

**THE RED MAN'S REVENGE:
A TALE OF THE RED RIVER
FLOOD, PP. 2-264**

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The Red Man's Revenge: A Tale of The Red River Flood, pp. 2-264 by R. M. Ballantyne

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VICTOR AND IAN ON THE SHORES OF LAKE WINNIPEG.—Page 27.
(Frontispiece.)

THE RED MAN'S REVENGE

A Tale of
THE RED RIVER FLOOD.

By R. M. BALLANTYNE,

AUTHOR OF "PORT HANBY;" "IN THE TRACK OF THE TROOPS;" "THE SETTLER AND
THE SAVAGE;" "UNDER THE WAVES;" "RIVERS OF ICE;" "BLACK IVORY;"
"THE PIRATE CITY;" "THE NORSEMEN IN THE WEST;" "THE IRON
HORSE;" "THE FLOATING LIGHT;" "ERLING THE BOLD;"
"FIGHTING THE FLAMES;" "SHIFTING WINDS;" "DEEP
DOWN;" "THE LIGHTHOUSE;" "THE LIFEBOAT;"
"GASCOYNE;" "THE GOLDEN DREAM,"
ETC. ETC.

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PREFACE

THE small and scattered settlement on the banks of Red River, of the north, was a sort of oasis in the desert of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories at the time of the occurrence of the great Flood which forms the groundwork of this tale. It was much the same when I sojourned there in 1841-42. It is now, under the new name of Winnipeg, a rising frontier town of the Dominion of Canada, in the province of Manitoba.

All the details, as well as the leading incidents of the flood, are, I believe, in strict accordance with fact. The tale itself is fiction.

R. M. B.

HARROW-ON-THE-HILL, 1880.

bluff, jovial, fiery, hot-tempered, irascible old father, that girl was Elsie Ravenshaw.

Although a gem, Elsie was exceedingly imperfect. Had she been the reverse she would not have been worth writing about.

Old Ravenshaw, as his familiars styled him, was a settler, if we may use such a term in reference to one who was, perhaps, among the most unsettled of men. He had settled with his family on the banks of the Red River. The colony on that river is now one of the frontier towns of Canada. At the time we write of, it was a mere oasis in the desert, not even an offshoot of civilisation, for it owed its existence chiefly to the fact that retiring servants of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company congregated there to spend the evening of life, far beyond the Canadian boundary, in the heart of that great wilderness where they had spent their working days, and on the borders of that grand prairie where the red man and the buffalo roamed at will, and the conventionalities of civilised life troubled them not.

To this haven of rest Samuel Ravenshaw had retired, after spending an active life in the service of the fur-traders, somewhat stiffened in the joints by age and a rough career, and a good deal soured in disposition because of promotion having, as he thought, been too long deferred.

Besides Elsie, old Ravenshaw possessed some other gems of inferior lustre. His wife Maggie, a stout, well-favoured lady, with an insufficient intellect and unbounded good humour, was of considerable intrinsic value, but highly unpolished. His second daughter, Cora, was a thin slip of sixteen years, like her mother in some respects—pretty, attractive, and disposed to take life easily. His eldest son, Victor, a well-grown lad of

fourteen, was a rough diamond, if a diamond at all, with a soul centred on sport. His second son, Anthony, between five and six, was large and robust, like his father. Not having been polished at that time, it is hard to say what sort of gem Tony was. When engaged in mischief—his besetting foible—his eyes shone like carbuncles with unholy light. He was the plague of the family. Of course, therefore, he was the beloved of his parents.

Such were the chief inmates of Willow Creek, as old Ravenshaw styled his house and property.

It was midwinter. The owner of Willow Creek stood at his parlour window, smoking and gazing. There was not much to look at, for snow had overwhelmed and buried the landscape, fringed every twig of the willows, and obliterated the frozen river.

Elsie was seated by the stove, embroidering a pair of moccasins.

"Victor is bringing down some of the lads to shoot to-day, father," she said, casting a furtive glance at her sire.

"Humph! that boy does nothing but shoot," growled the old man, who was a giant in body if not in spirit. "Who all is he bringing?"

"There's John Flett, and David Mowat, and Sam Hayes, and Herr Winkleman, and Ian Macdonald, and Louis Lambert—all the best shots, I suppose," said Elsie, bending over her work.

"The best shots!" cried Mr. Ravenshaw, turning from the window with a sarcastic laugh. "Louis Lambert, indeed, and Winkleman are crack shots, and John Flett is not bad, but the others are poor hands. Mowat can only shoot straight with a crooked gun, and as for that half-cracked schoolmaster, Ian Macdonald, he would miss a barn door at fifty paces unless he were to shut his eyes and fire at random, in which case he'd have some chance—"

"Here they is; the shooters is comin'. Hooray!" shouted Master Anthony Ravenshaw, as he burst into the room with a scalping-knife in one hand and a wooden gun in the other. "An' I's goin' to shoot too, daddy!"

"So you are, Tony, my boy!" cried the old trader, catching up the pride of his heart in his strong arms and tossing him towards the ceiling. "You shall shoot before long with a real gun."

Tony knocked the pipe out of his father's mouth, and was proceeding to operate on his half-bald head with the scalping-knife, when Cora, who entered the room at the moment, sprang forward and wrenched the weapon from his grasp.

"We'll give them dinner after the shooting is over, shan't we, father?" asked Cora.

"Of course, my dear, of course," replied the hospitable old gentleman, giving the pride of his heart a sounding kiss as he put him down. "Set your mother to work on a pie, and get Miss Trim to help you with a lot of those cakes you make so famously."

As he spoke there was a sudden clattering in the porch. The young men were taking off their snow-shoes and stamping the snow from off their leggings and moccasined feet.

"Here we are, father!" cried a bright, sturdy youth, as he ushered in his followers. "Of course Elsie has prepared you for our sudden invasion. The fact is that we got up the match on the spur of the moment, because I found that Ian had a holiday."

"No explanation required, Victor. Glad to see you all, boys. Sit down," said Mr. Ravenshaw, shaking hands all round.

The youths who were thus heartily welcomed presented a *fine manly* appearance. They were clad in the capotes,