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KENTON'S FIRST VICTORY.

## SIMON KENTON.

**N**INETY years ago there lived in Fauquier County, Virginia, a tall, active, well-developed, handsome youth of about eighteen, belonging to the class of "poor white folk"—a class almost peculiar to the slave States of America. Either the schoolmaster was not yet abroad, or our youth had failed to meet him, or meeting him, found his acquaintance too troublesome to be very long continued; for certain it is that at the above-mentioned age he could neither read

nor write, though subsequently he learned to make with a pen a combination of marks which to any one duly instructed beforehand plainly appeared to read "Simon Kenton." This ignorance is, however, not to be wondered at when we remember that not a hundred years before a Royal Governor of the Old Dominion had proclaimed—and thanked God for the fact—that the moral plague-spot, the printing-press, had not yet appeared in his province. When such an extraordinary subject of congratulation and thanksgiving could be proclaimed by the Gov-

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ernor, it is not to be presumed that the mass of the people would regard Kenton as a prodigy of ignorance.

He was undoubtedly an ignorant young man, but he was "a man for a' that;" and though he could not appreciate the literary graces of Addison and Pope, his soul was fully open to the impressions of female beauty, and at the age of sixteen he was the declared admirer of one of the most attractive of the neighboring belles. His suit, however, was not prosperous, and he soon found that a young farmer named Leitchman (much his senior) was his favored rival. On him, therefore, he resolved to take vengeance, and for that purpose sought a fight in which he got terribly thrashed. The next year, however, finding himself six feet high he determined to hazard another engagement. His challenge was promptly accepted, and the two retired to a solitary spot in the woods, resolved that the combat should be *à l'outrance*. The struggle was desperate, and Kenton was again on the point of defeat when luckily he succeeded in suddenly winding his antagonist's long queue round a sapling. The victory thus acquired he so unmercifully abused as to stretch his enemy senseless upon the field of battle. Fierce as a tiger when enraged, Kenton was a humane man, and he no sooner found that resistance had ceased, and beheld his foeman lying apparently dead at his feet, than all his anger subsided and he strove by every means in his power to restore him to consciousness, but in vain. Struck with remorse, and fearful of the consequences of his rash deed, he fled from the spot, and without even returning to his father's house, made his way over the Blue Ridge into the valley of Virginia.



DANIEL MORGAN.

Here, where Daniel, afterward General, Morgan had once reigned supreme at horse-races and log-rollings, and where the name of Battletown still attests the unusual pugnacity of the people, our hero probably found ample opportunities for the display of his natural combativeness. He

had on fleeing from his native county changed his name to Butler, and by that alone was known among his new acquaintances. But the disguise was imperfect, and learning that his family had discovered his place of retreat, and intended reclaiming him by force, and still believing himself to be the slayer of Leitchman, he determined to elude both paternal and civil authority by penetrating yet farther toward that mysterious West, which was just then beginning to exercise its fascination over the restless population of the border.

Accordingly we next hear of him as a hunter and trapper, ranging along the water-courses from Cheat River to Fort Pitt, then the outpost of civilization toward the Northwest. Here he learned for the first time that Leitchman had recovered from his injuries and married the lady for whose sake he had suffered them. This news, we may well suppose, lightened our young woodman's conscience without much wounding his heart; at any rate, it produced no disposition in him to return to the haunts of his boyish loves and battles.

He had now heard from a young man who had for some time been a prisoner among the Indians some extravagant descriptions of a magnificent "land of cane," lying somewhere to the southwest of the Ohio; a land whose unfailing vegetation was browsed by thousands of deer and elk, and around whose numerous salt-licks were to be seen herds more numerous than those of all the graziers in the settlements combined. This hunters' elysium Kenton longed to behold with his own eyes, and toward it his thoughts were henceforth entirely directed. No captive Jew ever panted more ardently after the remembered glories of Zion than did Kenton after those of this new land, which he knew only by vague reports, and had beheld only in his dreams. The inspiration that made him a pioneer was as strong and as real as that which made Pitt an orator and Burns a poet. At last he resolved to visit this enchanted region in person, and for this purpose united himself with his informant, Yager, and another young man named Strader. Yager had little idea where was the country which he had visited when a boy; but he felt sure that he would be able to identify the point at which the Indians were accustomed to cross the Ohio in their hunting expeditions into Kaintuck-ee. With this meagre itinerary as a guide these three youths launched their canoe at the mouth of the Great Kanawoh, and began their adventurous journey into regions seldom seen by white men, three years before Boone led the first company of settlers over the Cumberland Mountains. Two years before Boone himself had penetrated the mysterious country by its southern gate; but of this Kenton was entirely ignorant. Day after day the three floated down the current of the lonely river, and at length reached the site of the present village of Manchester. Here Yager, who had failed to recognize the point which he had described, declared that they must have passed it in the night. They there

fore retraced their way, landing at various points, and exploring the adjacent country, but without finding any where the wonderful "land of the cane."

Having regained their starting-point, the three friends struck off into the mountainous tract now embraced in the State of Western Virginia, and for nearly two years followed the occupation of hunting and trapping. But one evening as they were lounging in their shed, totally unsuspecting of danger, they were fired on by a small party of Indians, and Strader was instantly killed. Kenton and Yager fled without having secured even their rifles. For two days they made their way toward the Ohio, surrounded on every side by game, yet gnawed with hunger. At last the fierce pangs by which they had been tormented gave way to dizziness and deadly nausea, under the influence of which they repeatedly laid themselves down to die. But life was too strong in their athletic frames, and the love of life too keen in their boyish spirits, to yield so readily. Although in the grip of famine the reserved fund of vitality in their constitutions, recruited by rest, enabled them, after each of these fits of despair, to renew the struggle for existence. On the evening of the third day, having succeeded in crawling one mile since morning, they came in sight of the river just at the point where a company of traders happened to have pitched their camp. Alarmed at their report of savage hostility, they hastily packed up their goods and returned up the river to the mouth of the Little Kanawoh. There they met Dr. Briscoe at the head of a party preparing to join Captain Bullitt at the mouth of the Sciota.

Here was another chance of reaching Kentucky, and Kenton at once joined them. But misfortune again awaited him; for at the Three Islands the explorers were alarmed by the approach of a party, and abandoning their boats, struck through the wilderness for Greenbrier, then the frontier settlement of Virginia. Hence our hero made his way once more to the Upper Ohio. He arrived there at a most critical moment; for the whites had lately done that foul murder on the family of Logan, which, following the murder of Bald Eagle and a score of similar outrages, had roused the wild warriors of the Shawnees, Delawares, and Wyandots to vengeance;\* and the cloud of savage warfare was hanging darkly along the exposed frontier, from the head-waters of the Alleghany to those of the Tennessee. Some of its red warning drops had indeed already fallen, and hundreds of families were flying from their new-found homes to the shelter of the few fortresses, or to the yet safer refuge of the interior country, where the armies of Lewis and Dunmore were mustering for the conflict.

\* This murder was attributed to Michael Cresap, by Logan and others, and the odium of the deed rested upon his memory for three quarters of a century. But in 1851 Mr. Brantz Mayer, in an address before the Maryland Historical Society, proved conclusively that Cresap was in no way connected with the affair.—See *Loessing's Field-Book of the Revolution*, vol. II. p. 283.

Kenton was now nineteen years old, with a character for boldness and activity so well established that he was at once selected by Dunmore as one of his "spies"—a name which the wonderful predilection of mankind for cant has made a term of reproach. But our unlettered grandfathers had not attained to that refined casuistry which justifies us in tempting a man, by extravagant rewards, into a course of conduct which is to be forever afterward a cause of reproach and contempt. On the contrary, they were simple enough to admire and hail as a hero the person who had run the most appalling risks in their behalf. The dangers of such a life were, indeed, such as only the bravest dared to encounter, and its difficulties such that no one but a man of the most prompt sagacity could hope to succeed therein. But it was the life that suited Kenton precisely, and it was simply as a scout and spy that he acquired the distinction which has ranked him with Boone and Harrod, the greatest of the genuine backwoods pioneers. Of this trio Kenton was the truest representative of the borderers of that day—if by representative men we mean those who exhibit the highest development of such qualities as are peculiar to their class. Our hero possessed neither the moral nor intellectual superiority of his two celebrated contemporaries, and, as a consequence, never enjoyed that high respect which they extorted even from the refined and educated class that sought homes in Kentucky at the close of the Revolutionary War. Daniel Boone and James Harrod would, at any time of their lives, have been not unfit associates of George Washington and Philip Livingston, in all save dress and superficial polish of manner; but Simon, we fear, would hardly have been presentable in such company until old age had softened the character, and time had sanctified the reputation, of the veteran Indian fighter. He was never looked up to as a "leader of men"—the highest to which a mortal may aspire; but, unlike many in later days, he seems to have been aware of the deficiency, and never, I believe, commanded more than a score of men, nor does he appear to have been very successful even at the head of such flying parties as he on one or two occasions led into the Indian country. His "station" was founded shortly after those of Boone, Harrod, and Logan; but never, like theirs, became a centre of strength, and a radiating point from whence civilization gradually penetrated the surrounding waste. In fact, he for some years entirely abandoned his station, and contented himself with a subordinate place under the more influential pioneer leaders.

He served as a spy throughout the short campaign of Lord Dunmore, having for a companion in all his excursions a man whose very name was destined to become a hissing and a reproach throughout a whole continent forever, namely, Simon Girty. Their companionship in peril resulted in a friendship warm and lasting, at least on Girty's part—a friendship which survived, in the heart of that strange being, the change of





BOONE'S FORT.

race and nature; and years afterward, in a moment of direst extremity, he resolutely interposed in our hero's behalf, at the no small risk of compromising himself in the estimation of the capricious barbarians with whom he had cast in his lot, and in whose favor alone he could then find safety.

When the war of 1774 came to a close Kenton was discharged from service, but all the objects of his life had undergone a change. The excitement of the peaceful hunter was too tame for one of his fiery temperament, after having tasted the wilder excitement of war; and he had, besides, imbibed the true border hatred toward the Indians, in even a larger measure than usual. Henceforth, for twenty long bloody years he was a hunter of the red man—twenty such years as we believe no other man ever lived through, so crowded were they with hair-breadth escapes and adventures such as were never enacted elsewhere—except, perhaps, in the imaginations of English hunters in South Africa.

As soon as peace was concluded with the Ohio tribes, Kenton resolved to set out once more in search of the country which Yager had described. Accompanied by two friends, he descended the river in a canoe four or five hundred miles, to the mouth of Big-bone Creek, where he wondered over the enormous remains which then lay scattered over the surface of the valley, and drank of the nauseous springs that boil up from the sulphur-blackened mud. But our hero was not in search either of big bones or health-giving springs, for neither of which he had any use. The little party therefore re-embarked, and returned up the Ohio to the mouth of Cabin Creek, a short distance above Maysville. Here they landed, and, concealing their boat, struck off into the wood, resolved to explore the whole region thoroughly. They had luckily landed just where the since so celebrated blue grass land approaches nearest to the river. As they advanced the soil became more fertile and the landscape more charming, until, as they approached May's Lick, the delight of the party knew no bounds. Here at last Kenton felt that his dream of years was completely realized: at last he had found the glorious "land of cane." This was

certainly the region over which Yager had hunted with the Indians when a lad, and the beauties of which he had so often recounted. Under their feet was the thick green turf of the finest grazing land in the world; around them an open, park-like growth of timber through which deer and elk were roaming in such numbers as Kenton had never seen before; while, to crown all, a herd of buffaloes was crowding around the salt-lick in the valley below them.

Here Kenton resolved to make his home, and with his friend Williams cleared a small patch in the middle of a cane-brake, about a mile from where the town of Washington now stands, from which in the next season they ate the first roasting ears ever raised by white men in Northern Kentucky. But agricultural labor occupied but a very small part of their time; and supposing the northern tribes still to be peaceable, they fearlessly ranged the woods far and near, in which occupation Kenton learned that unerring woodcraft, and acquired that exact knowledge of the topography of the country, which was afterward of such essential service to the colonists.

At length they met with two other white men, named Hendricks and Fitzpatrick, who having been overset by a squall on the Ohio, had been for many days wandering in a half-starving condition through the woods. Hendricks at once agreed to remain with them; but Fitzpatrick was tired of the forest, and insisted on returning to the East. This could best be done by going to the Ohio and joining any party of traders that might be passing up that stream. Leaving Hendricks, therefore, in a temporary camp, with a plentiful supply of provisions, Kenton and Williams started off to escort their new acquaintance to the Limestone Point, as the site of Maysville was then called.

On their return they found the camp plundered and deserted, and, while pondering in no small dismay over such an unexpected disaster, they saw a smoke, at a little distance, rising from out of a deep ravine. Kenton was as yet but a raw Indian fighter, otherwise we could hardly forgive his conduct on this occasion; for no sooner did he and his comrade discover this "sign" than they took to their heels "and fled," says M'Clung, "faster and farther than true chivalry would seem to justify," without thinking even of reconnoitring the savage party, which was undoubtedly very small, and may have consisted of only two or three warriors; in either of which cases a brisk attack, suddenly and unexpectedly made, would probably have saved poor Hendricks from a horrible death, and would certainly have spared the two delinquents much shame and remorse when they returned next day and found the skull and bones of their friend scattered among the still smouldering brands. Kenton was certainly wanting in that invincible equanimity so remarkable in most of the chiefs of the Kentucky borderers; but to blame him with the want of chivalry is to judge him by a standard of which he was entirely ignorant. Neither the Indians nor whites knew any thing





FINDING THE REMAINS.

of that refinement of the warlike animal instinct which we call by this name. Their wars, it is true, afford many most splendid instances of self-elevating valor and generosity. But as among them valor seldom became rashness, so generosity never degenerated into folly. Boone himself, when retreating from the Blue Licks, and pressed by the Indians, abandoned his dying son in the woods and made his own escape, which he would never have done had there been even a moderate chance of preserving the young man's life by risking his own. And yet so inveterate is humbug, or so high-strung is modern chivalry, that many will regard this as a slander on the memory of the founder of Kentucky.

A few weeks after this, as the two friends were hunting near the Blue Licks, they met two other white men, who informed them that they were not the only settlers in Kain-tuck-ee, but that both Boone and Harrod had erected stations south of the river of that name, each of which had already quite a little population of settlers, hunters, and surveyors, who had been driven thither by the outbreak of hostilities between the colonies and the mother country, in which the Indian tribes were instantly involved on the part of the latter. Anxious to enjoy once more the pleasures of social intercourse, Kenton at once resolved to give up for a time his own station, and visit those of whose existence he now heard for the first time.

His first sojourn, during the winter of 1775-6, was at Hinckston's, a small outlying stockade, and one of the branches of Licking in the present county of Bourbon. In the spring the sav-

ages began to be so troublesome that most of the weaker posts were abandoned, and Kenton became an inmate of Harrod's Station, between which place and Boonesborough his time was for the next four years principally divided. Residence he could not be said to have; for the Indians had now become so furious, and their attacks so frequent, that the appointment of a small body of spies and scouts was suggested by Colonel Clarke as the best means of defense within the power of the inhabitants; and with this view he recommended to Boone, Harrod,



DANIEL BOONE.



KENTON SAVING BOONE.

and Logan, the heads of the three principal settlements, that each should appoint two young and active men, in whose sagacity they had perfect confidence, to whom the arduous duty of scouring the woods, and giving warning of any hostile movement on the part of the savages, was to be committed. Boone selected Kenton as one of his appointees; and in this capacity our hero at once entered on that career of wonderful adventure which has made his name a household word throughout the West. Some few of these adventures and escapes we will produce in chronological order, without attempting even the merest outline of his life for the next seven or eight years; and this we can the more easily do as the interest of his life is entirely personal, owing nothing whatever to his connection with public events, in which he was too ignorant to take any part, except in a very subordinate capacity.

He had not been long in his new employment before he had an opportunity of wiping out any suspicion that the unfortunate abandonment of Hendricks might have left on his reputation as a brave man. He and his brother scout were standing in the gate of the little fort early one

morning, consulting about their operations for the day, when two men who had gone out a few moments before were fired upon, and one of them slain and tomahawked within seventy yards of the picketing, and the daring savage was proceeding to scalp his victim when he himself was shot dead by Kenton. The two white men then gave chase to the remainder of the lurking party, which seemed but small. Boone, hearing the noise, hastened out with ten men to assist his spies, so that the whole party of white men outside the walls amounted to fourteen. After the pursuit had continued a little distance, Kenton, who was as watchful as a lynx, casting a glance behind him, saw an Indian taking aim at some of Boone's men. Quick as thought his gun was at his shoulder and discharged, the savage biting the earth of course, for our hero never missed. But at the same moment thirty or forty dusky forms seemed to start up out of the ground between them and the fort. Boone at once saw that he had committed a great blunder, but he was not the man to make it irreparable by hesitating in the face of danger. Right about! fire! charge! was the order, and the little band dashed in upon

these new foes in a desperate endeavor to reach the gate. They were met by a volley of rifles so close and well aimed that only seven out of the fourteen kept their feet, all the rest being killed or badly wounded, among the latter of whom was Boone himself. He was well known by the savages, one of whom, with an exulting yell, sprang astride his body, flourishing his hatchet for the blow which was to rid his people of their most dangerous enemy. The weapon was in the act of descending upon the head of the helpless veteran, when Kenton, who had missed him at the gate and rushed back to the rescue, discharged his gun into the breast of the Indian, and catching up his captain in his strong young arms, made good his escape into the stockade in spite of the shower of bullets that flew thickly round him and of the weight of his burden—about 170 pounds.

"Well, Simon, you have behaved yourself like a man to-day! Indeed you are a fine fellow!" Such was the compliment with which the taciturn old woodsman repaid the services of his friend; and never, perhaps, did a young soldier feel more generous pride on receiving a brevet for gallant and meritorious conduct than did our hero at such commendation from such a source. But alas! human pleasures are seldom complete, and Kenton was chagrined by the reflection that he had that morning killed three Indians without being able to obtain a single one of their scalps! Poor fellow!

Some time after this Boone set out at the head of a small force, with the intention of surprising the Indian village on Paint Creek, beyond the Ohio, which, of all their towns, lay most convenient for such an attempt. They passed the river unobserved, and had approached the vicinity of their object, when, as they were moving cautiously through the woods, Simon, who, as usual, was some hundreds of yards in advance, was suddenly surprised by the most boisterous peals of laughter a short distance in front, and evidently approaching. He instantly "treed," but had barely succeeded in concealing himself before two warriors came in sight, riding back to back on a small pony. Entirely unsuspecting of danger, they were indulging in all kinds of antics, and making the arches of the woods ring with their noisy merriment. Our scout—it really seems a pity to tell—put an abrupt end to their sport by firing at them *in line*, when they both fell, shot through the breast and back, the foremost dead and the other desperately wounded. Resolved not to lose two more honestly-earned scalps, Kenton ran up and was trying to tomahawk the wounded Indian, when his quick ear caught a slight noise, and glancing aside he saw two more savages taking aim at him from a distance of about twenty paces. A quick spring saved him, but both balls whistled close by his ears, and he had barely sheltered himself behind a tree before a dozen warriors appeared in the opposite direction. The tables were now completely turned, and he had for a few minutes hard work to avoid

the aim of so many enemies, but was at length rescued by Boone, who had hurried forward with his party at the sound of the guns, thus partially discharging the obligation under which Kenton had laid him a few months before; and Kenton had the satisfaction of taking off his two scalps.

A surprise of the village being rendered impossible, most of the party returned hastily into Kentucky; but our hero and another young man resolved to finish the expedition by themselves, in order, if possible, to get a shot at a warrior or two, or at least steal some horses—a temptation which to Kenton was always irresistible. They lay for two whole days within easy rifle-range of the town, without getting a chance to accomplish the former part of their design, but on the second night succeeded in mounting a fine steed, on which they made good their return journey to the settlements.

In the following fall an expedition of some magnitude was projected by Colonel Bowman against the great Shawnee towns on the Sciota; and as it was judged expedient to obtain some previous information as to their condition, Kenton, Montgomery, and Clark were dispatched thither for that purpose. With their wonted secrecy and celerity they traversed the intervening wilderness, approached the town of Chillicothe undetected, and during the whole day lay on the edge of a corn-patch within full view of the houses, and at night issued from their ambush and traversed the streets and lanes, walked round the principal houses, undisturbed even by the dogs which abound in all places of Indian residence or sojourn.

Having thus satisfactorily performed their official business, they were in the act of leaving the town when they again stumbled on a pound full of horses. Nothing could have been more unlucky; for this was a temptation that Kenton never could be taught to resist, even after the most woeful experience of the disasters to which it was apt to lead. Nor were his companions at all behind him in eager longing after horse-flesh. But on this occasion not only caution seems to have been upset, but even common sense appears to have been utterly banished from the minds of the whole trio. To have attempted to take a single horse from the midst of four or five hundred savages proverbial for their watchfulness was very dangerous; to have secured one apiece would have been an instance of good fortune for which even the most sanguine could scarcely have hoped. But Kenton here displayed that sort of dare-devil recklessness which sometimes lent an air of comicality to his most tragical adventures, and which has caused many to identify him—much to the injury of his reputation—with the Ralph Stackpole of Dr. Bird's well-known romance. In short, absurd as it may seem, the three madcaps resolved to steal the whole drove of twelve or fifteen half-broken horses out of a pen within as many paces of their owners' huts. Of course such an operation was not carried on



without a great deal of noise, and of course the Indians were awakened thereby. First one voice, then another, then another was heard, in excited tones, announcing that the white thieves were stealing their cattle before their very doors. Undismayed, however, and undeterred, our three scouts tugged and lashed away at the refractory beasts, and actually succeeded in getting the whole drove, without the loss of a single animal, safely out of the pound, about the time that the alarm-cry had swelled into a universal roar from the throats of chiefs, braves, squaws, and paposes, who came pouring from every lane and street to the rescue of their most valuable property. Nothing but Tam O'Shanter's race with the witches could parallel that which now took place. Away dashed our exulting friends, each leading four or five horses by a long cord, while on their traces opened in full yell the whole human and canine population of Chillicothe. But swift-footed as the Indians might be, they were no match for the horses; and the clamor of pursuit grew rapidly less threatening in the ears of the fugitives until, at the end of an hour, the regular beat of their own galloping hoofs was the only sound to be heard on the wide prairie.

It may be that Kenton's resolution to take all the horses was, like many another daring act, much wiser than it at first appears. At least it now gave them a vast advantage; for though the Indians would not easily give over the pursuit, they would be compelled to suspend it until they could procure horses from the nearest towns. Our three acquaintances thus acquired many hours the start, and, riding at a brisk pace, reached the Ohio on the morning of the second day. Here it was determined that our hero should swim over, driving the drove before him, while the other two made a raft out of logs and grape-vines for the transportation of themselves and their arms. Once on the other side and they would be safe. But the wind was high and the water rough, and, after many trials, Kenton found it impossible to make the animals take to the stream. By abandoning a part of their prey they could easily have made off with the rest; but they could not bring themselves to consent to such a measure; for, could they carry such a booty safely home, their names would be famous among horse-stealers forever; and all the brethren of that noble fraternity, which included the great body of the settlers, would turn green with envy at the recital of their exploit, while even in the pecuniary point they would be no small gainers. So they quietly sat down and waited for the river to become smooth enough to permit their passage—an almost inconceivable stretch of folly, as they thereby deliberately threw away all the advantage which the horseless condition in which they had left their pursuers had given them.

Next morning the river was calm, but the horses, remembering the difficulty of their former attempts, refused to enter the water at all, and, breaking away, scattered in every direction

through the woods. While trying to collect them again our adventurers became aware that the savages were at last close upon them, and they now determined to do what they ought to have done twenty-four hours before—that is, mount a horse apiece, and attempt to make their way down the river to the falls, two hundred and fifty miles as the crow flies. They accordingly set off through the woods, Kenton riding in the centre, and the others at two hundred yards' distance on either hand. But idiocy was still in the ascendant, and this gleam of common sense was as transient as it was tardy; for they had gone only a short distance when Kenton heard a loud hallo behind him, and, instead of quickening his pace, he actually stopped, dismounted, tied his horse to a tree, and quietly walked back to see what it was. Of course he was vastly astonished at beholding a couple of mounted Indians in full pursuit. But he does seem to have been wise enough to guess whom they were after; for he instantly presented his gun at the foremost and pulled the trigger, but having become damp upon the raft it only snapped. He darted into a mass of fallen timber, but, on emerging into the open wood on the opposite side, met another Indian on horseback, who had ridden around the edge of the brushwood to intercept him. "Broder! broder!" repeated this fellow as he rapidly drew near, holding out his hand with a most engaging frankness, which did not much impose on Kenton, as we believe. But as he was now fairly trapped he waited quietly to hear what this new relation might have to say; but not liking the eagerness with which his own proffered hand was grasped, or interpreting as any thing but fraternal the fire that burned in the other's eyes, he was just raising his gun to punch his new brother in the face, when a strong pair of dusky arms were thrown round him, pinioning his own tightly to his side. At the same moment his brother seized him by the top of the head, and shook him till his teeth rattled and his brain reeled with dizziness. The other two Indians quickly came up, and the prisoner was being stripped and disarmed, when Montgomery, who, with more bravery than discretion, had returned to see what had become of him, appeared in sight, and seemed to be busily engaged in repriming his gun. Two of the captors sprang off in pursuit, and soon the report of their rifles announced the fate of the fugitive.

The pursuers returned in a few minutes, and dashed the bloody scalp of his gallant companion in Kenton's face. They all knew their prisoner well, hated him vindictively, and had none of that high respect for his character which they always displayed toward Boone when he fell into their power. They therefore determined to give Kenton a foretaste of what he was to suffer by the immediate infliction of the most degrading punishment known among them. His flesh cringed in anticipation as he saw them begin to draw their tough hickory ramrods, and cut almost equally tough switches from the beech-trees



A FRATERNAL HUG.

around. Nor did they allow his sufferings to continue merely imaginary long; for as soon as each had provided himself with a sufficient number of the stinging weapons they surrounded their captive and all at once fell foul of him, lashing him over the head and shoulders without mercy, intermingling their blows with the most insulting and reproachful exclamations—"You want Injun hoss, hay!—you dam hoss-steal you!"

At last, having wearied themselves and reduced their victim to a most pitiable condition, they left off that mode of infliction and adopted another, which might soon have balked their further vengeance by causing his instant death. Being about to start for home, they bound him tightly upon the back of a half-broken colt, which they released with a cut and yell, expecting to see him dart off madly through the thick woods with his helpless rider. Such a ride would have been more dangerous than that famous one of Mazeppa over the steppes of the Ukraine, and would certainly have terminated in a few minutes, so far as our hero was concerned, by dashing out his brains against some friendly tree. But the dumb brute, apparently more merciful

than the human ones who had imposed such a task upon him, merely made a few springs and plunges through the undergrowth that bordered the path, returned of his own accord into line with the other horses, and was allowed to proceed quietly during the rest of the day.

Night at last came, but did not bring much relief to the wretched victim of savage hatred; for he was forced to lie down flat upon his half-flayed back, and two heavy poles were crossed upon his breast, to which his hands and feet were securely tied, much as criminals were to the wheel, except that in this case the wheel was upon the body instead of under it; while, to make assurance doubly sure, his neck was uncomfortably stretched by a stout thong fastened to a tree. He lived until morning, and even supposed that he slept; but he never recommended this manner of passing the night to his friends on the score of ease.

At the first village he was met by the famous Blackfish with the interrogatory, "Did Captain Boone tell you to steal my horses?" "No, Sir, I did it of my own accord;" which honest answer, instead of eliciting admiration, only procured

him another severe switching at the hands of the great chief—a very painful honor indeed.

To narrate the sufferings of the next week would fill the whole space allotted to this paper. Suffice it to say that he ran the gauntlet from town to town, was beaten by any one who chose to beat him, was cleft through the shoulder-joint with an axe, and was once actually fastened to the stake, so that at last even his strong powers of mind and body began to give way—not, however, until he had made one gallant effort to escape. He had been told that he was to be burned at Pickaway, and resolved to make an attempt to elude that terrible ordeal by breaking away from his guards on the journey thither, though they were some twenty-five or thirty in number, and several of them mounted. With that kind of weakness which makes us shrink from perilous attempts even when we know that our salvation depends on their being made, his heart now throbbed with a faint hope and now sank into despair, while his eyes keenly scanned the country to see what advantages it might afford him in the life or death race which he was meditating.

At length, as they approached the town of Pickaway, the sight of the place where he was to undergo the horrible torture of the stake put an end to any further hesitation, and with a startling cry of desperation he sprang through the line of guards, and flew with the speed of a deer toward a cane-brake which appeared at a few hundred yards' distance. But the odds were too much against him; he was soon surrounded by the horsemen and retaken.

When they reached the town a council was held to decide on the relative expediency of burning him at once or of sending him to Wae-eotomica to suffer the same fate. Kenton was little interested in the result. Hope was utterly gone; and as he stood in the middle of the council-house he was so little conscious of what was going on around him that he scarcely noticed the entrance of a new party, some of whom were renegade whites. Those, who had just returned from a foray against the frontiers with half a dozen scalps, were nevertheless in a bad humor, as they had lost some of their own people in the retreat. On being informed of the matter under discussion, one of them turned on Kenton, threw him violently to the ground, and, without ceasing to maltreat him, fiercely demanded his name.

"Simon Butler," was the reply.

The effect of these words seemed magical. The ferocious renegade gazed for a moment into the other's haggard face, his own features working strangely the while; and suddenly the bewildered captive, just now so friendless and forlorn, found himself clasped in a long and close embrace.

"Don't you remember me, Butler? I am Simon Girty."

It was indeed the hated traitor—the more than savage white man, who jeered Crawford in the midst of his torments at the stake, and who never before or afterward was known to spare one of his own race whom fortune placed in his power. Yet this man, so hardened and pitiless on all other occasions, now shed tears as he



KENTON AND GIRT.



gazed upon the wretched appearance of the friend whom he had known in his own better and happier days. A strange phenomenon, which proves how ineradicable is humanity in the human bosom.

Having given his friend his own blanket to cover his inflamed shoulders, and in some degree recovered his own calmness of feelings, Girty turned to the wondering assembly, and began an earnest plea in behalf of the already condemned prisoner. He told them that he was his early friend and companion; that he himself had done the tribes many services, and had proved his loyalty to their interests by deeds that excluded all chance of his ever leaving them; that he had never asked mercy for one of his own race before; and would they but grant this boon—would they but spare the life of this young man, the only friend he ever had among the Long Knives—he would promise never again to make an application in favor of one of that detested people; but would show his sincerity in the present case by warring more relentlessly than ever against the settlers along the border, from which, as they knew, he had just returned with seven scalps and no small amount of booty. This singular oration, delivered with the utmost earnestness of voice and gesture, produced a great deal of excitement among the listeners, and evidently of opposite kinds; and we may imagine with what breathless interest Kenton watched the war club as it passed from hand to hand, and how his heart must have dilated as he gradually became sure that the number of those who passed it on in silence would exceed that of those who struck it upon the earth.

For a time at least he was saved, and saved by an interposition which could have seemed to him at the moment little short of miraculous. It is a wonder that he did not lose his senses under such a revulsion of feeling, for he was by no means remarkable for equanimity or self-restraint. Probably his long-continued sufferings of body and mind had in a great degree destroyed his natural elasticity. But his constitution was too sound to remain long depressed when the causes of depression were removed. Under the assiduous care of Girty he rapidly recovered his bodily strength, and his naturally sanguine temper drew cheerful auguries from the changed demeanor of the savages, who, with that singular dissimulation on which they so much pride themselves, appeared to receive him precisely as one of their own people from the moment his reprieve was pronounced by the Council.

This reprieve, however, was of short duration; just long enough to recruit his love of life and his power of enduring pain. One fine morning he and Girty had sauntered forth to a short distance from the town, when they observed a horseman approaching them at a rapid pace. Nothing sharpens the faculties like fear, in a mind strong enough to resist its bewildering effects; and Kenton's heart at once misgave him that this was a messenger of evil to him-

self. This was confirmed by the change in Girty's countenance as the two spoke for a moment apart, and by the sullen silence in which the Indian turned away from his own greeting. It needed no words from his companion to inform him that fortune had again turned against him; but the cause of so sudden a change he was anxious to learn, and was soon satisfied. A deputation from the more northern towns had just arrived to remonstrate against the mistaken leniency of their brethren, and to insist upon a reconsideration of their verdict; the Council was now assembled to hear them, and, according to custom, the presence of the prisoner was required.

When Kenton and his friend entered the room the former passed round the circle, offering his hand to each of those who were about to decide upon his fate. But one after another folding his arms in his blanket, and regarding him with an eye of coldness or aversion, told him too well what that fate would be, and how completely the decision was already made. Girty opened the debate by an earnest plea in behalf of his friend, and was responded to by one of the Pickaway chiefs. Determined, if possible, to save his old comrade, the renegade again spoke at great length, employing all the resources of savage oratory. The principal man of the new-comers answered, and Kenton's indefatigable advocate arose to respond to him also, but the impatient murmurs and half-muttered hints about "white blood," which even the rigid decorum of an Indian deliberative meeting could not entirely suppress, at last convinced him that he was endangering himself without the least chance of saving his protégé. "Well, my friend, you must die," was all he said to the latter as he left the council-house.

After his departure the club once more passed around, and it was resolved that the prisoner should be burned at Waccotomicia, a town a few leagues from Pickaway, to which place he was at once dispatched, almost the whole population accompanying him. Girty soon overtook them on horseback, and told Kenton that he had many friends in Waccotomicia, therefore he would hurry on, and once more exert his whole influence for his salvation. But the hope was vain; and Girty, finding he could do nothing more, left the town before the arrival of Kenton and his escort, so that he might not witness the horrible execution which he had labored so faithfully to prevent. This transaction is the one bright spot in the great renegade's evil life. Let it be remembered to his credit.

At the entrance of this town the usual scene of brutal infliction and dogged endurance took place of course. While standing at the door of the council-room weary and hopeless, waiting the result of a deliberation going on within, our hero was approached by Logan, the famous Ming chief. This was the first time Kenton had ever beheld this truly great man, whose mien he described as wonderfully noble and attractive. And yet he saw him not in his prime; for he



KENTON AND LOGAN.

was now only the wreck of his former self, having succumbed entirely to those habits of dissipation into which the melancholy which had preyed upon his spirits ever since the murder of his wife and children had driven him. During the short war which that cowardly outrage precipitated he had indeed exacted a terrible revenge, the pursuit of which for a few months gave him a motive and an object of action. But when peace was made—that peace to which he had not consented, but to which he signified his adhesion in that mournful dithyramb preserved by Jefferson—his whole interest in life was gone, and he began that aimless, wandering sort of life that he ever afterward led; passing restlessly from village to village, a man of many woes, wishing only for a refuge from his own sorrowful thoughts and memories, and, like his great white contemporary, unfortunately finding it only in drink. But probably in the state of society in which he lived no other refuge was open to one of his poetic temperament. Certainly the white man has no right to point invidiously at Logan while he remembers Charles Lamb and Edgar Poe.

"Well, young man," said this magnanimous chieftain, as he scanned compassionately the bleeding and dejected prisoner, "these young men seem to be very mad at you."

"Yes, Sir, they certainly are."

"But don't be too down-hearted, for they have determined to send you to Sandusky, and I have sent off two runners to that place to take your part."

Cheered by such an assurance from one so widely known and respected, Kenton bore patiently the outrage and abuse that was heaped upon him without measure during the long journey. But, alas! the degrading habit of drunkenness is destructive of personal consideration in savage as well as in civilized life; and on his arrival in Sandusky he learned that the waning influence of Logan had failed to procure the reversal of his sentence. But while he was trying to nerve himself for the last trial, which now seemed inevitable, Fortune, as if resolved to vindicate to the utmost her reputation for fickleness, and who had just baffled the efforts of one friend in his behalf, now raised up another, equally unexpected, in the person of a trader named

Dreyer, who, admiring Kenton's appearance and pitying his misfortunes, resolved to save him, if possible, from a death such as those suffer who die at the stake. With this view he suggested to the chiefs that they should allow him to take the youth to the Governor at Detroit, who just then was anxious to obtain correct information of the condition of the Kentucky settlements, against which he was preparing an expedition. To this the savages consented, having exacted a promise from Dreyer to bring back the prisoner as soon as the desired information should be obtained. This promise the trader gave without the least intention of fulfilling; and hastily set off with his charge to Detroit, where he delivered him up to the authorities.

We know not whether the redemption of the good trader's pledge was ever demanded, but it is certain that Kenton remained quietly about the garrison, supporting himself by any sort of labor that he could find to do. This life he led for several weeks; but as he recovered from the effects of the terrible hardships of his captivity, the desire of liberty and the wish to revisit his friends became too strong to be resisted, and he resolved to relinquish the safety of his present condition, and run the risk of falling again into the hands of the Indians, in order to accomplish these objects. The attempt was one of difficulty and danger; but a woman, whom pity, and perhaps a still gentler feeling, had made his friend, at length furnished him with the means, and, in company with ten other prisoners, he set out on a circuitous journey of at least five hundred miles for the fall of the Ohio, through

a wilderness swarming with hostile Indians. And here ends what we honestly believe to be the most wonderful series of daring adventures, terrible sufferings, and hair-breadth escapes ever crowded in the same space of a mortal's life.

We said escapes, but preservations would be the better word; for during the whole time, with one short exception, Kenton was almost as passive as a shuttle-cock beaten backward and forward between two nicely-matched players. At last, however, his good angel won the game, and after a rapid and weary march of many days and nights he reached Fort Nelson safe and sound, much to the surprise of his acquaintances, who had given up all hopes of ever beholding him again. But their amazement was hardly greater than his own when he looked back on all that he had lived through—for he had eight times been forced to run the gauntlet, besides receiving an uncounted number of private or informal beatings—he had been cut down with an axe, knocked over with guns, clubs, and hatchets, and three times tied to the stake, from which mere accident or whim had released him. He had found friends in the noblest, the most vicious, and the most unremarkable of men, and had owed his final escape to the sympathy of a woman, the wife of an Indian trader, well used to behold suffering of every kind, and probably but little accustomed to be moved by a thing so familiar to her eyes as an emaciated prisoner.

As soon as he had a little recruited his strength he set out to visit his old commander, Clarke, at Vincennes; for we failed to mention that he had



KENTON AND HIS DELIVERER.





GEORGE ROGERS CLARKE.

acted as a guide to that officer on his famous expedition into Illinois, and had been sent back by him with dispatches of great importance; on which occasion he passed through the town of Vincennes (then garrisoned by the enemy) in the night, examined minutely its condition, sent back to the General the information thus gained by a companion, stole a horse, and made his way alone to the Falls. This, so far as the writer knows, was his first exploit in horse-lifting, the cause of all his woes.

After this he returned to Harrodsburg, where he remained in comparative quiet for about a year. But when, in the summer of 1780, Clarke called for an army of Kentuckians to retaliate on the Indians the damage inflicted by Byrd's incursion, Kenton promptly hastened to his standard with a company from the vicinity of his temporary residence; and when the enemy were brought to bay at Pickaway, he led the van, and had the satisfaction of repaying some of the blows which he had endured at that very spot two years before, besides burning a part of the town through which he had then been paraded a miserable and hopeless captive.

He was not at the defeat of the Blue Licks; but when Clarke again called for volunteers to avenge that terrible disaster, he again joined him at the head of his company and piloted the army throughout the campaign, and once more tasted the sweets of revenge upon the spots where he had suffered so much. On the return march he witnessed the singular death-scene of the gallant young Captain M'Cracken, who, as his litter was borne over the crest of the hills above the site of Cincinnati, and as his dying eyes wandered over that magnificent basin in the midst of which the Licking mingles its watery tribute from the neighborhood of Cumberland Gap with that drawn from the far interior of New York, called his fellow-soldiers to his side, and asked that, fifty years from that day, all who might survive should meet together on that spot—which

promise was given, and as far as possible was faithfully kept.

It was a singular idea or inspiration, and a strangely-solenn scene as we look back to it from the distance of eighty years; and eighty years forms a long vista in our busy, changeful country. The group of sad faces gathered round the expiring youth; below them the long line of glittering bayonets and the picturesque parties of mounted borderers, in more irregular order, winding down through the giant growth of forest trees; still lower, the broad stream of the "beautiful river," sweeping in a splendid curve across the landscape; and far beyond, the magnificent amphitheatre of the Kentucky hills, clothed to the top in the gorgeous autumnal foliage, bounded the view toward the south. When Captain M'Cracken cast his fast-dimming eyes over the prospect, not a hut was to be seen, and hardly a felled tree showed that a white man had ever trod its surface; now the dwellings of two hundred thousand of that race fill its extensive basin, and the spires of their churches are reflected in its rivers.

The tribes now became shy of making incursions when they found how rapid and effective were the return blows with which they were repaid; and never made another serious attempt to regain their lost domain, and the State of Kentucky grew rapidly in population and power. She had now a frontier and an interior; and Kenton, preferring a life upon the former, removed, with several families, to his old station near Washington, where a little settlement quickly grew up under his protection. His fort was for some years the principal barrier in that direction, and bore the brunt of those petty but dangerous forays which the Indians still continued to make for the purposes of murder and plunder. Imitating the tactics of his great captain, Kenton seldom failed to pursue the marauders into their own dens; and it was his fortune to chase back across the Ohio the last party of red men that is believed ever to have passed that stream with hostile intentions.

About this time, also, he heard that his father was still living, and for the first time in fifteen years he revisited his native county with the design of removing his family to the West. After a short stay, during which he paid a visit to his old antagonist Leitchman and his wife, with whom he talked over their former battles and wooings with the greatest friendliness, he again set out on his return, accompanied by his father and the remaining members of his family. The old man, however, never saw Kentucky, for he died on the journey, and lies buried in an unknown grave on the banks of the Monongahela. The rest of the family he brought to his station, and settled them in what he hoped would prove a permanent home.

Having come among the first into the country, and during his wide wanderings acquired an intimate acquaintance with almost the whole of its surface, he had been able to make extensive entries of its finest lands. This land was rapidly rising in value, and Simon Kenton was regarded

by others, and supposed himself to be, one of the richest citizens of the new State. So wealthy that, out of pure liberality, he thought himself justifiable in selling many tracts for a mere nominal price, while others he *actually gave away*; among these is said to have been the tract whereon the town of Washington now stands. But alas! that ignorance, which was the bane of so many of these old pioneers, proved the ruin of this one also. No sooner did the return of peace and safety render it worth while to rob him of his blood-bought wealth than the crowd of sharks and land-jobbers hastened greedily to begin the detestable work. His entries were disputed, his titles were attacked, and in a few years, harassed by the chicanery of law, whereof he was as ignorant as one of his old enemies, the Shawnees, and overwhelmed by difficulties, with which he was utterly incompetent to deal, he found himself once more without a home. In his simplicity he thought that as he had no more land to lose his troubles were of course at an end; but, shame to tell, he, a free rover of the woods, who could hardly bear the restraints of a fixed place of residence—who never knew what it was to pass a day in inaction—this man was arrested under the "guarantee-clause" in titles he had made to lands (part of which he had actually given away), and put into jail, almost within sight of the field where he himself had planted the first corn ever raised between the Ohio and the Kentucky rivers. But nothing was to be gained by his detention there; and at the end of twelve months he once more wandered forth, poorer and more friendless than he was when he first trod the soil of the cane land twenty years before.

But he was yet too strong in body and too brave in spirit to yield to despair. He had still a rifle and knapsack, and, like Boone and other compeers under the same circumstances, he called his family around him and set out in search of another home. His first stopping-place was near Urbanna, Ohio, where he was residing in poverty at the time of the war with Great Britain in 1812-15. When his old friend Shelby marched through that State at the head of the Kentucky troops, to reinforce Harrison on the northern frontier, General Kenton—for he had been elected Brigadier of Militia many years before—joined him as a volunteer, and was during the whole of the subsequent campaign an honored member of the Governor's military family. At the Thames he for the last time fought the Indians, forty-three years after he had been attacked by them in his camp on the Kanawoh. This decisive victory crushed the British and Indian power on that frontier, and was quickly followed by peace; and Kenton returned to poverty and obscurity.

Harassed by executions and processes from the Kentucky courts, he removed once more, and settled upon the head-waters of Mad River, almost within sight of the old Indian town of Waccotomic; and, to provide some support for the old age now gaining rapidly upon his overtaken frame, he reluctantly entered some

land in the names of his wife and children. Whether this land followed the rest of his immense possessions into the hands of the sharper children of civilization and the law we know not; but we do know that a few years afterward he was in abject poverty, living in a log-hut, with but few of the rude comforts which we look for even in such a dwelling. He had still some tracts of barren, broken land, of little value, in Kentucky, which had been forfeited to the State for non-payment of taxes. Even this had now become of importance to the veteran pioneer, whose cheerless old age seemed likely to close in the poor-house, unless some relief were found; and he set out in 1824, at the age of seventy years, to visit Frankfort, in order to ask the Legislature of Kentucky to release his mountain-land from the forfeiture.

On reaching Frankfort the old man was without a single acquaintance to whom he could apply, and was himself unable to take the first step toward the accomplishment of his business. In this desolate condition he wandered for hours through the streets, looking wistfully for some familiar face among the numbers that hurried by, or stopped to wonder at the queer-looking old fellow who seemed to be so much out of place. At length he was recognized by General Fletcher, by whose care he was at once furnished with a decent suit of clothes and a comfortable lodging.

As soon as it was known that Simon Kenton, the second great adventurer of the West, was in town, the little capital was thrown into a high state of excitement. He was taken to the Legislative Hall and installed in the Speaker's chair, where the high officers of the State, with its rank, and wealth, and beauty, crowded around to gain an introduction, and press his hard hands. Speeches, of course, were not wanting; and indeed nothing was omitted that could flatter the self-complacency of the actors. And then, after all this empty parade, the General Assembly of the State of Kentucky proceeded gravely to "Resolve"—what? Why, that they would not take away his few hundred acres of almost worthless mountain-land. That is all. They voted nothing further. And yet Kenton always referred to this as the proudest day of his life—the most striking illustration that could possibly be given of his childlike simplicity. But private charity was more active on this occasion than public gratitude, and enabled him to return home in respectable clothing and on a good horse.

He had now passed the allotted threescore and ten years; infirmity was breaking up his iron constitution, and poverty was closing its grip more sharply upon him. Never had he more needed a friend than now; and Fortune accordingly supplied that need, as she had always done in the great crises of his life: at Pickaway, at Waccotomic, at Sandusky, and at Detroit. Judge Barnett and General Vance brought his case forward, and succeeded in procuring him an annual pension of two hundred



KENTON AND FLETCHER.

and forty dollars—a pitiful sum when compared with the services he had rendered to the country, yet sufficient to secure his declining years from want, but from which he could not possibly lay by any thing for his children.

As the 4th of November, 1832, approached, Kenton remembered the promise that he had made to Captain M'Cracken fifty years before; and, being anxious to meet as many of his surviving comrades of other days as possible, he published a short address, reminding them of the solemn scene they had then witnessed, and urging them to fulfill their resolution, to which they had pledged themselves in the presence of their dying friend. But when the day at last came that dreadful visitant, the cholera, had covered the whole land with gloom and mourning; and his extreme feebleness warned him not to venture so far from home at such a time. Hence, although a good number of his old friends met, he was not with them.

Four years afterward, full of a Christian's faith and hope—for he had long been a member of the Methodist Church—he quietly breathed his last, near the spot where, fifty-eight years before, he had stood face to face with death in a

far more terrible form; and was laid by his neighbors, who loved and respected him, in an humble grave, where he yet sleeps in obscurity befitting his latter years. *Requiescat in pace!*



SIMON KENTON.



