Select Literature.

THE TRAPPER'S ESCAPE.

A STORY OF INDIAN SUPERSTITION.

BY WILLIAM H. BUSHNELL.

CHAPTER I.

"THAR's somethin' more'n beavers bin prowlin' eround here," said Ben Hardy to his companion, as he returned from his morning examination of his traps.

'What now, Ben? Anything strange! Perhaps it was a bear.'

'More the natur' of er painter, I should say. But they won't catch me sleepin', I can tell them.'

'Was it wolves?'

'Wal, yes, sort er human wolves?' and the old trapper indulged in a silent laugh, at what he considered a striking comparison.

'You don't mean Indians, Ben?'

'I don't mean anything else. I saw the print of the moccasins jest as plain as I kin see you.'

'How many was they?'

'That's er question that haint easily answered. They know how to hide their trail and step in one enrother's tracks so well, that it would puzzle a lawyer to tell onything about it.'

'But there was more than one?'

'I conceit so by their remarks, and they haint er prowlin' eround fer no good.'

'I suppose they want to steal our traps?'

'And maybe a scalp or two, jest to keept heir hands in.'

'Perhaps we had better pull up stakes and be off, then. I have no fancy for being roasted or skinned alive.'

'Nor I neither, but I haint er goin' ter be scared away. Trappin' is ter good eround here. I don't know of enother place like it in the hull territory. Let's have some breakfast.'

A well-trained and often-tried trapper was Ben Hardy. One perfectly familiar with the red man. With his companion, Will Forest, it was different. Though a strong, bold man, he was yet in his novitiate as regarded wild-wood life, this being his first winter from civilization. Much, therefore, had he to learn of the manners and customs of the Indians, much of the peculiar signs by which their presence was known. The scalp-knife and tomahawk —the war-whoop and the torture-post were to him known only by hearsay.

For miles along the river their traps had been set, and although Hardy had visited them in the morning, it was necessary to re-bait them before sundown. But the sun lingers not long in that northern latitude, especially in winter, and hardly had noon passed before they took their trail. Trap after trap was visited, and found unmolested. If Indians had been there, surely their object was not plunder, for none had been stolen, and, in some, game was found. Once or twice, Hardy thought he discovered something suspicious, but unwilling to alarm his companion, held his peace. In safety, and without anything to seriously awaken his fears, they returned to their little cabin.

'By ther big beaver!' said Hardy, 'thar have bin visitors here since we lef hum.'

'You are dreaming, Ben,' replied Forest. Who could have been here.'

'The same red scoundrels that visited ther traps this mornin'.'

'Indians again, Ben! How do you know.'

'Yes, Injuns: and they had er dog with 'em,' and he pointed to a clearly defined track in the sand.

'Pshaw! That's the track of a wolf's foot. I have seen it a thousand times.'

'So have I, and I expect to ergin, but it haint no more en wolf's than it is your'n.'

'Why, their track is almost the same. So near, indeed, that even old hunters don't pretend to tell the difference.'

'Ther more fools they! I know there hain't but er little difference, and er unpractised eyes would't discover it. But remember what I tell yer, and you'll allers be able to tell which is which. Er dog leaves the print of his nails, and er wolf don't, though they have the same spread toes when they run.'

'But about the Indians being here? I see no signs.'

Nothing had beed taken—nothing tampered with. Even the litttle flask of liquor—the great, almost irresistible temptation of the red man—that had been left upon the table by accident, was unemptied. This, more than anything else, was a puzzle to the trapper. How an Indian can restrain his appetite, was more than he could understand. With a perplexed brain he took a draught and was about to continue his investigation, when he heard a low growl, and saw a pair of eyes flashing upon him from under the rude bunk where he slept.

'Come out, yer serpent!' he exclaimed, as he brought his rifle to his shoulder, and cocked it for instant use.

'Hugh!' and a tall, young Indian crept slowly out, followed by his dog, and springing to his feet, stood like a bronzed statue.

'Wal, red-skin, what er yer sneakin' here fer?' demanded Hardy.

'Pale-face, hark!' and he went to the cabin door, and listened long and anxiously. Then, as if satisfied, he returned, seated himself upon the broad hearth-stone, drew from his pouch his pipe, lit it, and smoked in silence, waiting after the manner of his tribe to be questioned.

'Wal, what der yer want? What did yer come for?' asked Hardy, when he thought he had waited sufficiently long for even Indian etiquette.

Slowly his guest took his pipe from his mouth, and handed it to the elder trapper, who, in his turn, passed it to Forest. For a little time they smoked in silence. Evidently the business of the visitor was of a perplexing character.

'Out with it,' continued Hardy. 'Speak up like a man, and tell us what ye want. Ar yer hungry.'

'Food has not passed the lips of Way-wass-i-mo for two suns.'

'Asin't had nothin' ter eat for two days, and yer name is Lightning is it? Wal, yer shan't go hungry out of this ar cabin, though yer look smart enuff to earn your own livin'.'

'My brothers are upon the the trail. They are hunting me to the death,' replied the Indian, without taking the least notice of the insinuation of the trapper.

'Goin' to kill yer, are they? Bin doin' somethin' ergin the law?'

'The red-man returned from hunting—he heard the voice of Nee-bin, the squaw who would soon be his wife, calling for help—his knife was in hand—it is red with the blood of his own tribe.'

'Somebody imposin' on yer squaw, and her name was Summer, so yer jest killed him? Served him right, tu. I'd have done ther same thing. But ther tribe ar arter yer fer the murder.'

'Day and night they will be upon the trail until the blood is avenged.'

'Yes. I know that's yer custom, and if they don't catch you, somebody else will have ter suffer. But yer trying ter escape. I don't blame yer for that, neither. Life is sweet ter us all. However, I might git inter trouble by hiding yer here.'

'The pale-face is not false?' replied the Indian, pointing to his still smoking pipe—that bond of friendship and brotherhood among all of his race.

'Never fear. I hain't er goin' to give yer up. I'll hide yer so that all the Injuns in the world could not find yer. But this ar dog must be got out of ther way. He'd soon show them whar you were.'

Unfastening his wampum belt, the Indian tied it around the neck of the wolf-like animal, led him to the door, spoke a few words to him, and bade him begone. With long, powerful bounds he disappeared, and once the two were seated side by side.

'Now, Lightning,' said Hardy, 'you must have something to eat and drink, and then we'll hide yer till morning.'

'The blanket of night has been thrown over the he sun,' replied the Indian. Like a star, the light of the pale-man's fire can be seen from afar,' and he pointed to the flame Forest had kindled.

'That's true, but it won't do to put it out. These red-skinned brothers of yours would think somethin' was up, ef we did anything out of the common run. But I'll fix all things right.'

Lifting the broad stone that formed the hearth, Hardy disclosed a celler beneath, filled with food, skins, and even weapons, and continued:—Git down thar and eat and sleep. You'll be just as safe as er bug in er rug, and ef any thing should happen, you'll find yer way out of er back door. Jest creep erlong until yer see daylight, and you'll find yerself on ther bank of ther river, close to where my dugout is tied. Take some food with yer, and my boat, and be off jest as soon as possible. You see, Lightning, I am er good friend ter ye, and at ther same time don't want ter lose my scalp. Down with yer, but fust tell me whar yer dog has gone.'

'To the wigwam of Nee-bin.'

'To tell her that yer safe! Is that it?'

'With her own hands she worked the wampum. She will know that I am in safety when she sees it again.'

'You're er cunnin' chap, but git in You kin hear every word that's said, and so will know when it is time to run. Here, take er drink fust.'

The Indian secreted, the trappers began their usual preparations for supper, talking, meanwhile, in a low voice. Well Hardy knew that he had undertaken both a difficult and dangerous task; but he had perfect self-reliance, and although the Indian made no mention of the fact, knew that he had once saved his life. Perhaps a white man thus situated would have boasted of it, and made it a claim for protection. Not so the Indian. He trusted to the memory of Hardy, and would not have reminded him of it, if he had driven him from the door, though he might have sought revenge in the future. But the trapper was not one to forget or leave a favour unreturned. From the first time he had determined to save Lightning, although he had ignored even the knowledge of his name.

Busy over the fire, apparently absorbed in cooking, he was yet listening and watching. For a time nothing occured to arouse any suspicion in his mind that there were any lurkers without. But cautiously lifting his head from time to time, he at length saw thg face of an Indian pressed against the window-pane, and intently looking within. In an instant his mind was made up how to act, and stepping to the door, flung it wide open, and called aloud:—'Come in brother. Supper is ready. Stop and eat before you go home.'

Taken completely by surprise—caught in the very act of peering within, the Indian could not but comply. To refuse, would have been contrary to the usual custom, and have shown that his object was that of a spy. A skilful diplomatist as well as a warrior, he at once accepted the invitation, and without any appearance of hesitatation, entered, and sat down to the rude table. Meanwhile, various plans were floating through the brain of the trapper. First, he thought of plying him with whiskey, so as to render him insensible. But that was instantly rejected. It was far too scarce and costly an article to be wasted in such a manner. Then he thought of questioning him with regard to his being there at that time of night, but that, also, was discarded. But little if any truth would be contained in the answers he would receive, and while still undecided, the Indian pushed back, and stepped towards the door.

'You hain't er goin', brother, until yer smoke!' said Hardy, proffering him some tobacco.

'My dog is hungry. He has been all day hunting without food. I must feed him,' and he opened the door and whistled loudly.

Rapid glances passed between Hardy and Forest. Both were convinced that he had friends without, and that he was signallizing them, but what the purport could be, they had no means of determining.

'Yer dog has run away,' said Hardy, seeing that none came at the call. 'Better come in and have a smoke. You'll find him home when yer git thar.'

'I hear his footsteps on the leaves now,' replied the Indian. 'He will be here very soon.'

'And I should think thar whar er hull pack of 'em,' answered the trapper, as the sound of heavy tramping was heard. Er hull pack, and here they ar, by the big beaver!'

With the sound, a dozen armed warriors rushed into the little cabin. A dark band, and intent upon a dark purpose.

'Way-wass-i-mo?' questioningly exclaimed every lip, after looking in vain for the absconding Indian.

'Who?' asked Hardy, counterfeiting ignorance.

'He whom the pale-face calls Lightning.'

'How should I know anything about him?'

'He has been here,' replied the leader of the party looking Hardy full in the face. From his wigwam the dog of Way-wass-i-mo went out, bearing his wampum girdle. See!" And he held the trinket aloft.

'Wal, what of that!' coolly questioned Hardy, though in his heart he anathematised the innocent animal.

'His hands are stained with the blood of a brother. He must die.'

'Better catch him fust, hadn't yer?'

'With the red-man, blood never falls to the ground unrevenged. One has gone—another must take his place.' And the Indian stepped up to Forest, and laid his hand heavily upon his arm.

'Yer don't take him,' exclaimed Hardy. 'Take me, and be blessed, but yer can't have him.'

'The hairs of my brother are few as the leaves on the trees of winter, and white as it snows. The Manitou will soon call him to the spirit-land. The hand that did the deed was young. One like him must take his place.'

'Have no fears for me, Ben,' said Forest, for the first time breaking the silence.

Resistance was out of the question, and with ill will, Hardy saw his companion led away. But hardly had he passed from sight, before he raised the door of his secret *cache* and called for the Indian, resolved that he should give himself up. But he called in vain. The Lightning had followed his advice and fled.

To be concluded next week.

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Queen Street,

Charlottetown, P. E. Island, Aug. 8, 1866.

Butler's Rosemary Hair Cleaner.

AN elegant preparation for the Toilet and Nursery possessing, in the highest degree, the property of removing Scurf and Dandruff from the Head, and by its invigorating qualities increasing the growth of the Hair.

W. R. WATSON.

City Drug Store, Nov. 23, 1864.

FOR SALE.

I HAVE for Sale—

1 HORSE, 6 years old, Black Hawk breed, 15 hands high, good Roadster, no faults.
1 Pony, 14 hands, M'Innis's Breed—fast trotter, 5 years old.
1 Express Waggon and Harness,—1 Single Waggon, new.
200 Cedar Posts.
30 Tons Pictou large COAL.
30 " small "

Terms Cash, or approved Notes of Hand. Time to suit purchasers.

JOHN P. IRVING.

Ch'town, May 1, 1867 P I tf