TIPPECANOE

By SAMUEL McCOY

Recounting the adventures and love which came into the lives of David Larrence and Antoinette O'Bannon, in the days when pioneers were fighting red savages in the Indiana wilderness

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CHAPTER XXIII.—Continued.

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She shrank away from his filthy and unutterable loathing and buried her face downward in a paroxysm of weeping. The music of the drums and fifes had ceased. Outside, all was busied with activity. The prophet, but the red cup of his eye-socket over a lapful of grotesque implements, muttering incantations to himself.

Girty passed his hand soothingly over the trembling shoulders of the girl, and gutted the tangled, silken flood of her hair.

"I kain't blame ye, my dear, fur not likin' a injun to such a ugly ole critter as I be, but I've had a hard life, my dear, a hard life. I been ornery. I'll grant ye, I been ornery, but I been outraged to be. They's a lot o' pesky Injuns here in this world, my dear, an' I've had to fight hard agin 'em. I've been waitin' fur a likely young gal like you so as I kin go into the settlements on the Canady side and live noble like a king. I'm askin' ye quiet to go with me, ye see?"

Toinette only sobbed.

"Ain't that fair, as I put it to ye? What kin be fairer nor thet? I kin be just as pretty as a picter—me an' you a-settin' in front of the fire, me readin' to you out of the Book about the blessed Lamb o' God. Oh, ye may know as well as any on 'em when I'm a leetle devil, I be a good ole critter."

Toinette wondered to hear h'm name his mother. She made no reply, and suddenly burst in a string of the most oaths, cursing and blasphemy. But he offered her no violence. He still hoped to find some officer in Detroit who would pay a rich price for her. And such a purchaser would want her physically sound. For that he had seen to it that no warrior had harmed her; and he meant to keep his money to the end.

The drums had begun again, loud, but now instead of drawing nearer they passed farther and farther away, fainter and fainter. Elkskatawa stole cautiously from the tent. Presently there swept over Toinette the realization that Girty had fled—the fifes were playing an air that reddened her cheeks to the stirring notes of "The President's March!" She leaped to her feet, her eyes blazing. Fainter and fainter came the air to which she unconsciously fitted the words:

"Columbia, the gem of the ocean,
The home of the brave and free,
The shrine of each patriot's devotion,
A world offers homage to thee."

"Tis the men of Harrison!" she cried. "Tis the men of Harrison!" She faced Girty, and the days of dread, all her hours of fear were forgotten. "I have prayed to God and he has answered me!"

For a moment Girty was silent before the white radiance of her faith; then threw off his hesitancy with a coarse laugh.

"Purty lot of good thet handful o' Yanks do," he snarled. "By sundown we'll hev ye 'ever' one on the way, skelps fur ye to play with!"

He stepped hastily outdoors, satisfying himself that the troops were not in view, he returned, and, seizing Toinette's arm, dragged her from the tent. As she emerged into the raw November air she shivered.

"I'll see for yerself they hain't no purty squaws brave enough to fight a papoose, let alone a brave," he said tauntingly.

Innumerable warriors of the tribe were in war-paint, stalking to and fro among the tents of the encampment of the cautious Shawnees in support to his boast. Toinette looked helplessly from side to side, seeking some avenue of escape, and filled in her eyes.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Battle.

It was in the dark hour after midnight that the great war-bow of the Indians twanged. But the camp of the Americans was astir. A light rain fell. It was past.

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