

## THE INDIAN OUTLAW

By WM. ROUNSEVILLE

Chi-oc-o-ma was the pride of the tribe over which her father ruled as chief. Possessing the stern and inflexible nature of the sons of the forest, mingled with the softer passions of the gentler sex, she was the glory of her nation. The hunter brought the first fruits of the chase and laid them at her feet; and the young warrior on his first war path, secretly invoked the aid of her guardian spirit, that he might return with honor and fame.

Stern and unyielding as the rock, at the base of which he dwelt, was the chief of the Sacs, the father of Chi-oc-o-ma. His weapon was keen, and his eye was undimmed in pursuit of a foe, or in defense of a friend. He never suffered a favor to pass without reward, or an injury to pass unrevenged. Time, or distance, made no difference to the iron-hearted chief. Had one injured him, he must be careful indeed, if the hatchet of O-mal-kah did not find him at an hour when he believed danger far removed from him. Equally sure was he to repay a kindness.

The Sac chief dwelt near the "Father of Waters," and his wigwam was sheltered by the rocks that are ranged along its eastern bank. Here were his household gods, and in this retreat had he frequently left them, to return to them in peace, after the battle had been fought, and the enemy slain. The Menomonies pitched their tents to the northward, but not far distant, yet the terror of the name of O-mal-kah was sufficient to keep them away from the lodges of his tribe.

Prosperity followed the footsteps of O-mal-kah, for when did she ever desert those who had earned her favor? His tribe was successful, in battle and the chase. He was heard in the council with deference, and his words fell upon willing ears. Could anything farther be wanting to fill his cup with joy?

The day was hot and sultry, and worn out with the fatigues of the chase, Her-lo-wa-rah, the son of the Menomonic chief, reposed his limbs beneath the shade of an oak, that grew upon the hunting grounds of the Sacs. Notwithstanding his proximity to his sworn enemy, he slept. A slight rustling, so slight that only the ear of a hunter could have heard it, attracted his attention, and he looked forth. Seated on a grassy knoll, but a few yards distant was Chi-oc-o-ma.

Love filled the heart of the young warrior, and he gazed with delight upon the lovely being before him. There was no need that he should address her in set phrase—there was no necessity that he should choose honied words to dissipate her fears, for she was the daughter of the chief O-mal-kah, and what child of his ever felt fear. Quickly rising from his lowly couch, he stood before the dusky maiden. No scream announced the terror of her soul—she was surprised, not terror stricken. In her own beautiful and energetic language, she spake:

“Warrior of the Menomonies, why standest thou here? Know thou not that danger is in thy path?”

“Maiden of the raven locks,” replied the warrior, “Har-lo-wa-rah knows no danger! He feels safe in the presence of the daughter of the great chief of the Sacs. Her eyes are the light of his soul, and her smile is like the rays of the sun as they fall upon the snows of the north. It melts his heart and molds it to hers. He lays his life at her feet.”

“The warrior Har-lo-wa-rah, is the enemy of my nation,” said the maiden; “his words are the words of deceit. The hatchet of O-mal-kah is sure. He will revenge the insult offered to his daughter.”

“The words of Har-lo-wa-rah are true,” agreed the warrior; “he scorns to deceive. The daughter of the Sac may read his heart. He is not double-tongued. But he loves Chi-oc-o-ma. He would take her to his wigwam, and treat her as the daughter of a great chief, and as the wife of the leader of the Menomonies.”

"There is blood between our people," again demurred the maiden; "the child of O-mal-kah may not mate with the Menomonie. Go to your home, before your blood flows upon the ground upon which you have intruded."

"Let Chi-oc-o-ma hear the words of Har-lo-wa-rah," the warrior implored; "he would do her no harm, but the Great Spirit tells him he shall have her for his bride. She will not withstand his bidding."

"When the blood of my nation has been avenged, and the vengeance of O-mal-kah is satisfied, then ask him for his daughter," then countered the maiden; "but now there is blood upon our path if we tread it together."

"Is not the arm of Har-lo-wa-rah strong in battle?" urged the warrior; "is not his aim sure? Who will dare to raise a hand against his chosen? Will he not defend his squaw against his enemy? No hand can compare with his, in wielding the hatchet."

"Would the son of the Menomonie chief think to win the daughter of O-mal-kah, by boasting of his skill to slay them?" the maiden asked; "shall she prepare food for the enemy of her race? Shall she mate with the foe of her tribe?"

"The life of O-mal-kah is safe in the hand of Har-lo-wa-rah," the warrior pledged; towards him his hatchet has no edge, and his arrow is pointless. The chief of the Sacs will give his daughter to the brave, whose name is a terror to his foes."

"Ask him, and if the terrible leader of the Sacs, will say his daughter shall wed a Menomonie, I am thine," she softly said.

The lovers parted. Each took the path which led to the paternal wigwam. The interview had been short and unexpected, but not unenjoyed by either. The brave bearing and manly carriage of the Menomonie, had made a lasting impression upon the mind of the Indian maiden, while her beauty seemed to inflame the passion which he had already conceived for her, before they met, merely by hearing a recital of her good qualities.

Days and weeks passed, and still the young warrior had not proffered his suit to O-mal-kah. Yet in the silence of night, in moonlight dell, they had often met, and each succeeding meeting served only to confirm the impression given by the first, that they were made for each other. The haughty O-mal-kah suspected the intrigue, but was unable to detect the crafty lovers.

#### THE WARRIOR BECOMES AN OUTLAW

At last their intimacy could no longer be concealed. The chief wept with fury at the disgrace of his child. In his wrath, he swore to make of her a public sacrifice, and burn her at the stake. She was confined to her father's hut, and two trusty warriors were placed as sentinels to prevent her escape. The father, in the meantime, was busily engaged in plans of vengeance. A messenger was sent to the Menomonie chief, demanding the aggressor, but he, knowing the Indian custom, and their detestation of the violator of female innocence, had fled. By his own tribe he was declared an outlaw.

The hostile tribes united in the endeavor to find the criminal, and bring him to justice, but he eluded their search. Being perfectly acquainted with the country, with all its fastnesses and retreats, he could take advantage of them, in keeping himself safely from his pursuers.

Some seven miles from the Mississippi, on a branch of that stream, now stands a town of eight thousand inhabitants. A high bluff of rocks overlooks the town from the east, and holds within its rocky bowels, several caverns, where the outlaw was wont to retreat. One, deeper and larger than the rest, was his favorite haunt. It was in shape, nearly a circle, and its entrance was hid by a thick growth of underwood. Here he passed the most of his time, while his pursuers were vainly searching for his track.

Above, the rock arose perpendicularly to fifty feet in height, totally preventing any intrusion in that direction. Over the narrow entrance, a rock projected like a shelf,

and seemed to hang by a single point. A seam gaped wide above, as if some convulsion of nature had nearly rent it from its bed.

The rain fell in torrents, and the thunder rolled as it were the day of doom. A night of Egyptian darkness had enveloped the earth. The Sacs were away from their camp, on a hunting expedition, and Chi-oc-o-ma was left alone in the custody of the two sentinels, who slept soundly, dreaming nothing of danger.

Har-lo-wa-rah left his cell, and bent his steps toward the prison of his beloved. Dark as was the night, he threaded the intricate paths, until he came in sight of the camp. Then creeping cautiously forward, he discovered the guard lying upon a buffalo hide, under cover of the hut, in front of the dwelling of the chief. The tiger as he is about to leap upon his prey, moves not with so noiseless a step as the Indian, when he stole along under the shade of the wigwam. Entering the open door, it was but the work of moment to sink his hatchet in the heads of the sleepers. Another instant, and he stood by the couch of the prisoner. She had heard the blows, and knew he came to her rescue.

"Chi-oc-o-ma will go with her chief," was the salutation of the young warrior.

"She has no other friend," was the sad reply.

"Follow!" was the command.

"Where Har-lo-wa-rah will lead, there will Chi-oc-o-ma follow. Let us leave the lodges of our nations, and dwell apart from our race," she replied.

"Har-lo-wa-rah will lead you in safety to his wigwam," promised the warrior.

The cords with which she was bound, were cut, and the daughter of the chief of the Sacs was once more free. As they passed the fire, which had been kindled by the sentinels without the hut, a shout from a distance told that the hunting party had returned, and they were discovered. Fear added speed to their flight. Keeping close to the river, that they might not miss their way in the intense darkness, they fled towards the rocky retreat.

## SOUGHT BY VENGEFUL PURSUERS

Once only, as they began to ascend a ridge which ran from the rock to the river's bank, did they stop to listen for their pursuers. Then they heard them close at hand, panting with exertion, and the excitement of the chase. On the river to the right, were heard the measured strokes of a paddle, by which they knew their flight was cut off in that direction. An occasional flash of lightning revealed them to their pursuers, and it was with the utmost difficulty that they could prevent them from overtaking them.

A few rods more, and they would pass by the secret path into the thicket which surrounded the mouth of the cave. Onward they pressed—they fancied they could almost feel the hot breath of the pursuers, and began to fear that their fearful proximity would reveal the secret of their retreat, and their capture would then be certain, and a horrid death would be sure to follow. They gained the entrance to the thicket—a flash for an instant revealed the different parts of that wild group to each other, and the triumphant shout of the pursuers gave proof that they felt themselves sure of their prey.

The fugitives entered the friendly thicket, and sped their way to the cavern. And yet they knew that even this would afford them short, and dubious shelter. Their enemies were upon their footsteps, and even then they could hear their shouts as they arose above the roar of the elements. Still onward they pressed.

The pursuing party were unable to follow them farther, through the rough and rugged path. They therefore concluded to place their lines in such a manner, around the rock, as to render escape impossible, and defer the execution of their revenge until the following morning. Scarcely had they formed their lines, with either wing resting upon the base of the rock, then a vivid flash of lightning, accompanied by deafening peals of thunder, rent the air, and seemed to shake the solid rock to its center. A few drops of rain fell, and then the moon looked forth from the edge of the cloud, and all was calm, peaceful and still.

In the morning a company was chosen to explore the retreat of the fugitives, and to bring them forth. They followed the winding path with some difficulty, until it was closed by a huge rock, which had fallen from the height above. They found their way around it, and on the further side, they saw the bow of Har-lo-wa-rah, and a portion of the blanket of Chi-oc-o-ma. The rock which overhung the cave, had fallen during the terrible concussion of the preceding night, and had instantly buried the Indian outlaw and his bride.

The tribes to this day believe it to have been a direct interposition of providence, in punishing by a violent death the guilty pair. Many years have elapsed, yet a sense of awe steals over the hardiest warrior, as he passes the place where this catastrophe happened, similar to that which is felt by the devout Christian as he stands on Mount Sinai, and feels that on the same rocks have been marked the footsteps of the Almighty; and that the same echoes that answer to his voice, have reverberated to the sound of the thunders of his presence and power.—*Western Magazine*, May, 1846.

#### NICOLAS BOILVIN, INDIAN AGENT

Nicolas Boilvin spent twenty years of his life on the Upper Mississippi as an officer of the United States government—first as assistant, or subagent, on the Des Moines river, and later as Indian agent, with his home and station at Prairie du Chien. Although his early life has never been fully revealed, Boilvin asserted repeatedly that he had spent more than forty years among the Indians.

Born in Canada in 1761, he arrived, at the age of thirteen, in that part of the Illinois country which later became Missouri. At the close of the American Revolution he was back in Montreal, but in 1783 was employed by Patrick Sinclair, who had been a high ranking British officer in the Indian country, to take charge of his farm near Detroit. On reaching that post, Boilvin decided to go further west.—P. L. Scanlan, in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*.

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