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NO. 8.

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A WHIFF OF THE CALLER AIR.

Written in Australia by Mrs. Margaret Miller Davidson.

Oh, for a breath of the moorland air,

A whiff of the caller air!

For the scent of the daisy flower

My very heart is yearning.

Oh, for the sound of the burnies

That whistle over the lee,

For a sight of the brown bracken

On the hillside waving free!

Oh, for the blue locks cradled

In the folds of the moorland air,

That smile as they shadow the drifting

clouds.

At the sunny summer days!

Oh, for the top of mountains,

White with eternal snow!

For the winds that drift across the lift,

For the strong east winds that blow!

I'm sick of the blazing sunshine

That burns through the weary hours;

Oh, for the soft, sweet dews,

O' beautiful, dew-drops!

Oh, for the southern gales,

For a down of the gentle rain,

With a road over the bonny sea before

And a track of foam behind!

And Scotland may be rugged,

Her mountains stern and bare,

But, oh, for a breath of her moorlands,

A whiff of her caller air!

—London Independent.

AT FORT BOBOLINK.

"Proctor and Tecumseh have abandoned the siege of Fort Meigs, and therefore are coming this way."

These words were shouted by a man who rode through the Maumee forests on a day in the summer of 1812. They blanching cheeks of every listener.

The rider trotted a fast horse, whose flanks gave evidence of hard riding, and he galloped from cabin to cabin with the terrible announcement mothers seized their children and involuntarily pressed them to their bosoms.

For some time a large force of British and Indians under the joint leadership of General Proctor and the great Tecumseh had besieged Fort Meigs on the Maumee, but the brilliant defense made by General Harrison had shown the allies that it was not to be taken by either assault or stratagem.

Now that the siege had been abandoned, the allies would turn back, engage over their discomfiture, and the tomahawk and scalping knife would devastate the Maumee country.

"Proctor and Tecumseh coming," cried a boy who heard the news from the mounted messenger sent ahead to inform the fort. "I will run down to the fort to see if it is in trim for a siege."

The "fort" mentioned by the backwoods boy was a log cabin which had been abandoned by its original builders. Owing to the presence of a bobolink's nest near the fort, it was called Fort Bobolink, and the boy settlers were determined to defend it to the last extremity. When Ned Talbot, reached Fort Bobolink, the sun was setting, and after a brief inspection he ran back to the settlement, where he found all in a state of alarm.

A hurried council of war between the seven boys of the settlement and the women was held.

"We can't defend the scattered cabins. We may as well defend Fort Bobolink," said Ned.

"I'm not so sure of that," said the women. "The allies will show up in this direction, but if they really have abandoned the siege they are liable to be here this very night."

The council of war at once decided unanimously to go to Fort Bobolink, and, so, taking all the guns in the settlement, and other things which they thought would be needed, they marched toward the fort and prepared for the expected attack.

The sun went down, and the long shadows of twilight stole through the forest. Captain Ned had stationed his guards within the fort with military precision, and in every minute he made the rounds to see that watchfulness was not abandoned. The mothers had put the youngest children to sleep and now watched every eye that wandered in the darkness for the first quarter made its appearance. This gave some light and enabled the boys to see the outlines of the trees.

Suddenly one of the young settlers, looking through a loophole, discerned moving figures where a moment before he had seen only the shadows of the forest. Ned and they watched the figures together.

"The enemy have come!" said the boy as he turned back and faced the women.

In an instant the seven young defenders of the cabin stood at the loopholes with rifles in their hands.

"The skulking figures drew closer, till at last they halted among the stumps just in front of Fort Bobolink. They were savages, as the boys could now see by their dress and the gleam of their scalp locks and carried guns in the hollows of their naked arms. It was the advance force of the savages, and the mothers of the Maumee knew that before daylight the bloody work would begin. Half a dozen horses were within easy rifle shot of the fort, and as the boys watched them they put their heads together and pointed toward Fort Bobolink, while they talked in tones too low to be distinguished by the savages.

The six Indians had separated and were crawling through the grass toward the fort, taking good care to keep in the shadows of the stumps or the trunks of trees. The dark red bodies that seemed to possess the movement and the cunning of serpents. It was a moment of suspense to all eyes as they looked on. "Let them show their intentions. We are on the inside with 10 good rifles and stanch logs around us."

Five minutes later one of the savages rose and ran up to the door. In another moment he had struck it with the handle of his tomahawk.

"The blow sounded like a knell of doom to the women huddled in the little fort. "White squaw explained the Indian. "News from white soldiers with Harrison."

This was too evidently a stratagem to get the door open, and it did not succeed. After a silence the Indian was heard to growl to himself as he fell back to his companions.

"The door had been well barricaded with strong planks, but still the defenders of the cabin felt that the savages might cut through and they would then have them at their mercy."

Without their usual yell the Indians dashed upon the fort, but that instant they were met with a sheet of flame which seemed to sting their cheeks.

It was the first volley in defense of Fort Bobolink, and it fell royally but it was given.

Three of the Indians threw up their hands and fell back in the grass, while the others stood for a moment apparently bereft of reason.

When the living foes realized what happened, they dropped to the ground and wriggled back to the main body.

Since they followed that first volley from the loopholes of Fort Bobolink, and the boys, strain their eyes as they might, could see no sign of a live enemy, but the dark forms in the grass told them that at least three braves would never follow the plume of the great Shawnee chief.

At last there came from beyond the clearing a sound like the note of a bird, and Captain Ned said to his nearest companion: "That was a signal, Archie. Now we shall have more to work."

"In truth we shall," was the reply. "Look across the clearing to where the big tree stands."

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