The Devil's Own

A Romance of the Black Hawk War

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CHAPTER II—Continued.

"Seems to be a mighty populous river up this way, too, Mayne?" he remarked presently. "Unsteady crowd every bend."

"What do you mean? Have you picked up others?"

"Certainly, here. Hit a keelboat twenty miles below."

"A keelboat squatted in stream?"

"Couldn't say as to that. Was it, Mayne? The craft had gone down when I got on deck. Had four aboard, but we got 'em all off and steered 'em back there in the mean. You better get along now and attack those settlers' fathers."

The captain turned rather sharply away, and I was thrust through an open cabin door by the grasp of the mate before I could readily secure the true meaning of the unexpected news. Mayne passed long enough to gruffly indicate a coarse suit of clothes draped over a stool, and was about to withdraw without further words when I recovered sufficiently from the shock to halt him with a question.

"I suppose you now have people picked up from the river, Mayne?"

"Sure; helped pull 'em ab-oard. A d——d queer combination, if you ask me; two nigger wenches, Joe Kirby and a deputy sheriff from St. Louis way."

"Nothing more, you say? Both are dressed?"

"Well, there's what Joe said they were, and it reckons he knew. However you can wash yourself in your own room, I s'pose, and the deputy he of finer sense story—and the deputy he of finer sense story—and the deputy he of finer sense story—