# LOST IN THE BACKWOODS

## E. C. Kenyon



ALICE & BOOKS

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## Edith C. Kenyon

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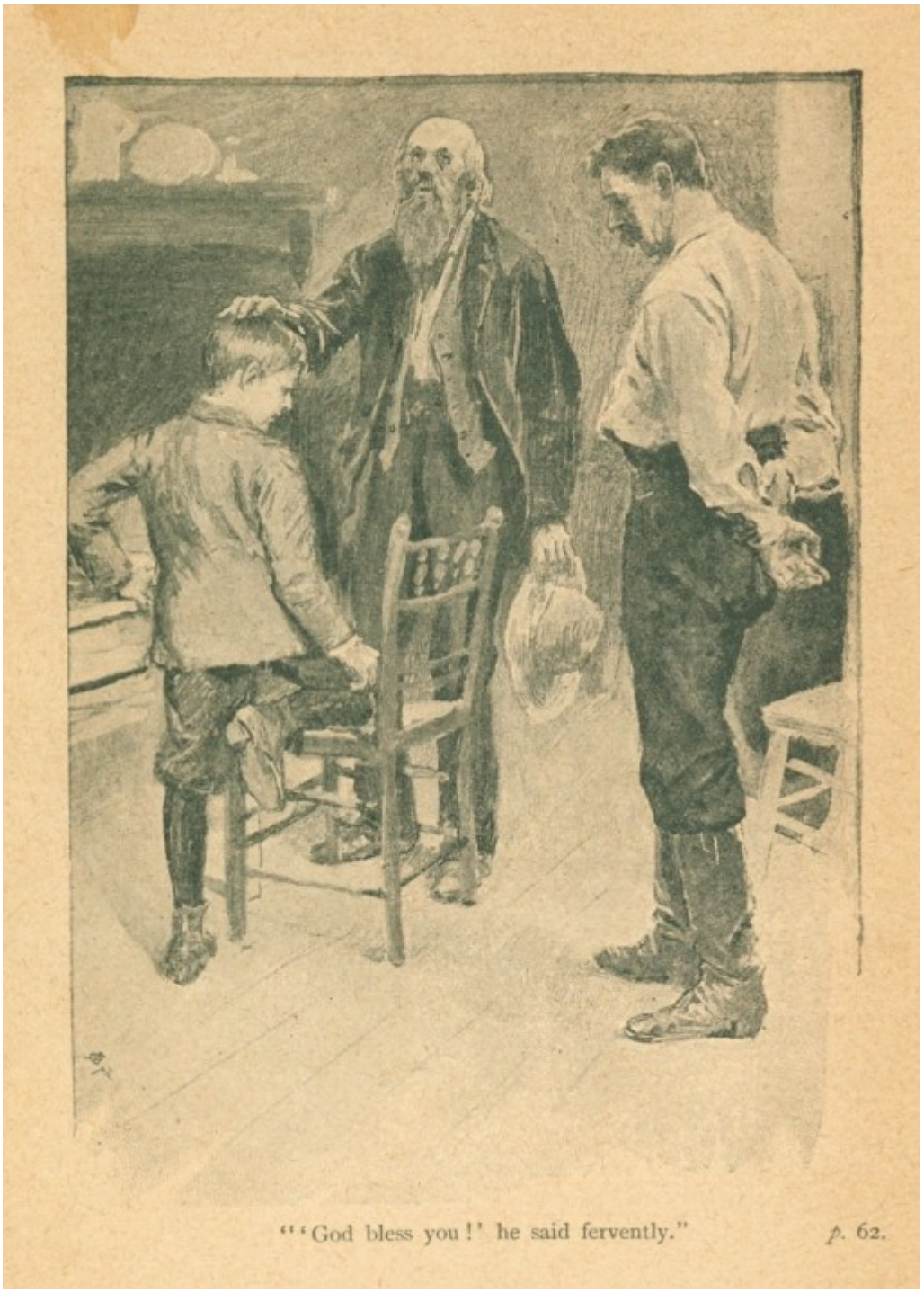
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"'God bless you!' he said fervently." p. 62

# Lost in the backwoods

# Chapter I

# Attacked by robbers

### Fourteenth thousand

"Your money or your life! Quick! Your money or your life!"

Cyril Morton gave a cry of horror and alarm. A masked brigand was pointing a revolver at his father, whose pale face confronted it with unnatural calmness.

Cyril had never passed through such a terrible minute in his whole life as that one during which his father remained silent, instead of replying to his fierce assailant's demand. A short while before the train-boy, passing down the outside passage of the comfortable American train, bearing his tray of chocolate, biscuits, fruit, etc., had waited on them and promised to return in a few minutes with illustrated papers wherewith to beguile the tedium of the journey. The train, which was a very slow one, was going from Menominee northwards. Cyril and his father had come to North America in search of the latter's brother, now long absent from his home. When last heard of Gerald Morton was in Michigan, so to that State they came on the death of Cyril's mother, whose last request was that her husband should go and look up his only brother. Cyril was twelve

years old; he was an only child, and his father, in his sorrow, could not bear the thought of leaving him behind in England, so the two travelled together and were "chums," as the boy called it. After a delightful sail from Chicago over the calm grey waters of Lake Michigan they were enjoying their slow journey through immense pine forests, when suddenly a band of robbers galloped up to the train, flung themselves from their horses, and clambered on to it. First they struck down the engine-driver, reversed the engine, and stopped the train. Then they began to search the passengers, demanding of all their money or their life.

On receiving no answer the ruffian who was threatening Mr. Morton repeated his words in a voice of thunder.

"Oh, father," cried Cyril, "give him the money, or he will kill you! Father, please." He screamed the last words in his agony of apprehension.

His attention being diverted by the boy the man glanced aside at him, and in that moment Mr. Morton, with a sudden movement, wrested the pistol from his grasp.

The other instantly snatched at it, and a struggle commenced between the two men for its possession. Backwards and forwards they swayed, now locked in each other's arms, now flung apart. Once the revolver fell upon the soft-cushioned seat, when Cyril instantly caught hold of it, and, watching his opportunity, slipped it back into his father's hand.

Maddened with rage the brigand struck the boy down with his huge fist. Then Cyril lay like a log upon the floor of the carriage, and knew no more.

A few moments and the struggle between the men was ended by the brigand's firing point-blank at Mr. Morton, who fell back on the seat apparently lifeless.

The robber proceeded to rapidly search his victim. Quickly he pocketed a gold watch and chain, a well-filled purse, and also a pocket-book containing notes. Then he stooped over the boy, looking in his pockets. As he did so something in the white upturned face touched even his hard heart.

"He's not unlike my Harry," he muttered, thrusting back the little purse his fingers had just closed on. "No, I'll not take his money. He'll

come to, and maybe want it."

Turning away he went on to rob someone else; and presently, with his pockets full of notes and gold, returned to his first victims, still lying where he had left them.

The other outlaws were leaving the train and mounting their horses; they were all in a hurry to get away.

The man who had struck down poor Cyril stood over him now, with a softened look in his hard face as he felt anxiously for the boy's pulse.

"Living!" he exclaimed, when his rough fingers had found it. "Well, he's a plucky little lad. I'll take him with me. His father's dead," he added, glancing at him. "I'll adopt the lad. He shall be my son, instead of poor Harry." So saying he lifted Cyril in his arms, carried him to where he had left his horse, and when he rode off with the others the boy, still unconscious, was on the saddle before him, his curly head drooping against his shoulder.



'The boy was on the saddle before him." [p. 10.

"The boy was on the saddle before him."

Now it happened that under the double burden the brigand's horse lagged behind the others, and although its master whipped and

spurred it cruelly it could not keep up with them.

"Whiterock," cried the captain of the band more than once, "come on. Why do you linger?"

"Coming, sir," answered Whiterock, redoubling his efforts, but in vain.

At last the captain, turning in anger to see why he was disobeyed, perceived the boy, and cried impatiently—

"What have you got there? A lad? Ridiculous! Absurd! Fling him down. Leave him. We want no babies."

Outlaw though he was—strong, desperate too—the brigand dared not disobey his chief. Reluctantly, therefore, he stopped short, sprang off his horse, and lifted the boy down in his arms. Muttering that he had once a son like him he laid Cyril down under a forest tree, and then, turning quickly, remounted his horse and rode rapidly after his captain.

All the horsemen rode away. The sound of their horses' hoofs died out in the distance.

Presently, as evening drew on, a huge grey bear, stealing through the bushes, stood looking down on the unconscious boy. After a few minutes the bear stooped, and almost poked him with his nose.

If Cyril had awoke then, if he had moved one hand, or in any way "shown fight," it would have been all over with him. Unless very hungry, however, these North American bears do not attack human beings if they make no aggressive movement; so Cyril remaining perfectly still the bear, having satisfied his curiosity, moved slowly away.

The shades of night stole over the forest. It became quite dark. The wild beasts sought their prey. All sorts of dangers were on every side; but, quite unconscious still, the boy lay there, a faint stirring of his pulse alone showing that life was still within his slight young frame.

He had no mother at home praying for him, but it might be in the Paradise above she was pleading for her boy, over whom a merciful Providence was watching.

# Chapter II

# Alone in the forest

About midday Cyril came to himself, opening wondering eyes upon an unknown world. Where was he? What had happened? Where was his father? Why were his limbs when he tried to move them so stiff and cramped? Raising himself with difficulty he leaned upon one elbow, and looked round searchingly.

He was alone in these unknown wilds. Where was his father? Why had he left him?

Suddenly the boy gave a great cry; he remembered all. His father was killed, must have been killed, or he would never have parted from him. He had put the pistol in his father's hand before the robber struck him; he did not know what had happened after that. But he felt convinced that his father was dead, and he lay down again upon the ground, crying as if his heart would break. There was a very tender love between him and his father; since the mother's death they had been all in all to one another. But a new thought came to Cyril by-and-by, and that was that someone must have brought him to the place where he was lying. For there was no railway line to be seen near there; indeed, the trees grew too thickly to admit of such a possibility. Who, then, had brought him away from the train, away from the railway line? Was it, could it possibly have been his father? But if so, where was he now?

Animated by the hope of finding him Cyril struggled to his feet. Then he called as loudly as he could, which was not very loud, for

his throat was parched and dry, and he himself felt very faint. "Father! Father!" he cried. "Father, where are you? Father, speak; tell me you are here! Father! Father!"

But there was no answer.

Despairingly the boy turned in first one direction and then another, repeating his cries until he could not utter another word. But all in vain. There was no trace of a human being in any direction. He was alone, quite alone in the forest.

In silence now he wandered up and down, finding some wild raspberries, or what looked like them, and eating them quite ravenously. The soft fruit allayed his thirst, and then he could shout again, which he did repeatedly. At first it had been his intention to remain near the place where he had been lying, that if his father or whoever brought him there returned he might be found. But he lost his way very soon and could not find the place again.

"Father! Father! Help! help!" he cried, pushing his way through the long grass and bushes, and running along narrow tracks in first one direction and then another. "Oh, help, I am perishing! Save me!"

For now a despairing feeling came over him that help would never come, that he would wander up and down there until he died—perhaps killed by some wild beast. He knew there were bears in that part of America, and presently he came across a young one. It did not appear to see him, and he ran away from its neighbourhood as fast as he could. He had no weapon of any kind, and the thought of that made him presently get out his pocket-knife and cut himself a stout stick. Then it was that he discovered that after all he had not been robbed. His purse was still in his pocket. He took it out, opened it, and examined its contents ruefully. One piece of gold, a sovereign, and a good many shillings and sixpences were all there. But of what use was money to him now? How gladly, thankfully, he would give the whole of his money to anyone who would show him the way out of that fearful solitude! However, he was in a place where money availed not. What could he do? He was in despair.

Then he remembered his heavenly Father, and, kneeling down just where he was in the lonely forest, he prayed to Him for help and guidance, and especially that, if his father still lived, they two might speedily find each other.

He felt somewhat comforted when, at length, he rose from his knees, for he knew that he had done the very best thing he could for himself and his dear father by laying all their concerns before God in prayer.

Looking round for more berries he soon found some, ate, and was again refreshed. Then he walked on once more in the hope that he would get to some inhabited place. But he was very tired; and presently, when his foot slipped over a tree-root and he fell heavily to the ground, he did not feel able to rise again. He therefore lay still where he was, and soon fell fast asleep.

Again the shades of night crept over the tall trees of the forest, veiling them and the sleeping boy in darkness. And once again the beasts of prey stole forth in search of food, but did not come near Cyril to harm him, whilst, unconscious of his danger, he slept on.

He was happy now, for he was dreaming of his mother. She looked as sweet as ever and far happier, for the lines of pain and trouble on her face had been all smoothed away. "Cyril, my boy," she said to him, stooping to kiss his brow, "it was brave of you to help your father as you did yesterday. You suffered for it. Yes, but that is all over. Now you must be brave in searching for your father and waiting patiently until God, in His good providence, permits you both to meet again."

"I will, I will, mother," Cyril cried in his dream; and then it ceased, and he lay in heavy, dreamless slumber until he awoke with a consciousness of its being very hot, and that there was a strong smell of something burning.

Starting up and looking round he found that it was morning, and that away to the right of him there was a mighty cloud of smoke mingled with flames, out of which great showers of sparks flew up into the sky. A tremendous roaring as of thunder announced the burning of great forest trees. The noise of it almost drowned the pitiful cries and screams, roars and screeches of wild animals and birds as, in their flight for their lives, the cruel flames caught hold of them and burnt them.

"The forest is on fire!" cried Cyril aloud in terror-stricken accents, "and I, where shall I go? Oh, God," he murmured, "help me!" and set

off running fast in the opposite direction from that in which the fire was advancing.

The air had become exceedingly hot. It dried up everything before the fire, so that when the flames came up they caught hold of the great pine trees without a moment's loss. The very ground seemed scorched.

Cyril found the fire gaining upon him. Of what use was it to run? Oh, if he could only come to some open space, or a sheet of water into which he could hasten!

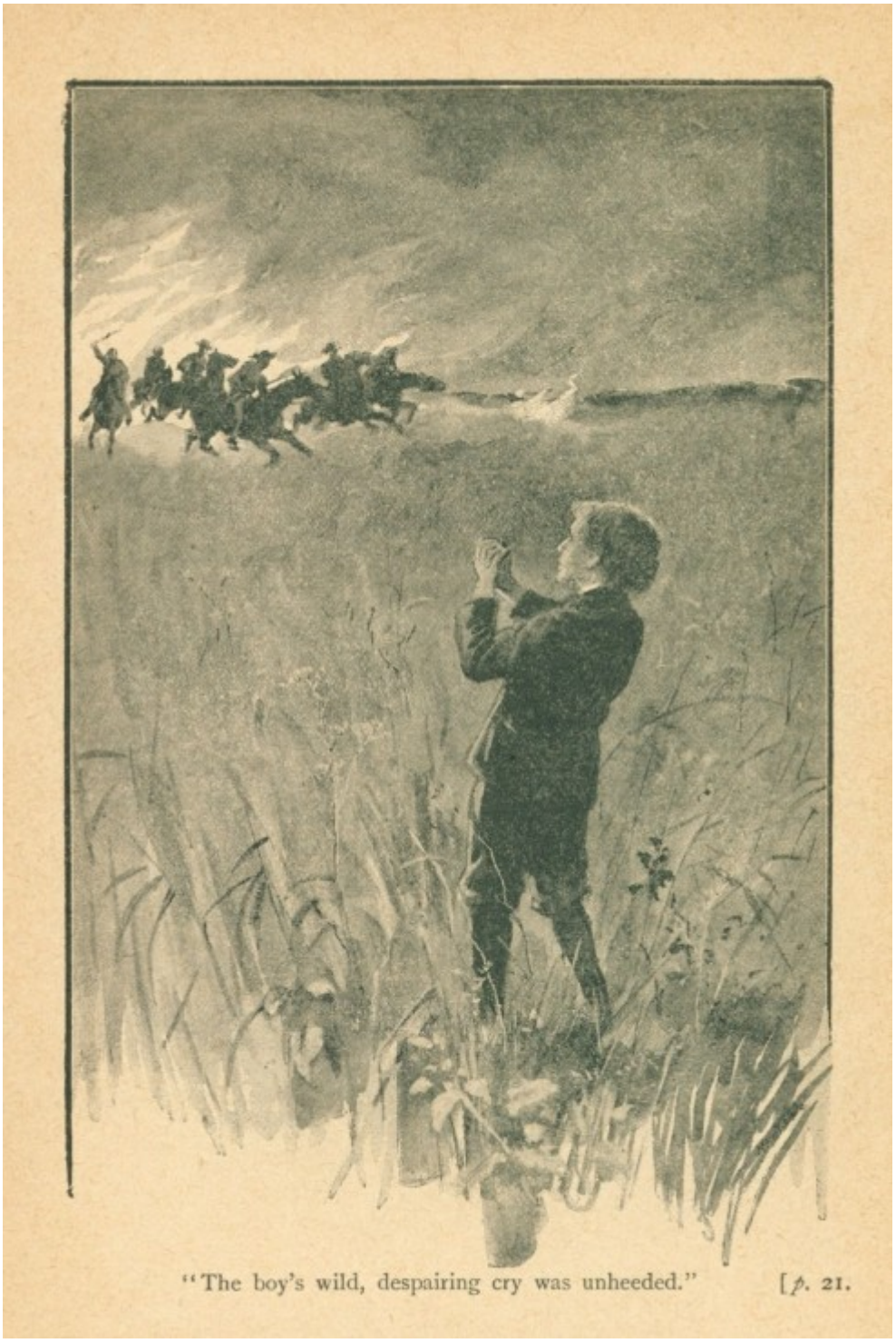
But no. There were no signs of either. Cyril became hotter and hotter. Soon, very soon, the fire would overtake him. He almost felt its hot breath on his cheeks. Wringing his hands he sank down with a loud, despairing cry.

# Chapter III

# Rescued

Now it happened that Whiterock and his companions had been fleeing before the fire for at least an hour, when its direction brought them to the place where Cyril fell.

The boy's wild, despairing cry was unheeded by most of the men, who were only bent on saving their own lives, but on Whiterock's ears it fell with powerful appeal. Swiftly he galloped up, espied the boy, leaped from his horse, flung Cyril upon the saddle, remounted, and once more rode off with him at full speed.



"The boy's wild, despairing cry was unheeded." [p. 21.

"The boy's wild, despairing cry was unheeded."

The men knew of a large clearing extending for several miles, where lumbermen had felled and carried away the great pines. They rode straight there, and in the course of an hour reached the place.

There was no fear of any fire following them into the clearing, for nothing remained there upon which it could feed. It took another direction, more to the north-west, and the men and boy were safe.

With noisy jests and much jeering at the fears which now were over the company made their way to the deserted camp of the lumberers. This proved to be a big frame-building, run up for the temporary convenience of the men who felled the trees, and then deserted when their work was done and the timber conveyed away. All round the inside of the building were sleeping-bunks, half filled still with dry grass and ferns.

They set to work with alacrity to kindle a fire, make coffee, cook some meat, and spread out their biscuits.

No one took any notice of Cyril, who stood in a corner watching them furtively. What powerful men they were! And how wicked some of them looked! But others seemed quite pleasant and kind. He watched Whiterock closely with very mingled feelings. He would have been most grateful to him for saving his life if it were not for the strong suspicion he had that he was the very man who had attacked his father. At that time he wore a mask. Now his dark-bearded face was uncovered. But there was something in his build and manner, and especially in the tones of his voice, which made Cyril confident that he was his poor father's assailant. How the boy longed to ask him if he had left his father living still! Would he be very angry if he were asked the question?

"Whiterock!" Cyril called timidly to him, stealing nearer as he did so.

The man had constituted himself cook, and was stooping over a battered frying-pan, whereon spluttered great slices of meat. Being much absorbed in his cooking he only noticed Cyril's call by giving him a nod.

Cyril did not return the nod. For just as he was about to do so it occurred to him that if the man were really his poor father's cruel assailant he could return no greeting of his.

Whiterock did not notice the boy's lack of cordiality; he was talking to one of the stewards now about the meat, which had run short. There would not be sufficient to go round. This was a great difficulty which could not be got over by talking.

When at last the men sat and lay down in a sort of circle round the stewards, who helped out the food straight from two central dishes into the men's hands, Cyril was called up by Whiterock and received a share of biscuit only.

"Biscuit is good enough for bairns," said the steward, laughing.

But Whiterock, grumbling, thrust a small piece of meat upon the boy's biscuit. It was his own. But how could Cyril eat it? He pushed it back into the man's hand. Whiterock looked annoyed, and made no further attempt to improve his meal. The men drank their coffee out of little cups belonging to their flasks. Cyril had not one, so would have had to go without if the steward had not kindly lent him his.

After the breakfast all the men but two or three, who remained to look after the horses, collect wood, and so forth, went off on foot to hunt. They returned, late in the afternoon, with an immense quantity of game. The men who had not been hunting were sent, with a couple of horses, to fetch home some of the best parts of the deer which the others had shot.

There was a great feast that evening, and much work afterwards in cutting and hanging up strips of meat to be smoked and dried by the fire during the night. Then the men divided the sleeping-bunks. Cyril shared one with Whiterock.

"There, get in, youngster," said Whiterock. "I'm awful sleepy. Want to say something? No, I can't hear it to-night. To-morrow some time will do. Good-night." He fell asleep, or appeared to do so, almost as he spoke.

Cyril dared not disturb him to inquire about his father's fate. He, too, was very sleepy, and in spite of his anxiety speedily followed his companion's example.

He was awoke suddenly in the night by shouts from the men, and then much loud talking and exclaiming. What was the matter? The men were flying wildly out of their bunks, on all sides, and making for the door. At that moment something soft, smooth, and slippery wound itself round Cyril's neck. With a cry for help he caught hold of Whiterock's hand.

The man sat up and astonished the boy by laughing loudly.

# Chapter IV

# Tempted

Whiterock flung something from the boy, and, jumping out of the bunk, still laughing loudly, lifted him on to the ground.

"Captain," he called out, "these old bunks here are full of pine-snakes, which have crawled into them for warmth. Fortunately they are quite harmless. Now then, men, they won't hurt you!"

When all the men had returned they declared that it was impossible to sleep any more that night. So more coffee was made, and they all sat and lay about near the fire, talking of their future plans. Cyril began to count the men, but was still so sleepy that he could not quite decide whether their number was nearer twenty than thirty.

For some time no one took any notice of the boy. But at last the Captain did so, and jeered at Whiterock for turning nursemaid.

Then they all began to talk of Cyril, much to his discomfiture.

Presently Whiterock asked him if he would like to remain with them as his adopted son, and in time would become one of the band.

"Ah, like Wolfgang," said the Captain, stroking his long beard. "He was a lad of about your age. We found him. I won't say where, but he grew up amongst us, and for cleverness and pluck there wasn't a man of us all that could beat him. Ah, he would have been captain if he had lived! He was killed in a scuffle with the police. He died fighting nobly."

Cyril had his own opinion about the nobleness of fighting the public officers of law and order. But he felt sorry for Wolfgang. The lad probably knew no better.

"Well, little 'un," said Whiterock, "would you like to stay with us and be my boy?"

"But my father?" said Cyril tremulously, looking appealingly at him.

"Oh, he's dead," said Whiterock hastily. "Now come, boy, don't make a scene."

Cyril turned his back on him. He was struggling with all his might to keep back the tears which would not be suppressed. His father, his dear, kind father, slain by that coarse, ruffianly fellow! Oh, it was too cruel!

"What's the matter?" demanded the Captain.

Whiterock crossed over to him, and said something rather low in his ear.

"Oh!" cried the Captain. "But that's only the fortune of war. Come here, my boy," he added to Cyril.

Cyril went up to him with a pale, resolute face.

"Whiterock saved your life, lad," said the Captain. "You must remember that. There wasn't one of us who would have done so much for you at such a time."

"He took my father's life," replied Cyril, looking up with flashing eyes, the hot blood mounting to his very brow.

"But he saved your life, lad," remonstrated the Captain.

"I know he saved my life," cried Cyril, "and I just wish he hadn't! As he killed my father, I would rather have died than——"

"Be quiet!" thundered the Captain. "Will you stay with us or no?"

"No, a thousand times no!" answered the boy boldly.

"I won't have him," muttered Whiterock sulkily.

"But I will," cried the Captain. "Look here, my lad, I honour you. Yes, I honour you for loving and respecting your father. You're a plucky lad! And if you like to stay with us you shall be my adopted son. Do you hear what I say?"

The men uttered various exclamations, tending to show that what they considered "a piece of rare luck" had come in Cyril's way.

Then they all waited for the boy's answer.

"No, thank you, Captain," he said politely, "I cannot."

"What for, lad? Why not?" demanded the Captain wrathfully.

"Oh, because 'Noblesse oblige!'" replied the boy.

"What do you say?"

Cyril repeated "Noblesse oblige" distinctly, in tones which were heard all over the great room.

"How do you explain those words?" asked the Captain.

"Oh, don't you understand them?" said Cyril, surprised that such a great man as the Captain should be ignorant of their meaning. "My father"—his voice shook a little as he said the name—"told me Noblesse oblige means rank imposes obligations, and that much is expected from one in a good position. You see, Captain, gentlemen can't do mean, dishonourable things. I'm sorry to disappoint you, but you see I come of a race of honourable gentlemen who would scorn to rob and plunder."

The Captain laughed loudly, rudely. "What a fine gentleman we've got here!" said he; "let's look at him." He dragged Cyril forward into the middle of the room. "There, my fine fellow, look around you," cried he. "Do you know several of these men are gentlemen of birth and breeding?"

"Then they've forgotten it," said Cyril calmly.

A murmur of anger went round the room. "Forgotten what?" cried one man.

"Noblesse oblige," replied Cyril.

"Absurd," cried the Captain. "Have you no better reason than that for refusing my offer?"

Cyril was silent.

"Speak out," cried the Captain.

Slowly but bravely Cyril said that there was yet another reason. He could not join them because he was a follower of Christ, who made the law of love, saying, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

A cry of rage burst from most of the men upon hearing this. But one or two drew rough hands across their faces, as if to hide them for a moment.

# Chapter V

# Cyril's sentence

"You little prig!" sneered the Captain of the band. But he did not look at Cyril. "Preaching at us!" cried another man indignantly.

"He wants taking down a peg or two," said a third.

"What sinners we must be!" scoffed a fourth.

"Leave him alone," growled one whose heart the boy's brave, noble words had touched. "Let him be."

"Aye, do," said a younger man. But he spoke timidly, looking down on the ground as he did so. "In case—in case," he added, "the youngster may be right."

"Right! Hark at him! Hark at Green!" jeered two or three rough voices.

The Captain looked angrily around at the men, and then at the boy. He felt thoroughly out of temper.

"A good thrashing would do the lad no harm," he muttered.

"Thrashing's too good for him," grumbled Whiterock, all his kind feeling for Cyril having changed to bitter dislike.

"Boy, come here," cried the Captain.

Cyril went up to him. He was very pale now, and trembling. He did not feel at all brave as he clasped his hands nervously together. It was terrible to feel that he stood alone, unarmed, helpless in the midst of all these men.

The Captain looked searchingly at him. "Your name, lad?" he demanded in stern tones.

"Cyril Morton," answered the boy.

"Cyril! A girl's name! Pooh!"

With a sudden change of mood the Captain laughed derisively. He passed his big, rough hand over the boy's soft curly hair and down his slim young figure.

"All the same," he said, "I like you, boy, and believe that we can make a man of you yet. After all, I will repeat my offer. Will you stay and be my son?"

Cyril shook his head. He could not speak at the moment, for the right words would not come. Was he to go through the ordeal again?

"He won't!" cried one of the men indignantly. "Did you ever know such defiance?"

"Speak," demanded the Captain, his hand resting heavily now on Cyril's shoulder as if he would compel his obedience. "Do you still refuse?"

"Yes. I cannot—oh, I cannot accept your offer! I cannot!" cried the boy.

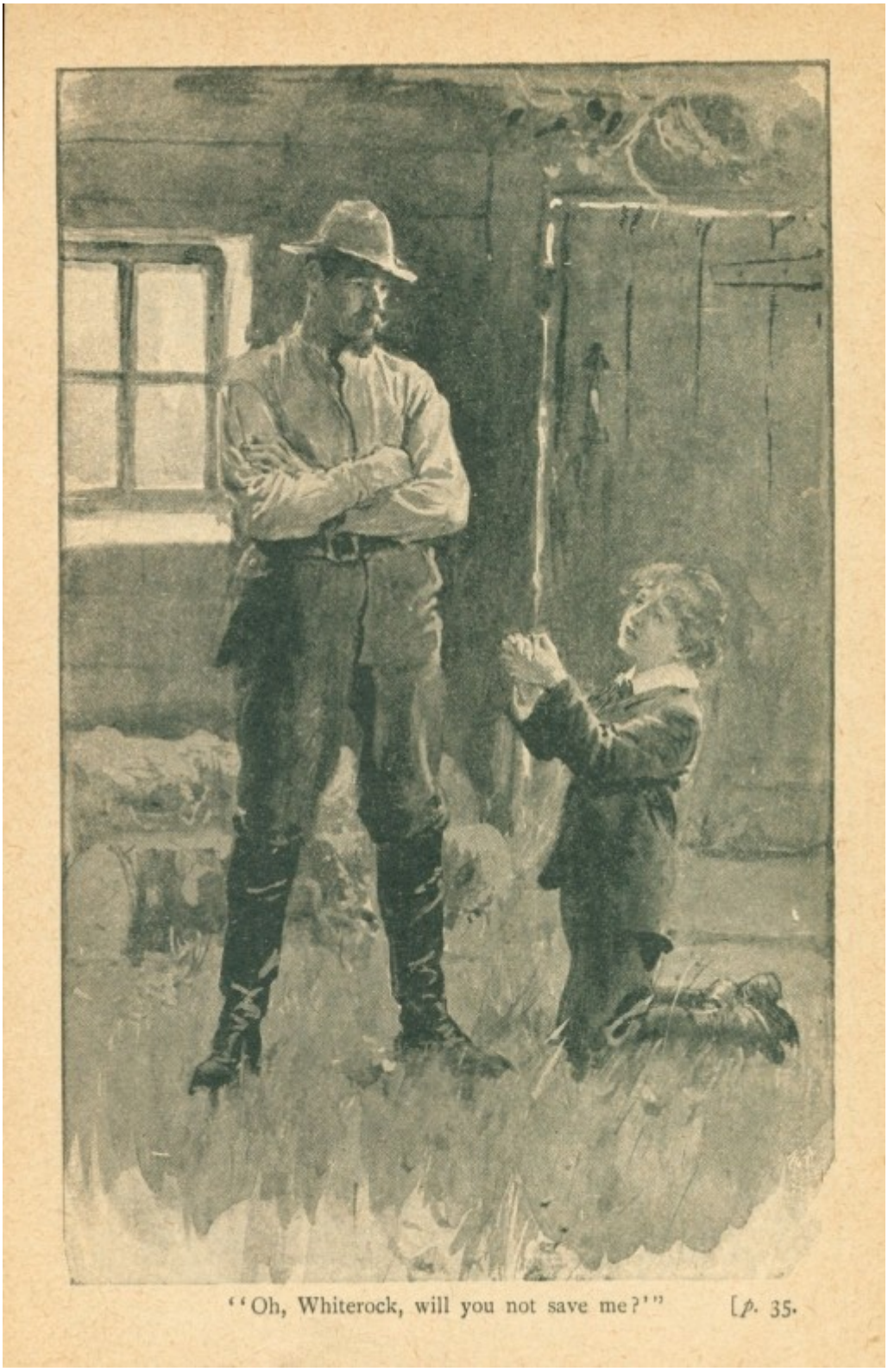
"Very well," shouted the Captain angrily. "You defy us! Here, you, Whiterock, you brought the youngster. Take him outside a bit while we decide what is to be done. Take him away, I say, for ten minutes. Then bring him back to hear his sentence."

Cyril trembled. Would they kill him? Out here in the backwoods they could do whatever they liked. There were no policemen here.

"Come on," said Whiterock, seizing hold of Cyril's collar and dragging him out of the place.

Outside he flung the boy down on the ground at his feet.

"Oh, Whiterock," pleaded Cyril, "though you killed my father—my dear, good father, will you not save me, his son?"



"Oh, Whiterock, will you not save me?" [p. 35.

"Oh, Whiterock, will you not save me?"

It was the best plea the boy could have made, for since those words of his to the Captain, and his terrible distress about his poor father, Whiterock had felt something like compunction for what he had done.

"The matter lies in your own hands, Cyril," he said, not unkindly. "You, and only you, can save your life. Accept the Captain's offer—it is a generous one."

"But I can't," said Cyril. "Oh, Whiterock, I can't!"

"Well, come back with me inside."

"One moment," cried poor Cyril. "What will they do to me?"

"You'll hear that soon enough," muttered Whiterock, leading him inside the huge shanty.

"Come here," called the Captain loudly, "and hear our decision."

Cyril stood tremblingly before him.

"It is," cried the man, "that if you do not change your mind by morning and consent to become one of our band, we shall tie you to a bunk and leave you here imprisoned in this camp, with only the snakes for your companions."

A cry of horror escaped from Cyril's lips. Then eagerly, passionately, he pleaded with the Captain to punish him in any other way he liked than that.

But to all and everything he urged the Captain had only one answer, Cyril must accept his offer, and then all would be well with him.

The boy, however, although greatly tempted to dissemble for a while and pretend to comply with the Captain's wishes until they reached a more civilised place where he might gain succour, remained firm.

So did the Captain. At the break of day he and the men breakfasted without giving one morsel of food to the boy. Then they made their preparations for leaving the place, which consisted mainly in packing up the best of the game and deer flesh.

When they were quite ready to start the Captain strode up to Cyril, asking if he had changed his mind.

"No, sir," answered the boy.

Then the Captain made two of his men lay Cyril down in a bunk and tie him to it securely.

The horrified boy, looking round nervously, perceived a snake at the foot of the bunk, and another larger reptile at one side of it.

Was he to be left exposed to their unwelcome embraces? Harmless they might be, but most unpleasant.

Vainly he begged and implored for mercy.

To all and everything he said the Captain's reply was always, "Do you change your mind? Will you be one of us?"

"I cannot! Oh, I cannot!" cried the poor boy every time.

Last of all Whiterock came up, and once more advised him not to throw his life away.

Cyril, however, would not yield.

Then they left him, and going outside mounted their horses and rode off.

There was a great silence in the deserted camp.

Cyril prayed to God for help.

Suddenly he felt a cold, slimy body slipping round his leg and gliding up his waist. He could not reach it with his hands, which were tied to the side of the bunk. Shouting at it to frighten it away was not of any use.

With a piercing scream he gave himself up for lost and knew no more.

# Chapter VI

# Deliverance

"Poor little chap!" said a rough but kindly voice, as a young man unwound the snake from Cyril's body and dashed it on the ground. "Pluckier than any of us men after all. Here, my lad, drink this." Whilst speaking he had unfastened Cyril's collar, and was now holding a flask to his lips.

Opening his eyes Cyril looked with a troubled gaze into the man's weather-beaten face. What had happened? Slowly he remembered. It was the young man called Green, who had tried to speak up for him when the others were so angry. What was he doing here?

Green cut away the ropes, and lifting the boy out of the bunk carried him away from the gloomy place altogether into the sunshine outside. Then he laid him down on some long grass, and going to his horse, which was tied to a fence near by, got a packet of food out of his saddle-bag.

The sweet, fresh air revived Cyril; the sunshine warmed him and did him good. In his heart he thanked God for the blessed change.

As Cyril ate and drank the repentant outlaw watched him with hungry eyes. There had been a time once when he was an innocent boy like him. Ah, well! that was long ago, and the good mother, whose pride and joy he had been in those days, had been dead for many years. There was no one to care so much what he did when she had gone, and the tempter enticed him along the downward path of idleness and self-pleasing. He had forgotten his mother's God,

and had turned away his mind from all thoughts of Him! That was the beginning and the end of all the evil.

But this boy, Cyril, had done very differently. Alone, unarmed, he had been brave in the most terrible danger, he had resisted the greatest temptation.

The robber sighed deeply.

Cyril, looking up, saw two great tears rolling down the man's face. He turned his head away quickly lest the boy should see them.

Jumping up he threw his arms round the man's neck.

"You have saved my life," he cried, "and now you are in trouble yourself. Yes, I know you are. Is there anything I can do? Will you—will you tell me what is the matter?"

Deeply touched, Green sank down on the grass beside Cyril and told him the whole story of his life, from the time when, as a child, he said his prayers at his mother's knee to the hour when, with his companions, he heard Cyril's outspoken condemnation of their wicked life.

"All night long," he said in conclusion—"all night long I've been thinking, thinking as I never thought before, and I've made up my mind, lad, that I'll try to lead a different life. If I can't earn my bread and cheese in future—well, I'll go without it. And I'll ask God's forgiveness for all my wrong-doing as long as I've breath in me to ask it."

After a pause, during which Green sat pondering, his horse made an impatient movement, which reminded him that they ought to set off.

"But where shall we go?" asked Cyril wonderingly.

Green replied that his father still lived, and happened to be working in a great saw-mill not twenty miles away from where they were. "If we go to him," he said, "I know he will get me work to do."

Then Cyril asked if Green could put him in the way of returning to England to his friends.

Green felt very sorry for him as he listened. But as Cyril had not nearly enough money, and he had very little himself, he did not see how he could possibly assist the boy to return home. However, the first thing was to get him into a place of safety, for the robbers might

return when they missed their comrade, or possibly, relenting, they might come back to liberate Cyril.

Mounting his horse, therefore, Green took up Cyril before him on the saddle and rode off.

After proceeding about five miles through the forest, without any greater adventure than the frequent difficulty of finding a path through the dense trees, they unfortunately came out into an open sandy plain, across which they had not gone far before they were perceived by some horsemen who happened to be crossing the plain in another direction.

With wild cries the men turned their horses about and set off after Green and Cyril.

It was a most unequal chase. The doubly-laden horse could not by any chance escape the pursuers, who gained ground every moment.

Encouraging it by word and by every other means in his power Green rode on, but with little hope in his heart.

Nearer and nearer came the pursuers, laughing and shouting as their horses flew over the plain.

"Come, Jack! Jack, old fellow, for pity's sake!" cried Green.

Tossing his head, with flakes of foam flying from his mouth, the horse dashed on.

But still the followers gained a little more.

"Jack, old fellow!" There was something despairing now in Green's appeal to the animal.

Neighing loudly, as if in answer, the horse galloped even faster than before. His hoofs scarcely seemed to touch the ground. It was all Cyril could do to hold on to his friend.

"Stop! stop! stop, or we fire!" cried a stentorian voice.

"Jack!" Green's appeal was almost frantic now.

With a bound the horse responded, plunging forward with greater speed than ever.

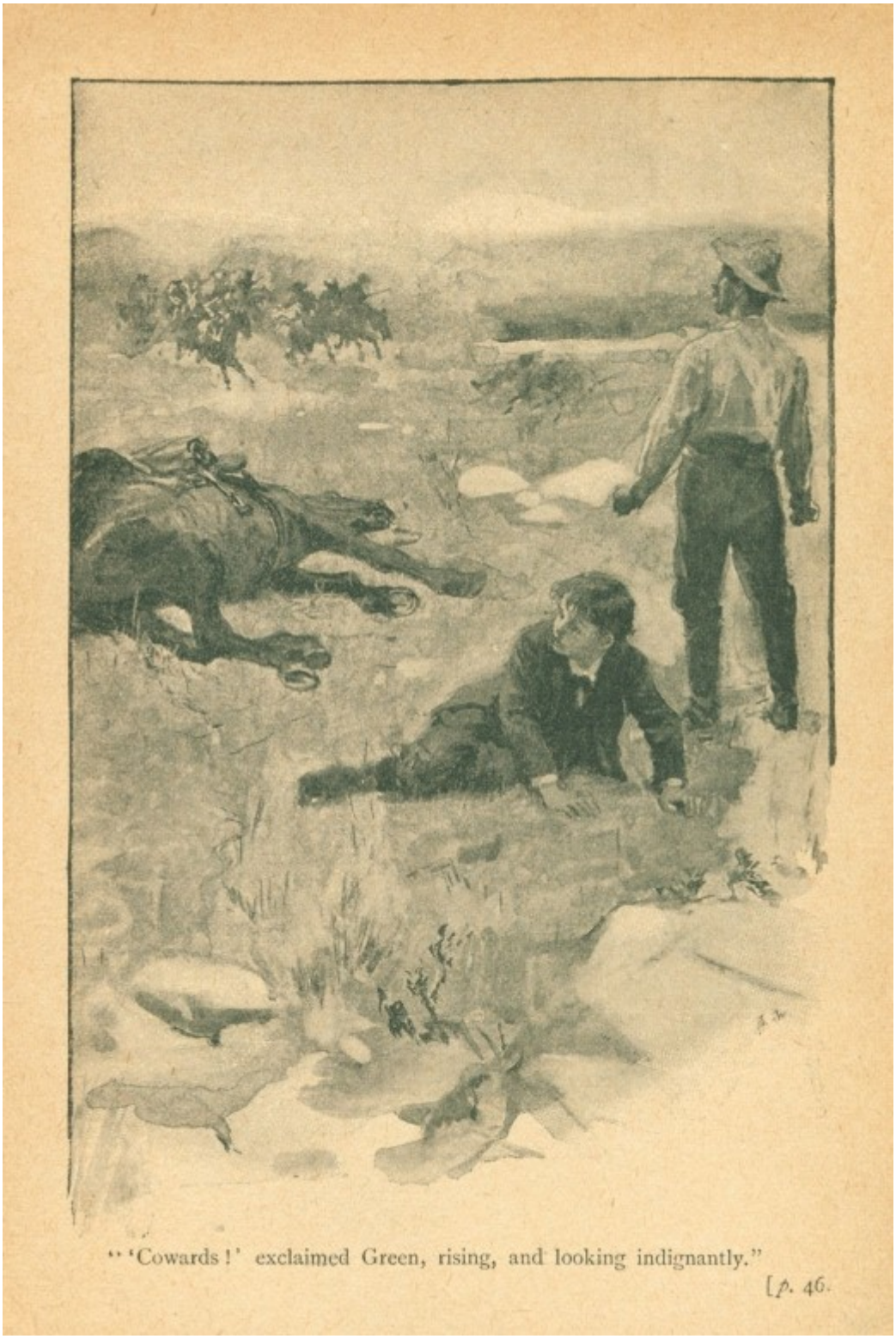
A shot rang through the air. Jack swerved heavily to one side; then he rolled over dead.

# Chapter VII

## A false alarm

The good horse Jack was dead, but neither Green nor Cyril were hurt. Fortunately for them the last violent movement of the animal threw them quite clear of its body.

"Cowards!" exclaimed Green, rising, and looking indignantly through a cloud of dust in the direction whence the shot had been fired.



"'Cowards!' exclaimed Green, rising, and looking indignantly." [p. 46.

"'Cowards!' exclaimed Green, rising, and looking indignantly."

"Why, Green! Green! They're off!" cried Cyril, who was already on his feet. "They're off!"

"Off! Leaving us!"

Green could scarcely believe his eyes. Instead of coming up to seize them the pursuers were galloping away.

"Oh! Look, look!" Cyril pointed in another direction.

A little company of horsemen had entered the sandy plain, and were riding rapidly towards them.

"They've scared our enemies. Aye, but we'd better be off too," cried Green in alarm.

"But we needn't run away from these men," said Cyril. "They are our friends."

"Friends? Not they! I should have a bad time of it if they caught me," said Green. "You see, they're Government men on the look-out for train-robbers and horse-stealers. Jack was a stolen horse. They'd make short work once they laid hands on me. Come on, lad." He caught hold of Cyril's hand and set off running back towards the forest.

"But, Green, stop. Let us tell them all. You are no outlaw now. You can say you have done with all that sort of thing—that you are repentant!" protested Cyril as they ran.

"That would make no difference. They'd punish me for what I've done already."

Cyril could not help feeling that if he told his story to these new-comers they would be sorry for him, and would befriend him. But he did not like to suggest that he should separate from his companion and wait for them.

Green, however, seemed to be thinking of it "They would not believe even you," he said. "You see, you'd be found in my company, and they would think you were one of us."

Across the boy's mind flashed the copybook precept he had written many a time, "A man is known by the company he keeps." And he remembered he could give no proof that his narrative was true.

"It's impossible to keep this up," panted Green after a while. "I'm dead beat! I can run no further."

The perspiration poured down his red face; he was thoroughly exhausted.

"Nor can I," cried Cyril, who, although more used to running than Green, was not in his usual health. "Let's give up."

They stopped short, and timidly, very timidly, looked round. They were alone. Not a creature—neither horse nor man—had followed them. With the exception of a few birds not a living thing could they see.

"Why, wherever be they?" exclaimed Green.

"Where? Where are they?" echoed Cyril.

There was no answer. Where, indeed, were their pursuers? Had the earth swallowed them?

"Something must have made the new-comers fear to attack them after all," said Green. "They must have been as afraid of the others as t'others was of them! Did you ever know such a thing?"

"And we've been just as bad," said Cyril in a tone of disgust, "for we've been running away from nobody at all!" He sat down dejectedly on a sandhill.

"Three parties all running away from each other, without ever stopping to look round! Well, that was mighty queer," cried Green.

"You were wrong about them being men in pursuit of you and your friends," said Cyril.

"I was indeed. They weren't after us at all. They must have been just quiet, peaceable travellers who heard the firing, and, being alarmed, made off back again as fast as they could!"

"Well, they saved us, anyway," said Cyril.

"Yes, that's true enough."

"But how shall we get on without a horse?"

"Poor Jack!" sighed Green. "Captain gave him to me because I was the means of his getting a whole lot——" he stopped abruptly. "What a rascal I've been!" he reflected.

"I'm ravenously hungry," said Cyril.

"And we've left nearly all our food in the saddlebags. But not quite, I've a little here!" Green got a packet out of his pocket, and, opening it, disclosed some slices of cooked meat.

"Oh, thank you!" Cyril said, gratefully taking his share.

For a few moments they ate in silence, then Green said they must push ahead as fast as possible before night came on.

"But which way shall we take?"

"Oh, we can't be so very far from the saw-mill where my father works, if I could only find the way there," said Green.

However, it turned out that he really did not know where they were—so many turnings had confused him. But they could not remain there, and so set off walking towards the forest. In the shelter of the trees, at least, they would not be so conspicuous if the pursuers again came near. Besides, Green was certain the saw-mill, which he had once been to, was near trees.

In an hour they found themselves again entering the forest, and walking along a broad track made by deer or other large animals. It was dark below the great pine trees, and before long the shades of evening made it still darker.

"Oh, Green, I can walk no further!" said Cyril at length, sinking down at the foot of a tree.

"Well, I think we're both about tired out," rejoined Green, leaning wearily against another tree, and looking down compassionately on the tired boy. "We'll stop here, lad, for the night."

"Yes. But shall we be safe? What about the wild animals?"

"Oh, we must have a fire! There's plenty of dry wood about."

He went forward and began to heap up some broken boughs.

"It won't do to light it here though," he went on. "We might set fire to the forest; everything is so burnt up."

"I'm afraid I can't go any further," said Cyril.

"No, you stay there. I'll just take a look round." He walked off as he spoke, and disappeared amongst the trees.

It was very still after he had gone. The twittering of birds and the occasional snarl of some wild animal, or the breaking of twigs as one stealthily approached, were the only sounds to be heard. At another time Cyril, who was unarmed, might have been nervous had not bodily fatigue overcome every other sensation. As it was, by the time Green returned to him he was fast asleep.

"Poor lad, I won't wake him," said the kindly man, lifting Cyril in his strong arms, and carrying him off as if he were a baby.

When Cyril awoke an hour later he saw a great wood fire burning, and sending up showers of sparks into the still night air. He was lying in an open space at one side of the fire, and Green was stooping down near it, attending to the roasting of a bird.

"Supper's ready, my lad," he was calling. "And a blessing it is I've got some supper for you. Jump up."

"What is it? How did you get it, Green?" asked Cyril eagerly, for all at once he felt uncommonly hungry.

"Never mind," said Green briefly, "you eat it."

He poked it out of the fire, and served it on a smooth flat stone. Then he divided it with his pocket-knife, handing Cyril the best of it with the same useful article.

The two made a good meal, for the food was very welcome. Then they lay down on the ground near the fire and were soon fast asleep.

# Chapter VIII

## Green meets his father

It was scarcely light when Cyril was awakened by Green shaking him vigorously.

"Wake up, lad. Wake up!" he cried. "There's something queer near us! Listen."

Cyril sat up, rubbing his eyes, and heard the sound of horses galloping along, and then crashing through the brushwood. He saw strange lights gleaming through the trees, and now shots were fired, and loud and excited voices bewailed the escape of some prey.

"Green," said the boy in a low tone, "are those men after us again?"

"No, no. It's some huntsmen. I see now; they're hunting deer with head-lights."

Even as he spoke one of the lights dashed through the bushes up to them, and Cyril saw, to his amazement, that it was a lighted lantern strapped on to the head of a stout pony. A man with a skin cap on his head rode the pony.

"Hullo!" shouted he, "what's this? What are you fellows doing? Camping out, eh?"

"Of course we are," said Green cautiously. "And who may you be?"

"Oh, we're just a party of men from Ellison's saw-mill——"

"Ellison's saw-mill! That's good hearing!" cried Green. "We're on our way there, but have got lost. How far off are we now?"

"About six miles or so. Where are your horses?"

Green looked embarrassed. Then he said, "We fell in with a rough lot—they shot our horse——"

"Shot your horse? Had you only one?"

Before Green could reply, much to his relief two or three other men came up, who, after asking a few questions, swung themselves from their saddles, and, opening their saddle-bags, began to take out sundry packages.

"We might as well have our breakfast here," said one. "Any objection to our using your fire to boil our kettle, master?"

"None whatever. Make yourselves at home," answered Green heartily.

"Any water hereabouts?" asked the man.

"There's a spring just round those trees, about ten yards off."

"Hurrah! Fetch some, Jem. We'll make coffee. You and the lad will join us, stranger?"

"That's so," replied Green, "and thank you."

In a quarter of an hour the five huntsmen, Cyril, and Green were partaking of a good breakfast, consisting of coffee, tinned meat, and bread.

Cyril learnt from the men's talk that they had been hunting all night and had shot two reindeer, which some of their party had taken home, whilst the others pressed on in search of more. The light of the lanterns fastened to their horses' heads attracted the deer, who, on coming forward to look at it, were shot point-blank by the men.

The boy thought it a very cruel way of entrapping the beautiful creatures, but all the others said it was "fine sport."

Presently the men, who had lingered too long over their breakfast, jumped up, and mounting their horses rode as fast as they could back towards the mill. Very little was said upon the way. One of the men took Cyril up behind him, and he found it difficult enough to hold on to the saddle he bestrode. He had no strength left for talking.

By-and-by they arrived at their destination—a group of houses and outbuildings, and a huge saw-mill, with heaps of timber and roughly-hewn planks.

The master of the mill, who was a tall man, with hair thickly sprinkled with grey, came to the door of his office—a small building

at one side of the yard—as they rode up.

"Well, men?" he said laconically.

"We've killed two head of deer, that's all," replied the spokesman of the party, "and we've picked up a man and a boy who were on their way here."

"Dismount," said the master briefly, addressing the strangers.

Green jumped down and took off his skin cap.

"Beg pardon, Mr. Ellison, sir," said he, "but can you tell me, is Josh Davidson, my father, still living here?"

"Yes," replied the master. "You are his son Ben?" he added.

"That's so," said Green, whose real name was Ben Davidson. "Can I see him?"

The master sent for the prodigal's father. Then looking at Ben, he said inquiringly—

"Turned over a new leaf?"

"Yes," Ben nodded. His face was very red, and great tears were in his eyes. The man before whom he stood knew all about him. He knew of the shameful years of robbery and violence; he knew of the father's broken heart.

Suddenly the saw-miller laid his hand on Ben's shoulder.

"Go meet him, lad," he said. "See, he's crossing the yard."

Ben hurried out. The two in the office heard a great glad cry—

"My son! My son! 'He was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found!' Thank God. Oh, thank God!"

"Now," said Mr. Ellison to Cyril, "tell me who you are. Do you belong to that man?"

"No, sir; oh, no!"

"Then how came you to be here with him?"

Cyril looked up into the man's grave, kind face. He wanted to tell him all that had befallen him since the time that he sat by his father's side in the train going northwards from Menominee, but remembered that he must not betray the ex-robber. And although it was evident Mr. Ellison knew something of the latter's wrong-doing, Cyril was not aware how far that knowledge extended.

A shade of sternness crept over Mr. Ellison's face as he noticed the boy's hesitancy.

"Well?" he said impatiently.

Cyril was greatly perplexed. How much could he tell the saw-miller without compromising the man who had saved his life?

# Chapter IX

# At the saw-mill

"It was in a train. It was attacked by rough, cruel men, and one of them killed my father."

Cyril's voice shook as he spoke, and for a moment he paused.

"I fell into the hands of the men, and they were leaving me to die, when Green—I mean Ben Davidson, rescued me."

"Ah! Just so! Well, I won't ask you questions about that. But say, what is your name? Where do you come from?"

"My name is Cyril Morton. My father was an English gentleman, with an estate in Cornwall. We came to this country in search of my uncle, Gerald Morton. Have you ever known him, do you think?"

Cyril asked the question with sudden eagerness. Who was so likely as the great saw-miller to know a sojourner in those parts?

The saw-miller shook his head. "Ours is an immense country," he said. "Unless you have some clue to his whereabouts I'm afraid you won't be likely to find that uncle of yours, my boy."

"Then, if you please," said Cyril, "can you help me to return to my friends in England?"

The saw-miller said nothing. He looked discouragingly at the boy.

"You see," said Cyril, "I've scarcely any money with me. But my father had plenty. When I get back to England I shall just go to Mr. Betts, our lawyer, and get him to send your money back, with interest —that is, if you will be so very kind as to lend me some."

"Just so," said the saw-miller. "But how can a little chap like you travel all those thousands of miles alone? No, no, my boy, it's not so easily done."

"But I must return home," protested Cyril.

"Yes, of course. All in good time. But you must wait here until someone going to Chicago comes this way."

"But——" began Cyril.

"Now, I can't argue with you, boy," said the saw-miller shortly. "You're very welcome to stay here with us until it's convenient to send you along to England. More than that I cannot do for you."

He touched the bell.

"Thank you," said Cyril, "but——"

"Jim, take this youngster to the cook," said Mr. Ellison to his errand-boy, "and tell him to give the lad something to eat and drink."

"Yes, boss. Come along." The last two words were addressed to Cyril, who followed him from the office immediately.

The boy conducted Cyril into a large room in the great house where the master saw-miller lived with such of his men as were unmarried. Then a man wearing a white cap placed a dish of hot meat, bread, and coffee before him, at one end of a very long table.

Just as Cyril was sitting down to the meal Ben and his father entered, and came quickly towards him.

"Here he is, father. Here is the boy whose brave true words spoke a message from heaven to my soul," said Ben.

The old man laid a hard but gentle hand on Cyril's head.

"God bless you!" he said fervently; "God bless you!"

"Thank you," said Cyril in a low tone. He felt very glad to think he had done so much good, but it was a little embarrassing too; so he hastened to speak of other things. "Green—I mean Ben," said he, "aren't you going to have some breakfast? Oh, yes, here comes the cook with another plate."

The man with the white cap laid the plate before Ben, regarding him curiously as he did so.

After he had gone the old man spoke. "Ben," he said, "my son, you've repented; yes, but the consequences of your wrong-doing remain. Your band has done a good deal of mischief in this

neighbourhood, and at any moment you may be recognised. You'll have to be disguised in some way."

"I'll shave my beard and whiskers off, and you must cut my hair quite close, father," said Ben. "Then if you'll kindly get me some clothes like yours, you'll see I shall look very different. If any of my old associates ever come this way, it must be quite impossible for them ever to recognise me."

"Aye, my lad. What would that desperate Captain do if he came across you?"

"Shoot me as soon as think of it," replied his son.

Cyril trembled. From what he had seen of the Captain he was sure it would be so. "But these saw-millers are very powerful, Ben, aren't they?" he asked. "They couldn't easily be overcome, could they?"

"Not likely," Ben answered, "if it came to a fair fight."

After the meal was over Ben shaved, and his father cut his hair quite close to his head. Then he dressed in the rough garments worn by the men at the saw-mill. His transformation was so complete that even Cyril did not know him when he returned to the big room.

Then, and not till then, did the old man take him to the master.

A little later in the day, when Cyril had been shown over all "the works," and had seen the different operations whereby great forest trees were sawn into boards, smoothed, planed, and piled up in mighty heaps ready for transportation, he learnt that Mr. Ellison had been very kind to Ben, and had engaged his services, that he might remain there and work with his father. The old man was most pleased and thankful; and his son and he made very much of Cyril, and were never tired of telling him how grateful they were to him for being the means of their present happiness. The boy did not like to disturb and distress them by letting them know of his own bitter disappointment in not being assisted at once to return to England.

Mr. Ellison was very kind to him in other ways. He allowed him to sleep in a tiny room opening into his own bedroom, and at meal times Cyril's plate was always set near the master's.

"He's a little gentleman," said the rough saw-miller; "he shall sit near me."

Sometimes, when "the boss" was resting, he would talk kindly to Cyril, explaining to him all about the wonderful work which went on in

the heart of that strange, wild land.

"You would never think, lad," said he, "that houses built in London, York, Sheffield, Liverpool, and so on, in the old country, are floored and partly 'run up' with boards made of our forest pines. Yet it is so; our timber goes to the wood markets of old England."

Then he related graphically how large parties of men, called lumberers, came over to Michigan and Canada just before the long winter and set up great camps, at which they lived a hard, rough life, going out long before light on intensely cold winter mornings to fell the giant pine trees, and returning early in the evenings to eat and sleep heavily until it was again time to go to work. In the winter months when the ground was covered with snow and ice the forest would resound with the blows of the axe, and the trees would lie prone on the ground until they were chained together into rough sleighs and dragged over the frozen snow to the banks of the frozen rivers. There they would lie waiting until the spring, when the ice would melt, and the timber would be slipped into the river and borne by the force of the current on, on, for many miles until it reached its destination.

"Yes," he said, "our timber comes floating down to us on our river. We stop it when it reaches us, and saw it up as you have seen. Afterwards the same river bears it away towards its distant market."

"Then the river is your road, your railway, and everything," said Cyril.

"Yes. And we make the water serve us doubly. It is our carriage or boat, as well as our road or river." And then Mr. Ellison told him of greater wonders still, of timber being formed into gigantic rafts, these "shooting the rapids" and being "tugged" across lakes by steamers.

It was all very wonderful; Cyril was deeply interested. But still he longed to leave that marvellous country to return to his friends and his father's friends in old England.

# Chapter X

# Attacked by bears

"Cyril! Cyril! Where are you?" called Mr. Ellison one morning.

"Coming," answered Cyril, from the top of a huge pile of logs. He had found a comfortable, sheltered seat up there, which he called his "retreat," and, though it was hard to climb up to it, he often sat there, thinking about England and the father he had lost. That morning he felt more sorrowful than usual, and his eyes were red and swollen when at last he reached Mr. Ellison's side.

The saw-miller was standing in the middle of the yard, looking at a pretty black pony which a strange man was holding by the bridle.

"Good. You shall have your price," said the saw-miller. "Now, my lad," he added, turning to Cyril, "can you ride?"

"Yes," replied the boy at once, "I have a pony at home." He looked sad as he thought what a long way off that was.

"Well, this shall be your pony then," said Mr. Ellison, smiling; "Blackie—that's his name—is for you. I've just bought him for you."

"Oh, thank you, thank you! How very kind!" exclaimed Cyril delightedly. "Blackie! Woa, my beauty!" He stroked the pretty creature, patting his arched neck.

"Well, sir, take him—take him!" said the man, slipping the bridle into Cyril's hand. "I guess you may ride him bare-back, or any way you like. He's quiet enough, you'll find."

The pony had no saddle on, and Cyril did not wait for one to be brought. Jumping lightly on Blackie's sleek, bare back, he trotted

quickly round the yard. His pleasure in the welcome gift, and the pleasant movement through the clear, frosty air, brought a bright colour to his cheeks. He sat erect, and the dark skin cap Mr. Ellison had given him contrasted with his fair, curly hair, and made his face appear brighter than ever.

Mr. Ellison looked admiringly at the boy. He had no child of his own. His wife had long been dead. He was all alone. Like the Captain of the brigands he thought it might be well for him to adopt Cyril, and so felt less inclined than before to hasten his departure to England.

Certainly after that day the boy seemed happier and more settled. He was generally on Blackie's back, trotting about all over the place, and often riding some distance into the forest on the roads made by the lumberers. Blackie was a capital companion. When Cyril was not riding him he followed his young master about like a dog. Sometimes Cyril found himself talking to the animal as if it could understand him. He told Blackie about his distant home in England, and his great wish to return to it, even though no kind father would be there now to welcome him. And sometimes as he talked his tears dropped down over Blackie's head, upon which the pony would poke his nose quietly against the boy's shoulder.

One day when Cyril was alone with Blackie in a part of the forest where the trees had just been felled, about two miles from the saw-mill, he saw something which made him throw himself from his saddle and run to the rescue. A baby bear had been entrapped by a falling tree, one branch of which lay over one of its hind legs, which was broken. The poor beast's moans were pitiful, but when Cyril approached it snarled at him fiercely.

The boy found, to his distress, that he could not move the heavy bough, and he was just stooping over it, preparatory to making another tremendous effort to do so, when an angry growl behind him caused him to look round quickly.

Close by him was the young cub's dam, in a towering rage, one mighty paw upraised to strike him down.

Cyril thought his last hour had come. Having no weapon with him, he was quite defenceless. The bear, imagining he had injured her offspring, was bent upon killing him.



The bear was bent upon killing him." [p. 70

"The bear was bent upon killing him."

One moment she towered over him, a huge, grey monster; then, just as he was breathing a prayer to his Heavenly Father for the help which in his heart he despaired of, a voice cried loudly—

"Drop on your face, lad! Down on your face, and let me get a shot at her."

Cyril flung himself down as he was bidden; the bear growled again fiercely, and turned to look at the intruder.

A shot rang through the air, another, and yet another.

With an anguished snarl the bear dropped down beside her young one, mortally wounded.

Cyril jumped up to look in the face of his deliverer. It was Mr. Ellison, who had come up just in the nick of time.

"Eh, my lad," said the saw-miller with emotion, "you had a narrow escape that time."

"Thank you—oh, thank you for saving my life!" cried Cyril.

The saw-miller sat down on a fallen tree to rest for a minute. "You must have the skin," he said, trying to speak coolly, though his voice still shook with emotion.

"But look at the poor little one! I believe it's dying. Oh, do look!" exclaimed Cyril.

The young bear was indeed expiring. As Cyril bent over it another large bear, with a terrific growl, rushed upon the scene.

Mr. Ellison's weapon was unloaded now. They were quite defenceless. The bear had the deaths of his poor mate and their cub to avenge. He was full of fury.

The saw-miller looked fixedly at the beast, trying to cow it with his eyes; but the bear's eyes were turned in the direction of Cyril. With a low growl it watched him angrily.

# Chapter XI

## Cyril speaks up for the Indians

As Cyril looked round hastily he perceived Mr. Ellison's box of matches, with which he had just been lighting his pipe, and at the same moment the thought flashed across his mind that fire was a mighty power. Perhaps the bear could by its means be scared away.

Suddenly he snatched up the match-box, struck a light, and applied it to the dry leaves and withered boughs beside him.

An instant conflagration was the result. A wave of fire leaped up between them and the bear.

The beast, snarling, drew back a yard or so, then sat up watching the flames with much distrust.

"Bravo, lad!" shouted Mr. Ellison, stirring up the fire and spreading it out between them and the bear, which retreated still further, with a prolonged growl.



"The bear retreated still further with a prolonged growl." p. 74.

"The bear retreated still further with a prolonged growl."

That fire saved two lives. It did not spread very far, because the trees were felled and piled up in places, ready to be removed. But it answered its purpose. The bear was driven off, and the saw-miller and Cyril returned home in safety.

Mr. Ellison had the skin of the she-bear dressed and cured for Cyril. He lavished favours upon the boy, and thought of him almost as his own son; only in regard to the matter of sending him to England he was stern, unyielding. Why could not Cyril give up the wish and remain with him? But Cyril thought longingly of the old country. If he could only get there, and could tell Mr. Betts, the lawyer, everything that had happened, that gentleman might be able to find out what his father's ultimate fate had been.

One morning, just before the long winter commenced, half a dozen poor Indian women (squaws they were called) came to the saw-mill with three ponies laden with goods they wished to sell to the men.

It happened to be the dinner hour, and a number of young fellows were crossing the yard on their way to the house when they saw the poor Indians. They shouted merry greetings and laughed boisterously.

"Now we shall have some fun," said they.

"What sort of fun?" asked Cyril, who happened to be near.

"Oh, you will see," was the answer. "They are so simple, these queer-looking squaws."

Cyril did see, and very indignant he became.

The poor squaws had brought warm wool mittens and skin caps, for which they asked a fair price, and hoped to do a good business. But the squaws had one great weakness, and the men at the saw-mill knew it well. They could not refuse a glass of beer, and they were so unused to it and so constituted that a very small quantity of alcohol completely upset them. Even one glass of beer would make them quite foolish.

The young men therefore refused to trade with them until they had refreshed themselves, as they called it, with a little beer. After that they easily persuaded the Indians to part with their goods for the most trifling sum, in some cases for only another glass, or perhaps two, of beer.

Cyril looked on in amazement. Would no one interfere? Were these men who were trading on the folly and sin of a few poor women?

"Oh! Davidson, see," cried Cyril, "that fellow, Jem, is trying to get one of their ponies now! That poor woman will be quite ruined! Just look at her."

Davidson had no objection to looking; but "I can't interfere," said he slowly. "It's a shame, though I can't help it."

Cyril's colour rose. If no one would venture to interfere—well, he must do it himself. Davidson, glancing at him, read his thought, and laid a detaining hand upon his shoulder.

"You mustn't speak," he said. "The man wouldn't stand it—least of all from a little fellow like you."

Cyril's eyes flashed. "I may be small," said he, "but right is right, and must—must triumph," and he ran forward, crying out aloud, "Stop! Stop! Stop! You're not acting fairly!"

Half an hour later, when Cyril lay on his hard, straw mattress in his little bedroom, aching and sore all over from the rough treatment he had met with, he did not think the right had triumphed at all, and he sobbed his heart out there in his loneliness and despair.

The men would not brook interference. What their master and old Davidson dare not attempt the boy, armed only with his consciousness of right, had ventured upon doing. The consequences were grievous to himself, and might have been fatal if it had not been for the Davidsons, aided by their master, who suddenly opened his office door for them to rush into with the boy. There were no police within many miles of the lonely saw-mill. The master ruled alone over the lawless roughs who, in a great measure, composed his staff.

The occurrence of that morning made Mr. Ellison see that the saw-mill was not a safe home for such a boy as Cyril. He began to think of plans for sending him back to England. Unfortunately, however, the sky was already black with threatening snow-storms; the weather would probably be such that it would be impossible to take Cyril thirty miles to the nearest station. And then, he had been so cuffed and knocked about by the men, it was most likely that he would be ill.

The idea of that made the saw-miller go back to Cyril's bedside.

"Are you any better, my lad?" he asked anxiously.

Cyril could scarcely say he was; all his bruises smarted, and his bones ached. He looked up at Mr. Ellison without speaking.

"I'm sorry this has happened," said the latter, very feelingly.

"Oh, it doesn't matter about me," said Cyril quickly. "I don't mind being knocked about a bit. But the pity is that it has done no good—no good," and he sighed deeply, thinking of the hard, cruel hearts of the men, and the wrongs of the poor Indian women.

"You can't say that," said the master, "you can't say that. Some of the men will feel ashamed when they think over what happened. They will see you were in the right, and—well, I fancy the next time the poor squaws come they will not be treated so badly."

"If that is so," said Cyril, smiling in spite of his pain, "I shan't mind having been knocked about a little, Mr. Ellison."

The saw-miller looked at his bright, if discoloured, face, and felt it hard to say the next words. "I've made up my mind, my lad; you shall go straight away to England as soon as it can be arranged."

Cyril was very glad to hear that. It comforted him immensely in his pain to think that he might soon be on his way home.

# Chapter XII

# A joyful meeting

Cyril was ill for several weeks after the assault upon him by the angry men at Mr. Ellison's saw-mill. When at last he crept out of his bedroom, looking pale and thin, winter had begun in good earnest, and the rough roads through the forest were quite impassable. The snow was coming down as if it never meant to stop, and the keen, cold wind blew it in great drifts on every side.

Whilst Cyril lay ill on his hard mattress two travellers going south to Chicago had called at the saw-mill; with either of them he might have travelled had he been well enough to do so. It was all very trying, and sometimes the boy was inclined to murmur at the cruel results which had followed his well-meant attempt to defend the cause of the poor Indians. But then again he was reassured, as his constant attendant, old Davidson, told him of first one and then another of the men having expressed contrition about their treatment, not only of the boy, but also of the poor Indian women. It had never struck them before, they said, that it was wrong to cheat a redskin. Until the English boy stood up and called their conduct monstrous it had seemed quite the proper thing. They had bitterly resented being corrected, and had beaten their monitor for doing it, but afterwards, as Mr. Ellison had foretold, they saw that he was in the right. Under the influence of these better feelings they were easily led by the Davidsons to unite in sending Cyril a message that

they apologised for thrashing him, and promised that in future they would respect the rights even of poor Indians.

The thought of all this greatly consoled Cyril, and helped him to bear patiently his pain and weakness, and the disappointment about his delayed return home.

When at last he was strong enough to travel, and the roads were not so bad, no one happened to be going south, and Mr. Ellison really could not send him just then. As the time went on, therefore, he felt very sad and lonely.

One evening, however, as he sat musing sorrowfully in the men's sitting-room—his heart too sore to allow him to join in the usual fun—he heard the sound of approaching horses clattering over the frozen yard. Then there was a loud rap at the door, followed by many others, louder and louder still, as the person outside endeavoured to make himself heard within the house.

Mr. Ellison strode to the door and threw it open.

"Who is there?" he demanded.

"I have come in search of—" began a rich, courteous voice.

"Father!" The cry, so joyous, so eloquent with tenderness, rang through the room. Then Cyril flew across the boarded floor and flung himself into the open arms of the new-comer.

"Oh, father! father! father!"

"My dear boy! My Cyril! Thank God! Oh, thank God!" and the tall, fur-clad man in the doorway clasped his child to his heart.

* * * * * *

"But, father," asked Cyril an hour later, as they sat together talking in his little bedroom, which Mr. Morton had obtained Mr. Ellison's permission to share with his son that night—"but, father, I can understand your coming round after everyone had thought you dead, and also your having quite a long illness after that, but I don't know yet how it was you found me. Why have you not told me that, father dear?"

"We have been so very happy, Cyril, for this last hour, and that is a sad story. Must you hear it to-night, my boy? Can you not wait till to-morrow?"

"Oh! tell me now, please," said Cyril wistfully.

"Very well, my boy." But the father sighed. "You know the police were busy a long time, trying to find the scoundrels who attacked the train. They did so at last, and after a desperate fight some of them were secured. They were tried in the police-court in Menominee, where I and some others had to bear witness against them. It was proved that two of them had been guilty of murder. The captain was one and Whiterock, the man who attacked me, was another."

"But, father, Whiterock didn't kill you after all!" said Cyril quickly.

"No, not me. But unfortunately he killed someone else, and he was condemned to die. Shortly before the hour of his death the prison chaplain sent me a note to tell me that the criminal, Whiterock, greatly desired to see me. Of course I visited his cell as soon as I could. Then Whiterock told me that he wished to do one just deed before he died. He had carried you away from the train and caused you to fall into the brigands' power; he would try to atone for that by telling me all about you and where you were."

"But how did he know——" began Cyril.

"Oh, he said he and his party generally got to hear all that they wanted to know about people. You and the man who left them had not been here very long before they were aware of it. However, it did not suit their purpose to molest either of you, although they meant to punish their renegade comrade at some future date. I was deeply thankful to know that you were here in safety, and I came for you as soon as I could. Whiterock left this message for you, Cyril—'Tell your son,' he said, 'that I've found at last that honesty is the best policy. And tell him, too, that he did right to speak those brave, true words to us, and right, too, not to pretend, even for an hour, that he could be one of us—villains.'"

"Poor Whiterock," said Cyril softly. "He saved my life once, father! He was good to me then."

"We will only think of that," said Mr. Morton, "and of his kindness in telling me where I might find you. And now, my boy, we must go to bed. To-morrow, as I have had to give up my fruitless search for your uncle, we will start for home."

"Home," murmured Cyril, as his head touched the pillow, "with father," and he fell asleep. A smile rested on his face. He was a happy boy.

# Chapter XIII

# Leaving the Saw-Mill

"This is very awkward! Very!" exclaimed Mr. Morton the next day, when, on joining his host at the great breakfast-table, he heard that his guide of the day before had changed his mind about returning with him to the nearest railway station, twenty miles away. The man wished to remain at the saw-mill, having found an old mate there.

"I can do with him very well," said the saw-miller, "as I am rather short of hands just now. All the same, I don't wish to take the fellow from you."

"Well, of course, I engaged him to guide me here and back, and I can make it worth his while to return with me."

"Oh, I'll compel him to do that, if you like!" said Mr. Ellison. "But you might find him a bit nasty. I know the man, who has been here before; he has an ugly temper."

"Then we are better without him. After all, I believe I can remember the way; we can scarcely call it a road. It is in nearly a straight line, is it not?"

"Yes, for about half the distance. Then you come to a place where the track, or way, branches out in two directions. You must take the turn to the right—you'll remember right's right—and go straight on. There is no difficulty."

"Well, then, I'll dispense with Smith's services."

"I should if I were you. It's nice weather, clear and frosty, the snow as hard as any road. You'll find your horses, animated by the fine

exhilarating air, will gallop over it splendidly."

"Will you sell me a mount for the boy?" asked Mr. Morton.

"He has his own pony. Of course he will take that."

"May I?" asked Cyril eagerly. "Oh, Mr. Ellison, may I really take Blackie?"

His eyes shone with delight. He had been thinking that morning how hard it would be for him to leave his dear pony, notwithstanding his great happiness.

"Why, of course, Cyril. The pony is your own. I gave it to you long ago," answered Mr. Ellison.

"And he's such a stunning pony, father. He follows me like a dog, and he's never tired; he goes like the wind. And such a beauty! There isn't one like him in England, I'm sure; at least, I don't think there can be."

"I must see him," said his father. "You've been very kind to my boy," he added gratefully to the saw-miller.

The big man laid his hand on Cyril's head as he sat beside him. "I would give half of all that I possess," he said to Mr. Morton, "to have a boy like him. My wife and infant son died thirteen years ago," he added rather huskily.

Mr. Ellison grasped his hand. "I have lost Cyril's mother too, for a time," he said very softly.

"A time? What do you mean?"

"Please God, we shall meet again in a better world," replied Mr. Morton in low tones full of deep feeling.

"Ah, you are a happy man!" said the saw-miller, so low that no one else could hear. "It's all plain sailing with you. You'll get to heaven, I've no doubt. But with me it's very different. It's a rough life this of mine, trying to wrest a living out of the heart of the forest, far from any help of religion or even civilisation; I try to keep straight, but——"

"I know you do," exclaimed Mr. Morton. "You've been so good to my boy. You know our Lord's words, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.'"

The saw-miller's eyes filled with tears of surprise and joy; he brushed his hand across them hastily lest they should be seen. At heart he was a very humble man, although he had to appear stern

and proud to the men, who, generally, obeyed him as if he were a sort of king over them.

"And you are not really alone," continued Mr. Morton, still speaking in the low tones which could not be heard by the others at the table. "Although you have no outside spiritual aids, no place of worship, and no clergyman, you have the promise, 'Lo, I am with you always.'"

"But was that meant for me?" asked the saw-miller. "I always thought that was only meant for the parsons."

"It was meant for everyone who, in all future times, should endeavour ever so humbly to tread in the steps of our great Exemplar, the Lord Jesus Christ."

That was all that passed just then. The "boss" was obliged to turn to his men, and dismiss them to their work with a few pointed directions. But when Mr. Morton was ready to ride away, after having looked round the place where his little son had lived so long, thanked the Davidsons for their kindness to him, and seen the affectionate way in which they and some of the other men parted from him, the saw-miller came up hastily and wrung his hand, saying, "Good-bye. I can understand now how it is Cyril became what he is. I shall think of your words after you have gone."

"Good-bye. God bless you!" said the grateful father.

Cyril threw his arms round the saw-miller's neck and kissed him for the first and last time on his hard, bronzed face. "Good-bye, dear Mr. Ellison," he said, "I shall write you ever such long letters from England. And I'll tell you all about how Blackie likes the old country. I can't thank you enough for giving me Blackie. I can't indeed." For he estimated the gift of Blackie more highly than any other kindness the great saw-miller had shown him.

Then he had to follow his father, who had already ridden on, and the saw-miller stood looking after them until they were out of sight among the trees.

"I'm afraid, boss," remarked Ben Davidson, meeting him as he crossed the yard to his office, "that we shall have snow again, after all, before long. It has begun to grow darker during the last five minutes," and he scanned the sky with a troubled face.

"Well, I hope it won't come until they have arrived at the station. I did not think there would be snow, or I should not have allowed them

to go, although Mr. Morton was most anxious to be off home."

And with these words the saw-miller passed into his office, looking disturbed and not altogether happy.

# Chapter XIV

## Lost in the snow

Mr. Morton and Cyril rode on briskly, Blackie keeping up most cleverly with the larger horse, until when they were about eight miles on their way the snow which Ben Davidson had prognosticated began to fall heavily and in the most bewildering manner.

"I never saw such snow in my life!" exclaimed Mr. Morton. "It does not come down straight, it whirls all about and rises again and beats upon one in such a blinding fashion. Stay near me, Cyril, my boy. Can you keep your pony up?"

"Yes, father. He stumbles rather, but he won't fall. He's such a good pony, isn't he, father?"

"Splendid! And you're a capital rider!"

They pushed on as rapidly as possible, but it soon became exceedingly difficult for their horses to advance. The newly fallen snow was so much softer than the hard iced snow covering the track, it rolled into balls under the horse's hoofs, making them stumble and flounder sadly. At last Mr. Morton's horse fell down, slightly crushing his foot, which he had not time to release from the stirrup. He turned very white with the pain, and it was a few moments before he could extricate himself from the horse. Cyril was in an agony of apprehension.

"Oh, father, are you hurt?" he cried. Then, as Mr. Morton made no reply, he jumped off his pony and caught hold of him by the arm.

"I shall be all right soon," his father replied with an effort, leaning heavily on him. "My foot is sprained, I think. It rather pains me, that's all." But he grew pale to the lips.

His horse stood by, hanging his head and looking quite ashamed.

"My Blackie wouldn't have done that!" cried Cyril, and as if the pony understood him he came poking his nose into his master's hands.

All the time the snow was falling fast, whirling round, and beating in their faces. It had covered the track now, so that except for the opening in the trees they could not tell where it was.

Mr. Morton endeavoured to mount his horse again, but in vain. Frightened by his fall and the bewildering snow the animal jumped about and would not stand still, whilst the pain his master's foot gave him when he stood upon it crippled all his efforts.

Letting go Blackie's bridle—the pony would not stir without him—Cyril held his father's horse, patted his neck, and endeavoured to pacify him, but in vain.

It grew darker; the snow rose in great drifts now, and flung itself upon them with stinging force.

Mr. Morton struggled hard against the faintness and drowsiness which was stealing over him. "My boy," he said, "it is no use. I cannot ride. The horse would only fall again."

"But, father, what shall we do?" cried Cyril. "I've heard of people in this country being buried in the snow whilst yet alive, and of their being starved to death too."

"If only there were some shelter!" sighed his father, "a hollow tree, or a cave, or something. Look round, Cyril, can't you see anything?"

Cyril endeavoured to look through the snow, but could see nothing except snow—snow in all directions, whirling about, drifting high, covering the trees till it made them look gigantic cloud-like mountains, and piling itself up against them as they stood until it really seemed to be trying to bury them all alive.

Tinkle! Tinkle! Tinkle! The sound of sleigh bells, proceeding slowly in their direction, was the most welcome music to their ears that they had ever heard.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mr. Morton, making a renewed effort to resist the faintness stealing over him, "thank God!"

"Oh, father, it's a sleigh! I know the sound of sleigh bells!" exclaimed Cyril, "and there will be people, and they will take us somewhere!" In his glad excitement he let go of the bridle he was holding, upon which the horse immediately turned tail and bolted, floundering through the snow.

"Oh, dear! I couldn't help it!" cried the boy.

"Never mind; he was of no use. Who—who is coming?" faltered his father, still struggling with the deadly weakness.

"Hullo! Hey! What's up?" exclaimed a sharp, girlish voice, as a two-horse sleigh came up with frantic plunges and great difficulty on the part of the horses. A girl, warmly clad in furs, who was shovelling snow off the sleigh with one hand, whilst with the other she held the reins, peered through her wraps at the obstruction on the road.

"We've had an accident," answered Cyril, in shrill tones of excitement. "We were riding to the station at Iron Mountain when my father's horse fell. He's badly hurt and faint. My pony didn't fall!" he added quickly, in spite of his trouble, still proud of Blackie. "But I don't know what to do about my father. His horse finished off with bolting, you know."

The girl was staring through the blinding snow at Cyril as he spoke. "Why, it's only a child!" she ejaculated.

Cyril thought her rude, and felt hurt she should imagine he was small, but that was no time for thinking of himself. He was alarmed because his father did not speak, though he stood swaying in first one direction and then another as the snow beat upon him.

"Bless me!" cried the girl. "We must get your dad on my sleigh, though I doubt whether the horses can pull him." She jumped off the sleigh as she spoke and towered above Cyril, being a fine, tall young woman, as she offered her arm to his father. "You must rouse yourself, sir," she said commandingly, "and get into this sleigh. See! I'll help you! Make a great effort. For your life, sir!"

Her loud voice reached the injured traveller in the far-away region into which he seemed to have sunk; he made a great effort, and with the help of the girl and Cyril succeeded in getting on the sleigh. There he sank down unconscious, and the girl pulled a big skin rug over him.

"Now, little one," she cried sharply, "jump on your pony and show us what stuff you are made of! If you can ride on in front my horses will follow you!"

It was no time to resent the freedom of her speech. Cyril knew their lives depended upon getting through that terrible snow as speedily as possible.

"Blackie, Blackie," he cried in his pony's ear. "My dear old Blackie, do your best!"

The pony neighed and struggled on as best he could, but it was terribly hard work and he floundered about miserably. It was all Cyril could do to stick on. Once he thought it would be impossible to do so any longer, and looked back.

Then he saw the girl who had come so opportunely to their aid had a still harder task than his. Leaving the horses to follow his pony, she was working hard with both hands at shovelling the snow off the sleigh, which jumped about and jolted up and down owing to the plunges of the horses and the drifts of snow it encountered.

"I don't care if she does call me a little one!" said Cyril to himself, forgiving her everything at that moment. "She's a heroine, a real, splendid heroine!" And again he urged Blackie forward.

He was absorbed in the difficulties of the way, and so blinded by the snow that he was quite unconscious they had passed the place where the track parted in two directions, and were now pursuing the left one instead of the right. But the girl knew what she was doing, and when at last even Blackie fell on his knees and Cyril alighted on his hands and feet, unhurt, on the snow and a yard ahead of his pony, she called out encouragingly—

"It's all right. We're just close to a house. You're a brave lad, for all you are so small!"

Cyril got up, leaving Blackie to recover his feet as he could, and made his way to her side.

"Do you say there is a house?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes; through those trees. Do you see that narrow opening? There. Look! 'Tis a path that leads to the door. It isn't many yards."

"Hurrah!" cried Cyril. "How can we get father there?" he asked.

"I don't know. We must be sharp. I guess you had better run to the house and see if there's anybody there. It's just a chance there may

be. And bring them back to help us carry your father. Woa!" she cried to the horses, which, stung by the snow, were plunging about again. "Steady there! Look sharp, boy."

Cyril made his way as fast as he could over the snow-path through the trees; fortunately for him it was so sheltered that not much new snow had fallen upon it. After proceeding a few yards he stepped out of the shelter of the trees into what seemed a great snow-drift, which at first appeared impassable; by degrees, however, he perceived a way round it, which eventually brought him suddenly to the window-frame of a wooden house.

Looking in Cyril perceived a man dressed as a hunter kneeling on the floor, apparently digging a hole in the earth about the centre of the room; some boards he had taken up lay beside him.

"Come," cried Cyril to him, "come, my father——"

He was interrupted by a great cry, as the man, springing to his feet, flung up his arms in extreme terror.

# Chapter XV

# A confession of guilt

Cyril stared at the terrified man in amazement. The latter's cry rang through the empty house and filled his ears. What had so frightened him?

"My father," began Cyril again, wishing to explain his sudden appearance by saying that his father was lying out in the snow, waiting to be carried into shelter.

"Oh! Stop, stop!" cried the man, interrupting him in apparent anguish. "Mercy, father! Father, have mercy!" He turned wildly as if to flee, but thought better of it, and coming to the window threw himself down on his knees before it, looking up into Cyril's face with wild, unseeing eyes. "I didn't mean to kill yer, my father," he said. "I only wanted the gold. And I can't find it. I can't find it. And the snow-blindness is coming over me. I can scarcely see! Oh, my punishment is great enough! Have pity on me! Have pity on me!"

"What have you done?" The voice that asked the question was not Cyril's. It was that of the girl, who had followed him to the house, and her tone was loud and very angry. "Tell me again," she demanded. "I must hear it in your own words again."

"I will tell yer. Oh, I will! Have mercy, father!" wailed the unhappy man. "I wanted money so much, father, so very much. I'd lost a wager—a hundred pounds—to some men at Iron Mountain, who said they would duck me in a pond if I did not pay them it. And I begged yer on my knees, but yer wouldn't give me any. So I thought

I'd help myself. I knew yer hid your money in a hole under the flooring 'ere, and was looking for it when yer came to me. I shouldn't 'ave killed yer if yer 'adn't angered me with bad words. Then I was that put to, it seemed as if I killed yer before I knew what I was doing."

"And Mr. Gerald? What did he do?"

"Oh, 'e knew nothing about it. I guess I blamed 'im to get the blame off myself. Now I've told yer all," the wretched man whimpered. "I've told yer all. Mercy! Mercy, I beg!" Lifting up his hands, he cried still louder for mercy.

"Begone, then!" exclaimed the girl. "Begone this moment! No, not that way. Out of the door at the back of the house, and then fly southwards. If you ever return it will be at your own risk—your own risk!"

"I never will, father! I never will!" The wretched man fled through the house, out of the back door into the snow, running against trees and stumbling over drifts in his hurry to be gone.

The girl leaned against the window-frame, looking extremely pale.

"What does it mean?" asked Cyril. "What does it all mean?"

"Mean?" she said, and now once more she spoke in her natural voice—the one she had been using to the man was shrill and hard. "Mean? Why, just this. There is an old saying, 'Conscience makes cowards of us all.' 'Tis true in this case. His guilty conscience made a coward of yon man. His father, a rich old miser, who lived in this house, was killed six months ago—it was supposed for his money. Yon wretch accused a hunter, who had been lodging with them, of the crime. His name was Gerald; he was a nice man, a real gentleman, though very poor. Appearances seemed against him and he fled. 'Twas the worst thing he could do. Everyone, nearly, thought he must be guilty then. The house has been considered haunted by the old man's ghost ever since. It is lonely enough. And yon wretch, returning to find the money which he had not got after all, saw you, and being half blind—if it's true he has snow-blindness[1] coming on—and frightened almost out of his wits, he thought you were his father. But," she changed her voice, "we must now return to your father. We shall have to get him here the best way we can."

[1] Snow-blindness is rather common in those parts.—E.C.K.

To their surprise and delight, however, they met Mr. Morton coming towards them a minute later. He had recovered consciousness, and finding himself alone on a strange sleigh, wrapped in rugs, whilst its two horses stood quite still, stupefied now with fatigue and cold, he arose and made the best of his way along the only semblance of a path visible.

"Where am I? What has happened?" were his first questions.

The girl looked up into his face and smiled. "'Pears like I have seen you before," she said. "But come in. Don't talk now. Come straight in and sit down. We'll have a fire in no time, and some hot water for your poor foot." She led the way into the house as she spoke.

A few articles of furniture, too poor or too heavy to be worth carrying away, had been left in the room with the hole in the floor. The girl dragged forward an ancient arm-chair of the most elementary workmanship and begged Mr. Morton to sit down in it, near a strong table supported on what looked like tree-trunks instead of legs.

"Now, my boy," she said to Cyril, "let's make a fire. There'll be wood in that chimney-corner, I'll be bound. Here's a match. Oh, and here's some paper!" She pulled the latter articles out of a huge pocket under her furs. "Can you make a fire, boy?"

"Yes, I can," he replied quickly. "I've often done it at the saw-mill."

"His name is Cyril Morton," interposed his father. "I should like to know yours," he added to the girl.

"Mine's Cynthy—Cynthy Wood," she said, taking an old kettle she had found to a running spring in the kitchen. "I'll rinse this old thing out, then the water will be sweeter," she said cheerily.

"I ought to thank you," began Mr. Morton.

"Don't now. Don't thank me," she said. "I've been repaid a thousandfold for coming here."

Cyril looked round at her wonderingly. A vivid blush had overspread one of the prettiest faces he had ever seen. Her blue eyes shone with gladness. Her voice betrayed its happiness every

time she spoke. She seemed altogether a different person from the girl who had driven his father there.

"Now, you're wondering what has repaid me," she said to Cyril. "Shouldn't be surprised if I tell you after tea. You make that kettle boil sharp."

The boy laughed and poked the wood, which was nice and dry, with his boot. But Cynthy reproved him for that, "Waste not, want not!" she exclaimed. "It's wrong to burn holes in good leather. Now, sir," she added to Mr. Morton, "let me try to take your boot off."

With gentle hands, in spite of his protest, she deftly removed Mr. Morton's boot from his injured foot, then, fetching a basin from the inner room, she bathed it in warm water, filling the kettle up again after she had emptied it.

"It's swollen, sir," she said to her patient, "but I think it's more bruised than sprained; I'll bind it up for you."

"You are very kind, Miss Wood," said Mr. Morton.

"Now don't," she said. "Call me Cynthy, everyone does. Cyril, you fetch me that stool," pointing to one with three legs. "Now, sir, you must keep your foot up on the stool. Cyril, you and I must go back to the sleigh for some things I left there."

It was no easy task, but they struggled through the snow back to the sleigh, which was already nearly buried in it.

"The poor horses," said Cynthy; "I'd forgotten them. I shall cut them loose; they must look after themselves. I have no food for them. I think they will go home. Then my father will send to seek us."

Blackie was delighted to see Cyril again; he had stood still, waiting for him to return, and now he put his cold nose in the boy's hands, and seemed to ask him not to go away again.

"What shall I do with my dear old pony?" asked Cyril. "He has nowhere to go—he loves me so, he will never leave me!"

"Can you get him along the path to the house?"

"Oh! yes. He followed me before, but I sent him back. He's very intelligent."

"Seems so," said Cynthy. "Well, you bring him along. I guess he'll be able to get into the kitchen."

"Oh! do you think so?—but the people of the house——"

"There are none. The old man who owned it is dead. And his son and heir daren't come back, because he thinks his father's ghost has returned!" Cynthy laughed. "Remember this, Cyril," she added, "there's nothing like a guilty conscience to make an out-and-out coward."

# Chapter XVI

## The discovery in the loft

Blackie followed Cyril into the house through the back door when they entered it on their return from visiting the sleigh.

He did more; not content with his strange quarters in the kitchen he followed his master into the larger room, and trotted round it, looking hard at everything, including Mr. Morton in the arm-chair, and poking his nose into the hole in the middle of the floor as if to see why it was left there.

"I guess he's a smart pony, but you must take him right out, Cyril," said Cynthy.

"Oh, yes, of course. Come, Blackie." He led him into the little kitchen, telling him repeatedly that he was to be a good pony and stay quietly there. But Blackie whinnied a little, seeing no prospect of food.

"Oh, poor Blackie!" cried the boy sympathisingly; "what will you do without food?" He returned to Cynthy, who was spreading out a nice little repast of sandwiches, bottled milk, cheese, and bread and butter on the rough table.

"Were all these things in that basket?" asked Cyril, looking at the one they had fetched from the sleigh.

"All except the sandwiches. Your father provided those," she replied.

"But I say, Cyril," she added, "aren't you going to feed that pony of yours?"

"I only wish I could," he replied earnestly. "But unless you would give me a slice of bread for him, I don't know what there is for him to eat."

"Why, what do you imagine there is in this bag?" asked the girl, producing a coarse canvas bag from amongst the rugs she had thrown down in a corner.

"Oh! is it corn?"

"Corn and chopped hay," she replied. "The very thing for Blackie. I brought it for my horses, but didn't give it to them, for they can find their way home."

Cyril seized the bag eagerly, and with a grateful look, without waiting to thank her, he ran to Blackie and spread its contents out upon the floor. Then he really enjoyed seeing his pony eating the food with relish.

"Cyril! Cyril!" called Cynthy at last. "Come and have some dinner yourself."

All at once, feeling very hungry, Cyril returned to the other room and joined the others at the nice impromptu meal.

After it was over, and the things were cleared away—what was left of the food being carefully put by—Cynthy told Mr. Morton what she had already explained to Cyril, about the late owner of the house and his wicked successor. "He might have killed us too," she said in conclusion, "or at any rate have been very awkward, if I had not terrified him by pretending to be his late father. That was the only plan I could think of to frighten him away—yes, I see you look grave; it was trading on his fears, I know. But we really were in a desperate case. The horses could not possibly drag the sleigh another inch, and it was absolutely necessary we should have shelter from the snow."

"But what did that mean about Mr. Gerald? I did not quite understand," interposed Cyril. "Who is Mr. Gerald?"

"He is one of the best and gentlest of men," answered the girl, "so generous that he can never keep a cent in his pocket if he thinks anyone else has need of it. He told me once he had been extravagant and foolish in his youth away in England, and had done harm to a few people without really meaning it, and that made him very anxious to do all the good he could to others."

"A beautiful way of retrieving the past!" said Mr. Morton. "Would that everyone tried to do that sort of thing!"

"You said that exactly as Mr. Gerald might have done," exclaimed Cynthy, looking searchingly at her patient. "You do remind me of him."

"I believe you like Mr. Gerald a great deal," observed Cyril.

"I do indeed," said Cynthy, very earnestly.

"Can you tell us why?" asked Mr. Morton, regarding her with great interest.

Cynthy blushed deeply. "I'm engaged to be married," she said, "to a young man named Harry Quilter. He got into difficulties, and would have been ruined by some men, up at Iron Mountain, if it hadn't been for Mr. Gerald. He took his part and stuck up for him, besides paying some money Harry owed. And afterwards he got my Harry to go about hunting with him until he'd got all sorts of Mr. Gerald's wise maxims and good thoughts into his head. Now Harry has set up a store—a shop, you know, only they call them all stores here—and he's doing well. My father says Mr. Gerald has been the making of him."

"I am not surprised you think gratefully of him," said Mr. Morton. "But how did such a man come to be lodging in this lonely house?"

"Well, I don't know exactly, but I think he took compassion on old Jabez, who always posed as a very poor, half-starved old man, and thought it would be kind to lodge with him and pay him well for it when he hunted in this neighbourhood. He was always doing kind things like that. Pete, the old man's son, was a hunter too, and perhaps he helped to persuade Mr. Gerald to lodge here, telling him it was a good centre from which to hunt deer in the forest round. He used to go out hunting with Mr. Gerald. Perhaps he thought even then that if he killed the old man whilst Mr. Gerald was with them he might swear the latter did it. He's that cunning, is Pete."

"How was the old man killed?"

"No one knows rightly. Pete declared that Mr. Gerald had knocked him down with the butt end of his gun and thrown him into the river—the body was never recovered."

"But how was it such a man as Pete could be believed before this Mr. Gerald?"

"Well, you see the folks about here had known Pete from a child; he had grown up amongst them, and they never thought he could do it. Then the trappers and hunters and such-like all hang together, and what one man says the others always hold by. Besides, Mr. Gerald was an Englishman—and some of the people here are rather set against the English just now—and he had made himself a bit unpopular by taking the cause of the weak and despised against the richer, stronger men, and these last couldn't make out what he did it for. 'We shall see through his little game one day,' they said. So when Pete said Mr. Gerald had killed his father and taken all his money—a very considerable amount—they believed him. But there weren't any police here, and there was some delay, during which Mr. Gerald got away! It was a pity he did that. But he never cared much for people's opinion, and he may have thought he would rather go away than fight the matter out." But Cynthy sighed. "It always makes a man look guilty," she added, "when he runs away. However, Cyril, you've heard as well as I Pete's confession, that he committed the crime himself."

"Yes, he said so! What a fright he was in!" cried the boy. "I never saw anyone so much afraid in my life!"

"A guilty conscience is a terrible thing," remarked Mr. Morton. "But, Cynthy," he added to the American girl, "it is rather a coincidence that the reason we came to North America was to find a brother of mine, who went there many years ago, named Gerald Morton."

"What was he like?" asked the girl at once, for she had been greatly struck by Mr. Morton's resemblance to her hero. "Tell me just what he was like."

"He was five feet ten inches in height," said Mr. Morton. "His hair a blend between gold and red, his eyes were blue, and he used to look very young and boyish."

Cynthy nodded. "Mr. Gerald was all that you have said, except the last," she remarked. "He looked anything but boyish, but then he had had a hard struggle to get on. You know this country is not so easy for gentlemen without money to get on in. Poor men do better, because they have strength with which to labour, and they often know a trade. Mr. Gerald had knocked about a great deal, I know, before he settled down as a hunter."

"I wonder if he can possibly be my brother," said Mr. Morton. "I should like to see the room he occupied when he was here. There might be some traces of him in it."

"Oh, it is the bedroom he had. Up that ladder it will be," said Cynthy. "No, sir, please sit still. I can't let you try to get up with that foot. Cyril can go up with me, and we will look round and see if Mr. Gerald has left anything."

Cyril had already jumped up and run to the wooden ladder leading up to a trap-door in the boarded ceiling. He climbed up before Cynthy, and pushing open the trap-door, entered the loft-like bedroom.

Cynthy followed him in, and they looked round. A bed on the floor, a three-legged stool, a table of very amateurish construction, and some torn papers in a heap behind the door seemed to be all.

"What a poor place!" cried Cyril. "Oh, I don't think my Uncle Gerald can have lived here!"

"Let us look at these papers," said Cynthy, kneeling down beside the heap on the floor. "I'd scorn to look at any man's torn letters," she said; "but if there should be Mr. Gerald's real name on these, and it should lead to his friends finding him, why it would be such a good thing! These, however, are mostly torn memoranda and receipted bills. See, there is my father's name on one. He keeps a big store at Monkton, six miles off. But what's this?" She held up an envelope with the words written upon it, "Cyril Morton, Esq.," and the name Brooklands below, and on the next line the letter T and a blot, as if the address had never been completed."

"Why, that is papa's address!" exclaimed Cyril. "Do you see the writer was just beginning to write Truro when he stopped? The next word would have been Cornwall, and then it would have been finished. And my father will know the writing."

"That he will. We'll take all these papers to him," said Cynthy, gathering them up.

# Chapter XVII

# The ghost

Mr. Morton was much affected when they placed in his hands the handwriting of his long-lost brother, and he perceived that Gerald had at least been thinking of him and beginning a communication to him. There was no longer any doubt about the matter, his only brother had lived in that poor frame-house for weeks together, and had fled from it under suspicion of a terrible crime. That the suspicion was utterly false could now be proved, thanks to Cyril and Cynthy's having surprised and frightened the real culprit. But Gerald had gone, and it might be long before the good news reached him.

"We will not go home, Cyril," said Mr. Morton, "until we have found your uncle. That is of the most importance now."

"If he has gone to the lumberers, as Pete said," remarked Cynthy, "I have an idea in which direction we must go to find him. If only the snow has ceased to-morrow I will guide you to the place. I should like nothing better," she added, as Mr. Morton demurred about giving her so much trouble. "They are used to my going away for a few days at once, at my home; I have relations scattered about the country, and they will conclude I am visiting them."

Then, as night was drawing in, the clever girl made up a good fire —fortunately there was a sufficiency of wood in the house—and arranged the rugs for Mr. Morton and Cyril to sleep on near the fire.

"I guess I'm going upstairs," she said, when this had been done, and she ran lightly up the ladder to the loft above before they could

stop her.

"She'll be so cold up there, father!" exclaimed Cyril. "She'll freeze. There isn't a fireplace in the room, or anything but a poor bed on the floor."

"Run after her with this rug, Cyril," said Mr. Morton, choosing the largest skin-rug. "Tell her I won't have it and neither will you. We shall be miserable if she starves herself."

Cyril did as he was told with great willingness, but he had immense difficulty in making the generous-hearted girl consent to take the rug.

"I'm young and strong, Cyril," she said, "and you and your father are delicate. Besides, you belong to Mr. Gerald, so you ought to have the best of everything." But Cyril insisted, and she had to yield at last. The tired travellers slept well and long, being much exhausted with all they had gone through.

Mr. Morton awoke first, and had lighted the fire before Cynthy appeared.

"I have been awake some time, but did not like to disturb you too soon," she said, busying herself with filling the kettle. "Oh, now, sir," she added, "you'll hurt your foot standing about on it so, and there is no need. I can soon do everything."

"I'm glad to say my foot is much better," rejoined Mr. Morton, "and I am not going to allow you to do everything."

Cynthy smiled brightly. "I am glad you are better," she said. "But oh, look at the snow!" she added, removing one of the boards with which she had filled in the empty window-frame.

The snow was piled up until it almost reached the top of the window, and they could see that more was still coming down. It was impossible to open the door, which Cynthy tried next; a great snow-drift was piled up against it.

"We are snowed in!" she exclaimed. "And no one will think of looking for us here in the haunted house—unless my Harry does. He knows I'm not a bit superstitious. Still, I don't think he'll suppose we are here," and she grew thoughtful, weighing the pros and cons.

They had to be very economical of food that day, and there was none left for poor Blackie, much to Cyril's grief. Cynthy gave him

some lumps of sugar for his pony, but she could not spare any bread.

They all talked a great deal about Gerald Morton in the course of the day, Cynthy relating many anecdotes of the kindly deeds he had done for other people, all of which much delighted Mr. Morton, who asked many questions about them. He told Cynthy his brother had been left to his charge by a dying mother, and it was a great grief to him when, having failed in business and become ruined in fortune, Gerald left England, as he said, to seek his fortune in another country. "I shall not return until I have found it," were his parting words, "and it is of no use your writing, for I am going to try to travel about."

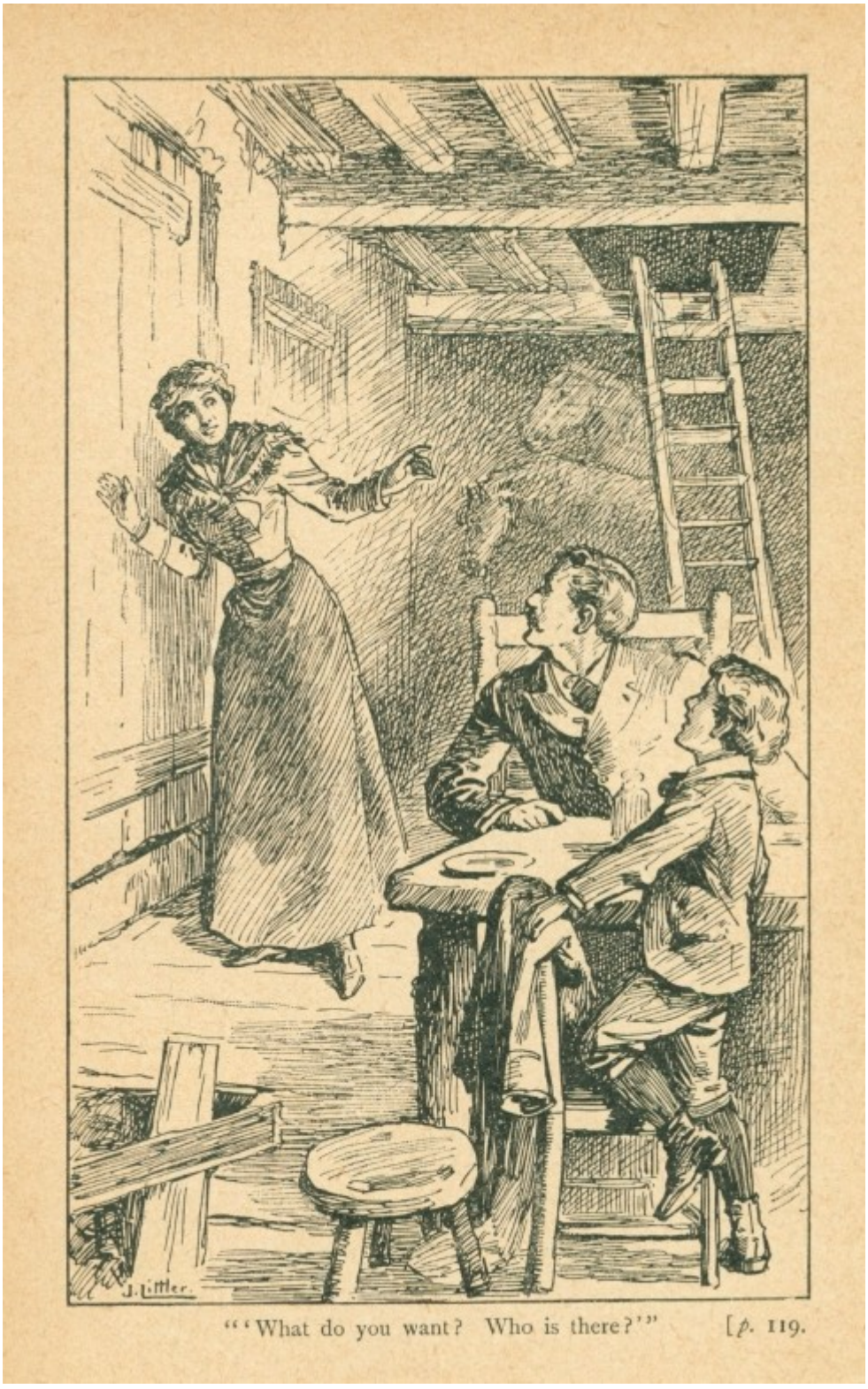
Mr. Morton, therefore, did not know where to write, and neither did he like to leave his delicate wife to go in search of him when he heard from a traveller that a gentleman like Gerald Morton had been seen in the forest country north of Lake Michigan. But when she was dying, Mrs. Morton, thinking of his dying mother's request, begged him to go in search of his brother, and he had started with Cyril for that purpose after her death.

Cyril then related his adventures. Cynthy was exceedingly interested in them all. She had heard of the trial of robbers at Menominee, when Whiterock and his captain were condemned to death, and knew what an immense amount of harm the band of robbers had done. It seemed to her a wonderful thing that one of the band—Davidson—should have repented and returned to a civilised life. "You'll be glad all your life that you helped him, Cyril," she said in her hearty way, "and I hope, sir," she added to Mr. Morton, "that when you have found Mr. Gerald you will tell him. He'll like to hear that."

Last thing that evening, just when they were all endeavouring to persuade each other that they were not at all hungry, because there was no food left, they all at once heard a great knocking at the very top of the outer door.

Who could it be? It was beginning to get dark. Was it the ghost? Cyril asked the question half laughingly, but he looked considerably startled. When people have resigned themselves to the fact that they are many miles away from any other person, it is rather queer to find

someone knocking at the door. It was Cynthy who cried out first, "What do you want? Who is there?"




"'What do you want? Who is there?'" [p. 119.

"'What do you want? Who is there?'"

The others could not hear the answer, but it evidently reassured her, for she gave a cry of joy, and her eyes shone with delight as she again tried to open the door, but in vain. Then she turned to explain to the others. "It's my Harry," she said. "He's found us. I thought he would."

"Yes," sang out a hearty voice from the other side of the door. "No matter what difficulties intervene love can find a way."

Cynthy blushed, and tried to hide her face from her companions, but Mr. Morton reassured her by kind words and a reminiscence of a far-off time when the dear lady who became his wife was lost with some others on a mountain, and he alone was able to find her, because he persevered after the others gave up the search. All this time the man outside was digging the snow away from the door. As he did so he called out, "Why, Cynthy, I hear you've Mr. Gerald inside there. 'Tis his voice, I'm sure."

"No 'tisn't," returned she, "but it is his brother and nephew, whom I came across in the snow some little time before getting here."

"That's lucky," cried the man outside, "for I've found out where Mr. Gerald is!"

They were all very glad to hear that, and when at length the snow was cleared off sufficiently to admit a fine, tall young man they besieged him with questions.

Harry Quilter related with much pleasure, as he shook hands with Mr. Morton and Cyril, that a hunter had informed him at which lumberer's camp he had lately seen the missing man. "It was only about ten miles off as the bird might fly," he said, which caused Cynthy to exclaim it would be nearly double that distance if they rode there.

Harry then proceeded to empty his pockets, which were stuffed with tea, dried deer-flesh, salt bacon, and a great hunk of bread. Asked how it was he knew of the whereabouts of his young lady, he answered that a trapper he had met had informed him that he had seen a great quantity of smoke issuing from the chimney of the haunted house. It was impossible to believe that a mere ghost could have lighted a fire so large as to cause all that smoke, and as Harry was anxious about the non-appearance of Cynthy Wood at her home he had put on his moccasins and plodded through the snow. He had

brought as much food as he could carry, in case there should be a difficulty about returning that night.

They would have been almost merry, as they sat round the rough table enjoying the welcome food, if it had not been for the thought of the tragedy which had deprived that poor house of its owner, and also the fact that Blackie was still calling out for food, which made the tears come into his master's eyes every now and then. He would have taken his own plate into the kitchen if Cynthy had not forbidden it.

"You need support more than that fat pony of yours does, Cyril," she said in her brisk way. "But here is some more lump sugar. Now I can't spare anything else. Sugar is very feeding, you know."

"And Blackie loves it. Thank you, Cynthy. Oh, just come and see my pony, will you, Mr. Harry?" he added to the stranger.

"What! Do you keep ponies in my house?" cried a harsh voice behind them.

They all turned to look at the door, which had silently opened. In the doorway stood an old man, with a hooked nose and long, neglected hair. He was so thin that he looked almost like a skeleton, and he leaned heavily upon a strong, notched stick. On his feet he wore moccasins, with which he had been able to walk through the snow.

"Is it the ghost?" faltered Cyril, whose imagination had been much exercised about the haunted house.

Cynthy did not smile; she looked at the figure in the doorway with a pale, frightened face. "It is Mr. Jabez Jones," she faltered.

"Aye, it's Jabez Jones, at your service," said the old man, coming forward. "And he would like to know what you are doing in his house, and what a horse is doing in his kitchen?" He almost screamed the last words as Blackie neighed more loudly than ever.

"We are travellers who have come here for shelter from the snow," said Mr. Morton wonderingly.

"And I've come in search of one of them," said Harry Quilter, finding his voice at length. "You know me, Jabez Jones, don't you?"

"Aye, aye, and I know her," said the old man, pointing to Cynthy, "but I don't know these," looking at the Mortons. "However, never mind. I guess I'll have a cup o' yon tea."

"Take my place," said Harry, offering his three-legged stool.

"Nay, I'll ha' my own arm-chair," said the old man rudely.

Mr. Morton at once rose, and placed it for him with gentle courtesy.

"Well, you can't be a ghost, for you're just old Jabez and no one else!" cried Cynthy. "But everyone thinks you were drowned in the river six months ago," she added. "Do tell us how you escaped."

"I wasn't drowned," said the old man. "But who has been after my money?" He put down the cup he was just raising to his lips and went up to the hole in the floor to investigate it, chuckling as he did so.

Cynthy, reassured that it was really Jabez Jones in life exactly as he had ever been, described to him the scene that she and Cyril witnessed on their arrival at the house, which the old man heard with grunts of satisfaction.

"So Pete has begun to repent!" he said. "I'm glad of that. And see now, my money isn't here after all. I took it away to the bank at Menominee last fall, and when I got out of the river—for I was able to float in it until washed on shore miles away lower down—having some gold with me, I just went across country to Menominee to see if it was safe. Happening to read in a newspaper that I had been killed, and my house was haunted, I thought I'd stay away a bit and frighten my graceless son well, and let him seek the money in vain. You see, everyone thought I kept it hid in a hole somewhere, because I always talked against banks, saying they were the worst places in which a man could keep his money. But talking is one thing and doing's another." He returned to the table and drank his tea.

Mr. Morton shook his head sadly over the hardened old man, and as the lovers sat together in the chimney-corner, talking after tea, whilst Cyril gave Blackie its lump sugar, he tried to make him see that the love of money is a great evil, and that in his case it had led his son into sin. But the old man's mental state was a very dark and unenlightened one, and not much impression could be made.

# Chapter XVIII

## The meeting in the forest

All through the winter the lumberers work in the woods, from sunrise to sunset, making the forest resound with the strokes of their axes as they fell tree after tree in amazing quantities. Often they divide into bands of six or eight men, each company striving to outrival the other in the amount of work it gets through. At night they return to the great wooden shanty, in which they sleep in the bunks arranged on two tiers of wooden shelves all around the place. They eat salt pork and drink strong tea, and at night sit round the huge log fires, smoking and chewing tobacco, and sometimes singing and telling stories.

Men who are strong and used to physical exertion enjoy the work, and return to it again and again, for the wages are good, and the bold, free life out of doors is not without its charms. But Gerald Morton was not strong enough, or yet rough enough, for the labour and the company it entailed. The men perceived this, and did not like to work with him, in spite of his pleasant, cheery ways. They nicknamed him "the gentleman," and at last their foreman was obliged to admit that it would be well for him to go to some other sphere of labour.

"You're not adapted to this life, nor yet strong enough for it," he said to Gerald, "so you had better go."

Gerald was thinking of these words as he spent his last day in the woods at the lumbering. On the morrow he must again set out on the wearying search for work. He was no nearer finding a fortune than

on the first day of his life in America, but he thanked God in his heart as he worked that he had found in those huge American forests that which was of more value than any earthly money. Through his head were ringing the words of an old, old Book, which he carried everywhere with him, at first because it was his mother's, and afterwards for its own sake:—

"The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.

"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, or the honeycomb.

"Moreover, by them is Thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."

"Father! Father! That must be Uncle Gerald! Look! See! He's just like your and Cynthy's description of him!"

Cyril's glad cry caused the axe to drop from the tired lumberer's hand. He turned and saw a little company of equestrians coming quickly up to him, their horses crunching the hard snow and the broken boughs strewing the ground.

"Gerald! Gerald! My dear Gerald!" cried Mr. Morton, dismounting and holding out an eager hand.

"Cyril! Cyril!"

Gerald clasped the hand as if he would never let it go.

* * * * * * *

"We have both been lost in the backwoods, Uncle Gerald," said Cyril, with a fine sense of comradeship, as they returned home in a great Transatlantic steamer.

"And you have both been found," said his father, with deep thankfulness. "My two beloved ones," he added mentally, looking at them with glad eyes, as he thought that neither would have been restored to his friends if it had not been for his strenuous efforts to do right and serve God when to do so was an extremely difficult task. "Truly there is a reward for the righteous," he said to himself, and he was not thinking merely of the earthly result of their conduct.

# The end

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6. Chapter V. CYRIL'S SENTENCE.
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