

THE RED STORM

Or the Days of Daniel Boone

By JOEL ROBINSON

CHAPTER X.

The heart of Allan Norwood was not weak and irresolute, but strong in its resolves, and firm and persevering in the execution of its purposes. The events at Boonesborough, in which Providence had made him an actor, called out the latent powers of his mind, and stimulated him to prompt and decisive efforts in regard to Rosalthe. Immediately after the departure of Logston, Captain Boone summoned some of the most experienced of his little garrison around him, to learn their respective views in relation to the course most proper to pursue under existing circumstances. It was finally decided that two or three persons of experience should steal quietly from the fort, to find the gentle maiden. Kenton, Ballard and Allan immediately offered their services.

Ballard affected to regard our hero with considerable contempt, for he prided himself not a little on his skill in woodcraft, and did not wish to be considered on a level with those less expert who had perchance never followed a trail or slain an Indian.

"If this Ohio fellow goes with us, we can't expect anything good will be likely to happen," he said to Kenton, in a voice sufficiently loud for Allan to hear.

"Why not?" asked Kenton.

"He's got no knowledge of these kind of things. He wouldn't know an Indian trail from a rabbit path. And as for rifle shootin', I don't suppose he could hit the bigness of a man at fifty yards, in firing as many times."

"Perhaps you underrate his abilities," answered Kenton.

"That ain't by no means probable!" retorted Ballard. "I'm called the shrewdest reader of human character in Kentucky. I don't often make mistakes in them kind of matters. The chap is too quiet to be anything; he's got no courage, and if he has, he hasn't skill enough to follow a trail. As sure as he goes, somethin' will break."

"Quiet your apprehensions, sir," said Allan, approaching the scout. "Do your own duty, and if I fail to discharge mine, the blame will not be attributed to you."

"That's all very well," replied Ballard unabashed. "I've heard people talk just so afore, and then be off in the time of danger."

"Come, Ballard, don't be hard; you'll wound the young man's feelings," interposed Kenton.

"Ugh!" exclaimed Ballard, imitating the short, guttural sound peculiar to the Indian tribes. "I reckon his feelin's ain't much finer nor mine nor yours. I ain't disposed to put my reputation on a level with a green hand like him."

The cool contemptuous manner and insulting language of the spy thoroughly aroused the indignation of Allan. Keeping down, with a strong effort, the feelings of wounded pride and impatience that were rankling within, he stepped forward and laid his hand upon Ballard's shoulder, and closing it until the fingers seemed sinking into the flesh, said in a hoarse whisper:

"Cease this foolish bravado; or, if you must quarrel, wait until we are outside the fort, when we will settle it like men."

The features of the scout grew pale, and then flushed with anger; he threw a savage look at Norwood, and grasped the handle of his hunting knife. Simon Kenton instantly seized Ballard's arm, and wrenched the weapon from his hand.

"Are ye madmen!" cried Boone, who appeared at that moment, and saw what was taking place. "What means this? Why are ye wrangling? Is there not fighting enough to be done, without cutting each other's throats? Ballard, you are always too fast. Your ill-nature will cost your life, ultimately; but I will risk this young man with you. No more delay—off with you, and do the best you can."

Everything being in readiness, the gate was opened, the trio took leave of their friends, and left the fort, followed by the prayers and good wishes of all who remained.

They proceeded down the river, the scout leading the way in sullen and ominous silence. It was evident that he had not recovered his temper. He fully resolved as he strode on, that Allan should not accompany them, but return to Boonesborough, or dispose of himself in any other manner he saw fit. With lowering countenance, and determined air, he stopped, and returning to Kenton, addressed him as follows:

"You've heard my opinion about that young chap from Ohio, and I mean to abide by it, and act up to it. He may go any way he pleases, and do what he pleases, but he can't go with me—that's settled."

"This is folly," exclaimed Kenton. "I will vouch for Mr. Norwood's courage and address."

"Well, if you like him, you can go with him, and we'll part company," returned the scout, doggedly.

Allan had gained sufficient knowledge of Ballard's character to enable him to understand that prompt and decided action was required.

"You have seen fit," said Allan, "to insult a stranger in a manner that is unpardonable, nevertheless, I will bear no malice, if your conduct in future be such as one man expects, in decency, from another. If you wish to be on friendly terms, I am ready and willing; but if, on the contrary, you wish to fight, you will not find me unprepared."

"You look like it!" was the laconic rejoinder.

"You are unreasonable," remonstrated Kenton, in a milder tone.

"We'll part company," added the scout.

The scout being naturally of a very obstinate disposition, it was impossible to change his determination; accordingly he shouldered his rifle and walked away, thinking, doubtless, that Kenton would follow him; but in this he was mistaken; Kenton remained with Allan.

"Let him go," he added; "he's in one of his contrary moods, and won't listen to reason. What do you say to taking a boat?"

"That would be the best thing we could do if we had one," answered Norwood.

"There is one concealed in the bushes yonder; so we'll soon float it," said Kenton.

CHAPTER XI.

The little vessel was dragged from its concealment, and the two young men were soon gliding down the river. Norwood had not forgotten to inform his comrade about the circumstances of finding the spot where a canoe had evidently been drawn up, and of the strange conduct of Vesuvius. For several hours they silently plied the paddles, always keeping close to the shore.

They had reached a place where the river made a sudden sweep to the left, and was much wider, when a man appeared on the opposite bank and sought them in an impassioned manner to come to his assistance.

Simon Kenton paid no attention to his entreaties, which astonished Allan very much, whose ears were ever open to the cries of those in distress.

"What do you want?" asked our hero, touched with pity by the frantic entreaties of the unknown, and, apparently, greatly terrified individual.

"I've escaped from the Wyandots; they are after me, and I cannot cross the river; come and take me off, if you are Christians," returned the man, who continued to run along the shore, wringing his hands as the boat passed on.

"Let us take him into the boat," said Allan.

Kenton smiled, and shook his head, and the man redoubled his cries, protesting that the Indians would soon recapture him if he did not succeed in getting across the river.

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Norwood. "Come, my friend, this is unlike you! Are you not touched by the terrible fears and miserable condition of the wretched man?"

"Not I," said Kenton. "This distress is not real; it is an infamous plot to allure us to the other side. The white scoundrel is backed by a score of redskins, no doubt."

"Are you really in earnest?" asked Norwood.

"Perfectly so. You are laying a trap to deceive us," said Kenton, ceasing to use his paddle.

The fellow on shore solemnly protested that he was not, but was acting in perfect good faith.

"How many Indians are there up in the woods behind you?" resumed Kenton, laying down his paddle.

The man swore that there was not one there to his knowledge; but he expected every moment the woods would be full of them, when he, unfortunate fellow, would perhaps be burned at the stake, the subject of tortures impossible to describe.

"Now back water a little, and keep the boat steady," whispered Kenton; then addressing the fellow in distress: "If we go ashore, you promise to play us no Indian tricks?"

"Not a trick," was the reply; and the white impostor called heaven and earth, and the Maker of both, to witness his truthfulness.

"Turn the boat quite round, head to the opposite shore, so as to bring you between myself and him," said Kenton, in a low voice.

"What if he should prove to be no impostor after all?" remarked Allan.

"Nonsense! Look! I can see a painted face peeping from behind a bush. Steady—as you are. When I have fired, drop your paddle and let fly at the Indian, if you get a chance."

The little boat now lay quietly upon the water; and before the man on shore perceived what was intended, Kenton raised his piece and discharged it.

The white man fell—scrambled to his feet—and fell a second time. Allan had kept watch of the red face behind the bush, and the instant Kenton fired, seized his own rifle and followed his example with all the celerity and precision of a practiced hunter. The painted visage disappeared, and a loud warwhoop resounded through the forest.

"You see I was right," said Kenton. "You have finished your fellow, and the white renegade has got what he won't get over in a hurry."

"His distress seems to be more real now," observed Allan, as the wounded man attempted to recover his feet for the third time with no better success than before.

While Norwood was speaking, several Indians appeared on the bank of the river, and our two friends were saluted with a shower of balls.

"Load your rifles," said Kenton, coolly, "and I will pull up close to the shore, and get as far out of range as possible. Several of their balls, you see, have touched the boat."

Simon bent smartly to the paddle, and

the tiny vessel shot rapidly through the yielding waters. The young hunter reloaded his rifle, while the bullets of his enemy occasionally whistled past his ears, splintered the boat, or, their force being spent, fell harmless a few feet from them.

"Several of them are at work in the water; I wonder what they are doing?" said Allan.

"They have doubtless sunk a canoe there, and are now raising it; they intend to follow us."

"You are right; they are dragging a birchen vessel from the water."

The canoe had left the opposite bank and was now rapidly approaching, propelled by four savages.

"They are Miamis," observed Kenton; "we must sink them."

"But how? Rifle balls make but small holes; we might perforate the bark in dozen places below the waterline and not affect our purpose."

"We have been trying some experiments at Boonesborough lately, with balls linked together in this manner," replied Kenton, holding up two bullets fastened together by a small chain about eight inches long. "These balls, when projected from the rifle, separate the length of the chain, and at the distance of 150 yards will pass through a board an inch in thickness. So you perceive that it will not take many such shots to sink one of those canoes, for they are not much thicker than brown paper."

The Miamis swept toward our friends with loud cries, thinking to terrify them, and render resistance less effectual.

"I don't care so much about destroying the poor wretches, as I do about sinking the canoe," added Kenton, in a suppressed voice. "Let us get the first fire, if we can. Do you fear them?"

"I never was afraid in my life," said Allan, coolly.

The words had scarcely left Norwood's lips when a shot from the savages cut a bit from his hunting frock.

"That was very well done," remarked Kenton. "They are near enough; let us have a shot—it's our turn now. Fire at the canoe, and you can't help doing damage."

Both took steady aim, and the Indians, anticipating their intentions, endeavored to screen themselves by dodging their heads down into the canoe.

"That will only make it worse for them," said Kenton; and then both fired. The result fully equalled their expectations; the fragile vessel was so badly cut that it immediately filled, and the Indians leaped into the water, some of them severely, if not mortally, wounded.

In a few seconds the canoe sank. Then the terrified Miamis made a great splashing in the water, while those on the bank yelled with rage. The two young men grasped the paddles and used them with such effect that in half an hour not an enemy was seen or heard.

Having landed, they filled the boat with large stones and sunk it. The sun had gone down and darkness pervaded the mighty forest.

"Come," said Allan, "let us go."

"Go where?" asked his companion.

"Anywhere," replied Norwood, hesitatingly, "to find Rosalthe Alston.

Kenton, who had seated himself on the bank, arose and attempted to follow Allan, but staggered a few steps and fell.

"My dear Kenton, you are wounded!" exclaimed his companion, running to the heroic woodsman and raising his head from the ground. But the gallant fellow made no reply; he had fainted from the loss of blood.

(To be continued.)

Flesh-Eating Plants.

The botanist was describing a curious plant called the sundew, or flesh-eating plant, about which Rossetti wrote his famous poem.

"The leaves of this plant were curious," he said. "Each had a lot of long, coarse hairs on it, and a knob in the center covered with a green muclage."

"A bee alighted on one of the hairs. Then a strange thing happened. The neighboring hairs seemed to come to life. They reared up and pounced upon the bee, they carried it over to the knob, and they pressed it firmly into the muclage. Then they became simply hairs again."

"The bee struggled helplessly, like a fly stuck in fly paper. The leaf gradually folded around it, enveloping it at last, as, in an apple dumpling, the pastry envelopes the fruit. A few hours later the leaf opened again, but no sign of the bee remained. It had been devoured."

"There are many flesh-eaters among plants. The bladderwort, the tootwort, and the butterwort attract insects and animalcules, and, imprisoning them by means of hairs and muclage, devour them at leisure."

"In Borneo and South America it is said that there are flesh-eating trees powerful enough to capture and digest foxes, gulls, children, even men. But we have no scientific proof that such trees exist. They could exist, of course, but till we actually see them, it is best to regard the stories about them as native twaddle."—New York Press.

An Estimate.

"My man," said old Hardfyst to the hero who had just saved him from death under the wheels of a locomotive, "if I had change for this half dollar I'd give you something."

"Pop," replied the hero, "if you really want to pay me what your life's worth you'll need change for a cent."—Philadelphia Press.

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Not Likely to Escape.

Henry Vignaud, secretary of the American Embassy at Paris, enjoys telling of an American who was being shown the tomb of Napoleon. As the loganous guide referred to the various points of interest in connection with the tomb, the American evinced the greatest interest in all that was said.

"This immense sarcophagus," declaimed the guide, "weighs forty tons. Inside of that, sir, is a steel receptacle weighing twelve tons, and inside of that is a leaden casket, hermetically sealed, weighing over two tons. Inside of that rests a mahogany coffin containing the remains of the great man."

For a moment the American was silent, as if in deep meditation. Then he said:

"It seems to me that you've got him all right. If he ever gets out, cable me at my expense."—Success Magazine.

Lincoln's First Election.

Lincoln's election to the legislature of Illinois in August, 1834, marks the end of the pioneer period of his life. He was done now with the wild carelessness of the woods, with the rough jollity of Clary's Grove, with odd jobs for his daily bread—with all the details of frontier poverty. He continued for years to be a very poor man, harassed by debts he was constantly laboring to pay, and sometimes absolutely without money; but from this time on he met and worked with men of wider knowledge and better trained minds than those he had known in Gentryville and New Salem; while the simple social life of Vandalla, where he went to attend the sessions of the legislature, was more elegant than anything he had yet seen.—St. Nicholas.

A Briak Trade in Sermons.

The wife of a Philadelphia clergyman recently sold a box of waste paper to a ragman, says Success Magazine. In the box were a lot of manuscript sermons of her husband's. A month or so thereafter, the ragman again came around, and asked if the lady had any more sermons to sell.

"I have some waste paper," said she, "but why should you particularly want sermons?"

"Well, mum, you see I did so well with them that I got here a month ago. I got sick up in Altoona, and a preacher there boarded me and my horse for a couple of weeks for that box of sermons, because I hadn't any money. Since then he's got a great reputation in those parts as a preacher. I'll give ten cents a pound for all you have."

The Supreme Court.

Ascum—I think it's a splendid opportunity for you. What are you going to do about it?

Henpeck—I haven't the slightest idea.

Ascum—But surely you can give an opinion.

Henpeck—O, gracious! No, my wife always hands down the opinion.—Philadelphia Press.



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