moments the person of an ungainly man came into view, riding a gaunt, lean-ribbed colt. He was a harmless person, named David Gamut.

‘ Seek you any here ? ’ demanded Heyward.

‘ I hear you are riding to William Henry, ’ replied the stranger ; ‘ and as I am journeying in that direction myself, I concluded good company would be agreeable to both parties. ’

‘ If you journey to the lake, you have mistaken your route, ’ said Heyward haughtily ; ‘ the highway thither is at least half a mile behind you. ’

‘ Even so,’ replied the stranger, nothing daunted by this cold reception. ‘ I have tarried at “ Edward ” a week, and I should be dumb, not to have inquired the road I was to take. Besides, I conclude that a gentleman of your character has the best judgment in matters of wayfaring. I have, accordingly, decided to join company, in order that the ride may be made agreeable.’

Heyward did not quite like the intruder ; but Alice interfered and said, ‘ Heyward, I take the man under my own especial protection. Now, throw aside that frown and suffer him to journey in our train. Besides,’ she added in a low and hurried voice, casting a glance at the distant Cora, who slowly followed the footsteps of their silent but sullen guide, ‘ it may be a friend added to our strength, in time of need.’ Permission was then granted to David and the cavalcade followed the footsteps of the ‘ runner.’

Presently, David commenced singing in full, sweet, and melodious tones. The Indian heard the song and wished to stop him. He muttered a few words in broken English to Heyward, who, in his turn, spoke to the stranger and stopped his musical efforts. It was but common prudence to journey

through the wilderness in as quiet a manner as possible.

Heyward and his confiding companions penetrated, without suspicion, deeper and deeper into the forest, as the guide led onward and got his intended victims more and more surely into his clutches.

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### CHAPTER III

#### **Hawkeye and Chingachgook**

Let us leave the travellers and shift the scene a few miles to the west.

On the same July day, as the sun was gradually setting, two men were lingering on the banks of a small but rapid stream, within an hour's journey from Fort Edward. One of them showed the red skin of a native of the woods.

His body was almost naked and painted with black and white emblems. His closely shaved head had only a small tuft on the crown, with an eagle's plume fastened to it. A tomahawk and knife were in his girdle, and a short military rifle lay across his knees. His name was Chingachgook.

The other was a thin, muscular man and seemed from his appearance to have known hardships and exertion from his earliest youth. He wore a hunting shirt of forest-green and a summer cap of skins which had been shorn of their fur. He also carried a knife in his girdle, but no tomahawk. His rifle which was long, unlike the short military rifle, leaned against a tree. This was our friend, 'Deerslayer', called by the Indians 'Hawkeye', on account of the keenness of his sight. In the course of this story, he is often referred to merely as the 'hunter', or 'Scout'.

'Your father', said Hawkeye to the Indian, 'came from the setting sun, crossed the big river (the Mississippi), fought the people of the country, and took the land; and mine came from the red sky of the morning, over the salt lake (the Atlantic Ocean), and did their work much after the fashion that had been set them by yours. So even your traditions make the case in my favour.'

'I ask you, Chingachgook, what passed according to the traditions of the red men, when our fathers first met?' continued the white man.

A minute passed, during which the Indian sat mute; then, full of dignity, he spoke thus solemnly:

‘Listen, Hawk-eye. What I now tell you is what my fathers have said, and what the Mohicans have done. My fathers came from the place where the sun is hid at night, over great plains where the buffaloes live, until we reached the big river. From the banks of the big river to the shores of the salt lake, there was none to meet us. The Iroquois followed at a distance. We said the country should be ours from the place where the water runs up no longer on this stream to a river twenty suns’ journey toward the summer. The land we had taken like warriors, we kept like men. We drove the Maguas (Iroquois) into the woods with the bears. They drew no fish from the great lake.’

‘Do you know anything of your own family at that time?’ asked the white man.

‘My tribe is the grandfather of nations,’ said Chingachgook; ‘but I am an unmixed man. The blood of chiefs is in my veins, where it must stay for ever. The first palefaces who came among us spoke no English. They came in a large canoe when my fathers had buried the tomahawk with the red men; then, Hawkeye, we were one people and we were happy. The salt lake gave us its fish, the wood its deer, and the air its birds. We worshipped the Great Spirit and were happy.’

‘The Dutch landed (in 1610) and gave my people the fire-water (spirits). The foolish men drank and drank and parted with their land. Foot by foot, they were driven back from the shores. So all of my family departed, each in his turn, to the land of the Spirits. I am on the hilltop and must go down into the valley ; and when Uncas follows in my footsteps there will no longer be any of the blood of the Sagamores (heads of the tribe). My boy Uncas, the son of Wah-ta-Wah, is the last of the Mohicans.’

‘Uncas is here!’ said another voice, in the same soft guttural tones, near his elbow ; ‘who speaks to Uncas?’

The next instant, a young warrior passed between them with a noiseless step and seated himself on the bank of the rapid stream. For several minutes, no question was asked by the older men. The new-comer was Uncas, Chingachgook’s own and only son! At length, the father turned slowly towards the son and said, ‘Do the Maguas dare to leave the print of their moccasins in these woods?’

‘I have been on their trail,’ replied Uncas, ‘and know that they number as many as the fingers of my two hands ; but they lie hid like cowards.’

‘The thieves are outlying for scalps and plunder!’ remarked the white man.

---

## CHAPTER IV

**Hawkeye and the Mohicans meet the Travellers**

‘I hear the sound of feet,’ said Chingachgook, suddenly bending his body till his ear nearly touched the earth. ‘The horses of white men are coming. Hawkeye, they are your brothers ; speak to them.’

‘That will I,’ returned the hunter ; ‘but I see nothing, nor do I hear the sounds of man or beast. ‘Tis strange that an Indian should understand white sound better than a white man who may have lived long with redskins ! Now I hear the bushes move ; and here they come themselves. God keep them from the Iroquois !’

‘Who comes ?’ asked the scout.

‘Friends to the law and to the king,’ replied he who rode foremost ; ‘men who have journeyed since the rising sun without nourishment, and are sadly tired of their wayfaring. We are seeking our way to Fort William Henry. We do not know where we are. We trusted to an Indian guide and he has lost his way. Know you the distance to a post of the crown called William Henry ?’

‘Hoot!’ shouted the scout. ‘William Henry, man! if you are friends to the king, and have business to do with the army, your proper way would be to follow the river down to Edward, and lay the matter before Webb!’

‘What, then, may be our distance from Fort Edward?’ inquired a new speaker. ‘The place you advise us to seek we left this morning, and our destination is the head of the lake.’

‘Then you must have lost your eyesight before losing your way, for the road across the portage is as grand a path as any that runs into London.’

‘We trusted,’ answered Heyward, smiling; for, as the reader has anticipated, it was he. ‘Yes, we trusted to an Indian guide to take us by a nearer though blinder path and he has lost his way.’

‘An Indian lost in the woods!’ said the scout, shaking his head; ‘when the sun is scorching the tree tops, and when the moss on every beech he sees will tell him in which quarter the north star will shine at night! The woods are full of deer, paths which run to the streams, nor have the geese done their flight to the Canada waters altogether. It is strange! Is he a Mohican?’

‘He is one of those you call a Huron,’ answered Heyward.

‘Hugh!’ exclaimed the companions of Hawkeye.

‘But he has been adopted into the tribe of the Mohicans,’ continued Heyward, ‘and he serves with our forces as a friend. Would you tell us where we are? How far are we from Fort William Henry?’

‘That may depend on who is your guide. I should like to look at the creature. If it is a true Iroquois, I can tell him by his knavish look and by his paint,’ said the scout.

Shoving aside the bushes, and proceeding a few paces, Hawkeye saw the girls who awaited the the result of the conference with anxiety. Behind them, the runner leaned against a tree, where he stood the close examination of the scout with a look so dark and savage that it might in itself excite fear. Satisfied with his scrutiny, Hawkeye left him and returned to Heyward.

‘I knew he was one of the cheats as soon as I laid eyes on him,’ returned the scout, placing a finger on his nose, in sign of caution. ‘If we were alone, I could show you the way to Fort William

Henry myself, but I wouldn't go a single mile in these woods after nightfall in the company of this guide. They are full of Iroquois, and he knows where they are, only too well.'

Hawkeye then talked, in the Delaware language, with his two red companions in a low tone; and a few moments later, the two Indians, father and son, went cautiously into the thicket on opposite sides of the path.

'Now, go you back,' said the hunter, speaking again to Heyward, 'and hold the runner in talk; these Mohicans here will take him without breaking his paint.'

---

## CHAPTER V

### **The Treacherous Guide**

However unwillingly, Heyward spurred his charger and halting where the sullen runner still stood leaning against the tree, he said, endeavouring to assume an air of freedom and confidence, 'You may see, Magua, the night is closing around us. You have missed the way, nor have I been more fortunate. But luckily, we have fallen in with a hunter who promises to lead us to a place where we may rest in safety till morning.'

‘Is he alone?’ asked the Indian.

‘Alone!’ answered Heyward, ‘Oh! not alone, surely, Magua, for we are with him.’

‘Then Le Renard Subtil (French for *The Sly Fox*) will go,’ replied the runner, ‘and the palefaces will see none but their own colour.’

‘Go! whom do you call Le Renard?’

‘Tis the name his Canada fathers (the French who were then masters of Canada) have given to Magua,’ said the runner, with an air that indicated his pride at the distinction. ‘Night is the same as day to Le Subtil, when Munro waits for him.’

The Indian then seated himself deliberately on the ground, drew forth the remainder of some former meal, and began to eat, bending his looks slowly and cautiously around him.

‘This is well,’ continued Heyward; ‘and the Sly Fox will have strength and sight to find the path in the morning. We must be moving before the sun is seen, or Montcalm may lie in our path and shut us out from the fortress.’

Magua heard sounds like the snapping of a dried stick and the rustling of leaves from bushes in the

neighbourhood. He knew what they meant. He turned aside his head. His nostrils expanded, and his ears seemed to stand more erect than usual. Without making the slightest noise, Le Subtil dropped his hand from his mouth. Heyward felt it had now become necessary for him to act. Still preserving an air of calmness and friendship, and anxious to prevent unnecessary alarm, he dismounted and said :

‘Sly Fox does not eat. His corn seems dry. Let me look into it.’

The runner held out his wallet ; but, when he felt the fingers of Heyward moving gently along his own naked arm, he struck up the limb of the young man, uttered a piercing cry as he darted beneath it, and plunged at a single bound into the opposite thicket.

The next instant, Chingachgook glided across the path in swift pursuit. Then followed the shout of Uncas and the woods were lighted by a sudden flash, accompanied by the sharp report of the hunter’s rifle.

Heyward remained fixed for a few moments in inactive surprise and then, dashing aside the surrounding bushes, pressed eagerly forward to lend

his aid in the chase. But, before he had gone a hundred yards, he met the three foresters returning from their unsuccessful pursuit.

‘Why are you so soon disheartened?’ he exclaimed; ‘the scoundrel must be concealed behind some of these trees, and may yet be secured. We are not safe while he goes at large.’

‘The Huron will draw us within reach of his comrades,’ returned the disappointed Hawkeye; ‘let him go.’

---

## CHAPTER VI

### At the Glenn's Falls

Night was fast coming on; and Heyward, as he looked around the gloomy woods, cried, ‘Do not desert me! Stay with me to protect these helpless girls, and name your own reward.’

Hawkeye and the two Indians were talking apart and heeded not Heyward or his offers. At length, the scout turned to him and said: ‘Spare your offers of money, which neither you may live to realize nor I to profit by. These Mohicans and I will do our best to save the lives of these girls. You must promise two things, or, without serving you, we shall only injure ourselves.’

‘The one is : Be still as these sleeping woods, let what will happen.

‘The other is : Keep the place where we shall take you, for ever a secret from all men.’

‘I will do my utmost to fulfil the two conditions,’ promised Heyward.

‘Then follow,’ said Hawkeye, ‘for we are losing moments that are as precious as the heart’s blood to a stricken deer !’

Heyward hurriedly told the girls what Hawkeye wished. Silently, and without a moment’s delay, they permitted him to assist them from their saddles and descended to the water’s edge. There the scout had collected the rest of the party, more by the help of gestures than by any use of words. The Indians took the bridles and led the frightened horses into the bed of the river.

The scout drew a canoe of bark from beneath some low bushes, placed Alice and Cora in it, and told Heyward to support one side of the vessel and posted himself at the other.

The scout placed his pole against a rock and, by a powerful push, sent the canoe directly into the middle of the turbulent stream. Forbidden to stir

even a hand and almost afraid to breathe, the girls watched the glancing waters in feverish suspense. Often the whirling eddies seemed to them to sweep them to destruction. At length, a long, vigorous, and desperate effort closed the struggle, and the canoe floated still at the side of a flat rock that lay on a level with the water.

‘Where are we, and what is next to be done?’ asked Heyward.

‘You are at the foot of the Glenn’s falls on the Hudson,’ answered the scout; ‘the next thing is to land steadily lest the canoe upset. Go you all on the rock, and I’ll bring up the Mohicans.’

Heyward, David, and the girls readily obeyed; and as the last foot touched the rock, the canoe was whirled away and the whole party remained a few minutes in helpless ignorance. But the canoe soon shot back into the eddy and floated again at the side of the low rock, with the help of the Mohicans.

In a few minutes more, the Scout, Chingachgook, and Uncas shouldered the canoe, and the three moved quietly past the travellers and disappeared one after another. Heyward and the girls became uneasy. The rude dress of the white man and his blunt speech, and the usual attitude of red Indians towards pale faces excited much terror in their minds.

Smothered voices were next heard, as though men called to each other in the bowels of the earth. Then a sudden light flashed and revealed the secret of the place. At the further end of a narrow cavern in the rock was seated the scout, holding a blazing knot of pine and calling aloud to them to enter. And at a little distance in advance stood Uncas, his whole person thrown into view. The upright figure of the young man filled the minds of Heyward and the girls with wonder. He wore the green fringed hunting shirt of the white man. His eyes were dark and fearless and the bold outline of his haughty features was marvellously grand.

‘I could sleep in peace,’ whispered Alice, with such a fearless-looking youth for sentinel.’

‘This fire begins to show too bright a flame,’ said Hawkeye, ‘and might light the Iroquios to our undoing. Uncas, drop the blanket, and show the knaves the dark side.’

Uncas did as the scout directed, and when the voice of Hawkeye ceased, the roar of the cataract sounded like the rumbling of distant thunder.

‘Are we quite safe here?’ demanded Heyward. ‘Is there no danger of surprise? A single armed man, at the entrance, would hold us at his mercy.’

Hawkeye for answer lifted another blanket; and showed him that there was another entrance also to the cave. Chingachgook, holding the pine knot, crossed a deep, narrow chasm in the rocks, and entered another cave exactly like the first in every essential particular.

‘Such old foxes as Chingachgook and myself are not often caught in a burrow with one hole,’ said Hawkeye laughing. ‘There are the falls on two sides of us, and the river above and below.’

‘Are we on an island?’ asked Heyward.

‘Ay! if you had daylight, it would be worth the trouble to step up on the top of this rock, and look at the water. It falls by no rule at all. Sometimes it leaps; sometimes it tumbles; there it skips, here it shoots; in one place it is as white as snow, in another it is as green as grass; it pitches into deep hollows that rumble and quake the earth; it ripples and sings like a brook. First it runs smoothly along, then it angles about and faces the shores, as if unwilling to leave the wilderness to mingle with the salt. A few rods below, you may see all the water flowing on steadily toward the sea.’

Heyward and the girls were now assured of their safety in the cave and they began to get supper ready. They had venison and plenty of fresh water. Uncas had brought green sassafras boughs for Alice and her sister to sit on. Everything seemed safe ; their fears gradually subsided ; and they talked and ate cheerfully and even merrily.

---

## CHAPTER VII

### A Strange Inhuman Cry

Suddenly, however, a cry that seemed neither human nor earthly rose in the outward air, and struck terror into the hearts of all who heard it.

‘ What is it ? ’ murmured Alice.

‘ What is it ? ’ repeated Heyward.

Neither Hawkeye nor the Indians made any reply. They listened for a minute or two, quite astonished. Then they spoke together earnestly in the Delaware language, and Uncas cautiously left the cavern. When he had gone, Hawkeye first spoke in English.

‘ What this cry is or what it is not, none here can tell, though two of us have ranged the woods for more than thirty years ! ’

Then the young chief re-entered, and the scout said to him, 'Well Uncas! what see you? do our lights shine through the blankets?'

The answer was short, and apparently decided, being given in the Delaware tongue.

'There is nothing to be seen without', continued Hawkeye; 'and our hiding-place is still in darkness! go into the other cave, girls, and sleep. We must be afoot long before the sun, or make the most of our time to get to Edward while the Mingoes are taking their morning nap.'

Cora moved out and so also did Alice.

Uncas raised the blanket for their passage, and the sisters, turning back to thank him for this act of attention, saw the scout seated again before the dying embers, with his face resting on his hands, in a manner which showed how deeply he brooded on the interruption.

They came into the chasm which separated the two caverns. The air felt cool and invigorating. The moon had risen, and its light was glancing here and there on the waters above them, but the rock on which they stood lay in the shadow.

Presently, the same strong, horrid cry, as before, filled the air. A long, breathless silence succeeded. At length the blanket was slowly raised, and the scout stood in the aperture with a countenance whose firmness evidently began to give way. He could not, for all his life in the country, solve the mystery. It was plain that some danger was threatening, against which all his cunning and experience might prove of no avail.

‘This is indeed a warning and must not be neglected,’ said Hawkeye. ‘The girls must stay here, but the Mohicans and I will watch on the rock, where I suppose Heyward would like to be with us. I have listened to all the sounds of the woods for thirty years. There is no whine of the panther, no whistle of the cat-bird, nor any cry of Huron that can cheat me. I have listened to the wind playing its music in the branches of the trees, and I have heard the lightning cracking in the air, but neither the Mohicans nor I can explain the cry we have just heard.’

‘I know the cry!’ said Duncan. ‘It is the shriek of a terrified horse. In the open air, I know the sound well.’

‘The wolves must be hovering above their heads,’ said Hawkeye, ‘and they are calling on us

for aid. Uncas, drop down in the canoe and hurl a brand among the pack.'

Uncas had already descended to the water to comply, when a long howl was raised on the edge of the river, and was borne swiftly off into the depths of the forest, as though the beasts, of their own accord, were abandoning their prey in sudden terror. Uncas receded and the three foresters held another of their low earnest conferences for a few moments. Then Hawkeye placed Heyward and the girls in the shadow to nod or sleep as they pleased; while himself and the Mohicans kept careful watch.

Hours passed by without further interruption. The moon had set and a pale streak above the tree-tops announced the approach of day. Then Hawkeye shook Duncan from his heavy slumbers.

'Now is the time to journey. Awake the girls,' he whispered. 'Be ready to get into the canoe when I bring it to the landing-place. Be silent, but be quick.'

Heyward lifted a shawl from the sleeping girls, and gently said, 'Cora! Alice! It is time to move.'

---

## CHAPTER VIII

**The Hurons attack the Travellers**

A loud shriek from Alice was the unexpected answer, and Cora stood upright in bewildered horror.

Suddenly there arose a tumult of yells, and the cries of Indians filled the woods.

They followed the bright flashes and the quick reports of a dozen rifles from the opposite banks of the stream; Gamut who was exposing his person was struck and left senseless on the rock. The Hurons at once raised a shout of savage triumph at the fall of the singing-master.

The Mohicans boldly sent back the yell of their enemies and the flash of rifles was then quick and close between the two parties. Hawkeye's rifle found a victim who shrieked from agony and, at this slight repulse, the assailants instantly withdrew and the place became as still as before the tumult.

Duncan now sprang to the body of Gamut and bore it within the shelter of the chasm where the sister stood protected.

The day had dawned ; and Hawkeye was able to distinguish objects beneath the gloomy pines.

‘ I see them ! I see them ! ’ the scout cried. ‘ They are gathering for the rush. Well, let them come on ; the foremost man comes to his death, though it should be Montcalm himself ! ’

At that moment, the woods were filled with another burst of cries, and four savages burst from the cover of the drift wood.

A sharp fight followed in which two of the enemies were overcome. There were two savages to be yet dealt with. The scout encountered a savage of gigantic stature and of the fiercest mien. At the same moment, Heyward found himself engaged with the other in a similar contest of hand to hand.

For near a minute, Hawkeye and his antagonist stood looking each other in the eye. Each had grasped the uplifted arm of the other, which held the dangerous knife, and they were exerting the power of their muscles for the mastery. At length, the toughened sinews of the white man prevailed over the less practised limbs of the Indian and the scout drove his sharp knife through the naked bosom of the other to the heart.

Meanwhile Heyward found himself struggling with the remaining Indian at the edge of the waterfall. Each tried to throw the other over. Each threw all his energies into that effort. Both were tottering on the brink of the precipice. Heyward felt the grasp of the other at his throat and saw the grim smile which the savage gave. At this moment of extreme danger, Heyward felt a strong arm pull him back. Uncas had saved his life! The savage fell over sullenly and disappointed, down the precipice into the cataract.

‘To cover, to cover!’ cried the scout.

‘To cover for your lives! The work is but half ended!’

The young Mohican gave a shout of triumph, and, followed by Duncan, he glided up the acclivity they had descended to the combat, and sought the friendly shelter of the rocks and shrubs.

‘Uncas has saved my life,’ whispered Heyward, ‘and he has made a friend who will never forget the debt.’ And the two exchanged looks of friendship. Uncas partly raised his body, and offered his hand to the grasp of Heyward.

A ragged oak grew on the right bank of the river nearly opposite to the position where the scout and his friend were. It had inclined so far forward that its upper branches overhung the stream. Among the topmost leaves a savage was nestled, partly concealed by the trunk of the tree. He fired unseen and the shot struck the rock at Duncan's side with a smart rebound. Uncas found him and raised his rifle to bring him down. But Hawkeye told him to keep the opponent in play, until he could bring kill-deer to bear. Uncas delayed his fire until the scout uttered the word. The rifles of both flashed, but the Indian answered their assault by a taunting laugh, sending down upon them another bullet in return, which last struck the cap of Hawkeye from his head. Once more the savage yells burst out of the woods, and the leaden hail whistled above the heads of the besieged.

'This must be looked to,' said the scout, glancing about him with an anxious eye. 'Uncas, call up your father ; we have need of all our weapons to bring down the cunning Iroquois.'

Uncas pointed out the dangerous enemy to his father and the usual 'Hugh' burst from his lips. The Mohicans and Hawkeye talked together earnestly for a few moments and each quickly took his

post. Meanwhile the savage had kept up a quick fire ; but it did not take long for them to dislodge the Iroquois from the oak. He fell exhausted at last into the river. A single yell burst from the woods and all again was still.

## CHAPTER IX

### **In Despair. Munro's Daughters are resigned**

Hawkeye found to his horror that all his powder had been exhausted and said : 'Uncas, lad, go down to the canoe and bring up the big horn ; it is all the powder we have left. And we shall need it to the last grain, or I am ignorant of the Mingo nature.'

The young Mohican complied, leaving the scout turning over the useless contents of his pouch and shaking the empty horn with renewed discontent. From this unsatisfactory examination, however, he was soon called by a loud and piercing exclamation from Uncas. The sisters, the wounded David, and the whole party rushed down the pass to the friendly chasm and saw that their little bark was floating across the eddy, towards the swift current of the river, directed by some hidden agent.

All was lost and the scout was ready to die, with no words of scoffing in his mouth, and without bitterness at the heart.

‘Why die at all?’ said Cora; ‘the path is open on every side; fly, then, to the woods. Go, brave men, we owe you too much already; let us involve you no longer in our hapless fortunes.’

‘The Iroquois is sure not to have left the path open to the woods!’ replied Hawkeye; ‘but we could escape by the down-stream current.’ ‘Only,’ he added, ‘what answer could we give Munro when he asks us where and how we left his children?’

‘Go and tell him to hasten to our aid’ returned Cora; ‘say to him that the Hurons are bearing us to the northern wilds and we might yet be rescued. If, after all, his help comes too late, bid him not to mourn our early fate.’

Chingachgook and Uncas heard the talk of the dark-eyed Cora and admired her.

It was no time to delay. The elder Mohican very unwillingly dropped into the river and sank. The scout gave Cora an affectionate shake of the hand, said bitterly, ‘Had the powder held out, this disgrace could never have befallen!’ and he also sank into the river and became lost to view.

Cora advised Uncas also to escape. But he answered calmly in English, 'Uncas will stay.' 'No, generous young man'; said Cora, 'go to my father and tell him to trust you with the means to buy the freedom of his daughters. Go! 'tis my wish, 'tis my prayer that you will go!'

Uncas no longer hesitated. With a noiseless step, he crossed the rock, and dropped into the troubled stream.

Then Cora turned and advised Heyward to follow the example of Hawkeye and the Mohicans; but he said: 'By my presence, evils to you worse than death may be averted. So I stay on.'

Cora ceased her entreaties and veiling her face in her shawl, drew the nearly insensible Alice after her into the deepest recess of the inner cavern.

A little later, a yell burst into the air without. 'We are lost!' exclaimed Alice.

'Not yet, not yet,' returned Heyward; 'we are not yet discovered, and there is still hope.'

A second yell soon followed the first, and a rush of voices was heard pouring down the island, spreading around them in every direction. The savages suddenly discovered the rifle that Hawkeye had abandoned and shouted out 'La Longue Cara-

bine.' There were bursts of savage joy, when they found it and Heyward himself who heard the shout learned now for the first time that his late companion was no other than the celebrated hunter and scout, in whose praise he had heard much.

After a vociferous consultation, which was at times deafened by bursts of savage joy, the Indians again separated.

'Now,' Heyward whispered to the trembling sisters—'if our place of retreat escape their scrutiny, we are still safe: In any event, we are assured that our friends have escaped, and in two short hours we may look for succour from Webb.'

The savages conducted their search with vigilance and method. At length a corner of a blanket fell and a faint ray of light gleamed into the inner part of the cave. Seeing that escape was no longer possible, David placed himself between the sisters and the first onset of the terrible meeting.

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## CHAPTER X

### **The Hurons Capture the Travellers**

In an instant, Le Renard Subtil stood at the entrance, his malignant, fierce, and savage features chilling the blood of Heyward; and when he gave

a long whoop, it was answered by a tremendous yell from the mouth of every Indian within hearing of the sound. The savages entered the cavern and dragged Duncan and his companions from their shelter and bore them into the day, where they stood surrounded by the whole band of the triumphant Hurons.

Two powerful Indians cast themselves on Heyward and, after a hard struggle, bound and fastened him to the body of a sapling. Bound, in the same way, Cora and Alice looked pale and agitated.

The savages were impatient to know where 'La Longue Carabine' was. They called for his life ; or, they said, they would have the blood of those who kept him hid.

'He is gone—escaped ; far beyond their reach.' 'Where is his body ? Let the Hurons see his scalp. The red men would torture even the ghosts of their enemies.'

'He is not dead, but escaped,' answered Duncan. 'Can the Delawares swim too ? Where is "Le Gros Serpent" ?'

Duncan now saw that his late companions were much better known to his enemies than to himself.

'He also is gone down with the water.'

“Le Cerf Agile” is not here?’

‘I know not whom you call *The Nimble Deer*.

‘It is Uncas. The white man calls the young Mohican *Bounding Elk*. The son of *Le Serpent* is *Le Cerf Agile*. Has he also crossed the river to the woods?’

‘The younger Delaware too is gone down with the water,’ answered Duncan.

When the savages heard this, they raised a frightful yell in token of their disappointment.

A few minutes later, the leader summoned his warriors to himself in council. Their deliberations were short and the decision seemed unanimous. From the speakers frequently pointing in the direction of the encampment of Webb, it was apparent they dreaded the approach of danger from that quarter.

The leader had the canoe placed in the water near the mouth of the outer cavern and made signs to the prisoners to descend and enter. Heyward led the way into the canoe and was soon seated with the sisters and the still wondering David. The vessel glided down the current.

Most of the Indians crossed the river and disappeared in the woods, leaving the prisoners in charge of six savages, at whose head was The Sly Fox.

‘ I see Magua ’, said Heyward cunningly to the late runner, ‘ that you are after all kind to us. You are evidently resolved to carry to the rich and gray-headed Scotsman his daughters. I may assure you that your wisdom and honesty will be amply repaid. You will have a medal, not of tin, but of beaten gold. Your horn will run over with powder ; you will be given as many dollars as there are pebbles on the shores of Horican. And all else that you may ask for will be readily granted.’

Le Renard listened gravely ; and then laying his hand on the rude bandages of his wounded shoulder, he said with some energy :—

‘ Do friends make such marks ?’

Then after a pause, he said :

‘ What Le Renard does will be seen. Keep your mouth shut. When Magua speaks, it will be time to answer.’

Magua then signed to Heyward to assist the sisters into the saddles. David and Duncan were compelled to journey on foot.

When all were prepared, the Iroquois made the signal to proceed, advancing in front to lead the party in person.

Next followed David. The sisters rode in his rear, with Heyward at their side, while the Indians flanked the party, and brought up the close of the march, with a caution that never seemed to tire.

They proceeded towards the south, in a course nearly opposite to the road to William Henry. Mile after mile was passed through the boundless woods, without any prospect of a termination to their journey. Cora stretched forth her arm, whenever an opportunity offered, to bend aside the twigs that met her hands. But the vigilance of the Indians made this difficult and dangerous. Once only did she completely succeed. When she broke down the bough of a large sumach, by a sudden thought, she let her glove fall at the same instant. But an Indian restored her glove and broke other branches in the same way ; and then laid his hand on his tomahawk with a significant look.

During all this time, the Magua seldom turned back and never spoke. At length, he suddenly ascended a hill, so steep that the sisters were compelled to alight, in order to follow. When the summit was gained, they found themselves on a level spot thinly covered with trees, under one of which Magua had thrown his dark form. Heyward straggled to the spot where Le Renard was seated.

## CHAPTER XI

**Cora pleads before Sly Fox**

‘Go’, said the Huron, ‘to the dark-haired girl and tell her I wish to speak. The father will remember what the child promises.’

Heyward accordingly brought Cora near Magua.

The Indian told Heyward to retire and tried to lay his hand firmly upon Cora’s arm which she firmly but quietly repulsed. Then he said—‘Magua was born a chief and a warrior among the red Hurons of the lakes. When he had seen twenty summers he saw a paleface and he was then happy. Then his Canada fathers (the French) came into the woods, and taught him to drink the fire water, and he became a rascal. It was, remember, the palefaces, the people of your own colour, that gave him the fire-water and made him a villain.’

‘The Hurons drove him from the graves of his fathers and he ran down the shores of the lakes. There he hunted and fished, till the people chased him again through the woods into the arms of his enemies. The chief, who was born a Huron, was at last a warrior among the Mohawks.

‘It was your people that gave him the fire-water and made him a villain.’

‘Is that my fault?’ asked Cora.

‘Listen to me’, continued the Indian. ‘When his English and French fathers dug up the hatchet, Le Renard went out against his own nation. The red skins were driven out from their hunting-grounds. The old chief at Horican, your father, was the great captain of our war party. He made a law that if an Indian drank the fire-water, he should be flogged. Magua foolishly opened his mouth, and the hot liquor led him into the cabin of Munro. The Huron chief was tied up before all the warriors, and whipped like a dog.’

Cora remained silent.

‘See!’ continued Magua, ‘here are scars given by knives and bullets. Of these a warrior may boast before his nation; but the gray head has left marks on the back of the Huron chief that he must hide.’

‘I had thought,’ said Cora, ‘that an Indian warrior felt not and knew not the pain his body suffered.’

‘True,’ answered Magua; ‘when the Chippe was tied Magua to the stake and cut this gash (laying his finger on a deep gash), the Huron laughed in their faces and told them that women struck so light! But he felt the blows of Munro, his spirit

lay under the birch. The spirit of a Huron remembers for ever.'

'If my father has done you this injustice, show him how an Indian can forgive an injury, and take back his daughters—'

Magua shook his head.

'What would you have?' asked Cora.

'What a Huron loves—good for good, bad for bad!' answered Magua.

'You would then take vengeance on his helpless daughters?' pleaded Cora. 'Would it not be more like a man to go to my father and take the satisfaction of a warrior?'

'The arms of the palefaces are long, and their knives sharp!' replied the savage. 'Why should Sly Fox go among the muskets of his warriors, when he holds the spirit of Munro in his hands?'

'Is there no way of softening your heart?' said Cora; 'release my sister, and satisfy your revenge on me!'

Sly Fox shook his head, and motioned her away. He then spoke to the little group of Iroquois and began to speak to them with the dignity of an Indian chief. He was reciting to them a tale of the wrongs they had suffered from the white men.

‘Are the Iroquois dogs to bear all this?’ he cried.

The whole band sprang to their feet and rushed upon their prisoners in a body, with uplifted tomahawks. Two powerful men overpowered Heyward and David, and bound them to the trunk of a tree. Alice and Cora met the same fate.

‘Now die’, shouted Sly Fox, hurling his tomahawk at Alice. It struck the tree above her head. Maddened at what he saw, Heyward, with a mighty effort, snapped the twigs that bound him and rushed upon the nearest savage. A whistling sound swept past him, accompanied by the crack of rifle, and, to his astonishment, the savage fell dead on the faded leaves by his side.

‘The Long Rifle! The Long Rifle!’ burst from every lip, and was succeeded by a plaintive howl from the savages. Then came cries of: ‘Great Serpent! Nimble Deer!’

Chingachgook and Uncas and Hawkeye had not gone to the fort for aid, but had waited to watch the movements of the Iroquois. The bush that had been broken by Cora gave them the right scent. Hawkeye got his rifle from the pile of arms which the savages had left carelessly in the neighbouring thicket.

The Indians rushed upon the rescuing party ; neither side had firearms, for Hawkeye had no time to load his rifle, and he used it only as a club.

The encounter was short but fierce. Sly Fox was the only enemy left. Chingachgook attacked him. They closed and came to earth, Sly Fox and Great Serpent. They rolled, twisting and turning in each other's grasp. The Mohican found an opportunity to make a thrust with his knife. Sly Fox suddenly relinquished his grasp and fell backward, seemingly lifeless. His adversary leaped on his feet and made the forest ring with shouts of triumph.

'Well done for the Delawares! Victory to the Mohicans!' cried Hawkeye.

But at that very moment, the subtle Iroquois rolled swiftly and leapt at a single bound into the centre of an adjoining thicket of low bushes. The Mohicans followed, but Hawkeye called them back.

'Let him go! let him go. This is but one man and he, without rifle or bow, many a long mile from his French comrades, is like a rattler that has lost his fangs. He can do no further mischief.'

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## CHAPTER XII

**The Travellers Journey Along**

Uncas, accompanied by Heyward, flew to the assistance of the females and, quickly releasing Alice, placed her in the arms of Cora. The sisters offered their deep thanks to the Almighty Disposer of events for their unexpected restoration to life and to each other. Alice threw herself on the bosom of Cora and sobbed aloud the name of their aged father. 'We are saved' she murmured, 'to return to the arms of our dear, dear father. And you too, Cora, my more than sister, my mother,—you too are spared; and Duncan, ever our own brave and noble Duncan, has escaped without a hurt.'

Cora strained Alice to her heart, as she bent over her in melting tenderness. Heyward felt no shame in dropping tears over the spectacle of affectionate tenderness. And Uncas stood a calm looker-on, with eyes beaming with a sympathy that elevated him far above the best of his nation.

In the meanwhile, Hawkeye liberated David from his bonds and set him free. He struck his hand on the breach of his rifle, and said: 'I have got back my old companion, *Kill-deer*, and that in itself is a victory!'

It was now time for the party to move. They descended the steep hill and there found the horses browsing on the bushes. They mounted and followed Hawkeye as guide.

The party soon left the path that Sly Fox had followed, turned to the right, and, entering a thicket, crossed a babbling brook and halted in a narrow dell under the shade of a few water-elms.

They had some fragments of food which Hawkeye had put in his wallet and they now prepared some kind of meal. Close to them was a celebrated spring, from which a clear and sparkling stream of water bubbled out. [The spot where they ate their meal is where Ballston Spa now stands. Fifty years later it became one of the two chief watering-places in America,]

Hawkeye now gave the word to proceed and the whole party moved through the narrow path, towards the north.

Duncan and David grasped their rifles and followed Alice and Cora. Hawkeye led the advance, while the Mohicans brought up the rear.

The hunter occasionally glanced at the moss on the trees, or towards the setting sun to determine his path. He led the way boldly into a dense

thicket of young chestnuts and after he had gone a few hundred feet, he entered an open space which surrounded a low green hillock. This was crowned by a decayed blockhouse. The roof had long since fallen in. Hawkeye explained that that had been the scene of a bloody battle between the Mohicans and the Mohawks.

‘They ’re gone,’ said Hawkeye, ‘and will never shout the war whoop again. Chingachgook and I alone are living of all the warriors who fought that day. You see before you all that are left of the Mohican race.’

‘Uncas,’ continued the scout, ‘clear out the spring, while your father makes a cover of chestnut shoots for these girls, and a bed of grass and leaves.’

Soon all was quiet. Chingachgook kept watch, while the weary travellers slept. Duncan was awakened by a light tap on the shoulder.

‘Who comes?’ he asked, feeling for his weapon, ‘Speak. Friend or foe?’

‘Friend!’ replied the low voice of Chingachgook. ‘Moon comes—white man’s fort far off—time to move.’

While the party made preparations for the journey, the Mohicans gave an exclamation of warn-

ing. The horses were led into the blockhouse, and the whole party took refuge there. There was a rustling of leaves without and a crackling of dried twigs, and this told them that their enemies must be at hand.

As a matter of fact, the savages were near. They were talking to each other earnestly, and presently the sounds grew fainter and more distant, and were finally lost in the depths of the forest.

Chingachgook assured Hawkeye that all was safe. The horses were led forth and the sisters were helped into their saddles. The journey began. Not the least sound arose from the forest. Bird, beast, and man appeared to slumber alike. Towards the sounds of the rivulet, they immediately held their way. On reaching its banks, Hawkeye halted and removed the moccasins from his feet and Heyward and David did the same. He then entered the water and travelled for an hour on the bed of the brook, leaving no trail.

‘We are not far from Fort William Henry?’ asked Heyward.

‘It is yet a long and weary path. Our greatest difficulty now is, when and where to strike it. Hist! do you see nothing walking on the shore of that pond?’

## CHAPTER XIII

**Fort William Henry is besieged by the French**

‘Who goes there?’ asked a sentinel sternly and quickly in French.

The scout did not understand it. He knew only Indian and English.

‘Who goes there?’ again asked the voice.

‘France!’ cried Heyward in the same language, advancing within a few feet of the sentinel.

‘Are you an officer of the king?’

‘Certainly. I have with me the daughters of the commander of the fort.’

The sentinel, with a gracious bow, allowed them to pass, thinking them of his own nationality. But Heyward and his friends saw that the French surrounded the fort and were puzzled how to get through their lines without betraying themselves.

The scout proposed two ways by which the difficulty might be got over. *One* was, to dismount the girls; and send the Mohicans in front; then they might cut a lane through the French sentries, and enter the fort over the dead bodies. Heyward at once opposed and said that it would not do, that a soldier might force his way in that manner, but that it could never be done with such a convoy. The

*other* was to turn on their trail, and get without the line of their lookouts, bend short to the west, and enter the mountains, where Hawkeye said he could hide them.

This last course was agreed to. Hawkeye told the rest to follow and moved along the route by which they had just entered their present critical and even dangerous situation. Their progress was guarded and without noise.

Hawkeye soon deviated from the line of their retreat, and striking off towards the mountains on the west, led his followers with swift steps. The route was painful, bleak and black hills lying on every side of them ; and they thus toiled on till morning.

The scout now told the sisters to dismount ; and taking the bridles from the mouths of the jaded beasts, he turned them loose among the shrubs and meagre herbage of that elevated region.

Immediately at the feet of the party, the southern shore of the Horican swept in a broad semicircle ; to the north stretched the narrow sheet of the 'Holy lake,' indented with numberless bays, and dotted with countless islands. Directly on the shore of the lake, and nearer to its western than to its eastern margin, lay the extensive ramparts and low

buildings of William Henry. In its front stood the scattered sentinels who held a weary watch against their numerous foes ; and towards the south-east, was an entrenched camp, in which Hawkeye pointed out the presence of the auxiliary regiments that had so recently left the Hudson in their company.

‘ Morning is just touching them below,’ said the scout ; ‘ we are a few hours too late. Montcalm has already filled the woods with his accursed Iroquois.’

‘ It is sickening,’ said Cora ; ‘ let us go to Montcalm, and demand admission ; he dare not deny a child the boon.’

‘ We cannot find the tent of the Frenchman,’ said the scout. ‘ If we had a boat, it might be done. Ha ! yonder comes a fog and there will be an end of the firing. If you are equal to the work and will follow, I will make a push.’

‘ We’re equal,’ said Cora firmly ; ‘ on such an errand we will follow to any danger.’

They were soon about one half-mile from the western side of the fort. The fog had been rolling heavily down the lake and wrapped the camp of the enemy in its mist. However, the party were getting near the fort, when, within twenty feet of them, came the fierce call in French :

‘Who goes there?’

‘Push on,’ whispered the hunter.

‘Who goes there?’ was renewed by a dozen voices.

‘It is I,’ answered Heyward, dragging, rather than leading, the girls.

‘Who?’

‘A friend of France.’

‘You have more the manner of an enemy of France! Stop! No? Then fire, men! fire!’

The order was obeyed instantly, and the fog was stirred by the explosion of fifty muskets. Happily the aim was poor.

The outcry was renewed, and the order not only to fire again, but to pursue was plainly heard.

Hawkeye halted and spoke firmly: ‘Let us fire; they will believe us to be the enemy, and give way.’

The instant the French heard the report, it seemed as if the plain were alive with men, muskets rattling along its whole extent from the shores of the lake to the farthest boundary of the wood.

‘The entire army will be upon us,’ cried Duncan; ‘lead on, my friend, for your own life and for ours.’

But the scout had lost the direction. In vain he turned either cheek to the light air; they felt equally cool. He grew anxious. 'The fog may leave us in the middle of our path, a mark for both armies to shoot at.'

Hawkeye presently found from a glare of light that they were rushing to the woods under the very knives of the Iroquois.

The moment they discovered their mistake, they went back, angrily pursued by the enemy. 'Stand firm and be ready, my gallant 60ths,' suddenly exclaimed a voice above them. Wait to see the enemy, and fire low!

'Father! father!' exclaimed a piercing cry from out the mist; 'it is I! Alice! Thy own Elsie! spare, oh, save your daughters!'

'Hold!' shouted the former speaker, 'Tis she! God has restored my children! Throw open the sally-port; to the field, 60ths, to the field; pull not a trigger, lest ye kill my lambs! Drive off these dogs of France with your steel.'

Duncan heard the grating of the rusty hinges, and darting to the spot, he met a long line of dark-red warriors, whom he knew for his own battalion of Royal Americans, and flying to their head,

soon swept every trace of his pursuers from before the works.

For an instant, Cora and Alice had stood trembling and bewildered by this unexpected desertion ; but, before either had leisure for speech, or even thought, an officer of gigantic frame, whose locks were bleached with years of service, rushed out of the body of the mist, and the girls were clasped in their father's arms ! And as Munro folded them to his bosom, large scalding tears rolled down his pale and wrinkled cheeks, and he exclaimed, in the peculiar accent of Scotland,—

‘ For this I thank thee, Lord. Let danger come as it will, thy servant is now prepared !’

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## CHAPTER XIV

### **Montcalm interrupts Webb's letter**

A few days passed amid the privations, the uproar, and the dangers of the siege. It was sad to contemplate that Munro possessed no competent means of resisting the approach of the French. It looked as if Webb, with his army which lay slumbering on the banks of the Hudson, had utterly forgotten the strait to which his countrymen were reduced at Fort William Henry.

In the afternoon of the fifth day of the siege, and the fourth of his own service in it, Major Heyward, availing himself of a parley that had just been beaten, repaired to the ramparts of one of the water bastions and breathed the cool air from the lake, and to take a survey of the progress of the siege. He then saw the scout advancing, under the custody of a French officer, to the body of the fort. Hawkeye looked haggard and careworn, and his air dejected, at having fallen into the power of his enemies. Heyward ran rapidly across the parade, and stood before Munro.

‘ I am sorry to see, sir, that the messenger I so warmly recommended has returned in custody of the French ! ’

‘ The fidelity of the Long Rifle is well known to me, ’ returned Munro. ‘ Montcalm has got him, and with the politeness of his nation, he has sent him in with a doleful tale, of “ knowing how I valued the fellow, he could not think of retaining him ”, a way of telling a man of his misfortunes ! ’

‘ But the general and his succour ? ’

‘ Hoot ! hoot ! ’ bitterly remarked the old soldier laughing. ‘ You’re an impatient boy and cannot give the gentleman leisure for their march. ’

‘They are coming, then? The scout has said as much?’

‘The dunce has omitted to tell me this’, said Munro.

‘There is a letter, it would seem, too; and that is the only agreeable fact of the matter.’

‘He keeps the letter, then, while he releases the messenger.’

‘Our decision should be speedy,’ said Duncan.

‘The camp will not be much longer tenable. The walls are crumbling and provisions begin to fail.’

‘While there is hope of succour,’ answered Munro, ‘this fortress will I defend. It is Webb’s letter that I am anxious to have and his intentions.’

‘And can I be of service in the matter?’

‘Sir, you can; Montcalm has invited me to a personal interview between the works and his own camp. I will meet the Frenchman without delay. Go, Major Heyward, give them a flourish of the music and let them know who is coming. We will follow with a small guard.’

And presently, Colonel Munro and Major Heyward left the fortress, attended by a small guard. And Montcalm moved towards them with a quick but graceful step, baring his head to the veteran,

and dropping his plume nearly to the earth in courtesy. After the usual greeting, Montcalm turned to Duncan, and speaking in French, said :

‘I have solicited this interview from your superior, because he has already done everything necessary for the honour of his presence and must now listen to the admonitions of humanity. I will for ever bear testimony to the fact that his resistance has been gallant and was continued as long as there was hope.’

‘Monsieur is welcome to visit my camp and see, for himself, our numbers and the impossibility of his resisting them with success.’

‘I know,’ returned Colonel Munro, ‘that the King of France is well served, but my own royal master has as many and as faithful troops.’

‘Your troops are not at hand, fortunately for us,’ observed Montcalm. ‘There is a destiny in war, to which a brave man has to submit, with the same courage with which he faces his foes.’

‘If your glasses can reach to the Hudson,’ said Munro proudly, ‘you will know when and where to expect the army of Webb.’

‘Let General Webb himself explain his position,’ replied the politic Montcalm, suddenly extending an

open letter towards Munro as he spoke. 'You will there learn, Monsieur, that his movements are not likely to prove embarrassing to my army.'

The veteran seized the offered paper eagerly and as he read it, his countenance changed from its look of military pride to one of deep chagrin. The paper fell from his hand, and his head dropped upon his chest. Duncan caught the letter from the ground, without apology, read at a glance its cruel purport. Herein Webb advised a speedy surrender, urging the utter impossibility of his sending a single man to their rescue.

'The man has betrayed me!' Munro at length bitterly exclaimed; 'he has brought dishonour to the door of one where disgrace was never before known to dwell, and he has heaped shame heavily on my grey hairs.'

'Say not so,' cried Duncan; 'we are yet masters of the fort, and of our honour. Let us then sell our lives at such a rate as shall make our enemies believe the purchase too dear.'

'Boy, I thank thee,' exclaimed the old man, 'you have, for once, reminded Munro of his duty. We'll go back, and dig our graves behind those ramparts.'

‘Messieurs,’ said Montcalm, advancing towards them a step, in generous interest, ‘you little know Louis de St. Véran if you believe him capable of profiting by this letter to humble brave men, or to build up a dishonest reputation for himself. Listen to terms before you leave me. There is no privilege dear to a soldier that shall be denied you both, and your brave comrades.’

‘Our colours?’ asked Heyward.

‘Carry them with you.’

‘Our arms?’

‘Keep them; none can use them better.’

‘Our march; the surrender of the place?’

‘Shall all be done in a way most honourable to yourselves.’

Munro heard this with amazement, and was deeply touched by so unusual and unexpected generosity.

‘Go you, Duncan,’ he said; ‘go and arrange it all. I have lived to see two things in my old age, that never did I expect to see. An Englishman afraid to support a friend; and a Frenchman too honest to profit by his advantage.’

So saying, the veteran returned slowly towards the fort with a dejected air.

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## CHAPTER XV

**Munro surrenders: the Massacre of Fort William  
Henry**

It was then openly proclaimed that fighting must cease. Munro signed a treaty with General Montcalm by which the fort was to be surrendered to the enemy the next morning, the garrison retaining their arms, their colours, and their baggage. The French General also promised the English an escort of French soldiers through the woods.

On the 8th of August 1757, Munro signed the treaty with General Montcalm; and in the early morning of the 9th, the first tap of the French drums was echoed from the bosom of the fort, and presently the valley was filled with the strains of martial music, rising long, thrilling, and lively.

A very different scene took place within the lines of the defeated English. As soon as the fifes gave the warning signal, the sullen soldiers shouldered their empty rifles, and fell into their places. Women and children ran from place to place, some bearing the scanty remnants of their baggage, and others searching in the ranks for relatives and friends. As General Munro and Heyward had to stay at the head of the troops, David Gamut was asked to escort Cora and Alice.

The signal to depart was given and the head of the English column was in advance. Glancing their eyes around, the sisters saw the white uniforms of the French grenadiers who had already taken possession of the gates of the fort, and the wide folds of the standard of France above their heads.

‘Let us go,’ said Cora; ‘this is no longer a fit place for the children of an English officer.’

Alice clung to her sister, and together they left the parade.

As every vehicle was occupied by the sick and wounded, the sisters had to endure the fatigues of a foot march. Living masses of the English, to the amount of near three thousand, moved slowly across the plain towards a vista cut through the lofty trees, where the road to the Hudson entered the forest. Along the sweeping borders of the woods, hung a dark cloud of savages watching their enemies, the English, and they were only kept from stooping on their prey by the presence and restraint of a superior army.

The advance, with Heyward at its head, had already reached the forest and was slowly disappearing. Then Cora beheld a soldier being plundered of his baggage by an Indian. Men from either side interfered, some to prevent, and others to

aid in, the robbery. Voices grew loud and a hundred savages appeared, as if by magic, where a dozen only had been seen a few moments before. Then Cora met a most alarming sight. Sly Fox himself was seen among the Hurons speaking eloquently to them and apparently bidding them murder the English. Magua went further. He placed his hands to his mouth, and raised the fatal and appalling whoop. More than two thousand savages broke at once from the forest and fell on English men and women, the sick and the wounded, and slew them. The horrors of the scene were revolting. The trained bodies of the troops threw themselves quickly into solid masses and endeavoured to frighten them, but it was all to no avail. Then followed one of the most bloody scenes of the Colonial Wars. It is known on the Massacre of Fort William Henry.

The sisters stood riveted, horror—stricken and nearly helpless. Alice dropped senseless on the earth, and Cora sank at her side.

‘Lady,’ said David, ‘this is indeed the jubilee of the devils and is not a meet place for us to tarry in. Let us up and fly.’

‘Go,’ answered Cora, ‘and save thyself. To me thou canst not be of further use.’

David said to himself, 'If the Jewish boy might tame the evil spirit of Saul by the sound of his harp and the words of sacred song, why shall not I try the power of music here ?'

Then he raised his voice to its highest tones, and pouerd out a powerful strain. This had some effect for a few minutes and then ceased to have any potency. But the unwonted sounds of David caught the ears of Magua who was at a distance. And he saw his old prisoners and uttered a yell of pleasure. He bounded forward, caught Alice, and ran swiftly across the plain towards the woods.

'Hold!' shrieked Cora, following wildly on his footsteps. 'Release the child!'

David followed the distracted sister, raising his voice again in sacred song.

The savage enemies would have struck Cora to death, but for David who stalked in her rear and who now appeared to the astonished savages to be gifted with the protecting spirit of madness.

Magua, wishing to elude pursuit, entered the woods through a low ravine. On his way he saw the horses abandoned shortly before by Heyward, Cora, and Alice. Placing Alice on one of them, Sly Fox made a sign to Cora who was closely

following him to mount the other. But Cora took her seat and got Alice removed to her own horse. This Magua permitted; and seizing the bridle, he plunged deeper into the forest. And David mounted the horse that had been left behind and rode as fast as he could behind the savage.

They soon began to ascend; and when they gained the flattened surface of the mountain top, Magua allowed them to dismount.

Below, the murder of Englishmen by the Hurons continued without check. On every side, the captured men were forced to fly before their cruel persecutors, while the armed columns of the French looked on and cared not to interfere. This conduct of the French has not yet been explained. It has no doubt left a dark stain on the otherwise fair escutcheon of General Montcalm.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### **The Search: In the Ruined Fort**

Within two days after its capture, Fort William Henry was burnt down. On the third evening, it was a smouldering ruin. The victorious French had departed, leaving their camp, which had rung with merry rejoicings, a silent deserted city of huts.

About an hour before the setting of the sun on the third day, five men were seen advancing in the direction of the ruined works. It was Munro, the father, in quest of his children; Major Heyward, and the three friendly foresters—Hawkeye, Chingachgook, and Uncas. Uncas who moved in front suddenly tore from a bush, and waved in triumph, a fragment of the green riding-veil of Cora.

‘My child!’ said Munro, ‘give me my child!’

‘Here is the impression of the footstep of a man,’ cried Heyward. ‘They are captives.’

‘Better so than left to starve in the wilderness,’ returned the scout. ‘Look at it, Sagamore; you measured the prints more than once, when we hunted the varments from Glenn’s to the spring.’

Chingachgook examined and said, ‘Magua.’

‘Ay, it’s a settled thing; here then have passed the dark-hair and Magua.’

‘And not Alice?’ asked Heyward.

‘Of her we have not yet seen the signs,’ returned the scout. ‘What have we there? Uncas, bring hither the thing you see dangling from yonder thorn-bush.’

When the Indian brought it, Hawkeye held it on high and laughed in his silent but heartfelt manner.

‘It’s the tooting weapon of the singer !’ he said.

‘But still there are no signs of Alice,’ said Duncan.

‘We are not about to start on a squirrel hunt, but to outlie for days and nights, and to stretch across a wilderness where the feet of men seldom go. An Indian never starts on such an expedition without smoking over his council fire. We will, therefore, go back, and light our fire to-night in the ruins of the old fort ; and in the morning we shall be fresh, and ready to undertake our work, like men.’

The sun was setting and the place looked very dreary, when the party entered the ruins of William Henry. Hawkeye and the Mohicans deliberated on the measures they were to adopt to discover the sisters. The Indians urged a pursuit by land, while Hawkeye was for a passage across the waters of the Horican. Hawkeye also pointed out how the age and weakness of Munro were against journey by land. At length, his proposal was agreed to. Hawkeye lay down and rested before the dying embers ; and Chingachgook announced his desire to sleep and stretched his form on the naked earth. Uncas carefully raked the coals so as to impart their warmth to his father’s feet, and slept among the ruins of the place. Heyward imitated their example and slumbered heavily.

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## CHAPTER XVII

**The Search (Continued)**

The heavens were still studded with stars when Hawkeye came to arouse the sleepers. Munro and Heyward soon got ready to follow the hunter to the lake where the Mohicans were waiting for them with a little birchen canoe. The scout made a sign for them to enter and they did so. Heyward sat in silence, while the canoe glided over several miles of water. And just as the day dawned, they entered the narrows of the lake and stole swiftly and cautiously among their numberless little islands; cautiously, because Montcalm who had retired with his army by that road might have left some Indians in ambush to protect the rear of his forces.

Chingachgook laid aside his paddle; while Uncas and Hawkeye urged the light canoe through crooked and intricate channels. The paddle ceased moving, in obedience to a signal from Chingachgook.

‘Hugh!’ exclaimed Uncas.

The Indian gravely raised his paddle and pointed to an edging of black smoke that hung along the lower edge of a mist. Then he dropped his paddle again into the water and urged forward the canoe.

There they are,' whispered the scout ; ' two canoes and a smoke.'

Just then, a rifle cracked whose ball came skipping along the placid surface of the strait ; and a shrill yell from the island interrupted his speech and announced that their passage was discovered. In another instant, several savages were seen rushing into the canoes which were soon dancing over the water, in pursuit.

' Hold them there, Sagamore,' said Hawkeye, ' keep them just there. The Hurons cannot shoot at this distance ; whereas *Killdeer* has a barrel on which a man may calculate.' So the hunter deliberately laid aside his paddle and raised the fatal rifle. And as he did so, an exclamation from Uncas, who sat in the bow, caused him to suspend the shot.

' What now, lad ?' asked Hawkeye ; ' You saved a Huron from the death-shriek by that word. What is the matter ?'

Uncas pointed towards the rocky shore a little in their front, whence another war canoe was darting directly across their course. Their situation was immensely perilous. The scout laid aside his rifle, and resumed the paddle.

The Mohican canoes passed swiftly on ; nevertheless, bullets from the Hurons whistled about them

and they fired, volley after volley. Uncas lent his great strength and skill and left the enemies far behind. Chingachgook was much pleased and he gave the war-whoop of the Mohicans.

The clamorous sounds of 'Le Gros Serpent!' 'La Longue Carabine!' and 'Le Cerf Agile!' burst at once from the canoes behind, and seemed to give new zeal to the pursuers. The scout seized *Killdeer* in his left hand, and shook it in triumph at his enemies. The savages answered the insult with a yell, and immediately another volley succeeded. The bullets pattered along the lake, and one even pierced the bark of their little vessel.

'Now Major,' said the scout, 'if you'll use the paddle, I'll let *Killdeer* do some work.'

Hawkeye at once took a swift aim and fired. The Huron in the bows of the leading canoe was struck, and fell backward, suffering his gun to fall from his hands into the water. The chasing canoes clustered together, and became stationary.

The scout now laid aside his rifle, and resumed the paddle, which he wielded with sinews that never tired; and in a very few minutes left such a considerable distance between his own party and the enemies that Heyward once more breathed freely.

Instead of following the western shore, whither their errand led them, the wary Mohican inclined his course more towards those hills behind which Montcalm was known to have led his army into the formidable fortress of Ticonderoga. The Hurons appeared to have abandoned the pursuit; still the scout plodded on, until a bay was reached, nigh the northern termination of the lake. Here the canoe was lifted from the water and borne into the woods, where it was carefully concealed under a pile of brush.

Then the adventure commenced by land. Hawkeye led the advance. He often stopped to examine the trees; and, when he crossed even a rivulet, he attentively considered the quantity, velocity, and colour of its waters, and frequently appealed to the opinion of the elder Mohican.

The scout spoke in English and explained the embarrassment of the situation; 'So far we have not crossed a sign of a trail! It is possible we may not have taken the proper scent.'

'Has Uncas no counsel to offer in such a strait?' said Duncan.

The young Mohican cast a glance at his father, but stood silent. Chingachgook understood the look, and bade him speak. The same instant, Uncas,

with a gleam of intelligence and joy, bounded forward like a deer, and stood exultingly over a spot of fresh earth, that looked as though recently upturned by the passage of some heavy animal.

'Tis the trail!' exclaimed the scout advancing to the spot. 'The lad is quick of sight and keen of intelligence for his years.'

'See here!' said Uncas, pointing north and south at the marks of the broad trail; 'the dark-hair has gone towards the frost.'

'Hound never ran on a more beautiful scent,' remarked the scout.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### A Strange Village

The party moved on and before an hour had passed, the speed of the scout sensibly abated and he seemed to be conscious of approaching danger. He soon stopped, and waited for the whole party to come up.

'I scent the Hurons,' the scout said, speaking to the Mohicans; 'and we are getting too near their encampment. Chingachgook, you take the hillside to the right; Uncas will bend along the brook to the left, while I will try the trail. If

anything should happen, the call will be three croaks of a crow. I saw one of the birds fanning himself in the air, just beyond the dead oak—another sign that we are touching an encampment.’

The Indians departed their several ways without reply, while Hawkeye cautiously proceeded with the two gentlemen. And presently the scout told Heyward to steal to the edge of the wood, which, as usual, was fringed with a thicket, and wait his coming ; for he wished to examine certain suspicious signs a little on one side. Duncan obeyed.

The trees of many acres had been felled, and the glow of a summer’s evening had fallen on the clearing in beautiful contrast to the grey light of the forest. A short distance from where Duncan stood, the stream had seemingly expanded into a little lake, covering most of the low land, from mountain to mountain. And the water fell out of this wide basin, in a cataract so regular and gentle, that it appeared to be more the work of man, than fashioned by nature. A hundred earthen dwellings stood on the margin of the lake. Their rounded roofs, admirably moulded for defence against the weather, denoted more of industry and foresight than the Indians were wont to bestow on their habitations.

The whole village appeared deserted ; but, at length, Duncan thought he saw several human forms advancing towards him on all fours, and apparently dragging in their train some heavy and formidable engine. Just then a few dark-looking heads gleamed out of the dwellings and the place seemed suddenly alive with beings that glided swiftly from cover to cover. Alarmed at these suspicious movements, Heyward was about to give the signal to the others by imitating the call of the crow, when the rustling of leaves at hand drew his eyes in another direction.

The young man started, when he found himself within a hundred yards of a strange Indian. It was now becoming dusk and Duncan saw he was unobserved. The native, like himself, seemed occupied in observing the low dwellings of the village, and the stolen movements of its inhabitants. The head of the Indian was shaved, as usual, with the exception of the crown, from whose tuft three or four faded feathers from a hawk's wing were loosely dangling. A ragged calico mantle half encircled his body, while his legs were bare, and sadly cut and torn by briars. Altogether, the appearance of the savage was forlorn and miserable.

The scout stole silently and cautiously to the

side of Duncan, who whispered : 'Here is their settlement and here is one of the savages himself, in a very embarrassing position for our further movements.' Hawkeye closely scrutinised the stranger, and said :

'The imp is not a Huron, nor of any of the Canada tribes, his clothes indicate that the knave has been plundering a white man. Ay, Montcalm has raked the woods for his inroad and has gathered together here a whooping, murdering set of varlets. Can you see where he has put his rifle or his bow ?'

'He appears to have no arms,' answered Heyward ; 'unless he gives the alarm to his friends who are dodging about in the water, we have but little to fear from him.'

The scout turned to Heyward, and looked at him in amazement. Then he indulged in unrestrained and heartfelt laughter for a while and, repeating the words, 'Friends who are dodging about in the water !' he added, 'You keep him under your rifle, while I creep in behind through the bush and take him alive. Fire on no account.'

Duncan waited in feverish impatience for some minutes, before he saw the scout again, creeping along the earth, directly in the rear of his intended captive. Hawkeye rose his feet silently and slowly.

At that instant, several loud blows were struck on the water and Duncan turned his eyes just in time to see a hundred dark forms plunging, in a body, into the troubled little sheet. Hawkeye lifted up his hand above the savage and again looked at him. But suddenly he withdrew his hand and, opening wide his mouth, again laughed long and silently. He stepped forward and touched the Indian on the shoulder.

‘How now, friend,’ said the scout; ‘have you a mind to teach the beavers to sing?’

‘Even so,’ was the ready answer.

Heyward was very agreeably surprised. His lurking Indians became converted into four-footed beasts; his lake became a beaver pond; his cataract, a dam, constructed by the industrious beavers. And, most wonderful of all, the suspected Indian was no other than David Gamut, the harmless singer. After Hawkeye had recovered from his amusement, he gave the signal of the crow; and in a few minutes, the two Mohicans and Munro joined them.

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## CHAPTER XIX

**In the Camp of the Iroquois**

‘We see that you are safe,’ said the scout ; ‘now tell us what has become of the maidens.’

‘They are captives,’ answered David ; ‘though greatly troubled in spirit they enjoy comfort and safety in the body. We have had little cause for complaint, except the violence done to our feelings by being thus led in captivity into a far land.’

‘Where is Magua ?’ interrupted the scout.

‘He hunts the moose to-day with his young men ; and tomorrow, they pass farther into these forests, and nearer to the borders of Canada. The elder maiden is conveyed to a neighbouring people, who live beyond yonder black pinnacle of rock ; while the younger is detained among the women of the Hurons, who live but two short miles from here on a table-land.’

‘And why do they let you go at large, unwatched ?’ asked the hunter.

David answered : ‘Little be the praise to such a worm as I. Still my music has powerful effect over the savages and I am suffered to go and come at will.’

The scout laughed and said, 'The Indians never harm such as you. Why didn't you come back to Fort Edward and bring us news of the capture?'

'How could I desert the two girls entrusted to my care?' answered David stoutly.

He then told the story of their journey. His narrative was simple, and the facts but few. He described, however briefly, how the horses were let loose at the spring, how the girls were carried in a litter made of bows and branches, and how the elder was sent to a tribe that temporarily occupied an adjacent valley.

Asked if he could tell the name of the tribe, he pleaded ignorance.

'Had they held their corn-feast?'

'Of corn,' answered David, 'we had many and plentiful feasts. I know nothing of the totems of the tribe. If totem has any reference to their music, I could at once say that these profane men never join their voices in praise.'

'You are then ignorant of the nature of an Indian,' observed the scout. 'Even the Mingo adores but the true and living God. It is true that the Indians sometimes make truces with the wicked one; but they look up for favour and help to the great and good Spirit only.'

‘I have noticed,’ interrupted David, ‘that the image of the tortoise was often used as a device.’

‘Hugh!’ exclaimed the Mohicans.

Chingachgook then spoke in the language of the Delawares with calmness and dignity. Once he lifted his arms, when the folds of his blanket were thrown aside and Duncan saw that the device of the tortoise was charmingly, though faintly, worked in blue on the chief’s breast.

‘The Great Serpent is of the high blood of the Delawares,’ said Hawkeye; ‘He is the Great Chief of their Tortoise. Some of this stock is among the people who are holding Cora; still it is a dangerous path we move in. It seems to me that this singer might go in camp again and carefully give the girls notice of our approach. He knows the call of the whip-poor-will. That will be our signal. Remember then,’ turning to David, ‘that when you hear the whip-poor-will call three times, you are to come into the bushes, where we will consult.’

‘Stop!’ cried Heyward. ‘I’ll go with you.’

At first, they looked amazed. Chingachgook undertook to disguise the young man as a French juggler from Ticonderoga, straggling among friendly and allied tribes.

Then he drew on Duncan's face all the fantastic lines and shadows that mean jollity and buffoonery to the Indians, and avoided every line that could mean a liking for war. The hunter then gave him much friendly advice.

'Now you may go,' said the hunter, 'You will have occasion for your best manhood and sharp wit. Good-bye and God bless you! If the Huron get the better of you, he shall pay for his victory.'

I myself will leave General Munro in some safe encampment in charge of Chingachgook; and myself and Uncas shall pursue our inquiries among the Delawares.'

Then Duncan shook Hawkeye warmly by the hand and departed with David. Hawkeye continued to gaze after the high-spirited and adventurous young man for several moments and then led his own division of the party into the concealment of the forest.

Duncan and David took their course directly across the clearing of the beavers and along the margin of the pond. Then they turned from the water-course and began to ascend a little hill. Presently they came upon another clearing on the opposite side of which were fifty or sixty Indian lodges, rudely made of logs, brush, and earth. Towards these, the two made their way.

Soon they found themselves in the midst of a number of Indian children playing games which consisted mostly of whooping and howling. Directly the children saw the two men, they raised a shrill cry which brought a dozen warriors to the door of the nearest lodge. David led the way into this very building. Duncan found it hard to assume an air of unconcern, as he followed; but knew that everything depended on his presence of mind. With a firm step, he acted like David. He took out a bundle of brush from a corner of the hut, and sat on it in silence.

The warriors surrounded Duncan and patiently waited until he should speak. Three or four of the oldest sat on the ground. A torch was burning in the place. At length, an old man spoke in the Iroquois tongue which Heyward did not understand.

‘Do none of my brothers speak the French or English language?’ asked Heyward. ‘The Great Father (that is, the King of France) has bidden me, a man that knows the arts of healing, to go to his children, the Iroquois of the Great Lakes, and ask if any are sick.’

A silence followed. The oldest Iroquois asked in French, if the white men of the Canadas, who

always boasted that their faces were pale would paint their skins.

‘When an Indian chief comes among his white fathers,’ replied Heyward, ‘he puts aside his buffalo robe to wear the shirt that is offered to him. My brothers have given me paint, and I wear it.’

A low murmur of applause followed this compliment. At that instant, a low but fearful sound arose from the forest, and was succeeded by a higher and shriller yell, which equalled the longest and most plaintive howl of the wolf. The warriors glided in a body from the lodge and Heyward followed the throng.

A war party had come back in triumph, bringing in a young warrior of another tribe, and he was to run the gauntlet for his life. Men, women, and children, the aged, the infirm, the active, and the strong were alike abroad, shouting their loudest, thereby expressing their savage pleasure in what was going to happen.

The captive was Uncas and he was eventually taken near the council lodge. He stood erect and firm, prepared to meet his fate like a hero. The warriors arranged themselves in two lines and formed a lane that stretched from the captive to the lodges.

The signal yell was given and Uncas bounded from the place quickly like a deer, and instead of rushing through the lines, he leapt over the heads of a row of children and gained the outer and safer edge of the array.

With yells, the Mingos threw themselves before him, and drove him back. Turning again, the captive shot with the swiftness of an arrow and alighted on the opposite side of the clearing.

Here again he was met by a few Iroquois and turned back. The power of man could not endure so severe a trial much longer. Availing himself of an opening, he ran and quietly leaned against a small painted post before the door of the chief lodge. According to Indian rules, the post protected him and he could not be harmed, until a council decided his fate. He was perfectly safe till then, and he was breathing hard after his superhuman exertions.

Heyward saw that the young captive was no other than his friend Uncas. Presently, an Iroquois led Uncas toward the door of the council lodge. It was dark and Uncas cleverly laid his hand on Duncan and said :

‘The Iroquois are dogs! Munro and Chingachgook are safe. The rifle of Hawkeye is not asleep.

Go! Uncas and you are now strangers. It is enough.'

Then Uncas gently pushed Duncan away. Duncan left the place and searched for David. He went from hut to hut, but could not find him. But he was very anxious about Uncas and so went back to the council lodge, entered it, and gravely took a seat. Presently, an old warrior, who spoke French, said :

'An evil spirit possesses the wife of one of my young men. Can the clever stranger frighten the spirit away?'

'Spirits differ' replied Duncan; 'some yield to the power of wisdom, while others are too strong.'

'My brother is a great medicine man,' said the cunning savage; 'will he try?'

'He will,' was the answer.

The Indian was about to lead the way to the hut of the invalid. At that instant, a tall, powerful warrior darkened the door, and stalking silently among the attentive group, seated himself beside Duncan. The sudden return of the savage, who was no other than Magua, caused a delay in the departure of the Huron to the lodge of the sick woman. Ten minutes, which appeared so many

ages to Duncan, passed. Then Sly Fox who was seated, with his back towards Uncas, for the first time cast a glance towards the prisoner. Their eyes met. For near a minute, the two bold and untamed spirits kept looking at each other steadily in the eye. 'The Nimble Deer!' Magua exclaimed, with an expression of ferocious joy.

The warriors who had not known Uncas, sprang upon their feet at the utterance of the hated and yet respected name, and shouted also 'Le Cerf Agile!'

The women and children, who lingered around the entrance to the lodge, took up the words in an echo, which was succeeded by another shrill and plaintive howl.

Uncan enjoyed his victory and quietly smiled. Magua noticed this sign of scorn and raised his arm and shook it at the captive, exclaiming in English:

'Mohican, you die!'

The young men whose duty it was to guard the prisoner instantly passed their ropes of bark across his arms and led him from the lodge amid a profound silence.

Then the Indian chief who requested the aid of Duncan made a sign to the supposed physician to

follow and proceeded directly toward the base of an adjacent mountain, which overhung the temporary village. A thicket of brush skirted its foot and they had therefore to follow a crooked and narrow path. The blaze of one of the fires lighted the way, and they entered a grass opening.

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## CHAPTER XX

### **The Adventure with the Bear**

As the Indian warrior and Duncan were about to cross the path, a dark and mysterious-looking figure arose unexpectedly in their way. The animal began to move and, by its restless and sidling movements, Duncan judged it to be a bear. It growled loudly and fiercely, but did not look hostile. So the Huron quietly pursued his course, accompanied by the 'medicine man.'

The bear was often tamed by the Indians and Duncan knew this. So he believed that some favourite of the tribe had come into the thicket in search of food. It was passed unmolested, but Duncan noticed the beast rolling along their path and following their footsteps. He would have spoken about it to the Huron, but the latter at that moment pushed aside a door of bark and went into

a cavern in the bosom of the mountain. Duncan gladly stepped after him and was closing the cover to the opening, when he found that the shaggy beast was drawing it from his hand. Heyward pressed forward, but the beast kept growling at his back, and once or twice laid his enormous paws on him: Naturally Heyward became nervous. But soon a glimmer of light appeared and they found themselves in a large cavern of the rock, rudely felled to serve as a number of apartments. The structure was simple. The rooms were composed of stone, sticks, and bark intermingled. An opening above let in the light by day, and, at night, fire, and torches took the place of the sun.

The sick woman had been brought to this curious place by the Indians, in the belief that the spirit which possessed her would find more difficulty in assaulting her through walls of stone than through the leafy coverings of the lodges. Duncan and his guide entered the room where the sick woman lay on a rude couch. Duncan saw that she was unconscious, that she lay in a sort of paralysis, and that she had got beyond curing. A group of women surrounded the sick bed and by their side, Duncan saw his musical friend, David Gamut, who commenced a song which, he thought, might have some

effect on the invalid. The Indians respected his imaginary infirmity and allowed him to proceed to the close, and Duncan was too glad of the delay to hazard the slightest interruption. As David was finishing, he and David were startled to hear the last words repeated behind them in a voice half human and half sepulchral.

Looking around, he saw the shaggy bear seated in a shadow of the cavern, where, while his restless body was swinging in the uneasy manner of that animal, it repeated in a short of low growl, sounds which bore some slight resemblance to the melody of the singer. David's eyes opened as if he doubted their truth; and his voice became mute in excess of wonder. He suddenly exclaimed aloud 'she expects you and is at hand,' and precipitately left the cavern.

The Indian chief then advanced to the sick woman and motioned to the women who had gathered there to witness the skill of the stranger to depart. He then pointed towards his insensible daughter, and said to Duncan—

'Now let my brother show his power.

Heyward began to recite, as nearly as he could remember, the strange spells of Indian conjurers that he had heard. But he was interrupted by a

fierce growl from the bear. Three several times did Duncan try, but as often did the bear growl more and more and interrupted his proceeding.

‘The cunning ones are jealous’, said the Huron; ‘I go. Brother, the woman is the wife of one of our bravest young men; deal justly by her. Peace!’ he added, beckoning to the discontented beast who had begun to growl again, ‘I go!’

The chief was as good as his word and Duncan now found himself alone in that desolate abode, with the helpless sick woman and the fierce brute. When the bear was sure that the Indian had left the cavern, it seated itself, erect like a man. The youth looked anxiously around for a weapon with which to resist the attack of the bear which he now seriously expected.

In an instant, the grim head of the bear fell on one side, and in its place appeared the honest, sturdy countenance of the scout.

‘Hist!’ whispered the woodman, interrupting Heyward’s exclamation of surprise; ‘the varlets are about the place, and any sounds that are not natural to witchcraft would bring them back upon us in a body.’

‘What means this masquerade? Why have you attempted such a desperate adventure?’

‘After we parted,’ said the scout, ‘I placed General Munro and Chingachgook in the old beaver lodge, where they are perfectly safe ; for the high North-West Indians still continue to venerate the beaver. Then Uncas and I pushed for the other encampment as was agreed. Have you seen the lad?’

‘He is captive,’ answered Heyward ; ‘and condemned to die at sunrise.’

‘We mustn’t abandon such a boy to the Huron,’ resumed the scout. ‘Luckily I went to the very spot where a famous conjurer of the tribe was dressing himself. I struck him on the head, bound him between two saplings, placed a walnut in his mouth to prevent an uproar and made free with his finery. From then I have been taking the part of the bear. But all our work is before us ; where is the girl ?’

‘Heaven knows. I have searched every house in the village and have not had the slightest trace of her presence in the tribe.’

‘You heard what the singer said, as he left us ? He was frightened and blundered through his message. I’ll climb up one of these rocks and take a look at the settlement. I am a beast, you know, and have a hankering for honey-pots which may be hidden in these rocks.’

Hawkeye climbed up the partition and slid down quickly.

‘She is here,’ he whispered, ‘and by that door you’ll find her. I have spoken a word of comfort to her. But she will not know you, Major, in that disguise. Wash the paint off and when you come back I will try my hand at a new embellishment.’

Duncan did so and quickly disappeared. In a minute or two, he stood before Alice whose joy then might be better imagined than described. He hurriedly told her the story of his adventures and was preparing to carry her away, when he was interrupted by a light tap on his shoulder. Starting, Duncan turned and saw before him the dark form and malignant face of Magua. The savage gave a deep guttural laugh, and said—

‘The pale-faces trap the cunning beavers, but the red-skins know how to take the Yengeese.’

Duncan drew Alice to his bosom, and exclaimed: ‘Huron, do your worst!’

‘Le Renard is a great chief,’ returned the Indian; ‘he will go and bring his young men to see how bravely a pale-face can laugh at the tortures!’

Magua dropped a log of wood across a door different from that by which Duncan had entered

and was about to leave the place through the avenue by which Duncan had approached; when a growl caught his ear, and made him hesitate. The figure of the bear appeared in the door, where it sat, rolling from side to side in its usual restlessness. Sly Fox prepared to pass it in cool contempt. But the threatening growl of the beast caused him again to pause. Then, resolved to be trifled with no longer, the savage moved resolutely forward. The bear then reared on its hinder legs and beat the air with its paws.

‘Fool!’ exclaimed the Huron, ‘go play with the children and squaws; leave men to their wisdom.’

Suddenly the beast extended its arms and enclosed him in a tight grasp. Heyward watched what took place with breathless interest. He saw Magua’s both arms pinned to his side by the iron muscles of the scout. He himself caught up a thong of buck-skin, rushed upon Sly Fox, and effectually secured him. Arms, legs, and feet were encircled in twenty folds of the thong. Then Magua lay utterly helpless on his back, with his mouth gagged by Hawkeye.

Duncan wrapped Alice in the clothes of the Indian and concealed all of her little form.

‘Now take her in your arms,’ said the scout, ‘and follow. Leave the rest to me.’

Duncan obeyed the scout and as both approached the little door of bark, it was found that the friends and relatives of the invalid were gathered about the place.

‘If I open my lips to speak, they will surely discover me. Give them your jargon, major,’ the scout said; ‘tell them that we have shut the evil spirit in the cavern, and are taking the woman to the woods in order to find strengthening roots.’

Growling fiercely, the bear walked out, followed closely by Heyward. And they soon found themselves in the centre of a cluster of twenty anxious relatives and friends.

The crowd fell back a little, and allowed the father and the husband of the woman to approach.

‘Has my brother driven away the evil spirit?’ demanded the chief. ‘What has he in his arms?’

‘Your child,’ replied Duncan gravely; ‘The disease has gone out; it is shut up in the rocks. I take the woman to a short distance, where I shall see her strengthened with certain roots and proof against further attacks. She shall be in the wigwam of the young man when the sun comes again.’

These words were received with satisfaction and Duncan was allowed to proceed.

When the scout had gone sufficiently far, he halted and said—

‘This path will lead you to the brook. Follow its northern bank until you come to a fall; mount the hill on your right; and you will see the fires of the other people. Go straight and ask protection. If they are true Delawares, you will be safe. It is impossible to fly far with the girl. The Hurons are sure to follow up our trail and master our scalps, before we had got a dozen miles. Go and Providence be with you!’

‘And you?’ demanded Heyward.

‘The Hurons hold the pride of the Delawares; the last of the high blood of the Mohicans is in their power,’ replied the scout. ‘I go to see what can be done for him. Had they killed you, I should have killed in return as many Indians as there are hairs on your scalp; but if the young Sagamore is to be led to the stake, the Indians shall see also how a man can die!’

The scout turned and went towards the lodges. Heyward and Alice took their way towards the distant village of the Delawares.

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## CHAPTER XXI

**The Escape of Uncas**

As Hawkeye approached the buildings, his steps became more deliberate, and he crawled to a little opening in a deserted hut, from which he might view the interior. It proved to be the abiding place of David Gamut ; and so the scout ventured into the very presence of the music man and seated himself.

‘ What art thou ? ’ demanded David.

‘ A man like yourself, and one whose blood is as little tainted by the cross of a bear or an Indian as your own,’ returned Hawkeye. ‘ Now let us do business.’

‘ First tell me of the maiden, and of the youth who so bravely sought her,’ interrupted David.

‘ Ay, they are happily freed from the tomahawks of these varlets. But can you put me on the scent of Uncas ? ’

‘ The young man is in bondage, and his death is decreed,’ answered David.

‘ Can you lead me to him ? ’ demanded Hawkeye. ‘ If you can, lead on.’

The scout found that David knew where Uncas was confined and that he had some access to the

captive. And David offered to lead Hawkeye to the prison. Hawkeye once more fastened on his bear's skin and went after David.

The lodge was silent and gloomy; Uncas, having been tightly bound, both hand and feet, by strong and painful withes, lay in a distant corner in a reclining attitude. His guards were sound asleep.

'Cut his bands quick', said Hawkeye to David. The singer did accordingly and Uncas found his limbs released. The hunter took off his shaggy skin and put a long glittering knife in Uncas's hands. Then the skin was quickly fastened on the young warrior. David agreed to take the place of Uncas, for he knew that the Iroquois would not harm him, and he could escape easily later.

Now Hawkeye exchanged clothes with David, wore on his head David's triangular beaver, and expected to pass in the twilight for the singer.

David was bound and placed where Uncas had been lying.

Hawkeye in David's clothes, and Uncas in the skin of the bear were now ready to go. They walked calmly out and got clear of the village, swiftly approaching the shelter of the woods. Then a loud and long cry arose from where Uncas had

been confined. The next moment a burst of cries filled the outer air and the whole village was astir. Uncas threw away his skin and dashed forward.

The savages who lingered about the prison of Uncas were so impatient that they got over their dread of the conjurer's breath. It is true that for several minutes they mistook the figure of David for that of Uncas. But when David turned his head and they saw the simple and mild face in place of the haughty features of Uncas, they rushed into the house and made David believe that his own final hour had come. He then sang the first verse of a funeral hymn and the Indians knew the infirm man at once, rushed out into the open air, and aroused the village.

Two hundred savages were in an instant ready for the chase ; and the whole tribe crowded in a body around the council lodge. In the meantime, some of the swiftest of the young men were told to make a circuit of the clearing under cover of the woods.

In a few minutes, the oldest and most distinguished chiefs met for grave consultation. The father of the sick woman stepped forth and related what he knew. Then a few of the wisest and firmest among the chief were chosen to make an investigation. These men soon reached the entrance. The

younger men who had gone in advance made way for their seniors ; and they proceeded firmly along the low, dark gallery.

The outer apartment was silent and gloomy. The sick woman lay in her usual place, though there were present men who had seen her carried into the woods. This puzzle they were trying to solve, when a dark-looking object was seen rolling out of an adjoining apartment into the very centre of the room where they stood. For a minute or so, the whole party drew back, but they soon recognised, in the object, Magua with his sullen and angry features.

Several ready knives were at once offered, his bonds were cut, and he was released. The whole of the savage party left the cavern and returned to the council lodge with Sly Fox.

‘ Let the Delaware die ! ’ cried Sly Fox in a voice of thunder,

A silence followed.

‘ The Mohican is swift of foot and leaps far ’, said the old chief, ‘ but my young men are on his trail.’

‘ Is he gone ? ’ demanded Magua.

‘ An evil spirit has been among us ; and the Delaware has blinded our eyes.’

‘An evil spirit!’ repeated Sly Fox mockingly; ‘It is the spirit that has slain so many of the Iroquois and who now bound the arms of Sly Fox, the dog who carries the heart and cunning of an Iroquois under a pale skin, the Long Rifle!’

These words caused much astonishment; and in great rage, many threats of vengeance were vehemently spoken. Runners were sent out in different directions to collect intelligence; and spies were ordered to approach and feel the encampment of the Delawares who lived near-by.

The spies were so clever and cunning that in a short time they returned with the news that the fugitives had sought and obtained the protection of the neighbouring tribe of the Delawares, a tribe not unfriendly to the Iroquois. Then the chiefs deliberated and decided that Sly Fox was to go and meet the Delawares with twenty stout warriors behind him, coax them with gifts of toys and trinkets and arms collected from the spoils of Fort William Henry, flatter them largely, and get back their captives. They had received information that these Delawares had no love for their hated enemy, the Long Rifle.

Long before the next day dawned, warrior after warrior,—and they were twenty in all—entered

the hut of Magua. Each bore rifle and all the other accoutrements of war, though their paint was uniformly peaceful. Magua gave the signal to proceed, and himself marched in advance. Instead of taking the path which led directly towards the village of the Delawares, Magua led his party along the little artificial lake of the beavers. Though Sly Fox bore the outline of a fox on the skin which formed his robe, there was one chief in his party who carried the beaver as his peculiar symbol, or *totem*. He was bound to show regard for the beaver which he fancied to be related to him. Accordingly he paused, spoke kind and friendly words to the beavers, and requested them to give his party a portion of that wisdom for which they were so renowned. And just as he had ended his address, the head of a large beaver was thrust from the door of an uninhabited lodge. This the chief regarded as a highly favourable omen and lavished on the animal his thanks and commendations. Magua was impatient and he made the signal to proceed. The beaver, however, continued to watch the movements of the party with much interest and sagacity.

[The reader may be taken into confidence and told that the animal which looked up from the lodge was no other than Chingachook in his mask of fur.

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## CHAPTER XXII

**In the Camp of the Delawares**

On that morning when Magua led his silent party from the settlement of the beavers, the people were very busy in the Delaware encampment. The women ran from lodge to lodge, preparing their morning's meal and the warriors were lounging in groups.

A man suddenly appeared at the farthest extremity of a platform of rock which formed the level of the village, when in full view of the Delawares, he stopped, threw his arm upward and then let it fall upon his breast. The people of the village gave a low murmur of welcome and encouraged him to advance. Then the dark figure moved with dignity into the very centre of the huts. He was the well-known Huron chief, Le Renard Subtil.

His reception was grave, silent, and wary. The warriors in front stepped aside, opening the way to their oldest and wisest orator.

'The wise Iroquois is welcome,' said the Delaware.

Then the guest was invited to enter the lodge and share the morning meal. After they had eaten, Sly Fox said—

‘I have brought gifts to my brother.’ As Huron handed them the little frinkets, the Delawares were much pleased and again they said—

‘Our brother is a wise chief. He is welcome

‘The Iroquois love the Delawares’, answered Sly Fox. ‘Why should they not? They are coloured by the same sun, and their just men will hunt in the same grounds after death. The redskins should be friends and look carefully on the white men. Has not my brother scented spies in the woods? The paleface who has slain many Delawares now goes in and out among the Delawares!’

‘Who is that spy?’ asked the Delaware.

‘The Long Rifle!’ was the answer.

The Delawares started. They had no idea that the famous hunter was in their power.

‘An Iroquois never lies,’ continued Sly Fox. ‘The Delawares will find, among their prisoners, one whose skin is neither red nor pale,—La Longue Carabine!’

A long pause followed. The chief consulted apart with his companions.

At that instant, the door of a neighbouring hut opened and three men came from it slowly and approached the place of consultation. The one in

the centre leaned on the other two for support. His frame was now bent. His long white locks fell on his shoulders. He was dressed in a robe of the finest skins, and his breast was loaded with medals. He wore also armlets, and cinctures of gold above the ankles. His tomahawk was nearly hidden in silver, and the handle of his knife shone like a horn of solid gold. He was Tamenund. His name was whispered from mouth to mouth. He was known over all the country for his wisdom and justice. He sat in the centre of his people with the dignity of a monarch and the air of a father.

The principal chiefs arose and entreated his blessing. The younger men touched his robe and were content. After a short delay, some young men went out and returned with the fugitives who had been placed in one of the houses.

Cora stood foremost with her arms twined about Alice. By their side stood Heyward, and Hawkeye was a little in the rear. Uncas was not there.

A chief who was seated at the side of Tamenund arose and said :

‘ Which of my prisoners is Long Rifle ?

Duncan wished to protect the hunter who had done so much for him and the girls. So he said

haughtily, 'Give us arms and place us in yonder woods. Our deeds shall speak for us.'

Hawkeye stepped forward and said:—

'I am the man whom the Iroquois have presumed to style *Long Rifle*.'

The chief looked perplexed.

'Give the prisoners guns,' at last he said, 'and let them prove which is the man.'

'Major,' cried the hunter, 'you see the gourd hanging against that tree. If you are a marksman, let me see you break the shell.'

Duncan smiled at the thought of competing with Hawkeye, but he tried his best and hit the tree a very little on one side of the gourd.

Hawkeye laughed.

He fired and a young Indian bounded forward, but no traces of the bullet were to be seen.

'Go,' said the old chief to the scout in disgust; 'you are a wolf in the skin of a dog.'

'Fools!' said Hawkeye; 'if you would find the bullet of a sharpshooter of these woods, you must look *in* the object, and not *around* it.'

The Indian youths tore the gourd from the tree and held it on high, with a shout, displaying a hole

in the bottom which had been cut by the bullet through the opening in the upper side. This decided the question.

Now Sly Fox was called on to speak and declare his errand.

‘What brings an Iroquois here?’ demanded Tamenund.

‘Justice. His prisoners are with his brothers, and he comes for his own.’

‘Justice,’ declared the patriarch, ‘is the law of the great Spirit. My children, give the stranger food. Then Iroquois, take thine own and depart.’

The same instant, four or five of the younger warriors stepped behind Heyward and the scout and passed thongs as dexterously and rapidly around their arms, as to hold them both in instant bondage.

Magua cast a look of triumph around the whole assembly ; raised Alice, and beckoning Heyward to follow, he motioned for the encircling crowd to open. But Cora rushed to the feet of the Tamenund, and cried loud :

‘Just and venerable Delaware, on thy wisdom and power we lean for mercy! Be deaf to yonder artful and remorseless monster, who poisons your noble ears with falsehoods.

‘In the first place, yonder girl is the daughter of a very old man, far too precious to become the victim of that villain. Besides, there is one of your own people who has not been brought before you. Before you let the Iroquois depart in triumph, hear him speak!’

Tamenund looked about him doubtingly. One of his companions then said :—

‘It is a snake—a redskin in the pay of the English. We keep him for torture.’

‘Let him come,’ directed the sage.

The Patriarch sank in his seat, and Uncas was brought before him.

Without opening his eyes, Tamenund asked: With what tongue does the prisoner speak?’

‘Like his fathers,’ Uncas replied, ‘with the tongue of a Delaware.’

A low, fierce yell ran through the multitude. A Delaware!’ said the sage in a low guttural tone. I never until now have found a Delaware so base as to creep, like a poisonous serpent, into the camps of his nation. The warrior who deserts his tribe, when hid in cloud, is doubly a traitor. The law of the Manitou is just. He is yours, my children; deal justly by him.’

‘The singing birds have opened their bills,’ spoke Uncas in the softest notes of his own musical voice, ‘and Tamenund has heard their song.’

The sage started.

‘Does Tamenund dream?’ he exclaimed, ‘what voice is at his ear?’

A solemn and respectful silence followed. Then an aged warrior spoke as if to remind the sage of Uncas’ treachery.

‘The false Delaware trembles,’ he said, ‘lest he should hear the words of Tamenund. It is a hound that howls when the English show him a trail.’

‘And ye,’ returned Uncas, looking sternly around him, ‘are dogs that whine to the Frenchmen’s spies.’

Twenty knives gleamed in the air, and as many warriors sprang to their feet.

Tamenund, however, spoke again.

‘Delaware,’ he said, ‘You are little worthy of your name. You are a double traitor. The law of the great Spirit is just. It is so. So long as the rivers run and the mountains stand, while the blossoms come and go on the trees, it must be so. The prisoner is yours, my children; deal justly by him.’

A cry of vengeance burst at once. In the midst of the yells, a chief proclaimed in a high voice that the captive was condemned to be tortured by fire.

The circle broke its order and preparations were made for the punishment of Uncas. The young Mohican looked on with a steady eye and met the tormentors who came to seize him with a firm and upright attitude. One of the savages, more fierce than the rest, seized the hunting-shirt of the prisoner, and tore it from his body ; and then, with a yell of frantic pleasure, prepared to lead him to the stake.

At that moment, the eyeballs of the savage seemed to start from their sockets, his mouth opened, and he stood amazed. He pointed with a finger to the bosom of the captive, and the other savages who stood near, also wondered and looked intently on the figure of a small tortoise beautifully tattooed on the breast of the prisoner in a bright blue tint.

Uncas enjoyed his triumph and smiled calmly on the scene. Then motioning the crowd away with a high and haughty sweep of his arm, he advanced to the front with the air of a king and spoke to the multitude that gazed on him in admiration.

‘Men of the Lenni Lenape!’ he said, ‘my race upholds the earth.’ ‘What fire that a Delaware can light would burn the child of my fathers?’ he added, pointing proudly to the simple blazonry on his skin; ‘the blood that came from such a stock would smother your flames! My race is the grandfather of nations!’

‘Who are you?’ demanded Tamenund.

‘Uncas, the son of Chingachgook,’ answered the youth modestly, turning from the nation and bending his head in reverence to the other’s character and years; ‘a son of the great Unamis (Turtle).’

‘The hour of Tamenund is nigh!’ cried out the sage; ‘the day is come at last to the night. I thank the great Spirit (Manitou) that one is here to fill my place at the council-fire. Uncas, the child of Uncas, is found. Let the eyes of the dying eagle gaze on the rising sun. Our wise men have often said that two warriors of the unchanged race were in the hills of the Yengeese; why have their seats at the council-fires of the Delawares been so long empty?’

At these words, the youth stepped lightly, but proudly, on the platform where all the wondering tribe could see him, and said:

‘The blood of the Turtle has been in many chiefs, but all have gone back into the earth from which they came, except Chingachgook and his son.’

Tamenund closed his eyes, and sank into his seat.

‘Uncas,’ he repeated, ‘the panther of his tribe, the eldest son of the Lenape, the wisest Sagamore of the Mohicans!’

Then said Uncas loudly :

‘Once we slept where we could hear the salt-lake speak in its anger. Then we were rulers and Sagamores over the land. But when the paleface was seen on every brook, we followed the deer back to the river of our nation. The Delawares were gone. Then said my fathers, “Here will we hunt. The waters of the river go into the salt lake. If we go towards the setting sun, we shall find streams that run into the great lakes of sweet water. There would a Mohican die, like fishes of the sea, in the clear springs. When the Manitou is ready, and says *Come*, we will follow the river to the sea, and take our own again.” Such, Delawares, is the belief of the children of the Turtle. Our eyes are on the rising, and not towards the setting sun. It is enough.’

‘Where is the Huron?’ asked the patriarch.  
‘Has he stopped my ears?’

Magua boldly stepped in front of the patriarch.  
‘The just Tamenund,’ he said, ‘will not keep what a Huron has lent.’

‘Tell me, son of my brother,’ returned the sage, turning to Uncas, ‘has the stranger a conqueror’s right over you?’

‘He has none. The panther may get into snares; but he is strong and knows how to leap through them.’

The Delawares heard Uncas with profound respect. Then Uncas caught sight of Hawkeye, still bound with thongs, went up to him, and cut his bonds, took his hand, and led him to the feet of Tamenund.

‘Father,’ Uncas said, ‘this paleface is a just man, and the friend of the Delawares. We call him Hawkeye, for his sight never fails.’

‘The paleface has slain my young men,’ said the sage.

‘I have never harmed a Delaware,’ answered the hunter. ‘I am friendly to them and all that belongs to their nation.’

Uncas then explained how all of them had escaped from the Iroquois, and therefore Sly Fox had no claim on them.

'And the woman that Huron left with my warriors?' asked the savage.

'She is mine,' cried Sly Fox in triumph. 'Mohicans, you know that she is mine!'

'It is so,' answered Uncas sorrowfully. Then said Tamenund: 'Go, Iroquois, with the dark-eyed maiden.'

'Hold, Iroquois!' cried Duncan, springing forward. 'Her ransom shall make thee richer than any of thy people were ever yet known to be.'

'Sly Fox is a redskin and wants not the beads of the palefaces.'

'The words of the Delaware are said,' spoke Tamenund in answer to the appeals of many. 'Men speak but once.'

Then the scout offered to take the place of Cora, but Sly Fox refused.

'Iroquois,' said Uncas, 'look at the sun. He is now in the upper branches of the hemlock. Your path is short and open. When he is seen above the trees, men will follow upon your trail.'

'I hear a crow!' exclaimed Sly Fox with a taunting laugh. 'Go,' he added, shaking his hand at the crowd; 'Where are the petticoats of the Delawares? Dogs, Rabbits, Thieves! I spit on you!'

And so Le Renard left and went through the forest, protected by the laws of Indian hospitality, taking the miserable Cora with him.

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## CHAPTER XXIII

### The Pursuit of Sly Fox

The instant Sly Fox disappeared, the Delawares made preparations for an expedition of war against the Iroquois to help Duncan recover Cora.

The women bore their choicest articles, their young, and their aged and infirm into the forest. After a short and touching interview with Uncas, Tamenund also retired there.

In the meantime Duncan saw Alice to a place of safety and then sought the scout.

A young warrior came from the lodge of Uncas, gravely marched towards a dwarf pine, tore the bark from its body, and then returned without speaking. Another went up to it, stripped it of its branches, and left a naked and blazed trunk. A third covered the post with stripes of dark-red paint.

## CHAPTER XXIV

**The Final Battle**

Finally Uncas himself appeared, with one half of his face hidden under a cloud of threatening black paint. He moved toward the post and danced around it with measured step, raising his voice in the wild chant of his war song, asking the great spirit, or Manitto, for aid in battle. Three times he sang and as often he went round the post dancing. Then he struck his tomahawk deep into the post, and raised his voice in a battle cry. At that signal, a hundred youths rushed to the tree and tore it to pieces, until nothing of it remained except the roots in the ground.

Then Uncas looked at the sun which was just gaining the point when the truce with Magua was to end. All were ready. Hawkeye sent a boy to fetch his own weapon, Killdeer, and the rifle of Uncas which they had kept hidden on approaching the camp of the Delawares.

Uncas now collected his chiefs and divided his power. He presented Hawkeye as a warrior deserving of confidence; and finding him favourably received, gave him the command of twenty men, like himself, active, skilful, and resolute. He informed the Delawares of the rank of Duncan among the troops of the Yengeese, and offered him a trust of

equal authority. But Duncan declined the charge, wishing to serve as a volunteer by the side of the hunter. After this, Uncas appointed various native chiefs to fill responsible positions. Then he gave forth the word to march.

Two hundred men silently but cheerfully obeyed the young Mohican chief. They entered the forest, nor did they meet any one until they met David wandering about. From him they learned that Cora was in the cave, and that the Iroquois were hidden in the forest, ready to attack them.

Then the chiefs held a 'whispering council,' and discussed divers plans of operation. Hawkeye's proposal was accepted. According to it, he was to take his twenty men to the old beaver lodge where Chingachgook and General Munro still were. A whoop from there would easily travel a mile. Then Uncas was to drive in their front. The scout pledged himself, when the Iroquois came within range of their pieces, to bend their line like an ashen bow, and then carry their village. After this, they resolved to attack the cave and rescue Cora.

The plan was rendered intelligible to all the chiefs, the different signals were appointed, and the chiefs separated, each to his allotted station.

Across the tract of wilderness, which lay between the Delawares and the village of the Hurons,

the woods were quite still ; but Hawkeye knew the character of those with whom he was about to contend, too well to trust the treacherous quiet.

The scout led his men along the bed of the water-course, neglecting no precaution known to an Indian attack. And when the brook joined the greater stream, he halted to consult the signs of the forest. He knew that the Huron encampment lay a short half-mile up the brook and was greatly troubled at not finding the smallest trace of the presence of his enemy. At length, he determined to bring matters to an issue, by unmasking his force, and proceeding cautiously, but steadily, up the stream.

On hearing a signal from Hawkeye, the whole party stole up the bank. The scout advanced, the band breaking off in single files and following so accurately in his footsteps as to leave it the trail of but a single man.

The party was, however, scarcely uncovered before a volley from a dozen rifles was heard in their rear. And a Delaware, leaping high into the air, like a wounded deer, fell at his whole length, perfectly dead.

‘To cover, men,’ cried Hawkeye, ‘and charge.’ His words were answered by a shout ; and, without stopping to breathe, the Delawares dispersed, Heyward finding himself left alone with David.

Luckily for him, the Iroquois had already fallen back, and he was safe from their fire.

The Delawares leaped upon their prey. The combat endured only for an instant, hand to hand, and then the Iroquois yielded ground rapidly until they reached the margin of the thicket, where they clung to the cover. The success of the struggle became doubtful again. But at this critical moment, a bullet came whizzing from among some beaver lodges, which lay in the clearing, in their rear, and was followed by the fierce and appalling yell of the war-whoops.

'There speaks the Sagamore!' shouted Hawkeye, answering the cry with his own loud voice, 'We have them now in face and back.'

The enemy, finding themselves attacked from a quarter that left them no opportunity for cover, uttered a yell of disappointment, and broke off in a body, fleeing under the bullets and yells of the pursuing Delawares.

Chingachgook took command of the party and led the way back through the thicket and made a halt. The land fell away rather precipitately in front; and beneath their eyes, there stretched, for several miles, a narrow, dark, and wooded vale.

Here Uncas was still fighting with the main body of the Hurons.

'The fight is coming up the hill,' cried Duncan, and indeed it was not long before the reports of the rifles sounded as if discharged in the open air. Hawkeye and his companions withdrew to a shelter and waited. Presently Iroquois warriors appeared driven to the skirts of the forest and a long line of them seemed clinging to the covers.

'The time is come for the Delaware to strike', said Duncan.

At that instant, the whoop was given, and a dozen Hurons fell by a discharge from Chingachgook and his band. The shout that followed was answered by a single war-cry from the forest. The Iroquois staggered, deserting the centre of their line, when Uncas issued from the wood, through the opening they left at the head of a hundred warriors.

Waving his hands right and left, Uncas pointed out the enemy to his followers, who separated in pursuit.

The war was decided, both wings of the broken Hurons seeking protection in the woods again, hotly pressed by the victorious warriors of Lenape.

One little band of the enemy, however, disdain- ing to seek a cover, retreated like lions at bay, slowly and sullenly up the slope. Sly Fox was in this party.

The moment Uncas saw Sly Fox, he forgot every other consideration, raised his cry of battle

and rushed upon him. The enemy instantly turned and commenced a rapid retreat up the ascent. And soon the pursuers and pursued entered the Iroquois village. And they fought around the council lodge, the Hurons fighting with the fury of despair. The tomahawk of Uncas, the blows of Hawkeye, and the nervous arm of Munro were all extremely busy, and the ground was quickly strewed with their enemies. Magua still escaped from every effort against his life. Raising a yell that spoke volumes of anger and disappointment, the subtle chief darted away, leaving the Delawares engaged in stripping the dead of the bloody trophies of their victory.

## CHAPTER XXV

### **Cora and Uncas are Slain**

Uncas saw his enemy and bounded forward in pursuit ; Hawkeye, Heyward, and David still pressing on his footsteps. Magua leaped into a thicket of bushes and suddenly entered the mouth of the cave where Alice had been imprisoned. The pursuers dashed into the long and narrow entrance, in time to catch a glimpse of a white robe fluttering ; and they found it was that of Cora ; whom the cowardly savage was holding to shield himself from the bullets of the white men.

‘ ’Tis Cora !’ exclaimed Heyward.

'Cora! Cora!' echoed Uncas, bounding forward like a deer.

'It is the maiden!' shouted the scout; 'We come. Courage. We come!'

'I'll go no further,' cried Cora, stopping on a ledge of rocks that overhung a deep precipice. 'Kill me if you will, detestable Huron; I will go no further.'

The supporters of the maiden raised their Tomahawks, but Magua stayed the uplifted arms, drew his knife, and, turning to his captive, he said:

'Woman, choose: the wigwam or the knife of *Le Subtil*!'

Cora regarded him not; but, dropping on her knees, she raised her eyes and stretched her arms towards Heaven, and said—

'I am Thine! do with me as Thou seest best!' Just then, Uncas leaped frantically from a fearful height upon the ledge. Magua recoiled a step; and one of his assistants, profiting by the chance, sheathed his own knife in the bosom of Cora.

Uncas fell between the Huron and the wretch who murdered Cora. Magua, without losing a moment, buried his weapon in the back of Uncas. But the young chief arose from the blow and struck the murderer of Cora by an effort in which the

last of his failing strength was expended, and looked at Le Subtil in a manner which indicated what he would do to him, if he had not become powerless. As Sly Fox seized the unresisting Mohican,

‘Mercy, mercy, Iroquois!’ Heyward cried from above. ‘Have mercy on the boy!’

But the Huron heeded him not. He passed his knife three several times into the bosom of the young and brave Delaware and struck him dead.

And as he did so, he shouted in triumph:

‘The palefaces are dogs! Delawares are women!’

Hawkeye had been crouching like a beast about to take its spring and he fired at Sly Fox. Turning a fierce look on his enemy, the savage shook his wounded hand at him in grim defiance; but his hold on the ledge loosened, and his dark form fell rapidly down and was shattered into numerous pieces.

## CHAPTER XXVI

**The End: Hawkeye and Chingachook left alone in the world!**

The sun found the Delewares the next day, a nation of mourners. The sounds of the battle were over. They had taken vengeance on the Hurons by the destruction of the whole village. Still no shout of joy, no song of triumph. The lodges were deserted. Everywhere there were demonstrations of grief. Delaware women came in numbers to sing the

funeral dirges of Cora and Uncas. General Munro and Heyward stood, sunk in misery, among the mourners, while the scout near by leaned on his famous Killdeer. Even Tamenund came down and joined in the mourning. And just within the inner edge of the circle stood an *aide* of Montcalm, anxious to escort the white people back to the English settlements.

Then the sage of the Delawares, leaning on the shoulders of his attendants, rose and said :

‘Men of the Lenape ! the face of the great Spirit is behind a cloud ; his eye is turned from you ; his eyes are shut ; his tongue gives no answer. You see him not. Men of the Lenape ! the face of the Manitto is behind a cloud.’

As his words died away, a low murmur of soft, wailing voices began a sort of chant in honour of the dead. A Delaware girl of high rank sang of the noble qualities of Uncas. She called him the panther of his tribe and described him as one who left no trail on the dews ; whose bound was like the leap of the fawn ; whose eye was brighter than a star in the dark night, and whose voice in battle was as loud as the thunder of the great Spirit.

Then she sang of Cora, of her beauty, of her courage. She compared her to flakes of snow and her hair to the tendrils of the vine.

The place chosen for the grave of Cora was a little knoll, where a cluster of young pines had taken root, forming a melancholy and appropriate shade over the spot. The body of Cora was deposited there. At length, the scout said in the Delaware tongue :

‘ My daughters have done well ; the white men thank them.’

The head of Munro had sunk upon his chest and he was fast relapsing into melancholy. But the French aide ventured to touch him lightly on the elbow, and he came back to himself, and said—

‘ It is the will of Heaven and I submit. Come, gentlemen. Our duty is ended. The gentle Indian maidens have done well. I thank them.’

A renowned Delaware warrior stood up before the body of Uncas and spoke thus :

‘ Why hast thou left us, pride of the Wapanachki ? Thy time has been like that of the sun in the trees ; thy glory brighter than his light at noon-day. Who that saw the battle would believe that thou couldst die ? Thy feet were like the wings of eagles ; thine arm, heavier than falling branches from the pine. Pride of the Wapanachki, why hast thou left us ? ’

Other warriors spoke of Uncas’ virtues, and especially of his courage in battle.

It was growing late. The young *aide* suggested that the white men might take their leave, as they had many miles to travel. A light and closely-covered litter was brought in which sat Alice, mourning her dead sister.

‘Come,’ said Munro, looking very sad, ‘let us depart.’

Duncan pressed the hand of the scout and mounted his charger. Then all the white men, excepting Hawkeye, passed from before the eyes of the Delawares, and were soon buried in the vast forests of that region. They never visited that part of the country again. But the Delawares long continued to talk of the beauty, courage, and miseries of the white maiden, and of the young warrior of the Mohicans.

After the white men had left, Chingachgook stood up and said :

‘Why do my brothers mourn ? Why do my daughters weep—that a young man has gone to the happy hunting grounds ; that a chief has filled his time with honour ? He was good ; he was dutiful ; he was brave. Who can deny it ? As for me, I am a blazed pine in a clearing of the palefaces. I am alone—’

‘No, no,’ cried Hawkeye ; ‘no Sagamore, not alone. I, also, have no kin and no people. Uncas was

your son, and redskin by nature, and it may be that your blood was nearer—but if I ever forget the lad who fought by my side in war, and slept by my side in peace, may He who made us all forget me! The boy has left us for a time; but, Sagamore, you are not alone.'

Chingachgook grasped the hand that the scout had stretched across the fresh earth and, in that attitude of friendship, the two sturdy and intrepid woodsmen bowed their heads together, while scalding tears fell to their feet, watering the grave of Uncas like drops of falling rain.

So spoke the two most renowned warriors of that country and a stillness followed the warm burst of feeling. It was time for the multitude to disperse and in ordering it, the great Patriarch lifted his voice and spoke thus:

'It is enough. Go, children of the Lenape. The anger of the Great Spirit is not done. The palefaces are masters of the earth. The time of the red-men does not yet seem to come again. My day has been too long. In the morning I saw the sons of the Turtle happy and strong; and yet, before the night has come, have I lived to see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans.'

## APPENDIX I

**Chief Characters**

General Munro : Commander at Fort William Henry.

General Webb : Commander at Fort Edward.

General Montcalm . French Commander in Canada.

Duncan Heyward : Major, English Officer.

Hawkeye (Hunter, Scout, Long Rifle) : a sun-burnt woodsman, of European parentage.

David Gamut : wandering musician.

Cora } : Daughters of General Munro.  
Alice }

Tamenund : Patriarch of the Delawares.

Chingachgook : Father of Uncas, Mohican Chief.

Uncas : Son of Chingachgook, Last of the Mohicans.

Magua : Huron Chief (Sly Fox).

Le Longue Carabine : 'The Long Rifle,' Hawkeye.

Le Gros Serpent : The Great Snake, Chingachgook.

Le Cerf Agile : The Nimble Stag, Uncas.

Le Renard Subtil : The Sly Fox, Magua.

**Historical Note**

The Red-men of North America were divided into two main branches—The *Delawares* and the *Iroquois*. The Delawares were also called the *Lenni Lenape*, and *Mohicans*. The Iroquois were also called Maquas and Mingoos.

The Delwares were thought to be the progenitors (or grandfathers) of the people who occupied the Eastern and Northern States of America.

The Iroquois were a confederacy of five Indian tribes. They were so called by the French. The

Dutch called them Maquas. The Delawares called them, in reproach, *Mingoes*. They called themselves Hurons and inhabited the region between Lakes Huron, Erie, and Ontario. The chief tribe among these people were the *Mohawks*, who occupied the valley of the Mohawk, New York.

### Geographical Note

*The Champlain* : a lake (120 miles long) lying between New York and Vermont, named after a French explorer who discovered it in 1609. *The Big River*, the Mississippi. *The Salt Lake*, the Atlantic Ocean.

*Glenn's Falls*, a little waterfall on the River Hudson, 44 miles north of Albany. *Holy Lake*, Lake George, so named by the French; the Indians called it Horicon (the tail of the lake). *Scaroon*, a tributary of the Hudson. *Ticonderoga*, a town situated between Lakes Champlain and George. It was Montcalm's headquarters in 1757. *Salt Lake*, the sea. *Lakes of sweet water*, Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario.

## APPENDIX II

### Select Glossary

*Between two fires*, shot at from two directions.

*Canada Fathers*, the French.

*Cavalcade*, company of riders.

*Chasm*, deep cleft in rock.

*Colours*, flags.

*Convoy*, persons conducted or escorted.

*Escutcheon*, shield with armorial bearings; (*blot on escutcheon*, stain on character).

*Fife*, shrill flute used with drum in military music.

*Fire-eater*, juggler.

*Fire-water*, alcoholic liquors, whisky, brandy, etc.

*Housings*, the trappings of a horse.

*Jubilee*, time of rejoicing (50th anniversary).

*Leech*, physician.

*Manitto*, god.

*Moccasin*, shoe of deerskin.

*Moose*, large deer resembling the European elk.

*Portage*, route by which goods are transported between two navigable rivers.

*Rapids*, part of a river where the current is most rapid.

*Rivet*, fix one's eyes or attention upon.

*Sagamore*, leader of a tribe.

*Sassafras*, a North-American tree with medicinal bark.

*Singing-bird*, liar.

*Squaw*, Indian woman (America).

*Succotash*, dish consisting of a stew of green Indian corn and beans.

*Tomahawk*, war-axe of the North-American Indian.

*Toot*, sound of horn, trumpet, etc.

*Totem*, hereditary emblem of a tribe of American Indians.

*Ungainly*, awkward-looking, clumsy.

*Varlet*, rogue.

*Whip-poor-will*, an American bird.

*Wigwam*, tent or hut of a North-American Indian.

*Yengeese*, English.

*Run the gauntlet*, pass between two rows of men armed with sticks or swords, who strike. If the captive comes out of the line without being killed (which never happens), he is set at liberty.

*To no avail, uselessly.*

*Equal to, have strength or courage adequate for doing a thing.*

*Hold out, persist in resistance.*

### APPENDIX III

#### Exercises on Subject-Matter

1. (a) Who was Sly Fox? (b) Why was he thirsting to injure General Munro? (c) What was the plan by which he wished to carry out his wishes? (d) How far did he succeed?

2. What estimate did Hawkeye, Duncan, and Munro's daughters form of the character of Uncas?

3. (a) Tell an incident to prove Uncas' respect and love for his father.

(b) How did Uncas save the life of Duncan?

(c) How did Uncas escape from the tortures prepared for him?

4. Relate briefly—

(a) what was done by Hawkeye in the disguise of a bear

(b) what Uncas did, dressed in the skin of a bear

5. Give proofs of the devotion of an Indian, or his hospitality.

6. What part did David play in the story? How was he useful to the Travellers?











