

THE REFUGEES

By A. CONAN DOYLE,
Author of "The Return of Sherlock Holmes"

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(Continued from Thursday.)

But there was another whose view of duty led him from safety into the face of danger. All night the Franciscan had watched De Catinat as a miser watches his treasure, filled with the thought that this heretic was the one little seed which might spread and spread until it choked the chosen vineyard of the church. He, too, clambered down at the very heels of his prisoner and rushed into the stream not ten paces behind him.

And so the watchers at the window saw the strangest of sights. There in midstream lay the canoe, with its burden of dark warriors, and the two women crouching in the midst of them. Swimming madly toward them was De Catinat, rising to the shoulders with the strength of every stroke, and behind him again was the tonsured head of the friar, with his dark capot and long trailing gown floating upon the surface of the water. But in his zeal he had thought too little of his own powers. He was a good swimmer, but he was weighed and hampered by his unwieldy clothes. Slower and slower grew his stroke and lower and lower his head until at last, with a great shriek of "In manus tuas, Domine!" he threw up his hands and vanished in the swirl of the river. A minute later the watchers, hoarse with screaming to him to return, saw De Catinat pulled aboard the Iroquois canoe, which was instantly turned and continued its course up the river.

"My God!" cried Amos hoarsely. "They have taken him! He is lost!"

"I have seen some strange things in these forty years, but never the like of that!" said Du Lhut.

The seigneur took a little pinch of snuff from his gold box and flicked the wandering grains from his shirt front with his dainty lace handkerchief.

"M. de Catinat has acted like a gentleman of France," said he.

Du Lhut glanced round him and shook his head. "We are only six now," said he. "I fear that they are up to some deviltry because they are so very still."

"They are leaving the house?" cried the centinelle, who was peeping through one of the side windows.

"What can it mean? Holy Virgin, is it possible that we are saved? See how they throng through the forest! They are making for the canoe."

On the river the single Iroquois canoe, which held the captives, was speeding south as swiftly as twenty paddles could drive it; but, save this one dark streak upon the blue stream, not a sign was to be seen of their enemies.

"By my faith, I believe that they have gone!" cried the seigneur.

"Take care that it is not a ruse," said Du Lhut. "Why should they fly before six men when they have conquered sixty?"

But the centinelle had looked out of the other window, and in an instant he was down upon his knees, with his hands in the air and his powder blackened face turned upward pattering out prayers and thanksgivings. His five comrades rushed across the room and burst into a shriek of joy. The lower reach of the river was covered with a flotilla of canoes, from which the sun struck quick flashes as it shone upon the musket barrels and trappings of the crews. Already they could see the white coats of the regulars, the brown tunics of the coureurs de bois and the gaudy colors of the Hurons and Algonquins. On they swept, dotting the whole breadth of the river and growing larger every instant, while far away on the southern bend the Iroquois canoe was a mere moving dot, which had shot away to the farther side and had lost itself presently under the shadow of the trees. Another minute and the survivors were out upon the bank waving their caps in the air, while the prows of the first of their

rescuers were already grating upon the pebbles. In the stern of the very foremost canoe sat a wizened little man with a large brown wig and a gilt-headed rapier laid across his knees. He sprang out as the keel touched bottom and, rushing up to the seigneur, flung himself into his arms.

"My dear Charles," he cried, "you have held your house like a hero!"

"I know that you would not desert a comrade," he said. "We have saved the house, but our losses have been terrible. My son is dead. My wife is in that Iroquois canoe."

The commander of Fort St. Louis pressed his friend's hand in silent sympathy.

"The others arrived all safe," he said at last. "Only that one was taken on account of the breaking of a paddle. Three were drowned and two taken. There was a French lady in it, I understand, as well as madame."

"Yes, and they have taken her husband also."

"Ah, poor souls! Well, if you are strong enough to join us, you and your friends, we shall follow after them without the loss of an instant. Ten of my men will remain to guard the house and you can have their canoe."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE Iroquois had not treated De Catinat harshly when they dragged him from the water into their canoe. So incomprehensible was it to them why any man should voluntarily leave a place of safety in order to put himself in their power that they could only set it down to madness, a malady which inspires awe and respect among the Indians. Two warriors passed their hands over him to be sure that he was unarmed, and he was then thrust down between the two women, while the canoe darted in toward the bank to tell the others that the garrison of Fort St. Louis was coming up the stream. Adele was deadly pale, and her hand, as her husband laid his upon it, was as cold as marble.

"My darling," he whispered, "tell me that all is well with you—that you are unhurt!"

"Oh, Amory, why did you come? Why did you come, Amory?"

"How could I stay behind when I knew that you were in their hands? We have gone through so much together that we cannot part now. What is death, Adele? Why should we be afraid of it?"

"I am not afraid of it."

"And I am not afraid of it. Things will come about as God wills, and what He wills must in the end be the best."

"Tell me, monsieur," said Omega, "is my lord still living?"

"Yes, he is alive and well."

"It is good. He is a great chief, and I have never been sorry, not even now, that I have wedded with one who was not of my own people. But, ah, my son! Who shall give my son back to me? Ere that sun shines again we shall all be dead, and my heart is glad, for I shall see my boy once more."

The Iroquois paddlers had bent to their work until a good ten miles lay between them and Ste. Marie. Then they ran the canoe into a little creek upon their own side of the river and sprang out of her, dragging the prisoners after them. Then, after a short council, they started through the forest, walking in single file, with their three prisoners in the middle. There were fifteen warriors in all, eight in front and seven behind, all armed with muskets and as swift footed as deer, so that escape was out of the question. They could not follow on and wait in patience for whatever might befall them.

All day they pursued their dreary march. Omega had the endurance of the Indians themselves, but Adele, in spite of her former journeys, was foot-sore and weary before evening. It was a relief to De Catinat, therefore, when the red glow of a great fire began suddenly through the tree trunks and they came upon an Indian camp in which was assembled the greater part of the war party which had been driven from Ste. Marie. Here, too, were a number of the squaws who had come from the Mohawk and Cayuga villages in order to be nearer to the warriors. Wigwams had been erected all round in a circle, and before each of them were the kettles, slung upon a tripod of sticks, in which the evening meal was being cooked. In the center of all was a very fierce fire, which had been made of brushwood placed in a circle so as to have a clear space of twelve feet in the middle. A pole stood up in the center of this clearing, and something all mottled with red and black was tied up against it. De Catinat stepped swiftly in front of Adele that she might not see the dreadful thing.

"They have begun already, then," said Omega composedly. "Well, it will be our turn next, and we shall show them that we know how to die."

"They have not ill used us yet," said De Catinat. "Perhaps they will keep us for ransom or exchange."

The Indian woman shook her head. "Do not deceive yourself by any such hope," said she. "When they are as gentle as they have been with you it is ever a sign that you are reserved for the torture. Your wife will be

married to one of their chiefs, but you and I must die."

"Married to an Iroquois!" Those dreadful words shot a pang through both their hearts which no thought of death could have done. De Catinat's head dropped forward upon his chest, and he staggered and would have fallen had Adele not caught him by the arm.

"Do not fear, dear Amory," she whispered. "Other things may happen, but not that, for I swear to you that I shall not survive you."

As they entered the Iroquois village the squaws and warriors had rushed toward them, and they walked through a double line of hideous faces, which jeered and gibed and howled at them as they passed. Their escort led them through this rabble and conducted them to a hut which stood apart.

An instant later an old war chief, accompanied by two younger braves and by the bearded half Dutch Iroquois who had led the attack upon the manor house, strolled over and stood in the doorway, looking in at the prisoners. The Bastard was smoking a stone pipe, and yet it was he who talked the most, arguing apparently with one of the younger braves, who seemed to come round at last to his opinion. Finally the old chief said a few short stern words, and the matter appeared to be settled.

"And you, you beldam," said the Bastard in French to the Iroquois woman, "you will have a lesson this night which will teach you to side against your own people!"

"You half bred mongrel," replied the fearless old woman, "you should take that hat from your head when you speak to one in whose veins runs the best blood of the Onondagas. You a warrior—you who, with a thousand at your back, could not make your way into a little house with a few poor husbandmen within it! It is no wonder that your father's people have cast you out."

The evil face of the Bastard grew livid as he listened to the scornful words which were hissed at him by the captive. He strode across to her, and, taking her hand, he thrust the forefinger into the burning bowl of his pipe. She made no effort to remove it, but sat with a perfectly set face for a minute or more, looking out through the open door at the evening sunlight and the little groups of chattering Indians. He watched her keenly in the hope of hearing a cry or seeing some spasm of agony upon her face, but at last, with a curse, he dashed down her hand and strode from the hut. She thrust her charred finger into her bosom and laughed.

"He is a good for naught!" she cried. "He does not even know how to torture. Now, I could have got a cry out of him. I am sure of it. But you, monsieur, you are very white!"

"It was the sight of such a hellish deed. Ah, if we were but set face to face, I with my sword, he with that weapon he chose, he should pay for it with his heart's blood!"

The Indian woman seemed surprised. "It is strange to me," she said, "that you should think of what befalls me when you are yourself under the same shadow. But our fate will be as I said. You are to die at the stake. She is to be given to the dog who has left us."

"Adele! Adele! What shall I do?" He tore his hair in his helplessness and distraction.

"No, no, fear not, Amory, for my heart will not fail me. What is the pang of death if it binds us together?"

"The younger chief pleaded for you, saying that the Mitche Manitou had stricken you with madness, as could be seen by your swimming to their canoe, and that a blight would fall upon the nation if you were led to the stake. But the Bastard said that love came often like madness among the palefaces and that it was that alone which had driven you. Then it was agreed that you should die and that she should go to his wigwam, since he had led the war party. As for me, their hearts were bitter against me, and I also am to die by the pine splinters."

"Now, at once. They have gone to make all ready. But you have time yet, for I am to go first."

"Amory, Amory, could we not die together now?" cried Adele, throwing her arms round her husband. "If it be sin, it is surely a sin which will be forgiven us. Let us go, dear. Let us leave these dreadful people and this cruel world and turn where we shall find peace."

The Indian woman's eyes flashed with satisfaction. "You have spoken well, White Lily," said she. "Why should you wait until it is their pleasure to pluck you? See! Already the glare of their fire beats upon the tree trunks, and you can hear the howlings of those who thirst for your blood. You have said rightly, White Lily. There lies the only path for you."

"But how to take it?"

Omega glanced keenly at the two warriors who stood as sentinels at the door of the hut. They had turned away, absorbed in the horrible preparations which were going on. Then she rummaged deeply within the folds of her loose gown and pulled out a small pistol with two brass barrels and double triggers in the form of winged dragons. It was only a toy to look at, all carved and scrolled and graven with the choicest work of the Paris gunsmith. For its beauty the seigneur had bought it at his last visit to Quebec, and yet it might be useful, too, and it was loaded in both barrels.

"I meant to use it on myself," said she as she slipped it into the hand of De Catinat. "But now I am minded to show them that I can die as an Onondaga should die and that I am worthy to have the blood of their chiefs in my veins. Take it, for I swear that I will not use it myself unless it be to fire both bullets into that Bastard's heart!"

(To Be Continued.)

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TIDE TABLE.

The following table shows the high and low tides at Empire for each day during the coming week:

High Water.

	A. M.	P. M.
June, h. m. Feet. h. m. Feet.		
Thurs., 20...	1:47 2.3	1:48 2.0
Fri., 21...	2:55 1.6	2:40 2.8
Sat., 22...	3:59 0.7	3:41 2.5
Sun., 23...	4:58 0.2	4:41 2.7
Mon., 24...	5:52 0.9	5:48 2.8
Tues., 25...	6:42 1.5	6:32 2.8
Wed., 26...	0:28 10.1	1:52 7.5

Low Water.

	A. M.	P. M.
June, h. m. Feet. h. m. Feet.		
Thurs., 20...	7:44 6.4	10:12 8.2
Fri., 21...	8:58 6.4	11:11 8.7
Sat., 22...	10:08 6.6	10:02 9.2
Sun., 23...	11:10 6.8	10:52 9.6
Mon., 24...	12:07 7.0	11:40 9.9
Tues., 25...	13:00 7.3	0:00 0.0
Wed., 26...	7:32 1.8	7:27 2.8

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9:45 a. m. Coquille.
Arrive 10:30 a. m. Myrtle Point.

No. 2.	Trains.
Daily	Stations.
Except Sunday.	

Leave 10:45 a. m. Myrtle Point.
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12:00 m. B. H. Junction.
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Swimming madly toward them was De Catinat.