

ALICE of OLD VINCENNES

By MAURICE THOMPSON

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CHAPTER X.

M. ROUSSILLON ENTERTAINS COLONEL HAMILTON.

A DAY or two after the arrival of Hamilton the absent garrison of buffalo hunters straggled back to Vincennes and were duly sworn to demean themselves as lawful subjects of Great Britain. Rene de Ronville was among the first to take the oath, and it promptly followed that Hamilton ordered him pressed into service as a woodchopper, and log hauler during the erection of a new blockhouse, large barracks and the making of some extensive repairs of the stockade. Nothing could have been more humiliating to the proud young Frenchman. Every day he had to report bright and early to a burly Irish corporal and be ordered about as if he had been a slave, cursed at, threatened and forced to work until his hands were blistered and his muscles sore. The bitterest part of it all was that he had to trudge past both Roussillon place and the Bourcier cabin, with the eyes of Alice and Adrienne upon him.

Hamilton did not forget M. Roussillon in this connection. The giant orator soon found himself face to face with a greater trial even than Rene's. He was calmly told by the English commander that he could choose between death and telling who it was that stole the flag.

"I'll have you shot, sir, tomorrow morning if you prevaricate about this thing any longer," said Hamilton, with a right deadly strain in his voice. "You told me that you knew every man, woman and child in Vincennes at sight. I know that you saw that girl take the flag. Lying does not serve your turn. I give you until this evening to tell me who she is. If you fail you die at sunrise tomorrow."

In fact, it may be that Hamilton did not really purpose to carry out this bloodthirsty threat—most probably he relied upon M. Roussillon's imagination to torture him successfully—but the effect, as time proved, could not be accurately foreseen.

Captain Farnsworth had energy enough for a dozen ordinary men. Before he had been in Vincennes twelve hours he had seen every nook and corner of its surface. Nor was his activity due altogether to military ardor, although he never let pass an opportunity to serve the best interests of his commander. All the while his mind was on the strikingly beautiful girl whose saucy countenance had so dazzled him from the roof top of the fort what time she wrenched away the rebel flag.

"I'll find her, high or low," he thought, "for I never could fall to recognize that face. She's a trumper."

It was not in Alice's nature to hide from the English. She had held the town and fort before Helm came, and she had not found them troublesome under Abbott. She did not know that M. Roussillon was a prisoner, the family taking it for granted that he had gone away to avoid the English. Nor was she aware that Hamilton felt so keenly the disappearance of the flag. What she did know—and it gladdened her greatly—was that Beverley had been well treated by his captor. With this in her heart she went about Roussillon place singing merry snatches of creole songs, and when at the gate, which still hung lopsided on account of Beverley's force in shutting it, she came unexpectedly face to face with Captain Farnsworth, there was no great surprise on her part.

He lifted his hat and bowed very politely, but a bold smile broke over his somewhat ruddy face. He spoke in French, but in a drawing tone and with a bad accent.

"How do you do, mademoiselle. I am right glad to see you again."

Alice drew back a pace or two. She was quick to understand his allusion, and she shrank from him, fearing that he was going to inquire about the flag.

"Don't be afraid," he laughed. "I am not so dangerous. I never did hurt a girl in all my life. In fact, I am fond of them when they're nice."

"I am not in the least afraid," she replied, assuming an air of absolute dismissal, "and you don't look a bit ferocious, monsieur. You may pass on if you please."

"Suppose that I don't pass on?" he presently ventured, with just a suspicion of insolence in his attitude, but laughing until he showed teeth of remarkable beauty and whiteness. "Suppose that I should wish to have a little chat with you, mademoiselle?"

"I have been told that there are men in the world who think themselves handsome and clever and brilliant when in fact they are but conceited simpletons," she remarked rather indifferently, muffling herself in her fur wrap. "You certainly would be a fairly good hitching post for our horses if you never moved." Then she laughed out of the depth of her hood, a perfectly merry laugh, but not in the least flattering to Captain Farnsworth's vanity. He felt the scorn that it conveyed.

She laid a shapely hand on the broken gate and pushed it open.

"I beg your pardon, mademoiselle. His manner softened as she spoke. "I beg your pardon, but I came to speak to you about the flag—the flag you took

away from the fort." She had been half expecting this, but she was quite unprepared, and in spite of all she could do showed embarrassment.

"I have come to get the flag. If you will kindly bring it to me or tell me where it is?"

She quickly found words to interrupt him with, and at the same time by a great effort pulled herself together.

"You have come to the wrong place," she flung in. "I assure you that I haven't the flag."

"You took it down, mademoiselle."

"Oh, did I?"

"With bewitching grace you did, mademoiselle. I saw and admired. Will you fetch it, please?"

"Indeed I won't."

"More depends upon returning that flag than you are probably aware of," he presently said in a more serious tone. "In fact, the life of one of your townsmen and a person of some importance here, I believe, will surely be saved by it. You'd better consider, mademoiselle. You wouldn't like to cause the death of a man."

"Who is it?" she frankly demanded.

"It is the mayor, the big man of your town—M. Roussillon. I think he calls himself. He's got himself into a tight place. He'll be shot tomorrow morning if that flag is not produced. Governor Hamilton has so ordered, and what he orders is done."

"You jest, monsieur."

"I assure you that I speak the plain truth."

"You will probably catch M. Roussillon before you shoot him." She tossed her head.

"He is already a prisoner in the fort."

Alice turned pale.

"Monsieur, is this true?" Her voice had lost its happy tone. "Are you telling me that?"

"You can verify it, mademoiselle, by calling upon the commander at the fort. I am sorry that you doubt my veracity. If you will go with me I will show you M. Roussillon a tightly bound prisoner."

Jean had crept out of the gate and was standing just behind Alice, with his feet wide apart, his long chin elevated, his head resting far back between his upthrust shoulders, his hands in his pockets, his uncanny eyes gazing steadily at Farnsworth. He looked like a deformed frog ready to jump.

Alice unmistakably saw truth in the captain's countenance and felt it in his voice. The reality came to her with unblinded effect. M. Roussillon's life depended upon the return of the flag. She put her hands together and for a moment covered her eyes with them.

"I will go now, mademoiselle," said Farnsworth, "but I hope you will be in great haste about returning the flag."

Jean took hold of Alice's dress as she turned to go back into the house.

"Is he going to take the flag? Can he find it? What does he want with it? What did you do with the flag, Alice?" he whined in his peculiar, quavering voice. "Where is it?"

Her skirt dragged him along as she walked.

"Where did you put it, Alice?"

"Father Beret hid it under his floor," she answered involuntarily and almost unconsciously. "I shall have to take it back and give it up."

"No—no—I wouldn't," he quavered, dancing across the veranda as she quickened her pace and fairly spun him along. "I wouldn't let 'em have it at all."

Alice's mind was working with lightning speed. Her imagination took strong grip on the situation so briefly and effectively sketched by Captain Farnsworth. Her decision formed itself quickly.

"Stay here, Jean. I am going to the fort. Don't tell Mamma Roussillon a thing. Be a good boy."

She was gone before Jean could say a word. She meant to face Hamilton at once and be sure what danger menaced M. Roussillon. Of course, the flag must be given up if that would save her foster father any pain, and if his life were in question there could not be too great haste on her part.

She ran directly to the stockade gate and breathlessly informed a sentinel that she must see Governor Hamilton, into whose presence she was soon led. Captain Farnsworth had preceded her, but a minute or two, and was present when she entered the miserable shed room where the commander was having another talk with M. Roussillon.

The meeting was a tableau which would have been comical but for the pressure of its tragic possibilities. Hamilton, stern and sententious, stood frowning upon M. Roussillon, who sat upon the ground, his feet and hands tightly bound, a colossal statue of injured innocence.

Alice, as soon as she saw M. Roussillon, uttered a cry of sympathetic endearment and flung herself toward him with open arms. She could not reach around his great shoulders, but she did her best to include the whole bulk.

"Papa! Papa Roussillon!" she chirped between the kisses that she showered upon his weather beaten face.

Hamilton and Farnsworth regarded the scene with curious and surprised interest. M. Roussillon began speaking rapidly, but being a Frenchman he could not get on well with his tongue while his hands were tied. He could shrug his shoulders; that helped him some.

"I am to be shot, ma petite," he pathetically growled in his deep bass voice; "shot like a dog at sunrise tomorrow."

Alice kissed M. Roussillon's rough cheek once more and sprang to her feet facing Hamilton.

"You are not such a fiend and brute as to kill Papa Roussillon," she cried. "Why do you want to injure my poor, good papa?"

"I believe you are the young lady that stole the flag?" Hamilton remarked, smiling contemptuously.

She looked at him with a swift flash of indignation as he uttered these words.

"I am not a thief. I could not steal what was my own. I helped to make that flag. It was named after me. I took it because it was mine. You understand me, monsieur?"

"Tell where it is and your father's life will be spared."

She glanced at M. Roussillon.

"No, Alice," said he with a pathetically futile effort to make a fine gesture. "Don't do it. I am brave enough to die. You would not have me act the coward."

No onlooker would have even remotely suspected the fact that M. Roussillon had chanced to overhear a conversation between Hamilton and Farnsworth, in which Hamilton stated that he really did not intend to hurt M. Roussillon in any event; he merely purposed to humiliate the "big wind bag."

"Ah, no; let me die bravely for honor's sake. I fear death far less than dishonor! They can shoot me, my little one, but they cannot break my proud spirit." He tried to strike his breast over his heart.

"Perhaps it would be just as well to let him be shot," said Hamilton grimly, and with dry indifference. "I don't fancy that he's of much value to the community at best. He'll make a good target for a squad, and we need an example."

"Do you mean it? You ugly English brute. Would you murder him?" She stamped her foot.

"Not if I get that flag between now and sundown. Otherwise I shall cer-

tainly have him shot. It is all in your hands, mademoiselle. You can tell me where the flag is." Hamilton smiled again with exquisite cruelty.

Farnsworth stood by gazing upon Alice in open admiration. Her presence had power in it to which he was very susceptible.

"You look like a low, dishonorable, soulless tyrant," she said to Hamilton, "and if you get my flag how shall I know that you will keep your promise and let Papa Roussillon go free?"

"I am sorry to say that you will have to trust me, unless you'll take Captain Farnsworth for security. The captain is a gentleman, I assure you. Will you stand good for my veracity and sincerity, Captain Farnsworth?"

The young man smiled and bowed.

Alice felt the irony, and her perfectly frank nature preferred to trust rather than distrust the sincerity of others. She looked at Farnsworth, who smiled encouragingly.

"The flag is under Father Beret's floor," she said.

"Under the church floor?"

"No, under the floor of his house."

"Where is his house?"

She gave full directions how to reach it.

"Untie the prisoner," Hamilton ordered, and it was quickly done. "M. Roussillon, I congratulate you upon your narrow escape. Go to the priest's house, monsieur, and bring me that flag. It would be well, I assure you, not to be very long about it. Captain Farnsworth, you will send a guard with M. Roussillon, a guard of honor, fitting his official dignity, a corporal and two men. The honorable mayor of this important city should not go alone upon so important an errand. He must have his attendants."

"Permit me to go myself and get it," said Alice. "I can do it quickly. May I, please, monsieur?"

Hamilton looked sharply at her.

"Why, certainly, mademoiselle, certainly. Captain Farnsworth, you will escort the young lady."

"It is not necessary, monsieur."

"Oh, yes, it is necessary, my dear young lady, very necessary; so let's not have further words. I'll try to entertain his honor, the mayor, while you go and get the flag. I feel sure, mademoiselle, that you'll return with it in a few minutes. But you must not go alone."

Alice set forth immediately, and

Farnsworth, try as hard as he would, could never reach her side, so swift was her gait.

When they arrived at Father Beret's cabin, she turned and said with imperious severity:

"Don't you come in. You stay out here. I'll get it in a minute."

Farnsworth obeyed her command.

The door was wide open, but Father Beret was not inside; he had gone to see a sick child in the outskirts of the village. Alice looked about and hesitated. She knew the very puncheon that covered the flag, but she shrank from lifting it. There seemed nothing else to do, however; so, after some trouble with herself, she knelt upon the floor and turned the heavy slab over with a great thump. The flag did not appear. She peeped under the other puncheons. It was not there. The only thing visible was a little ball of paper fragments not larger than an egg.

Farnsworth heard her utter a low cry of surprise or dismay, and was on the point of going in when Father Beret, coming around the corner of the cabin, confronted him. The meeting was so sudden and unexpected that both men recoiled slightly, and then, with a mutual start, saluted.

"I came with a young lady to get the flag," said Farnsworth. "She is inside. I hope there is no serious intrusion. She says the flag is hidden under your floor."

Father Beret said nothing, but frowning as if much annoyed, stepped through the doorway to Alice's side, and stooping where she knelt, laid a hand on her shoulder as she glanced up and recognized him.

"What are you doing, my child?"

"Oh, father, where is the flag?" It was all that she could say. "Where is the flag?"

"Why, isn't it there?"

"No, you see it isn't there! Where is it?"

The priest stood as if dumfounded, gazing into the vacant space uncovered by the puncheon.

"Is it gone? Has some one taken it away?"

They turned up all the floor to no avail. La banniere d'Alice Roussillon had disappeared and Captain Farnsworth went forthwith to report the fact to his commander. When he reached the shed at the angle of the fort he found Governor Hamilton sitting stupid and dazed on the ground. One jaw was inflamed and swollen and an eye was half closed and blood-shot. He turned his head with a painful, irregular motion and his chin sagged.

Farnsworth sprang to him and lifted him to his feet, but he could scarcely stand. He licked his lips clumsily.

"What is the matter? What hurts you?"

The governor rubbed his forehead, trying to recollect.

"He struck me," he presently said with difficulty. "He hit me with his fist. Where—where is he?"

"Who?"

"That big French idiot—that Roussillon. Go after him, take him, shoot him—quick! I have been stunned. I don't know how long he's been gone. Give the alarm—do something!"

Hamilton, as he gathered his wits together, began to foam with rage, and his passion gave his bruised and swollen face a terrible look.

The story was short and may be quickly told. M. Roussillon had taken advantage of the first moment when he and Hamilton were left alone. One Herculean buffet, a swinging smash of his enormous fist on the point of the governor's jaw, and then he walked out of the fort unchallenged, doubtless on account of his lordly and masterful air.

"Zif!" he exclaimed, shaking himself and lifting his shoulders when he had passed beyond hearing of the sentinel at the gate. "Zif! I can punch a good stiff stroke yet, M. le Gouverneur. Ah, zif!" and he blew like a porpoise.

Every effort was promptly made to recapture M. Roussillon, but his disappearance was absolute. Even the reward offered for his scalp by Hamilton only gave the Indians great trouble; they could not find the man.

Such a beginning of his administration of affairs at Vincennes did not put Hamilton into a good humor. He was overbearing and irascible at best, and under the irritation of small but exceedingly unpleasant experiences he made life well nigh unendurable to those upon whom his dislike chanced to fall. Beverley quickly felt that it was going to be very difficult for him and Hamilton to get along agreeably. With Helm it was quite different; smoking, drinking, playing cards, telling good stories—in a word, rude and not infrequently boisterous conviviality drew him and the commandant together.

Under Captain Farnsworth's immediate supervision the fort was soon in excellent repair and a large blockhouse and comfortable quarters for the men were built. Every day added to the strength of the works and to the importance of the post as a strategic position for the advance guard of the British army.

Hamilton was ambitious to prove himself conspicuously valuable to his country. He was dreaming vast dreams and laying large plans. The Indians were soon anxious to gain his favor, and to bind them securely to him he offered liberal pay in rum and firearms, blankets, trinkets and ammunition for the scalps of rebels. He kept this as secret as possible from his prisoners, but Beverley soon suspected that a "traffic in hair," as the terrible business had been named, was going on.

Savages came in from far away with scalps yet scarcely dry dangling at their belts. It made the young Virginian's blood chill in his heart, and he regretted that he had given Hamilton his parole of honor not to attempt to escape.

Among the Indians occasionally reporting to Hamilton with their ghastly

out valuable trophies was LOUG HAIN, who slipped into the fort and out again rather warily, not having much confidence in those Frenchmen who had once upon a time given him a memorable run for his life.

Winter shut down, not cold, but damp, changeable, raw. The work on the fort was nearly completed, and Rene de Ronville would have soon been relieved of his servile and exasperating employment under the Irish corporal, but just at the point of time when only a few days' work remained for him he became furious, on account of an insulting remark, and struck the corporal over the head with a hand-spiked. This happened in a wood some miles from town, where he was loading logs upon a sled. There chanced to be no third person present when the deed was done, and some hours passed before they found the officer quite cold and stiff beside the sled. His head was crushed to a pulp.

Hamilton, now thoroughly exasperated, began to look upon the French inhabitants of Vincennes as all like M. Roussillon and Rene—but waiting for an opportunity to strike him unawares. He increased his military vigilance, ordered the town patrolled day and night, and forbade public gatherings of the citizens, while at the same time he forced them to furnish him a large amount of provisions.

When little Adrienne Bourcier heard of Rene's terrible act, followed by his successful escape to the woods and of the tempting reward offered by Hamilton for his scalp, she ran to Roussillon place well nigh crazed with excitement. She had always depended upon Alice for advice, encouragement and comfort in her troubles, but in the present case there was not much that her friend could do to cheer her. With M. Roussillon and Rene both fugitives, tracked by wily savages, a price on their heads, while every day added new dangers to the French inhabitants of Vincennes, no rosy view could possibly be taken of the situation. Alice did her best, however, to strengthen her little friend's faith in a happy outcome. She quoted what she considered unimpeachable authority to support her optimistic argument.

"Lieutenant Beverley says that the Americans will be sure to drive Hamilton out of Vincennes or capture him. Probably they are not so very far away now, and Rene may join them and come back to help punish these brutal Englishmen. Don't you wish he would, Adrienne? Wouldn't it be romantic?"

"He's armed; I know that," said Adrienne, brightening a little. "and he's brave, Alice; brave as can be. He came right back into town the other night and got his gun and pistols. He was at our house, too, and oh—"

She burst out crying again. Adrienne's simple heart could not grasp the romantic criterion with which Alice was wont to measure action. Her mind was single, impulsive, narrow and direct in all its movements. She loved, hated, desired, caressed, repulsed not for any assignable reason more solid or more luminous than "because." She adored Rene and wanted him near her.

"Why couldn't he be quiet and do as your man, Lieutenant Beverley, did?" she cried in a sudden change of mood, the tears streaming down her cheeks. "Lieutenant Beverley surrendered and took the consequences. He didn't kill somebody and run off to be hunted like a bear. No wonder you're happy, Alice. I'd be happy, too, if Rene were here and came to spend half of every day with me."

"Why, what a silly girl you are!" Alice exclaimed, her face reddening prettily. "How foolish you prattle! I'm sure I don't trouble myself about Lieutenant Beverley. What put such absurd nonsense into your head, Adrienne?"

"Because, that's what, and you know it's so too. You love him just as much as I love Rene, and that's just all the love in the world, and you needn't deny it, Alice Roussillon!"

Alice laughed and hugged the wee, brown faced mite of a girl until she almost smothered her.

It was growing dusk when Adrienne left Roussillon place to go home. The wind cut lily across the commons and moaned as it whirled around the cabins and cattle sheds. She ran briskly,

"Oh, Father Beret! Help me! Help me!"

When Farnsworth recovered from the breath expelling shock of the jab in his side and got himself once more in a vertical position, both girl and priest were gone. He looked this way and that, rapidly becoming sober and beginning to wonder how the thing could have happened so easily. His ribs felt as if they had been hit with a heavy hammer.

"By Jove!" he muttered all to himself. "The old prayer singing heathen! By Jove!" And with this very brilliant and relevant observation he rubbed his sore side and went his way to the fort.

(To Be Continued Next Week.)

Things.

Every woman knows a thing or two; a thing being another woman who looks better in a hat trimmed the same way.

Women are all things to each other, if not to all men.

Women know all things in different ways. Thus we have the kissing acquaintance, the speaking acquaintance, and the glaring acquaintance amongst women.

Herbert Spencer maintained things are unknowable. But the horizon of one who was not only a philosopher, but lived 83 years without marrying, was necessarily limited.—Ex.

Nothing Equal to Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy for Bowel Complaints in Children.

"We have used Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy in our family for years," says Mrs. J. B. Cooke, of Nederland, Texas. "We have given it to all of our children. We have used other medicines for the same purpose, but never found anything to equal Chamberlain's. If you will use it as directed it will always cure." For sale by Hood Bros., Selma Drug Co., Bens-a Drug Co.

Send by Inclosed Girl.

An East Side druggist is preparing a unique scrap book. It contains the written orders are both curious and amusing. Here are some that are copied from the originals.

"I have a cute pain in my child's diagram. Please give my son something to release it."

"Dear Doccher, please give bearer five sense worse of Auntie Toxyn for baby's throat and oblesage!"

"My little baby has eat up its father's parrish plaster send an anecdote quick as possible by inclosed girl."

"This child is my little girl. I send you five cent to buy two siteless powders for a groan up adult who is sike."

"You will please give the little boi five cents worth of epicac for to throw up in a five months old babe. N. B.—The babe has a sore stummick."

"I haf a hot time in my inside and which I wood like it to be extinguished. What is good for to extinguish it? The inclosed money is the price of the extinguisher. Hurry please"—Ex.

"DO IT TODAY."

The time-worn injunction, "Never put off 'til tomorrow what you can do today," is now generally presented in this form: "Do it today!" That is the terse advice we ought to give you about that hacking cough or demoralizing cold with which you have been struggling for several days, perhaps weeks. Take some reliable remedy for it TODAY—and let that remedy be Dr. Boschee's German Syrup, which has been in use for over thirty-five years. A few doses of it will undoubtedly relieve your cough or cold, and its continued use for a few days will cure you completely. No matter how deep-seated your cough, even if dread consumption has attacked your lungs, German Syrup will surely effect a cure—as it has done before in thousands of apparently hopeless cases of lung trouble. New trial bottles, 25c; regular size, 75c. At Hood Bros., druggists.

"Oh, Father Beret! Help me!" muffled in a wrap, partly through fear and partly to keep warm, and had gone two-thirds of her way when she was brought to an abrupt stop by the arms of a man. She screamed sharply, and Father Beret, who was coming out of a cabin not far away, heard and knew the voice.

"Ho, ho, my little lady!" cried Adrienne's captor in a breezy, jocund tone. "You wouldn't run over a fellow, would you?" The words were French, but the voice was that of Captain Farnsworth, who laughed while he

reporting to Hamilton with their ghastly



"Why do you want to injure my poor, good papa?"



"Oh, Father Beret! Help me!"

FOLEY'S HONEY AND TAR Cures Colds; Prevents Pneumonia