

# Annette, The Metis Spy

Joseph Edmund Collins

Project Gutenberg's Annette, The Metis Spy, by Joseph Edmund Collins

Copyright laws are changing all over the world. Be sure to check the copyright laws for your country before downloading or redistributing this or any other Project Gutenberg eBook.

This header should be the first thing seen when viewing this Project Gutenberg file. Please do not remove it. Do not change or edit the header without written permission.

Please read the "legal small print," and other information about the eBook and Project Gutenberg at the bottom of this file. Included is important information about your specific rights and restrictions in how the file may be used. You can also find out about how to make a donation to Project Gutenberg, and how to get involved.

**\*\*Welcome To The World of Free Plain Vanilla Electronic Texts\*\***

**\*\*eBooks Readable By Both Humans and By Computers, Since 1971\*\***

**\*\*\*\*\*These eBooks Were Prepared By Thousands of Volunteers!\*\*\*\*\***

Title: Annette, The Metis Spy

Author: Joseph Edmund Collins

Release Date: October, 2004 [EBook #6668]  
[Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule]  
[This file was first posted on January 12, 2003]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

**\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ANNETTE, THE METIS SPY \*\*\***

Produced by Avinash Kothare, Juliet Sutherland, Charles Franks  
and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team.  
This file was produced from images generously made available by the  
Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions.

# **Livros Grátis**

<http://www.livrosgratis.com.br>

Milhares de livros grátis para download.

ANNETTE, THE METIS SPY:  
A HEROINE OF THE N.W. REBELLION.  
BY  
EDMUND COLLINS.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I

LE CHEF FALLS IN LOVE WITH THE HALF-BREED MAIDEN.

CHAPTER II

ANNETTE FORMS AN HEROIC RESOLVE.

CHAPTER III.

THE LITTLE MAIDEN'S BRAVERY.

CHAPTER IV.

ANNETTE'S LOVER IN DANGER.

CHAPTER V.

DIVERS ADVENTURES FOR OUR HEROINE.

CHAPTER VI.

A DARING ESCAPE.

CHAPTER VII.

A FIGHT; A CAPTURE; AND THE GUARDIAN SWAN.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STARS ARE KINDLY TO LE CHEF.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STARS TAKE A NEW COURSE.

NOTES.

ADDENDUM.

NANCY, THE LIGHT-KEEPER'S DAUGHTER.

ANNETTE;

THE METIS SPY.

A HEROINE OF THE N.W. REBELLION.

CHAPTER I.

LE CHEF FALLS IN LOVE WITH THE HALF-BREED MAIDEN.

The sun was hanging low in the clear blue over the prairie, as two riders hurried their ponies along a blind trail toward a distant range of purple hills that lay like sleepy watchers along the banks of the Red River.

The beasts must have ridden far, for their flanks were white with foam, and their riders were splashed with froth and mud,

"The day is nearly done, mon ami," said one, stretching out his arm and measuring the height of the sun from the horizon. "How red it is; and mark these blood-stains upon its face! It gives warning to the tyrants who oppress these fair plains; but they cannot read the signs."

There was not a motion anywhere in all the heavens, and the only sound that broke the stillness was the dull trample of the ponies' hoofs upon the sod. On either side was the wide level prairie, covered with thick, tall grass, through which blazed the purple, crimson and garnet blooms, of vetch and wild pease. The tiger lily, too, rose here and there like a sturdy queen of beauty with its great terra cotta petals, specked with umber-brown. Here and there, also, upon the mellow level, stood a clump of poplars or white oaks--prim like virgins without suitors, with their robes drawn close about them; but when over the unmeasured plain the wind blew, they bowed their heads gracefully, as a company of eastern girls when the king commands.

As the two horsemen rode silently around one of these clumps, there suddenly came through the hush the sound of a girl's voice singing. The song was exquisitely worded and touching, and the singer's voice was sweet and limpid as the notes of a bobolink. They marvelled much who the singer might be, and proposed that both should leave the path and join the unknown fair one. Dismounting, they fastened their horses in the shelter of the poplars, and proceeded on foot toward the point whence the singing came. A few minutes walk brought the two beyond a small poplar grove, and there, upon a fallen tree-bole, in the delicious cool of the afternoon, they saw the songstress sitting. She was a maiden of about eighteen years, and her soft, silky, dark hair was over her shoulders. In girlish fancy she had woven for herself a crown of flowers out of marigolds and daisies, and put it upon her head.

She did not hear the footsteps of the men upon the soft prairie, and they did not at once reveal themselves, but stood a little way back

listening to her. She had ceased her song, and was gazing beyond intently. On the naked limb of a desolate, thunder-riven tree that stood apart from its lush, green-boughed neighbours, sat a thrush in a most melancholy attitude. Every few seconds he would utter a note of song, sometimes low and sorrowful, then in a louder key, and more plaintive, as if he were calling for some responsive voice from far away over the prairie.

"Dear bird, you have lost your mate, and are crying for her," the girl said, stretching out her little brown hand compassionately toward the crouching songster. "Your companions have gone to the South, and you wait here, trusting that your mate will come back, and not journey to summer lands without you. Is not that so, my poor bird? Ah, would that I could go with you where there are always flowers, and ever can be heard the ripple of little brooks. Here the leaves will soon fall, ah, me! and the daisies wither; and, instead of the delight of summer, we shall have only the cry of hungry wolves, and the bellowing of bitter winds above the lonesome plains. But could I go to the South, there is no one who would sing over my absence one lamenting note, as you sing, my bird, for the mate with whom you had so many hours of sweet love-making in these prairie thickets. Nobody loves me, woos me, cares for me, or sings about me. I am not even as the wild rose here, though it seems to be alone, and is forbidden to take its walk; for it holds up its bright face and can see its lover; and he breathes back upon the kind, willing, breeze-puffs, through all the summer, sweet-scented love messages, tidings of a matrimony as delicious as that of the angels."

She stood up, and raised her arms above her head yearningly. The autumn wind was cooing in her hair, and softly swaying its silken meshes.

"Farewell, my desolate one; may your poor little heart be gladder soon. Could I but be a bird, and you would have me for a companion, your lamenting should not be for long. We should journey, loitering and love-making all the long sweet way, from here to the South, and have no repining."

Turning around, she perceived two men standing close beside her. She became very confused, and clutched for her robe to cover her face, but she had strayed away among the flowers without it. Very deeply she blushed that the strangers should have heard her; and she spake not.

"Bonjour, ma belle fille." It was the tall commanding one who had addressed her. He drew closer, and she, in a very low voice, her olive face stained with a faint flush of crimson, answered,

"Bonjour, Monsieur."

"Be not abashed. We heard what you were saying to the bird, and I think the sentiments were very pretty."

This but confused the little prairie beauty all the more. But the gallant stranger took no heed of her embarrassment.

"With part of your declaration I cannot agree. A maiden with such charms as yours is not left long to sigh for a lover. Believe me, I should like to be that bird, to whom you said you would, if you

could, offer love and companionship."

The stranger made no disguise of his admiration for the beautiful girl of the plains. He stepped up by her side, and was about to take her hand after delivering himself of this gallant speech, but she quickly drew it away. Then, turning to his companion,

"We must sup before leaving this settlement, and we shall accompany this bonny maiden home. Go you and fetch the horses; Mademoiselle and myself shall walk together." The other did as he was directed, and the stranger and the songstress took their way along a little grassy path. The ravishing beauty of the girl was more than the amorously-disposed stranger could resist, and suddenly stretching out his arms, he sought to kiss her. But the soft-eyed fawn of the desert soon showed herself in the guise of a petit bete sauvage. With an angry scream, she bounded away from his grasp.

"How do you dare take this liberty with me, Monsieur," she said, her eyes kindled with anger and hurt pride. "You first meanly come and intrude upon my privacy; next you must turn what knowledge you gain by acting spy and eavesdropper, into a means of offering me insult. You have heard me say that I had no lover to sigh for me. I spoke the truth: I \_have\_ no such lover. But you I will not accept as one." And turning with flushed cheek and gleaming eyes, she entered a cosy, clean-kept cottage. But she soon reflected that she had been guilty of an inhospitable act in not asking the strangers to enter. Suddenly turning, she walked rapidly back, and overtook the crest-fallen wooer and his companion, and said in a voice from which every trace of her late anger had disappeared.

"Entrez, Messieurs."

The man's countenance speedily lost its gloom, and, respectfully touching his hat, he said:

"Oui, Mademoiselle, avec le plus grand plaisir." Tripping lightly ahead she announced the two strangers, and then returned, going to the bars where the cows were lowing, waiting to be milked. The persistent stranger had not, by any means, made up his mind to desist in his wooing.

"The colt shies," he murmured, "when she first sees the halter. Presently, she becomes tractable enough." Then, while he sat waiting for the evening meal, blithely through the hush of the exquisite evening came the voice of the girl. She was singing from *\_La Claire Fontaine\_*.

"A la claire fontaine  
Je m'allais promener,  
J'ai trouve l'eau si belle  
Que je me suis baigne"

Her song ended with her work, and as she passed the strangers with her two flowing pails of yellow milk, Riel whispered softly, as he touched her sweet little hand:

"Ah, ma petite amie!"

The same flash came in her eyes, the same proud blood appeared red

through the dusk of her cheek, but she restrained herself. He was a guest under her father's roof, and she would suffer the offence to pass. The persistent gallant was more crest-fallen by this last silent rebuke than by the first with its angry words. The first, in his vanity, he had deemed an outburst of petulance, instead of an expression of personal dislike, especially as the girl had so suddenly calmed herself, and extended hospitalities.

He gnashed his teeth that a half-breed girl, in an obscure village, should resent his advances; he for whom, if his own understanding was to be trusted, so many bright eyes were languishing. At the evening meal he received courteous, kindly attention from Annette; but this was all. He related with much eloquence all that he had seen in the big world in the East, during his school days, and took good care that his hosts should know how important a person he was in the colony of Red River. To his mortification, he frequently observed in the midst of one of his most self-glorifying speeches that the girl's eyes were abstracted. He was certain that she was not interested in him, or in his exploits.

"Can she have a lover?" he asked himself, a keen arrow of jealousy entering at his heart, and vibrating through his veins. "No, this cannot be. She said in her musings on the prairie, that she had nobody who would sing a sad song if she were to go to the South. Stop! She may love, and not find her passion requited. I shall stay here until the morrow, and let the great cause wait. Through the evening I shall reveal who I am, and then see what is in the wind."

During the course of the evening the audacious stranger was somewhat confounded to learn that the father of his fair hostess was none other than Colonel Marton, an ex-officer of the Hudson Bay Company, a man of wide influence among all the Metis people, and one of the most sturdy champions of the half-breed cause. Indeed he was aware that Colonel Marton was at this very time about preaching resistance to the people, organising forces, and preparing to strike a blow at the authority of the Government in the North-West.

"It is discourteous, perhaps, Mademoiselle, that I should not disclose to you who I am, even though the safety of my present undertaking demands that I should remain unknown."

"If Monsieur has good reasons, or any reasons, for withholding his name, I pray that he will not consider himself under any obligation to reveal it."

"It would be absurd to keep such a secret, Ma petite Brighteye, from the beautiful daughter of a man so prominent in our holy cause as Colonel Marton. You this evening entertain, Mademoiselle, none other than Louis Riel, the Metis chief."

"Monsieur Riel," exclaimed the girl in astonishment, and somewhat in awe. "Why, we thought that Monsieur was far beyond the prairie, providing ammunition for the troops."

"I have been there Mademoiselle, and seen every trusty Metis armed, and ready to follow when the leaders cry Allons!"

Paul, the girl's brother, believed that there had never lived a hero so brave and so mighty as the man now under his father's roof. As for

poor Annette, she bethought of her outburst of temper and lack of respect toward the chief; and she trembled to think that she might have given offense to a man so illustrious, and one who was the head of the sacred cause of her father and of her people.

"But why should he address a poor simple girl like me?" she mused; and then as she reflected that the leader had a wife and children in Montana, and if report spoke true, a half-breed bride in a prairie village besides, a round red spot came into each cheek and burned there like a little fire.

The chief watched the changing colour in the maiden's face, and saw also in the great dark, velvety eyes, the reflection of her thoughts as they came and went, plainly as you may see the shadows upon an autumn day chase each other over the prairie meadows.

Paul went out for a little; the chief's companion had retired to his couch; and Riel was left alone with the girl.

"Mademoiselle must not shrink from me; she is too beautiful to be unkind. Ah ma petite Amie, those adorable lips of yours are made to kiss and kiss, not to pout and cry a lover nay. Through this wide land there is many a maid who would glory in the love, my beautiful girl, that I offer you." He advanced towards the maid, trembling with his passion, and dropped upon his knee.

"You would not let me kiss your lovely lips; pray sweet lady of my heart, let me take your sweet little hand."

The girl was trembling like a bird when the eagle's wings hover over its nest. "O, why does a great hero like Monsieur address such words to me? I am only a simple girl, living here upon the plains; besides, if I could give the brave leader my heart, it would be wrong to do so, for he is already wedded."

"Do not speak of the ceremonies which men have muttered, binding man and woman, when the heart cries out. Do not deny me your love my sweet girl," and the villain once more seized the maiden's waist, and sought to kiss her lips. But she screamed, and struggled from his embrace.

"Paul, Paul, mon frere, come to me." Her cries speedily brought her brother. But Monsieur Riel had taken his seat, and he lowered upon the girl who sat like a frightened fawn upon her chair, her great eyes glimmering with starting tears.

"What is wrong Annette?" the boy asked, leaning affectionately over his sister.

"She is not brave Paul. A shadow passed the window which was nothing more than my own, and she believed it to be that of a hostile Indian."

"What a silly girl you are, Annette," her brother said, softly smiting her cheek with his finger-tips.

The maiden did not make any explanation, but in a very wretched and embarrassed way arose and said, "Good night."

Nothing was said about the matter in the morning, and as the girl passed on her way to milk the cows Riel murmured,

"Mademoiselle will not say anything of the cause of her out-cry last night?"

"I will not Monsieur; if you will promise not to address any words of love-making to me again."

"I promise nothing, foolish maiden; but I have to ask that you will not make of Louis Riel an enemy."

When breakfast was ended he perceived Annette rush to the window, and then hastily and with a dainty coyness withdraw her head from the pane; and at the same moment he heard a sprightly tune whistle'd. Looking down the meadow he saw a tall, well-formed young white man, a gun on his back, and a dog at his heels, walking along the little path toward the cottage,

"This is the lover," he muttered; "curses upon him." From that moment he hated with all the bitterness of his nature the man now striding carelessly up towards the cottage door.

"Bonjour, mademoiselle et messieurs" the newcomer said in cheery tones, as he entered, making a low bow.

"Bonjour, Monsieur Stephens, was the reply. Louis Riel, intently watching, saw the girl's colour come and go as she spoke to the visitor. The young man stayed only for a few moments, and the chief observed that everybody in the house treated him as if in some way he had been the benefactor of all. When he arose to go, Paul, who knew of every widgeon in the mere beyond the cottonwood grove, and where the last flock of quail had been seen to alight, followed him out of the door, and very secretly communicated his knowledge. Annette had seen a large flock of turkeys upon the prairie a few moments walk south of the poplar grove, and perhaps they had not yet gone away.

"When did you see them, ma chere demoiselle?" enquired Stephens. You know turkeys do not settle down like immigrants on one spot, and wait till we inhabitants of the plains come out and shoot them. Was it last week, or only the day before yesterday?" There was a very merry twinkle in his eye as he went on with this banter. Annette affected to pout, but she answered.

"This morning, while the dew was shining upon the grass, and you, I doubt not, were sleeping soundly, I was abroad on the plains for the cows. It was then I saw them. I am glad, however, that you have pointed out the difference between turkeys and immigrants. I did not know it before." He handed her a sun-flower which he had plucked on the way, saying,

"There, for your valuable information, I give you that. Next time I come, if you are able to tell me where I can find several flocks, I shall bring you some coppers." With a world of mischief in his eyes, he disappeared, and Annette, in spite of herself, could not conceal from everybody in the house a quick little sigh at his departure.

"It seems to me this Monsieur Stephens is a great favourite with you folk?" said M. Riel, when the young man had left the cottage. "Now had I come for sport, no pretty eyes would have seen any flocks to reserve for me." And he gave a somewhat sneering glance at poor

Annette, who was pretending to be engaged in examining the petals of the sun-flower, although she was all the while thinking of the mischievous, manly, sunny-hearted lad who had given it to her. M. Riel's words and the sneer were lost, so far as she was concerned. Her ears were where her heart was, out on the plain beyond the cottonwood, where she could see the tall, straight, lithe figure of young Stephens, and his dog at his heels.

"Oui, Monsieur," returned Paul, "Monsieur Stephens is a very great favourite with our family. We are under an obligation to him that it will be difficult ever to repay."

"Whence comes this benefactor," queried M. Riel, with an ugly sneer, "and how has he placed you under such an obligation?" Then, reflecting that he was showing a bitterness respecting the young man which he could neither explain nor justify, he said:

"Mais, pardonnez-moi. Think me not rude for asking these questions. When pretty eyes are employed to see, and pretty lips to tell of, game for one sportsman in preference to another, the neglected one might be excused for seeking to know in what way fortune has been kind with his rival."

"Shall I tell the whole story, Annette" enquired Paul, or will you do so?"

"O, I know that you will not leave anything out that can show the bravery of Mr. Stephens," replied the girl.

"Well, last spring, Annette was spending some days with her aunt, a few miles up Red River. It was the flood time, and as you remember, the river was swollen to a point higher than it had ever reached within the memory of any body in the settlement. Annette is venturesome, and since a child has shown a keen delight in going upon boats, or paddling a canoe; so, one day, during the visit which I have mentioned, she went into a birch that swung in a little pond, formed behind her uncle's premises by the over-flowing of the stream's channel. Untying the canoe, she seized the blade and began to paddle about in the lazy water. Presently she reached the eddies, which, since a child, she has always called the 'rings of the water-witches,' wherever she learned that term. Her cousin Violette was standing in the doorway as she saw Annette move off, and she cried out to her to beware of the eddies; but my sister, wayward and reckless as it is her habit to be in such matters, merely replied with a laugh; and then as the canoe began to turn round and round in the gurgling circles she cried out.

"I am in the rings of the water-witches. C'est bon! bon! C'est magnifique! O I wish you were with me, Violette, ma chere. It is so delightful to go round and round." A little way beyond, not more than twice the canoe's length, rushed by roaring, the full tide of the river.

"Beware, Annette, beware, for the love of heaven, of the river. If you get a little further out, and these eddies must drag you out, you will be in the mad current, and no arm can paddle the canoe to land out of the flood. Then, dear, there is the fall below, and the fans of the mill. Come back, won't you! But my sister heeded not the words. She only laughed, and began dipping water from the eddies with

the paddle-blade, as if it were a spoon she had in her hand. 'I am dipping water from the witches-rings,' she cried. 'How the drops sparkle! Every one is a glittering jewel. I wish you were here with me, Violette!' Suddenly and in an altered tone, she cried, 'Mon Dieu! My paddle is gone.' The paddle had no sooner glided out into the rushing, turbulent waters than the canoe followed it, and Annette saw herself drifting on to her doom. Half a mile below was the fall, and at the side of the fall, went ever and ever around with tremendous violence, the rending fans of the water-mill. Annette knew full well that any drift boat, or log, or raft, carried down the river at freshet-flow, was always swept into the toils of the inexorable wheels. Yet, if she were reckless and without heed a few minutes before, I am told that now she was calm. Violette gave the alarm that Annette was adrift in the river without a paddle, and in a few seconds every body living near had turned out, and was running down the shore. Several brought paddies, but it took hard running to keep up with the canoe, for the flood was racing at a speed of eight miles an hour. When they did get up in line each one flung out a paddle. But one fell too far out, and another not far enough. About fifteen men were along the banks in violent excitement, and every one of them saw nothing but doom for Annette. As the canoe neared a point about two hundred yards above the falls, a young white-man--all the rest were bois-brules--rushed out upon the bank, with a paddle in his hand, and without a word sprang into the mad waters. With a few strokes he was at the side of the canoe, and put the paddle into Annette's hand. 'Here,' he said, 'Keep away from the mill; that is your only danger; and steer sheer over the falls, getting as close as possible to the left bank.' The height of the fall, as you are aware, was not more than fifteen or eighteen feet, and there was plenty of water below, with not very much danger from rocks. 'Go you on shore now and I will meet my doom, or achieve my safety,' my sister said; but the young man answered, 'Nay, I will go over the fall too: I can then be of some service to you.' So he swam along by the canoe's side directing my sister, and shaping the course of the prow on the very brink of the fall. Then all shot over together. The canoe and Annette, and the young man were buried far under the terrible mass of water, but they soon came to the surface again, when the heroic stranger seized my sister, and through the fury of the mad churning flood, landed her unhurt upon the bank. That young man was Philip Edmund Stephens, whom you saw here this morning. Is it any wonder, think you, Monsieur, that when Annette sees wild turkeys upon the prairie, she keeps the knowledge of it to herself till she gets the ear of her deliverer?

"A very brave act, indeed, on the part of this young man," replied the swarthy M. Riel. "He has excellent judgment, I perceive, or he would not so readily have calculated that no harm could come to any one who could swim well, by being carried over the Falls."

Annette's eyes flashed a little at this cold blooded discounting of the generous, uncalculating bravery of her young preserver; but she made no reply.

"This Monsieur Stephens is, if I mistake not, Mademoiselle, a very zealous servant of Government, and his chief duty now is to keep watch over the assemblies held by the Half-breed people. I cannot suppose that Colonel Marton is aware of the intimacy between a deadly enemy of our cause and the members of his household."

"Indeed, Monsieur, there is no intimacy more than what you have seen," the girl replied, the roses now out of her cheek. "Thrice, since rescuing me, Mr. Stephens has been at our home, and I believe that, henceforth, his duty will take him to a distant part of the territory." As she said these words her eyes fell, and her bosom heaved a little.

Riel was upon his feet. "If I find this young spy anywhere about this settlement again, I shall see that he is cared for." Then as Paul and his companion went out, he drew himself to his full height and continued:

"Annette, get your heart away from this young man; such love can only bring you ruin. From me you shall hear again, and hear soon. Farewell." As the girl put out her hand, he drew her suddenly into his arms, and before she could cry or struggle, kissed her upon the mouth.

Then he was gone.

## CHAPTER II

### ANNETTE FORMS AN HEROIC RESOLVE.

All day long Annette was in sore trouble, for she felt that the words of the rebel chief boded no good to herself or to her deliverer.

"Why should he think that I loved Captain Stephens?" the girl murmured, as a soft tinge of crimson stole into her cheek. "I am sure that I behaved in no way to him, that a girl should not act towards the man who had risked his life to save hers."

With the dusk came her father, his horse covered with foam; for he had ridden fast and far.

"Why is my daughter's cheek so pale?" he asked as he came into the sweet, tidy cottage, with its trailing morning glories, and bunches of mignonette.

"I have been a little disturbed, papa. The Metis chief and one of his friends stayed here last night. O, I do fear that we are now very near an outbreak. Is it not so, my father? Will you not tell me?"

"It is even so, child. Already nearly a thousand men, including Bois-Brule's and Indians have arms in their hands, and await the words of their leaders."

"But, papa, can good really come of this insurrection which you propose? I mean, mon pere, can you and Monsieur Riel, with your scattered followers, who have no money, no garrisons, no means of holding out in a long struggle, hope to overcome the numerous trained soldiers of the Government, with the money and the enthusiasm of a nation at their back?"

"You talk, my daughter, as if some friend of Government had been

pouring his tale into your ear. Now, Annette, child, I love you very dearly, and I am grateful to this young man who has saved your life; but as the opinions which you have expressed could only have come from him I must ask that further intercourse between you and him ceases till this great issue has been fought out and settled."

"Captain Stephens, mon pere, has never uttered a word to me about these matters; and the opinions which I have, worthless though they be, are my own. Ah, papa, you surely have not forgotten the last struggle. Monsieur Riel, then, had some sort of right to set up his authority in a province which for a time came not under the jurisdiction of the Company or of the Dominion; the clergy were at his back; he had possession of the strongest Fort in the North-West Territories, and provisions enough to supply his forces for a year. Yet, at the very beating of the soldiers' drums he fled like a felon, and was obliged to beg a mouthful of food in his flight to exile. The circumstances now are not nearly so auspicious. How, then, can you hope to succeed?"

"You are not familiar, child, with affairs in these territories; and you neither know the extent of the discontent, nor the causes which have led to it. The Half-Breed people and the Indian tribes have been treated by government and their agents, worse than we would use our dogs. Instead of sending honest and capable men to rule here, they appoint adventurers whose only object is to make money during their residence, at the expense of the people. You are not wholly ignorant of the conduct of Lieutenant-Governor Tewtney. Since his arrival in the territories he has never been known to give a patient hour to hearing the grievances of the half-breed people; but he is forever abroad grabbing up plots of choice land, and securing timber and mineral leases; or furthering the schemes of knots of friends and advisers gathered about him. I shall relate one instance which has just come to light, and it will serve as an example of this man's career. Some time ago a friend of his imported a large quantity of meat, but upon arrival it was found to be unwholesome and foul. This man went to Governor Tewtney and he said.

"All my consignment of meat is spoilt. Isn't that a great loss?"

"No loss at all my dear friend,' replied the Governor: 'give it to the Indians and half-breeds.' Now you are aware that government had undertaken to give relief to the Indians and to the Metis, with employment that would bring them food. Well, this meat was given to both, and for every pound of the foul meat the wretched Breed or Indian was charged fifteen cents. One of the chief's and also a Metis, went to the Governor and complained that the meat was vile and unwholesome; but they only received this in reply:

"You are becoming very choice, you fellows. You will eat this meat, or starve and be d--d."

"Year after year, the half-breed who has toiled upon his holding, has applied for a grant of this holding under the law, but has applied in vain; and a friend of Mr. Tewtney coming in may drive him off his farm, and profit by his toil and skill.

"All these things have been represented at Ottawa by the priests and the people; and the only reply that has been obtained, in effect, is this:

"What a troublesome, noisy set these savages and half-breeds are! Cease pestering us. We will not, and cannot, do more for you than we have done.'

"When a new minister of these Territories was appointed, our priests waited at his office and besought him for God's holy sake, to listen to the people's wrongs; and to enquire into the doings of Governor Tewtney; but it is a fact that he actually went asleep in his chair, while the delegates were stating their case. Instead of making enquiry into the grievances, he hastily packed his trunks and went away to England to obtain a knighthood, which had been promised to him. While he was running back and forth between his lodgings and Downing street, the officials here were laying upon our backs the last weight that our endurance could bear."

While he was speaking there suddenly arose, outside, a jingling of bells, and a clashing of cymbals; and looking through the window father and daughter beheld a numerous band of painted Indians advancing, brandishing tomahawks, and singing war songs.

"I hope these savages will not make a bungle of things," the Colonel said; "I wonder who has started them upon the war-path?" Then going to the door he raised his voice.

"Where go my friends the Crees?"

The chief, a tall and magnificent savage, put his finger on his lips and advanced:

"Me speak inside with the colonel. Chief Louis Riel has ordered our braves to surround the Hickory Bush, when the moon rises. Captain Stephens, police spy, and heap of other spies there. Take em all and put em in wigwam a long way off. Mebbe shoot em. Tall Elk comes to see if Great Colonel would like to come too."

"Thank you, chief; I would rather not be at the capture of Captain Stephens. You know he saved la Reina here, from being drowned in the whirlpool."

The "Queen" was the name by which Annette was known among all the Indians and Metis that lived upon the plain. "But," continued the Colonel, "I hope that Tall Elk and his braves will do no harm to Stephens. He is not with us, but he is a brave, good man, and love our people. In acting against us he is only doing his duty."

"Ugh! It is well," grunted the chief. "Will look after Stephens myself."

But this assurance did not satisfy Annette, who stood, during the dialogue, with throbbing heart and pale cheek. The threats of the Rebel Chief still lingered in her ear; and she knew that her deliverer's life would not be safe in the hands of the terrible man. She said naught, but a bold resolution passed like a flame through her brain. In a little while the chief departed, and at the head of his painted warriors struck out across the dark prairie in the direction of Hickory Bush. The Bush was about twelve miles distant, and the rising of the moon would be in two hours.

In a little while the girl said, "Papa, I am so disturbed to-night that I cannot sit up with you as long as usual: good-night." Then she kissed her father who caressed her silken hair; and she left the room.

Now, Annette had as a companion or attendant, an orphan girl, named Julie. She was not tall and graceful like Annette, but her olive face was stained with delicate carnation, and her little mouth resembled a rose just about to open. She was intelligent, active and affectionate; and the great aim of her existence was to serve a mistress whom she almost adored.

"Come to me, Julie," Annette whispered as she passed the girl.

"Well, mademoiselle, what can Julie do?"

"Captain Stephens, as you are aware, ma petite Julie, is to be captured to-night by those savages who have just left our house. Monsieur Riel hates my deliverer, and I shudder to think that he should fall into his hands. I mean to-night to warn him of his danger.

"Brava!" exclaimed the girl; "c'est bon! It is so like my brave mistress. Ah, mademoiselle, I have seen Monsieur le Chef look upon you; and there was great love in his eye. But it was not the good, the holy kind. Ah! It was bad. He hates le Capitaine, because he saved you from the chute.

"Ah, then my little Julie, you know? Yes, it is all as you say; and this is why my heart flutters so for the fate of Monsieur Stephens. I want my bay saddled and led quietly out to the poplar bush; and I shall come there in a little."

Julie kissed the forehead of her mistress, and then tripped away daintily and softly as a fawn to do the bidding.

Before ten minutes had elapsed, an Indian boy, of lithe and graceful figure, walked swiftly down the path toward the bush. As he reached the little grove, another figure emerged from the shadow and said in a low tone:

"Tres bien!" This was Julie, and the Indian boy was Annette, disguised so perfectly that her father could not have guessed the truth were he standing by. She wore a buff coat and deer skin leggings; and about her waist was a belt in which were stuck a long knife and a pair of pistols. She patted her pony, took the bridle in her little brown hand, and vaulted lightly into her seat. "There now, Julie; return quickly, and go to your room."

"Au plaisir, portez-vous bien, ma maitresse."

"I shall take care of myself. Adieu;" and she galloped down the grassy knoll, and out upon the prairie.

Although the plain was a great, dusky blur, this observant maiden knew the route as accurately as if the meridian sun were shining; and her horse, guessing that his mistress was on an errand of life and death, flew lightly over the level sod, as if he were a thing woven of the winds. She was aware that her horse could outdistance an Indian pony; and after half an hour's ride knew that the band must now be fully a couple of miles in the rear. But she kept on till she

judged that fifteen minutes more must bring her to the encampment at Hickory Bush. Then through the hush of the night came to her ear a far off, indistinct sound, which resembled galloping thunder. She knew not what it could mean, unless indeed it was the tumult of some distant waterfall, borne hither now because, mayhap, a storm was brewing, and the dense air was a better carrier of the sound. The moon was now pushing its wide yellow edge above the plain, and she was enabled to see objects for a considerable distance around. But nothing met her view, save here and there a hummock or a clump of poplars. She rode on marvelling what the sound might be, for the noise was constantly becoming louder, and growing

"Nearer, clearer, deadlier than before"

when lo! out of the west come what seemed a dim shadow moving across the plain. With hushed breath she watched the dark mass move along like some destroying tempest and, as it seemed to her, with ten thousand devils at its core. Chained to the ground with a terrible awe, she stood fast for many minutes, till at last in the dim light she saw eye-balls that blazed like fire, heads crested with rugged, uncouth horns and shaggy manes; and then snouts thrust down, flaring nostrils, and rearing tails.

"My God, a buffalo herd!" she exclaimed. Close at hand was a tall boulder in the shelter of which she instantly secured her horse; then running a few paces to where stood a tall, sturdy poplar, she clambered into its branches.

Then the tremendous mass, headed by maddened bulls, with blazing eyes and foaming nostrils, drove onward toward the south, like an unchained hurricane. Some of the terrified beasts ran against the trees, crushing horns and skull, and fell prone upon the plain to be trampled to jelly by the hundreds of thousands in rear. The tree upon which the girl had taken refuge received many a shock from a crazed bull; and it seemed to Annette from her perch in the branches, as if all the face of the plains was being hurled toward the south in the wildest turmoil. Hell itself let loose could present no such spectacle as this myriad mass of brute life sweeping over the lonely plain under the elfin light of the new-risen moon. Clouds of steam, wreathing themselves into spectral shapes rose from the dusky, writhing mass, and the flaming of myriad eyeballs in the gloom presented a picture more terrible than ever came into the imagination of the writer of the Inferno.

The spectacle, as observed by the girl some twenty feet from the ground, might be likened somewhat to a turbulent sea when a sturdy tide sets against the storm, and the mad waves tumble hither and thither, foiled and impelled, yet for all the confusion and obstruction moving in one direction with a sweep and a force that no power could chain.

Circling among and around the strange dusk clouds of steam that went up from the herd were scores of turkey buzzards, their obscene heads bent downward, their sodden eyes gleaming with expectancy. Well they knew that many a gorgeous feast awaited them wherever boulder, tree or swamp lay in the path of the mighty herd. At last the face of the prairie had ceased its surging; no lurid eye-ball light gleamed out of the dusk; and the tempest of cattle had passed, and went rolling out into the unbounded stretches of the dim, yellow plain.

When the ground was clear she descended from the tree, every limb trembling, lest in the delay the Indians should have accomplished their object. When she reached her horse, she found near by a heap of dead and struggling buffalo, which in their headlong race had run over the bluff front of the boulder. When she resumed her gallop she observed that the great amplitude of rich grasses was like unto a ploughed field. The herbage had been literally crushed into mire, and this the innumerable hoofs had churned up with the soft rich soil. The leguminous odors of the trodden clover and the rank masses of wild pease, together with the dank earthy smell of the broken sod, rose offensively in the girl's face. Her course now lay along an upland covered with straggling corses of white oak and poplar. In the dim valley beyond, lying drunken under the moonlight, was Hickory Bush. Upon the solid crest of the little hill the hoofs rang out sharply; but the girl's quick ear detected noises besides those which came from the trample of her horse. Still she swept on, with a long swing, resembling the flight of a swallow. A small grove lay in front, and as she swerved around this a horseman sprang suddenly before her.

"Stop!"

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE LITTLE MAIDEN'S BRAVERY.

She pulled her rein, but her eye flashed and she grasped the butt of her pistol.

"Who dares call upon me to stop? Have I not the right of way on these prairies?"

"I call you to stop," replied the horseman, riding up close to the girl, and pushing back his hat. "I do. Look and see if you know me?" Full well she knew who the interceptor was. The first sound of his voice had gone with a shiver to her heart. "Ah, you know the Metis chief?"

"But I wish to pass on, monsieur. Even you, le grand Chef, have no right to stop me without cause; and I now ask you again to let me pass."

"I will not because I have reason."

"What is it, monsieur?"

"You are a spy. You are an enemy to the cause."

"Even to you, monsieur, I say it is a lie. I will pass;" and she struck her heels into her horse's flank. The animal bounded forward, but the rebel chief seized the bridle, as he cried:

"You are an enemy to the cause; and you go now to the enemy. I know you, mademoiselle Annette." And a terrible light blazed in his eyes, as he looked the disguised maiden in the face.

"Ay, monsieur! you are quick at penetrating disguises. I am Mademoiselle Annette; and I go to the enemy. Nor can monsieur hinder me." As she spoke these words she suddenly drew a pistol, and cocking it placed the cold, glittering barrel within a foot of the leader's face.

"Unhand my bridle or by our Holy Lady I fire." The coward hand quivered, the fingers relaxed, and the bridle was free.

"Now I advise monsieur to meddle with me no more this night. I will not suffer any bar to my project; I have sworn it." So saying her horse sprang forward, and she disappeared down the slope, leaving the balked chief sitting upon his horse still as a stone. Away, away out over the soft grassy plain she sped, swiftly and as lightly as a bird might fly. Three minutes brought her in sight of Hickory Bush, a grove of trees straggling up from the flat in the moonlight, and resembling a congregation of witches with draggled hair, suffering torture. Beyond the trees shone a cluster of white camps; and the girl's heart gave a great bound as she saw by the order prevailing there, that the inmates had been so far unmolested. She sprang into the midst of the camps and shouted,

"Awaken! Arise! Quick! The Crees are bound hither to make you captives. Allons! Allons!"

A tall supple figure sprang from one of the tents. How readily she recognised his manly step, his proud head, his bright eye, his musical voice.

"Who are you? Why this attack?"

"I am your friend. Away, if you value your liberty, and mount your horse. I await to lead you from the danger." With motion quick and noiseless as the movements of night birds, the inmates of the tents armed themselves, strapped their knapsacks, and got into the saddle. No one questioned the graceful Indian boy further. There was something so appealing in his voice, so impatient in his gestures as he waited for their departure, that suspicion could not lurk in any mind.

"Hark!" cried the unknown. "They come. Hear you not the dull trample of their hoofs?"

"By the saints in heaven, yes, and I see them too," said one of the party, looking from his saddle through a night-glass.

"Away, away," cried the Indian boy. "Follow me;" and as the savages behind surrounded the empty tents with their hellish cries, he led the rescued ones at full speed down the valley, around the northern edge of Hickory Ridge, and out toward the Chequered Hills. After half an hour's ride, he drew bridle and the company gathered about him. Captain Stephens was the first to speak.

"Brave lad, we owe our liberty to you; yet wherefore, I am sure, I cannot tell."

But the boy only raised his hand, as if imposing silence upon that

point.

"You are by no means safe from the Indians yet. They will scour the plains, and on this untrodden prairie you cannot conceal your trail. My advice is that you make no delay, but push on to Fort Pitt, which is only about twelve miles distant."

"Of all points this is the one that I should most desire to be at," responded Stephens; "but I do not know that I can find Pitt."

One of the number had been at the Fort a few years before; but he could not make it again from this unknown part of the prairie.

"Follow me, then," answered the unknown. "I shall take you through the hills by a short route to the river. Then you need but to follow the bank to find the fort;" and as he spoke he once more dashed his heels into his horse's flanks and set off towards the center of the group of hills, that resembled in the distance a row of Dutchwomen in heavy petticoats.

Several times as the party followed their deliverer, Stephens would exclaim,

"Where have I heard that voice? The tone is familiar to me, but I cannot give the slightest guess as to the boys' identity."

"Do you think he is an Indian?" enquired one.

"His voice is certainly finer and sweeter than any Indian's that I have ever heard. And his French is perfect.

"True, captain, and notice the delicate little hands that he has, and the proud, dainty poise of his head. He is evidently in disguise; and what is equally plain, he does not relish our attempts at penetrating his identity." Upon the crest of a round hill, the guide stayed his horse and pointed eastward.

"A few minutes ride will take you to the river; half an hour then to the north and you are at Pitt. Before I leave, just a word. Tall Elk put on paint to-day, and before the set of to-morrow's sun, there is not a Cree in all the region who will not be on the war-path. To-morrow the chief goes to Big Bear, to press him to dig up the hatchet; so Messieurs, look to your guns in the Fort, as you will have more than three hundred enemies under the stockades before the rising of the next moon. Au revoir."

Before any of the group could utter a word of thanks, the mysterious boy was off again to the north-west with the speed of the wind.

"That voice!" exclaimed Stephen striking his forehead. "I know it surely; whose can it be?" and bewildered past hope of enlightenment, he turned his horse down the slope, and dashed towards the Saskatchewan. His followers and himself were admitted readily enough by Inspector Dicken, a son of the great novelist, and destined afterwards to be one of the heroes of the war.

When Annette rode away from Louis Riel to give warning to her lover, the rebel chief ground his teeth and swore terrible oaths.

"It is as well" he muttered; "I have now justifiable grounds for depriving her of liberty." Putting a whistle to his mouth he blew a long blast, which was immediately answered from a clump of cottonwood, about a quarter of a mile distant. Then came the tramp of hoofs, and a minute later a horseman drew bridle by his chief.

"The spy has escaped me, Jean, and he was none other than I supposed, ma belle Demoiselle. She did not deny that she was on a mission hostile to our interests, and when I remonstrated, she held a pistol in my face and swore by the Virgin that she would fire. This is reason enough, Jean, for her apprehension. Let us away."

The chief led along the skirt of the upland, till he entered the mouth of a wide, darksome valley. Upon either side straggled a growth of mixed larch and cedar; in the centre was a dismal bog, through which slowly rolled a black, foul stream. As they passed along the shoulder of solid ground, troops of birds rose out of the wide sea of bog, and the noise of their wings made a low, mournful whirring as they passed in dark troops upwards into the ever-deepening dusk.

Then out of the gloom came a Ding Dong, like the low, solemn beat of a bell. Jean crossed himself and exclaimed,

"Mon Dieu! What is that Monsieur?"

"What, afraid Jean? That is no toll for a lost soul, but the crying of the dismal bell bird."

"I never heard it before Mon Chef."

"And may never hear it again. It lives only in the most doleful and solitary swamps, and I doubt if there is another place in all the wide territories save here, where you may hear its voice."

It had now grown so dark that the horses could only tread their way by instinct, and at every noise or cry that came from the swamp, Jeans' blood shivered in his veins. He had no idea where his master was leading him, and had refrained from asking all along, though the query hung constantly upon his tongue. Then a pair of noiseless wings brushed his cheek, paused, and hovered about his head; while two red eyes glared at him.

"In the name of God what is it?" he screamed, smiting the creature with the handle of his whip. "Where are you leading me Mon Chef?"

"Peace Jean, I did not believe that you were such an arrant coward. You shall soon see where I go. It is seldom that man is seen or heard in this region, and the strange creatures marvel. That was one of the large night-hawks which so terrified your weak senses. Do you see yonder light?"

From a point which appeared to be the head of the valley, came a piercing white light, and its reflection fell upon the wide, black, shining stream that ran through the valley, like the links of a golden chain.

"Yonder, Jean, is the abode of Mother Jubal--thither am I bound."

"What, to Madame Jubal, the Snake Charmer, the witch, the woman that comes to her enemies when they sleep at nights, and thickens their blood with cold? I thought, Monsieur, that she lived in hell, and only appeared on earth when she came to do harm to mankind."

"You will find her of the earth, Jean; but she has ever been willing to do my behests."

By the reflection of the light could be seen a hut standing in a cup-shaped niche at the head of the valley. It was ringed around with dragged larch and cedars; and a belt of dark hills encircled it. No moonlight penetrated here, save toward the dawn, when pale beams fell slantwise across the ghostly swamp.

As the horses, drew near there was heard to come from the hut a low, suppressed yelp, half like the bark of a dog, yet resembling the cry of a wolf. The door was open, and by a low table, upon which burned the clear, unflickering light which the two had seen so far down the valley, sat the old woman. Upon hearing the approach of footsteps, she blew out this light, and through the hideous gloom the Too whit, Too whoo of an owl came from the cabin. Then several pairs of eyes began to gleam at the intruders out of the dusk, and all the while several throats went on repeating in ghostly tones Too whit, Too whoo.

The chief pulled up his horse, while his companion shivered from head to foot. Then raising his voice, he cried:

"Jubal, relight your lamp; I have come far to see you. You know me, Jubal. Monsieur le chef?"

"Pardonnez moi," croaked the hag, as she struck the light. Then came in quavering tones:

"Entrez."

What a brushing of soft wings and gleaming of eyes! The hut was literally filled with living creatures.

"These are my children," the old woman said, with a horrible quaking laugh, as she pointed to the perches. Rows of pert ravens stood upon tip-toe along the bars looking with bright eyes upon the strangers; while here and there an owl opened his crooked beak and said Too whit, Too whoo. A strange creature, with wolfish head and limbs, crouched by the hearth; but after three or four furtive glances at the intruders, he skulked back into a dark corner of the cabin. From this retreat he continued to glare with shy, treacherous eyes.

The old woman was short, and stooped; but her eyes were wonderfully bright. Nay, when she looked from the dark corner, phosphorescent jets seemed to break from them.

"Come, mother, toss the cup and tell me what Fortune has in store for me this time," said the chief, who had seated himself upon a low, creaking stool in the corner.

"I will," she replied; "why should I not when I am honoured so much as to receive a visit from le grand chef de Metis." And hobbling away, she took from a nook a large cup without a handle, black on the outside and white within. Tea was brewed which the Rebel chief drank,

leaving naught but the dregs. Then Jubal muttered some words, which her visitors could not understand, and threw up the cup. She had no sooner done this than the crows began to chatter and caw, and the owls to cry; and each time that the cup ascended, they all raised themselves upon their feet and elevated their wings. When the cup came into her hand from the ceiling the third time, she looked toward the perches and said:

"Peace children." Then turning to the dark, oily chief, she said, "Listen, O Monsieur, while I read. Here are bands of men hurrying across the prairie into the gorges, and concealing themselves in the wood. There is the flash of sabres, and the smoke of cannon. Everywhere a bloody war is raging; and Indians are tearing away men, and women, and children from their homes to captivity.

"Ah! what is this I see here? A girl. Monsieur woos her, but she is turned away. The maiden flies; Monsieur follows, and he overtakes the maiden. Then he bears her away with guards around her, through a deep valley, till he reaches a hut. Now he hands her over to an ugly hag--and the name of that hag is Jubal. Is it not so, Monsieur?" and the crone, turning from the cup, looked with a hideous grin in the face of the Rebel chief.

"Oui, Jubal. You have guessed aright. To-morrow or the next day, Jean will bring hither a young woman. She is to be strictly guarded in that room where you kept--....

"Jubal remembers; Monsieur need not mention names."

"C'est bon! Well, Jubal, you need not exercise any severity towards the maiden, save that of a rigid confinement to her room. Me you shall hear from again."

"Is the maiden a pretty bird?" the crone asked with a chuckle.

"That matters not, Jubal," the chief replied, somewhat haughtily. "She is a dangerous young person, and has been playing the traitor to our cause. The only means of proceeding against the girl, is to take her liberty away. I am in hopes of persuading her to a right frame of mind, and with this end in view, I shall be obliged to pay some visits here during her captivity."

"I understand," quavered the hag; and the gleam in her eyes, as she laid her hand upon the chiefs shoulder, was most diabolical to see. "My poor simple son is down to the village with the pony for some provisions for my little cabin. Ma belle I shall be able to use handsomely, when she comes." Fetching then a black bottle, around which were many tangles of cob-web, she set it before; her visitors. The chief took a long draught. Jean swallowed enough to enable him to stand boldly up and stare at the owls, and the bright-eyed ravens.

"Let us away, Jean," cried the chief now in high spirits as the old Jamaica began to race through his veins; and flinging himself into his saddle, he rode off at a fleet pace.

Jean opened not his mouth till he found himself once more upon the plain, in the light of the honest moon. The Rebel chief now checking his pony's gait said:

"I suppose you have control enough over your fears now to listen to me?"

"Oui Monsieur."

"You will be able to-morrow night to find the den that we have left?"

"Without difficulty, Mon Chef."

"Well; to-morrow you ride away to Tall Elk, and give him this message from me.

"Colonel Marton is abroad, and his daughter, Annette, the enemy of the Indian and the Half-breed, is at home. She must be secured this evening before the moon rises. Bring up twenty braves; approach the house carefully, and fetch the maiden where directed. You will see that the braves make no noise, for this girl is as wary as the wild goose, and that little minx, Julie, her maid, is almost as wide-awake."

And as Jean rode away, the villain muttered to himself, "We shall see my proud bird how long you will gainsay Louis Riel after I get you under Jubal's bolt and lock. Go with you from Canada as my wife, and fly the honours with which this revolution will crown my brows? No, by the Mater purissima. You have been too scornful my pretty maiden; you have not concealed your preference for this English dog; you have held your rebellious pistol in my face. Ah, no, ma petite Annette; but I shall amuse myself, sometimes, after the brunt of the day's labour, by riding up the dismal valley, and stroking your broken wings. When I have served my mood, played to the full with the caged bird, Jubal can let it go to attract some new mate. Holy

virgin, but my triumph will be very sweet! Yea, Annette, to have you in one's own power is a sweet thing; nothing can be sweeter except the vengeance which shall feast itself at the same source as my passion."

He raised his arm in the direction of White Oaks, where lay the girl's cottage, and cried like a triumphant fiend.

"Bonsoir. Adieu, ma belle Annette. Sweet dreams about your lover to-night. To-morrow I shall bathe my face in the coils of your silken hair." And he was away.

When Jean rode away from his master he fell into a train of musing. "Methinks," he said aloud after a long pause, "that we had better kill two birds with one stone to-morrow. If the master take the mistress, I do not see why the man should not have the maid." And as the fellow reached this conclusion his little weasel eyes brightened as if each were the point of a glow worm; and he smote the flank of his horse with his heavy heel. "You one day turned up your sweet, haughty nose, Julie, when I told you how beautiful you were, and that I would like to kiss the dew off your red lips. Well, Julie, my plan for the morrow is to denounce you to Tall Elk as a spy; and after I have got possession of you, my pretty one, with a brave at one side of your pony, and myself at the other, we shall march to the cottonwood where the door of ma mere stands always open to her son, and that which belongs to him." So, chuckling over the fair prospects of the morrow, the fellow urged his pony to the full of its speed, down to the little village of St. Ignace.

Just as the sun went down like a shield of burning brass over the gray line of the prairie on the morrow, a cringing, stealthy-looking man might be seen riding a sorrel pony towards the verge of Alka Swamp, near which were camped the painted warriors of Tall Elk. As he drew near the squaws began to clap their hands, and the lean, ugly dogs gave several short yelps. Tall Elk came to the door of his wigwam, wherein sat several pretty young Cree wives sewing beads and dainty work upon his war jacket; and going to the horseman he said:

"The messenger from the great chief is welcome. What is his command for Tall Elk?"

When the savage had heard the orders of the rebel chief, and the additional instructions of Jean, he grunted: "Ugh; sorry to do this. The two girls were always kind to the Indians; and our braves will not like to do this against La Reine. But we must obey the orders of le grand chef."

"It is well. Let your braves be ready to start when the gopher comes out of his burrow." Fastening his horse to a cottonwood tree, this miscreant emissary began to whistle a tune, and walked about among the lodges, seeking to attract the attention of some pretty Indian maiden, of which there were many in the tents. The braves were abroad a little way, some looking for elk and others for muskrat, so that the impudent Metis might go about seeking to break hearts without any risk of getting a broken head.

When night had fallen over the prairie, and the bull-frog and the cricket filled the lower air with a confusing din of small sounds, thirty dusky warriors, mounted upon their ponies, with Tall Elk and Jean at their head, crossed over the ridge and struck out for White Oaks. An hour's ride brought them to an elevation from which they saw a light twinkling through the grove. Jean's small eyes were gleaming with foul expectation--he was thinking of his lovely booty, safe under the lock and key of his hideous little Metis mother.

"Let us spread our force now, chief," he whispered to Tall Elk. And we leave them drawing their circle of horses, stealthily and swiftly, around the silent cottage.

#### CHAPTER IV.

#### ANNETTE'S LOVER IN DANGER.

When Annette parted from Captain Stephens and his companions, she returned homeward through a region of the prairie over which lay no trail. She approached her cottage with noiseless tread; but the quick eyes of Julie saw her coming, and she stole forth like a kitten.

"Welcome mademoiselle;--is he safe?"

"Oui Julie. He is now--they are now--in Fort Pitt."

"Bon, Bon! To-morrow all the warriors upon the plain and all the

Breeds arise; and your father leads them. Oh, such throngs as came around our house since you went away mademoiselle, beating drums, dancing in the ring, and singing chansons de guerre. And, O mademoiselle, there was among the Crees one chief, so tall, and so noble-looking; and he will some day come back again to, to--see me." She squirmed very gently, and poised upon one dainty foot, till her pretty hip curved outward; and she pecked at her little forefinger with her rosy mouth as she made this pretty speech: "I think I like the chief so much mademoiselle; I know he is brave, and I do not think that he is altogether un sauvage."

"Oh! has my little Julie lost her heart? I hope your chief has left a little for me."

"I like mon chef, a good deal, but I love mademoiselle better than anybody in the world;" and the sweet, round, dimpled little maiden put her smooth arms closely and tenderly about the neck of her mistress.

"But how came about this sudden captivation of heart?" They were now in Annette's sweet tasty bed chamber, fresh and cool with the night air, and delicately fragrant with the breath of prairie flowers.

"You will not wonder when I tell you mademoiselle. You know I went away, shortly after the arrival of the warriors, to the little gray fountain. I sat here listening to the gurgle of the water, for my heart was sad, and filled with troublesome forebodings about you, and your deliverer 'Ah, I said, before ma maitresse fell into the freshet river, she wanted no stranger's love but mine. Now he who delivered her from death below the Chute, has crept into her heart; and she may think no more of her fond, and faithful Julie."

"What an absurd, sweet, little creature it is," murmured Annette.

"There I sat, dabbling my fingers in the babbling water when I saw a straight, tall, handsome man approaching me. He walked direct to the fountain and lifting his cap said:

"'Pardonnez, ma chere Julie.' His large eyes were very bright, but the light shining in them was a great tenderness.

"I did not know what to reply, but I rose to go, saying.

"'Monsieur le chef will excuse me. It is late; and I must return.'

"He folded his arms across his breast, and turned so that the moonlight shone full upon his face.

"'Does not the sweet Julie remember?'

"I looked at him in astonishment, but could not see any familiar likeness in his face."

"'Does little Julie remember many years ago? Wild men stole her away from her home, and a Cree chief rode to the village of the robbers, and smote them in their tents. Then he took upon his saddle a little girl with skin like the peach, and lips like the rose in bud. He carried her to his home upon the banks of the Saskatchewan, and she lived two years in his tent. During the summer days she played among

the flowers, or hooked gold-fish in the river. She had a companion who was ever at her side, the chief's son, whom the people called Little Poplar. He loved the maiden, and when they took her away to her home upon the far prairie, he mourned by day and by night, and vowed that he would leave no house or wigwam unsearched till he saw his maid again. To-night as he came to this cottage he saw the face that he has sought in vain for so many years. He now stands before the maiden of his heart. Sweet, ma Julie, do you forget your little boy lover of the sunny Saskatchewan?'

"Ah, my mistress, what could I say when it all came back so plain, and told in his rich, deep, musical voice? I do not know whether it was wrong or no; but without speaking any word to my beautiful chief I went up to him and laid my head against his breast. And he kissed me, and kissed me again, and stroked my hair; and whispered in my ear that when the war was over he would come and wed me, and fetch me wherever my heart desired. But I said that I would not live apart from you; that I had consecrated my life to the service of my sweet mistress.

"'I have seen her,' he replied. 'Her face is beautiful and good;' and then, mademoiselle, the silly chief said a great big untruth, but I know he only did so because he loves me so much. He declared, ma belle mademoiselle, that I was just as pretty as my mistress."

"Your beauty is only equalled by your naivete;" Annette exclaimed, fondly brushing back a stray lock from the forehead of the little maid.

"I have no doubt that your chief is good, brave, and handsome; but he should be all these in a high degree before he is worthy to get such a girl as yourself, ma Julie. Now, away to your bed, and sleep of your lover. I go, too, for I am tired."

With the morrow's sun all the neutral tribes were astir and mixing their paint; and long before Annette or her little maid had risen, Colonel Marton had saddled his horse, and ridden towards the rendez-vous at Burnt Hills.

The bright, windless day passed over the prairie, and whenever Annette spoke of the bravery of Captain Stephens, Julie would tell some praises of the chief with the graceful loins and the great luminous eye.

"Your lover has said that he would come to see you, Julie, but, ah me, in these troublesome times Captain Stephens can no more return to our cottage. Do you know, my little friend, that I cannot bear being cooped up here during all this strife and tumult, when brave men and defenceless women are at the mercy of savages and ill-advised men of our own class. There have been evil and oppressive doings by government and its agents, but I do not think that Monsieur Riel and my father have taken the prudent course to remove the wrongs. It will not be fair or honorable war; for when the savage and cruel instincts of the red men are once aroused, they will treat the innocent like the guilty, and neither woman nor child will be safe from their horrible vengeance. Therefore, Annette, I have made up my mind to go forth tomorrow in my Indian-boy disguise.

"I shall not betray my people or my friends, but I shall pass from

one force to the other, and whenever I can warn the loyal troops, or apprise their people of danger, I shall do it. You Julie I shall leave in the care of my aunt at the Portage; for it is not safe for you, it would not be safe for you and me together, to remain in this deserted cottage alone during these looting and lawless times."

The two maidens were now alone, save for the presence of a Cree drudge; for Paul had mounted a pony and followed his father, with pistols in his holster-pipes, and a large bowie knife stuck into his belt.

So as evening drew on Annette had packed, in little, portable parcels all the valuables about the house; and when she sat down to supper with Julie at her side, she said that everything was now ready, and that they needed but to get into the saddle in the morning. Little did these two girls know, as they sat quietly eating their supper, that there was at this very moment a band of painted enemies hurrying across the dim prairie toward their cottage! Everything was perfectly still in the house, and the tick-tack of the clock smote the silence. The heart of each girl was far away, and the eyes of both were on the white, sweet floor.

Annette was the first to raise her eyes, and a short cry of terror burst from her lips. For there in the entrance of the little dining-room stood the tall, straight figure of an Indian chief. The cry brought Julie to her senses, and she too looked up: but she gave no cry; the blood came surging into her sweet head till her cheeks, and her smooth throat, and her little shell-like ears, became the color of a blown carnation.

"Little Poplar," she exclaimed. "Mademoiselle," turning toward her mistress, "it is about him that I have told you;" and the dainty maiden crept softly as a kitten over to the side of the handsome chief. He smiled, stooped, and touched her forehead with his lips. Then he rose to the height of his splendid stature again, and took off his cap.

"There is danger to mademoiselle and to ma Julie. Just now a band of painted Crees with Tall Elk and Jean, Le Grand Chef's man, at their head are coming to make you prisoners. Follow me instantly."

In a few moments the two girls were gliding swiftly from the house toward the corral where their horses stood tethered, the chief bearing the little packages of valuables in his arms. There was no time to be lost, and as the trio rode away from the corral, the neighing of the enemies' ponies close at hand burst in a wild shower upon their ears.

"Follow me," whispered the chief, and as he rode around the shoulder of the gloomy hill, the cries of the disappointed Indians were borne upon the night. When they reached the level prairie the chief reined in his horse, and the three paced along side by side.

"How can we thank the brave chief enough for his care and help," Annette said in the heartiest tones of her sweet voice.

"I was passing through the village of Tall Elk at the set of sun, and heard the great chief's man, Jean, say, 'It will be a good catch to-night for master and man, won't it? I take Julie; Le Grand Chef

gets the other.' I then enquired of Tall Elk, and he told me of their plans. The house was to be surrounded before moonrise; mademoiselle was to be seized and taken away to the hut of the hag Jubal, and Julie was to be borne to the cabin of Jean's mother." As he spoke these words a terrible light gleamed in his eyes, and he muttered,

"Had this man, Jean, succeeded I should have hunted him down and taken out his heart."

When they were far beyond the enemy's reach, Annette said,

"Will the chef ride to yonder cottonwood and wait there until his Julie and myself have put on apparel more suited to our present inclinations?" Tall Poplar rode away; but when he joined the maidens again a great look of dismay came into his eyes.

"Where are--" but before he ended the words, the truth flashed across him, and he burst out in a tone of mirth and approval: "Brava, brava: there is not a man in all the plains that can name these two Indian boys."

Annette remained during the balance of the night with her aunt; but she arose before the dew was dry, and with the other lad at her side, for Julie would not remain behind her mistress, was off at a brisk canter towards Fort Pitt. The news which she had heard lent speed to Annette. From far and near the Crees had come to enroll themselves under the banner of the blood-thirsty chief, Big Bear; and the murderous hordes were at that very moment, she knew, menacing the poorly garrisoned fort with rifle, hatchet and fire.

All over the territory, I may say, the Indians had now begun to sing and dance, and to brandish their tomahawks. Their way of living during late years has been altogether too slow, too dead-and-alive, too unlike the ways of their ancestors, when once at least in each year, every warrior returned to his lodge with scalp locks dangling at his belt.

Les Gros Ventres for the time, forgot their corporosity, and began to dance and howl, and declare that they would fight till all their blood was spilt with M. Riel, or his adjutant M. Marton.

The Blackfeet began to hold pow-wows, and tell their squaws that there would soon be good feasts. For many a day they had been casting covetous eyes upon the fat cattle of their white neighbours. Along too, came the feeble remnant of the once agile Salteaux, inquiring if it was to be war; and if so, would there be big feasts?

"Oh, big feasts, big feasts," was the reply. "Plenty fat cattle in the corrals; and heaps of, mange in the store." So the Salteaux were happy, and, somewhat in their old fashion, went vaulting homewards.

Tidings of fight, and feast, and turmoil reached the Crees, and they sallied out from the tents, while the large-eyed squaws sat silent, marvelling what was to come of it all.

High into the air the Nez Perce thrust his nostril; for he had got scent of the battle from afar. And last, but not least, came the remnant of that tribe whose chief had shot Custer in the Black Hills. The Sioux only required to be shown where the enemy lay; but in his

enthusiasm he did not lose sight of the fat cattle grazing upon the prairies.

But we return for a time to Captain Stephens and his party. When their deliverer, the Indian boy, departed, they rode along the bank of the Saskatchewan, according to the lad's instructions, and in half an hour were in sight of Pitt. Inspector Dicken was glad enough to receive this addition to his little assistance; and informed Captain Stephens that he had resolved to fight it out against the forces menacing him.

"What is the number of the enemy?" enquired Stephens.

"About a hundred armed braves I should judge," Inspector Dicken replied. "Big Bear accompanied by a dozen wives came under the stockade this morning, and invited me to have a talk. With the coolest effrontery he informed me that if I would leave the fort, surrender my arms, and accompany him, with my men, into his wigwams, that he would give me a guarantee against all harm. If I refused these terms, he said he would first let his young men amuse themselves by a couple of days' firing at our forces; and that afterwards he would burn the Fort and put the inmates to death.

"I expostulated with the greasy, swaggering ruffian, but he only swore, and reiterated his threats. Then I told him to be gone for an insolent savage, and that if I found him prowling about the Fort again, I should send my men to take charge of him. Thereat his squaws began to jeer, and cut capers; and squatting upon the sod in a row they made mouths, and poked their fingers at me. Then they arose yelling and waving their arms, and followed the savage. It appears that after the chief left me, he went to the people of our town and proposed the same terms; for an hour later, to my horror, I saw the chief factor of the Hudson Bay Company, his wife and daughters, and several others following the Indian to his wigwams. Had these people put themselves under our protection, and the men aided us in defence, we might have laughed defiance at the five score of the enemy who threaten."

"But," returned Stephens, "I fear that you do not count at its full the force preparing itself to attack. From all I can gather a hundred or so of Plain Crees will come here to-day under Tall Elk; while the total strength of the Stonies, who will rise at Big Bear's call, cannot be less than five hundred."

Inspector Dicken looked grave; but he was a brave man and busied himself in making preparations. The total number of his force, including mounted police and civilians was 24; and each man had a Winchester and about twenty rounds of ammunition.

"Two of my scouts are abroad," he said, "reconnoitering; they should be here by this time." While he was yet speaking a storm of yelling came from the wigwams of Big Bear, and three or four score of braves were seen pouring from their tents, like bees bundling out of a hive. Each one had a gun in his hand, and a hatchet in his belt. The cause of this sudden commotion was soon apparent: about half a mile distant, two police scouts were riding leisurely along the plain towards the Fort, and evidently not suspecting the danger which menaced them. They advanced to a point about two hundred yards from the stockades; then a yell went up from a body of prostrate savages,

and immediately half a hundred rifles were discharged. One of the men fell from his horse, dead, upon the prairie; but the other rode through the storm of lead to the Fort, and entered struck by half a dozen bullets.

"The devils have begun!" muttered the Inspector, and he quivered from head to foot, but not with fear.

The first taste of blood set the savages in a high state of exultation. They gathered yelling and dancing, and flashing their weapons in the sun around the door of the chief. Big Bear pulled off his feathered cap and threw it several times in the air. Then turning to his wives he told them to make ready for a White Dog feast; and he bade his braves go and fetch the animals.

So a large fire was built upon the prairie, a short distance from the chief's lodge, and the huge festival pot was suspended from a crane over the roaring flames. First, about fifteen gallons of water were put in; then Big Bear's wives, some of whom were old and wrinkled, others being lithe as fawns, plump and bright-eyed, busied themselves gathering herbs.

Some dug deep into the marsh for "bog-bane," others searched among the knotted roots for the little nut-like tuber that clings to the root of the flag, while a few brought to the pot wild parsnips, and the dried stalks of the prairie parsley. A coy little maiden whom many a hunter wooed, but failed to win, had in her sweet little brown hands a tangle of wintergreen vines, and maiden-hair.

Then came striding along the young hunters with the dogs. Each dog selected for the feast was white as the driven snow. If a black hair, or a blue hair, or a brown hair was discovered anywhere upon his body he was taken away; but if he were *\_sans reproche\_* he was put into the pot just as he was, with head, and hide, and paws, and tail, his throat simply having been cut.

Six dogs were thrown in, and the roots and stalks of the prairie plants, together with salt, and bunches of the wild pepper-plant, and of swamp mustard, were added for seasoning. Through the reserves round about for many miles swarthy heralds proclaimed that the great Chief Big Bear was giving a White Dog feast to his braves before summoning them to the war-path. The feast was, in Indian experience, a magnificent one, and before the young men departed they swore to Big Bear that they returned only for their war-paint and arms, and that before the set of the next sun they would be back at his side.

True to their word the Indians came, hideous in their yellow paint. If you stood to leeward of them upon the plain a mile away you could clearly get the raw, earthy smell of the ochre from their hands and faces. Some had black bars streaked across their cheeks, and hideous crimson circles about their eyes. Some, likewise, had stars in pipe-clay painted upon the forehead, and others were diabolical in the figures of horrid beasts, painted with savage skill upon their naked breasts.

The beleaguered could notice all these preparations with their glasses; and the men spoke to each other in low tones. Savages seemed to be gathering from all points of the compass, and massing upon the plateau round about the camps of the Cree Chief. But several bands

were stationed around the Fort, in such a manner as to cut off retreat from the stockades should escape be attempted.

Close to the fort was the shining, yellow Saskatchewan; and for miles, with a glass, you could see the bright coils of its leisurely waters, as that proud river pierced its way through the great stretch of plain till it became lost in the haze of the distance.

"If you were only upon the river in yonder flat boat," said Captain Stephens, "you might drop quietly down to Battleford. The reinforcement would come quite opportunely to Morrison."

"I do not care to leave here without giving the rebels a little of our lead," the Inspector replied. "But even though I desired to do so, now, the thing as you see is impossible."

Night fell, and when it came there was not a star in the sky. A heavy mass of indigo-coloured cloud had risen before the set of sun, in the south east, and crept slowly over the whole heavens, widening its dark arms as it came. So when night fell there was not a point of light to be seen anywhere in the heavens.

"It would seem," murmured one, "as if God were going to aid the savages with His darkness."

Shortly after dark the wind began to wail like a tortured spirit along the plain; and in the lull between the blasts the cry of strange night-birds could be heard coining from each little thicket of white oak or cottonwood.

Louder and louder grew the screaming of the tempest, and it shrieked through the ribs of the stockade, like a Titan blowing through the teeth of a giant comb.

Inspector Dicken, with Captain Stephens at his side, was standing at the edge of the stockade. Not a sound came from the plateau, and not a glimmer of light appeared in the darkness. Then the great, wide, black night suddenly opened its jaws and launched forth an avalanche of blinding, white light. The two men bounded in their places; then came a roll of mighty thunder, as if it were moving on tremendous wheels and destroying all the heavens.

No enemy yet!

But the besieged had hardly breathed their breath of relief, before there arose upon the dark air, a din of sound so diabolical that you might believe the gates of hell had suddenly been thrown open. From every point around the fort went up a chorus of murderous yells, and then came the irregular flash and crack from rifles.

The Inspector ran hastily back among his men:

"Don't waste your ammunition," he said, "in the dark. Part of their plan is to burn the fort. Wait till they fire the torches, and then blaze at them in their own light."

Every man clenched his rifle, and the eyes of the brave band glimmered in the dark.

Crack! crack! crack! went the rifles of the savages, and now and again a sound, half like a snarl, and half like a sigh, went trailing over the fort. It was from the Indians' bullets.

"Keep close, my men," shouted the Inspector; "down upon your faces."

Drawn off their guard by the silence of the besieged, the enemy became more reckless, and lighting flambeaux of birch-bark, they began to wave them above their heads. The spluttering glare showed scores of savages, busy loading and discharging their rifles.

"Now, my men; ready! There, have at them." Crack, c

# Livros Grátis

( <http://www.livrosgratis.com.br> )

Milhares de Livros para Download:

[Baixar livros de Administração](#)

[Baixar livros de Agronomia](#)

[Baixar livros de Arquitetura](#)

[Baixar livros de Artes](#)

[Baixar livros de Astronomia](#)

[Baixar livros de Biologia Geral](#)

[Baixar livros de Ciência da Computação](#)

[Baixar livros de Ciência da Informação](#)

[Baixar livros de Ciência Política](#)

[Baixar livros de Ciências da Saúde](#)

[Baixar livros de Comunicação](#)

[Baixar livros do Conselho Nacional de Educação - CNE](#)

[Baixar livros de Defesa civil](#)

[Baixar livros de Direito](#)

[Baixar livros de Direitos humanos](#)

[Baixar livros de Economia](#)

[Baixar livros de Economia Doméstica](#)

[Baixar livros de Educação](#)

[Baixar livros de Educação - Trânsito](#)

[Baixar livros de Educação Física](#)

[Baixar livros de Engenharia Aeroespacial](#)

[Baixar livros de Farmácia](#)

[Baixar livros de Filosofia](#)

[Baixar livros de Física](#)

[Baixar livros de Geociências](#)

[Baixar livros de Geografia](#)

[Baixar livros de História](#)

[Baixar livros de Línguas](#)

[Baixar livros de Literatura](#)  
[Baixar livros de Literatura de Cordel](#)  
[Baixar livros de Literatura Infantil](#)  
[Baixar livros de Matemática](#)  
[Baixar livros de Medicina](#)  
[Baixar livros de Medicina Veterinária](#)  
[Baixar livros de Meio Ambiente](#)  
[Baixar livros de Meteorologia](#)  
[Baixar Monografias e TCC](#)  
[Baixar livros Multidisciplinar](#)  
[Baixar livros de Música](#)  
[Baixar livros de Psicologia](#)  
[Baixar livros de Química](#)  
[Baixar livros de Saúde Coletiva](#)  
[Baixar livros de Serviço Social](#)  
[Baixar livros de Sociologia](#)  
[Baixar livros de Teologia](#)  
[Baixar livros de Trabalho](#)  
[Baixar livros de Turismo](#)