

# Alice of Old Vincennes

By MAURICE THOMPSON

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(Continued.)

"You were speaking recklessly, your words were incendiary; ardentia verba. My son, you were suggesting a dangerous thing. Your life would scarcely satisfy the law were you convicted of instigating such treason. What if one of your prowling guards had overheard you? Your neck and mine might feel the halter. Quod avertat dominus." He crossed himself and in a solemn voice added in English:

"May the Lord forbid! Ah, my son, we priests protect those we love."

"And I, who am not fit to tie a priest's shoe, do likewise. Father, I love Alice Roussillon."

"Love is a holy thing, my son. Amare divinum est et humanum."

"Father Beret, can you help me?"

"Spiritually speaking, my son?"

"I mean can you hide Mlle. Roussillon in some safe place if I take her out of the prison yonder? That's just what I mean. Can you do it?"

"Your question is a remarkable one. Have you thought upon it from all directions, my son? Think of your position, your duty as an officer."

A shrewd polemical expression beamed from Father Beret's eyes, and a very expert physiognomist might have suspected duplicity from certain lines about the old man's mouth.

"I simply know that I cannot stand by and see Alice—Mlle. Roussillon—forced to suffer treatment too beastly for an Indian thief. That's the only direction there is for me to look at it from, and you can understand my feelings if you will. You know that very well, Father Beret. When a man loves a girl he loves her; that's the whole thing."

The quiet, inscrutable half smile flickered once more on Father Beret's face, but he sat silent some time with a slender forefinger lying alongside his nose. When at last he spoke it was in a tone of voice indicative of small interest in what he was saying. His words rambled to their goal with the effect of happy accident.

"There are places in this neighborhood in which a human being would be as hard to find as the flag that you and Governor Hamilton have so diligently and unsuccessfully been in quest of for the past month or two. Really, my son, this is a mysterious little town."

Farnsworth's eyes widened and a flush rose in his swarthy cheeks.

"Hang the flag!" he exclaimed. "Let

it be hidden forever. What do I care? I tell you, Father Beret, that Alice Roussillon is in extreme danger. Governor Hamilton means to put some terrible punishment on her. He has a devil's vindictiveness. He showed it to me clearly awhile ago."

"You showed something of the same sort to me, once upon a time, my son."

"Yes, I did, Father Beret, and I got a load of slugs in my shoulder for it from that brave girl's pistol. She saved your life. Now I ask you to help me save hers, or if not her life what is infinitely more, her honor."

"Her honor!" cried Father Beret, leaping to his feet so suddenly and with such energy that the cabin shook from base to roof. "What do you say, Captain Farnsworth? What do you mean?"

The old man was transformed. His face was terrible to see, with its narrow, burning eyes deep under the shaggy brows, its dark veins writing snakelike on the temples and forehead, the projected mouth and chin, the hard lines of the jaws, the iron gray gleam from all the features—he looked like an aged tiger stiffened for a spring.

Farnsworth was made of right soldierly stuff, but he felt a distinct shiver flit along his back. His past life had not lacked thrilling adventures and strangely varied experiences with desperate men. Usually he met sudden emergencies rather calmly, sometimes with phlegmatic indifference. This passionate outburst on the priest's part, however, surprised him and awed him, while it stirred his heart with a profound sympathy unlike anything he had ever felt before.

Father Beret mastered himself in a moment and, passing his hand over his face, as if to brush away the excitement, sat down again on his stool. He appeared to collapse inwardly.

"You must excuse the weakness of an old man, my son," he said, in a voice hoarse and shaking. "But tell me what is going to be done with Alice. Your words—what you said—I did not understand."

He rubbed his forehead slowly, as one who has difficulty in trying to collect his thoughts.

"I do not know what Governor Hamilton means to do, Father Beret. It will be something devilish, however—something that must not happen," said Farnsworth.

Father Beret, like most men of strong feeling who have been subjected to

four years of trial, narrows, untold dangers and all sorts of temptation, and who have learned the lessons of self control, had an iron will, and also an abiding distrust of weak men. He saw Farnsworth's sincerity, but he had no faith in his constancy, although satisfied that while resentment of Hamilton's imperiousness lasted he would doubtless remain firm in his purpose to aid Alice.

He listened in silence to Farnsworth's story. When it came to an end he began to offer some but half relevant suggestions in the form of indirect cross questions, by means of which he gradually drew out a minute description of Alice's prison, the best way to reach it, the nature of its door fastenings, where the key was kept, and everything, indeed, likely to be helpful to one contemplating a jail delivery. Farnsworth was inwardly delighted. He felt Father Beret's cunning approach to the central object and his crafty method of gathering details.

The shades of evening thickened in the stuffy cabin room while the conversation went on. Father Beret presently lifted a punchbowl in one corner of the floor and got out a large bottle, which bore a mildewed and faded French label, and with it a small iron cup. There was just light enough left to show a brownish sparkle when, after popping out the cork, he poured a draft in the fresh cup and in his own.

"We may think more clearly, my son, if we taste this old liquor. I have kept it a long while to offer upon a proper occasion. The occasion is here."

A ravishing bouquet quickly imbued the air. It was itself an intoxication.

"The brothers of St. Martin distilled this liquor," Father Beret added, handing the cup to Farnsworth, "not for common social drinking, my son, but for times when a man needs extraordinary stimulation. It is said to be surpassingly good because St. Martin blessed the vine."

The doughty captain felt a sudden and imperious thirst seize his throat. The liquor flooded his veins before his lips touched the cup. He had been abstaining lately; now his besetting appetite rushed upon him. At one gulp he took in the fiery yet smooth and captivating draft. Nor did he notice that Father Beret, instead of joining him in the potation, merely lifted his cup and set it down again, smacking his lips with gusto.

There followed a silence, during which the aromatic breath of the bottle increased its dangerous fascination. Then Father Beret again filled Farnsworth's cup and said:

"Ah, the blessed monks little thought that their matchless brew would ever be sipped in a poor misadventure's hut on the Wabash! But after all, my son, why not here as well as in sunny France? Our object justifies an impetuosity of time and place."

"You are right, father. I drink to our object. Yes, I say, to our object."

In fact, the drinking preceded his speech, and his tongue already had a loop in it. The liquor stole through him, a mist of bewildering and enchanting influence. The third cup

drove its sentences into unattainable fragments; the fourth made his underjaw sag loosely; the fifth and sixth, taken in close succession, tumbled him limp on the floor, where he slept blissfully all night long, snugly covered with some of Father Beret's bed-clothes.

"Per casum obliquum, et per indirectum," muttered the priest when he had returned the bottle and cup to their hiding place. "The end justifies the means. Sleep well, my son. Ah, little Alice, little Alice, your old father will try, will try!"

He fumbled along the wall in the dark until he found the rapier, which he took down; then he went out and sat for some time motionless beside the door, while the clouds thickened overhead. It was late when he arose and glided away shadowlike toward the fort, over which the night hung black, chill and drearily silent. The moon was still some hours high, but smothered by the clouds; a fog slowly drifted from the river.

Meantime Hamilton and Helm had spent a part of the afternoon and evening, as usual, at cards. Helm broke off the game and went to his quarters rather early for him, leaving the governor alone and in a bad temper, because Farnsworth, when he had sent for him, could not be found. Three times his orderly returned in as many hours with the same report. The captain had not been seen or heard of. Naturally this sudden and complete disappearance, immediately after the reprimand, suggested to Hamilton an unpleasant possibility. What if Farnsworth had deserted him?

Hamilton sat for some time after Helm's departure, thinking over what he now feared was a foolish mistake. Presently he buckled on Alice's rapier, which he had lately been wearing as his own, and went out into the main area of the stockade. A sentinel was tramping to and fro at the gate, where a hazy lantern shone. The night was breathless and silent. Hamilton approached the soldier on duty and asked him if he had seen Captain Farnsworth, and, receiving a negative reply, turned about puzzled and thoughtful to walk back and forth in the chill, foggy air.

Presently a faint yellow light attracted his attention. It shone through a porthole in an upper room of the blockhouse at the farther angle of the stockade. In fact, Alice was reading by a sputtering lamp a book Farnsworth had sent her, a volume of Ronsard that he had picked up in Canada. Hamilton made his way in that direction, at first merely curious to know who was burning oil so late, but after a few paces he recognized where the light came from and instantly suspected that Captain Farnsworth was there. Indeed, he felt sure of it. Somehow he could not regard Alice as other than a saucy hoiden, incapable of womanly virtue. His experience with the worst element of Canadian French life and his peculiar cast of mind and character colored his impression of her. He measured her by the women with whom the coureurs de bois and half breed trappers consorted in Detroit and at the posts eastward to Quebec.

Alice, unable to sleep, had sought forgetfulness of her bitter captivity in the old poet's charming lyrics. She sat on the floor, some blankets and furs drawn around her, the book on her lap, the stupidly dull lamp hanging beside her on a part of the swivel. Her hair lay loose over her neck and should-

ers and shimmered around her face with a cloudlike effect, giving to the features in their repose a setting that intensified their sweetness and sadness. In a very low but distinct voice she was reading, with a slightly quivering intonation—

Mignonne, allons voir si la rose  
 Qui ce matin avoit des fleurs  
 Sa robe de pourpre au soleil,  
 when Hamilton, after stealthily mounting the rough stairway which led to her door, peeped in through a space between the slabs and felt a stroke of disappointment, seeing at a glance that Farnsworth was not there. He gazed for some time, not without a sense of villainy, while she continued her sweetly monotonous reading. If his heart had been as hard as the iron swivel balls that lay beside Alice he must still have felt a thrill of something like tender sympathy. She now showed no trace of the ravenous sauciness which had hitherto always marked her features when she was in his presence. A dainty gentleness, touched with melancholy, gave to her face an appealing look all the more powerful on account of its unconscious simplicity of expression.

The man felt an impulse pure and noble, which would have borne him back down the ladder and away from

the building had not a stronger one so boldly in the opposite direction. There was a short struggle with the seared remnant of his better nature, and then he tried to open the door, but it was locked.

Alice heard the slight noise and breaking off her reading turned to look. Hamilton made another effort to enter before he recollected that the wooden key, or notched lever, that controlled the cumbersome wooden lock hung on a peg beside the door. He felt for it along the wall, and soon laid his hand on it. Then again he peeped through to see Alice, who was now standing upright, near the swivel. She had thrown her hair back from her face and neck; the lamp's flickering light seemed suddenly to have magnified her stature and enhanced her beauty. Her book lay on the tumbled wraps at her feet, and in either hand she grasped a swivel shot.

Hamilton's combative disposition came to the aid of his baser passion when he saw once more a defiant flash from his prisoner's face. It was easy for him to be fascinated by opposition. Helm had profited by this trait as much as others had suffered by it, but in the case of Alice, Hamilton's mingled resentment and admiration were but a powerful irritant to the coarsest and most dangerous side of his nature.

After some fumbling and delay he fitted the key with a steady hand and moved the wooden bolt, creaking and jolting, from its slot. Then flinging the clumsy door wide open, he stepped in.

Alice started when she recognized the midnight intruder, and a second deeper look into his countenance made her brave heart recoil, while with a sinking sensation her breath almost stopped. It was but a momentary weakness, however, followed by vigorous reaction.

"What are you here for, sir?" she demanded. "What do you want?"

"I am neither a burglar nor a murderer, mademoiselle," he responded, lifting his hat and bowing, with a smile not in the least reassuring.

"You look like both. Stop where you are!"

"Not so loud, my dear Miss Roussillon. I am not deaf, and, besides, the garrison needs to sleep."

"Stop, sir; not another step!"

She poised herself, leaning slightly backward, and held the iron ball in her right hand ready to throw it at him.

He halted, still smiling villainously.

"Mademoiselle, I assure you that your excitement is quite unnecessary. I am not here to harm you."

"You cannot harm me, you cowardly wretch!"

"Humph! Pride goes before a fall, wench," he retorted, taking a half step backward. Then a thought arose in his mind which added a new shade to the repellent darkness of his countenance.

"Miss Roussillon," he said in English and with a changed voice, which seemed to grow harder, each word deliberately emphasized, "I have come to break some bad news to you."

"You would scarcely bring me good news, sir, and I am not curious to hear the bad."

He was silent for a little while, gazing at her with the sort of admiration from which a true woman draws away appalled. He saw how she loathed him, saw how impossible it was for him to get a line nearer to her by any turn of force or fortune. Brave, high headed, strong as a young leopard, pure and sweet as a rose, she stood before him fearless, even aggressive, showing him by every line of her face and form that she felt her infinite superiority and meant to maintain it. Her whole personal expression told him he was defeated, therefore he quickly seized upon a suggestion caught from a transaction with Long Hair, who had returned a few hours before from his pursuit of Beverley.

"It pains me, I assure you, Miss Roussillon, to tell you what will probably grieve you deeply," he presently added; "but I have not been unaware of your tender interest in Lieutenant Beverley, and when I had had news from him I thought it my duty to inform you."

He paused, feeling with a devil's satisfaction the point of his statement go home to the girl's heart.

"The Indian, Long Hair, whom I sent upon Lieutenant Beverley's trail, reported to me this afternoon that his pursuit had been quite successful. He caught his game."

Alice's voice came to her now. She drew in a quivering breath of relief.

"Then he is here—he is— You have him a prisoner again?"

"A part of him, Miss Roussillon. Enough to be quite sure that there is one traitor who will frontle his king no more. Mr. Long Hair brought in the lieutenant's scalp."

Alice revolved this horrible statement in silence, but her face blanched and she stood as if frozen by the shock. The shifty moon glimmer and the yellow glow of the lamp showed Hamilton to what an extent his devilish cruelty hurt her, and somehow it chilled him as if by reflection, but he could not forego another thrust.

"He deserved hanging, and would have got it had he been brought to me alive. So, after all, you should be satisfied. He escaped my vengeance and Long Hair got his pay. You see, I am the chief sufferer."

These words, however, fell without effect upon the girl's ears, in which was looming the awful, stormlike roar of her excitement. She did not see her persecutor standing there. Her vision, unhindered by walls and distance, went straight away to a place in the wilderness where, all mangled and disfigured, Beverley lay dead. A low cry broke from her lips. She dropped the heavy swivel balls, and then, like a bird, swiftly, with a rustling swoon, she went past Hamilton

## Eczema

How it reddens the skin, itches, oozes, dries and scales!

Some people call it tetter, milk crust or salt rheum.

The suffering from it is sometimes intense; local applications are resorted to—they mitigate, but cannot cure.

It proceeds from humors inherited or acquired and persists until these have been removed.

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positively removes them, has radically and permanently cured the worst cases and is without an equal for all cutaneous eruptions.

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and down the stair.

For perhaps a full minute the man stood there motionless, stupefied, amazed, and when at length he recovered himself it was with difficulty that he followed her. Everything seemed to hinder him. When he reached the open air, however, he quickly regained his activity of both mind and body and looked in all directions. The clouds were breaking into parallel masses with streaks of sky between. The moon hanging aslant against the blue peeped forth just in time to show him a flying figure which, even while he looked, reached the postern, opened it and slipped through.

With but a breath of hesitation between giving the alarm and following Alice silently and alone he chose the latter. He was a swift runner and light footed. With a few bounds he reached the little gate, which was still oscillating on its hinges, darted through and away, straining every muscle in desperate pursuit, gaining rapidly in the race, which bore eastward along the course twice before chosen by Alice in leaving the stockade.

(Continued next Saturday.)

### Deafness Cannot Be Cured.

by local applications as they cannot reach the diseased portion of the ear. There is only one way to cure deafness, and that is by constitutional remedies. Deafness is caused by an inflamed condition of the mucus lining of the Eustachian tube. When this tube is inflamed you have a rumbling sound or imperfect hearing, and when it is entirely closed, deafness is the result, and unless the inflammation can be taken out and this tube restored to its normal condition, hearing will be destroyed forever; nine cases out of ten are caused by catarrh, which is nothing but an inflamed condition of the mucous services.

We will give One Hundred Dollars for any case of deafness (caused by catarrh) that cannot be cured by Hall's Catarrh Cure. Send for circulars, free.

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Backed up by over a third of a century of remarkable and uniform cures, a record such as no other remedy for the diseases and weaknesses peculiar to women ever attained, the proprietors and makers of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription now feel fully warranted in offering to pay \$500 in legal money of the United States for any case of Leucorrhoea, Female Weakness, Prolapsus, or Falling of the Womb, which they cannot cure. All they ask is a fair and reasonable trial of their means of cure.

WHEN LOVE INVITES

The woman follows the man of her choice though the path leads out of Eden into a world untrod and untried. What is her reward? Many a time when her health is broken by the burdens she has borne for the man's sake, her reward is to see him turn from her to seek rozier cheeks and brighter eyes. It is man's nature to crave beauty; to keep her maiden bloom when motherhood has crowned her wifely happiness? Some women seem to have found this secret of perpetual youth. "Age cannot wither them." They have learned that fairness of face and form depend upon the health, and that the general health depends upon the local womanly health. They establish regularity of the periods. They dry the disagreeable drains which draw the luster from the eyes and the vermilion from the lips as well as sap the body's strength. They quench the internal fires of inflammation in which the very elements of beauty are consumed. They heal the ulcer which gnaws into the very life. They walk the world as wonders—women exempt from the sacrifice to love. How have they done this? By the use of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, which makes weak women strong and sick women well. It matters not how weak the woman is, or how sick she is, "Favorite Prescription" will cure the womanly ills that vex her; will round out the sunken curves of her form, put light in her eyes, tint her cheeks with health's carnation, and make her a glad and happy woman. Hundreds of thousands of women testify to the truth of these statements. Let every ailing woman read the two testimonials given below and remember that these two women speak for more than half a million other women cured by the skill of Dr. Pierce and by the use of his "Favorite Prescription." There is no alcohol in "Favorite Prescription," neither has it any opium or other narcotic.

"Two years ago I began to gradually lose my health," writes Mrs. Nellie D. Stark, Vice-President Bethesda Society, 30 Gardner Street, Worcester, Mass. "I became nervous, lost my appetite, and



"Stop, sir; not another step!"

it seemed impossible to obtain a good night's rest. I became emaciated, hollow-eyed, and suffered with frequent heart palpitation. Complexion was bad and "muddy" looking and I had a haggard expression. I felt as though life had lost its charm; did not care to live, for life without health is simply a living death. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription changed all this. It came as a blessing into my home; I felt better in a short time after starting to use it, and within a month I was like another woman. New life, health and vigor returned and my husband fell in love with me all over again, and a new light and happiness came into my life. Your medicine did all this for me, and it is certainly worthy of praise."

"I was a great sufferer for six years and doctored all the time with a number of physicians but did not receive any benefit," writes Mrs. Geo. Soglen, 641 Bond Street, Saginaw (South), Michigan. "I had given up all hope of ever getting better, thought I would write to you. When I received your letter telling me what to do I commenced to take your 'Favorite Prescription' and follow your advice. I have taken ten bottles in all, also five vials of the 'Pleasant Pellets.' Am now regular, after having missed two years and suffered with pain in the head and back. I was so nervous, could not eat or sleep. Now I can thank you for my recovery."

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