

SCARRED EAGLE

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CHAPTER I.

WHITE VS. RED.

“CRACK! crack!” rung out the reports of two rifles over the calm bosom of the lake, and two canoes, about fifty rods apart, seemed to leap from the water as they sped forward.

The course of both canoes was toward the western shores of the bay forming the north-western portion of Lake Erie. The one behind was manned by five Indian warriors, two of whom had just fired upon the boat ahead, which contained two persons—a white man and an Indian. The bullets, however, had no other effect than to cut the water at the distance of several yards to the right of the pursued men.

“S’pose you take rifle now, Scarred Eagle?” said the Indian to his white companion.

“No, not yit, Goodbrand,” said the other. “Thar’s little danger of the devils hittin’ us yit, but they want to make us lose time. Five oars ag’in’ two is gre’t odds, with a mile still afore us. Pull for y’ur life?”

The speaker was a man past forty years of age, with proportions denoting great strength and agility. Evidently, he had been through many rough scenes of border-life, for nearly every part of his body visible showed the marks of wounds. The most conspicuous of these was upon his face, one side of which was an entire scar. From this circumstance, he was called “Scarred Eagle” by the Indians, who had long since

learned both to fear and respect him. But his face, though disfigured, was not wanting in expression. In fact, there was something of dignity in his bearing. No stranger would meet the clear gray eye, and note the bold, frank style of the man's speech, without feeling that he was in the presence of one of nature's noblemen, indeed. His dress was after the prevailing style of bordermen; and we note but one peculiarity. The hunting-frock was decorated on the breast by a design in bead-work representing a man in the act of silently bearing a white female prisoner from the midst of some sleeping Indians.

The Indian who assisted in propelling the canoe was not so tall as his white friend, though dressed nearly like him. He was a noble-looking savage, and had learned to speak the English tongue with considerable fluency.

A few words will explain the meaning of the situation in which we find these two men.

Both belonged to a body of scouts hovering near the besieged garrison at Detroit. They had, in the present instance, been scouting alone on the neck of land between Erie and St. Clair lakes. Being discovered by a party of Indians, they had retreated to the lake, and embarked in the canoe which had brought them from the opposite side of the bay already mentioned. But the Indians had found a canoe and started in pursuit before our friends were half a mile away. And at the moment we have introduced them, this distance had been lessened, so that hardly fifty rods now separated them.

Scarred Eagle and his Indian friend were not wanting in skill in the management of their craft. They knew the pursuers were

fast gaining on them; yet they hoped to avoid a close struggle on the water, over which the gloom of night was fast settling. It was yet nearly a mile to the shore, however, and the shots which came every few seconds from their enemies, began to whizz alarmingly near.

"It's time ter pay back, Goodbrand," said Scarred Eagle, at length. "I hate ter begin, 'cos it'll hinder our speed an' give them bloody rascals an advantage."

"S'pose you no do now, *have* to bimeby," returned the Indian. "Mebbe kill some now; den not so many to fight if come up."

"Thet's a good plan enough, allowin' I kin dew it, Goodbrand. But they'll dodge down likely, jest as we do. Howsumever, I'll try it. Ha! down with ye ag'in!"

The warning was not a moment too soon; for as they dodged down into the canoe-bottom, two or three reports rung out, and this time the bullets spun directly over them.

"Ay, Goodbrand; now keep 'er stidy's ye kin, while I see what kin be done."

Scarred Eagle, while thus speaking, dropped the paddle and snatched up his rifle, which was leveled and discharged with surprising quickness. A cry of pain answered the report of the weapon, and one of the pursuers fell back, never to use oar again! Goodbrand gave utterance to a shout of triumph.

"Ha, Scarred Eagle, dey find out *who* shoot now, mebbe," he said, though without relaxing for a moment his exertions at the paddle.

“Thar’s *one* less, sartin,” replied Scarred Eagle, “but they’ve gained fast on us fur the last minit. We’ll keep frum close quarters as long as we kin.”

Before the pursuers had fully recovered from their confusion, the white marksman had reloaded his rifle. He kept a sharp watch upon those behind, while his Indian friend, with bared bosom and arms, was reeking with sweat, as he strained every muscle to his work.

Scarce thirty rods now separated the canoes, and the pursuers were, every one, using a paddle. Scarred Eagle again jerked his rifle to a poise; but, quick as was the movement, the Indians crouched down, leaving but little of their bodies exposed, though still managing to propel their canoe.

The white man, still keeping watch upon the enemy, snatched up a paddle and assisted his Indian friend. But he was not permitted to do so long. One of their foes rose suddenly and fired, the ball grazing Goodbrand’s shoulder as he stooped, and for the first time during the chase, four ringing war-whoops from those behind echoed over the lake-waters.

“No—no—not yit, Goodbrand!” cried Scarred Eagle, as he saw the Indian about to draw in his paddle. “Save y’ur shot till it comes closer quarters. ’Tain’t more’n a quarter of a mile funder to shore—we must leasten it all we kin.”

The white man spoke hurriedly, though no trepidation could have been noticed in his voice. He himself, taking advantage of the few seconds allowed, was working with giant strength at the paddle. But, as before, the Indians, upon noticing his work,

determined to stop it and draw his fire. Two of them fired together this time, and one of the balls plowed a slight furrow across the top of Goodbrand's head!

Hardly had the echoes of the reports ceased when Scarred Eagle sprung up and leveled his rifle. Its report was followed by jeering cries from the pursuers, who redoubled their exertions at the oars.

"That 'ar was wasted through your whirlin' round an' rockin' the canoe so sudden, Goodbrand," said Scarred Eagle, with chagrin in his tone. "Ah!" he immediately added, as his quick glance fell upon his friend's head, "struck, war ye? Wal, it's no use puttin' things off longer. Take y'ur rifle."

The other did so, suffering the canoe to float idly on the water, while his white companion was hurriedly reloading. But the latter had not time to finish the work. Not more than forty yards now separated the canoes, and the occupants of the hindmost had also ceased their labors, preparing for the struggle. Two of them suddenly rose, and *three* reports rung out simultaneously. The shot of Goodbrand told with good effect, for one of his enemies fell back into the lake. He himself was merely grazed; but his white friend, Scarred Eagle, uttered a deep groan and fell headlong beneath the waters of the lake!

The Indian, Goodbrand, could not repress an exclamation of sorrow. He was as deeply attached to Scarred Eagle as though the latter had been an own brother. But now, the career of his friend seemed ended.

The faithful fellow was almost on the point of throwing himself into the lake after his friend. But the exultant yells of his enemies roused in him that instinct of revenge so characteristic of his race. He had no chance to reload his rifle, for the other canoe was now but a few yards distant, and he knew three Miami warriors were ready to shoot him the moment he should rise.

Goodbrand himself was a Miami Indian. He had been converted years before, by the Moravian missionaries, and had only departed from their teachings in that he took up the hatchet of war, in behalf of the white race whom he loved. For this reason he was an outcast from his tribe, and had no hopes of other than a cruel death, in the event of falling alive into their hands.

As the canoe of the others came nearer, Goodbrand grasped knife and hatchet in either hand, fully determined not to be taken alive.

He had not been more than a few seconds thus prepared, when the appalling war-whoops of his enemies were suddenly hushed, and groans burst out, quickly followed by a splashing in the water. Quickly he raised his head and saw, not more than twenty feet away, the canoe of his pursuers *bottom upward*, while two of its late occupants were disappearing beneath the water! Another moment, and the form of Scarred Eagle rose from the water, surging toward him!

“Push up, Goodbrand, push up,” said Scarred Eagle, in a panting voice. And in less time than what we occupy in describing it, the Indian had assisted his friend into the canoe.

For a few moments the latter could hardly speak, and Goodbrand, comprehending the work he had done, merely uttered an exclamation of joy as his keen eyes watched for the reappearance of their foes.

“I knifed two on ’em the minit I riz up side o’ thar skiff, Goodbrand,” said Scarred Eagle, with a shiver in his voice. “*Them* won’t mislest us more, but t’other one’s hangin’ ter the canoe yender.”

Already had his Indian friend seen this, and seizing the paddle began to sweep up toward the drifting canoe. But suddenly, Scarred Eagle interposed.

“Let the poor devil go, Goodbrand,” he said. “He kain’t dew us any hurt, an’ it seems like a cruel advantage to take by sich as we.”

“Good!” assented the other. “It shall be as my brother says, ’cos he wise head as well as quick hand. He has saved us both. He is an Eagle that can fly under water, as well as over the land.”

“I seen ’twas best course, considerin’ the fix we war in,” replied the other as he began to wring the water from his clothes. “It come to me all of a sudden like. Ah—thar’s the cretur’ in sight,” he added, as the head and shoulders of the remaining enemy appeared on the opposite side of the receding canoe.

“It is Nookechin—one of my cousins,” exclaimed Goodbrand in surprise. “I’m glad no to kill him, though kill me, mebbe.”

“An’ I’m glad tu hear ye say it, Goodbrand,” answered Scarred Eagle. “It shows you’ve a Christian heart, an’ that the Moravians hev’n’t labored on ye in vain.”

“Workechin likes not to war upon his own race, and only does so when necessary to defend his white friends,” replied the other, assuming for the moment his Indian name. “He believes in the white God and white ways; and wishes his own tribe would believe likewise. They would be more happy then. Nookechin,” he added, elevating his voice, and using his native tongue, “you see we spare your life. I hope never to have occasion to meet you nor any other of my kin or tribe in battle, for I would not harm them. Does Nookechin hear?”

“It is well,” answered the other. “I shall not forget this kindness from my cousin. I will never fight against him till I do him as good a turn.” And, as if fully confident of the good intentions of the others, he righted the canoe and sprung into it. Then, grasping a paddle which floated near, he made a gesture of good-will toward his late enemies, and began to push rapidly toward the northern shore.

“What now, Scarred Eagle?” asked Goodbrand, as he peered toward the western shore now barely discernible through the gloom. “Mebbe our friends hear us fight—mebbe Injuns hear too.”

“Y’ur right,” said the other. “Lay ’er off sou’-west a trifle an’ we’ll try ter steal ashore under kiver of the darkness.”

Goodbrand obeyed, taking a course that would land them some distance below the point from which they had embarked.

Though prudent himself, he instinctively deferred to the judgment of his white friend. And there were but few along the border who did not place more confidence in the opinions of Scarred Eagle than in their own.

The latter, while his friend pushed forward the canoe, reloaded his trusty rifle, which he had left in the canoe with his powder-horn, at the time he feigned death. This accomplished, he directed his gaze toward the shore.

“Easy, Goodbrand, easy,” he whispered, at length. “It’s gittin’ dark, but not fast enough for our purpose unless we move slower. That’s right—it’s better.”

His Indian friend had ceased to paddle, and the canoe floated noiselessly on the water. For a quarter of an hour neither of them spoke except in low whispers. About two hundred yards away loomed up the great forest, stretching away from the shore. Not a sound came from its depths yet they knew lurkers might lie along shore, thirsting for their blood.

“It’s jest possible that we mout land safe, Goodbrand; but ’twon’t dew to trust the appearance of things hereaway,” remarked Scarred Eagle. “Some o’ the chaps orter be expectin’ us, even ef they hain’t heard our rifles, which it is possorable they hain’t.”

“S’pose you give signal,” said the Indian.

“We’ll steal up a little closer fust. Thar’s hardly an outline of the shore to be seen now.”

Goodbrand began to push the canoe forward. Suddenly a single peculiar note came from the forest.

"About with it, quick!" whispered Scarred Eagle. "It's Ben Mace's signal, an' warns of danger."

As he spoke he seized another paddle, and in a moment the canoe was gliding back from shore. Then came three or four rifle-reports, and the bullets whistled uncomfortably near.

"Now, Goodbrand, we've got ter calkerlate clus," remarked Scarred Eagle, as soon as they were out of danger. "We've got ter land *somewhar*. Whether funder up or down's the question. We'll be watched for, cluser'n Saul watched for David, an' must use all the wits Proverdenche has gin us."

"Scarred Eagle speaks well," replied the Indian. "S'pose we go up. The Miami warriors are cunning. They cum from fort-way an' will watch above here 'cos they've heerd us fight. Den we better go, hurry down."

"Ye've come to the marrer of the thing, Goodbrand, an' that's what I like," responded the other, after a moment's thought. "Now, won't our enemies not reelly expict we'll take the very course you speak of? It strikes me they will. They'll reason the thing 'bout 's you, who ar' ecquainted with their wiles."

"I see—yis," said Goodbrand, to whom this species of strategy was apparently new. "Den, if say go up, we go."

"We must keep well out an' dip light," remarked Scarred Eagle, as he seized a paddle. "It's sartin Mace is 'round, an' the rest orter be—some on 'em. All on 'em wouldn't have stayed at the

bivo'ac. But land we must; otherwise this night-wind 'll benumb every narve in my body."

For half an hour they continued to pull northward. As the darkness deepened, they drew gradually nearer shore, and soon their canoe touched a jut of land.

At this moment, a succession of sounds, muffled by distance and intervening forests, came to their ears. Any but the experienced ears of a scout, would have failed to understand the significance of these sounds. But our friends knew they were the echoes of rifle-reports.

"Ay, Goodbrand," said Scarred Eagle, in a whisper, as both glanced around through the gloom. "The rest o' the chaps ar' in trouble, an' we're in fur it. Come!"

Both stepped noiselessly ashore, drew their canoe under the densely-wooded bank, and then began to steal forward through the gloom.

CHAPTER II. MOOROOINE.

ABOUT an hour previous to the events last described, a number of rangers were grouped around a fire, near the termination of a deep forest gorge. A small stream ran through the gorge, finding an outlet at the shores of the lake, about two miles away. At their backs rose an almost perpendicular cliff a hundred feet in height, covered with dense foliage. The banks of the gorge, opposite, were comparatively low, and supported huge trees, whose branches, shooting far out, rendered the place gloomy even at midday.

A better hiding-place, or bivouac, for a *posse* of rangers, could not well have been chosen. An enemy might pass within thirty yards of the place, and be none the wiser, so far as sight or hearing is concerned. On the contrary, those within, looking outward from comparative darkness, could quickly discover the presence of interlopers, and withstand attack or make a good retreat, as policy might require.

The rangers had not been at this bivouac long. In groups of two, they had been watching the forest in different directions. They had returned, according to previous arrangement, and were now partaking heartily of rich venison-stew broiled on the bed of coals in their midst. They had assured themselves that no Indians were lurking near, before kindling the fire; yet the smoke from the hard, dry wood, became invisible ere it reached the top of the interlaced branches above them.

Little need be said in description of these men. They were the main body of scouts mentioned in the preceding chapter, and Scarred Eagle was their acknowledged leader. They were all hardy-looking fellows, well-armed, and of various ages, of uncouth appearance, rough in speech, but with nerves of steel; ready to face danger at any moment, and not loth to indulge in the pastime of a wrestling-match, or knock-down among themselves, in the absence of more exciting events.

“Seems ter me Brom, as yer call ‘im, orter showed hissself afore now ef ‘e *ain’t* got took,” remarked one of them, a tall, coarse-looking fellow in homespun.

“I dun know, Hulet,” replied one of his companions, clearing his throat. “It’s a dangerous job he ondertook—gittin’ to the fort when it’s compissed by so many Injuns. But ‘e ain’t had time. A day for twenty miles’ travel, an’ all on’t to be *stole* over, ain’t too long, I reckon.”

“I know it’s dangerous. But he’s be’n gone more’n a day. He started three hours afore this time yisterday.”

“An’ s’posin’ ‘e did?” broke in another, of Celtic origin. “Is dthat a sign he’s tuk? How dthe deuce are you or me to know dthe crooks an’ turns he’s had to make? Uv wan thing I’m certain, Brum w’u’dn’t cair for y’ur advice, nor woon’t thank yees for y’ur unaisiness. So ye needn’t be ov dthe first to wurry.”

Hulet deigned no answer to the Irishman, but resumed conversation with the ranger first addressed.

“Then, you’re out on the distance tew,” he said. “It’s sca’ce ten miles to the fort.”

"It ain't, eh?" answered the one called Revel, who stopped with a piece of venison half-way to his mouth, and eyed the questioner. "Sca'ce ten mile! Who don't know that?"

"You said, twenty."

One or two of the group indulged in sneering chuckles.

"I say so yit," returned Revel. "Brom's got to pass over the ground *twice* afore he gits back here, ain't 'e?"

"Yees needn't ax *dthat*, Will," said the Irishman. "Our *laid*er has swall'ed too much venison entoirely, an' it's druv all dthe sinse he had in his head down to his belly. Dthe thruth, as sure's me father wur a docthur!"

The laugh which went round at Hulet's expense, was of course not over-relished by the latter.

"That ar' ye call wit—Irish wit, I s'pose," returned Hulet unable to conceal anger. "But I don' know 'bout the 'doctor.' Who ever heerd of a durned Irishman bein' a doctor."

"Who is it?" queried the Irishman, fiercely. "I'll take a joke but not an insoolt to me name, ye domd gossoon. Me father *was* a docthur, though, an' I, Tim Devine, am able to docthur y'ur face, for the slandhur of y'ur tongue!" He aimed a blow at Hulet, as he spoke, which the latter parried.

"Hold on—this 'ere ain't a-goin' to do, now," said Revel, rushing between them. "This ain't the time for a row. Put it off. We've got to start pretty soon for the lake-shore. Thar may be Injuns skulking around, an' we ain't goin' ter be sech headlong fools as to direct 'em here."

Tim stood back. In the absence of Scarred Eagle, Revel was a sort of leader, and all liked him. But Tim shot fierce glances at Hulet, who smiled tauntingly.

"Niver mind, aneconde," said Tim. "We'll hove dthis out some time, an' though y'ur size is something in y'ur favor, I'll make ye respect me name if not swalle y'ur words. See if I don't now, ye ill-mannered baist!"

"Hold up, men," interrupted Revel. "Don't run it into a quarrel. That's foolish."

"I don't want 'er quarrel, nor have no diffikilty," said Hulet. "But he begun it. I own I made a mistake 'bout the distance we was talkin' of, 'cos I didn't at fust think."

"Co-cor-course; Hulet knew better ef he'd had time ter th-th-think. He don't allus, ye know, bo-bo-boyes. T'other day he mis-mis-mistook an Injun fur a black b-b-bear, jest 'cos he didn't hev time ter th-th-think!"

The stuttering speaker was a tall, spare man, with a whimsical face, eyes keen as a hawk's and almost as small. His sally was greeted by a round of subdued laughter, from all except Hulet, whose face showed more signs of anger than had been evinced during his rencontre with the Irishman.

Hulet was not personally well liked by his companions. He had been with them but a few days. He pretended to hail from one of the border settlements, and claimed to be a scout of much experience. One or two of the rangers held him in positive distrust. He seemed used to the forest; yet at times he made strange blunders for a scout. The one referred to by the

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