

the east were massacre and pillage, that rapine was loosed upon the land, and that this external fixity of calm was as unstable as the crystalline sphere of a bubble to collapse at a touch. Every ear was strained to a whisper; the express from over the mountain was met afar off by stragglers from the settlement, and came, delivering by word of mouth such news as he personally possessed, before his package was rendered up to the officers at the fort. Every heart seemed subject to the tension of suspense except such organ as might serve Captain Stuart for the cardiacal functions. He appeared wholly engrossed in perfecting the details of battalion drill, and the attention of the garrison was concentrated on these military maneuvers; even the men of the settlement, especially the rattling single men, were drawn into these ranks, the garrison not being strong enough to furnish the complement desired. In their buckskin hunting-shirts and leggings, with their muscular, keen activity, their ready practice, and their suppleness in handling their rifles, the pioneers made what he was pleased to call "a very pretty body of fencibles." His praise and their evident advance in proficiency gratified them, although the tactical arts of war in the heavy growths of this wild and rocky country were at a discount, since the defeat of that martinet and military precisian, General Braddock.

Thus the afternoon drill at the fort became of increasing public interest, and afforded the social opportunity of a rendezvous for the whole settlement; and despite the growing disaffection of the Cherokees, now and again groups of Indian spectators appeared at the gate.

Stuart's tact never deserted him; one day when ordering a knot of pioneers near the sally-port to "fall in"—for he himself drilled the fencibles—he motioned too, with his imperious gesture, to half a dozen braves who were standing hard by, as if he made no difference between them and the other civilian neighbors. One moment of astounded doubt, then they "fell in" as front-rank men, evidently infinitely flattered and marvelously quick in adapting the manual exercise they had often witnessed. Now and again there was an expression of keen interest on their stolid faces, and more than once when woe befell the effort to ploy the battalion into double column to form square and the movement became a contortion, they laughed out gutturally—that rare Indian mirth not altogether pleasant to hear. And as they went home in the red sunset to Citico, and Great Tellico, and Tennessee Town and Choté, from along the river banks came their harsh cries—"Shoulder firelock!" or "Fa'lock," as they rehearsed it. "Feex Bay'net! Pleasant A'hms!"

It became evident that they rehearsed their learning, suiting the action to the word, once too often,—for they returned no more. Whatever might have been the advantage of their acquiring the secret of the military maneuvers from so competent and patient an instructor as the condescending Captain Stuart, the powers that were at Choté had no mind to expose their stalwart young braves to the winning wiles of that magnetic commander, and permitting them to acquire among the troops, perchance, a personal regard for the officer and an *esprit de corps* in addition to a more available military spirit. If he had had a scheme and the scheme had failed there was no intimation to that effect on the imperturbable exterior he maintained.

It had always been known that Captain Stuart was somewhat fond of the pleasures of the table, and he suddenly developed a certain domesticity in this regard. He desired to experiment on the preserving of some "neat's tongues," — as he politely called those of the buffalo,—and for the sake of this delicacy utilized a floorless hut, otherwise unoccupied, at the further end of the whole enclosure, as a smokehouse. Often smoke was seen issuing thence, but with this understanding it created no surprise. Sometimes the quartermaster-sergeant and two or three other non-commissioned officers were seen pottering about it. Now and again

Captain Demeré stood at the door and looked in. One day it chanced that Hamish, who had secured two tongues, desiring to offer them as a small tribute, came up close to him, in his deft, noiseless deerskin buskins, before Captain Demeré was aware. As he turned and saw the boy, he instantly let the door in his hand fly back — not, however, before the quick young fellow had had a dissolving view of the interior. A fire smoked in the center of the chimneyless place, half smothered with stones that constituted at once a hearth and protection from the blaze, but one flickering shred of flame revealed not only the tongues which Captain Stuart coveted, but rows of haunches and saddles of venison and bear hams, and great sections of buffalo meat, as well as pork and beef.

The boy understood in an instant, for the hunters from the fort provided day by day for the wants of the garrison from the infinite reserves of game in the vast wilderness without; these were preparations against a state of siege, kept secret that the garrison might not be dispirited by so gloomy a prospect, possibly groundless, and the settlement with its women and children affrighted. Hamish, with a caution beyond his years, affected to see naught, made his little offering, and took his way and his speculations homeward. There he was admonished to say nothing of the dis-

covery; it was very proper, Sandy thought, for the garrison to be prepared even against remote contingencies.

Hamish dutifully acquiesced, although he could but feel very wise to know the secret workings of Captain Stuart's subtle mind and divine his hidden plans, when that officer seemed to grow gravely interested in the development and resources of the country, in which he had no share save the minimum of space that the ramparts enclosed. He speculated adroitly about mineral wealth in gossiping with the groups of settlers at the gates after the drill. He told some strange stories that Attakulla-Kulla had recounted of the vestiges of previous vanished inhabitants of this country — of certain evidences of ancient mining ventures where still lay curious outlandish tools; he felt certain of the existence of copper and lead, and he believed most faithfully too in the proximity of gold; for his own part, he declared, he thought the geological formation indicated its presence. These themes, transferred to the great hall, served to fill it with eager discussions and clouds of tobacco smoke, and to detain the settlers as long as the regulations would admit of the presence of visitors. As to iron and other minerals, the springs indicated iron ore beyond a doubt, and he inquired earnestly had any one ever tried to obtain salt by the usual primitive process of

boiling and evaporation at the big salt-lick down the river? Thus nobody was surprised when Captain Stuart and the quartermaster and a detail of soldiers and a lot of big cauldrons were reported to be actively engaged in the effort to manufacture salt down at the lick. No necessary connection was apprehended between the circumstances when four packhorses came over the mountain laden with salt, for even after that event Captain Stuart continued the boiling and stirring that went on down at the lick.

Hamish wondered how long he would care to keep up the blind, for the need of salt for the preservation of more meat had by this last importation been satisfied. Perhaps Stuart himself felt it a relief when one day it chanced that some buffalo bulls met at the salt-lick, — as if by appointment, — and the battle that ensued among them was loud and long and stormy. So numerous were the contestants, and so fiercely did the conflict wage, that the officer and his force were compelled to climb to a scaffold built in one of the gigantic trees, used by the settlers who were wont to wait here for the big game and fire down upon them without the danger of being trampled to death.

This battle had other observers: a great panther in the same tree crouched on a limb not far above the soldiers, and sly and cowardly as the creature is, gazed at them with a snarling fierce distention of

jaws, plainly unaware of any weapons that could obviate the distance, and counting on a lingering remnant of the party as evidently as on the slain bison to be left on the ground when the battle should be over. Now and again came a glimpse of the stealthy approach of wolves, which the tumult of the conflict had lured to the great carcass of the defeated. Although the salt-makers waited in much impatience through several hours for the dispersal of the combatants, and were constrained to fire their pistols almost in the faces of the wolves and panthers, Captain Stuart's chief emotions seemed expressed in admiring the prowess of a champion in the fight, whom he identified as the "big *yanasa* * that was the pivot man of the wheeling flank," and, on his return, in guying the quartermaster on the loss of the great cauldrons, for their trampled remains were unrecognizable; but indeed, this worthy's countenance was lugubrious enough to grace the appellation of chief mourner, when he was apprised of the sad ending of the salt-making episode, for he loved a big kettle, as only a quartermaster or a cook can, in a country in which utensils are small and few and not to be replaced.

That Stuart felt more than he seemed to feel was suspected by Demeré, who was cognizant of how the tension gave way with a snap one day in the

* Buffalo.

autumn of that year of wearing suspense. Demeré looked up with a changed face from the dispatches just received — the first express that had come across the mountains for a month, having dodged and eluded bands of wandering Indian marauders all the way.

"Governor Lyttleton has taken the field," he said.

"*At last!*" cried Stuart, as in the extremity of impatience.

For upon the massacre of all the inmates of a strong station, carried by storm, in addition to other isolated murders up and down the frontier, the royal governor of South Carolina had initiated a series of aggressive measures; asked aid of North Carolina, urged Virginia to send reinforcements and provisions to Fort Loudon (it being a place which from its remote situation was very difficult at all times to victual, but in the event of a Cherokee war entirely cut off from means of supply), and by great exertions succeeded in mustering a force of eight hundred militia and three hundred regulars to advance into the Indian country from the south. The vigor and proportions of this demonstration alarmed the Cherokees, grown accustomed to mere remonstrance and bootless threats. They had realized, with their predominant military craft, the most strongly developed of their mental traits, that the occupation of all the available forces of the government in

Canada and on the northwestern frontiers crippled the capacity to make these threats good. Thus they had reveled in a luxury of fancied impunity and a turbulent sense of power. Now they were smitten with consternation to perceive the cloud upon the horizon. Suddenly the privileges of trade which they had forfeited, — for they had become dependent on the supplies of civilization, such as ammunition, guns, tools, blankets, etc., and certain stores in transit to them had been, by Governor Lyttleton's instructions, intercepted by Captain Coytmore, the commandant at Fort Prince George; — the opportunities of a strong alliance that they had discarded; the advantageous stipulations of the treaties they had annulled; all seemed precious when annihilated by their own act.

The Upper towns and the Lower towns — the *Ottare* and the *Ayrate* — met in solemn conclave at Choté to consider the situation.

Fort Loudon, hard by, maintained quiet and keen watch and strict discipline. The drums beat, the bugles sounded for the measured routine. The flag waved in the sunshine, slipping up to meet the dawn, fluttering down as the last segment of the vermillion disk slipped behind the dark, level, rampart-like summit of the distant Cumberland range, and the sunset-gun boomed till the echoes blared faintly even about the council-chamber at Choté,

where the warriors were gathered in state. Whether the distant thunderous tone of that potent force which the Indians admired, and feared, and sought to comprehend beyond all other arms of the service, the artillery, suggested anew the untried menace of Lyttleton's invasion of their country with a massed and adequate strength; whether they had become desirous now to regain those values of trade and alliance that they had thrown away in haste; whether their repeated reprisals had satiated their greed of vengeance for their comrades, slain on the return march from aiding the defense of the Virginia frontier; whether they were inspired only by their veiled deceit and savage craft, in which they excelled and delighted, and which we now call diplomacy, exercised between the enlightened statesmen of conferring and Christian nations, — whatever motive urged their decision, no gun barrel was sawed off, an unfailing preparation for battle, no corn pounded, no knife whetted, no face painted, no bow strung, no mysterious scalp-dance celebrated — the Cherokees were not upon the war-path!

A deputation of their "beloved men" went to forestall the martial advance of the Carolinians — Oconostota, the "great warrior," with his many wrinkles, and his crafty eye, and his port of meaning that heralded events; and Atta-Kulla-Kulla, of whom all had heard, whose courage was first of the

brain and then of the hand, whose savage instincts were disciplined by a sort of right judgment, an intelligence all independent of education, or even of that superficial culture which comes of the observation of those of a higher and trained intellect; and also Willinawaugh, fierce, intractable, willing to treat for peace, to be sure, but with a mental reservation as to how far it might serve his purposes. Savanukah was of the delegation, doubtful, denying, with a dozen devices of duplicity; he could not at times understand the English he spoke fairly well, and the French, in which he could chaffer smartly and drive a bargain, nor even the Cherokee, for which he kept a deaf ear to hinder a settlement he deprecated with the hated English—invaluable at a council was Savanukah! Of the number, too, was Tennessee Warrior, who fought, and did nothing but fight, and was ready and willing to fight again, and yet again, and to-morrow! He was always silent during the conferences, studying with successive scowls the faces of the white men. He knew nothing about numbers, and did not yearn to handle the match, and make the big gun howl; he had but to paint his face, and whet his scalp-knife, and load his firelock, and blaze away with as deadly an aim as a pioneer's. What need had the Tennessee Warrior for diplomacy? If there was to be any fighting the Tennessee Warrior would

rejoice in going along to partake. If there was to be only diplomacy, and diplomacy were long continued with peace unbroken, then the white men and the red men might be sure of one thing—of hearing the Tennessee Warrior snore! He was an excellent selection to go to a council. Then there was Bloody Fellow, Eskaquah, who had scant need of vermilion, so sure he was to paint himself red in another way. And Tus-ka-sah, the Terrapin of Chiletooch, and old Abram, Ooskuah, of Chilhowee, and Otassite, the Man-Killer of Hiwassee, and old Tassel, Rayetaeh of Toquoe,—about thirty-five in all,—went in a body to Charlestown to negotiate for peace, and some of them signed. These chiefs who signed were Oconostota, Atta-Kulla-Kulla, Otassite, Kitagusta, Oconnocca, and Killcannokea.

The day on which they set forth Captain Stuart and Captain Demeré, themselves in council in the great hall at Fort Loudon, heard the news of the departure of the delegation on this errand, looked at each other in amazement, and fell into bursts of laughter.

Had their sense of triumph been such as to find joy in reprisal they might have relished the fact that the anxieties, the secret fear, the turmoil of doubt, which Oconostota had occasioned to them, were returned to him in plenitude on his arrival in Charlestown. Governor Lyttleton had not yet set out, but

the military forces summoned forth were already entered upon their long and toilsome march from various distant districts to the appointed rendezvous at Congaree, and thither the commander of the expedition felt that he must needs forthwith repair to meet them. "I did not invite you to come here," he said to Oconostota, and despite the remonstrance of the delegation, and doubtless thinking he could treat with the savages to more effect at the head of an armed force invading their country, he postponed hearing their "talk" till he should have joined his little army, but offered them safe-conduct in accompanying his march. "Not a hair of your head shall be touched," he declared.

Returning thus, however, almost in the humiliated guise of prisoners, in fact under a strong guard, accompanying a military force that was invading Cherokee soil, comported little indeed with Oconostota's pride and his sense of the yet unbroken power of his nation. The coercions of this virtual captivity extended to the stipulations of the treaty presently formulated. While ratifying previous pledges on the part of the Indians to renounce the French interest, and providing for the renewal to them of the privileges of trade, this treaty required of them the surrender of the murderers concerned in the massacres along the frontier; pending the delivery of these miscreants to the commandant at Fort Prince

George, and as a guarantee of the full and faithful performance of this compact, the terms dictated the detention at the fort, as hostages, of twenty-two of the Cherokee delegation now present.¹⁰

Oconostota himself was numbered among the hostages to be detained at Fort Prince George until the surrender of the Cherokee murderers, but the representations of Atta-Kulla-Kulla, who was at liberty, compassed the king's release, urging his influence with his nation and the value of his counsels in the British interest for the restoration of peace. The little band of Cherokees, helpless among overwhelming numbers, was hardly in a position to openly withstand these severe measures proposed, and consequently the treaty thus signed on the 26th day of December, 1759, might have been expected to prove of but slight cohesive properties. The hostages remained of necessity at Fort Prince George; the few Indians of the unfortunate embassy who retained their freedom began to scatter, sullen, fierce, disconsolate, to their towns; the army, already discontented, mutinous, and eager to be gone because of the devastations of the smallpox in a neighboring Indian village, and the appearance of that disease among a few of the volunteers, set out upon its homeward march, without striking a blow, from an expedition that cost the province the sum of twenty-five thousand pounds sterling.

Oconostota and Willinawaugh, sitting together on the ground, in the flickering sunlight and the sparse wintry shadows of the leafless woods, looking like two large rabbits of some strange and very savage variety, watched the rear-guard file over the hill in the narrow blazed way that seemed a very tolerable road in that day. When the last man had vanished, they listened for a long time to the throb of the drum—then the sound was lost in the distance; a mere pulsing in the air continued, discriminated by the keen discernment of the Indians. At last, when not even a faint ripple of sound-waves could be felt in the still atmosphere, Oconostota keeled over suddenly and laid his ear to the ground. No vague reverberation, no electrical thrill, no stir of atom of earth striking against atom; nothing! The army was gone! The two savage old rabbits squatted again upright and seemed to ruminate on the situation. Then, as if with a single impulse, they looked at each other and broke into sudden harsh gutturals of triumphant laughter.

CHAPTER VIII

PEACE was welcome—so welcome. Hence the turning of the soil by the pioneers commenced betimes in the chill spring with heartfelt thankfulness to be anew between the stilts of a plow. The sap was rising; the winter had gone like a quiet sleep ensuing on the heavy tumults of troubled dreams.

One day a wren came and perched in a loop-hole of the block-house of the northwestern bastion and sang very loud and sweet and clear, till all the men sitting about the fire turned to look at it, amazed at its temerity, and enjoying in a lazy, sensuous way the jubilation and thrilling crystalline purity of its tone. Two of the youngsters, Lieutenant Gilmore and Ensign Whitson, ready to wager anything on anything, disputed as to the size of the creature,—if it had on no feathers,—one maintaining that it was two inches long, the other, an inch and a half. The bird brought a straw and arranged it carefully in place in the loop-hole, and then singing, flew away, and came back with a feather. His intention was evident.