make one pity them. It represented the hard labor of nearly two years — and it was all to begin anew.

When Sandy, with the vigorous Scotch thrift, began to show how easily the stockade might be moved to exclude the spring, Gilfillan shook his head warningly. A station should never be without water. Sooner or later its days were numbered. As to the stockade, it was futile. Twenty — nay, fifty men might be surprised and massacred here. For the ordinary purposes of life the place was useless.

Hamish, after the first sharp pang, was resolved into curiosity; he must needs slip through the fissure and into the cave below. When Odalie ceased her tears to remonstrate, he declared that he could get out of any cave that Willinawaugh or Choo-qualee-qualoo could, and then demanded to be tied to her apron-string to be drawn up again in case he should prove unable to take care of himself. He went down with a whoop, somewhat like Willinawaugh's own war-cry, then called out that the coast was clear, and asked for his rifle to be handed to him.

Following the wall with his hand and the sound of the water he took his way through a narrow subterranean passage, so densely black that it seemed he had never before known what darkness was. He could hear naught but the wide, hollow echo of the flow of the stream, but never did it touch his feet; and after he had progressed, as he judged, including the windings of his way, some five or six miles, he began to recollect a little, meager stream, yet flowing with a good force for its compass, that made a play in the current not a quarter of a mile, not more than one thousand feet, from the fort. So well founded was his judgment of locality that when the light first appeared, a pale glimmer at the end of a long tunnel, growing broader and clearer on approach, and he reached an archway with a sudden turn, seeming from without a mere "rock-house" — as a grotto formed by the beetling ledges of a cliff is called in that region — and with no further cavernous suggestion, the first thing that caught his eye was the English flag flying above the primitive block-houses and bastions and out-works of Fort Loudon, while the little stream gathered all its strength and hied down through the thick underbrush to join the Tennessee River.

The officers heard with evident concern of the disaster that had befallen MacLeod Station, and immediately sent a runner to bid the stationers come to the fort, pending their selection of a new site and the raising of new houses. So Odalie, with such few belongings as could be hastily collected once more loaded on a packhorse, again entered the gates of Fort Loudon with a heavy heart.

But it was a cheery group she encountered. The soldiers were swaggering about the parade in fine

form, the picture of military jollity, and the great hall was full of the officers and settlers. An express had come in with news of a different complexion. Long delayed the bearer had been; tempted to turn back here, waiting an opportunity there, now assisted on his backward journey by a friendly Indian, and again seeing a dodging chance of making through to Loudon, he had traveled his two hundred miles so slowly that the expedition he heralded came hard on the announcement of its approach. While the tidings raised the spirits of the officers and the garrison, it was evident that the movement added elements of danger and developed the crisis. Still they consisted with hope, and with that sentiment of good cheer and jovial courage which succeeded the reading of the brief dispatch from Fort Prince George.

Advices just received from Charles Town. General Amherst detaches Colonel Montgomery with adequate force to chastise Indians.

Discussions of the situation were rife everywhere. There was much talk of the officer in command of the expedition, a man of distinguished ability and tried courage, and the contradictory Gilmore and Whitson found themselves in case to argue with great vivacity, offering large wagers of untransferable commodities, — such as one's head, one's eyes,

one's life, — on the minor point, impossible to be settled at the moment, as to whether or not he spelled his name with a final "y," one maintaining this to be a fact, the other denying it, since he was a younger brother (afterward succeeding to the title) of the Earl of Eglinton, who always spelled his name Montgomerie. It might have afforded them further subject for discussion, and enlarged their appreciation of the caricature of incongruity, could they have known that some two years later three of these savage Cherokee chiefs would be presented to His Majesty King George in London by the Earl of Eglinton, where they were said to have conducted themselves with great dignity and propriety. Horace Walpole in one of his letters chronicles them as the lions of the hour, dining with peers, and having a vocal celebrity, Mrs. Clive, to sing on one of these occasions in her best style for their pleasure. In fact, such was the grace of their deportment, that several of the newspapers seemed to deduce therefrom the failure of civilization, since the aboriginal state of man could show forth these flowers of decorum, a point of view that offends to the quick a learned historian, who argues astutely throughout a precious half-page of a compendious work that the refinements of spiritual culture are still worth consideration, seeming to imply that although we cannot all be Cherokee chieftains, and take London

by storm, — in a manner different, let us say in passing, from their previous reduction of smaller cities, — it is quite advisable for us to mind our curriculum and our catechism, and be as wise and good as we may, if not distinguished.

Perhaps the Cherokees acted upon the intuitive perception of the value of doing in Rome as the Romans do. And that rule of conduct seems earlier to have been applied by Colonel Montgomery. However he spelled his name, he was sufficiently identifiable. He came northward like an avenging fury. Advancing swiftly with a battalion of Highlanders and four companies of the Royal Scots,[11] some militia and volunteers, through that wild and tangled country, he fell on Little Keowee Town, where with a small detachment he put every man to the sword, and, by making a night march with the main body of his force, almost simultaneously destroyed Estatoe, taking the inhabitants so by surprise that the beds were warm, the food was cooking, loaded guns exploded in the flames, for the town was promptly fired, and many perished thus, the soldiers having become almost uncontrollable on discovering the body of an Englishman who had only that morning suffered death by torture at the hands of the savages. Sugaw Town next met this fate — in fact, almost every one of the Ayrate towns of the Cherokee nation, before Colonel Montgomery wiped his bloody

sword, and sheathed it at the gates of Fort Prince George, having personally made several narrow escapes.

These details, however, were to Fort Loudon like the flashes of lightning of a storm still below the horizon, and of which one is only made aware by the portentous conditions of the atmosphere. The senior officers of the post began to look grave. The idea occurred to them with such force that they scarcely dared to mention it one to the other, lest it be developed by some obscure electrical transmission in the brain of Oconostota, that Fort Loudon would offer great strategic value in the possession of the Indians. The artillery, managed by French officers, who, doubtless, would appear at their appeal, might well suffice to check the English advance. The fort itself would afford impregnable shelter to the braves, their French allies and non-combatants. Always they had coveted it, always they claimed that it had been built for them, here in the heart of their nation. Stuart was not surprised by the event. He only wondered that it had not chanced earlier.

That night the enmity of the Indians was prefigured by a great glare suddenly springing into the sky. It rose above the forests, and from the open spaces about Fort Loudon, whence the woods had been cleared away, one could see it fluctuate and

flush more deeply, and expand along the horizon like some flickering mystery of the aurora borealis. But this baleful glare admitted of no doubt. One needed not to speculate on unexplained possibilities of electrical currents, and resultant thrills of light. It only epitomized and materialized the kindling of the fires of hate.

It was Odalie's little home; much that she valued still remained there — left to be quietly fetched to the fort next day. Their flitting had taken place at dusk, with but a load of wearing apparel, and it was supposed that the rest was quite safe, as the Cherokees were not presumed to be apprised of their absence. The spinning-wheel and the loom; her laborious treasures of home-woven linen for bed and table; the fine curtains on which the birds flickered for the last time; the beds and pillows, adding pounds on pounds of dry balsam needles to the fire; the flaunting, disguised tabourets, showing themselves now at their true value, and burning stolidly like the chunks of wood they were; the unsteady tables and puncheon benches; all the uncouth, forlorn little makeshifts of her humble housekeeping, that her embellishing touch had rendered so pretty, added their fuel to the flames which cast long-glancing lines of light up and down the silvery reaches of the river she had loved.

Captain Stuart and Captain Demeré, who had

gone instantly to the tower in the block-house by the gate, on the report of a strange, distant light, saw her as they came down, and both paused, Demeré wincing a trifle, preferring not to meet her. She was standing beside one of the great guns and had been looking out through the embrasure. The moon was directly overhead above the parade, and the shadows of the palisades fell outward. The officers could not avoid her; their way led them down near at hand and they needs must pass her. She turned, and as she stood with one hand on the big cannon, her white dress richly a-gleam in the moonlight, she looked at them with a smile, something of the saddest, in her eyes.

"If I wanted to scream, Mrs. MacLeod, I should scream," exclaimed Demeré, impulsively.

She laughed a little, realizing how he would have upbraided the futility of tears had she shed them — he was always so ready with his staid, kind, undeniably reasonable rebukes.

"No," she said, "I am trying to remember that home is not in a house, but in the heart."

"I think you are trying to show us the mettle of a soldier," said Demeré, admiringly.

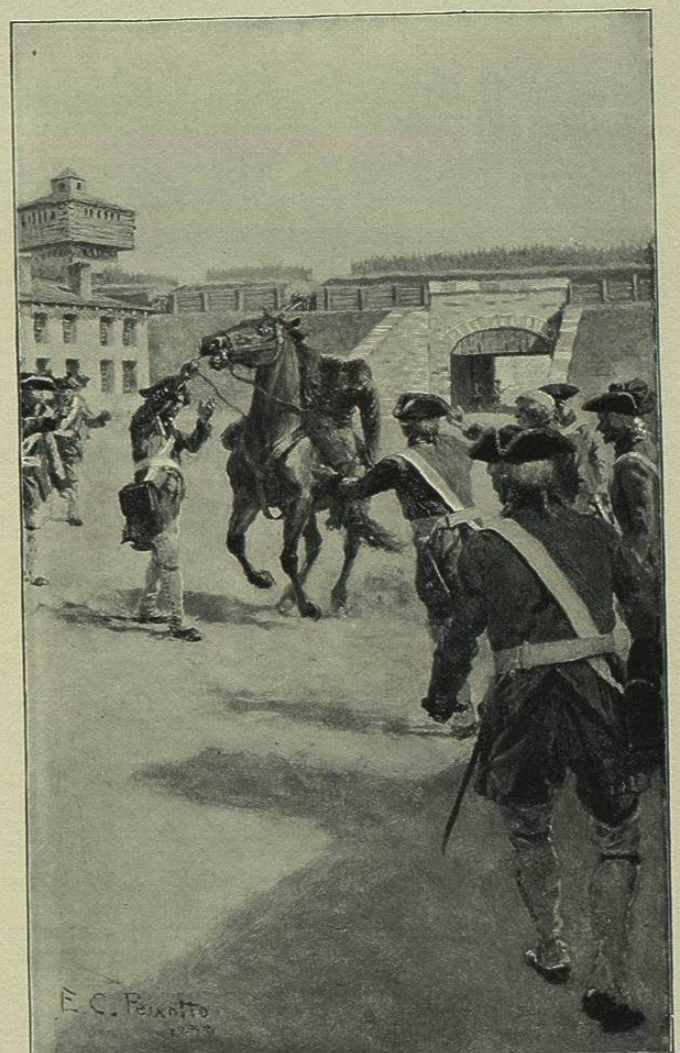
"Mrs. MacLeod would like the king's commission!" cried Stuart, breaking the tension with his bluff raillery, striking the cannon a smart tap with the butt of the pistol he carried in his hand, while

the metal gave out a deep, hollow resonance. "Her unbridled ambition was always to be the commanding officer!"

Both Stuart and Demeré thought more seriously of the demonstration as affecting the public weal than did the pioneers of the settlement. Still hoping for the best, it seemed to them not unnatural that an abandoned station should be fired as merely wanton mischief, and not necessarily with the knowledge or connivance of the head-men of the Cherokees.

The next day, the hunters of the fort went out betimes as usual, and Hamish found it agreeable to make one of the party. Corporal O'Flynn was among the number, and several horses were taken to bring in the game; a bright, clear day it was, of that sweet season when the spring blooms gradually into the richness of summer. The wind was fresh; the river sang; the clouds of a glittering whiteness, a flocculent lightness, floated high in the blue sky. Suddenly the sentry at the gate called out sharply for the corporal of the guard. The men, lounging about the parade, turned to look and listen.

The hoof-beats of a horse coming at frantic speed smote first upon the ear; then across the open space to which the glacis sloped, with snorting head and flying mane and tail, the frightened creature galloped, plunging through the gate and half



"Plunging through the gate and half across the parade ground."

across the parade ground; a soldier was on his back, leaning forward upon the animal's neck, his arms clasped about it, the stirrups and his position alone retaining him in the saddle; for he was dead — quite dead. Too dead to answer any of the dozen questions hurled at him as the soldiers caught the bridle; when the horse whirled he reeled out of the saddle, so hopelessly dead that they asked him no more. The good sorrel would have told much, if he might, as he stood, snorting and tossing his head, and trembling in every fiber, his eyes starting out of their sockets, yet, conscious he was among his friends, looking from one to another of the soldiers as they handled him, with an earnest appeal for sympathy and consolation which implied some terrible ordeal. Before an order could be given the crack of rifles came from the woods, and a few of the hunters were seen bursting from the forest, one by one, and coming at a double-quick up the slope of the glacis.

Hamish and O'Flynn were the last. They had been together a little distant from the others. Now and again they had heard the report of firearms, multiplied into something like a volley.

"Listen at them spalpeens wastin' powdher," the corporal exclaimed once, wroth at this unsoldierly practice. "Must they have twenty thrys to hit a big black buffalo? Just lemme git 'em into the

gyard house wunst agin — time they git out they'll be fit to worship the outside o' the dure; it'll look so strange an' good to 'm."

It was a wolf-trap which he was exploiting at the moment, made of logs cumbrously adjusted and baited with buffalo meat, and within it now were two large, handsome specimens whose skins were of value, and who had evidently resolved to part with those ornamental integuments as reluctantly as might be; they were growling and plunging at the timbers with a most ferocious show of fangs and the foam flying from their snarling jaws.

The sun sifted down through the great trees and the soft green shadows on the man and boy, both clad in the hunter's buckskin shirt and leggings. Corporal O'Flynn had knelt down outside the pen the better to see in the shadow the two plunging wild beasts.

"I'm afeared to shoot so close lest I might singe yer hair, but I can't stand on ceremony, me dears," he said, addressing the wolves, as he drew his pistol. "Bedad, I *must* go and stop that wastin' o' powdher!"

The next moment something suddenly sang aloud in the wilderness — a wild, strange, sibilant strain. It seemed materialized as it whizzed past Hamish's ear, and so long had it been since he had heard the flight of the almost discarded arrow that he did not

recognize the sound till he heard a sharp exclamation of pain and saw the shaft sticking in O'Flynn's right arm, pinning it to the logs of the wolf-trap. The claws of the wild beasts, reaching through, tore now the buckskin and now the flesh from his chest, as he pluckily struggled to free himself; the pistol went off in his grasp and one of the wolves fell in convulsive agonies; the other, dismayed, shrank back. Hamish caught up O'Flynn's loaded gun, looking about warily for Indians, and prudently reserving his fire. He saw naught, and the next moment he realized that O'Flynn was fainting from the pain. He knew that the straggler who had shot the arrow had sped swiftly away to summon other Cherokees, or to secure a gun or more arrows. He risked his life in waiting only a moment, but with the fellow-feeling which was so strong among the pioneers of the Tennessee Valley that it would induce two men at parting, having but one knife between them, to break and share the blade, to divide the powder that meant life in that wild country equally to the last grain, Hamish did not for one instant contemplate any other course. He rushed to O'Flynn and sought to release him, but the flint of the arrow that had gone through the heavy muscular tissues of the arm still stuck fast in the strong fiber of the logs of the trap, and the blood was streaming, and once more the wolf was angrily plunging against the

side of the pen. Suddenly the boy remembered the juvenile account of the scalping of "Dill." Calling piteously to O'Flynn not to mind, if he could help it, Hamish placed one firm foot against the straight back of the soldier, and bracing himself with his left arm around a stanch young tree, he pulled at the arrow with all his might. There was a ripping sound of flesh, a human scream, a creak of riving wood, and Corporal O'Flynn lay face downward on the ground, freed, but with the shaft still in his arm, the blood spurting from it, and the wolf plunging and snarling unheeded at the very hair of his head.

CHAPTER IX

WITH a great effort Hamish dragged O'Flynn, who was a heavy, muscular fellow, out of the reach of the wolf. Fortunately there chanced to be a spring branch near at hand, and the ice-cold water hurriedly dashed into the corporal's face, together with an earnest reminder of the hideous danger of death and torture by the Indians, and a sense of the possibility of escape, served to sufficiently restore him to enable him to get upon his feet, unsteadily enough, however, and with Hamish's help make his way toward the fort at a pretty fair speed. He fainted after they crossed the ditch, and the great gates closed. These two were the last of the hunters who found rescue; the others who had straggled in previously, reported having been fired upon by Indians, and that several dead soldiers were left upon the ground.

The parade was a scene of wild turmoil, far different from its usual orderly military aspect. The settlers and their families, alarmed at last, had fled for refuge to the fort, bringing only a small portion of