

THE LOCKED DOOR.

Two friends once closed between them, mutually. A door with double locks, one on each side; with separate keys, fashioned with cunning art. Sure of himself, strong in fresh wounded pride, each, for his own side only, held the key.

And thus for weary weeks they dwelt apart, till one, at last, whose drooping tears had dried, the fire of wrath that in his bosom burned, full of forgiveness, softly stole and turned the key, then sought to open the door, but found it locked.

The other lock still fast, still locked the door! Then the old anger leaped to sudden flame, and, laying on his friend's hard heart the blame, he shot again the bolt and turned once more to nurse, in bitterness, the reopened wound.

That night the other thought of olden days, and melted in the memory; they seemed so near that estrangement's later hours, that of the quarrel he thought he must have dreamed.

And so unlocked the door; yet all his powers failed still to shake it. Then he muttered, "Fool, to think that stubborn churl would e'er repent!"

And socketed again the bolt he sent.

And thus before the first friends' wrath could cool, the other's heart grew hard again and kept the bar between them while they waked or slept.

But one calm eve both waken from a dream of what has been, clear forthadowing, too, the golden prophecy of what may be: Each rises, in the moonlight's softened gleam, resolves to try again all he can do. Once more before the barrier he stands; and as, again, slowly each iron key rasps in the rusted wards, an answering sound comes from the other side. The great door is flung open and the old friends, newly found, lovingly looking in each other's eyes, with reunited hearts and firm clasped hands.

—G. W. Baker in Cincinnati Enquirer.

A TRIAL IN FICTION.

There is a time in the life of nearly every educated person when he feels that fierce, unquenchable desire to write—to put into words for the benefit of coming generations such thoughts and fancies as may occur to him or to her.

And indeed I believe one may wish to write without even possessing the thoughts to embody in one's effusions, so great is the fascination of seeing one's own writings in print.

To this curious malady I became an early victim. And the acceptance of an occasional poem by various weekly papers added fresh fuel to the unquenchable desire of literary ambition. At twenty-two I occupied a minor editorial position on a daily paper, and had had one or two stories accepted by one of the great magazines. Consequently, I began to feel rather important in a literary way, and this tendency was decidedly encouraged by compliments, sincere and otherwise, of those with whom I came in contact.

One of these, and one who from its beginning had taken a warm interest in my literary work, was a girl—Miss Katharine Merry. I had known Miss Merry almost from childhood and had always had considerable admiration for her. I looked upon her as entirely different from the other girls of my acquaintance. She was rather intellectual in her tastes, very fond of reading, and had even published some very creditable verses, although she was my junior by two years. She was not a girl to flirt with, and she absolutely disliked compliments. That is, she really did not like them, differing in this respect from the majority of women, who may affect to despise flattery, but who are none the less susceptible to its influence. She and I were half fellow well met together to a more or less degree. We understood each other very well, were interested in each other's projects and enjoyed comparing notes over our failures and successes.

One night, when it so happened that we were both dining at the same house, the conversation turned upon that much mooted question as to whether such a thing as a platonic love was possible. Miss Merry and myself both argued warmly for the affirmative, and probably we each thought of our mutual friendship as an instance, although upon that point we kept silent, contenting ourselves with mentioning historical cases.

The other side, however, probably because those who constituted it were better informed and more able to express their ideas, had somewhat the best of the argument, and Miss Merry and I, although still unconvinced, were compelled to withdraw from the battle.

I walked home with the Merries afterward, and while the father and mother went about their usual duties, I stood slowly after them, discussing the subject which had been under consideration at dinner.

"Why, of course it is possible," she said. "There are you and I—"

"To be sure," I answered, "we are living flesh and blood evidence! By the way, I have a scheme. Why shouldn't we write a story together about a platonic friendship? I think we could work it up in great shape."

"That's a capital idea," exclaimed Miss Merry. "You could furnish the man's part, and I the woman's."

"Good! Already I behold the comfortable check which shall reward us for our labor."

"Oh, that is too bad. You are always putting a cash value on things. Remember, sir, that this is a story that is to show the world how platonic friendships may and do exist."

"All right. When shall we commence work? You know we must talk our plot over first. Tomorrow is my day off from the paper. Shall I call in the afternoon?"

"That's all right, and we can take a walk to discuss the plot."

Thus it was arranged that we should collaborate in a story, and the following morning, according to the engagement, I called at the Merry household.

Miss Merry came down ready for the visit which he had and gloves already on, and she was in a very good humor.

Little things like this that make you feel a platonic friendship for a girl, if any, thing will.

"I've been thinking of a title for our story," she cried. "What shall we call it?"

"You must name it," I said, "that is part of your share of the labor."

"Very well, then, let us call it 'Two Friends.'"

"That's a capital idea. Now for the plot."

The plot was a hard thing to settle. The story must have some element to lend color to it. Love of course was barred out, and friendship must take its place; but how, and what incidents to make use of in order to portray it happily, was an extremely knotty and difficult question. One thing we fixed upon: There must be a noble sacrifice on the part of one or both of our characters. But of what nature and circumstances it should be we could not determine.

"Do you think," I inquired tentatively, "that such a friendship could rise superior even to love?"

"I don't know," hesitated Miss Merry. "You see, I can't speak from experience, and novelists always set love on a pedestal above the other emotions."

"True! But this other story of ours must not be formed on the theories of other writers. We must originate it entirely."

"I don't see how. Neither of us is in love or has ever been to my knowledge."

"Nor to mine," I returned hastily, perhaps because on this point a shadow of a doubt had crept over me.

But on due reflection I determined that I had answered with perfect frankness. No, I was not in love with Elsie Harwood by any means. I admired her very much, it was true, and I fancied that she rather liked me. I had seen a good deal of her in the mountains during the past summer, and once or twice the idea had entered my head that she was much nicer than most girls and that I liked to be with her. That was all. Why, I had not seen her a dozen times since she returned to the town.

Having thus disposed of the trifling doubt which assailed my conscience, I turned to Katharine, who had been busy planning meanwhile.

"There is only one way to do it," she cried.

"One of us must fall in love." I confessed the idea staggered me at first, and it was with difficulty that I recovered breath enough to ask:

"Which of us?"

"Well," said Katharine thoughtfully, "I think you better. The consequences are so much less apt to be dangerous for a man."

"Here, I don't know about that. Suppose I were really to fall in love and get married?"

"Just so. What of it? You must get married some time."

"But marriage is a thing a fellow doesn't want to jump into out of hand, in the manner you suggest."

"You goose! You need not fall head over ears in love; a mild case of imaginary love will answer the purpose."

"Suppose it should cause our friendship to break up?"

"Oh, consistency, thou art a jewel. Then how about our theory of platonic affection?" said Katharine, with a twinkle in her blue eyes.

"True enough," I replied. "I'll try it. I'll fall in love with Miss Harwood immediately."

"Oh, no, not with her, surely. She is so insipid and foolish."

Now I did not think Miss Harwood insipid or foolish at all, and Katharine's criticism nettled me somewhat, so that I answered rather stiffly that I supposed a fellow might choose for himself whom he was to fall in love with.

"Certainly," said Katharine, "you are free to fall in love with a wooden Indian if you wish."

Whereupon we walked in silence for some time, while the plot of our story made very little progress.

Insipid and foolish indeed! I tried to recall any instance of these qualities to Miss Harwood, but could not. I only remembered that she had very large eyes and a very pretty mouth, with the whitest of teeth. She was rather petite and a clinging sort of a girl. At least that was my mannish definition of a woman who drew forth the chivalric instincts of a man. I thought of the long drives we had had together during the summer and how much I had enjoyed talking to her. Although she seldom said much she seemed to grasp my ideas, looking up to me the while with her big eyes in a confiding and trustful manner. Oh, no, I thought, "she is anything but insipid." Whereupon Katharine, who must have guessed my thoughts, said:

"When you have finished thinking of Elsie perhaps you will condescend to return to our story."

"Of course, my dear Katharine, you really must pardon the absentmindedness of one who is so deeply in love."

We both laughed at this, and the laugh made things a little better between us. We agreed that our plot must form itself naturally, and the chief incident must be the falling in love of the hero with another girl. As for the sacrifice we had determined must play an important part in the story, we could not very well determine what it should be.

Miss Merry suggested that the hero should give up his sweetheart so as to prolong his friendship with his platonic friend. I reminded her that she had just expressed the idea that love or marriage would not interfere with such a friendship.

"But then his wife would probably be jealous," said Katharine. "The chances are ten to one that she would be an ignorant, empty-headed little fool."

This reply of Katharine's angered me, I scarcely knew why. I felt in her description of our hero's imaginary mistress she had a certain person in mind, and that person Miss Harwood. It was the first time I had ever known Katharine to be spiteful or anything else resembling it, and it annoyed me particularly, as I knew that Miss Harwood was not at all a fool, although she was

what one would call an intellectual girl. We walked in silence for some time, and finally I gave utterance to the opinion that I did not think a man would give up his mistress under the circumstances.

"If there is such a thing as a friendship such as we have in mind, it must survive all barriers. It must be far above any such petty considerations as jealousy."

"I am sure no one said anything about jealousy," Katharine said rather pettishly. "I'm afraid that you flatter yourself."

"Oh, no! I don't mean anything like that," I answered hastily. "But here we are at your door and we have made very little progress. When shall we have our next seance?"

"Can you come tomorrow evening?"

"Yes, and we will begin the story then."

But the next evening came and the story was not begun. I called and found Williams, a man I never cared for, talking to Katharine. Williams was determined to stay as long as I, and our story was, of course, not mentioned, I had to leave without making another engagement.

I went away in rather an angry mood, disgusted with Williams, who had always seemed to me too familiar with Katharine, and annoyed because I fancied that Katharine herself had treated me somewhat coldly. Williams had called on Katharine pretty frequently of late. Suppose she were to marry him. Why not? I disliked him personally, but I found upon sober reflection that I knew of absolutely nothing against the man. Other people liked him, men as well as women. He was of good family, well off, and I remembered with distinct dissatisfaction, he was remarkably good looking. There was no reason in the world why Katharine should not marry him if she chose, even though I did not like him. At all events, I thought I would speak to her about him and see what she thought of him.

I never doubted but she would tell me her sentiments in regard to him, so great had our confidence in each other been ever since childhood.

I called on Miss Harwood the next day. She received me very graciously, and I spent a very delightful half hour with her.

Unconsciously, however, I began to compare her with Katharine's description of "an empty-headed little fool." Certainly she was very pretty, and her manner and everything she said were very charming. Her words were few, but carefully chosen, and that which they expressed was simple and to the point. But I went away with a new idea born into my brain, which grew hour by hour until I arrived at the conclusion that I did not, nor could I ever, love Elsie Harwood as a man should love his wife.

Side by side with this thought a companion idea evolved itself almost unconsciously. Indistinct and insignificant at first, it gradually assumed a magnitude and importance until it mastered my whole being, and then I knew that I could love but one woman—she who shared with me our so-called platonic friendship, and my literary collaborator.

In the meantime our story had made no progress at all. I had only seen Katharine in various public places and she was always with some one—frequently Williams. They seemed very friendly toward each other. Indeed, I thought at times that I could detect love glances exchanged between them. I sighed to myself as I thought of the old days of our friendship and the happy confidence which we had reposed in each other.

"Alas," I thought, "it is all over and our poor little story will never be written, I fear."

At last one day I called and found her alone. Neither of us spoke of the story at first, but different things entirely foreign to it. Finally I asked her about Williams—whether she cared for him or not.

I must have asked the question in an unpleasant manner, for I could see that she was hurt. For several minutes she made me no answer.

"I do not see why you should ask me that question," she said slowly, with her eyes fixed upon the floor.

"I have a perfect right," I answered. "I want to know whether or not our friendship is to come to an end."

"It need never come to an end under any circumstances."

"I do not believe it," I cried. "Katharine, if you marry that man, we can never be friends again. Tell me, do you care for him?"

Katharine laughed, and as I hate to be laughed at I grew angry.

"What about our theory that we are going to express in our story?" she asked.

"Oh, hang the story! This is real life, and I am in earnest. Do you love Dick Williams?"

"I like him very much."

"Would you marry him?"

"I call that question rather impertinent. Do you love Elsie Harwood? And will she marry you?"

Katharine laughed again, and my anger vanished. I suddenly realized that she had been making game of me.

"Katharine," I said, "you know whom I love. There is only one way that we can ever finish our story. Shall we collaborate for good?"

And she said, "Yes," and we did. And one sunny spring day we wrote out this little story together, which is to prove that platonic affection does not exist. And when we had nearly arrived at the end Katharine said, "How shall we finish it?" and I said, "Like this," breaking back as I spoke the brown hair from her forehead to kiss it.—Yankee Blade.

Better Than Staying In.

Mother—Where in the world are you going?

Small Son—Goin to play hopscotch.

Mother—Dear me! Don't you know it's pouring down rain!

Small Son—I've got an umbrella.

THE FLAG OF PIERRE.

On the northeastern shore of Lake Champlain is a long sandy beach. Inland from this stretches the dreary expanse of a tamarack swamp. One afternoon early in October the only living things plainly in sight along this beach were several small sandpipers that daintily tiptoed over the sand and a tall blue heron wading in shallow water. But when one looked closely, as did Plover Pierre, one noticed a bunch of bushes stuck into the sand so as to form what hunters term a "blind." The blue heron, keeping a wary eye on the misplaced bushes, may have thought it thus called because only sightless creatures would think a place so suspicious looking devoid of harm.

As Plover Pierre scanned the beach he discovered a man lying behind the bushes of the blind. This man was a stalwart, bronzed fellow, perhaps thirty years old; he had on the blue uniform of the United States army and wore long leather boots, and as he lay stretched on his side a shotgun rested in the hollow of his arm. Just now the lieutenant was yawning. The scene was a stuporously peaceful one; all things were quiet and sleepy—too much so to please the young officer, who longed for a flock of plovers to flutter by to relieve the monotony.

"If something doesn't turn up pretty soon," he thought, "I'll stalk my friend, the blue heron—though I believe the fellow keeps an eye on me, for all his marching along in such an unconscious and dignified manner. He's the only bird bigger than my thumb that I've seen for an hour. Why, so far as sport goes, I might better be at the barracks drilling recruits. But, hello! there's a queer bird."

He had seen Plover Pierre. Pierre emerged from the shadow of the evergreens and stood upon the sand. The boy did not see many strangers; so he moved along the beach to investigate this one. As he passed by the little sandpipers tipped as if making low courtesies to a friend, and the blue heron looked at him with less haughtiness than it usually assumed. Perhaps the bird believed that Pierre came to destroy the absurd structure called a blind.

But for once the heron was mistaken. Pierre did not disturb the blind, but crawled behind it to chat with the soldier. At first the boy was half afraid of this long fellow in blue clothes and brass buttons, though his face was kind and friendly. Pierre had once been in a law court at Quebec, where the high official was addressed as "monseigneur." The boy decided to use this title in the present instance.

"Monseigneur, are you a Yankee?" The soldier nodded, and Pierre resumed:

"So am I. We have moved, and now we live one mile south of the line between Canada and Vermont. You see, I am a Yankee by a whole mile."

"So you are," replied the other, "and in your case no one can say a mile's not better than a miss. You wouldn't like to miss being a Yankee, would you?"

"No, indeed, monseigneur, I am proud to be a Yankee. The French and the Yankees were always friends, and it is good to belong to the United States. Since we are both Yankees, we should be friends. Is it not so?"

"Of course it is," The soldier laughed. "Come, what'll you have? Here's some ale, and here's a cigar."

Plover Pierre shook his head. "Jules says liquor is only good to put out a cigar. I want neither."

"Why, this Jules must be a perfect stoic."

"Oh, no; Jules is my friend, and he lives quite near us. He too has moved to Vermont."

"And I imagine you're great playfellows," suggested the lieutenant.

"Well, not quite that, monseigneur. He teaches me and knows many stories. You see he is old. He was my father's clerk, and he has white hair standing up all over his head. My father," said Pierre proudly, "was a notary and knew all things. Jules says my father was quite old when he married the mother! Then he died and she married Jean Bourdo. He is strong and can work on the farm, but he likes better to be idle." The boy was rattling on, when he remembered that Jules said people should not talk too much of their own affairs. A dusky red crept into his swarthy face. "But it tires you to hear all this. Do you come from the barracks across the lake, where they teach neologists?"

His new acquaintance smiled assent.

"Jules says it is a shame for United States people to fight each other, but I like wars. I should go if it were not for that."

As Pierre said "that," he looked at something which should have matched the sturdy leg curled up beneath him, but was only a piece of wood fastened to a very short stump of log. Besides the wooden leg, Pierre carried two yellow crutches. Perhaps it was these slender substitutes for legs which gave him the name of Plover Pierre. The soldier's eyes searched the boom of the lake as though much interested in watching a distant flock of plover.

Pierre's face brightened as he continued: "Although I can't walk well, I ride better than most boys. I might be a horse soldier, and so fight just as hard for my country as can other people. Will you drill me to be a soldier?"

The man in blue shifted his eyes from the imaginary flock of plover and looked at Pierre. "Why, you're too young. You can't be more than ten years old."

"Not so; I am twelve and know well how to shoot."

The officer seemed to be pondering Pierre's soldierly advantages. He muttered to himself, "I wish those fellows I'm drilling had this boy's spirit."

But now the quiet boy was stirred into new life. A steam launch rounded one of the points and puffed toward the young officer's blind. The blue heron gave a cry of surprise, and then, recovering his dignity, swept away with a little over to head and neck.

The soldier got up and shook the sand from his clothes.

"Here's the government boat come to take me back to 'Lattsburg barracks.' A small skiff put out from the launch to bring him on board. He threw a few shore birds into the skiff, stepped in himself and was rowed away.

The government boat flew two flags—a large one at the bow and a smaller at the stern. When the lieutenant got on board he pulled down the one from the stern, and getting into the skiff again was rowed back to the shore. Pierre was still standing on the sand.

The officer gravely handed the colors to the boy. "Uncle Sam presents these to a valued citizen. Never forget that you are a Yankee."

Pierre, being such a new citizen, did not quite understand the reference to Uncle Sam. But his heart gave a throb of pride, and he reverently took the colored silk into his grubby hands.

As he hopped back through the swamp road leading to the fields beyond, he thought: "Now I am really a Yankee. The tall man would not give me the flag if he had any doubt about it."

When he reached the log house it was growing dusk. The fat twins, his half brothers, were on the floor, and Mme. Bourdo busied herself in getting supper. The stout Canadian woman still showed some traces of her comely girlhood. Jean Bourdo's heavy figure loomed by the stove, a grievous obstacle both to his wife and the tumbling twins.

"Jean Bourdo," said Pierre, "would you not like to be a soldier?"

"A good question! And if I went to the war, who would earn bread for you to eat?"

"Jules says that if my father's money had been well managed it would support all."

Jean turned angrily. "Jules is crazy! And as for your father, Pierre Beaudrie, he did so much burrowing into old books that he had no time to plow the land or collect fees from the clients."

"The notary made a good husband, though he was old enough to be my father. In his time I lived like a lady."

Pierre had hidden the flag under his jacket, and now he climbed the ladder to the loft and put the silk beneath his pillow. He returned to the lower room, the family had supper and Jean, lighting his pipe, said:

"Pierre, go you to bed. I have company tonight, and tomorrow you must be up early to help the thrashers."

Plover Pierre kept nearly as early hours as the plovers themselves. Tonight, moreover, he was willing to be alone, for he had plenty to think about. He pulled himself up the ladder as nimbly as could most boys who had two legs. After admiring the bright flag he carefully laid it away among his few belongings and soon was in bed.

Visions of war and soldiers filled his excited brain. The friendly officer ceased to be an awe inspiring monseigneur; now he was merely a good comrade, and they were fighting for the same beloved country. Pierre himself, bestride a gallant white charger and holding aloft the emblematic flag, led ranks of horsemen to victory.

The restless boy, tossed by such fancies, must have lain awake for a long time, when he was recalled to himself by hearing a door open and some one enter the room below. Again and again visitors arrived, until there must have been ten men assembled in the lonely cabin.

So many visitors were unusual, and Pierre, at first without meaning to turn eavesdropper, heard enough of their talk to rouse his suspicions. Getting quietly out of bed he put his eye to a crack in the floor and listened.

The men had arranged their business and were about to leave. When they had all risen, one of them spoke to Jean Bourdo:

"Remember, Bourdo, how it is settled. We are to meet here tomorrow afternoon at 8—twenty men, armed and on good horses. You, in what disguise you please, are to ride with us, guide us to St. Albans by the shortest road and point out the village banks. We will do the rest. For doing this you are to receive \$100. If there seems danger of your being implicated, you can cross the line into Canada, and we will make good all your losses."

Bourdo was satisfied and the men went out.

Plover Pierre, listening overhead, trembled with excitement. He felt sure this was a plot against his new Yankee land—a plot which might compel him to return to Canada. He comprehended that there was trouble ahead for St. Albans, and that the people must be warned. Indeed, he had heard the conspiring of those desperate and irresponsible men, who in 1844, under no authority from Richmond or any government, succeeded in sweeping down from Canada, to surprise the village of St. Albans, Vt., and rob its banks.

The boy crept noiselessly back to bed, but it was long before he slept. When he did, the flag, the officer, the conspirators and the fated banks pushed their benign and hateful influences into his dreams.

All the next morning Pierre was busy helping the thrashers. Jean would have kept him at work during the afternoon as well, but at 4 o'clock the boy contrived to escape from the barn. Slipping away to the house he got his flag from the loft where he had left it.

He tried to think of some way of warning St. Albans before the men were to leave at 5 o'clock reach there. Lame as he was, it was impossible to walk the fifteen miles in time. Bourdo, he knew, would take the young brown mare, their only horse. Even now he was grooming her in the stable. Pierre was almost in despair when he remembered that old Jean, his neighbor, had a horse. To be sure it was old and somewhat stiff, but it was better than nothing. He would at once go to Jules and ask for the horse. But moments were precious, and there was no time for explanations. He knew where the animal was pastured and must take it without asking. Soon he had caught the old gray, slipped a bridle over its head, and started it

Plover Pierre did not know the country well, but he was sure of the general direction in which St. Albans lay. As he galloped along, Pierre grew excited and was filled with joyous enthusiasm. The small figure on the gaunt gray horse was perhaps a travesty on his vision of the cavalry officer dashing at the head of his troops, but the boy was satisfied. His mission was a responsible one, and he was working for the cause in which he burned to distinguish himself.

He had pushed the flag under his jacket. Now he took it out, and tied it about him like an officer's sash. The people at the few farmhouses along the road stared at this apparition. After he had traveled what seemed to him a long distance, he got into a country where there were no farmhouses. The land was hilly, rough and used for pasturage alone.

Pierre had no watch, but he thought it must be nearly 6 o'clock. This could not be the main road to St. Albans. He climbed high hills and looked about, but he could see no village spires. While watching from one of these hills he saw far to the westward a body of horsemen clustering along a smooth road.

Pierre's heart sank within him. These were the raiders, and he was too late. His opportunity had come, and he had failed! Discouraged and limp in body, he rode sadly down to the highway where he had seen the horsemen, and followed it back toward his home.

As the raiders dashed through the outskirts of St. Albans the people stared in astonishment at the cavalcade of wild looking men carrying carbines, and with pistols stuck in their belts. Jean Bourdo, dressed as an Indian chief, all his dull wits sharpened by excitement, led them on.

They rode into the midst of the town. The villagers, unconscious of danger, did not molest them. Bourdo pointed out the different banks; these had closed for the day to the public, but the bookkeepers were still at their desks. The raiders overpowered them, broke open the safes and took what money they could hastily gather.

In half an hour they were galloping away, firing their pistols as they went. One citizen who appeared at his doorstep was shot and killed. But most of the bullets were fired high in the air. They soon passed the last house, and rapidly moved northward over the same road which Pierre had taken on his return home.

Jules' old horse was growing more and more lame. It was unshod, and this long journey had made its feet tender. Pierre did not like to urge it too much, and so he had to be satisfied with a slow trot. The night would now have been quite dark had not a crescent moon shed an uncertain light on the brown fields and lingered about the bright silk which hung from the shoulder of a small boy perched on a tall, gray horse.

Dark patches of woodland bordered the road, and when Pierre was passing one of these, which he thought not far from home, he heard a clattering of hoofs behind him. He did not expect the raiders to return so soon, but he thought it must be they. The boy feared to let Bourdo see him.

A wood road led into the bushes, and Pierre, riding into this dark recess, halted some twenty yards from the road to let the horsemen pass. His horse was hidden by shadows; but the little moon slid down between the evergreens and lit up the gay colors of the flag.

The raiders were riding recklessly, singing and shouting. They were hilarious with success. Two young fellows brought up the rear of the galloping column. A startled owl flapped over their heads, and one aimed his carbine at the slowly moving bird.

"Jim, if we'd no orders not to fire I'd bring down that fellow."

"If I wanted to shoot," returned Jim, "I'd take orders from no man. Hello! look into this path. Don't that look like the thing they call a flag up here?" He stopped his horse, raised a rifle and fired.

The two resumed their gallop and caught up with the main body. The captain looked back angrily, but did not stop to remonstrate. Already the sharp ear of Jean Bourdo had caught the sound of pursuing horses. They were only two miles from the Canada line when a troop of horsemen appeared on the brow of a hill a short distance behind them.

The robbers put spur to their horses; the better animals responded, but some could not, and their riders were overtaken, made prisoners and part of the money recovered. The better mounted men escaped into Canada. They, too, were finally captured and most of the booty returned to the banks.

Jean Bourdo led the raiders before they were overtaken, and no one suspected his connection with the "St. Albans raid."

The next morning Jules was surprised to find his gray horse, more lame than usual, waiting at the stable door. The old clerk went to the Bourdo house to ask Pierre if he knew anything about it. The boy was missing. Jules thought his absence and the travel worn condition of the horse, were in some way connected. He returned to his stable, and with patient care followed back the track of the shoeless hoofs.

Slowly he traced the horse's path till he was led to the swamp beside the road. Here he found flag and boy, equally cold, and wrapped in a rag blanket. In the evening a friend strolled into the lieutenant's quarters at the recruiting station. "Here's news," he announced. "Roughs from Canada have robbed the St. Albans banks. One villager was killed, and this morning a boy crippled and wrapped in a rag blanket, through the heart, was found near the road by which the raiders returned to Canada."

"A crippled boy with a flag!" cried the officer. He threw away his cigar, and the next day he was moody and took little interest in the drilling.

The evergreen bushes stuck into the sand of the bay near the tamarack swamp dried and withered, the plover uttered mournful cries, as they circled over the deserted beach, and the blue heron, wading along with drooping wings, found the oldtime relief for frogs was gone.

Plover Pierre had left the country

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