

**George Raymond Ray**



***Kasba (White Partridge)***

**George Raymond Ray**

# **Kasba (White Partridge)**

**A Story of Hudson Bay**



Published by Good Press, 2022

[goodpress@okpublishing.info](mailto:goodpress@okpublishing.info)

EAN 4064066355081

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. AN UNPLEASANT INCIDENT.

CHAPTER II. FORT FUTURE.

CHAPTER III. KASBA FIGHTS A BITTER FIGHT.

CHAPTER IV. THE MAN OF THE SHADOWS.

CHAPTER V. AN ESKIMO CONJURER AND A PUGILISTIC ENCOUNTER.

CHAPTER VI. LOST IN THE DRIFTING SNOW.

CHAPTER VII. "THE PACKET" AT LAST.

Your ever loving

Lena ."

CHAPTER VIII. DELGEZIE'S DESPAIR.

CHAPTER IX. ENTERTAINING THE "PACKET" MEN.

CHAPTER X. A TRIP TO AN ESKIMO ENCAMPMENT.

CHAPTER XI. BROOM HAS CONSCIENTIOUS SCRUPLES AND A SORE TEMPTATION.

CHAPTER XII. AN ESKIMO ENCAMPMENT.

CHAPTER XIII. A DASTARDLY DEED.

CHAPTER XIV. GRUESOME DISCOVERIES.

CHAPTER XV. A BITTER SORROW.

CHAPTER XVI. RETRIBUTION.

CHAPTER XVII. A NARROW ESCAPE.

CHAPTER XVIII. AN INGENUOUS EXPEDIENT.

CHAPTER XIX. KASBA'S SACRIFICE.

# CHAPTER I. AN UNPLEASANT INCIDENT.

## Table of Contents

It was a bright, bitter-cold day in the short days of winter. The sun shone forlornly upon the bleak, ice-bound shores of Hudson Bay, as if in despair at its utter inability to warm the intensely cold atmosphere, or change in the slightest degree the frozen face of nature. Limitless fields of dazzling Whiteness stretched to the horizon on either hand; a tremendous expanse of turbulent ice-fields, of hills and ridges, of plains and dells; a great white world, apparently empty.

Over all was the silence of death; a silence of awful profundity, yet at the same time an indescribably beautiful revelation.

Near at hand a trapped Arctic fox lay dishevelled and bleeding, its little green eyes glittering evilly and watching with some apprehension the movements of an object which had sprung up, apparently from nowhere, to advance upon it with startling directness.

The object was Roy Thursby, an intrepid young officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, visiting his "line" of traps; a big fellow of five-and-twenty, with muscles of iron; a clean-shaven face—a noble face that betrayed a high-minded nature; eyes that as a rule were hard, but could soften; and a heart that never quailed. He was dressed in moleskin trousers, a pair of long blue stroud leggings, a coat made of hairy-deerskin (that is to say, deerskin dressed on the one side only), with a hood edged with fur, a l'Assumption belt

that encircled his waist, and large deerskin moccasins, under which he undoubtedly wore at least two pairs of hairy-deerskin socks. Mittens of dressed deerskin were suspended from his shoulders by a worsted cord, and a fur cap with earpieces completed his costume. He wore snowshoes and carried a hunting-bag across his back and a rifle over his shoulder.

Over the undulating plain he came, pausing occasionally, diverging rarely, and ever nearer.

At length there was the sound of crunching snow, the swish of snowshoes; a short, stifled bark, and a white, furry, inanimate thing lay on the snow.

Without doffing his mitts Roy reset the trap. It was a steel trap, destitute of teeth, with two springs. The jaws when spread out flat were exactly on a level with the snow. He hid the chain and brushed a thin layer of snow on top of the trap. A few scraps of fish were scattered about for bait and the whole carefully smoothed over, so that it was almost impossible to tell that anything was there.

Then he straightened himself. The air had needles in it, and he readjusted the hood of his hairy coat and tightened the wide ribbed belt around his waist.

Slipping the fox into his bag, he reached for his axe and gun, and with the long, even strides of one who could never tire, continued his "rounds," pausing now and then to "trim" a trap when nothing was in it, or killing an animal when caught and dropping it into his trapping-bag.

As he pressed on, his keen eyes, ever alert, caught a glimpse of a small dark blot moving along the face of a ridge of rocks in the foreground. He paused in his stride to

scrutinize the moving object; then, apparently satisfied, he resumed his tramp.

Yowl, yowl; kum-pack, kum-pack—ptarmigan ran uneasily together in an adjacent clump of willows. Whir-r-r, and a flock flew up at his very feet. Other flocks followed on the right and left of him, but he heeded them not, for his thoughts were on the “packet.” Somewhere in the wilderness of snow and ice to the south, two men and a train of dogs were laboring and straining every nerve to reach Fort Future. Of this the Company’s hard and fast regulations made him cognizant: but where were they? Already they were several days overdue. What could have happened to detain them? Would they reach the Fort that day? These and like questions occupied his mind.

Soon he was winding his way up a gully in the ridge of rocks, and right before him was the object he had previously descried. As he drew near, it took on the form of an Indian girl, a young and beautiful Chipewyan of about eighteen summers. She wore a blanket-skirt, very short as to length; a pair of red stroud leggings, beadwork moccasins and a thick woollen shawl, which ordinarily muffled the head and face but had now slipped back, leaving them exposed to view. She was a Chipewyan, but had scarcely a feature like them.

Her face was exquisitely moulded, and of a rich golden brown; her cheeks of coral red; her eyes large, dark and liquid, very strongly marked brows and long, thick lashes; her mouth was small and expressive, with very beautiful teeth. Her hair was neatly braided, crossed at the back of the head and tied on either side with a piece of narrow

ribbon. She turned as he approached, and, dropping a bundle of short sticks and an axe, stood with heightened color and a pretty, embarrassed look on her finely cut features, waiting for him to come up.

With eyes intent upon the trader, the girl was quite oblivious of the presence of the middle-aged man of unprepossessing appearance, who had been skulking behind her for some time. Perceiving her preoccupation, he now approached her with a stealthy tread. In a flash he leaped from the background and caught her in his arms, drew her to him with a force she could not resist, and kissed her.

He was about to repeat this, when she gaspingly cried out.

There was an answering shout, the sound of someone running, a voice that imparted courage, crying, "I am here, Kasba!" and suddenly she was wrested from the man's clutches and he was sent violently to the snow.

Palpitating with fear, the girl crouched down, hiding her face in her hands.

Roy stood breathing sharply, waiting for the man to rise. "By heaven, Broom," he thundered, in a wrath that was terrible, "this is too much! I will not stand this!"

Broom picked himself up. Instinctively his hand felt for his revolver; he evidently had no scruples against attacking an unarmed man (when Roy rushed to Kasba's assistance he had dropped his gun and it lay some few yards away), and inwardly he cursed himself for not having the weapon upon his person. "Curse you," he cried hoarsely, a paroxysm of rage almost preventing the utterance. "I'll kill you for

that!" and, roaring like a wild beast, he hurled himself upon his opponent.

The other's blazing eyes narrowed ominously. He met Broom's mad rush with a swing of his heavy arm. The impact resounded sharply, and there was considerable force behind the blow, for the brute staggered and again fell.

Recovering himself, he stood sucking his bleeding lips, and glaring venomously at his antagonist. "*You* won't stand this!" he shouted with a blast of profanity; "and who are *you*?" Then with an insolent laugh: "Oh, I see now how 'tis, I was poaching on your preserves."

The trader made a quick step toward him.

But defiantly the fellow went on: "Of course if I'd known how matters stood between you and this little——"

"Silence!" roared Roy, rushing upon him. "Silence! Speak another word and I will kill you! By heaven, I will! I will kill you where you stand!" His eyes fixed upon the other's blazing orbs and held them.

Broom was no coward, but there was such fierce wrath in the trader's look that it caused him to hesitate, and in that moment of hesitation he remembered what he had lost all thought of in his baffled fury—remembered that Roy was all-powerful in those parts, where he held the food supply and controlled the natives; that the trader could turn him adrift in the trackless wilderness to meet a certain death. And in another moment he had recovered himself.

He laughed awkwardly. "I beg pardon," he said with a sneer; "I will leave you with the—lady." Then, bowing mockingly to Kasba, who was now on her feet, he left them.

When the fellow had gone, Roy went up to the girl, and taking one of her hands softly in both his, began to comfort her. She was breathing heavily and her face was pale. "Oh, I am so terrified!" she said; "I know he will do you harm. He will kill you! Heaven! It would be terrible!"

"It wouldn't be the first time it was tried," Roy answered with an easy laugh. "Don't worry, little friend," he added, patting her hand tenderly.

A wave of color flooded the girl's face. "Oh, you are so strong, and so brave," she cried, then stopped, lost in admiration. She stood looking at him now out of half-closed eyes. Her lashes were long, and shadowed the orbs so that he could not see the expression in them. Then she smiled dazzlingly and turned her face aside, but one full blushing cheek was kept towards him and one shell-like little ear—I am afraid this heroine of ours was a natural little coquette.

Roy started a little and tried to scrutinize the girl's face more closely.

Kasba's breath came quickly, her heart palpitated wildly, the crimson deepened in her cheeks and brow. Her secret was there—plain for him to read, and he would have been blind, indeed, had he not read it.

Surprised, and somewhat startled, he dropped her hand and stepped back, looking at her uncertainly for a moment. Then Kasba laughed, a nervous little laugh, and tossing her head back, and opening her eyes wide, looked at him roguishly,—brown as a berry but a veritable little beauty.

For a few moments there was silence, then Roy turned and walked away. A profound pity was in his eyes.

But the girl's face flashed and she stamped her little foot furiously. Her teeth set tightly, her breath coming and going swiftly. Then tears trembled in her eyes, and in an irresistible impulse of yearning she threw out her arms and softly called his name. But he did not pause or look back, and she dropped her arms and bent her head with a sigh of pain. She was a little bundle of opposites, this dusky maiden.

Hitherto she had roamed the country unattended and unmolested, pure, happy, serene. Now at one blow all this was changed. Broom's assault on her had opened her eyes to the danger of wandering alone. Her violent struggles to free herself from his tight embrace had bruised her arms and bosom, and she ached in every limb. But her agony of body was as nothing compared with her agony of mind. Ignorant of the world, she knew nothing of the prejudices of rank or race, but Roy's walking away had somehow revealed their relative positions; and Kasba considered it folly to think anything good could possibly come from her unwise affection.

After a time she stooped down, and, lifting up the bundle of sticks, threw it across her back, then moved away. Erect and supple, gently swaying under her burden, she glided along.

Crossing a small pond in a deep hollow in the summit of the rocks, she came in sight of her father's hut, which stood quite alone, at some little distance from the Fort, in the sheltering angle of a ridge of rocks.

Delgezie, her father, was a widower, and as Kasba was his only child he showered all the love of his poor old heart

upon her. Nothing was too good for her, no sacrifice too great. She had been brought up at Churchill, and though he still clung to many of the superstitions of his race, he had allowed her to attend the day school conducted by the missionary, and in the end to spend most of her childhood at the Mission, for the missionary's wife had soon become fond of the bright little motherless girl, and had easily persuaded the doting old man that it was to the girl's advantage. So it had come about that it was to this good lady Kasba owed her superior manners and refinement.

Kasba had been exceedingly happy in those days. But since she had come with her father to Fort Future a deep shadow had come into her young life. She had offered Roy Thursby all the love of her warm little heart and he had turned from it. She was intensely miserable. In her present misery she thought of those cloudless days, and a sigh escaped her.

"You are sad, Kasba," said a voice in Chipewyan at her side.

The girl stopped and looked up. It was Sahanderry, a tall, active-looking native.

Kasba turned to him with a wan smile. She was fond of Sahanderry, for she had known him all her life; besides, he wished to marry her. Remembering how quickly Roy had turned away on discovering her secret love for him, a feeling of tenderness came over her for this Indian. "Should she spoil his life?" she asked herself. "What had she to do with love? The girls of her race," she argued, "had no voice in the choosing of their husbands." For the first time in her life she felt discontented with her lot.

“Leave it, Sahanderry,” she said, a trifle bitterly, as he reached up to take the bundle from her back. “It’s contrary to the customs of our race for men to carry wood; that’s woman’s work.”

Sahanderry looked at her a moment in surprise.

“But you are not like the other women of our race,” he urged, quietly.

“Still I am a Chipewyan,” she burst forth. Then seeing the pained, puzzled expression on his face, she put out her hand tenderly and touched him on the arm. “Forgive me,” she said, “I am sorry. I did not mean to be unkind. What I meant to say was that I’m a Chipewyan and must follow the customs of my people.” With this she walked on.

The man stood bewildered. He could not understand Kasba in her present mood. He had often met her in this way and she had never before objected to his taking her burden. He felt she was behaving unfairly. He watched her for a moment, then, like a faithful dog, slowly followed after. He had not gone far, however, before he saw her stop and look round. At this, he quickened his footsteps, caught up with her and walked close behind her, for the rest of the way in silence.

Arriving at the hut, the girl dropped her load and entered, and instantly attended to the fire.

The hut was built of logs, caulked with moss, and had a flat roof. It comprised only one room. In the centre of this was a large Carron stove, the pipes from which completely encircled the room before bolting out of a hole in the roof to carry off the smoke. The walls were bare of paint and ornamented with snowshoes, dog-whips, shotbags and such

other paraphernalia of the chase. A few rude shelves held such articles as a clock and a lamp, while the table was of rough plank, and a few empty cases did duty for chairs. Pushed against the rear wall and opposite the door were two narrow beds, neatly covered with deerskin robes. High overhead several long sticks or poles had been suspended horizontally to form a rack or shelf, on the theory that heat rises, and half-a-dozen fish lay there slowly thawing out, while several pairs of moccasins, in various stages of dryness, dangled from it by their strings. The place, though primitive, was clean and tidy, and bore unmistakable signs of a woman's careful attention.

Sahanderry brought in an armful of wood, which he dropped beside the stove. Kasba reached out her hand blindly, placed a few of the pieces gingerly upon the embers and blew the whole into a blaze; then, satisfied that the fire was well under way, she rose from her knees, and putting off her outdoor clothing, selected half-a-dozen ptarmigan from a number on the table, and, seating herself on an empty sugar-case, commenced to pluck the birds into a large tin bowl at her feet. She worked the faster because a dull pain was making itself felt in her heart.

There was silence. Presently the man fumbled in his pocket and brought forth a knife and a plug of nigger-head, which he proceeded to cut up on a corner of the table. He glanced at the girl slyly.

The noise of the tobacco-cutting and the crackling of the fire were the only sounds to break the stillness.

Having duly and solemnly finished the operation, Sahanderry took out his pipe, which he leisurely filled.

Presently there was a grunt of satisfaction, and a cloud of smoke issued from his mouth.

The girl threw him a furtive glance. He happened to be looking at her at that instant and caught her in the act. Kasba dropped her head. A wistful expression came into the man's face, and laying aside his pipe, he leaned forward, as if to get a closer look at her countenance, but she dropped her head still lower.

"Kasba," he said earnestly, then stooped over her, gently tilting her chin upwards so that he could see her face more closely, "why won't you promise to marry me when we get back to Churchill?"

"Because I am a bad, wicked Indian," she said presently with a show of impulse, and tearing herself free.

The man stood staring at her, thunderstruck. "*You bad! You wicked!*" he ejaculated, greatly amazed. Then, suddenly his look of amazement changed to one of outrage. His brow darkened and his eyes struck fire. "If *Bekothrie* (master) has ——" he began, shaking his fist in the air.

But the girl sprang to her feet and stopped him with some little excitement. The bird she was plucking fell from her lap to the feathers in the bowl and sank out of sight. "Hush, Sahanderry!" she cried, severely. "Remember, it is of the master you are speaking."

The man fairly hung his head.

Now Kasba with all her impetuosity possessed considerable sense of justice and grasping his arm tightly, she went on resolutely. "You must not speak against Mr. Thursby. This trouble is all of my own making. I alone am to

blame. I have been very silly, and—if you will forgive me and be patient with me, I—I—” she dropped her head.

“You will love me?” he suggested, eagerly, his face betraying the liveliest emotions.

She was silent several moments, then raised her face, a little paler than it had been, but with a passionless resolve set on it. “If I can,” she responded bravely, giving him her hands. “I will *try* to love you, I—” she stopped and his arms went about her.

“You make me very happy!” he said. Then he kissed her.

She closed her eyes to shut out the look on his face, and pushed him gently from her. “No, no; not now!” she said, all in a tremble. “Give me time. Give this evil spell time to pass away, and be good and patient with me.”

“I will be patient, Kasba,” he said, pressing her hand.

The man’s actions reminded her sharply of how soothingly another had patted her hand shortly before, how the other’s touch had caused the blood to dance in her veins and to rush to her face and her heart to beat so wildly with joy that it had shown itself in her eyes; and she withdrew her hand quickly.

“What is the matter?” enquired Sahanderry, feeling the rebuke.

“Nothing,” replied the girl a trifle coldly and drawing back a little. “You had better go now, the master will be wanting you.”

The man bowed his head mutely, and turned slowly on his heel. At the door he looked back. She smiled at him, but there was a great deal of sadness in the look. He returned the smile and went out.

The girl stood still and watched him go. Then with her handkerchief she rubbed vigorously at her cheek—the place where Sahanderry had kissed her.

# CHAPTER II. FORT FUTURE.

## Table of Contents

Fort Future consisted of a solitary group of small buildings situated near the mouth of Chesterfield Inlet, which is in the Barren Lands. It seemed as if the buildings must have sprung up there of themselves, like so many mushrooms; or must have been dropped from the heavens, or else carried there by one of those raging, tearing windstorms that sweep over that part of the country, so incongruous did they appear in that vast northern wilderness.

Nevertheless, Fort Future was a comfortable place in its way—at least so said Roy Thursby; for he, like most of the Company's officers, was acquainted with starvation, solitude and desolation, and knew there were posts compared with which Fort Future, with its unfailing supply of country provisions, was a veritable paradise. Broom called it "a rotten hole," "the last place that God Almighty made," and by much worse names; all of which Roy would laughingly refute by telling him that he was a sailor, and therefore never satisfied; that for himself he had no objections to banishment; and Broom would retaliate by asserting that Roy was a Hudson's Bay man, that the Company owned him body and soul, and that he was there because he had been sent—which was true as to the last part. The Hudson's Bay Company had required a fearless and staunch man to establish a post at Chesterfield Inlet, and after some

correspondence with his chief—Roy was then second in charge at York Factory—Thursby had been chosen. His willingness to go, if ever thought of at all, had been looked upon as a mere matter of course. The Company's interests had to be attended to, therefore go he must, willing or unwilling. Luckily for him, and perhaps for the Company too, the enterprise had appealed to the strong spirit of adventure in the young officer, and he had entered into the scheme with eagerness and made his arrangements with all enthusiasm, treating the prospective dangers with total indifference. The wonderful Far North breeds men of this stamp: men of courage, resourcefulness and self-reliance; men who fear nothing and live hard.

That was more than a year ago, and in the interval he had established the post and enthroned himself, so to speak, monarch of all he surveyed. He held his kingdom and ruled his subjects—wandering bands of Eskimo, who displayed a curious mixture of simplicity and fear and a disposition to high-handed robbery with an indomitable will and daring courage. The works of some Arctic voyagers describe the Eskimos as inveterate thieves and of murderous dispositions, while others speak of them as honest, good-natured fellows, which is perplexing. But the fact is, both descriptions are true, even of people of the same tribe, which proves the Eskimo character is a difficult problem to solve. At one time he may be good and amiable, and at another all that is bad and treacherous. Much depends upon conditions.

Besides himself, the resident population of Fort Future consisted of five other human beings, to wit: the man

Broom, Kasba, Delgezie, Sahanderry, and a boy named David. The last four were Chipewyan Indians from Churchill. In fact, save these and a few wandering bands of Eskimo, there was not another human being to be found within a hundred miles of this desolate spot in any direction, and then only a few transient visitors such as came with American and other whalers.

Roy Thursby was a bachelor, though not indisposed to change his estate under favorable conditions, as we shall see; Sahanderry cooked for him and did the general housework, while Kasba washed and mended his clothes.

The Fort stood on an old gravel beach about five miles from the coast. The inlet or river widened immediately before it, and miles of ice hummocks extended where once the restless wave had raised its angry crest; countless masses thrown up into weird, fantastic shapes by the peculiar workings of some mysterious submarine power, their formation was constantly changing in these strange upheavals. The establishment consisted of a few one-storey log buildings. The trading-store, warehouse, and one or two minor stores were grouped together, while the "master's" house stood apart in the background. A small coast-boat, hauled well above high-water mark, lay propped up in its winter quarters; a flagstaff reared its head skywards; and a number of Eskimo dogs ran about among the buildings or lay curled up in the snow, their long hairy coats covered with rime.

Roy Thursby was worried. Broom's assault on Kasba foreshadowed trouble, and much of it, in the future. Also, Roy was greatly annoyed. At first he was determined to

make Broom “hit the track.” His presence at the Fort would now be a constant menace to his peace of mind. Therefore the fellow must go.

But as he became calmer, Roy’s better nature asserted itself. He remembered that terms of familiarity prevailed among Broom’s late associates, and he decided, after severely cautioning him, to let the unpleasant incident drop.

Broom had lived two years among the Eskimos. A man of a different nature and a higher moral tone might have improved the natives during this two years. But the fellow had drifted with the current of popular custom and had adopted tribal manners and usages. I do not think he would have ill-treated a woman; but he looked upon them as being created solely for the use and pleasure of man.

Then, too, Roy was distressed at discovering Kasba’s secret. The knowledge that Kasba loved him surprised and pained him beyond measure. For he was not a vain man. He had always admired the girl, she was so quiet, and had such pretty, shy little ways and gestures; but beyond thinking of her as a pleasant little thing to have about him, he had never given her a thought. Under the new conditions he hardly knew what to do. There was a deep tinge of pity for her in his thoughts. The matter was still puzzling him when he arrived at the door of his dwelling.

The dogs greeted him with suppressed growls of welcome. Jumping up, they sniffed enquiringly at the bag on his back. With a “Down, Flyer, Mush, Klondike!” he slipped his feet out of his snowshoe lines and crossed the threshold.

The two-roomed house contained a kitchen and what served as a bed-room and living-room; had only one door,

and very few windows. There was little of luxury. In the kitchen a large cookstove, on which several kettles stood simmering and emitting little clouds of steam, was the chief ornament. A very serviceable water-barrel stood in one corner, while a large wood-box occupied another. Pots and pans hung from nails in the walls and a heavy table of rough plank occupied a position near the stove. The floor was of plank and well swept, for Roy was fastidious. The walls of the other room were white-washed, the chairs and table all country-made and unpainted. A large wooden clock ticked solemnly on the wall, and there were pictures and photographs tacked up or standing on shelves, with a conglomeration of other small articles more or less useful.

Roy dropped the bag from his shoulders and emptied its contents on the kitchen floor. There were three white foxes and a blue one. These he hung up to thaw. Then he stepped into the inner room and there pulled off his outdoor clothing.

Seated in a chair, with his feet resting on the lower of two bunks which were fitted on one side of the room, was Broom. He was reading a book with a paper cover brilliantly illuminated—one of those “Three-Fingered Jack” series of stories so eagerly devoured by uncultured minds.

Broom shut the book as Roy entered the room. He nodded familiarly, distorted his swollen lips into a smile and dropped his feet to the floor. “Well, what luck?” he inquired with feigned interest.

“Three whites and a blue,” replied the trader. He tried to put some heartiness into his words, but the irritation he still felt at the man held him back. He went back to the kitchen to wash his hands, and Broom returned to his book.

Pausing in his ablutions, Roy threw the man a searching glance. He now had a great mistrust of him. And here I may perhaps best explain who Broom was, as he is a gentleman with whom we shall have much concern in these pages.

Broom was a runaway sailor. Deserting his ship at Cape Fullerton, he had one day turned up at Fort Future. He might be one of those worthless characters found in all occupations, but he was a white man, and that had been enough for Roy Thursby. Besides he had shown considerable courage in attempting a solitary journey down the coast to the Fort. This appealed to Roy and he had allowed him to stay on, intending to give him a passage in the coast-boat that went south in the spring. At first the runaway had been very energetic. He had made himself useful about the place and regularly attended the few traps he had put down, as he laughingly remarked, to keep himself in tobacco, but latterly he had slackened off and appeared discontented. He displayed fits of irritability and moodiness. Roy had noticed this, and after Broom's late outbreak he seriously doubted his wisdom in having harbored him. Debating the question, he went back to the inner room and sat down; then in very plain language told the sailor what he thought of his conduct. Broom looked at him through half-closed lids; his lips were still parted, but the smile was gone. Then he exploded. "Hang it all!" he said sulkily; "you needn't be hard on a fellow."

"Well, behave yourself, then," said Roy, firmly, and having spoken his mind he would have dropped the subject.

But the other did not seem disposed to allow him. "She's a pretty little baggage for an Indian," he asserted, "and

what's more, she knows it."

Roy directed a searching glance at the sneering face of the speaker, but paid no attention to the remark except, perhaps, that he raised his eyebrows a little. He naturally possessed more self-control than most young men of five and twenty. He was high-spirited, and could not brook an insult; but he was inclined to consider the source of a remark before he retaliated. Besides, he wished to avoid another quarrel, for he knew it would serve to widen the breach already broad enough between them.

"Wonder some Indian brave hasn't snapped her up and carried her off to his happy wigwam," Broom went on. "But there!" he added, "I suppose she'd turn up her pretty little nose at a native. She wants a white man." Then, with emphasis there was no misunderstanding, "and no understrapper at that."

Jumping to his feet, Roy stood before the fellow. A flush of manifest vexation burned upon his cheek. His hands clenched involuntarily. His eyes flashed, but restraining himself, he said: "Look here, Broom, that's enough! I'll have no more of your veiled insinuations, or hear any more disrespectful remarks about that girl."

The sailor laughed quietly for a moment as if he had some mighty good joke in his mind, then with a half-deprecative, half-protesting movement of the hand, "All right," he said, "don't get on your ear. There's no need for us to quarrel over a native."

"But I strongly object to the tone you adopt when speaking of the girl," persisted Roy, indignantly, "and while we are on the subject I may as well tell you that I will not