

In the Days of Poor Richard

by IRVING BACHELLER

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"DROP YER GUNS!"

SYNOPSIS.—Solomon Binkus, veteran scout and interpreter, and his young companion, Jack Irons, pass through Horse Valley, New York, in September, 1788, to warn settlers of an Indian uprising. Jack is an educated young frontiersman.

CHAPTER I—Continued.

"Now we've got jest 'nough hoppin' to keep us from gettin' foundered," said Solomon, as he stood on the farther shore and adjusted his pack. "It ain't more'n a mile to your house."

They hurried on, reaching the rough valley road in a few minutes.

"Now I'll take the bee trail to your place," said the scout. "You cut across the meadow to Peter Boneses' an' fetch 'em over with all their grit an' gun an' ammunition."

Solomon found John Irons and five of his sons and three of his daughters digging potatoes and pulling tops in a field near the house. The sky was clear and the sun shined warm. Solomon called Irons aside and told him of the approaching Indians.

"What are we to do?" Irons asked.

"Send the women an' the babies back to the sugar shanty," said Solomon. "We'll stay here 'cause if we run away the Boneses'll get their hair lifted. I reckon we kin conquer 'em."

"How?"

"Shoot 'em full o' meat. They must a' traveled all night. Them Injuns is tired an' hungry. Been three days on the trail. No time to hunt! I'll hustle some wood together an' start a fire. You bring a pair o' steers right here handy. We'll rip their hides off an' git the rest o' vittles in the air soon as God'll let us."

Mrs. Irons hid in the shed with the loaded guns.

Both Irons and the children set out for the sugar bush. The steers were quickly led up and slaughtered. As a hide hunter Solomon was a man of experience. The joints of one animal were cooking on turnspits and a big pot of beef, onions and potatoes boiling over the fire when Jack arrived with the Bones family.

A little later Solomon left the fire. Both his eyes and his ear had caught "sigh"—a clamor among the moose birds in the distant bush and a flock of pigeons flying from the west.

"Don't none o' ye stir till I come back," he said, as he turned into the trail. A few rods away he lay down with his ear to the ground and could distinctly hear the tramp of many feet approaching in the distance. He went on a little farther and presently concealed himself in the bushes close to the trail. He had not long to wait, for soon a red scout came on ahead of the party. He was a young Huron brave, his face painted black and yellow. His head was encircled by a snake skin. A fox's tail rose above his brow and dropped back on his crown. A birch-bark horn hung over his shoulder.

Solomon stepped out of the bushes after he had passed and said in the Huron tongue: "Welcome, my red brother; I hear that a large band o' yer folks is comin' and we have got a feast ready."

The young brave had been startled by the sudden appearance of Solomon, but the friendly word had reassured him.

"We are on a long journey," said the brave.

"And the flesh of a fat ox will help ye on yer way. Kin ye smell it?"

"Brother, it is like the smell of the great village in the Happy Hunting Grounds," said the brave. "We have traveled three sleeps from the land of the long waters and have had only two porcupines and a small deer to eat. We are hungry."

"And we would smoke the calumet of peace with you," said Solomon.

They entered the house and barn and walked around them, and this, in effect, is what Solomon said to him:

"I am the chief scout of the Great Father. My word is like that of old Flame Tongue—your mighty chief. You and your people are on a bad errand. No good can come of it. You are far from your own country. A large force is now on your trail. If you rob or kill anyone you will be hung. We know your plans. A bad white chief has brought you here. He has a wooden leg with an iron ring around the bottom of it. He come down lake in a big boat with you. Night before last you stole two white women."

A look of fear and astonishment came upon the face of the Indian.

"You are a son of the Great Spirit!" he exclaimed.

"And I would keep yer feet out o' the snare. Let me be yer chief. You shall have a horse and fifty beaver skins and be taken to the border and

set free. I, the scout of the Great Father, have said it, and if it be not as I say, may I never see the Happy Hunting Grounds."

The brave answered:

"My white brother has spoken well and he shall be my chief. I like not this journey. I shall bid them to the feast. They will eat and sleep like the gray wolf, for they are hungry and their feet are sore."

The brave put his horn to his mouth and uttered a wild cry that rang in the distant hills. Then arose a great whooping and kintecawing back in the bush. The young Huron went out to meet the band. Returning soon, he said to Solomon that his chief, the great Spiltnose, would have words with him.

Turning to John Irons, Solomon said: "He's an outlaw chief. We must treat him like a king. I'll bring 'em in. You keep the meat a-sizzlin'!"

The scout went with the brave to his chief and made a speech of welcome, after which the wily old Spiltnose, in his wonderful headress of buckskin and eagle feathers, and his band in war-paint, followed Solomon to the feast. Silently they filed out of the bush and sat on the grass around the fire. There were no captives among them—none at least of the white skin.

Solomon did not betray his disappointment. Not a word was spoken. He said John Irons and his son began removing the spits from the fire and putting more meat upon them and cutting the cooked roasts into large pieces and passing it on a big earthen platter. The Indians eagerly seized the hot meat and began to devour it.



In a letter Solomon has thus described the incident: "It were a band o' out-throat robbers an' runnygades from the Ohio country—Hurons, Algonks an' Mingoes—an' all kinds o' cast-off red rubbish with an old Algonk chief—the name o' Spiltnose. They stuffed their hides with the meat till they was stiff as a foundered horse. By an' by they was only two that was up an' pawin' around in the stew pot fer 'nother bone, lookin' kind o' unsart in an' jaw weary. In a minute they wiped their hands on their hair an' lay back fer rest. They was drunk with the meat, as drunk as a Chinese a'ter a pipe o' opium. We white men stretched out with the rest on 'em till we see they was all in the land o' nod. Then we riz an' set up a hussle. Hones we could 'a' killed 'em with a hammer an' done it delib'rit. I started to pull the young Huron out o' the bunch. He jumped up very supple. He wasn't asleep. He had known better than to swallow a yard o' meat."

"What was the wimmén? I knowed that a part o' the band would be back in the bush with them 'ere wimmén. I'd seed suthin' in the trail over by the drowned lands that looked kind o' neev'arious. It were like the end o' a wooden leg with an iron ring at the bottom an' consid'able weight on it. An Injun wouldn't have a wooden leg, leastways not one with an iron ring at the butt. My ol' thinker had been chawin' that cud all day an' o' a sudden it come to me that a white man were runnin' the bull crew. That's how I galked ground with the red scout. I took him out in the sidge o' the bush an' sez I:

"What's yer name?"

"Buckeye," sez he.

"Who's the white man that's with ye?"

"Mike Harpe."

"Are the white wimmén with him?"

"Yes."

"How many Injuns?"

"Two."

"What's yer signal o' victory?"

"The call of the moose."

"Now, Buckeye, you come with us," sez.

"I knowed that the white man were runnin' the bull party an' I latched to git holt o' him. Got ding his pictur! He'd sent the Injuns on ahead fer to do his dirty work. The Ohio country were full o' robber whelps wch I kind o' mistrusted he were one on 'em who had raked up this 'ere band o' runnygades an' gone off fer plunder. We got holt o' most o' their guns very quiet, an' I put John Irons an' two o' his boys an' Peter Bones an' his boy Israel an' the two women with loaded guns on guard over 'em. If any on 'em woke up they was to ride the nightmare er lay still. Jack an' me an' Buckeye sneaked back up the trail fer 'bout twenty rods with our guns, an' then I told the young Injun to shoot off the moose call. Wall, sir, ye could 'a' heard it from Albany to Wing's falls. The answer come an' jest—as I 'spected, 'twere within a quarter o' a mile, I put Jack erbout fifty feet further up the trail, than I were, an' Buckeye nigh him, an' tol 'em what to do. We skootched down in the bushes an' heerd 'em comin'. Purty soon they hove in sight—two Injuns, the two wimmén captives an' a white man—the wust-lookin' bulldog brute that I ever seen—stampin' erlong lively on a wooden leg, with a gun an' a cane. He had a broad head an' a big top mouth an' thick lips an' a long, red, warty nose an' small black eyes an' a growth o' beard that looked like hog's bristles. He were about built. Stood 'bout five foot seven. Never see such a sight in my life. I hopped out afore 'em an' Jack an' Buckeye on their heels. The Injun had my ol' hanger.

"Drop yer guns," says I.

"The white man done as he was told. I spoke English an' mebbe them two Injuns didn't understand me. We'll never know. Ol' Red Snout leaped over to pick up his gun, an' he'd made up his mind to fight. Jack grabbed him. He were stout as a lion an' tore 'way from the boy an' started to pull'n a long knife out o' his bootleg. Jack didn't give him time. They had it hammer an' tongs. Red Snout were a reg'lar fightin' man. He jest stuck that 'ere stump in the ground an' braced ag'in it an' kep' a-sizzlin' an' jabbin' with his club cane an' yellin' an' cussin' like a fend o' hell. He knocked the boy down an' I reckon he'd 'a' mellered his head proper if he'd 'a' been spryer on his pins. But Jack sprung up like he were made o' Injy rubber. The bulldog devil had drawn his long knife. Jack were smart. He hopped behind a tree. Buckeye, who hadn't no gun, was jumpin' fer cover. The peag-egg swore a blue streak an' fung the knife at him. It went cl'ar through his body an' he fell on his face an' me standin' thar loadin' my gun. I didn't know but he'd lick us all. But Jack had jumped on him 'fore he got holt o' the knife ag'in.

"I thought sure he'd floor the boy an' me not quite loaded, but Jack were spy as a rat ferrier. He dodged an' rushed in an' grabbed holt o' the club an' fetched the cuss a whack in the paunch with his bare fist, an' ol' Red Snout went down like a steer under the ax.

"Look out! there's 'nother man comin'," the young wimmén hollered.

"She needn't 'a' tuk the trouble 'cause afore she spoke I were lookin' at him through the sight o' my ol' Marler, which I'd managed to git it loaded ag'in. He were runnin' towards me. He tuk jest one more step, if I don't make no mistake.

"The ol' brute that Jack had knocked down quivered an' lay still a minute an' when he come to, we turned him, round an' started him toward Canada an' tol' him to keep a-goin'! When he were 'bout ten rods off, I put a bullet in his ol' wooden leg fer to hurry him erlong. So the wust man-killer that ever trod dirt got erway from us with only a sore belly, we never knowin' who he were. I wish I'd 'a' killed the cuss, but as 'twere, we had consid'able trouble on our hands. Right erway we heard two guns go off over by the house. I knowed that our firin' had prob'ly woke some o' the sleepers. We pounded the ground an' got 'war as quick as we could. The two wimmén wa'n't fur behind. They didn't calculate to lose us—you hear to me. Two young braves had sprung up an' been told to lie down ag'in. But the English language ain't no help to an Injun under them circumstances. They don't understand it an' thar ain't no time when ignorance is more costly. They was some others awake, but they had learnt suthin'. They was keepin' quiet, an' I sez to 'em:

"If ye lay still ye'll be safe. We won't do ye a bit o' harm. You've got in bad comp'ny, but ye ain't done nothin' but steal a pair o' wimmén. If ye behave proper from now on, ye'll be sent hum."

"I love you and I wish this Journey could go on forever."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Hunting Cheeta

For short distances the cheeta is supposed to be the swiftest quadruped. However, it is not possible to ascribe the honor definitely to any particular animal. The cheeta, which is found in Asia and Africa, is a large tropical cat, slender of body and limb. It is from three to four feet long and of a pale, tawny color, marked with numerous dark spots on its sides and back and almost white beneath. It resembles the leopard, and is often called the hunting leopard. The animal resembles the dog in docility. Its fur is not sleek like that of typical cats. It has a long tail which is somewhat bushy at the end.



BUNNIE BONNIE'S MOTHER

Bunnie Bonnie was named after a great-grandfather of his. For the name of Bunnie Bonnie was a family name of which to be proud.

He was a dear little bunny rabbit and his mother dearly loved him. He had beautiful pink eyes and a soft, white lovable body and his nose wiggled in just the most adorable fashion ever a rabbit nose could wiggle.

Mother Rabbit said to herself: "Mothers may talk of their babies and of how cunning they are when they coo and scold and laugh and giggle and crow. They may laugh when their babies do such interesting little tricks as to try to catch hold of their toes and even look as though they were going to have toe soup or toe dessert the way they try to put them in their mouths.

"They may be delighted to see them eat good meals and I've heard of a little boy named Charles Norman whose mother was proud of him because he could swallow with his mouth open!

"Mothers are amused at such little things! Now I am amused at more important and interesting things than those.

"I am interested in seeing my little darling as he wiggles his nose. That's something worth watching! He wiggles his nose in such a perfect rabbit fashion—oh, he is wonderful at it.

"Yes, my little darling, you are a wonderful rabbit and no other child could be so dear as Bunnie Bonnie is to his mother."

Bunnie Bonnie nestled up quite close to his mother and his soft, furry little body was very near hers.

He had been playing. He had been eating. Now he was tired. And as he rested against his mother, she thought of the days to come when he would be a big rabbit.

She thought of adventures he would have. She thought of the lessons she must teach him, for every rabbit must go to his mother's rabbit class.

Or he must go to some rabbit class, at any rate, and learn what is good to eat and what is not so good, what is



dangerous and what is not, when to lie low and when to run about, who were his friends and who were his enemies.

All of those things he had to learn and many other things, too.

The school days would be busy days, but they would all be days of adventure, too. He would be adventuring all the time, seeing new sights, learning new smells, remembering the thump, thump signals of the rabbit world.

And then he would go forth by himself, and he would pick out a dear little mate, and he would be grown up.

How strange it did seem to think of Bunnie Bonnie ever becoming a grown-up rabbit gentleman.

Perhaps when he grew up he would pick out one of the charming apartments in the rose brier patch not far away.

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It was so safe—no apartments were any safer. And with the lease of the apartment the dew-drop water came with it without any extra charge.

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So Mother Rabbit dreamed ahead. And she knew that Bunnie Bonnie would become famous, and that all the rabbits far and near would be saying to each other:

"You know Bunnie Bonnie, don't you? A splendid rabbit chap! He can do anything. There isn't a thing in the world he couldn't do, and that's the truth."

Mother Rabbit could almost hear them saying these things now.

She didn't quite know what famous things Bunnie Bonnie would do, but she knew he would do them, and she put her face close down by the face of her dear little son's and said:

"Only never take foolish chances, my son, for they are only foolhardy, and the really brave are never foolhardy."

And for answer a very sleepy little rabbit wiggled his most adorable little nose.

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In American political history the two administrations of President Monroe, up to the time of the campaign for his successor, 1817-1824, was known as the era of good feeling. There were practically no issues and but one party, Monroe being unanimously re-elected in 1820 except for the personal whim of one elector.

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Machiavelli

Machiavelli was an Italian statesman, historian and man of letters (1469-1527). It is said the object of his book, "The Prince," is to show that all is fair in diplomacy. The term "Machiavellism" has come to mean political cunning and duplicity, the art of striking and overreaching by diplomacy.

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