

of itself when we sat down to this and the johnny-cake. By noon we had taken up the trace for Harrodstown, marching with scouts ahead and behind. Mr. Clark walked mostly alone, seemingly wrapped in thought. At times he had short talks with different men, oftenest—I noted with pride—with Tom McChesney. And more than once when he halted he called me to him, my answers to his questions seeming to amuse him. Indeed, I became a kind of pet with the backwoodsmen, Cowan often flinging me to his shoulder as he swung along. The pack was taken from the sorrel mare and divided among the party, and Polly Ann made to ride that we might move the faster.

It must have been the next afternoon, about four, that the rough stockade of Harrodstown greeted our eyes as we stole cautiously to the edge of the forest. And the sight of no roofs and spires could have been more welcome than that of these logs and cabins, broiling in the midsummer sun. At a little distance from the fort, a silent testimony of siege, the stumpy, cleared fields were overgrown with weeds, tall and rank, the corn choked. Nearer the stockade, where the keepers of the fort might venture out at times, a more orderly growth met the eye. It was young James Ray whom Colonel Clark singled to creep with our message to the gates. At six, when the smoke was rising from the stone chimneys behind the palisades, Ray came back to say that all was well. Then we went forward quickly, hands waved a welcome above the logs, the great wooden gates swung open, and at last we had reached the haven for which we had suffered so much. Mangy dogs barked at our feet, men and women ran forward joyfully to seize our hands and greet us.

And so we came to Kaintuckee.

CHAPTER X

HARRODSTOWN

THE old forts like Harrodstown and Boonesboro and Logan's at St. Asaph's have long since passed away. It is many, many years since I lived through that summer of siege in Harrodstown, the horrors of it are faded and dim, the discomforts lost to a boy thrilled with a new experience. I have read in my old age the books of travellers in Kentucky, English and French, who wrote much of squalor and strife and sin and little of those qualities that go to the conquest of an empire and the making of a people. Perchance my own pages may be colored by gratitude and love for the pioneers amongst whom I found myself, and thankfulness to God that we had reached them alive.

I know not how many had been cooped up in the little fort since the early spring, awaiting the chance to go back to their weed-choked clearings. The fort at Harrodstown was like an hundred others I have since seen, but sufficiently surprising to me then. Imagine a great parallelogram made of log cabins set end to end, their common outside wall being the wall of the fort, and loopholed. At the four corners of the parallelogram the cabins jutted out, with ports in the angle in order to give a flanking fire in case the savages reached the palisade. And then there were huge log gates with watch-towers on either side, where sentries sat day and night scanning the forest line. Within the fort was a big common dotted with forest trees, where such cattle as had been saved browsed on the scanty grass. There had been but the one scrawny horse before our arrival.

And the settlers! How shall I describe them as they crowded around us inside the gate? Some stared at us with sallow faces and eyes brightened by the fever, yet others had the red glow of health. Many of the men wore rough beards, unkempt, and yellow, weather-worn hunting shirts, often stained with blood. The barefooted women wore sunbonnets and loose homespun gowns, some of linen made from nettles, while the children swarmed here and there and everywhere in any costume that chance had given them. All seemingly talking at once, they plied us with question after question of the trace, the Watauga settlements, the news in the Carolinys, and how the war went.

"A lad is it, this one," said an Irish voice near me, "and a woman! The dear help us, and who'd 'ave thought to see a woman come over the mountain this year! Where did ye find them, Bill Cowan?"

"Near the Crab Orchard, and the lad killed and sculpted a six-foot brave."

"The saints save us! And what 'll be his name?"

"Davy," said my friend.

"Is it Davy? Sure his namesake killed a giant, too."

"And is he come along, also?" said another. His shy blue eyes and stiff blond hair gave him a strange appearance in a hunting shirt.

"Hist to him! Who will ye be talkin' about, Poulsson? Is it King David ye mane?"

There was a roar of laughter, and this was my introduction to Terence McCann and Swein Poulsson. The fort being crowded, we were put into a cabin with Terence and Cowan and Cowan's wife — a tall, gaunt woman with a sharp tongue and a kind heart — and her four brats, "All hugemug together," as Cowan said. And that night we supped upon dried buffalo meat and boiled nettle-tops, for of such was the fare in Harrodstown that summer.

"Tom McChesney kept his faith." One other man was to keep his faith with the little community — George Rogers Clark. And I soon learned that trustworthiness is held in greater esteem in a border community than any-

where else. Of course, the love of the frontier was in the grain of these men. But what did they come back to? Day after day would the sun rise over the forest and beat down upon the little enclosure in which we were penned. The row of cabins leaning against the stockade marked the boundaries of our diminutive world. Beyond them, invisible, lurked a relentless foe. Within, the greater souls alone were calm, and a man's worth was set down to a hair's breadth. Some were always to be found squatting on their door-steps cursing the hour which had seen them depart for this land; some wrestled and fought on the common, for a fist fight with a fair field and no favor was a favorite amusement of the backwoodsmen. My big friend, Cowan, was the champion of these, and often of an evening the whole of the inhabitants would gather near the spring to see him fight those who had the courage to stand up to him. His muscles were like hickory wood, and I have known a man insensible for a quarter of an hour after one of his blows. Strangely enough, he never fought in anger, and was the first to the spring for a gourd of water after the fight was over. But Tom McChesney was the best wrestler of the lot, and could make a wider leap than any other man in Harrodstown.

Tom's reputation did not end there, for he became one of the two breadwinners of the station. I would better have said *meat*winners. Woe be to the incautious who, lulled by a week of fancied security, ventured out into the dishevelled field for a little food! In the early days of the siege man after man had gone forth for game, never to return. Until Tom came, one only had been successful, — that lad of seventeen, whose achievements were the envy of my boyish soul, James Ray. He slept in the cabin next to Cowan's, and long before the dawn had revealed the forest line had been wont to steal out of the gates on the one scrawny horse the Indians had left them, gain the Salt River, and make his way thence through the water to some distant place where the listening savages could not hear his shot. And now Tom took his turn. Often did I sit with Polly Ann till midnight in the sentry's

tower, straining my ears for the owl's hoot that warned us of his coming. Sometimes he was empty-handed, but sometimes a deer hung limp and black across his saddle, or a pair of turkeys swung from his shoulder.

"Arrah, darlin'," said Terence to Polly Ann, "'tis yer husband and James is the jools av the fort. Sure I niver loved me father as I do thim."

I would have given kingdoms in those days to have been seventeen and James Ray. When he was in the fort I dogged his footsteps, and listened with a painful yearning to the stories of his escapes from the roving bands. And as many a character is watered in its growth by hero-worship, so my own grew firmer in the contemplation of Ray's resourcefulness. My strange life had far removed me from lads of my own age, and he took a fancy to me, perhaps because of the very persistence of my devotion to him. I cleaned his gun, filled his powder flask, and ran to do his every bidding.

I used in the hot summer days to lie under the elm tree and listen to the settlers' talk about a man named Henderson, who had bought a great part of Kentucky from the Indians, and had gone out with Boone to found Boonesboro some two years before. They spoke of much that I did not understand concerning the discountenance by Virginia of these claims, speculating as to whether Henderson's grants were good. For some of them held these grants, and others Virginia grants—a fruitful source of quarrel between them. Some spoke, too, of Washington and his ragged soldiers going up and down the old colonies and fighting for a freedom which there seemed little chance of getting. But their anger seemed to blaze most fiercely when they spoke of a mysterious British general named Hamilton, whom they called "the ha'r buyer," and who from his stronghold in the north country across the great Ohio sent down these hordes of savages to harry us. I learned to hate Hamilton with the rest, and pictured him with the visage of a fiend. We laid at his door every outrage that had happened at the three stations, and put upon him the blood of those who had been carried off to

torture in the Indian villages of the northern forests. And when—amidst great excitement—a spent runner would arrive from Boonesboro or St. Asaph's and beg Mr. Clark for a squad, it was commonly with the first breath that came into his body that he cursed Hamilton.

So the summer wore away, while we lived from hand to mouth on such scanty fare as the two of them shot and what we could venture to gather in the unkempt fields near the gates. A winter of famine lurked ahead, and men were goaded near to madness at the thought of clearings made and corn planted in the spring within reach of their hands, as it were, and they might not harvest it. At length, when a fortnight had passed, and Tom and Ray had gone forth day after day without sight or fresh sign of Indians, the weight lifted from our hearts. There were many things that might yet be planted and come to maturity before the late Kentucky frosts.

The pressure within the fort, like a flood, opened the gates of it, despite the sturdily disapproving figure of a young man who stood silent under the sentry box, leaning on his Deckard. He was Colonel George Rogers Clark,¹ Commander-in-chief of the backwoodsmen of Kentucky, whose power was reënforced by that strange thing called an education. It was this, no doubt, gave him command of words when he chose to use them.

"Faith," said Terence, as we passed him, "'tis a foine man he is, and a gintleman born. Wasn't it him gathered the Convintion here in Harrodstown last year that chose him and another to go to the Virginia legislatoor? And him but a lad, ye might say. The devil fly away wid his caution! Sure the redskins is as toired as us, and gone home to the wives and childher, bad cess to thim."

And so the first day the gates were opened we went into the fields a little way; and the next day a little farther. They had once seemed to me an unexplored and forbidden country as I searched them with my eyes from the sentry boxes. And yet I felt a shame to go with Polly

¹ It appears that Mr. Clark had not yet received the title of Colonel, though he held command.—EDITOR.

Ann and Mrs. Cowan and the women while James Ray and Tom sat with the guard of men between us and the forest line. Like a child on a holiday, Polly Ann ran hither and thither among the stalks, her black hair flying and a song on her lips.

"Soon we'll be having a little home of our own, Davy," she cried; "Tom has the place chose on a knoll by the river, and the land is rich with hickory and pawpaw. I reckon we may be going there next week."

Caution being born into me with all the strength of a vice, I said nothing. Whereupon she seized me in her strong hands and shook me.

"Ye little imp!" said she, while the women paused in their work to laugh at us.

"The boy is right, Polly Ann," said Mrs. Harrod, "and he's got more sense than most of the men in the fort."

"Ay, that he has," the gaunt Mrs. Cowan put in, eying me fiercely, while she gave one of her own offsprings a slap that sent him spinning.

Whatever Polly Ann might have said would have been to the point, but it was lost, for just then the sound of a shot came down the wind, and a half a score of women stampeded through the stalks, carrying me down like a reed before them. When I staggered to my feet Polly Ann and Mrs. Cowan and Mrs. Harrod were standing alone. For there was little of fear in those three.

"Shucks!" said Mrs. Cowan, "I reckon it's that Jim Ray shooting at a mark," and she began to pick nettles again.

"Wimmen is a shy critter," remarked Swein Poulsson, coming up. I had a shrewd notion that he had run with the others.

"Wimmen!" Mrs. Cowan fairly roared. "Wimmen! Tell us how ye went in March with the boys to fight the varmints at the Sugar Orchard, Swein!"

We all laughed, for we loved him none the less. His little blue eyes were perfectly solemn as he answered:—

"Ve send you fight Injuns mit your tongue, Mrs. Cowan. Then we haf no more troubles."

"Land of Canaan!" cried she, "I reckon I could do more harm with it than you with a gun."

There were many such false alarms in the bright days following, and never a bullet sped from the shadow of the forest. Each day we went farther afield, and each night trooped merrily in through the gates with hopes of homes and clearings rising in our hearts—until the motionless figure of the young Virginian met our eye. It was then that men began to scoff at him behind his back, though some spoke with sufficient backwoods bluntness to his face. And yet he gave no sign of anger or impatience. Not so the other leaders. No sooner did the danger seem past than bitter strife sprang up within the walls. Even the two captains were mortal enemies. One was Harrod, a tall, spare, dark-haired man of great endurance,—a type of the best that conquered the land for the nation; the other, that Hugh McGary of whom I have spoken, coarse and brutal, if you like, but fearless and a leader of men withal.

A certain Sunday morning, I remember, broke with a cloud-flecked sky, and as we were preparing to go afield with such ploughs as could be got together (we were to sow turnips) the loud sounds of a quarrel came from the elm at the spring. With one accord men and women and children flocked thither, and as we ran we heard McGary's voice above the rest. Worming my way, boylike, through the crowd, I came upon McGary and Harrod glaring at each other in the centre of it.

"By Job! there's no devil if I'll stand back from my clearing and waste the rest of the summer for the fears of a pack of cowards. I'll take a posse and march to Shawnee Springs this day, and see any man a fair fight that tries to stop me."

"And who's in command here?" demanded Harrod.

"I am, for one," said McGary, with an oath, "and my corn's on the ear. I've held back long enough, I tell you, and I'll starve this winter for you nor any one else."

Harrod turned.

"Where's Clark?" he said to Bowman.

"Clark!" roared McGary, "Clark be d—d. Ye'd think he was a woman." He strode up to Harrod until their faces almost touched, and his voice shook with the intensity of his anger. "By G—d, you nor Clark nor any one else will stop me, I say!" He swung around and faced the people. "Come on, boys! We'll fetch that corn, or know the reason why."

A responding murmur showed that the bulk of them were with him. Weary of the pent-up life, longing for action, and starved for a good meal, the anger of his many followers against Clark and Harrod was nigh as great as his. He started roughly to shoulder his way out, and whether from accident or design Captain Harrod slipped in front of him, I never knew. The thing that followed happened quickly as the catching of my breath. I saw McGary powdering his pan, and Harrod his, and felt the crowd giving back like buffalo. All at once the circle had vanished, and the two men were standing not five paces apart with their rifles clutched across their bodies, each watching, catlike, for the other to level. It was a cry that startled us—and them. There was a vision of a woman flying across the common, and we saw the dauntless Mrs. Harrod snatching her husband's gun from his resisting hands. So she saved his life and McGary's.

At this point Colonel Clark was seen coming from the gate. When he got to Harrod and McGary the quarrel blazed up again, but now it was between the three of them, and Clark took Harrod's rifle from Mrs. Harrod and held it. However, it was presently decided that McGary should wait one more day before going to his clearing; whereupon the gates were opened, the picked men going ahead to take station as a guard, and soon we were hard at work, ploughing here and mowing there, and in another place putting seed in the ground: in the cheer of the work hardships were forgotten, and we paused now and again to laugh at some sally of Terence McCann's or odd word of Swein Poulsson's. As the day wore on to afternoon a blue haze—harbinger of autumn—settled over fort and forest. Bees hummed in the air as they

searched hither and thither amongst the flowers, or shot straight as a bullet for a distant hive. But presently a rifle cracked, and we raised our heads.

"Hist!" said Terence, "the bhoys on watch is that warlike! Whin there's no redskins to kill they must be wastin' good powdher on a three."

I leaped upon a stump and scanned the line of sentries between us and the woods; only their heads and shoulders appeared above the rank growth. I saw them looking from one to another questioningly, some shouting words I could not hear. Then I saw some running; and next, as I stood there wondering, came another crack, and then a volley like the noise of a great fire licking into dry wood, and things that were not bees humming round about. A distant man in a yellow hunting shirt stumbled, and was drowned in the tangle as in water. Around me men dropped plough-handles and women baskets, and as we ran our legs grew numb and our bodies cold at a sound which had haunted us in dreams by night—the war-whoop. The deep and guttural song of it rose and fell with a horrid fierceness. An agonized voice was in my ears, and I halted, ashamed. It was Polly Ann's.

"Davy!" she cried, "Davy, have ye seen Tom?"

Two men dashed by. I seized one by the fringe of his shirt, and he flung me from my feet. The other leaped me as I knelt.

"Run, ye fools!" he shouted. But we stood still, with yearning eyes staring back through the frantic forms for a sight of Tom's.

"I'll go back!" I cried, "I'll go back for him. Do you run to the fort." For suddenly I seemed to forget my fear, nor did even the hideous notes of the scalp halloo disturb me. Before Polly Ann could catch me I had turned and started, stumbled,—I thought on a stump,—and fallen headlong among the nettles with a stinging pain in my leg. Staggering to my feet, I tried to run on, fell again, and putting down my hand found it smeared with blood. A man came by, paused an instant while his eye caught me, and ran on again. I shall remember his face and name