

DEAN'S
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THE
FORTUNATE ESCAPE.



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DURING the French and Indian war,

when the red man, in merciless rage, scalped for bounty—on a lovely summer's evening, when the trees, the golden flowers, and the green waving grass, all seemed to echo back the evening song of the birds in their homeward flight, strange though it may seem that ever care or anxiety should have been banished from the mind at such a fearful time—yet I remember my heart was light. Edward had taken Monson, the hired man, who worked with him upon this farm, and each, with gun and knapsack, had gone to drive up the cows to be milked. Just as I put aside my spinning-wheel, and laid the cloth for our supper, the discharge of a gun, in the direction of the pasture-land, filled my heart with fear—for I knew that the Indians lurked about, with tomahawk and scalping-knife. We got up a rally from the neighbourhood, and went forth to seek our missing ones. Oh! how my heart died within me, when Edward, my eldest son, and your own paternal grandfather, met me on his return, and falling, sorrow-stricken, ex-

claimed, "Mother! oh, mother! we must try to bear our trouble. Father is nowhere to be found, and the ground is all bespattered with blood—those cruel, blood-thirsty beings!" We could not indulge in hope, and the only conclusion was, that mine was a widowed and fatherless family. I must not pain you, my dear children, by the rehearsal of our sorrows and sufferings—our regrets for the loved and best, the good and the brave, whose tortures, perhaps, we were never to know. We had enough of this world's goods; we did not want for bread. We had friends, too. Your grandfather was a good boy then, a lad of fourteen years, and manfully he strove to drive away the despair which daily threatened to cloud my mind for ever. In vain were all such efforts. To me, no beauty was there in the morning sun, no joy in the song of the evening birds; my heart withered and died daily; nor could I be comforted, because he "was not." Thus had passed away four dreary months; and, one day, I came in from a little thicket of hemlock

near the door, where I had been cutting a



broom. Your grandfather sat in his seat,

evidently trying to conceal some strong overwhelming emotion ; the younger children sat about the seat you now occupy, looking very archly at each other. I stopped to warm my hands by the fire, when my eye rested upon this sacred thing—relic of my early love, and harbinger of peace. It had been placed there on purpose to attract my attention. I could see there was joy in the faces of my children, and I knew my husband lived ! “ Where is your father ? ” I asked, “ For I know he has come. ” The voice of my beloved Edward responded in these words, “ *Here am I, my Mary !* ” To pourtray the happiness of that moment, words were but a mockery. Our greeting was mutual ; and that was the time I first gave my heart to God, when I saw my own dependence, prayed earnestly for the forgiveness of sin, saw my Saviour, and knew the happiness of a ransomed soul. My children, the Angel Gabriel hovered over this house, ready to bear the glad tidings of a newly-born soul to Heaven, and “ Gabriel ! Gabriel ! ” I

shouted, "stop a moment longer, and carry the glad tidings of one more newborn soul to Heaven." It was even so. My husband laid hold of the cross with me; we were received and blessed together.

A change passed over the countenance of that aged woman; her white lip quivered; she cast upon us a benignant and happy smile; she spoke again, "God bless you, my children; I am going home to Heaven." Her hand fell upon the Bible before her, and Mary Hunter had passed away.

The remainder of this story was told me by my father. When the Indians came upon Edward Hunter and Monson, both guns were loaded; and, had not Monson been so cowardly a spirit, my great grandsire would have stood his ground with any number of them, while ammunition lasted. He directed Monson to re-load after the first shot, wherewith he killed one; but, turning to take, as he expected, a loaded gun, there was the fearful and cowardly fellow being dragged

by the heels, from the stump of a hollow tree, by two of the red men. They were carried prisoners to Canada by a tribe of Indians, enduring great sufferings, and were afterwards redeemed by our Government, and sent home.

