

GOLDEN ARGOOSY

FREIGHTED WITH TREASURES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

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Lost in the Wilds. A Sequel to "Up the Tapajos."

By ROLLO ROBBINS, JR.

CHAPTER VII.

WE have said that the captive Arara Indian was separated from the lad who was guarding him by a distance, perhaps, of twelve feet.

When Ned looked at Oogrooh his attention, as in the first instance, seemed to be entirely absorbed by the hurt on his arm. He scrutinized the linen bandage, stained with his own blood and the crushed berries, as though it were the greatest curiosity on which he had ever gazed.

Then, with his hand, he tenderly lifted one corner of the bandage and peered under. The action seemed to give him pain, and, screwing up his lips, he quickly put the linen back in place.

Ned laughed to himself.

"He is as big a baby as Harry or I was when we were little fellows. The next thing I suppose he will do will be to put his hands to his face and begin blubbering—that seems queer!"

The last exclamation was caused by a strange impression indeed. When Ned looked at the Indian, it seemed to him the space separating the two had become slightly less than it was a few minutes before!

He had carefully measured the distance with his eye, else he might not have noticed it. But he became convinced he was mistaken, for he failed to understand how such a phenomenon could occur.

"Now, if he could only talk English, I would open a conversation with him," thought the lad; "but his tongue doesn't sound any more like ours than the grunting of pigs does. He has a wicked face, and I believe, if he could get the chance, he would murder every one of us. I wonder what is the matter with my eyes!"

He rubbed them vigorously for an instant, then glanced toward the stream, on which he could hear the slight sound made by Ardara's paddle in taking his friend across. The boat was little more than half way to the other side, and the lad caught a passing glimpse of it for a moment through the vegetation.

It must not be supposed that, during this interval, brief as it was, Ned Livingston forgot his duty. All the time the captive was in his field of vision, and he could not have made any motion without its being instantly detected by his guard.

The latter still grasped his gun in both hands, the muzzle being pointed toward the savage, but the hammer was not raised.

However, that could be done with great quickness, and, where the separating distance was so slight, no aim was necessary. Without bringing the rifle to his shoulder, the youth had only to point the muzzle toward the savage and pull the trigger: the aim could not fail.

Young Livingston did not expect any demonstration on the part of the Arara, and he hoped none would be attempted. If the lad should be assailed by the dusky captive, he could do nothing less than shoot him in self-defence.

Besides his dislike of doing such a thing, he felt

that it would be almost equally fatal to Harry Norwood. Deprived of the vast advantage of holding an important prisoner with which to open negotiations, and with a true knowledge of the situation in the possession of the Araras, there would be very slender hope for Harry.

"The South American Indian is like his northern brother," was the sensible conclusion of Ned; "that is, in many respects. The story books tell you how noble and generous he is, and how he never forgets an insult or kindness, but every one who knows anything about him paints him as altogether a

less than at first, but it was being steadily diminished.

When the treacherous redskin leaned his head forward and nursed the wound in his arm, covered by the stained bandage, he seemed to be looking at and giving his whole attention to it; but had any one been able to see his black, restless eyes just then, he would have discovered that he was not examining his arm at all.

He was looking askance at the boy, occasionally letting his gaze fall to his arm, and then darting a sidelong glimpse toward the stream, so as to keep

in his mind the movements and whereabouts of Ardara, whom he held in the most wholesome fear.

From where

trick, he ran much risk of being detected. He could not shift his body without working his powerful muscles, and his clothing was too scanty to conceal such action from the scrutiny of a suspicious person.

But the savage must have felt he had no time to throw away. Ardara, who had subdued him so quickly and completely, would not take long to land his friend on the other side of the stream and to return for his prisoner; when he should reach the shore, from which he started, it would be too late to accomplish anything.

By and by, Ned Livingston appeared to become weary of looking so intently at his captive, and allowed his gaze to follow the movements of a crimson-hued bird, flitting among the branches overhead.

As the boy did so, he did not relax his vigilance, for the savage was in his field of vision, and he could detect the motion of one of his arms.

After a brief spell, Ned looked at his man again, and he was startled beyond expression.

They were actually within six feet of each other!

More than that, Ned observed the guarded action of the muscles of his legs, and it came upon him, with the suddenness of the lightning flash, that the Arara was in the very act of gathering himself for a leap, intending to strangle him to death before he could defend himself or his friend could rush to his assistance!

CHAPTER VIII.

NED LIVINGSTON did not detect the subtle trick of the Arara Indian an instant too soon.

Looking at his dusky legs, he observed the twitching of the muscles, accompanied by an almost imperceptible motion of the body toward the youth, who was astounded beyond expression.

The warrior, after all his professions of friendship and gratitude, was stealing forward with the intention of suddenly leaping upon the boy and throttling him to death.

Ned possessed enough self-command to avoid showing the amazement he felt, but he saw distinctly that the wild man was at the point where he was about ready to make the side leap that would land him on his prey, as the lion bounds down upon the unsuspecting Hottentot.

Without any manifestation of astonishment, therefore, Ned quickly moved back a yard or more. As he did so, he kept his eye on his captive, and cocked his rifle.

The soft click of the hammer, as it was lifted, could not fail to be heard by the Indian, who also showed a marvelous command of his emotions, for he continued patting and nursing the bandaged arm, as though it were a burn he was seeking to charm away.

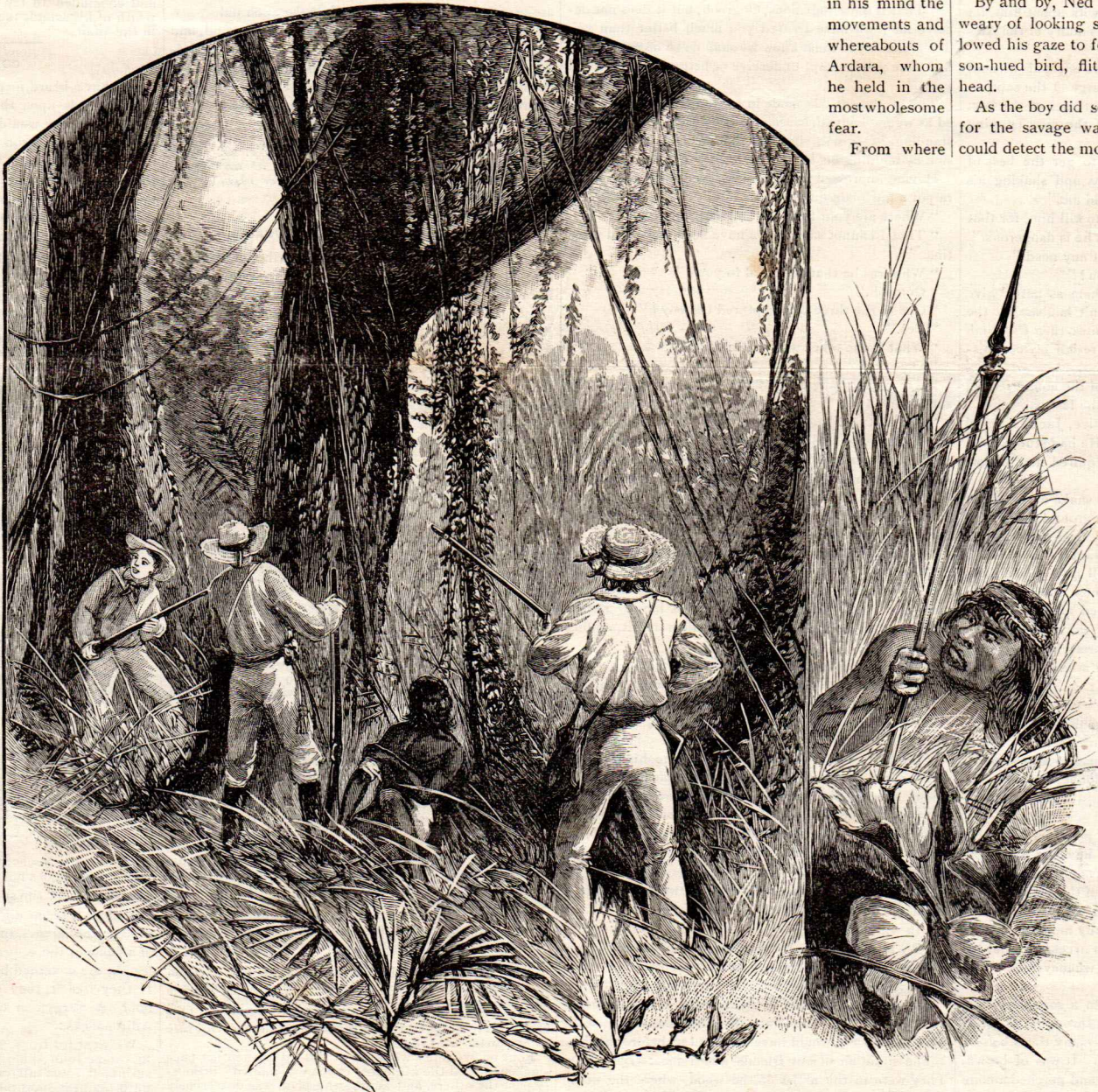
His hope must have been followed by intense disappointment; but, if such was the fact, he gave not the slightest evidence of it.

"That's just as close as I want you," said Ned, addressing him in a loud voice, as we are all inclined to do when talking with a foreigner who doesn't understand what we say.

Oogrooh looked up, as if puzzled, and probably he did not know the full import of the words.

His repulsive face had such a quizzical, wondering expression that Ned was amused for the moment.

"Oh, you are a sly dog! but I happened to discover your trick in time; do you understand? No more trifling, or I'll—"



"LISTEN AND WATCH," HE ADDED; "IF YOU CATCH SIGHT OF ANY WARRIOR, FIRE!"

different individual. The Indian very often is as quick to scalp his friend as his enemy. Well, it must be that I have been watching him so closely I have lost the power to see things as they are."

That which troubled Ned just then was the conviction that the distance between him and his charge was not only less than what it first was, but less than when he looked at Oogrooh a few minutes before.

He could not help feeling bothered and perplexed, for there was a mystery about the whole business beyond his comprehension.

The space originally separating the two had been diminished fully one-fifth, if not more, within the last few minutes, or else the eyes of the lad were playing him false.

"There's one thing certain, I am sitting exactly where I was when Ardara left, but that Indian has approached me."

Had the lad been more experienced in the ways of the wood, he would have become aware of a strange and alarming fact.

In truth, his eyes were not deceiving him: the distance between him and the Arara was not only

the boy sat it was impossible for him to suspect the savage was doing anything except gazing at his bandaged arm, screwing up his lips, and uttering soft expressions of his suffering.

But the treacherous warrior was engaged in a much more wonderful exploit: without seeming to change the muscle of an arm or leg, he held the lower limbs rigid, and worked the moccasined feet in such a guarded fashion that, while it could not be seen, yet it effectually moved his body toward the spot where the boy sat.

With a skill that was astonishing he was "inching along," toward the youth who might well suspect that his eyes were at fault, when he had never seen or heard of such a performance.

"It must be I am wrong," he muttered, after studying the matter several minutes. "I would like to be further away from him, but he would be apt to think I am afraid if I make such a movement, or else he won't understand it at all."

When the Arara saw that the youth was scrutinizing him unusually close, he must have suspected the cause, and he ceased his efforts; for, despite the extraordinary skill with which he played the

