

The Red Road

A Romance of
Braddock's Defeat

By

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SYNOPSIS

Impoverished by the open-handed generosity of his father, Virginia gentleman, young Webster Brond is serving as a scout and spy for the army under General Braddock preparing for the advance on Fort Duquesne. He has just returned to Alexandria from a visit to the fort, where, posing as a Frenchman, he has secured valuable information. Braddock, bred to European warfare, fails to realize the importance of the news. Brond is sent back to Fort Duquesne, also bearing a message to George Croghan, English emissary among the Indians. Brond joins his friend and fellow scout, Round Paw, Indian chief, and they set out. On the way they fall in with a typical backwoodsman, Balsar Cromit, who joins them. The party encounters a group of settlers threatening a young girl, Elsie Dinwold, whom they accuse of witchcraft.

CHAPTER II—Continued

"There are two or three men in this valley and as many more in Little Cove who will not work. They pretend to be witch-masters, and they get their keep by pretending to undo the mischief the Dinwold women were said to do. After my mother's death, and after they named this place 'Der Hexenkopf' my sisters would not live here. They knew men were drawing our pictures on stumps and shooting them with silver bullets; and they went away, and only I was left. Those fools down there burn marks on their dogs and cattle to cure them of my spells. Every time a worthless scamp strips an odder they say I milked their cows. God help those who must live among fools!"

I had let her talk herself out, and now said:

"This valley isn't safe for you. Isn't there any place where you can go? Back to Carlisle, Philadelphia, or to some Maryland town?"

"It isn't easy to travel with a helpless man," she fiercely reminded me.

I glanced at the cripple. He did not seem to be hearing our talk, but his face was flushed and his breathing more rapid.

"Get your uncle inside," I whispered to the girl. "He's unwell. The excitement has upset him."

She put her arms around him and petted him, and murmured things I could not hear, and aided him to enter the cabin. The people down the hill noted her disappearance and began advancing up the slope. Calling to the Onondaga in English I directed: "Scalp the German and the red-faced man if they do not fall back."

In his own tongue I added:

"Scare those fools away."

Round Paw threw aside his blanket and glided toward the oncoming settlers. Cromit flourished his big knife and kept at the Indian's side. The latter sounded his war-whoop and charged. The unarmed settlers gave way in a panic and raced back to their cabins.

"Elsie Dinwold, you must get away from this valley. Once we're gone there'll be no one to protect you. Your uncle must risk it. He will surely die if he stays here."

"I'll get a horse and get him out of the Cove if it kills him. I never saw him like this before. We have three cows and two oxen. No one here will pay what they are worth. Will Braddock's army buy them?"

"Gladly. Fresh beef will be needed at Will's creek. But you can't drive them there, and my business won't let me do it. There must be some one in the Cove who will buy them at a fair price. I'll send the man Cromit up here to get them and find a buyer. He's as shrewd as he is red-headed. He'll drive a good bargain. Now let me see your uncle."

He was on his bed, breathing rapidly and hiccuping at intervals. My experience with death had been largely confined to men dying from mortal wounds, but I knew that this man was about to enter a longer and deeper valley than that of Great Cove. I patted the girl's bowed head and promised she should not be disturbed.

She knew the truth, for she followed me to the door and whispered: "He must die."

"I fear he is dying now," I told her. "I will stay with you."

"No!" There was a flash of fierceness in her refusal. More gently she added:

"We've been without kindness a long time. We'll bide the rest of the way together and alone. Please go now."

I descended the hill to where Cromit and the Indian were awaiting the settlers' return. Men were hurrying up with axes and muskets, eager to avenge the sting their pride had received. I went to them and announced that Dinwold was dying and that the

young woman would leave the valley very soon, and that her departure would be hastened could she find some one to buy her cattle. My words sobered them and took the edge from their anger. A man said:

"If she will swear on the Holy Book that they are not bewitched, I'll take them off her hands."

"We three men will drive them to Braddock's camp, or will sell them here. We can get more for them on Will's creek. The man Cromit of McDowell's mill will make the trade if you care to buy."

"Bewitched, or bedeviled, I care not. I'll buy them and cure them and then sell them to Braddock. Let the young man stop showing his claws and his teeth and we can make a trade."

Much pleased at the outcome of what had threatened to be a serious affair, I returned to Cromit and gave him his instructions. I told him the Indian and I would spread our blankets in the path south of the hill and for him to take the money to the cabin, if he made a fair bargain, and then come to us.

In less than an hour Cromit came through the darkness to us and announced:

"She's got the money and says I made a good bargain. But the man,



"It isn't Easy to Travel With a Helpless Man," She Fiercely Reminded Me.

her uncle, will never see the stars again in this mortal land. There's the death-mark on him."

We slept for several hours and I must have been close to midnight when the report of a flintlock brought us to our feet.

Believing the girl was in trouble I called on my companions to follow me. Cromit ran at my side. Behind us came the Onondaga, softly humming:

"Ha-hum-weh. Ha-hum-weh—I be long to the Wolf clan. I belong to the Wolf clan."

He chanted it over and over as we mounted the hill and only became silent when the girl confronted us, a vague slim figure in the night. In a faint voice she said:

"He is dead. My good uncle is dead. He died in his sleep. His kind heart was very weak."

She did not weep but kept repeating that he had died in his sleep. The Onondaga would not enter the cabin, but Cromit and I wrapped the dead man in a blanket and dug a grave some distance from the cabin, the girl holding a pine torch so that we might see. When we had finished and had retired she threw herself on the grave and wept a little. Then she came to us and said:

"I leave this place this night. Those people down there killed him. I leave this place this night."

"Then you must go to McDowell's

Hope to Find Bones of Cardinal Wolsey

Leicester abbey, where Cardinal Wolsey told the abbot he had "come to lay his bones," is to undergo transformation. For many years the abbey grounds have been used as a farm, but now they are to be laid out as gardens and for recreation. Pierre Van Paassen, writing in the Atlantic Constitution, tells us, Wolsey's body was laid in an unknown grave, and it is thought that in the excavations necessary to adapt the grounds to their new use, some trace of it may be found, but as there is no record of any of the cardinal's possessions being buried with him the search seems likely to end in failure. One fact about Wolsey is probably not widely

known. When he was at the height of his power he employed an Italian sculptor to make a magnificent sarcophagus beneath which he should lie. Leicester monks laid him to rest in plain earth and Henry VIII sequestered the sarcophagus with the rest of the cardinal's vast possessions. The sarcophagus remained government property and idle until 1906, when it was used to cover the body of Nelson after his remains were brought from Trafalgar. The man who said that England expected every man to do his duty, and led them in so doing, rests under the covering prepared for the man who was laid away and ruined by overweening ambition.

mill, and from there start for the Eastern settlements. We will go with you as far as the mill. Later we will plan just how and where you are to travel. I can give you a letter to Charles Swaine at Shippensburg, and I know he will be pleased to serve you."

"Wait till I get a bundle from the cabin and I will go with you, mister. God knows there are those at McDowell's mill who will not be glad to see anyone from Der Hexenkopf. Yet I will go there because you have been good to me. Wait for me at the foot of the hill."

She was so long in the cabin that I started back to find her, but she had vanished. In vain did we beat about the woods and call her name.

"She is a witch. She rides through the air," muttered Round Paw as we took the southern path.

A shrill cry caused us to halt. The Widow Cox was coming after us, waving something in her hand.

"I found this after you'd sailed. It had been left at my door and the wind must 'a' blown it one side."

It was a small piece of dressed deer skin. On one side with a charred stick was written:

"For bradocks about if he asks For Elsie Dinwold."

Amazed I turned it over and read: "I told You I wud Go to maddows mill I didn't say Youd see the Thar E. D."

CHAPTER III

On Braddock's Business

We commenced our journey to Will's creek, with the Onondaga leading the way and his watchful suspicious gaze swinging from side to side of the narrow path as alertly as if we had been in the Huron country.

After traveling a short distance the Onondaga halted and dropped on his knees. He had found eight bar spoons. Holding them up he said:

"So many Indians stopped here to eat this morning. They are our nephews, the Leni-Lenape. They are some of the men Croghan has been hunting for. They have traveled east to see the Big Knives on the path. Now they go to Will's creek to be there when the Big Chief comes with his warriors."

If his reasoning were correct, the Delawares had journeyed east until they beheld Braddock's army on the march; and by the same token our campaign against the French would soon take us to Duquesne. I was keen to press on.

We made Will's creek early on the ninth of May and were surprised to find none of the army there except Rutherford's and Clark's independent companies on foot, ordered to the creek from New York in the preceding summer; and Demarie's independent company from Maryland.

The three companies had wintered on the creek in huts and were mighty weary of the monotony of it all. We were quickly surrounded by an eager mob and piled with questions as to Braddock's whereabouts, when he would arrive, and how large an army he would bring. Had the French already abandoned Duquesne, as had been reported by some of the Delaware scouts? And if so, why the devil were his majesty's independent companies being held in idleness at the creek and made to miss all the fun?

Mr. Croghan came into camp a few hours after our arrival, and I delivered Governor Morris' letter. After reading it, he told me:

"The belts were sent on the twenty second of last month. I fear we'll get scant help from the lake tribes. Many of the Indians are waiting to see who's to win. They'll flock in to join the winner. It's lucky we have the French whipped already, for the slow work of getting the army here had made me uneasy."

"If a thousand men, or even less could now march swiftly to Duquesne the place would be ours without any fighting. The Indians have taken hold of the French ax, but they'll drop it if the French quit Duquesne. The assembly hurt us when it refused to feed my three hundred Iroquois. After keeping them all winter, they should have held on for a few weeks longer. Now the three hundred are back with the French. I have forty fighting men here, and sixty women and children. They've taken up the hatchet against the French. But, if they ain't handled right, they'll accept a bloody belt from Duquesne."

"General Braddock hasn't any notion of handling red men. Dinwiddle or Morris should have looked after that part of the business. But we'll lick the French easy enough. They're licked already. Worst is we'll have to smooth some of the Indians down after the French are back in Canada."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

OUR COMIC SECTION

Events in the Lives of Little Men



FINNEY OF THE FORCE

All the King's Horses, Etc.



THE FEATHERHEADS

Fire Prevention Week

