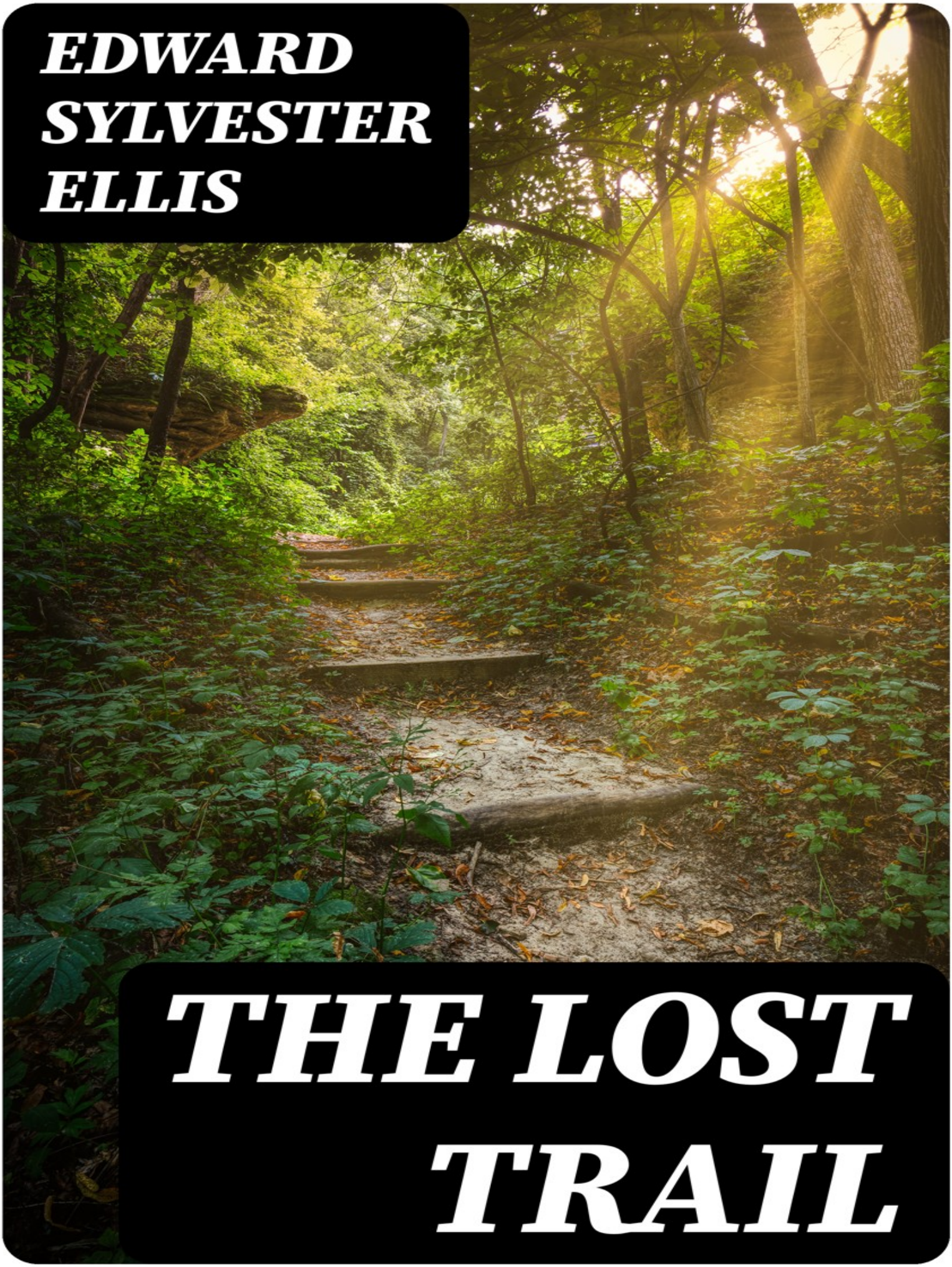
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THE LOST TRAIL

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The Lost Trail

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CHAPTER I

AN ENEMY IN A TREE

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One afternoon in early spring, Jack Carleton, a sturdy youth of seventeen years, was following a clearly-marked trail, leading through the western part of Kentucky toward the Mississippi river. For many a mile he followed the evenly spaced tracks made by a horse on a walk, the double impressions being a trifle more than three feet apart.

"Helloa!" exclaimed, Jack, when he looked at the earth again and observed that the tracks had taken a new form, with nearly eight feet between them. "Otto has forced the colt to a trot. He must be in a hurry, or he thinks I am fond of traveling."

Thus far the lusty young Kentuckian felt no misgiving, but within fifty yards the trail underwent the startling change—the footprints being separated by more than three yards now.

"My gracious," muttered the boy, coming to a full stop, "something is wrong: Otto would not have put the horse on a dead run if he hadn't been scared."

Jack Carleton proved his training by the keenness and quickness with which he surveyed his surroundings. The woods were on every hand, but they were open and free from undergrowth, so that he gained an extensive view.

As he advanced with vigorous steps along the winding path, his eyes sometimes rested on the pendulous branches of the majestic elm, a small purple flower here and there

still clinging to the limbs and resisting the budding leaves striving to force it aside; the massive oak and its twisted, iron limbs; the pinnated leaves of the hickory, whose solid trunk, when gashed by the axe, was of snowy whiteness; the pale green spikes and tiny flowers of the chestnut; the sycamore, whose spreading limbs found themselves crowded even in the most open spaces, with an occasional wild cherry or tulip, and now and then a pine, whose resinous breath brooded like a perennial balm over the vast solitude.

Jack Carleton was arrayed in the coarse, serviceable garb of the border: heavy calf-skin shoes, thick trousers, leggings and coat, the latter short and clasped at the waist by a girdle, also of woolen and similar to that of the modern ulster. The cap was of the same material and, like the other garments, had been fashioned and put together by the deft hands of the mother in Kentucky. Powder-horn and bullet-pouch were suspended by strings passing over alternate sides of the neck and a fine flint-lock rifle, the inseparable companion of the Western youth, rested on the right shoulder, the hand grasping it near the stock.

Jack's hasty survey failed to reveal any cause for fear, and he resumed his pursuit, as it may be termed. The quick glances he cast on the ground in front showed, in every instance, that the horse he was following was fleeing at the same headlong pace. His rider had spurred him to a dead run, at which gait he had shot underneath the limbs of the trees at great risk to himself as well as to his rider.

The trail was broad, for loaded horses had passed in both directions, and wild animals availed themselves of it more

than once in making their pilgrimages to the Mississippi, or in migrating from one part of the country to the other.

But there were no footprints that had been made within the past few days, with the single exception noted—that of the horse which had abruptly broken into a full run.

The balmy afternoon was drawing to a close, and Jack began to believe the chances were against overtaking his friend and companion, young Otto Relstaub.

"If he has kept this up very long, he must be far beyond my reach, unless he has turned about and taken the back trail."

Glancing at the sky as seen through the branches overhead, the youth observed that it was clear, the deep blue flecked here and there by patches of snowy clouds, resting motionless in the crystalline air.

Comparatively young as was Jack, he had been thoroughly trained in woodcraft. When beyond sight of the cabins of the straggling settlement, where he made his home, he was as watchful and alert as Daniel Boone or Simon Kenton himself. His penetrating gray eyes not only scanned the sinuous path, stretching in front, but darted from side to side, and were frequently turned behind him. He knew that if danger threatened it was as likely to come from one point as another.

He could not avoid one conclusion: the peril which had impelled the young German's horse to such a burst of speed must have been in the form dreaded above all others—that of the wild Indians who at that day roamed through the vast wilderness of the West and hovered along the frontier, eager

to use the torch, the rifle, or the tomahawk, whenever and wherever the way opened.

The probability that such was the cause of the horseman's haste threw the young Kentuckian at once on his mettle. Inasmuch as he was putting forth every effort to rejoin his companion, there was good reason for fearing a collision with the red men. He had been in several desperate affrays with them, and, like a sensible person, he spared no exertion to escape all such encounters.

"If they will let me alone I will not disturb them," was the principle which not only he, but many of the bravest frontiersmen followed daring the eventful early days of the West.

The youth now dropped into the loping trot of the American Indian—a gait which, as in the case of the dusky warrior himself, he was able to maintain hour after hour, without fatigue. The sharp glances thrown in every direction were not long in making a discovery, though not of the nature anticipated.

A short distance in front a white oak, whose trunk was fully two feet in diameter, grew beside the trail which he was following. Its shaggy limbs twisted their way across the path and among the branches on the other side. The exuberant leaves offered such inviting concealment to man and animal that the youth subjected them to the keenest scrutiny.

His trot dropped to a slow walk, and he instinctively glanced at the lock of his gun to make sure it was ready for any emergency.

Something was moving among the branches of the forest monarch, but Jack knew it was not an Indian. No warrior would climb into a tree to wait for his prey, when, he could secure better concealment on the ground, where he would not be compelled to yield the use of his legs, which play such an important part in the maneuverings of the red man.

The lad caught several glimpses of the strange animal, and, when within a few rods, identified it.

"It's a painter," he said to himself, with a faint smile, resuming his slow advance and giving a sigh of relief; "I don't know whether it is worth while to give him a shot or not."

The name "painter," so common among American hunters, is a corruption of "panther," which is itself an incorrect application, the genuine panther being found only in Africa and India. In South America the corresponding animal is the jaguar, and in North America the cougar or catamount, and sometimes the American lion.

Jack Carlton did not hold the brute in special fear, though he knew that when wounded or impelled by hunger he was a dangerous foe. During an unusually cold day, only a few months before, one of them had made an open attack on him, inflicting some severe scratches and tearing most of his clothes to shreds.

It would have been one of the easiest things in the world for the young Kentuckian to settle the whole question by leaving the trail and making a detour that would take him safely by the treacherous beast, which, as a rule, is afraid to assault a person. The lad was certain that at that season of the year it would not leave the tree to attack him.

But if he took such a course, it would be a confession of timidity on his part against which, his nature and training rebelled.

"No," Said he, after brief hesitation, "I won't leave the path for all the painters this side of the Mississippi. It may not be wise for me to fire my gun just now and I won't do it, if he behaves himself, but I don't mean to put up with any nonsense."

He brought his weapon in front, raised the hammer and closely watched the animal above, while the quadruped was equally intent in observing him. It was a curious sight—the two scrutinizing each other with such defiant distrust.

The cougar was crouching on a broad limb, just far enough from the trunk of the oak to be directly over the trail. He was extended full length, and, as partly seen through the leaves, offered the best target possible for the marksman below.

But Jack preferred not to fire his gun, for the reason that the report was likely to be heard by more dangerous enemies. His purpose was to refrain from doing so, unless forced to shoot in self defense, and his pride would not permit him to deviate a hair's-breadth from the path in order to escape the necessity of shooting.

He walked with the deliberate, noiseless tread of an Indian, looking steadily upward at the eyes which assumed a curious, phosphorescent glare, that scintillated with a greenish light, as the relative position of the enemies changed.

The lad passed under the limbs staring unflinchingly aloft. When exactly beneath, the cougar was hidden for an

instant from sight, but, recognizing the changing conditions, he quickly lifted his head to the right, and the lad again saw the greenish glare, the white teeth, and blood red mouth. He traced the outlines of the sinewy body close along the limb, and through which he could have driven a bullet with fatal certainty. The "painter," whose scream is often mistaken for the cry of a human being, uttered an occasional snarling growl as he looked down on the lad. His attitude and manner seemed to say: "I've got my eye on you, young man! Walk very straight or you will find yourself in trouble."

The probability that a cougar is gathering his muscles on a limb with the intention of bounding down on one's shoulders, is enough to make the bravest man uneasy. Jack Carleton did feel a creeping chill, but the same pride which prevented him deviating a hair's-breadth from the trail, would not allow him to increase or retard his gait.

"If you think you can make me run, old fellow," he muttered, with his gaze still fixed on the beast, "you are mistaken. We don't meet wild animals in Kentucky that are able to drive us out of the woods. You needn't fancy, either, that I am in any hurry to walk away from you."

And, to show the contempt in which he held the beast, the youth at that moment came to a full stop, turned about and faced him.

CHAPTER II

WHAT A RIFLE-SHOT DID

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The moment the young Kentuckian assumed this attitude, he became aware that the cougar had determined upon hostilities.

With a rasping snarl he buried his claws in the shaggy bark, pressing his body still closer to the limb, and then shot downward straight toward Jack, who was too vigilant to be caught unprepared. Leaping backward a couple of steps, he brought his gun to his shoulder, like a flash, and fired almost at the moment the animal left his perch. There could be no miss under the circumstances, and the "painter" received his death wound, as may be said, while in mid-air. He struck the ground with a heavy thump, made a blind leap toward the youthful hunter, who recoiled several steps more, and then, after a brief struggle, the beast lay dead.

During these moments, Jack Carleton, following the rule he was taught when first given his gun, occupied himself with reloading the weapon. A charge of powder was poured from the hollow cow's horn, with its wooden stopper, into the palm of his hand, and this went rattling like fine sand down the barrel. The square piece of muslin was hammered on top until the ramrod almost bounded from the gun; then the bullet which the youthful hunter had molded himself, was shoved gently but firmly downward, backed by another bit of muslin. The ramrod was pushed into its place, and the hammer, clasping the yellow, translucent flint, was drawn

far back, like the jaw of a wild cat, and the black grains sprinkled into the pan. The jaw was slowly let back so as to hold the priming fast, and the old fashioned rifle, such as our grandfathers were accustomed to use, was ready for duty.

Jack surveyed the motionless figure on the ground and said:

"I don't think you'll ever amount to anything again as a painter; at any rate, you ain't likely to drop on to a fellow's head when he is walking under a tree."

And, without giving him any further notice, he turned about and resumed his walk toward the Mississippi.

It was vain, however, for him to seek to suppress his anxiety. The trail of the flying horse still indicated that he was going on a dead run, and some unusual cause must have impelled him to do so. Jack could not doubt that his friend Otto was driven to such severe effort by the appearance of Indians, but it would seem that the terrific gait of the Steed ought to have taken him beyond all danger very speedily, whereas, for more than a mile, the pace showed not the slightest diminution.

At the most, Otto was not more than an hour in advance, and his friend, therefore, had good reason to fear he was in the immediate vicinity of the dreaded red men.

The young hunter was brave, but he was not reckless. He had refused to turn aside to avoid a collision with the cougar, but he did not hesitate to leave the trail, in the hope of escaping the savages who were likely to be attracted by the report of the gun.

From the beginning the lad had stepped as lightly as possible, bringing his feet softly but squarely down on the ground, after the fashion of the American Indian, when threading his way through the trackless forest. He now used the utmost care in leaving the trail, for none knew better than he the amazing keenness of the dark eyes that were liable to scan the ground over which he had passed.

Not until he was several rods from the footprints of the flying horse did he advance with anything like assurance. He then moved with more certainty until he reached a chestnut, whose trunk was broad enough to afford all the concealment he could desire.

Stepping behind this, Jack assumed a position which gave him a view of the trail, with no likelihood of being seen, unless the suspicion of the Indians should be directed to the spot.

"If they are coming, it is time they showed themselves."

The words were yet in the mouth of the youth, when something seemed to twinkle and flicker among the trees, in advance of the point where he had turned aside from the path. A second look allowed that two Indian warriors were returning along the trail.

He recognized them as Shawanoes—one of the fiercest tribes that resisted the march of civilization a century ago. It may be said that they corresponded to the Apaches of the present day.

The couple were scrutinizing the ground, as they advanced with heads thrown forward and their serpent-like eyes flitting from side to side. Manifestly they were expecting to discover certain parties along the trail itself.

There may have been something in the peculiar sound of the rifle, which raised their suspicions, though it is hard to understand wherein the report of two similarly made weapons can possess any perceptible difference.

Be that as it may, that which Jack Carleton feared had taken place—the shot which killed the cougar brought far more dangerous enemies to the spot.

The lad would have had no difficulty in picking off one of the warriors, but he had not the remotest intention of doing so. There could be no justification for such a wanton act, and the consequences could not fail to be disastrous to himself. He was never better prepared to support the creed of the frontiersmen who would willingly leave the red men unmolested if they in turn sought to do them no harm.

The Shawanoes soon passed by, making no pause until they reached the carcass of the panther. They quickly saw the bullet-wound, between his fore legs, and understood that his heart had been pierced while in the act of leaping from his perch upon the hunter beneath. A brief scrutiny of the ground brought to light the impressions of the calf-skin shoes of him who had fired the fatal shot.

They understood at once that the party was a white person, and, judging from the size of the footprints, he clearly was an adult-one who, it was safe to conclude, was able to taking good care of himself; but it must have been a relief to the warriors when their examination of the earth showed that only a single member of the detested race had been concerned in the death of the cougar.

That which followed was precisely what the watcher expected. The moment the red men were certain of the

direction taken by the hunter they started along the same line. The foremost looked down for an instant at the ground, and then seemed to dart a glance at every visible point around him. The other warrior did not once look down, but guarded against running into any ambush for it need not be said that the task on which they were engaged was most delicate and dangerous.

The American Indian cannot excel the white man in woodcraft and subtlety, and no Kentucky pioneer ever stood still and allowed a dusky foe to creep upon him.

It will be conceded that a point had been reached where Jack Carleton had good cause for alarm. Those Shawanoe were following his trail, and they had but to keep it up for a short distance when he was certain to be "uncovered."

"I wish there was only one of them," muttered the youth, stealthily peering from behind the tree; "it will be hard to manage two."

The coolness of Jack was extraordinary. Though he felt the situation was critical in the highest degree, yet there was not a tremor of the muscles, nor blanching of the countenance, as it would seem was inevitable when such a desperate encounter impended.

There was a single, shadowy hope; it was fast growing dark in the woods, and the eyes of the Shawanoes, keen as they were, must soon fail them. The sun had set and twilight already filled the forest arches with gloom.

Peering around the bark, Jack saw the leading Indian bend lower, leaving to the other the task of guarding against mishap. He walked more slowly; it was plain his task

was not only difficult, but was becoming more so every moment.

Jack followed the movements with rapt attention. Knowing the precise point where he had left the path, his heart throbbed faster than was its wont, when he saw his enemies close to the tingle in his course. A half minute later they were beyond—they had overrun his trail.

A short distance only was passed, when the warriors seemed to suspect the truth. They came to a halt, and the trail-hunter sank upon his knees. His head was so close to the ground that it looked as if he were drawing lines and figures with his curving nose, which slowly circled around and back and forth. At the same time the palm of his right hand gently moved over the leaves, touching them as lightly as the falling snowflakes, and with as wonderful delicacy as that of the blind reader, when his fingers are groping over the raised letters of the Book of Life.

The young Kentuckian from his place of concealment smiled to himself.

"There are some things which even a Shawanoe, cannot do, and that's one of them."

Such was the fact; for, with that care which the trained pioneer never permits himself to forget or disregard, the lad had adopted every artifice at his command to add to the difficulty of identifying his footsteps.

The warrior straightened up with an impatient "Ugh!" which brought another smile to the face of the watcher, for it proved beyond question the failure of his foes.

The Shawanoe, however, had established one fact—the overrunning of the trail. The one for whom they were

searching had left the path at some point behind them. Scant chance was there of learning the precise spot.

"Follow me if you can," was the exultant thought of Jack, who carefully lowered the hammer of his rifle. "I'm glad that as the painter was determined on picking a quarrel with me he did not do it earlier in the day—helloa!"

While speaking to himself, he became aware that the warriors were invisible. They may have believed they were acting as oscillating targets for some hidden enemy, who was likely to press the trigger at any moment; and, unable even to approximate as they were his biding-place, they withdrew in their characteristic fashion.

Jack thrust his head still further from behind the tree, and finally stepped forth that he might obtain the best view he could. But the red men had vanished like the shadows of swiftly-moving clouds. Nothing more was to be feared from that source.

But with the lifting of the peril from his own shoulders, there returned his distressing anxiety for his absent companion. No doubt could exist that when he put his horse to his hurried flight, he had done so to escape the Indians. Whether he had succeeded remained to be learned, but Jack felt that every probability was against it.

He might well debate as to his own duty in the premises. His one desire was to learn what had become of Otto, the German lad, with whom he left the Settlements a couple of days before. Neither had ever visited this section, but they were following the instructions of those who had, and the young Kentuckian knew the precise point in their journey that had been reached.

Standing as motionless as the trees beside him and amid the darkening shadows, Jack Carleton listened with the intentness of an Indian scout stealing into a hostile camp.

The soft murmur which seems to reach us when a sea-shell is held to the ear filled the air. It was the voice of the night—the sighing of the scarcely moving wind among the multitudinous branches, the restless movements of myriads of trees—the soft embrace of millions of leaves, which, like the great ocean itself, even when the air is pulseless, is never at rest.

Jack Carleton had spent too many days and nights in the woods to be greatly impressed with the solemnity and grandeur of his surroundings. That which would have awed his soul, if noted for the first time, had lost the power to do so from its familiarity; but while in the attitude of listening, he became conscious of another sound which did not belong to the vast forest, the throbbing air, nor the gathering darkness.

CHAPTER III

ON THE BANK OF THE MISSISSIPPI

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That which reached the ears of Jack Carleton, while he stood in the woods, silent and listening, was a peculiar swashing noise, which continued a few seconds, followed by the same space of silence—the intervals being as regular as the ticking of a huge pendulum. Accompanying the sound was another, a soft, almost inaudible flow, such as one hears when standing on the bank of a vast stream of water.

He knew that both were caused by the sweep of the mighty Mississippi which was near at hand. The reason for the first he could not understand, but that of the latter was apparent. He had never looked upon the Father of Waters, but many a time he had rested along the Ohio and been lulled to sleep by its musical flow, even while the camp-fires of the hostile red men twinkled on the other shore.

Manifestly nothing could be done by remaining where he was, and, in the same guarded manner in which he left the trail a half hour before, he began picking his way back. Probably he ran greater personal risk in following the beaten path, yet he was controlled by a true hunter's instinct in every movement made.

When he reached the trail, he observed that not only had the night descended, but the full moon was shining from an almost unclouded sky. The trees, crowned with exuberant vegetation, cast deep shadows, like those of the electric light, and only here and there did the arrowy moonbeams

strike the ground, redolent with the odors of fresh earth and moldering leaves.

"Some of the warriors may be returning or groping along the trail," was the thought of the youth, who glided silently forward, his senses on the alert. His misgivings, however, were much less than when watching the two Shawanoes, for with the dense gloom of the forest inclosing him on every hand, he felt that the shelter was not only secure but was of instant avail.

Less than a furlong was passed, when he caught the shimmering of water. A few steps further and he stood for the first time on the bank of the Mississippi.

The youth felt those emotions which must come to every one when he emerges from a vast forest at night and pauses beside one of the grandest streams of the globe. At that day its real source was unknown, but Jack, who was unusually well informed for one of his years, was aware that it rose somewhere among the snowy mountains and unexplored regions far to the northward, and that, after its winding course of hundreds of leagues, during which it received the volume of many rivers, enormous in themselves, it debouched into the tropical waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

The reflection of the turbid current showed that it was flowing swiftly. The dark line of the forest on the other shore appeared like a solid wall of blackness, while to the north and south the view ended in the same impenetrable gloom.

Impressed and awed by the scene, the lad saw something which at first startled him by its resemblance to a man, standing in the river, with his feet braced against the

bottom and his head and shoulders above the surface. The current seemed to rush against his bared breast, from which it was cast back and aside, as though flung off by a granite rock. Then the head bowed forward, as if the strong man sought to bathe his brain in the cooling waters, that he might be refreshed against the next shock.

A minute's scrutiny was enough to show Jack that the object was a tree, which, rolling into the river at some point, perhaps hundreds of miles above, had grown weary of its journey, and, plunging its feet into the muddy bed of the stream, had, refused to go further. The fierce current would lift the head several feet with a splash, but could hold it thus only a part of a minute, when it would dip for a brief while, to rise again and repeat the action.

The tree was what is known to-day on the Mississippi as a "sawyer," and which is so dreaded by the steamers and other craft navigating the river. Many a boat striking at full speed against them, have had their hulls pierced as if by a hundred-pound shell, and have gone to the bottom like stone.

It was the sound made by the "sawyer" which had puzzled Jack Carleton before he caught sight of the great river. He could not wonder that he had failed to guess the cause of the intermittent swash which reached him through the woods.

"And we must cross that stream," murmured Jack, with half a shudder, as he looked out upon the prodigious volume rushing southward like myriads of wild horses; "it seems to me no one can swim to the other shore, nor can a raft or boat be pushed thither."

The plucky boy would not have felt so distrustful and timid had the sun been shining overhead.

"Ish dot you, Jack?"

Young Carleton turned his head as if a war hoop had sounded in his ear. He fairly bounded feet when he recognized his old friend at his elbow. The good-natured German lad was grinning with delight, as he extended his chubby hand and asked:

"How you vos?"

"Why, Otto!" gasped Jack, slapping his palm against that of his friend and crushing it as if in a vise. "I am so glad to see you."

"So I vos," was the grinning response; "I'm always glad to shake hands mit myself."

"But," said the other, looking furtively over each shoulder in turn, "let's move away the trail, where we cannot be seen or heard."

The suggestion was a wise one, and acted upon without delay. The friends entered the wood, which continued quite open, and tramped steadily forward with the intention of finding place where they could start a fire and converse without danger of discovery by enemies.

The hearts of both were too full for hold their peace while stealing forward among the trees.

"Otto," said Jack, "where is the colt?"

"I dinks he's purty near New Orleans as soon as dis time."

Young Carleton looked wonderingly toward friend and asked, "What do you mean?"

"I don't mean vot I don't say and derefore dinks I mean vot I vos."

"So the colt went into the river? Where were you?"

"Mit de colt and he vos mit me, so we bot vos mit each other. Just feels of me."

Jack reached out his hand and pinched the clothing of his friend in several places. It was saturated.

"Ven I valks, de vater in my shoes squishes up to mine ears—don't you hear 'em?"

"Why don't you pour it out?"

"I hef done so, tree time already—I done so again once more."

And, without ado, the young German threw himself forward on his hands and head and kicked his feet with a vigor that sent the moisture in every direction. Indeed the performance was conducted with so much ardor that one of the shoes flow off with considerable violence. Otto then reversed himself and assumed the upright posture.

"Mine gracious," he exclaimed, "where didn't dot shoe of mine went?"

"It just missed my face," replied Jack, with a laugh.

"Dot vos lucky," said Otto, beginning to search for his property.

"Yes; it might have hurt me pretty bad."

"I means it vos lucky for de shoe," added Otto, who, in groping about, stumbled at that moment upon the missing article. "Bime by de vater soaks down mine shoes agin and I stands on head and kicks it out."

But Jack Carleton was anxious to learn what had befallen his friend since their voluntary separation some hours

before, and so, while they were advancing along the shore, the story was told.

Otto, as he had agreed to do, was riding at a leisurely pace, when, without the least warning, the sharp crack of a rifle broke the stillness of, the woods on his right, and the bullet zipped so close to his forehead that it literally grazed the skin, leaving a faint mark, which was visible several days afterward.

The lad was never so frightened in all his life. For a minute or so he was absolutely speechless, during which the horse, alarmed in a less degree than he, broke into a trot. Otto, however, quickly regained his self-control, and fully realized his danger. He did not glance behind him nor to the right or left. No investigation was needed convince him of his peril. He put the horse to a dead run, first throwing himself forward on his neck so as to offer the least possible target to his enemies.

Only the single shot was fired, and Jack counted it strange that the report failed to reach his ears. When the fugitive had gone a considerable distance, he ventured to look back. He thought he saw several Indians, but it was probably fancy, for had they observed he was leaving them behind (as would have been the case), they surely would have appealed to their rifles again.

Otto was in such danger from the overhanging limbs, and was so fearful that he was running a gauntlet of Indians, that he kept his head close to the mane of his steed and scarcely looked to see where they were going.

The awakening came like an electric shock, when the terrified horse made a tremendous plunge straight out into

the river. The first notice Otto received was the chilling embrace of the waters which enveloped him to the ears. He held his rifle in his right hand, and, in his desperate efforts to save that, was swept from the back of the animal, which began swimming composedly down stream, carrying saddle, blankets and other valuable articles that were strapped to him back.

Encumbered with his heavy clothing and his gun, young Otto Relstaub had all he could do to fight his way back to land. He escaped shipwreck as by a hair's-breadth, from the sawyer which had attracted the notice of Jack.

"I vos swimming as hard as nefer vos," he explained, "and had just got in front of the tree, ven as true as I don't live, it banged right down on top mit me and nearly knocked out my brains out. I grabbed hold of it, when it raised up and frowed me over its head. Den I gots mad and swims ashore."

Jack laughed, for, though he knew his friend was prone to exaggeration, he could understand that his experience was similar, in many respects, to what he had stated.

"After the shore reaches me," continued Otto, "I turns around free, four times to find where I ain't. I see de colt going down stream as fast as if two Indians was on his back sitting and paddling him mit paddles. I called to him to come back and explained dot he would cotch him cold if he didn't stay too long in de vater, but he makes belief he don't hears me, and I bothers him no more."

"There will be trouble at home when your father finds out the colt is lost," said Jack Carleton, who knew how harsh the