10. Prisoner of the Shawnee King

IN January of 1778, Boonesborough's salt supply began to run short. Salt was one of the most pressing needs of the pioneers. They had to have it for curing meat and hides, and they enjoyed it as one of the few condiments that added flavor to their monotonous diet. To be left in the wilderness without bread or salt was one of the few hardships of which they ever complained, and Boonesborough at the moment had eastern militia wintering there who were probably complaining very loudly indeed.

Daniel Boone took a party of some thirty men, lashed the station's salt-kettles, which had been especially sent out as a gift from the Virginia government, on pack-horses, and set out for the Blue Licks. These salt springs were a central point on the forest traces on the Licking River, a tributary flowing north into the Ohio River in northeastern Kentucky.

Boone's salt-makers were to camp at the Licks for about a month and were then to be relieved by a new party. These reliefs were to continue until a year's supply of salt had been sent to the station on pack-horses, which were the only kind of transport that could negotiate the narrow wilderness paths. But Captain Boone did not keep his fellow-settlers at Boonesborough waiting till a pack train could get through. A special messenger rushed back with the first small sack of salt his men could make.

Fortunately they were living in a country where nature provided salt in abundance. Far below their feet, imprisoned in rock and sand, lingered the waters of prehistoric seas. Rainwater, seeping down through many strata, forced the salt waters to the surface, where they bubbled out in those salt and sulphur springs common in all limestone country. There were innumerable springs of this sort, large and small, throughout Kentucky, scattered ten to thirty miles apart.

These were the "licks"—so called because the deer and buffalo, eager for salt, licked up the impregnated earth. These animals, like the mammoth and the mastodon before them, had found the springs long before the white man came, perhaps even before the red man. Mammoth and mastodon had crowded around the salt licks, where even the earth was full of the mineral they craved. "Big Bone Lick" took its name from the disjointed skeletons of the huge beasts which millennia before had died there, caught in the marshes into which their gigantic bulks sank easily and fatally. They had perished in such numbers that a man could walk for several hundred yards without touching ground, stepping from one huge bone to another.

The pioneers gazed upon the remnants of these enormous carcasses with wonder but accepted their presence without much speculation. The huge vertebrae made comfortable camp seats. They were neatly rounded to accommodate the appropriate portion of the human frame weary with much hunting. They were also a convenient rest for the poles from which camp kettles swung above the fire. The big bones were just one of the benefits the wilderness provided, and the hunters accepted them without troubling their heads over fossil lore. A few were sent back to Virginia for the edification of the philosophic Mr. Jefferson, and others to France for the great Cuvier to study.

It was fairly simple for Daniel Boone to make salt. The set-

tlers merely had to go to the springs, fill their kettles with salt water, and boil it down. The mineral mixture that resulted contained a good many things besides sodium chloride, but salt predominated and the iodine mixed with it was very good for them, though nobody suspected it. Iodized salt is a modern invention, but sea water is full of iodine, and the settlers, willy-nilly, ate iodine with their home-boiled product.

The labor of salt-making was prodigious. It took 840 gallons of this weak brine to yield a single bushel, though very fine springs were said to give a bushel for every eighty gallons or even less. But the work was worth doing. A bushel of salt was worth a cow and a half.

Salt-making was not merely laborious, it was also dangerous. The Indians knew quite as much about the salt licks as the white men. Red man-hunters watched the licks for scalps as eagerly as white pot-hunters watched them for game. Salt-making parties like Boone's had to go out in force, ready to defend themselves at any time.

At first there was no trouble. Boone's salt-kettles bubbled merrily for some weeks, and several horse-loads of salt had already been sent back to the station, in charge of three men. It was about time for the relief to arrive, and the thoughts of the salt-makers in the lonely little camp began to turn to their homes and families in Boonesborough. They had been undisturbed for some time and had begun to feel entirely secure. The Indians usually kept close to their villages in Ohio during the bitter weather. That was why winter was the best time for salt-making—warm work, anyhow. Furthermore, the Indians had been very badly beaten only a few months before, and it did not seem likely that they would be returning to Kentucky before spring at the earliest.

Early in February Daniel Boone went out to scout, hunt, and follow his trapline for beaver. The camp had to be sup-

plied with meat; there was beaver sign in the Licking River and Hinkston's Creek. Pelts were valuable, and Daniel Boone was never one to scorn an honest dollar. The salt party kept three scouts in the woods at all times. Boone was to reconnoiter in one direction, while his son-in-law Flanders Callaway and a companion were operating in the other.

In winter the buffalo left the licks and sought areas where plenty of cane had grown. As there were no canebrakes near the salt camp, Boone made a wide swing of five or six miles to find game and to make sure his reconnoissance included country well out to the flank. Toward evening he loaded his pack-horse with buffalo meat and headed home for camp through a blinding snowstorm, hardly able to see or hear anything in the forest on one side or along the river on the other.

He had been leading his burdened horse slowly along the river bank and had just passed a narrow place where the upturned roots of a fallen tree left barely room to squeeze through. The Shawnees were on him before he was aware. Boone noticed that his horse seemed nervous. He glanced back quickly. The Indians were right behind, thirty paces away, having hidden behind the fallen tree to let him pass. The best accounts say that he was attacked by four braves at once. All accounts agree there were too many Indians for comfort. The warriors were scouts from a Shawnee war party, sent toward the Blue Licks to see if anyone was there. They had stumbled upon Boone by accident.

Daniel snatched at his knife, hoping to slash the thongs of green hide—"buffalo tugs"—that held the load of buffalo meat on the horse, scramble up, and ride for his life. But after using the knife to skin and clean a buffalo, he had thrust it back into the sheath covered with blood and grease. It had frozen fast, and its greasy hilt was so slippery that his hands, also greasy, could not get grip enough to pull it out.

He dropped the bridle and ran, leaving the horse to shift for itself. One Shawnee stayed with the game. Two more opened out, one on either side, to flank the fugitive. A fourth slashed off the load, mounted Boone's own horse, and proceeded to ride him down.

It was no use trying to hide. His trail in the snow was plain to follow.

There was a lively chase for half a mile and then, as Boone dodged through the wintry forest, the Indians drew closer and bullets began to sing about his ears. Indians were notoriously poor shots, but the range was now getting very short. Spurts of snow and bits of flying bark warned him. Then, at a few yards' range, a bullet cut the thong of his powder-horn. Boone had a charge in his rifle, but he would never get a chance to reload if he fired it.

Daniel knew Indians, and he also knew when he had had enough. He did not believe the bullets so far had been meant to kill, but only to warn him. The next shots would be aimed to kill. He halted in his tracks. No chance of escape was left. He prepared to surrender to his red brothers.

Slipping behind a tree, he placed his rifle in front of it as evidence that he would not resist. The braves came up, laughing, disarmed him, shook hands warmly, and marched him off.

The Indians were naïvely delighted with their capture. This was no ordinary white man, but the great hunter himself, long known to them by reputation. They all set off together for the Indian camp on Hinkston's Creek, not far from the Blue Licks.

As they came into camp, Boone stared in amazement and horror at what he saw. In a sheltered part of the valley blazed a fire thirty or forty feet long, and around it sat a party of more than a hundred Shawnee warriors, fully armed. Boone looked quickly at their faces. All were painted for war. The chief approached, a short and sturdy warrior, past middle age.

It was Blackfish. The war chief himself had taken command of the party. This, Boone must have realized instantly, was no ordinary raid.

As he looked around, he saw that not all were Indians. With the warriors about the fire were several white men, hardly distinguishable from redskins in their rough woods dress. Worse and worse. White brains were directing red savagery. There was Charles Beaubien, a French-Canadian whom the British employed as Indian agent. There was Louis Lorimier, French-Canadian trader, whose post in Ohio was a center for the Shawnees and who had enormous influence in the tribe. Worst of all, here were the "white Indians," George and James Girty, brothers of the notorious Simon whose mere name spread terror along the American frontier.

There was even a negro slave named Pompey, who later in the year was to fight with the Indians at the long siege of Boonesborough. According to one account, the negro had escaped from the Kentucky settlements and joined the tribe voluntarily. More probably, he had been captured in some raid and held as slave by the Indians, who often kept negroes and sometimes traded in them.

Boone must at first have supposed he had been captured by an isolated raiding party of a few adventurous warriors. As he looked at the savage group stretched out by the fire or rising curiously to see the prisoner, he knew the full extent of the danger.

The presence of white men showed that the attack had been carefully planned and encouraged by the British. The band was strong enough to overwhelm Boonesborough in a few hours. It might even be able to capture the other settlements, surprising them one by one. Boone was calm as usual as the painted warriors led him up to Chief Blackfish, but behind the quiet blue eyes his brain was working furiously.

"King" Cornstalk, the great chief of the Shawnees, had been treacherously murdered by irresponsible American soldiery while in an American fort on a mission of peace only three months before. The Shawnee war party was now out to take revenge on the nearest and weakest of the Big Knives' settlements. Indian justice demanded revenge—it did not matter on which individuals vengeance fell so long as somebody belonging to the offending tribe of the Big Knives suffered. The British had astutely taken advantage of Shawnee indignation to spur the Indians on. Hence the unusual venture on the warpath in midwinter, contrary to all custom.

The distinguished prisoner received a hearty, if somewhat sardonic, welcome. The Indians shook hands, uttered the usual * greeting, "How d' do," or "How d'y," patted him on the back, made much of him, and laughed mightily over his capture.

Among the chiefs who gathered about him Boone recognized the leader of the band who had captured him nine years before. and boldly greeted him by name:

"How d' do, Captain Will?"

Captain Will was greatly surprised, but when reminded of his earlier captures showed no resentment at Boone's previous escape. Instead, he shook hands once more, with increased cordiality. Thereupon all the warriors who had already shaken hands did it all over again with the utmost gravity.

This friendly reception meant nothing in particular. Sometimes it was merely an ironic prelude to torture and death at the stake. In this case it may have been entirely sincere, for there was always a faintly chivalrous note in Daniel Boone's warfare with the Indians. He hated killing. He was never cruel

* All the early documents give this form of the greeting. Later, the Plains Indians made it simply, "How." In Minnesota and Ontario the modern Ojibway still use the greeting, "B'joo," an obvious adaptation from the French of the early explorers.

himself (there is no record that he ever took a scalp), and he was never the victim of cruelty. The Indians admired him, were invariably pleased on the rare occasions when they outwitted him, were delighted to have caught him this time, and later obstinately refused to give him up, even for cash. Daniel Boone was as good a woodsman as any of them, and a far better shot. Such men were valuable in any camp. The Shawnees regarded him as a prospective ornament to the tribe and made no secret of their plans.

With the negro Pompey as interpreter, Blackfish explained that his band was going to attack Boonesborough, and then inquired who the men at the salt springs were. His scouts had by this time discovered them. Seeing that his first attempts at evasion did no good, Boone admitted the salt-makers were his own men. Blackfish blandly announced that he would go down and kill them right away.

Daniel Boone did some quick thinking. The fortifications at Boonesborough, he knew, were in their usual bad condition. According to one story, a whole side of the stockade was still missing and there were only two blockhouses. With nearly thirty men at the salt camp and the relief already outside the fort on the way thither, the almost empty settlement would hardly be able to resist assault. The settlers, entirely off guard, could be taken by surprise and easily killed. Even if the Indians spared their lives, the very best that could be expected was a long march with helpless women and children through bitter weather, with prolonged captivity at the end for those who did not die of hardships, torture, or the tomahawk.

The salt-making party were now some distance away, and the Indians were not at the moment heading in their direction, but Blackfish's scouts had seen them. Boone's little party would probably also be taken by surprise, just as he had been himself.

On the other hand, there was still a chance to save Boonesborough. The Shawnee was an intrepid daredevil, but Indian nature is rarely persevering, especially in cold weather. Give the warriors one small success to boast about, and they would very likely decide they had done enough and go quietly back to Ohio.

With the friendliest air he could assume, Boone told Blackfish he would himself go with him and persuade the young men to surrender. Blackfish must guarantee that they should not be tortured or forced to run the gauntlet. The latter ceremony was usually inevitable whenever a new captive was brought into a village.

Boone further explained that it was too cold to move the women and children now; but in the spring it would be easy enough to take them to Detroit. Blackfish agreed, but added, that if Boone failed to persuade his salt-makers to surrender, his own life might be the penalty.

Next morning the war party set off. By noon they were within two hundred yards of the salt-makers and had entirely surrounded them without being discovered. Boone was then sent down a hill toward them through the snow, under surveillance of warriors following a little way behind him but near enough to shoot in case of treachery.

The spring had been flooded with fresh water for some days and the salt-makers, unable to work, were resting quietly in camp. Boone's absence occasioned no uneasiness. Scouts or hunters were likely to stay in the forest for days at a time and the other two scouts were also still out. Seeing men approaching through the woods, the salt-makers looked up from their blankets, supposing it was the relief coming in from Boonesborough. Then, seeing Indians, they leaped for their rifles.

"Don't fire!" yelled Boone. "If you do, all will be massacred."

GOVERNOR HAMILTON BUYS SCALPS

A unique Revolutionary propaganda print now in the possession of Earle R. Forrest.

Hurriedly he explained: "You are surrounded with indians and I have agreed with these Indians that you are to be used well and you are to be prisoners of war and will be give up to the British officers at Detroyt where you will be treated well." A militia lieutenant had been left in command. Under his orders, the salt-makers formed a circle and stacked arms. A larger circle of warriors then emerged from the woods on all sides, surrounded them, and ordered them to sit down. Including Boone himself, the haul of prisoners was either twenty-seven or twenty-eight, two salt-packers and two scouts being absent.

The Indians now held council to determine whether they should kill their prisoners in spite of promises. There was no possible excuse for such treachery; but it was exactly what the American soldiers had done to Cornstalk, and the war party had come out to avenge his murder. They proposed to spare no one but Boone. He would be useful at Boonesborough in the spring.

White, red, and black sat down together in the council. For two full hours the solemn debate proceeded, as warrior after warrior rose and spoke, for mercy or for death. The negro Pompey, sitting by Boone, translated for him, but in so low a voice that the other prisoners could not hear. With no knowledge of Shawnee, none of them had the least idea that their lives depended on the outcome of the ceremonious Indian council. The white agents whom the British had sent along sat silent through it all, but Daniel Boone was permitted to make the closing speech. Sixty-six years later, one of the salt-makers repeated what he remembered. It was not a speech likely to be forgotten:

"Brothers!" said Boone, as Pompey turned his words, sentence by sentence, into Shawnee. "What I have promised you, I can much better fulfil in the Spring than now; then the

weather will be warm, and the women and children can travel from Boonesboro to the Indian towns, and all live with you as one people. You have got all the young men; to kill them, as has been suggested, would displease the Great Spirit, and you could not then expect future success in hunting nor war; and if you spare them they will make you fine warriors, and excellent hunters to kill game for your squaws and children. These young men have done you no harm; they were engaged in a peaceful occupation, and unresistingly surrendered upon my assurance that such a step was the only safe one; I consented to their capitulation on the express condition that they should be made prisoners of war and treated well; spare them, and the great Spirit will smile upon you."

This was the first speech the startled prisoners had understood, and now for the first time they realized the peril they were in. The war club passed from hand to hand as the vote was taken, under the eyes of the captives. Fifty-nine warriors dashed it into the ground, as a vote for death; sixty-one let it pass as a token of mercy. There is a story that they let Boone vote. The group of reckless, brutal young braves who wanted blood had lost. Blackfish, who had allowed Pompey to translate for Boone, had won. The older chiefs seemed to approve.

All had turned out exactly as Daniel Boone had hoped. The Shawnees were entirely satisfied. Here was a big haul of prisoners and plenty of glory—plenty of profit, too. Prisoners were useful as slaves and could be sold to the British for cash. Why go on to Boonesborough through the snow and risk a hard fight for nothing, when they could now slip safely back to Ohio with prisoners, much glory, and no losses?

Boone is said to have pretended conversion to the British side. The pretense would have been credible enough, for even Simon Girty had served for a time with the Americans before joining the British, and Boone himself had been a Colonial

officer under the British flag in 1774. He could point to the surrender of his men as proof of his conversion, and he painted an alarming picture of Boonesborough's strength. The fort was far too strong, he said, for any war party of this size to think of capturing. Why not let it alone for the time being, and return later with a larger band?

Blackfish was greatly impressed. When he actually did come back, six months later, he brought four or five hundred warriors.

In vain did their white comrades urge the Shawnees on to the attack, while Boone and the other prisoners listened in an agony of suspense. Charles Beaubien was disgusted with Boone's success. He doubted that the garrison of Boonesborough was any stronger than his own band. With Boone's large party absent, he argued, it was probably weaker. Capture would be easy.

Beaubien was entirely correct. But "the Savages could not be prevailed on to attempt the Fort, which by means of their prisoners might have been easily done with success," as the British lieutenant-governor at Detroit, Henry Hamilton, later complained. He did not know that it was Boone who had thwarted his whole enterprise.

Boone had, in fact, played his part altogether too well. He convinced the Indians and thereby saved the settlement. Blackfish probably expected that with his prisoner's intervention he could eventually take the town without even fighting for it. But what deceived Boone's enemies also deceived some of his friends. There was no chance for Boone to take his own men into his confidence. They had no knowledge of his plans. And his devious play-acting roused suspicions of his loyalty.

Once the retreat with the prisoners had been decided on, it was promptly carried out. Three hundred bushels of salt were thrown away. Then the war party filed off to the north through

the white and silent winter woods, with their prisoners under close and careful guard.

Having been accepted as a friend, Boone was eager to keep up the pose. He joked and made friends with the warriors, and there may have been some surly and suspicious glances from the other whites at a leader who had first made them surrender to the redskins and now seemed to be on the best of terms with his savage captors.

Since there had been no fighting, there were no wounded. Since the prisoners were all seasoned woodsmen, there were no weaklings or laggards. There was, therefore, none of the usual dreadful tomahawking and scalping of prisoners who were unable to keep up with the rest of the party. Once they had agreed not to kill their prisoners, the Indians kept their bargain and, according to their lights, treated them well. When, in the division of the burdens, a warrior tried to make Daniel Boone carry a heavy brass kettle, he refused. When the brave insisted, Boone knocked him and the kettle down together, and was immediately protected by Blackfish.

They had barely reached camp that night, however, when Boone noticed warriors clearing a path in the snow. He inquired of Pompey what it was for. As he had suspected, the Indians were getting ready for the gauntlet. Boone went straight to Blackfish with a protest and a reminder of his promise, only to be met with:

"Oh, Captain Boone, this is not intended for your men but for you."

Blackfish was right. In his eagerness to protect his companions, Daniel Boone had quite forgotten to stipulate that he, too, should be exempted from the gauntlet, something every new captive normally must go through, even when the tribe intended to spare his life. Blackfish was offering his prisoner the honor of running the gauntlet among warriors only. Most

captives were dragged to the villages and compelled to sing at the tops of their voices as they approached. Thus warned, the entire population—squaws, children, old men, and any warriors who happened to have stayed behind—seized clubs, sticks, stones, hatchets, deer's antlers, or anything else that seemed likely to hurt the prisoner, and raced out to help belabor him.

It was, as a brave once explained, "a sort of how do do." It was also a useful way of sorting out the stronger and braver captives from the weaker and more timid. The weak would not survive, and a timid man who hesitated stood a good chance of being beaten to death; but a bold man who dashed fearlessly through his tormentors was reasonably sure to escape with minor injuries. Practical purposes aside, the Indians found the gauntlet vastly diverting. It was their idea of innocent merriment.

Boone surprised the warriors by zigzagging from side to side, escaping the worst of the ordeal. When one man stepped squarely into the path, hoping to get in a good blow, Boone butted him in the chest with his head, knocking the eager redskin sprawling amid shouts of Shawnee laughter. Once the gauntlet was over, the band crowded around to offer congratulations on his courage, and Boone remained a prime favorite.

Boonesborough discovered its loss almost at once. The other two scouts, returning to the empty camp, at first thought the salt-makers had wearied of waiting for the relief and had gone back to Boonesborough. Kindling a fire, they prepared to camp for the night. But they soon discovered an Indian bow, some arrows, and moccasin tracks. Then they observed that the precious salt had been thrown into the snow. Leaving the remaining salt-kettles where they lay, they rushed off by night to warn the advancing relief, whom they found in camp. Hearing their story, the relief party made for the fort at full speed. The in-

trepid Simon Kenton with a few companions hurried off after the Indians. The trail was easy to follow, for the snow was "half leg deep," but Kenton's handful of men could not attack so large a force.

News of the capture of so many men spread rapidly through the settlements. A friend wrote to George Rogers Clark on March 7: "Came an Express from kentuckey here and informed me of Capt Daniel Boone with Twenty Eight men being taken prisoners from the Salt licks on licking Creek without Sheding one drop of blood." A party of settlers on their way to Kentucky turned around and went back to the states when they heard what had happened.

No news came back from the captives. Kenton had found no bodies. There were no signs of fighting. The wilderness had swallowed a forlorn little handful of Kentuckians. That was all.

After weeks had passed with no news of her husband, Rebecca Boone gave him up for dead; and about May she joined the families of the other missing men on the lonely and dangerous way back to the North Carolina settlements. Jemima, now married to Flanders Callaway, remained behind. It was natural enough to suppose Daniel Boone was dead. He had been captured before and had escaped. The Indians were likely to remember that and kill him in revenge. It is said that Rebecca finally learned he had been taken to Detroit; but that news was no guaranty of safety; and with it all trace of him ended.

The war party and its prisoners made fairly good time back to Ohio, considering that game failed, leaving them with nothing to eat but slippery elm and white oak bark, and that they were loaded down with plunder; but it was, as Boone later remarked, "an uncomfortable journey in very severe weather."

Several Indians had their ears frozen; and the prisoners, being tightly tied up at night, suffered a great deal.

Ansel Goodman, one of the party, thus described his own treatment, which all the others must have shared: "The night after he was taken, his arms were tied behind him, a rope or Buffaloe's Tug tied fast around his middle and then made fast to an Indian on each side of him, and the one around his arms was made to go around his neck and tied fast to a tree, and in that position he had to sleep upon the snow, a little while before he reached the Indian Town he was compelled to strip himself, and was entirely naked, his arms again made fast and a load of Bare meat packed upon him. It was a heavy load Indeed he was packed heavily from the time he was taken untill he arrived at the town."

By February 18, ten days after the capture, they were at Little Chillicothe, an important Shawnee town on the Miami.

There was wild rejoicing when the war party came in. So large a number of prisoners was almost unheard of. There had been nothing like it since Braddock's defeat. In spite of the agreement, all the prisoners—except Boone, who had already done so—were compelled to run the gauntlet. Ansel Goodman had to "dance like the whites" to amuse his captors. There was a great war dance and sixteen prisoners were selected for adoption into the tribe.

On March 10 Boone and ten other prisoners were taken to Detroit by forty Indians with Blackfish at their head. The warriors wanted to collect their pay from the British, who had encouraged them to go on the warpath. Several prisoners, whom they did not want to adopt, were to be sold.

The Americans firmly believed that the British paid for scalps, and one contemporary deposed on oath: "that all the Indian Warriors are liberally Rewarded for every Trip they make against us; & that all the Squaws and Children receive

plenty of Cloathing from them, & Rations when at Detroit." Some time after Boone's captivity another man wrote: "The Custom of giving goods in small portions at Du Troit to Indian Warriors is laid aside; the rule now is for them to go into the Magazines (when they Come with a scalp or prisoners) and take what they Can Cary at one Load." It is certainly true that Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton, who directed the raids on Kentucky, did receive scalps from the Indians when he met them in council. But on this occasion, all prisoners were handed over alive and unhurt.

Boone met and made friends with the lieutenant-governor. The British official felt a certain pity for these unfortunate white captives, helpless in the hands of the savages. After all, both sides were of British blood, however divided by the Revolutionary struggle. Boone himself testifies that he was treated "with great humanity." Hamilton offered the Shawnees one hundred pounds for him, intending to parole him and let him go home—an offer which the Indians instantly refused. Though it was an immense sum for a prisoner, Blackfish and his braves had other plans. They let the British have some of their other prisoners, but according to Hamilton himself, "took Boone expecting by this means to effect something."

They did, however, let Hamilton "borrow" him for interrogation. Boone had the malicious satisfaction of giving the British at Detroit their first reliable information of Burgoyne's surrender. So far, the isolated post at Detroit had heard only rumor.

"It was a well known fact in Kentucky before I was taken," he said, answering Hamilton's question, "that Burgoyne and his whole army had surrendered to Gen. Gates."

The startled Hamilton called the news to his military secretary in an adjoining room: "Capt. Boone says it was well known in Kentucky before he was taken."

Hamilton urged Boone not to mention it to the Indians, but—

"You are too late, Governor," answered the imperturbable Daniel. "I have already told them of it."

Failing to secure Boone as their own prisoner, the good-natured British officers tried to lend him "a friendly supply for my wants," but he refused their offers with simple dignity, saying he could never hope to repay "such unmerited generosity." He did accept a horse, saddle, bridle, and blanket from Hamilton's army supplies, as well as some silver trinkets for Indian trading; and he demonstrated his ability to make gunpowder, "having been shut up in a room with all the materials." The British also gave him clothing, but unfortunately Blackfish decided that they fitted him rather better than they fitted Boone, and his prisoner was in no position to insist on keeping them.

This kindness from the enemy may have been sincere enough, but there was an element of policy in it. Boone is said to have shown Hamilton his old British commission as a militia captain which he carried about him for just such emergencies. He kept on dropping tactful hints that Kentucky was not irrevocably wedded to the American cause; and his hints seem to have been taken seriously by the British and also, unfortunately, by some of the American prisoners. It was strange to see their leader so cordially received by the Indians and made much of by the British. There were whispers.

After about ten days at Detroit occupied in reports to British officers and distribution of rewards for services rendered, the Shawnees started back to Little Chillicothe, taking their famous prisoner with them. They went by a roundabout way, visiting the Delaware, Mingo, and Shawnee villages, while Blackfish gave the warriors of the various tribes instructions for

his expedition against Boonesborough, when the warm weather came.

When they reached home again, they found that the first of Boone's fellow prisoners had escaped from the Shawnees' clutches. This was Andrew Johnson, who had been left behind in the Indian camp. By pretending to be a mere simpleton, Johnson disarmed suspicion. He was so small that the Indians were by no means sure he was quite grown up. He pretended to be afraid to leave camp; he pretended to be gun-shy; when persuaded to shoot he invariably flinched at the report, missing not only the mark but the tree in which it was set. Convinced that he was a mere fool, the Indians would ask: "Pequolly [Little Shut His Eyes], which way Kentuck?" Pequolly always pointed in the wrong direction. The Indians laughed contemptuously and ceased to watch him, never dreaming that Little Shut His Eyes really had eyes far wider open than their own.

Pequolly stayed with the Shawnees long enough to attend a war dance. Then, while the excitement was at its height, Little Shut His Eyes slipped quietly into the forest completely equipped for travel with his tribal "father's" rifle, tomahawk, knife, powder, lead, and blanket coat. Being in reality an excellent woodsman and now completely outfitted, he had no difficulty in making his way swiftly to Boonesborough.

The honest Shawnees were dreadfully agitated. Pequolly, they said, was a little fool. He would surely die in the forest unless they found him. They searched three days for his trail. It was in vain. They inquired of Boone whether Pequolly could possibly survive the trip. Boone, diplomatically, was not at all sure.

Pequolly's Shawnee father was greatly concerned for his son's safety. The fault, he said, was all his own. He had recently scolded Pequolly. He had been too severe, and that had made

Pequolly run away. The good old warrior was extremely sorry about it.

Johnson brought Boonesborough its first reliable news of what had happened to the salt-makers. He also brought the Kentucky settlers their first accurate information of the whereabouts of the Shawnee villages. Within a few weeks Pequolly was back with five companions, raiding the homes of his late captors, stealing horses and taking scalps. The scalps were vengeance, but the horses were badly needed in Kentucky, for the Indians had stolen nearly all the settlers had. Johnson's raiders were exultant over bringing seven back with them.

When the vengeful Johnson led the first party of Kentucky raiders against them, the Indians had no idea they had been attacked by white men. It was night when the retaliating Kentucky band ran into their first Indian camp, where Blackfish and a few others were living temporarily. As the rifles poured their fire into the astonished red men, Blackfish called, "Huy! Huy! We are Shawnees," supposing that one of his own war parties was making a mistake.

When the fire continued in spite of that, the Shawnees took to the woods and escaped. But even when they had come back and looked the ground over in daylight, they still supposed they were the victims of hostile Indians of some other tribe.

Then a Shawnee warrior, scouting toward Boonesborough, saw white men traveling homeward with stolen horses. He recognized Pequolly among them and brought word to Blackfish. The Big Knives had found the Shawnee country and had taken the offensive.

Daniel Boone himself later remarked that the worst mistake the Indians ever made was to take the Boonesborough prisoners back to their home camps. The Shawnees were quick to realize the danger that had now arisen. Before Johnson's raid the northern Indians had been mysterious plagues, emerging

mysteriously from the forests and vanishing with equal mystery into them again. Pursuit was difficult. No one knew where their camps were, and it was impossible to carry the war into the Indians' own country and destroy their bases, as Clark, Boone, and Logan did a few years later. Now the Shawnees' troubles had really begun. There were a number of Kentucky woodsmen with accurate knowledge of the red men's territory and an active interest in evening up the score.

There were two or three other escapes during the year, but for the most part the prisoners were watched so closely or had been taken so far north that there was little hope of getting away. One even reached Lake of the Woods, far out in Minnesota. Seven who escaped from the British at Detroit were recaptured, put in irons, and sent to prison in Montreal. Thence they at length escaped to Connecticut. Others spent years among the Indians. Joseph Jackson took the Shawnee name of Fish and enjoyed Indian life so much that he refused to come home even when the Revolutionary War was over. He was strongly suspected of bearing arms against the Americans in various campaigns, but he returned to American territory in 1799. Later, however, he rejoined his Shawnee friends along the Mississippi.

As soon as Boone and Blackfish got home from Detroit, the Shawnees began the adoption ceremonies that were to transform Captain Daniel Boone, of the Virginia militia, into Sheltowee, or Big Turtle, a Shawnee warrior in good and regular standing in his tribe, son of the great war chief Blackfish himself. One gets an idea of the high esteem in which the Indians held Boone from the fact that this powerful chief wanted him as a son and, after the adoption ceremonies, really treated him as such. Blackfish even unbent enough from the habitual reserve of an Indian chief to comment admiringly on the fleetness

of foot with which James Ray had outrun his best warriors at Harrodsburg the year before.

The adoption was lengthy, ludicrous, and unpleasant. Says the biographer Peck, who had many conversations with Daniel Boone, "the hair of the head is plucked out by a tedious and painful operation, leaving a tuft, some three or four inches in diameter, on the crown, for the scalp-lock, which is cut and dressed up with ribbons and feathers. The candidate is then taken into the river in a state of nudity, and there thoroughly washed and rubbed, 'to take all his white blood out.' This ablution is usually performed by females. He is then taken to the council-house, where the chief makes a speech, in which he expatiates upon the distinguished honors conferred on him, and the line of conduct expected from him. His head and face are painted in the most approved and fashionable style, and the ceremony is concluded with a grand feast and smoking."