

ALICE of OLD VINCENNES

By MAURICE THOMPSON

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CHAPTER XIII.

A MEETING IN THE WILDERNESS.

BEVERLEY set out on his mid-winter journey to Kaskaskia with a tempest in his heart, and it was perhaps the storm's energy that gave him the courage to face undaunted and undoubting what his experience must have told him lay in his path. What meant suffering to him if he could but rescue Alice? And what were life should he fail to rescue her? The old, old song hummed in his heart, every phrase of it distinct above the tumult of the storm. Could cold and hunger, swollen streams, ravenous wild beasts and scalp hunting savages baffle him? No; there is no barrier that can hinder love. He said this over and over to himself after his encounter with the four Indian scouts on 1. Wabash. He repeated it with every hearty beat until he fell in with some friendly red men, who took him to their camp, where, to his great surprise, he met M. Roussillon. It was his song when again he strode off toward the west on his lonely way.

He did not know that Long Hair and his band were fast on his track, but the knowledge could not have urged him to greater haste. He strained every muscle to its utmost, kept every nerve to the highest tension. Yonder toward the west was help for Alice. That was all he cared for.

But if Long Hair was pursuing him with relentless greed for the reward offered by Hamilton there were friendly footsteps still nearer behind him, and one day at high noon while he was bending over a little fire broiling some liberal cuts of venison a finger tapped him on the shoulder. He sprang up and grappled Uncle Jazon. At the same time, standing near by, he saw Simon Kenton, his old time Kentucky friend. The pugnacious features of one and the fine, rugged face of the other swam in a mist before Beverley's eyes. Kenton was laughing quietly, his strong, upright form shaking to the force of his pleasure. He was in the early prime of a vigorous life, not handsome, but strikingly attractive by reason of a certain glow in his face and a kindly flash in his deep set eyes.

"Well, well, my boy!" he exclaimed, laying his left hand on Beverley's shoulder, while in the other he held a long, heavy rifle. "I'm glad to see ye, glad to see ye!"

"Thought ye was Injuns, eh?" said Uncle Jazon. "An' of we had 'a' been we'd 'a' been shore of your scalp!" The wizened old crook cackled gleefully.

"And where are ye goin'?" demanded Kenton. "Ye're makin' what lacks a heap o' both a bee line for some place or other."

Beverley was dazed and vacant minded. Things seemed wavering and dim. He pushed the two men from him and gazed at them without speaking. Their presence and voices did not convince him.

"Ye're meat's a-burnin'," said Uncle Jazon, stooping to turn it on the smoldering coals. "Ye must be hungry. Cookin' enough for a regiment."

Kenton shook Beverley with rough familiarity as if to rouse his faculties. "What's the matter? Fitz, my lad, don't ye know Si Kenton? It's not so long since we were like brothers, and now ye don't speak to me. Ye've not forgotten me, Fitz?"

"Mebby he don't like ye as well as ye thought he did," drawled Uncle Jazon. "I hev known o' fellers a-bein' mistaken jes' that way."

Beverley got his wits together as best he could, taking in the situation by such degrees as seemed at the time unduly slow, but which were really mere momentary falterings.

"Why, Kenton! Jazon!" he presently exclaimed, a cordial gladness blending with his surprise. "How did you get here? Where did you come from?"

He looked from one to the other back and forth, with a wondering smile breaking over his bronzed and determined face.

"We've been hot on yer trail for thirty hours," said Kenton. "Roussillon put us on it back yonder. But what are ye up to? Where are ye goin'?"

"I'm going to Clark at Kaskaskia to bring him yonder." He waved his hand eastward. "I am going to take Vincennes and kill Hamilton."

"Well, ye're takin' a mighty queer course, my boy, if ye ever expect to find Kaskaskia. Ye're already twenty miles too far south."

"Carryin' his gun on the same shoulder all the time," said Uncle Jazon, "has made 'im kind o' swing in a curve like. 'Tain't good luck nowher to carry yer gun on yer left shoulder. When ye do it meks ye take a longer step with yer right foot than ye do with yer left, an' ye can't walk a straight line to save yer liver. Ventrebleu! La venaison brule encore! Look at that dasted meat burnin' agin'!"

He jumped back to the fire to turn the scorching cuts.

Beverley wrung Kenton's hand and looked into his eyes as a man does when an old friend comes suddenly out of the past, so to say, and brings the freshness and comfort of a strong, true soul to brace him in his hour of greatest need.

"Of all men in the world, Simon Kenton, you were the least expected. But how glad I am, how thankful! Now I

know I shall succeed. We are going to capture Vincennes, Kenton, are we not? We shall, shan't we, Jazon? Nothing, nothing can prevent us, can it?"

Kenton heartily returned the pressure of the young man's hand, while Uncle Jazon looked up quizzically and said:

"We're a to'ble 'spectable lot to prevent; but, then, we might git prevented. I've seed better men 'an us purty consid'ble prevented lots o' times in my life."

"For my part," said Kenton, "I am with ye, old boy, in anything ye want to do. But now ye've got to tell me something. I see that ye're keepin' something back. What is it?" He glanced sidewise slyly at Uncle Jazon.

Beverley was frank to a fault, but somehow his heart tried to keep Alice all to itself. He hesitated; then—

"I broke my parole with Governor Hamilton," he said. "He forced me to do it. I feel altogether justified. I told him beforehand that I should certainly leave Vincennes and go get a force to capture and kill him, and I'll do it, Simon Kenton; I'll do it!"

"I see, I see," Kenton assented, "but what was the row about? What did he do to excite ye, to make ye feel justified in breakin' over yer parole in that high handed way? Fitz, I know ye too well to be fooled by ye. You've got somethin' in mind that ye don't want to tell. Well, then, don't tell it. Uncle Jazon and I will go it blind, won't we, Jazon?"

"Blind as two moles," said the old man; "but, as for that secret," he added, winking both eyes at once, "I don't know as it's so mighty hard to guess. It's always safe to 'imagine' a woman in the case. It's mostly women that sends men a-trottin' off 'bout nothin', sort o' crazy-like."

Beverley looked guilty and Uncle Jazon continued:

"They's a pooty gal at Vincennes, an' I see the young man a-steppin' into her house about fifteen times a day 'fore I left the place. Mebbe she's tucked up w' one o' them English officers. Gals is slippery an' onsertin'."

"Jazon," cried Beverley, "stop that instantly, or I'll wring your old neck!" His anger was real, and he meant what he said. He clinched his hands and glowered.

"Don't get mad at the old man," said Kenton, plucking Beverley aside. "His yer friend from his heels to his old scalped crown. Let him have his fun." Then, lowering his voice almost to a whisper, he continued:

"I was in Vincennes for two days and nights spyin' around. Mae Godere hid me in her house when there was need of it. I know how it is with ye. I got all the gossip about ye and the young lady, as well as all the information about Hamilton and his forces that Colonel Clark wants. I'm goin' to Kaskaskia, but I think it quite possible that Clark will be on his march to Vincennes before we get there, for Vigo has taken him full particulars as to the fort and its garrison, and I know that he's determined to capture the whole thing or die tryin'."

Beverley felt his heart swell and his blood leap strong in his veins at these words.

"I saw ye while I was in Vincennes," Kenton added, "but I never let ye see me. Ye were a prisoner, and I had no business with ye while your parole held. I felt that it was best not to tempt ye to give me aid or to let ye have knowledge of me while I was a spy. I left two days before ye did and should have been at Kaskaskia by this time if I hadn't run across Jazon, who detained me. He wanted to go with me, and I waited for him to repair the stock of his old gun. He tinkered at it 'tween meals and showers for half a week at the Indian village back yonder before he got it just to suit him. But I tell ye he's waitin' for ye in any length of time, and I was glad to let him have his way."

Kenton, who was still a young man in his early thirties, respected Beverley's reticence on the subject uppermost in his mind. Mme. Godere had told the whole story with flamboyant embellishments. Kenton had seen Alice, and, inspired with the gossip and a surreptitious glimpse of her beauty, he felt perfectly familiar with Beverley's condition. He was himself a victim of the tender passion to the extent of being an exile from his Virginia home, which he had left on account of dangerously wounding a rival. But he was well touched with the backwoodsman's taste for joke and banter. He and Uncle Jazon, therefore, knowing the main feature of Beverley's predicament, enjoyed making the most of their opportunity in their rude but perfectly generous and kindly way.

By indirection and impersonal details, as regarded his feelings toward Alice, Beverley in due time made his friends understand that his whole ambition was centered in rescuing her. Nor did the motive fail to enlist their sympathy to the utmost. If all the world loves a lover all men having the best virile instinct will fight for a lover's cause. Both Kenton and Uncle Jazon were enthusiastic. They wanted nothing better than an opportunity to aid in rescuing any girl who had shown so much patriotism and pluck. But

Uncle Jazon was fond of Alice, and Beverley's story affected him peculiarly on her account.

"They's one question I'm a-goin' to put to ye, young man," he said after he had heard everything and they had talked it all over. "an' I want ye to answer it straight as a bullet from yer gun."

"Of course, Jazon. Go ahead," said Beverley. "I shall be glad to answer." But his mind was far away with the gold haired maiden in Hamilton's prison. He scarcely knew what he was saying.

"Air ye expectin' to marry Alice Roussillon?"

Beverley started as if a blow had been aimed at him. Uncle Jazon's question indeed was a blow as unexpected as it was direct and powerful.

"I know it's pooty plinted," the old man added after a short pause, "an' ye may think that I ain't got no business askin' it, but I have. That leetle gal's a pet o' mine, an' I'm a-lookin' after her an' expectin' to see that she's not bothered by nobody who's not goin' to do right by her. Marryin' is a mighty good thing, but—"

Kenton had been peeping under the low hanging scrub oak boughs while Uncle Jazon was speaking these last words, and now he suddenly interrupted:

"The dance! Look yonder!" he growled out in startling tone. "Injuns!"

It was a sharp snap of the conversation's thread, and at the same time our three friends realized that they had been careless in not keeping a better lookout. They let fall the meat they had not yet finished eating and seized their guns.

Five or six dark forms were moving toward them across a little point of the prairie that cut into the wood a quarter of a mile distant.

"Yander's more of em," said Uncle Jazon, as if not in the least concerned, wagging his head in an opposite direction, from which another squad was approaching.

That he duly appreciated the situation appeared only in the celerity with which he acted.

Kenton at once assumed command, and his companions felt his perfect fitness. There was no doubt from the first as to what the Indians meant, but even if there had been it would have soon vanished, for in less than three minutes twenty-one savages were swiftly and silently forming a circle inclosing the spot where the three white men, who had covered themselves as best they could with trees, waited in grim steadiness for the worst.

Quite beyond gunshot range, but near enough for Uncle Jazon to recognize Long Hair as their leader, the Indians halted and began making signs to one another all round the line. Evidently they dreaded to test the marksmanship of such riflemen as they knew most border men to be. Indeed Long Hair had personal knowledge of what might certainly be expected from both Kenton and Uncle Jazon. They were terrible when out for fight. The red warriors from Georgia to the great lakes had heard of them; their names smacked of tragedy. Nor was Beverley without fame among Long Hair's followers, who had listened to the story of his fighting qualities brought to Vincennes by the two survivors of the scouting party so cleverly defeated by him.

"The liver colored cowards," said Kenton, "are afeared of us in a shootin' match. They know that a lot of 'em would have to die if they should undertake an open fight with us. It's some sort of a sneakin' game they are studyin' about just now."

"I'm a-gittin' mos' too ole to shoot woth a cent," said Uncle Jazon, "but I'd give half o' my scalp of that Long Hair would come clost enough fo' me to git a bead onto his left eye. It's to'ble plain that we're gone gosh'n's this time, I'm thinkin'. Still it'd be mighty satisfyin' if I could plug out a left eye or two 'fore I go."

Beverley was silent. The words of his companions were heard by him, but not noticed. Nothing interested him save the thought of escaping and making his way to Clark. To fall meant infinitely more than death, of which he had as small fear as most brave men, and to succeed meant everything that life could offer. So in the unlimited selfishness of love he did not take his companions into account.

The three stood in a close set clump of four or five scrub oaks at the highest point of a thinly wooded knoll that sloped down in all directions to the prairie. Their view was wide, but in places obstructed by the trees.

"Men," said Kenton after a thoughtful and watchful silence, "the thing looks kind o' squally for us. I don't see much of a chance to get out of this alive, but we've got to try."

He showed by the density of his voice and a certain gray film in his face that he felt the awful gravity of the situation, but he was calm, and not a muscle quivered.

"They's jes' two chances for us," said Uncle Jazon, "an' them's as slim as a broom straw. We've got to stan' here an' fight it out or wait till night an' sneak through atween 'em an' run for it."

"I don't see any hope o' sneakin' through the line," observed Kenton. "It's not goin' to be dark tonight."

"Wa-a!" Uncle Jazon drawled nonchalantly while he took in a quid of tobacco. "I've been into tighter squeezes 'an this many a time, an' I got out too."

"Likely enough," said Kenton, still reflecting while his eyes roamed around the circle of savages.

"I fit the skunks in Ferginny 'fore ye's thought of, Si Kenton, an' down in Car'lina in them hills. If ye think I'm a-goin' to be scalped where they ain't no scalp 'thout tryin' a few dodges, yer a dad dastard fool 'an I used to think ye was, an' that's makin' a big compliment to ye."

"Well, we don't have to argy this question, Uncle Jazon. They're a-git-



A young warrior leaped high and fell paralyzed.

tin' ready to run in upon us, and we've got to fight. I say, Beverley, are ye ready for fast shootin'? Have ye got a plenty o' bullets?"

"Yes; Roussillon gave me a hundred. Do you think—"

He was interrupted by a yell that leaped from savage mouth to mouth all round the circle, and then the charge began.

"Steady, now!" growled Kenton. "Let's not be in a hurry. Wait till they come nigh enough to hit 'em before we shoot."

The time was short, for the Indians came on at almost race horse speed.

Uncle Jazon fired first, the long, keen crack of his small bore rifle splitting the air with a suggestion of vicious energy, and a lithe young warrior who was outstripping all his fellows leaped high and fell paralyzed.

"Don't shoot woth a cent," mut-

tered the old man, deftly beginning to reload his gun the while, "but I jes' happened to hit that buck. He'll never git my scalp, thet's sartin and sure."

Beverley and Kenton each likewise dropped an Indian, but the shots did not even check the rush. Long Hair had planned to capture his prey, not kill it. Every savage had his orders to take the white men alive, Hamilton's larger reward depended on this.

Right on they came, as fast as their nimble legs could carry them, yelling like demons, and they reached the grove before the three white men could reload their guns. Then every warrior took cover behind a tree and began scrambling forward from bole to bole, thus approaching rapidly without much exposure.

A struggle ensued which for desperate energy has probably never been surpassed. Like three lions at bay, the white men met the shock, and lion-like they fought in the midst of seventeen stalwart and determined savages. "Don't kill them. Take them alive. Throw them down and hold them," was Long Hair's order, loudly shouted in the tongue of his tribe.

Both Kenton and Jazon understood every word and knew the significance of such a command from the leader. It naturally came into Kenton's mind that Hamilton had been informed of his visit to Vincennes and had offered a reward for his capture. This being true, death as a spy would be the certain result if he were taken back. He might as well die now. As for Beverley, he thought only of Alice yonder as he had left her a prisoner in Hamilton's hands. Uncle Jazon, if he thought at all, probably considered nothing but present escape, though he prayed audibly to the Blessed Virgin even while he lay helpless upon the ground pinned down by the weight of an enormous Indian. He could not move any part of himself save his lips, and these mechanically put forth the wheezing supplication.

Beverley and Kenton, being young and powerful, were not so easily mastered. For awhile indeed they appeared to be more than holding their own. They time and time again scattered the entire crowd by the violence of their muscular efforts, and after it had finally closed in upon them in a solid body they swayed and swung it back and forth and round and round until the writhing, savage mass looked as if caught in the vortex of a whirlwind. But each tremendous exertion could not last long. Eight to one made too great a difference between the contending parties, and the only possible conclusion of the struggle soon came. Seized upon by desperate, clinging, wolflike assailants, the white men felt their arms, legs and bodies weighted down and their strength fast going.

Kenton fell next after Uncle Jazon and was soon tightly bound with rawhide thongs. He lay on his back panting and utterly exhausted, while Beverley still kept up the unequal fight.

Long Hair sprang in at the last moment to make doubly certain the securing of his most important captive. He flung his long and powerful arms around Beverley from behind and made a great effort to throw him upon the ground. The young man, feeling this fresh and vigorous clasp, turned himself about to put forth one more mighty spurt of power. He lifted the stalwart Indian bodily and dashed him headlong against the buttressed root of a tree half a rod distant, breaking the smaller bone of his left forearm and well nigh knocking him senseless.

It was a fine exhibition of manly strength, but there could be nothing gained by it. A blow on the back of his head the next instant stretched Beverley face downward and unconscious on the ground. The savages turned him over and looked satisfied when they found that he was not dead. They bound him with even greater care than they had shown in securing the others, while Long Hair stood by stolidly look-

ing on, meantime supporting his broken forearm in his hand.

"Ugh, dog!" he grunted and gave Beverley a kick in the side. Then turning a fiendish stare upon Uncle Jazon, he proceeded to deliver against his old, dry ribs three or four like contributions with resounding effect. "Polecat! Little old greasy woman!" he snarled. "Make good fire for warrior to dance by!" Kenton also received his full share of the kicks and verbal abuse, after which Long Hair gave orders for fires to be built. Then he looked to his hurt arm and had the bone set and bandaged, never so much as wincing the while.

It was soon apparent that the Indians purposed to celebrate their successful enterprise with a feast. They cooked a large amount of buffalo steak. Then, each with his hands full of the savory meat, they began to dance around the fires, droning meantime an atrociously repellent chant.

Before this was ended a rain began to fall, and it rapidly thickened from a desultory shower to a roaring down-pour that effectually quenched not only the fires around which the savages were dancing, but the enthusiasm of the dancers as well. During the rest of the afternoon and all night long the fall was incessant, accompanied by a cold, panting, wailing southwest wind.

Beverley lay on the ground face upward, the rawhide strings torturing his limbs, the chill of cold water searching his bones. He could see nothing but the dim, strange canopy of flying rain, against which the bare boughs of the scrub oaks were vaguely outlined; he could hear nothing but the cry of the wind and the swash of the water which fell upon him and ran under him, bubbling and gurgling as if fiendishly exultant.

The night dragged on through its terrible length, dealing out its indescribable horrors, and at last morning arrived, with a stinging and uncertain gift of light slowly increasing until the dripping trees appeared forlornly gray and brown against clouds now break-

ing into masses that gave but little rain.

There was great stir among the Indians. Long Hair stalked about scrutinizing the ground. Beverley saw him come near time and again with a hideous, inquiring scowl on his face. Grunts and laconic exclamations passed from mouth to mouth, and presently the import of it all could not be mistaken. Kenton and Jazon were gone—had escaped during the night—and the rain had completely obliterated their tracks.

The Indians were furious. Long Hair sent out picked parties of his best scouts with orders to scour the country in all directions, keeping with himself a few of the older warriors. Beverley was fed what he would eat of venison, and Long Hair made him un-



Beverley dashed him headlong against the root of a tree.

derstand that he would have to suffer some terrible punishment on account of the escape of his companions.

Late in the day the scouts straggled back with the report that no track or sign of the fugitives had been discovered, and immediately a consultation was held. Most of the warriors, including all of the young bucks, demanded a torture entertainment as compensation for their exertions and the unexpected loss of their own prisoners, for it had been agreed that Beverley belonged exclusively to Long Hair, who objected to anything which might deprive him of the great reward offered by Hamilton for the prisoner if brought to him alive.

In the end it was agreed that Beverley should be made to run the gantlet, provided that no deadly weapons were used upon him during the ordeal.

(To be Continued Next Week.)

Nervous Dyspepsia Cured by Rydale's Stomach Tablets.

Mr. R. E. Jones, buyer for Parker & Bridget, whose large department stores are located at 9th and Penn. Ave. Wash. D. C. writes, under date of April 14, '04, as follows: Last February, one year, while in New York on business for my house, I caught a severe cold, which laid me up for several weeks and left me weak and nervous. I had little or no appetite, and my digestion was very poor. My physicians could not get at the cause of my trouble, as my diet seemed so much impaired. I decided to try Rydale's Stomach Tablets, being assured by a friend, they were a good dyspepsia medicine. After using them for a few days I began to realize that I was getting better. I gave up the doctor's prescription and have gained 20 pounds while using two boxes of these tablets. I never felt better in my life, and accredit Rydale's Stomach Tablets with having cured me. I can recommend them most heartily, to sufferers from nervous indigestion and general run-down conditions of the system. J. R. Ledbetter, Hood Bros.

There'll Be no Irish There.

A woman sat in a street-car in a Canadian town one day when the car stopped at a crossing and another woman got in and sat beside the other woman saying, "Well, well, Mrs. Fiewclose, wherever have you been all summer?"

"Oh, we were at the Lake." "So were we—at Grand Bend." "We were at Port Stanley," said the woman who had opened the oratorical contest.

"Have a nice time?" "Well, not exactly. There's so many Irish there," she added with a weary look, but without so much as a glance about the car.

"Same way at the Bend—Irish, Irish everywhere."

A stout lady under a green hat that turned up behind sat in the seat immediately in front of the elocutionists. The stout lady turned and sized them up, but by this time they were dead to the world.

As the car rattled on they talked of everything and most everybody, and finally fetched up at the summer resort with Irish for dessert.

By this time there was Irish stew in the front seat.

The stout person under the pea-green hat turned and shone on them. "Ladies," she began, "I've me give yez a bit uv advice—the next time ye get a holiday, yez better spend it in hell—there'll be no Irish there."—Coy Warman, in May Lippincott's.

To Farmer and Stockman.

For Farmers and Stock owners; use Elliott's Emulsified Oil Liniment—is the best ever produced. You get a full half pint for 25c. and you'll find it a very satisfactory liniment for use in the family and on animals. Hood Bros., J. R. Ledbetter.

Harper's Magazine.

Two of the leading features of Harper's Magazine for May are an article on Hamlet, by Theodore Watts-Dunton, and "Our System of Neutrality," by Professor John Bassett Moore, of Columbia University. The leading stories are "Josephine," by Edward S. Martin; "The Black Death," by Warwick Deering; "The Gray Chieftain," by "A Sioux Indian," "The Cenotaph," by Mary Tracy Earle; There are several other stories by well known writers, and the usual departments are well up to the standard.

The Secret of Happiness.

The secret of happiness in the home is love. Pure, true, unselfish love and a great abundance of it. Enough to outweigh all pride and jealousy.

Sometimes in the home there will arise misunderstandings. Sometimes one is tired, and hasty a word is spoken. Sometimes we have a "blue day," when everything goes wrong. But to offset all these there are three small words—

"I love you" drives the frowns away; I love you drives the tears; I love you sets the words to say "To brighten all the years.

I love you brings the sunny smile; I love you cheers the heart; I love you makes life worth the while And bids all gloom depart. —Mabel Chase Norman in National Magazine for May.

All luxury corrupts either the morals or the taste.—Joubert.

DO YOU GET UP WITH A LAME BACK?

Kidney Trouble Makes You Miserable.

Almost everybody who reads the newspapers is sure to know of the wonderful cures made by Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root, the great kidney, liver and bladder remedy.

It is the great medical triumph of the nineteenth century; discovered after years of scientific research by Dr. Kilmer, the eminent kidney and bladder specialist, and is wonderfully successful in promptly curing lame back, kidney, bladder, uric acid troubles and Bright's Disease, which is the worst form of kidney trouble.

Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root is not recommended for everything but if you have kidney, liver or bladder trouble it will be found just the remedy you need. It has been tested in so many ways, in hospital work, in private practice, among the helpless too poor to purchase relief and has proved so successful in every case that a special arrangement has been made by which all readers of this paper who have not already tried it, may have a sample bottle sent free by mail, also a book telling more about Swamp-Root and how to find out if you have kidney or bladder trouble. When writing mention reading this generous offer in this paper and send your address to Dr. Kilmer & Co., Birmingham, N. Y. The regular fifty cent and Home of Swamp-Root, dollar sizes are sold by all good druggists.

