

# **A HERO OF TICONDEROGA**

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A hero of Ticonderoga by Rowland E. Robinson

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**ROWLAND E. ROBINSON**

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TICONDEROGA**





*Yours sincerely,*

*Rowland E. Robinson*

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OF  
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BY  
ROWLAND E. ROBINSON



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TO MR  
ANDERSON

# A Hero of Ticonderoga

## CHAPTER I

### COMING INTO THE WILDERNESS

The low sun of a half-spent winter afternoon streaked and splashed the soft undulations of the forest floor with thin, infrequent lines, and scattered blotches of yellow light among the thickening shadows.

A solitary hunter, clad in buckskin and gray homespun, thriddled his way among the gray trunks of the giant trees, now blended with them and their shadows, now briefly touched by

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a glint of sunlight, now casting up the powdery snow from the toes of his snowshoes in a pearly mist, now in a golden shower, yet moving as silently as the trees stood, or shadows brooded, or sunlight gleamed athwart them.

Presently he approached a narrow road that tunnelled, rather than seamed, the forest, for the giant trees which closely pillared its sides spread their branches across it, leaving the vast forest arch unbroken.

In the silence of the hour and season, which was but emphasized by the outcry of a suspicious jay and the gentler notes of a bevy of friendly chickadees, the alert ear of the hunter caught a less familiar sound. Faint and distant as it was, he at once recognized in it the slow tread of oxen and the creak of runners in the dry snow, and, standing a little aloof from

the untrodden road, he awaited the coming of the possibly unwelcome invaders of the wilderness.

A yoke of oxen soon appeared, swaying along at a sober pace, the breath jetting from their nostrils in little clouds that arose and dissolved in the still air with that of their driver, who stood on the front of a sled laden with a full cargo of household stuff. Far behind the sled stretched the double furrow of the runners, deep-scored lines of darker blue than the universal shadow of the forest, a steadfast wake to mark the course of the voyager till the next snow-storm or the spring thaw cover it or blot it out. As the oxen came opposite the motionless hunter, his attendant jay uttered a sudden discordant cry.

"Whoa, hush! Whoa haw, there! What are you afraid of now? That's nothin' but a jay squallin'." The

strong voice of the driver rang through the stillness of the woods, overbearing the monotonous tread of the oxen, the creak of the sled, and the responsive swish and creak of the snow beneath feet and runners.

Unmindful of his voice, the oxen still swerved from the unbeaten track of the forest road and threatened to bring the off runner against one of the great trees that bordered it. The driver sprang from his standing place, and, running forward alongside the cattle, quickly brought them to a halt with a few reassuring words, and a touch of his long, blue-beech gad across their faces.

Looking into the woods to see what had alarmed them, he became aware of the man standing a little way off, as motionless as the great tree trunks around him. Seeing the oxen were now under control, the latter ad-