

ALICE of OLD VINCENNES

By MAURICE THOMPSON

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(CONTINUED.)

ABOUT THIS time a runner came from Clark with an order to cease firing and let a returning party of British scouts under Captain Lamothe re-enter the fort unharmed. A strange order it seemed to both officers and men, but it was implicitly obeyed. Clark's genius here made another fine strategic flash. He knew that unless he let the scouts go back into the stockade they would escape by running away, and might possibly organize an army of Indians with which to succor Hamilton. But if they were permitted to go inside they could be captured with the rest of the garrison. Hence his order.

A few minutes passed in dead silence. Then Captain Lamothe and his party marched close by where Beverley's squad was lying concealed. It was a difficult task to restrain the creoles, for some of them hated Lamothe. Uncle Jazon squirmed like a snake while they filed past all unaware that an enemy lurked so near. When they reached the fort, ladders were put down for them and they began to clamber over the wall, crowding and pushing one another in wild haste. Uncle Jazon could hold in no longer.

"Ya! Ya! Ya!" he yelled. "Look out! The ladder is a-fallin' w' ye!" Then all the lurking crowd shouted as one man, and, sure enough, down came a ladder—men and all in a crashing heap.

"Silence! Silence!" Beverley commanded, but he could not check the wild jeering and laughing, while the bruised and frightened scouts hastily erected their ladder again, fairly tumbling over one another in their haste to ascend, and so cleared the wall, falling into the stockade to join the garrison.

"Ventrebien!" shrieked Uncle Jazon. "They've gone to bed, but we'll wake 'em up at the crack o' day an' give 'em a breakfas' o' hot lead!"

Now the fighting was resumed with redoubled spirit and noise, and when morning came, affording sufficient light to bring out the head sights on the Kentucky rifles, the matchless marksmen in Clark's band forced the British to close the embrasures and entirely cease trying to use their cannon, but the fight with small arms went merrily on until the middle of the forenoon.

Meantime Gaspard Roussillon had tied Francis Maisonneville's hands fast and hard with the strap of his bullet pouch.

"Now, I'll scalp you," he said in a rumbling tone terrible to hear. And with his words out came his hunting knife from its sheath.

"Oh, have mercy, my dear M. Roussillon!" cried the panting captive. "Have mercy!"

"Mercy! Yes, like your colonel's; that's what you'll get. You stand by that forban, that scelerat, that bandit, and help him. Oh, yes, you'll get mercy! Yes, the same mercy that he showed to my poor little Alice! Your scalp, monsieur, if you please. A small matter; it won't hurt much!"

"But, for the sake of old friendship, Gaspard, for the sake!"

"Ziff! Poor little Alice!"

"But I swear to you that I—"

"Tout de meme, monsieur, je vais vous scalper maintenant."

In fact, he had taken off a part of Maisonneville's scalp when a party of soldiers, among whom was Maisonneville's brother, a brave fellow and loyal to the American cause, were attracted by his cries and came to his rescue.

M. Roussillon struggled savagely, insisting upon completing his cruel performance, but he was at last overpowered, partly by brute force and partly by the pleading of Maisonneville's brother, and made to desist. The big man wept with rage when he saw the bleeding prisoner protected. "Eh bien! I'll keep what I've got," he roared, "and I'll take the rest of it next time."

He shook the tuft of hair at Maisonneville and glared like a mad bull.

Two or three other members of Lamothe's band were captured about the same time by some of the French militiamen, and Clark when on his round cheering and directing his forces discovered that these prisoners were being used as shields. Some young creoles, gay with drink and the stimulating effect of fight, had bound the poor fellows and were firing from behind them. Of course the commander promptly put an end to this cruelty, but they considered it exquisite fun while it lasted. It was in broad daylight, and they knew that the English in the fort could see what they were doing.

"It's shameful to treat prisoners in this way," said Clark. "I will not permit it. Shoot the next man that offers to do such a thing."

One of the creole youths, a handsome, swarthy Adonis in buckskin,

tosser his snappy head with a good-natured smile and said:

"To be sure, mon colonel. But what have they been doing to us? We have amused them all winter. It's but fair that they should give us a little fun now."

Clark shrugged his broad shoulders and passed on. He understood perfectly what the people of Vincennes had suffered under Hamilton's brutal administration.

At 9 o'clock an order was passed to cease firing, and a flag of truce was seen going from Clark's headquarters to the fort. It was a peremptory demand for unconditional surrender. Hamilton refused, and fighting was fiercely resumed from behind rude breastworks meantime erected. Every loophole and opening of whatever sort was the focus into which the unerring backwoods rifles sent their deadly bullets. Men began to fall in the fort, and every moment Hamilton expected an assault in force on all sides of the stockade. This, if successful, would mean inevitable massacre. Clark had warned him of the terrible consequences of holding out until the worst should come. "For," said he in his note to the governor, "if I am obliged to storm, you may depend upon such treatment as is justly due to a murderer."

Historians have wondered why Hamilton became so excited and acted so strangely after receiving the note. The phrase "justly due to a murderer" is the key to the mystery. When he read it his heart sank and a terrible fear seized him. "Justly due to a murderer!" Ah, that calm, white, beautiful girlish face, dead in the moonlight, with the wisp of shining hair across it! Such treatment as is justly due to a murderer! Cold drops of sweat broke out on his forehead and a shiver went through his body.

During the truce Clark's weary yet still enthusiastic besiegers enjoyed a good breakfast prepared for them by the loyal dames of Vincennes. Little Adrienne Bourcier was one of the



"What's the matter? Hev they hit ye?" handmaidens of the occasion. She brought to Beverley's squad a basket, almost as large as herself, heaped high with roasted duck and warm wheaten bread, while another girl bore two huge jugs of coffee, fragrant and steaming hot. The men cheered them lustily and complimented them without reserve, so that before their service was over their faces were glowing with delight.

And yet Adrienne's heart was uneasy and full of longing to hear something of Rene de Ronville. Surely some one of her friends must know something about him. Ah, there was Uncle Jazon! Doubtless he could tell her all that she wanted to know. She lingered after the food was distributed and shyly inquired.

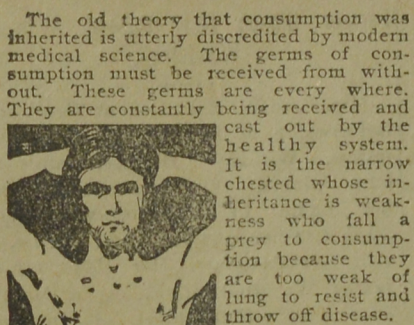
"Hain't seed the scamp," said Uncle Jazon, only he used the patois most familiar to the girl's ear. "Killed an' scelped long ago, I reckon."

His mouth was so full that he spoke mumblingly and with utmost difficulty. Nor did he glance at Adrienne, whose face took on as great pallor as her brown complexion could show.

Beverley ate but little of the food. He sat apart on a piece of timber that projected from the rough breastwork and gave himself over to infinite misery of spirit, which was trebled when he took Alice's locket from his bosom only to discover that the bullet which struck him had almost entirely destroyed the face of the miniature.

He gripped the dented and twisted case and gazed at it with the stare of a blind man. His heart almost ceased to beat and his breath had the rustling sound we hear when a strong man dies

Narrow Chests.



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or a sudden wound. Somehow the defacement of the portrait was taken by his soul as the final touch of fate, signifying that Alice was forever and completely obliterated from his life. He felt a blur pass over his mind. He tried in vain to recall the face and form so dear to him; he tried to imagine her voice; but the whole universe was a vast hollow silence. For a long while he was cold, staring, rigid. Then the inevitable collapse came, and he wept as only a strong man can who is hurt to death, yet cannot die.

Adrienne approached him, thinking to speak to him about Rene, but he did not notice her, and she went her way, leaving beside him a liberal supply of food.

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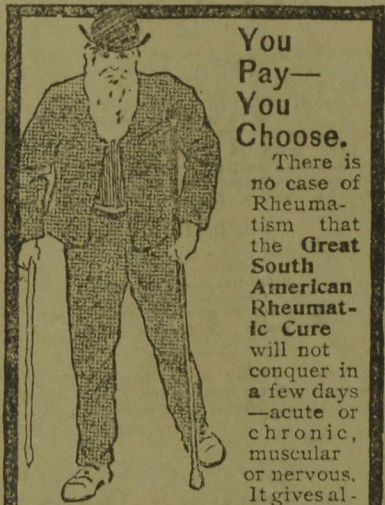
Vain.

"Did you find the Chinese a vain people?"

"Very. To hear a Chinese brag you could almost believe an American was talking."—Detroit Free Press.

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"For years when spring time came on and I went into gardening, I was sure to have an attack of rheumatism and every attack was more severe than the preceding one," says Jos. McDonald, of Marion county, West Va. "I tried every thing with no relief whatever, until I procured a bottle of Chamberlain's Pain Balm, and the first application gave me ease, and before the first bottle was used I felt like a new person. Now I feel that I am cured, but I always keep a bottle of Chamberlain's Pain Balm in the house and when I feel any symptoms of a return I soon drive it away with one or two applications of this liniment. For sale by all druggists."



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