

## Oussiat and the Wampum Belts

By Francis S. Palmer

In Two Parts—I.

One afternoon in August, 1645, the town of the Huron Indians where the Jesuit fathers had established the mission of Sainte Marie was filled with rejoicing. A war-party that had gone south and east to the country of the Senecas, the most western of the banded nations of the Iroquois, had returned in triumph. In the course of their march the warriors had come upon a hunting-camp of the Senecas, had attacked it, and won the victory.

There was one savage regret mixed with the savage joy at the village. The Senecas had fought with such true Iroquois bravery that no man was taken prisoner, and now, when the war-party, journeying in their canoes by lake and river, had returned to their country east of the Georgian Bay of Lake Huron, they brought with them only one captive, a boy who looked barely fifteen. It was a disappointment to have no man to torture; yet their young prisoner seemed so plucky a fellow that they decided to try his courage with the ordeals usually reserved for full-grown warriors.

The boy was tied to a stake and some brush collected. He forced himself to see these preparations with apparent indifference, remembering that an Iroquois must be brave.

When the war-party made their entry into the village, Father Ragueneau, Superior of the Huron Missions, was at vespers in the log chapel. With him were Fathers Garnier and Chabanel, and also Cyrille Valence, a French lad of sixteen, who, the year before, had been sent to the mission from Quebec to assist the priests in the good work of converting the savage heathen.

Now, Cyrille heard the turmoil, and guessed it to be caused by the return of the warriors. When the service was over, he hurried to where a crowd had collected around the Iroquois boy.

Already the flames were creeping near, but the young prisoner, who was keeping up courage by chanting a war-song of his tribe, did not tremble. Cyrille pushed his way through the throng, and knocked aside the blazing fagots. The Indian boy had heard of these Frenchmen that lived among the Hurons and helped them against the Iroquois, and at first he looked at Cyrille with defiance and hate; for he thought the French boy had come to show the Hurons new ways of torture. But when he saw what the newcomer was doing, defiance changed to surprise.

One of the sub-chiefs, an old man and a convert, laid his hand on Cyrille's shoulder.

"Be careful," he said, in a low voice. "Do not interfere with the right of torturing an Iroquois prisoner, or the whole village will rise against the French. If you wish, bring the Fathers to baptize him; but do not try to stop the torture."

Those in the crowd were looking angry, and Cyrille saw that he must seem to give way. He turned and walked off as if persuaded by the old sub-chief. Once outside the throng, he started on a run towards the chapel.

"Father!" he cried to Ragueneau as he burst into the little robing-room, "the warriors have got back and have brought a prisoner—a boy younger than I. They are going to torture him! Come and stop them!"

"It's no use," said Ragueneau, sadly; "we will only be driven from the village if we interfere. But go and baptize him, Brother Garnier; we can save the soul, if not the body. After all, what does the body matter, and a few hours more or less of pain?"

Cyrille and Garnier hurried into the crowd that surrounded the prisoner. "I wish we could do something more," the priest whispered to Cyrille, after he had administered baptism. "He's a fine-looking boy."

"I am going to try," returned Cyrille. Then he asked silence that he might speak of something concerning the welfare of the Hurons. The Indians prepared to listen, for they enjoyed a speech, and there was no need of hurrying the torture of their captive.

"The Hurons are becoming few," began Cyrille. "They

are disappearing like dead leaves that fly before the wind; and the blast that drives the Huron is the Iroquois. But the villages of the Iroquois are full of people; they never lack braves for their war-parties, though they fight often and many are killed. Why is this? Because the wise Iroquois spare their prisoners if they are young, and adopt them, making warriors of them. It is said an Iroquois by adoption is twice an Iroquois in his heart. Is this not all true?"

The men bowed their heads in grave assent, and Cyrille went on:

"Learn wisdom from your enemies. Adopt your prisoners. Here is a boy who will make a good warrior. See how well formed he is, and how brave, too. Make a Huron of him, and when he grows up he will be twice a Huron!"

Old Allewaya, head chief of the village, had come up while Cyrille was talking. Now he spoke, slowly and with authority.

"The Frenchman speaks wisely, though he is only a boy. Let the Iroquois live; perhaps he will teach our young men how to fight: yet watch him."

More than two years had passed since the Iroquois boy's capture, and he seemed to have become a real Huron. He and Cyrille were often companions in hunting and trapping expeditions. Already the young Iroquois had learned to talk in broken French.

Although Cyrille was in the service of the priests, that did not cause him to neglect his rifle and traps; and so, in this autumn of the year 1647, he had traps in the woods and along the streams, catching beaver and otter and sable and mink. One October morning he and Oussiat, the Iroquois boy, went to look at some otter-traps set on a stream to the southeast of the village. Several were broken and sprung, but all were empty.

"I think a wolf is robbing the traps," said Cyrille. "He breaks them down, takes the bait, and gets off free. See, there's his track in the mud. But I'll catch him. In the village I have a bear-trap that I brought from Quebec; it will hold a wolf easily."

Later in the day he and Oussiat brought the bear-trap and set it near one of the otter-traps that had been disturbed. They carefully covered the great iron jaws with moss.



## Two Homes

### II.—Myrtle's Home

By Rachel Dunkirk

Myrtle's home, like Johnny's, was an unexpected discovery. We did not start out to find it, because we had never heard of it, and did not know it when we first saw it. To get to Myrtle's home you crossed a beautiful trout-brook on a plank bridge that had no railing. If you were on the bridge when a wagon went over it, which was rarely, you would find yourself thoroughly shaken, for the bridge floor was not nailed, and its supports were the trunks of two large trees thrown across the brook. As soon as you crossed the brook you were in a beautiful wood. Bewitching wood-roads led off on both sides of the road; some down to the brook, leading through almost twilight darkness because of the thick foliage of the trees overhead, then into wild flower-gardens more beautiful than any cultivated flower-garden you ever saw: goldenrod, asters, daisies, everlastings, sumac, yellow grasses, like finest flowers, waving and nodding as though giving you welcome. Springs crossed the road, making beautiful tiny waterfalls on either side, or, dripping into natural basins surrounded with beautiful velvet moss and moss-covered stones, were so tempting as to compel you to drink from them. There were lovely nooks that seemed just the kind of homes the brownies love, but the only brownies you ever saw were the squirrels, and these seemed to live in the hollow trunks of trees, or stumps, from which they gazed wonderingly at you when you were wise enough to sit still

on some tree-trunk until they thought they were all alone, when they would begin their busy life which your appearance interrupted.

The road that led to Myrtle's house finally came to a clearing—rough, stony, with here and there a huge dead tree lifting its great bare arms to the sky. Grasshoppers by the millions were in these fields. They spangled your dress as you walked. The crickets sang until it seemed as if the very blades of grass must have throats with vocal chords, so full of sound was the field when you sat down to rest after the hard climb. Great clouds hung over the mountain beyond the valley in which you saw the little white church and the pretty yellow school-house. The roads ran up the hills to the north like brown ribbons, while the brook seemed to link them like a silver band as it wound in and out, reflecting the sunlight. The stony field was a steep climb to a road that was on the top of a mountain. You walked but a short distance on this road, when, if you had not been told of it, you would be startled to find a beautiful lake lying in what you might compare to a dimple right on the top of the mountain. Sometimes the lake is as blue as the heavens that seem to hover over it, again resembling nothing so much as a great drop of mercury, so still and silvery is it. Again it seems to reflect the green of the trees on its further side, while one day we saw it lashed into a fury of white caps—angry, dark, repellent, as if the summer had suddenly flown, so that you buttoned your coat when you saw it. This lake was peculiar in that no one knew what waters fed it. A beautiful brook which formed a waterfall was its outlet, but what waters fed it no one knew.

On the road, before you reached this lake, is a tiny house that at some time has been whitewashed. It is, you know at once, the home of some children who are poor. A soap-box wagon, and a thin little kitten, with a piece of red calico round its neck, lying on the piazza, tell you this. Off in the fields you can see a log house with small windows. This house at first sight you may think a barn, until you notice a rusty stovepipe coming through the roof. One day we came on to the lake road, and saw a woman coming across the field. She wore a sunbonnet, and her calico dress was patched and torn, one sleeve gone from the elbow. "Will you please tell us how to get to the road that we have been told goes through the woods on the other side of the lake?" we asked.

She looked at us curiously as she directed us, and then added:

"If ye'es a mind to go through them bars," pointing to bars directly in front of us, "and will crawl under two wire fences, ye will come to the road just by my house; that's my house over there. This is my married dorter's house, and we go that way." She turned quickly and hurried away.

We went through the bars, and then discovered a foot-path well worn. It led through a piece of swampy ground over which we had to pick our way. We crawled under two barbed-wire fences, and then found ourselves in the same field with Myrtle's house. As we came nearer we saw that there must be at least nine children looking at us through the small windows not entirely supplied with glass. As we looked back to the bars we wondered if visits were often made between the two houses, and, if so, what they did on Sunday if they "dressed up." We had vivid recollections of the dirt on our dresses after we got through the wire fences. We nodded to the children as we came nearer, but there was no response. They looked at us in round-eyed wonder, without any more expression than the cows our walk across the fields had interested. Myrtle is about fifteen: tall, thin, with a face so still that you wonder if she ever smiles. Myrtle stands back of the other children. In the front yard we found a large cooking-stove, with a long pipe; on it stood two cooking-pots. The stove was rusty, but large and strong-looking; a wash-tub, a pile of wood near the stove, a dented dish-pan, showed plainly that, in summer at least, the family had the use of a three-acre field for a kitchen, with the breezes from the lake to carry off the odors of cooking. It was a bright, sunny morning, but the door and every window in the house were tightly closed. There was not a sound but

the lazy lapping of the ripples of the lake on the shore, now and then a slow ding-dong of a cow-bell, and the chirping of the crickets in the grass. All this silence with the faces of seven children gazing at you solemnly from the one window in the front of the house! We found the road—just wheel-tracks in front of the house, not more than five feet from the cooking-stove. We followed it to the woods, and as we entered we looked back, but the house gave no signs of life. When we reached home we asked about the family, and then we heard of Myrtle. The house is two miles from the nearest school-house, over a rough, stony road the greater part of the way; about once a month the children go to school, yet Myrtle has learned to read. She learns her Sunday-school lesson, and reads as well as any of the girls in her Sunday-school class who go to school every day. She, it is evident, gets ready all the brothers and sisters who have clothes to come to Sunday-school, and pilots them to and from the tiny church. Whether she feels unequal to doing this every day, and that is the reason they do not come to day-school, or whether there are not clothes enough to go round, and those who must remain at home Sunday when the others go out are not willing to lend their wardrobes every day, no one knows. Myrtle makes no explanations. She comes down from the mountain Sunday with the three or four she has dressed—it is never the same three or four, but the clothes are always the same—gives her attention in her own class, yet always has an eye on her charges, nods her good-by, and starts up the mountain again, to appear the next Sunday.

Johnny's home is on the top of the mountain across the valley, but the two houses are as unlike as if in different lands, and both are as remote from the lives of the children who read these columns as are the homes of Japan or South America. All speak the same language; the fathers, and brothers old enough to vote, doubtless often vote for the same man for President; the homes are taxed to support the same government; but the children are as foreign, the homes as foreign, as though oceans, time, and methods of government separated them.



## A Remarkable Collector

A boy in Portland, Me., many years ago, was deeply interested in collections, and after taking up several things, minerals, stamps, and the like, he settled down to making a collection of shells. At seventeen he had developed such keenness of observation as to discover a new species of shell, and presented a paper before the Boston Society of Natural History on his discovery. In a few months he again discovered a new species that had been classified as the young of a known species. A great English naturalist visiting this country was taken to visit this boy and see his collection of shells. He was so interested that on his return to Boston he spoke of the collection to Professor Agassiz, who invited the collector to Harvard as a special student. That boy is known to the world as Professor Morse. He went to Japan as Professor of Zoölogy in the University of Tokio, and while in Japan began studying the beautiful pottery of that artistic nation, until he had become an authority, and was made judge at the Chicago Exposition. Professor Morse attributes his knowledge of Japanese pottery to the habits of close inspection acquired in his boyhood when making his collection of shells.



## Here and Elsewhere

Canada is now brought into direct communication with Honolulu. The first vessel left Vancouver for Honolulu last May. This will enable Canada to have its tropical fruits directly from, and also to sell its own products directly to, the Sandwich Islands. It is said that a third steamship is being built with a special view of transferring beef and mutton from Australia in exchange for frozen