



INDIAN TALES,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF AMERICAN LIFE,

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THE HISTORY OF

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INDIAN TARIFF

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THE TRAPPER'S BRIDE:

A TALE OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

WITH

THE ROSE OF OUISCONSIN.

BY

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PERCY B. ST. JOHN, 1821-1889.
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TO W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

A very sincere admiration of your genius, which has so delightfully enriched the body of modern literature, and a sense of your kindness in bringing my name before the public as a contributor to that able Magazine which has enabled you to foster many a young author, induces me to offer you this my first separate original effort.

That you may long continue to delight not only your countrymen, but our Transatlantic brethren, and those who enjoy your productions in various European languages, with a constant flow of rich romance, is the sincere desire of

Yours ever faithfully,

PERCY B. ST. JOHN.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE American Indians have always been a subject of deep interest to the author of this little volume. A residence in the wilds of America, in the back woods of Texas, and much study, have rendered him familiar with the scenes and habits which he has endeavoured to illustrate. The approbation bestowed upon certain Indian Tales and Sketches which have lately appeared in various periodicals* has led to the present more serious effort. Should it be received with any favour, the author will endeavour at a future period to bring before his readers sketches, scenes, and tales, illustrative of other phases in American life; life in Texas, among the wild Comanches, among the Mandans, the Sioux, the Seminoles, and other famous tribes of the New World.

* In Ainsworth's Magazine, in Bentley's Miscellany, the United Service Magazine; in Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, and other quarters.

THE TRAPPER'S BRIDE.

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CHAPTER I.

FORT BENT.

Few instances exist on record of industry so indefatigable in the pursuit of gain, amid dangers and difficulties, as that offered by the American trappers and gentlemen traders who, in the Great Prairie wilderness, in the Rocky Mountains, on the arid plains of Oregon, amid the perils of the Santa Fè caravan-trade, and all the various outlying posts of the vast interior, pursue a commerce which, characterised by features romantic and striking, must ever be viewed with feelings of interest and curiosity.

Thousands of hardy men, abandoning for ever

their native villages, and rarely, if ever, returning within the settlements, becoming utterly averse to the restraints of civilized life, start across the frontier, where, either on their own account, or in the service of some one of the more opulent adventurers, they become beaver-hunters, trappers, or carry on a system of barter with the Indians. No life is more fraught with constant peril, and no occupation can be less permanently advantageous to those on whom devolves all the hard work of this peculiar commerce. Leaving the station where they have wintered, the trapper, often alone, takes his departure for the mountains, and there, during a whole season, pursues his avocations, perhaps more than a thousand miles from any spot inhabited by civilized man; living on the produce of his gun, eating buffalo and elk meat, often half-starved, always in fear of the treacherous Eutaws, the roving Comanche, the wild Apachè, and the root-eating Shoshonie. The bare ground is their only bed, where, by the light of some well-concealed fire, deep in a woody glen

overhung by willow or spruce, the lone trapper sleeps with the wolf or panther growling within twenty feet, and only scared from attacking himself and horse by the blazing fire of cedar-logs. Hundreds perish from the arrows and tomahawks of the red-skins, that, in the Rocky Mountains, in that vast, lovely, and fertile valley, called the Bayou Salade, in the exquisite "Old Park," swarm by thousands; but hundreds also escape, and, concealing the produce of the chase in the numerous cachés known only to themselves, at the end of the season pour down upon the trading posts—upon Fort Bent, upon Brown's Hole, upon Vancouver; and there, during the winter season, swim in whiskey and float in tobacco-smoke; or, perhaps, wedding some loved Indian maid, settle down into more steady members of society. These marriages are common in the extreme, and from the submissive and resigned nature of the Indian female character, combined with their industry and power of enduring labour and fatigue, the unions are generally happy. The rude trappers find in

them obedient wives, to whom their word is law, and who, without a murmur, take upon themselves all the duties of the household, and even more than the duties. It would indeed be a difficult matter, if, under such circumstances, the husband found much cause for complaint.

Far in the interior of the Great Prairie wilderness, about six weeks' journey from the outermost verge of civilization in the United States, and some eighty miles from Taos, in New Mexico, is situated Bent Fort, a trading-post on the upper waters of the Arkansas. To this spot we must now request the reader's attention during a brief period.

It was at early dawn, the gates of the fort were not yet opened.

At no great distance from the post, and close to the river, is a little valley, or rather ravine, the summit of which, on each side, is skirted by a few aged willows and certain small bushes, the soil being inimical to anything of more generous growth, while a short stunted grass composes the

interior of the slope. Round the mouth of the vale grazed a number of horses and mules, confined within certain limits by the lariat. Beyond these, as the surface fell away towards the river, might have been seen the scattered tents of an Indian encampment, and, on nearer approach, the voices of many children rushing forth to healthful exercise, or to splash in the sedgy banks of the Arkansas, would have been distinctly heard. As yet no other movement could have been detected within the semicircle of wigwams forming the Eutaw camp, but on that ridge of the valley which lay nearest to the fort stood one to whom our attention is forcibly drawn.

Leaning his arms on his gay and polished rifle, of slight but wiry make, stood a young man in an attitude of deep reflection. A fringed deer-skin frock, leggins and mocassins of the same, with a cap of bear's fur, formed his sole attire, if we except the various hunting accoutrements, which in those regions are more indispensable than gloves and stocks to gentlemen in these civilized

divisions of the universe. The face of the youth was dark, but, brown as it was, no Indian blood aided in tinging his complexion. The burning sun of the plains, the chilly blasts and snows of the loftier ranges, the constant exposure to which all American hunters are liable, made his skin such as to be easily mistaken for that of the aborigines; but Pierre Lancel was born almost within sight of Léman Lake, a free Switzer.

Originally intended for the church, as a Roman catholic priest, Pierre, whose soul yearned for liberty of action, had fled from his native village, and, by a strange fancy for one who sighed for independence, had enlisted in one of the regiments of a neighbouring state. Finding the musket and drilling even more uncongenial than fasting, prayers, and vespers, and the barracks as strict confinement as a cell, Pierre again absconded, and, like many hundred of his countrymen, sought refuge in America, where his yearning for utter freedom of action and will were again doomed to be disappointed, as are, indeed, the expectations

of most who there seek "a crust of bread and liberty."

At length, however, his journey carried him beyond the limits of civilization; and now Pierre had during four years been an independent trapper, one of those who for months at a time wandered through the sublime scenes of grandeur and magnificence—through the soft beautiful valleys—the lakes—the thousand rills, rivers, and brooks—the romantic glens—the gravel knolls—the bluffs of sand and limestone—the ravines hundreds of feet in depth—the mighty insular mounds of earth, towering on all sides—the embankment of congregated hills—deep and irregular chasms—frowning precipices and hideous fractures which compose the Rocky Mountains.

"It is mighty disagreeable," muttered the young man to himself, "mighty! Not a thing in this wide world have I which I can call mine own, save this rifle, and that—Heaven bless the jade—I'll never part with. And yet have her I must, though what 'swap' I am to offer, is more than I can justly hit upon!"

The young hunter shook his head.

“These cunning devils know I will have her, no matter what she costs me, and the price has been made high in proportion to the strength of my wish to have her. But I fear I may wish, since all my earnings are long since gone, and wait until next season I cannot. Ah me!”

It may be supposed the young man was musing on the feared disappointment of losing a favourite horse or mule, which having intended to purchase, his improvidence had left him no means of so doing. By no means, however. The subject which occupied his thoughts was the fair daughter of the Eutaw chief, with whom the young Swiss had fallen deeply in love, and whom he was just then unable to purchase. Let not the sensitive mind be alarmed without reason. It is no new feature in the terrible history of slavery that we are giving publicity to. Certainly on all occasions when a white man honoured a red-skin girl with his affection, the parents or guardians fixed a price upon her possession, which price paid, the woman was

ever after the property of the purchaser. But is it alone amid the wild Indians of the American prairies that this custom prevails? If we look around, we shall find the fair daughters of Europe brought to market, not so universally, neither so openly and avowedly, but still bought and sold as nakedly and as foully as any poor Comanche or Eutaw maiden ever was.

When some lovely girl, blooming with fresh youth and beauty, light joys swimming invisible around her head and angels garlanding her way, when this brightest of God's created things is handed over to the hated arms of wealthy age, to share the splendour of some golden idol, with one foot in the grave, what is it but traffic in flesh and blood; a dealing of mere marketing, where parents or friends sell the very life they gave—the price, a dowry, a settlement, a coronet?

The Indian girl is sold, perhaps for a dozen horses, perhaps for one, by those to whom these things are vast increase of worldly possessions. Then are they less iniquitous than their white

co-dealers in humanity, who have not the wretched excuse of personal advantage to urge them on, and behind which to shelter the awful nature of such a deed.

But Pierre loved the Flower of the Eutaw, the lovely young Moama: her price was a dozen horses of the first quality, and the Swiss trapper had not one in his possession.

“Well!” exclaimed he, after the lapse of some few moments, “since I cannot raise the price they ask, *ma foi!* I’ll e’en have her for nothing. It is to be done.”

Having made this heroic determination of appropriating the lovely Moama to himself without paying the value at which she was rated, Pierre Lancel felt in a more agreeable humour with himself, and, turning his back on the Eutaw encampment, where he had spent the night at a festival, he advanced towards the fort.

Fort Bent is about a hundred and fifty feet long and one hundred wide. The walls, of adobies or unburnt bricks, cemented with a mortar of clay,

are six or seven feet in thickness, and about eighteen in height. On the eastern side is a gate, with a pair of heavy plank folding doors, while numerous bastions, two of which are cylindrical and thirty feet in height, with several cannon on them, command a wide range.

Numerous offices, houses, shops, stores, a caral for the horses, a waggon-house, covered over to keep these huge vehicles from the action of the sun, occupy the whole of the interior space; the tops of the houses, being flat and graveled over, afford an admirable promenade during the moonlight evenings, without bringing the walkers within reach of the marauders who might assail them on the outside.

The men who occupy themselves in the business of the fort are to the number of sixty; of whom a third, with one of the partners in this half-military half-commercial establishment, are employed in piloting to the United States the waggons bearing the skins, furs, buffalo-robcs, &c., which have been collected during the season, and in guarding the

fresh stock of goods which are constantly arriving to be used in the Indian trade. The avocations of those who remain are varied in the extreme; one party, starting over the sparse and distant plains, and entering even the confines of the hilly country, in search of elk and buffalo, supply the fort with food; another guard the mules and horses, while yet another, penetrating into the heart of the Indian country, amidst the deepest wilds of the Eutaw hills, behind Spanish Peak, and across the arid plains lying towards Oregon, carry on a trade with the interior tribes.

A few clerks and oversers make up the amount of the inhabitants of this wonderful mercantile post, wonderful in its dismal isolation, in its immense distance from the settlements, and in the strange appearance of its *tout-ensemble* when in activity.

Pierre advanced slowly towards the fort, and by no means taking the straight path, so that, long ere he presented himself before the gates, business was going on with its usual concomitants of bustle and noise.

In front of the fort was a long piazza, and beneath this were congregated various groups of a singularly picturesque character.

Near the gate, seated upon mats, and smoking their long pipes, with a view to digesting the very rough breakfast they had just consumed, were two men in the garb of Indian chiefs. Their mocassins were of the most elegant and received fashion, being profusely ornamented with beads and porcupine-quills; their trousers were of prepared deer-skin, fringed from hip to ankle, while their handsome hunting-shirts, of the same material, with sleeves also fringed on the elbow-seam from the wrist to the shoulder, and garnished with figures made with porcupine-quills of various colours, gave them altogether a most dashing and striking appearance. These were the brothers Bent, the monarchs of all they surveyed, and true chiefs within the whole district commanded by the fort.

Near at hand were crowds of trappers, of clerks, of traders; while, gliding about with ghost-like

step, were seen the Indian men and women. Numerous groups of children, of very doubtful complexions, were playing about, adding their merry laughter and lightsome, gladsome frolics, to the more serious features of a scene which was remarkable in the extreme.

As Pierre advanced slowly towards the fort, one of the men who were lounging about the gate, amusing themselves with a kind of employment which is familiarly called doing nothing, broke from the knot of idlers with whom he had previously been engaged, and made in the direction of the Swiss trapper.

“Mornin’,” exclaimed this personage. “Well, I conclude, Peter, you’re in a fix. What’s the locrum of it? Is it hard up, or is it the galls?”

The speaker was a huge member of the vast fraternity known in Europe as Yankees—an appellation justly belonging to only a small section of the Anglo-Americans—and stood six feet high. Though his face was neither handsome nor very agreeable, there was still an expression of good

humour and intelligence beaming across his plain features, which prepossessed all who gazed upon him in his favour.

Pierre, before he saw who the speaker was, was disposed to resent the interruption; but, raising his eyes and recognising the speaker, his indignation evaporated at once.

"Well, Ephraim," said he, with a lugubrious smile, "I believe you know what it's about."

"A gall!"

"A girl, as you say; but, Ephraim," continued Pierre, "you know very well I haven't an old mule, much more a dozen horses, which is the girl's price."

"Well!" exclaimed the huge animated mass of mortality known as Ephraim Smith, "if that don't take the shine out of me. Twelve hosses for a gall, and a Ingian gall too! my! It don't convene to the dignity of a member of our almighty nation to cuss, or I'd be ——"

"Stop," cried Pierre, gravely, "you'll have one out before you know where you are."

"Well, that's a fact, so it is," replied Ephraim; "but I calculate you've blotted the gall off your slate. Twelve hosses is a chalk above you."

"No!" said the young Swiss trapper warmly, "I have not. No, Ephraim, I love the girl."

"Does she love you?—though it's a persimmoon above me what love means. She is handsom', that's sartin; but twelve hosses, my!"

"She does love me, Ephraim," continued Pierre.

"Well!"

"And as I can't pay the price they ask, we've made up our minds that I'll pay nothing, and have the girl in spite of the whole tribe."

"Rale unpossible," replied the tall American, sententiously.

"No such thing, Ephraim; it is to be done, and shall be done; and, what is more, I reckon on you as my principal friend through the whole affair. In all Bent's fort there isn't another could do it."

"Well, that's what I call sawder, and precious soft sawder too, I do declare," replied the tall

trapper, with a gratified smile; "and as to helping a friend over a stile, why, Ephraim Smith is the man never to say no; and he can do it; if he can't——

"That's enough," said Pierre, with a significant hint; "and now we'll just take and talk the matter over. One thing however, Ephraim, I want you to do. I must have it thought I have given her up."

"I see three yards through a stone wall," replied the tall hunter, with a wink; "and it 'ud be a tall gratification to my feelings if you'd convene to do so. A woman is never any good, but an Ingian woman is the devil. Well, I'm a free citizen of our everlastin' re-public, and it goes agin the grain not to speak out; but if it don't avail you, mum's the word."

CHAPTER II.

FONTAINE-QUI-BOUILLE.

IT was seven days after the occurrence of the events recorded in the last chapter. Far o'er the southern rocky mountains, the sun was setting in a full tide of evening glory, as two men halted near a willow grove, where the Almager river, commonly known as Fontaine-qui-bouille, falls into, and increases, the waters of the Arkansas.

The grove was situated in a lovely valley, covered with turf as green and short as that of any lawn, while a clear cold brook, with pebbly bottom, and banks clothed with shrub cedar, were adjuncts of no mean power in rendering the scene picturesque. A sky as free from vapour as those which have rendered Italy so famous, a cool breeze from the cloud-capped and

snowy mountains, after a sultry day breathed freshness and new vigour through the human frame, while the sound of the babbling stream rushing swiftly over its stony bed spoke in soft musical accents to the ear of the wearied wayfarer. Flowers of varied hue and odour, the common dandelion, the angelica, the black-berried elder, with little blue and white spangles without name, diffused a sense of beauty o'er the scene, to which the antiquated and decrepit willow grove imparted an air of savage wildness, which, in its contrast, unharmoniously harmonized with the more gentle charms of the locality.

As the two men came within the shelter of the willow grove, they (as we have already stated) halted, and looked around them with some curiosity.

"Them varmint has camped here," said Ephraim Smith, for he was one of the pair, "and on this identical spot. Thar's the locality of the fire, and thar's the willow poles," pointing to several long branches of willow, thrust in the ground, and

fastened at the top with a supple bough of the same material, "which sarved them to throw their blankets on for wigwams. They've been gone I reckon since morning, for the embers is jist out."

"We are on their track at all events, which is all we require," replied Pierre Lancel; "and now to camp ourselves. Wood is plenty, so we can have fire enough to keep out the cold; but," added he with a grim smile, "eating I suppose is once more out of the question."

"Well, it does look raal scaly, and that's a fact," continued the tall hunter; "no buffalo, no deer; it's all the fault of thim cussed Eutaws; they've driv every eternal bit o' game out of the country. Here's two first-rate chaps, raal mountain trappers, bin two days, and never a bite, all along a thim thieving vagabones. Well, I wish I may be shot if I can cipher it no how. But you raise a blaze, Pierre, and I'll skirt this are brook, and if elk or coon, bear or wolf, be in nosing distance, we'll sup this are night."

And without another word the huge Ameri-

can trapper shouldered his rifle, and walked away through the willow grove, despite his hunger whistling a merry tune, until he drew near the probable haunts of game, when his lips ceased their play.

Left alone, Pierre laid his rifle and other accoutrements near at hand, and commenced preparing the camp for the night. As usual, the spot selected by the Indians was the best in the grove for the purpose, and here accordingly the young Swiss trapper decided upon locating himself. Being in the very centre of a knot of bushes, they were in great part sheltered from the wind, while the fire would by the same means be kept from flaring in a disagreeable manner, as well as being thus concealed from the prying eyes of any marauder.

Placing a small piece of cotton in his rifle with a charge of loose powder, and having collected a handful of dry leaves, he discharged the gun towards the ground. The cotton was thus inflamed, and, being placed in the centre of the leaves, the hunter moved the whole mass backwards and for-

wards, producing as much quick motion in the wind as possible. A blaze ensued, the leaves were deposited on the ground, and a few chips of wood placed gently over them. Stick by stick, Pierre increased the body of the fire, until a goodly flame rose within the old willow grove, the spruce-boughs and other fuel crackling merrily in that unfrequented spot. All around instantly fell into deep gloom, while each small opening between the bushes looked the entrance to some dreary cavern, the mouth of which sparkled in the unwonted light, while within all was inky black. A ruddy glow gilded the old willows, and night fled from one little spot to become only more dark elsewhere.

This part of his task executed, Pierre continued to collect fuel for the night, a somewhat difficult undertaking, the Eutaw Indians having made use of almost every available piece of wood within a moderate distance. Taking therefore his axe in hand, Pierre ascended the slope of the ravine, and walked towards the ford of the Arkansas, above the spot where it is joined by Fontaine-qui-bouille,

into which stream the brook, beside which the trappers were encamped, discharged its waters. Here was a grove of stunted pine, where the young Swiss hunter hoped to find a considerable supply of dry fallen boughs.

While he is thus employed, we must give our readers a brief outline of the events of the previous seven days. The Eutaws, having concluded their traffic with the traders at Fort Bent, and receiving no further offer from young Pierre Lancel for the hand of the beautiful Moama, had taken their departure toward their native hills, with the intention of returning to the fort during the following season. Pierre and Ephraim, however, were not idle, occupying themselves with preparations for tracking the Indians in their homeward march; the former indeed ventured on a stolen interview with his beloved, but one of brief duration; and then laying in a stock of powder, shot, &c., the two friends left the fort, giving out as the object of their journey a few days' hunting in the plains which lie between the post and Apishipa creek. They soon however

crossed the Arkansas, and, concealed within sight of the usual Indian trail, saw the Eutaw party pass on their way home. For some hours they remained still, then, moving on the track of the red-skins, kept cautiously in their rear up to the time when we meet with them near the banks of Fontaine-qui-bouille. For some days they had been successful in obtaining food, with the help of their guns, hooks and lines ; the Arkansas, in the lower part of its course near Fort Bent, being full of fine fat fish, which gradually become scarcer as the traveller advances towards the mountains, until at length in its upper waters they cease altogether to be found. For more than forty-eight hours, however, these two intrepid men had suffered the severest pangs of hunger, their sole sustenance having been a few small bleak they had been fortunate enough to capture in a stream falling into the Arkansas.

Pierre, however, who was accustomed to the hardships of the prairie life, roved about collecting wood with as much assiduity as if he had

been certain of its being accessory to the broiling of a fat elk-steak, or a slice of the delicious buffalo-hump. The probabilities were certainly against the supposition, but still such things might happen. The turning up of something to eat was a matter of possibility, at all events.*

Half an hour laboriously employed had sufficed Pierre to collect a load, under which he with difficulty staggered towards the camp—as every spot temporarily occupied by man is called in American prairie language—reaching which he again buried himself in the willow grove, where sundry small

* Despite the abundance of game which are to be found in parts, despite the vast herds of buffalo that wander o'er the mighty plains of the west, despite the skill and ability of the hunters, semi-starvation is often the lot of the wanderer. Whole regions are destitute of any fodder for the animals on which the traveller must depend for food, and here of course none of them are to be found.

Those who are curious to read of sufferings of this nature should peruse "Farnham's Travels in the Great Western Prairies," published in a little cheap volume by Messrs. Wiley and Putnam. It is a wild and graphic picture of life in the wilderness, full of strange adventures; and when the author after fifty hours of fasting eats his dog, it becomes, as has been truly remarked, almost sublime.

and stray pieces of wood were by patience and poking to be discovered.

Still not a sign of Ephraim. Pierre felt his spirits somewhat lowered, and, accordingly pulling out his pipe, proceeded to load it, and beneath the soothing influence of the odoriferous Virginian weed forgot the pangs of hunger in the thought of the pretty Moama. Tobacco, scoffed at and slighted by the fastidious, who dwell in towns and who know not the perils of the wilds, who are unaware of the sufferings from wet, cold, and hunger the traveller endures, is certainly one of the greatest physical blessings given by God to mortality. In all parts of the world its use in moderation is conducive to health and tranquillity of mind, but in the wilderness it often saves the life of man. It allays hunger, it counteracts the effect of miasma arising from swamp and morass, and to the solitary wanderer it serves the purpose of conversation and companionship.

Pierre was hungry, but his pipe deadened the sense of appetite; Pierre was restless and impa-

tient, the soothing weed gradually brought his mind into a calmer state, and allowed him to think of her for whom he had dared the perils of the wilderness, and for whom he was yet to brave the dangers of the Eutaw hills, where snow and swollen rivers, where shining glaciers and frowning precipices, opposed themselves to the invasion of the Swiss among the Indian nations, and rendered them comparatively secure amid their fastnesses. Hence perhaps their settled character, as well as the fact of their being more civilized than their neighbours.

The Eutaws, Utaws, or Yutaws, a brave race numbering from eight to ten thousand souls, dwell in their native hills, where they raise mules, horses, and sheep, cultivate corn and beans, hunt the beaver, and manufacture woollen blankets with a darning-needle. Though nominally at peace with the Mexicans and Americans, yet do they not hesitate to plunder and lay them under contribution whenever an opportunity occurs, that is, whenever

their numbers considerably outvie those of the whites or Spaniards.

Pierre sat before the blazing fire, thinking of these and other things in relation to the tribe, dwelling with pleasure on the image of the absent girl of his love, until by dint of thinking and smoking, and smoking and thinking, he became utterly abstracted from all around, and, o'erleaping time and space, sat in his half-savage wigwam, while around him the busy Moama, and the little miniatures of himself and her, their half white half dusky complexion speaking their mixed origin, busied themselves about, she preparing his evening meal, they playing merrily in the expectation of sharing it.

The wigwam was warm and neat. Conical in its shape and supported by several sturdy poles, outside composed of huge buffalo-hides, within it was wholly lined with the furred skin of various mountain animals. Guns, spears, axes, knives, hung from pegs protruding from the cross beam,

while in the centre a steaming caldron was suspended over a sparkling fire. The whole was calculated to awake pleasant sensations in the human mind, but chiefly the meal which the lovely Moama was busily preparing. Before Pierre was spread a clean mat, on which two bowls, as many horn spoons, and a couple of knives were laid, while curling round his head, and, despite every effort to prevent it, creeping within his nostrils, entering his mouth, and awakening the anxiously awaiting ministers of the interior, rose the strong odour of an Indian stew, in which the quantity and variety of the ingredients were not the only attraction.

Pierre felt contented and happy ; he was hungry, and a plentiful meal, cooked by the fair hands of the sweet Moama, was about to be transferred from the parent caldron to the more juvenile articles of furniture before him. Pierre smiled, laid down his long pipe reverentially by his side, and, bidding his lovely squaw good-humouredly to make haste, inhaled the savoury odour once more, and prepared to eat.

“Well! I wish I may be shot if you arn’t a pretty tall chap, you are,” cried Ephraim Smith; “it’s a caution if you arn’t popped off some of these fine nights. Mind you don’t wake and find yourself scalped, that’s all; you’ll remember then you’re in a Ingian country I reckon.”

“Oh, Ephraim, Heaven forgive you,” replied Pierre Lancel, rousing himself, “but you woke me from the happiest dream I’ve known this many a day.”

“My!” exclaimed Ephraim, advancing closer to the fire; “so you arn’t satisfied with sleepin’, but you must dream. But, Peter, my shaver, wihn you dreamed, did it look anythin’ like that are. I reckon not. Arn’t I a regular up-hill chap, first chop, and no mistake?”

“An elk, by Uncle Sam’s head!” said Pierre, jumping to his feet; “well, Ephraim, this is glorious.”

“It don’t convene to a chap as has been two days hungry to make much of a locrum, but I conclude I am the boy, when game’s near, jist to

nose it. I catched a sight o' this are brute a rubbin' his hams agin a tree t'other side of the river. The moment I seed him, I felt his steaks war broilin', and didn't I let fly, though may be he war out of rifle-shot? He stared, like a British jist landed in York, but it was all of no use; my ball ain't bigger nor two peas, but it war big enough to kill him."

Pierre made no reply, and for some time neither of the men spoke. Feelings are often said to exist which are too deep for utterance in words. It was so with them. Famished as they were, every thought of the mind, and every bodily sensation, was wrapped up in the coming meal. Those only who have experienced what it is to fast during so long a period as they had done can have any just idea of what fierce hunger will do for man. In the wide world there was no other charm so great, which the imagination could conceive, as the fat loins of the unfortunate elk. To skin him, to lay bare the fine meat of this splendid animal, was the work of a moment, and then, cutting huge slices, and placing them on the embers, these two famished

hunters scarcely allowed the flesh to become warm ere they transferred the broiled kabobs to a sharp-pointed stick, whence they further removed them with their knives to that receptacle intended to take in such food.

We should be loth to measure the appetite of the two young men, sharpened as it was by long fast, lest our readers might be tempted to one of two things—either to doubt our veracity, or to look upon our hero and his friend in the light of wolves rather than men. We, however, who have ourselves been placed in a similar perplexing situation, know how a fat deer entirely disappeared at two meals beneath the ravenous teeth of five men. This hint may guide those who may wish to calculate the probable weight of venison which lay beneath the belts of our heroes at the termination of their meal.

Everything, however, must have an end, and about an hour after the commencement of their repast the two friends sat beside their cosy little fire, a small and precious flask of brandy having

afforded them the means of giving a flavour to the river-water, while the everlasting pipe, which had previously allayed the pangs of hunger, now served to aid the process of digestion.

"Well, I wish I may be shot!" exclaimed Ephraim Smith, eyeing the carcass of the elk in a most covetous manner, "but there are some mighty tall steaks upon that beast still; but General Jackson spifflicate me if I can eat an ounce more."

"Enough is as good as a feast," replied Pierre with a complacent smile, "and I must say now that was a most capital shot of yours, Ephraim, just in the right place."

"I reckon so," exclaimed the hunter, with a loud laugh; "I hit just over the fore shoulder, and no mistake about that lot."

"If you only hit the Eutaws as smart, should we fall into a scrape, Ephraim, the red-skins will stand but a poor chance."

"Well, I conclude I am the lad for a skirmage too, Peter; but as it don't convene to my

notions of the eternal fitness of things to be caught napping by the prairie larks, supposin' we snooze."

"Snooze is the word then," replied Peter; "but, hush! what have we here?"

"Ingians, by the Lord!" exclaimed Ephraim, his usual careless manner vanishing on the instant: "squeeze yourself this way; foller me, or we'll be stuck as full of arrows as a hedgehog is full of prickles afore you can say tu tu's."

Seizing their rifles, and gliding away from the fire with a rapidity which did wonderful credit to their prairie education, in a few moments the two friends were kneeling behind a knot of bushes which commanded the ford of the Arkansas, whence the sound proceeded. They then took breath, and, crouching close to one another, cautiously examined their position.

To their right was the willow grove, and through a long low vista they could just catch a glimpse of the ruddy glow of their camp fire, which was further made public by the faint odour of smoke that reached them even there. Before them lay the

pine grove, and beyond that the broad Arkansas; the moon was high in the heavens, and its pale blue light, pouring down through that rare and pure atmosphere, made all objects visible at a considerable distance.

On the opposite bank of the river a knot of figures were clearly to be seen, mounted, and evidently holding a serious conference.

"It was plaguy venturesome," muttered Ephraim, "to have such a roaring tall fire, and we in the thick of these rampageous varmint; but it was all along o' that meat; we must be eatin'; and eatin', which was always said to be the way to keep life, is mighty likely to bring death."

"All we can do, Ephraim, is to fight like men, kill as many Indians as ever we can, and die like free trappers of the hills."

"That we are bound to do," replied Ephraim, with a laugh; "but not this ere notch. Well, thim chaps has long noses to smell our game a mile or two. It's lucky we've supped, or may be

we'd a looken rather streaky with one elk atween ten or a dozen."

While Ephraim muttered these words, the two hunters had risen from their recumbent posture, and were advancing towards the ford.

"Them chaps skeared me a few," said Ephraim, "and I feel mighty like skearing them. You can blart out the Arrapahoo war-whoop. It's about the ugliest I know, and that's a fact."

"They're too many for us," replied Pierre, with a laugh; and then he added, raising his voice to its loudest pitch, "Cross over there in peace, you come among Christian men."

"Mon dieu, I declare ver glad I am—I tink you rascally Corbeaux, dat is Crow—Christian man ver glad, hope get somethin'—eat," replied a Canadian trapper, plunging forward into the ford, and making for the opposite side.

Ephraim Smith gave a low but hearty laugh at his own perspicacity.

"I know'd it, I know'd it," cried he; "them hungry devils smelt our cookery a mile off. Well,

they're 'cute chaps them, a credit to their brought-ens-up, and no flies about that lot; raal stock-dolagers."

"Sacré! deep hole," cried the new arrival, floundering out of the river, and speaking in that mixed jargon of French and English which characterises the Canadian trappers; "coot, ver coot, dry land. Ah! *du feu*, by gar! I hop, Mr. Trappare, you somethin' heat, for, sacré, *mon dieu*, I dead of a hunger."

"Plenty to eat, my friend," replied Pierre, in French—Ephraim had slipped away in the direction of the fire—"if you are not too many in number."

"Ah, by gar!" replied the Canadian, leaping from his horse, and setting instantly to work to hopple him; "ve are nine, and ver lucky too, or them sacré Eutaws vould a slay us."

"Eutaws! Eutaws!" exclaimed Pierre, carelessly; "have you met any of the scamps?"

"A whole *tribu*, von journée from us."

"Ah!" said Pierre, "I thought they were

hereabouts ;” and then turning away, he added, “ As soon as you have hopped your horses, come up, and we’ll find you something to eat.”

“ And, pardi ! “ I will *dépêchez*, for I am hungry as one loup : de dam Eutaws kill de game or fright it all away.”

Pierre found Ephraim busily occupied in broiling the remainder of the elk, in which hospitable duty he speedily joined him.

“ I conclude, Peter,” said Ephraim, “ you’re going to walk into about five pounds more of this are meat ?”

“ Why so ?”

“ Well, you’re green, arn’t you ? Why, them hungry devils will eat every ounce we don’t, and, as there it is ten chawks to one we don’t get anything more a week, I shall lay in a few, that’s all.”

Pierre laughed, and their further discourse was cut short by the arrival of the Canadian trapper, followed by his companions.

CHAPTER III.

THE EUTAW HILLS.

PIERRE and Ephraim were on foot again long ere dawn broke in the eastern sky, and, without bidding adieu to the sleeping trappers, crossed the ford of the Arkansas, reaching only up to their knees, and, following the banks of the Timpa creek, hurried on the track of the retiring savages. During four days the two determined pedestrians pursued their way, continually guided by Indian signs, until, on the morning of the fifth, the dim outline of the Eutaw hills was plainly visible, and, high above, the towering monarch ruling around, the lofty peak yclept Spanish.

Behind was a sweeping plain—illimitable, vast, sublime, flat as the Arabian desert—without bush

or tree, knoll or hillock, to break its magnificent monotony; before them, spreading to the foot, apparently, of the range of hills, a spur of the Rocky Mountains, was a stony desert; a hard, dry, flinty expanse, black, gloomy, and forbidding. As far as the eye could reach it was the same—wild, drear, and, in its dull grey-tinted soil, without a blade of green grass to refreshen the eye, a fit picture of the famed region which formed the banks of the dead Acheron.

Still on walked the two friends, with courage and resolution renewed by the sight of the native hills of their enemies. They had again exhausted their stock of food, and, until they reached the mountains, there was little hope indeed of renewing it; while, whether during their journey across the arid desert before them there was even a drop of water to be obtained, was a very doubtful speculation. Neither had ever crossed this dreary waste before, though both had heard it spoken of with horror both by the white trappers and by the Indians; the latter asserting that not even a bird

was ever known to wing its flight over its inhospitable surface.

Still on they sped, love impelling the one, friendship the other; in either case, however, encouraged not a little by the restless love of adventure, so universally characteristic of the American borderer.

"I conclude this are a first-rate locality," observed Ephraim, drily; "it an't land, and it an't water; it are got no grass, no trees, no animals, no streams; and darn my old stocking, but it don't convene to my ideas what it war made for."

"I should say it was made for some use or other," replied Pierre, with a smile; and then he added, with that intuitive reverence which pervades the minds of the generality of the wild hunters of these regions, "as most things are, I fancy, which come from the hand of God."

"Well, it's my notion you're about right, Peter," continued the tall trapper; "but what war it made for? that's what ryles me. I'd stump the univarse

to show sich an almighty fine burying-ground for all the Ingian varmint."

"A very good idea of yours, Ephraim," said Pierre; "but what sound was that? was it the roar of buffalo? are we in luck? If I am right, we'll sup this evening."

Ephraim turned round, and gazed fixedly across the vast expanse of plain in his rear.

Above, the sky was blue and serene, while on all sides light fleecy clouds, the gauzy vapours of a summer morn, were creeping lazily along the silent heavens, flying from the vast arcana of storm and tempest in the high hills of the Stony range, where nature seems to fashion the hurricanes that so often sweep the plains of the Great Prairie wilderness, spreading desolation in their track; not, however, without their counteracting good in purifying the air, and bracing an atmosphere which otherwise would perhaps be dull and heavy.

The wind was light and gentle, breathing in balmy sweetness upon the warm brows of the travellers; and though no caroling birds welcomed

the rising sun, though no green and grassy meadows reflected the rays of morn's glad luminary, though the soft music of the breeze in the rustling boughs of pine and sycamore was not there heard to infuse a sense of joy into the souls of the wayfarers, yet did Pierre and Ephraim rejoice in the loveliness above. But a low growling sound had drawn their eyes towards the far horizon, and there a small cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, but black as Erebus, was rising in a bank of vapour. On it came, spreading with lightning speed o'er the fair surface of the blue and smiling heavens; but a minute since it was one speck of night in a vast ocean of clear sky, but, borne on the mighty wings of the blast, its dark outline spread across the whole range of the east, obscuring the sun, and clothing the vault above in a funeral pall, that rolled swiftly but majestically towards the mountains; on it came, huge columns of dingy vapour, vast masses of inky darkness crowding in wild and furious tumult along, mountain upon mountain of towering clouds, big with the awful artillery of

heaven, pregnant to bursting with the weight of waters, and marshaling for the contest that was to come.

Long bursting gusts of wind were felt, and then large drops of rain came pattering down swiftly upon the heads of the devoted pair.

Long ere this, however, Ephraim and Pierre had prepared for the tempest. Unslinging their guns, the muzzles were carefully stopped up with corks kept in their pouches for the purpose, while round the locks several pieces of leather were wrapped with the most studious care. The powder-flasks were bestowed away in the driest possible corner of their habiliments, and then, drawing their caps close over their ears, and buckling their waistbands tight, they turned their backs on the tempest, and proceeded on their way. Without hope of shelter, they had no alternative between advancing and standing still, of which the former was plainly the wisest mode of procedure.

Meanwhile thunder-gust upon thunder-gust followed, the rain fell in cold shivering floods, it

poured in torrents, it pelted in heavy sheets of water, and the stony plain was one vast ocean of dancing puddles. The din was tremendous as this reeking shower roared, rushed, foamed along, howling like some huge cataract, and, pursued by the furious wind, flew laterally along the surface of the level prairie. It was a bleak and chilly nor'easter, cold, cutting, and unmerciful. It was of no avail to draw their deer-skin frocks tightly round them, the wind penetrated to their very bones, it deafened their ears, and, wrapping all around in one vast veil of spray, rendered, as it groaned by, all objects invisible at the distance of a few yards. Indeed, after the first burst of the tempest, it was impossible to tell the direction in which they were advancing, but, by trusting to the wind, and taking care to keep this always in their rear, they did not diverge much from the right way.

Suddenly, a flash of lightning, almost blinding them, rendered the whole vault of heaven a fire-roofed cavern; a sheet of flame, perfectly awful in its intensity, poured its fury over all, illumining the

wild scene around, and for a moment hushing even the raging wind. The mountains stood out in bold relief, the pebbly plain looked as if seen through a microscope of flame, and all nature assumed a ghastly hue. Then came the thunder-peal, to meet which the two travellers closed the apertures of their ears with their fingers, striving to deaden at all events something of the violence of the sound.

The mighty roar of a battle-field, where a hundred cannon pour forth their belching fury, could give no idea of the tremendous—nay, the infernal nature of this explosion. It seemed to rend the very heavens in twain. Then all was hushed, the rain ceased, the wind died away, the echoes of the live thunder gloomily groaned from the far off hills, the sky broke, the deep azure prevailed, and the storm was over. Such is the violence, and such the brevity, of these prairie tempests.

“Well, I an’t availed o’ nothin’ if that warn’t awful grand,” cried Ephraim; “though it served us the purpose of a sherry-cobbler; it provides liquor.”

"And to spare," exclaimed Pierre, as they floundered through drenching puddles, walking as swiftly as possible, their clothes already beginning to steam under the warm rays of the sun.

On they went, pinched by hunger that day and during the greater part of the night, until they reached the fertile banks of the Rio de los Animas, otherwise called Purgatoire River, where they camped. In this stream fish were plenty, and, seated upon a green slope, half-buried in the swollen waters of the stream, they supped upon fare which, to the hungry trapper, is ever poor and scanty, but which, in that region, it was a perfect godsend to have hit upon.

Next morning found them, after some hours of hard walking, at the foot of the lesser Eutaw hills. By following the course of los Animas, they found a gap in the mountains, and in this way entered upon the territory of their enemies.

With high, precipitous, and almost perpendicular banks, beetling in places over the rushing stream below, but very little space was left by which to enter within the hills.

A rude, natural path led up the side of the cliff, gradually taking them towards the summit. This they followed slowly and with care, and, after some hours of unceasing toil, reached a ledge of rock, where the way ended in a gloomy pine forest. Beneath was the boiling torrent; behind, the vast plain they had traversed; and yet no further progress seemed possible. To enter within the arches of this dense pine grove, without aught of clue, was madness, and yet Ephraim felt persuaded that they were on the right track.

“Well, here is an awkward slice of business—an everlasting fix, and no mistake,” said he, bringing the stock of his gun to the ground with a loud ring, and leaning carelessly upon the muzzle; “it’s a raal jam and no hole to get out of, you may depend.”

“Let us branch off along the edge of the wood in search of signs,” replied Pierre, preparing to suit the action to the word.

“We’re bound to find ’em,” said Ephraim, “and there’s no findin’ without sarchin’. I’ll take the

left, you try right. It's considerable of a chance if we don't hit upon it in a'most less than no time. We'd better, that's all. I feel ryled already, and them Ingians had not better get my dander up. No! I'm ugly when I'm angry, and wipe considerable hard."

"You can," said Pierre, laughing; "and this time your anger has blinded your usual discrimination. Here's the path, and, as sure as my name's not Ephraim, we're close upon the red-skins."

With these words Lancel pointed with his rifle to a pebble, inserted in the cleft branch of a low stunted pine.

Ephraim examined "the sign" with the utmost gravity, looking as if he hoped to be able to contradict the assertion of his younger friend, and then said—

"Well, it goes considerable agin the grain to be walked over by a shaver in mountain business; but it's a raal fact. I reckon I'll rise a mighty tall hour earlier nor you next mornin', or I'll be a mile

behind you and no shoes to walk in; you'll be a teaching me next hitch."

"Not I," replied Pierre, seizing his friend's hand and giving it a hearty squeeze; "whatever I have learnt, you have taught me. I am deeply in your debt already; and help me but to get Moama for my bride, then I am eternally bound to you."

"Well, you're a credit to your broughtens-up, you are, and that's a fact; but as I was the birch-driver, why I warn't grumble if you do walk a chalk over me. But, *on avang*, as the Canadian's locrum has it."

Entering the wood, and keeping their eyes fixed on the trees on each side, the two hunters now made their way beneath the overhanging forest with comparative ease. Every now and then a small stone, similarly situated to the one discovered by Pierre, served to guide them. In this manner they proceeded for some time, continually ascending all the while, until at length a gleam of light in the distance informed them that they were on the verge of the timber's skirts.

Treading with singular caution, their rifles in hand, they approached the confines of the wood, and in a few moments were standing on the verge of a tremendous precipice, and gazing curiously on the depths below.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EUTAW VILLAGE.

THE scene which opened itself before the eyes of the two wayfarers was truly sublime and magnificent; a rare assemblage of the mightier elements with the more gentle features of landscape. They were, we have said, on the very verge of a mighty precipice; a yawning chasm lay beneath their feet, the depths of which their startled eyes refused at first to grasp, while the brain grew dizzy in the contemplation. But we must be more minute, and strive, if possible, to paint the most unequalled scene that presents itself to the admiring eye of the traveller on the whole American continent; a scene worthy of the pencil of the greatest master of the art which Raphael and Angelo have

rendered immortal, or of that land cleped Switzer, where sublimity of landscape exists at every step, but where the vast immensity of the American wilderness is wanting.

Decked in a garniture of perpetual frost, white with chilling snows that, eternal as the mountain on which they lie, crumble and are ever again renewed, rose, facing the bewildered and astonished travellers, the mighty heights of Spanish Peak, distant some twenty miles, its summit alone visible; while continual ranges of hills, sinking in height as they gradually neared the valley, or rather chasm, by which the friends stood, went suddenly sheer down perpendicular, making a mighty wall of rugged stone, that constituted the fourth side of the chasm.

Clothed in a black garb of pine, mingled with greener and less gloomy-tinted trees, the opposite hill-side presented almost precisely the same features as that on which the hunters stood; to the right, however, a broken mass of cliffs, rocks, and stones, over which bounded the waters of a moun-

tain torrent, presented a very different aspect. Bursting from a cleft rock, seemingly rent asunder by violence, the spring came rushing in a foaming cataract upon a stony ledge, whence, spreading and bounding in a sheet of water, two rivulets ensued from the intervention of several spurs of granite and other masses of stone, which, flowing in separate beds, rugged and rapid, were both, after leaping o'er stones and rocks, after gushing through secret ways, being here lost and there found, in one place a wide shallow stream, in others a deep silver thread, finally united in a black pool, worn during ceaseless ages in the side of the mountain; overflowing this, a tumbling cataract brought the water to the edge of the great chasm, thereinto falling in a sheet of vapoury spray, and forming a small lake, the exit of which was unknown, being of course subterraneous. This side was rude and grand, in magnificent contrast to that on the left of the travellers.

A gently-rising green-bosomed hill, one deep mass of soft verdure, with the tall grass waving,

and, adjoining the dark forest of fir, groves of yellow pine and aspen, lay opposed to the rough hill we have just described. In parts a low tender grass had tempted down herds of deer and buffalo, which, dotting the lofty rolling prairie with black and grey, formed an agreeable contrast to the grassy hue around, and rendered the whole, so thick were they, of a speckled tint. To this side the hunters were nearest; so that they could plainly discern numerous brilliant flowers decking the green with their bright colours, especially where the wild cattle

“the lang summer day
Had in their pasture eat and nipp'd away”

the waving grass; convolvulus and honeysuckle peeped up between the spreading boughs of the wild vine, and wild hops and mountain-flax waved their taller heads in the air.

But the object which chiefly interested the trappers was the extraordinary valley that lay beneath their feet. In appearance it was a deep hole, without any visible means of descending to

its bottom. About a mile long, and half as much wide, three of its sides were perfectly perpendicular, presenting huge walls of stone to the eye; while the fourth, that over which they stood, broken and rugged, was necessarily the means of access, if any, to the vale beneath.

The surface of the valley was level and green, while beside the little lake above mentioned stood the wigwams of the Eutaws; and behind, reaching to the foot of the rocks, their fields of Indian corn and beans. The village numbered two hundred lodges and more, arranged in a semicircle, their openings facing the water. Of the usual dome-shaped form, but of more solid make than the moving tents—earth and heavy beams composing a portion of the materials—they presented, from that height, the appearance of a beaver-town, save that around the wigwams swarmed men, women, and children, while numerous horses, and other cattle, crowded in the rear.

“It’s a raal tall location that, Peter,” said Ephraim, shaking his head; “a mighty deal too

good for thim Ingian varmint. It's a first-chop place for a fort. In summer it's kept raal cool by the snows, and in winter it's considerable snug. I've a notion of colonizing Ephraim Fort; it jingles, I reckon, a trifle."

"And the Eutaws?" inquired Pierre, with a laugh.

"Darn their old stockings!" replied Ephraim, emphatically, "the varmint an't no account. If it convenes to the notions of a Christian and a white man to locate these diggins, thim savages must re-move. It's natur."

"Well," exclaimed Pierre, "there are two sides to that question; but the matter now to be talked of is, how are we to proceed?"

"That's a fact," replied Ephraim; "night's a-creepin' over this are hole, and we must be raal active. To my notion, your first idea's the best. You'll find the gall, and I'll find the hosses."

"Agreed," said Peter. "As soon as darkness conceals all, we'll descend; though I rather fancy we shall have a guide before that. If not, I will

manage Moama, and to you I trust for the animals on which to escape. Path down I see none; but as those animals below there must ascend and descend, I suppose we shall find it."

Darkness was indeed spreading over the scene; the sun had gone down behind the hills, and the deep valley was already wrapped in heavy shadows; gradually the gloom spread o'er hills and mountains, and then all nature was concealed for a while beneath the sable cloak of night.

Then lights trembled below; from the ever-open doors of the wigwams the glare of the evening fire was plainly visible; while the still night-air enabled them to distinctly catch the hum of many voices, the bark of the watch-dogs, the lowing of cattle, the neighing of horses, and the sound of the merry-makings of the younger members of this wild fraternity. Round a blazing pile the *élite* of the youth and beauty of the village were doubtless congregated, and there they

"sang ring-songs, dances, leids, and rounds,"
merrily to those airs which are peculiar to their race.

No sooner was darkness clearly triumphant over day than the two friends emerged from their hiding-place, and prepared for their night adventure. Pierre was to descend into the valley alone, and there, if possible, obtain conference with his mistress, which occurrence it was improbable would happen ere morning, while Ephraim was to remain still concealed, and when, at early dawn, the horses were led up to pasture on the hill-prairies, his duty was to select three of the best, and, eluding the vigilance of the guards, to appropriate them to his own purposes. Such a proceeding would, in other localities, be designated by a very harsh name; but on the prairies, where the hand of every man is against that of every man, such things will ever be considered in the light of a laudable deed, for executing which with acuteness a man may be praised, while for so doing no reasonable individual could think of blaming another.

Pierre, these arrangements being fully understood on both sides, resigned his rifle, shot-pouch, and powder-horn, reserving only his knife, and began

groping his way down the path which led into the depths of the valley. Though steep and rugged, it was still sufficiently marked to be followed with ease. At times it was a narrow ledge along the face of a rock, with a deep and gloomy gulf below; then it made its way through a dark gully, winding, twisting, turning; now a broad road, then a mere bridle-path; now bare as the naked hand, then thickly overhung with bushes; now flat and even, then suddenly pitching down at an angle of forty-five degrees, and not unoften forcing the wearied trapper to climb a steep ascent ere he again proceeded on his journey downwards.

As it was necessary to exert the utmost caution, nearly an hour was consumed in the task, which at length brought the young trapper into a narrow gap or fissure in the rock, at the extremity of which the path seemed to end abruptly. Groping his way, however, on, and guided in part by the recollection of many circumstances related to him by Moama, Pierre advanced, and next moment found himself within the pitchy gloom of a mountain cavern.

Unlike, however, ordinary caves, it was very narrow, both sides being within reach of a man's hands; and though its cold and damp chilled him to the very bones, on went the young trapper, until, having made considerable way through the darkness, he suddenly turned a corner and stood, startled and astonished, half blinded by the brilliance of a glaring light, on the verge of whose circle he had almost entered.

When his eyesight returned to him, which it did by slow degrees, Pierre found himself close upon the spot occupied by the joyous dancers, male and female, who, hand in hand, and in a vast ring, ran round a huge pile of blazing logs, screaming, laughing, singing, in the most uncouth and wild manner, but apparently fully wrapped up in the enjoyment of what was for the moment the sole object of their happy thoughts.

Nearly naked, their long black hair loosely waving round their heads, the red glare of the fire illumining their dusky limbs, while many wore hideous masks, and all the men were frightfully painted, with the unearthly howls and whoop in

which they occasionally indulged, the scene was no unfit representative of Pandemonium, though with many a softer feature in the shape of the clean-limbed girls that in nature's garb gamboled around with the sterner sex.

Beyond lay the village, where all was hushed and still, save where, behind the wigwams,

“ Steed threaten'd steed in high and boastful neighs,
Piercing the night's dull ear.”

Pierre drew back into the very depths of that portion of the cave which commanded a view of the camp, and there, leaning against the wall, waited the progress of events, his knife clutched fiercely, and his whole frame braced for action in case of a discovery. As to struggle with the odds against him would be but madness, his sole idea in case of his presence being betrayed was flight.

The dance was evidently nearly over ; many fell gradually off ; no additional logs were heaped upon the fire, which slowly decreased in size, its hot embers sending forth even a more ghastly glare than the sparkling flames ; the maidens too were

creeping away, while the young men were not slow to follow. Pierre breathed more freely as the noise of the dance was gradually hushed, and, silence gaining rapid ground, soon was utterly master of the field.

The girls tripped away lightly to their warm wigwams, the men followed with their ever stealthy cautious tread, and the fire was at length deserted. No! one solitary figure lingers beside its dying embers, gazing with singular intentness upon the glowing coals. It seemed some spectre, the spirit perhaps of neglected mirth, so silent, sad, and solemn were its movements. The heart of the young Swiss trapper beat warmly, the blood sped courser-like through his tingling veins, an anxious sensation filled his heart, as he gave a low, almost inaudible whistle, and then paused for the result.

The figure turned sharply, and then, resuming its attitude of deep reflection, paid no further attention to the hunter's signal. His heart seemed leaping upward to his throat, his teeth were clinched violently, and a cold tremour shook his

whole frame, as it flashed across him that by that dim glimmering light his eyes had deceived him.

Presently the figure turned again, walking slowly and solemnly towards him, until within the shadow of the cave; then the bounding step of a light-heeled Indian girl brought Moama to the arms of her anxious but delighted lover. The moments which followed were most sweet and joyous; he, glad of the happy issue of his journey, clasped his handsome prize to his heart—she, proud of the difficulties he had overcome to win her, gave no restraint unto her feelings. Some quarter of an hour of time flew by, and then Pierre spoke in a more connected manner than he had yet been able to assume, urging the girl to fly at once. She however demurred when he alluded to the capture of the horses.

“The nest of Moama will be empty, the eagle eye of the red man will see that the long knife is near, that the Flower of the Eutaw valley has fled with the mountain hunter. Moama must sleep in the wigwam of her fathers one night more.”

The girl's voice was plaintive and sad, as if she regretted to leave the happy home which had so long known her; but the voice of love was too powerful, and stilled every other emotion.

Pierre was forced to agree that her proposition was wiser than his own, and accordingly after a few more words of endearment the lovers parted.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHASE.

AWAY ! away ! The steeds are neighing proudly, and snuffing the morning air, with difficulty restrained by him who held them.

On the rocky ledge, beyond the forest of pine, at the summit of the path by which the traveller had entered the Eutaw hills, stood Ephraim Smith holding by rude leathern halters three unbridled and unsaddled horses. Three noble creatures were they, tall horses of the wilderness, tamed by the wild Indians. In admirable order, with sleek sides and free legs, they bore their captivity with impatience, Ephraim being compelled to put forth his whole strength to keep them from escaping.

The sun was just peeping up above the eastern

horizon ; a glorious day, with a bracing wind, promised to aid the escape of the lovers.

At length, when the trapper's patience was well-nigh exhausted, Pierre and Moama appeared, and without a single word they all hastily mounted the unharnessed animals, and were speedily descending the narrow path that led to the plains.

The latter were gained without let or accident, and then with a deep sigh, as if he felt he could now breathe freely, Pierre patted the neck of his charger, and, smiling on his fair bride, gave the signal for hurrying on with speed and haste.

"Now then, Ephraim, my friend," exclaimed he joyously, "I have won my bride, and not ten thousand Indians shall tear her from me—Away! away!" added he in a tremendous voice, "the red-skin devils are upon us."

Away went the steeds, coursing along the plains with the speed of fear, their hoofs clanging like thunder on the hard road. They rode side by side, each urging on his charger to the utmost,

and looking behind every now and then to measure the distance between them and their enemies.

When Pierre spoke his eye had caught sight of the flashing spears of a Eutaw war-party above the very summit of a green hill, the foot of which he and his companions had gained. Next moment, with a loud whoop, with a yell which sounded with fearful distinctness in the ears of the fugitives, twenty furious horsemen came bounding over the hill-crest in hot chase.

Away ! away ! went the gallant steeds that bore the lovers on the road to happiness ; the goodly horses seemed to know the precious deposit of young love they bore upon their backs, so proudly, so nobly did they ride. Away ! away ! The towering hills are left behind, and far o'er the distant plain the eye catches no sign of shelter, or of any place which could be defended successfully against the foe. On come the Indians with shouts and yells ; away fly the hunters with hot and hasty speed ; they pass o'er in three hours more ground than in a day of their pedestrian journey ; they

seem to fly rather than to ride. But still behind, the furious Indians rattle with equal ardour; the horses of the fugitives begin to slacken in speed, when Pierre, uttering an exclamation of delight, unslung his rifle, in which he was imitated by Ephraim, and, wheeling round, confronted the Indians, just as they themselves reached the edge of a deep hollow.

It was a faint column of smoke which had aroused the energies of the fugitives, arising from the fall in the plain which they had now gained, and which they were persuaded proceeded from a camp of white men.

The Eutaws reined in as the two hunters faced them with the deadly western rifle leveled in their direction, and held council. Ephraim, however, was in no humour to allow them thus to consult, but, firing his gun in their midst, the discharge soon brought allies to the weaker party.

Three Rocky Mountain trappers, on their way to Brown's Fort, were camped in the hole which the fugitives had reached, and, hearing the clatter of

horses' hoofs and the report of a rifle, were speedily mounted on their nags, and making common cause against the enemy, whom all the hunters of the wilds have such terrible reason to dread. Hearty recognitions ensued; the rude trappers laughed at the boyish escapade, as they called it, of Pierre Lancel, and then, retreating in a body to the camp, the whole party prepared to contend with the Indians.

The Eutaws, however, who, on the discovery of Moama's flight, had mounted in chase without preparation, half-unarmed, without ammunition, and without food, were in no humour to lay a regular siege; and, accordingly, when, themselves and steeds refreshed by rest and food, the friends, with their fair prize, were once more on their way, their foes were seen retreating towards the mountains.

Thus Pierre Lancel won his Indian bride, whom he bore to Brown's Hole, and there formally wedded. That he was very happy, that the picture which in fancy had risen before him was often

and speedily realized in all its minutest features, red and white miniatures and all included, few of my readers will be disposed to doubt. Yes! he was happy, and never, during those years which have already passed over his head, has he ever sighed for a more civilized mate, or regretted the hour which gave him an Indian bride.

The above is a rude sketch rather of scenery and life in the wild prairies of the west, with a connecting story, true in its details, than any attempt at a dramatic tale. The author's limits would not permit him to work out the full features of a narrative not wanting in native interest. The "Rose of Ouisconsin," which follows, is an attempt at a more complete and finished legend of Indian and Border life in the last century.

THE ROSE OF OUISCONSIN.

THE ROSE OF OUISCONSIN.

SOMEWHERE between the *Prairie du Chien* and the celebrated Falls of St. Anthony is a small expanse of water, which, though nameless in the annals of geographers, was yet not very many years ago known to the Indians as Cedar Lake. By not many years ago we would be understood to speak of a period just previous to the struggle with England, and when the united colonies were yet dependent on the mother country.

Cedar Lake is some four miles in circumference, of an oblong form, and it is to the extreme point of its eastern extent, where it is fed by the waters of Sycamore Creek, that we must now endeavour to transport the fancy of our readers. To the left rose

a lofty hill, clothed in a garb of sombre green, which, sweeping down to within two hundred feet of the water's edge, ended in an abrupt hollow of exquisite verdure, but unspotted by tree or bush, and then sloped upward again, until, when the creek was reached, the ground had attained the form of cliffs beetling over the water, with a graceful fringe of cotton-wood, buffalo, and other bushes, which rendered objects on that side completely invisible from the opposite bank. It was the end of May, and at early dawn; myriads of those bright-plumed choristers that throng the teeming woods of the American continent were giving full play to their untutored melody, a herd of deer were gently cropping the velvet sward, while the fall of the cataract, which united the waters of the creek and the lake, sounded with the solemn unvarying tone which emanates from all things that we are conscious have been in action since the creation.

Suddenly, the deer raised their heads, pricked up their keen and timid ears, listened one moment, and then, evidently alarmed at the ap-

proach of some enemy, bounded off in a direction equally distant from the skirt of the forest and the bank of the stream, and, taking shelter in an island of timber, disappeared. Before the last straggler of the escaping animals had leaped within the friendly concealment afforded by a sycamore grove, a man stepped forth from the long arches of the forest, and, kneeling, leveled a rifle in the direction of the game. Satisfied, however, of the uselessness of a shot at the distance which intervened between him and his promised victims, he reserved his fire, and, shouldering the deadly arm of the backwoodsman, walked leisurely across the green hollow, musing and gazing at the scene around him.

He was a young man, of that lofty stature which is more common in the western states of America than perhaps in any country in the world. Of powerful make, his form had all the elegance of one nurtured in the ease of a town life, with the sunburnt complexion and rude garb of the hunter. His face was handsome; but though exposure had

darkened his naturally fair skin, it had not attained that weatherbeaten appearance which years of toil in the open air alone give, but which never so rapidly manifests itself to landsmen as it does unto those who have the effects of alternate heat and cold, sun, rain, and wind, upon the changing bosom of the ocean. A tunic of deer-skin, open at the breast, showing off the red hunting-shirt, and ornamented at the edges with blue fringe; a dog-skin cap set jauntily on the side of the head, and confined by a leathern thong; dark-brown hair curling thickly and hanging to his shoulders; leggings and mocassins, with powder-belt, shot-pouch, brandy-flask, and a little axe—such were the outward ornaments of the stranger. Good humour and intelligence beamed in his face, with a slight tinge of obstinacy showing itself in the expression of the mouth. How far physiognomy gave a true index to his character will presently be seen.

“The very place for a location,” muttered Harry Folthorpe, turning his back on the creek and gazing at the forest, while he leaned his two

arms on the muzzle of his gun, a dangerous practice, which, however, the careful use of fire-arms by all American hunters renders seldom fatal; "and I vote at once for settling here. Yonder," pointing to a little rising in the bosom of the hill, "is the house-lot, and beneath it is a tall clearing, while what could be more convenient than this prairie? It is a field ready cleared, and then my ears tell me a saw-mill can be raised without any intolerable deal of trouble. Whatever the others may see in all their ranges, I decide upon this for mine, and I conclude the rest will not quarrel much about the choice. But now for the water-power." And, turning towards the creek, the young man, his rifle resting on his shoulder, walked in that direction.

When about half a dozen yards from the edge of the bank, the hunter happening to raise his eyes from the ground on which they had been resting, his face gave token first of astonishment, and then was suffused by that look of caution and alarm which even the bravest must feel at the approach of a

danger at the same time unexpected and fearful. Rising above the edge of the bank, and evidently proceeding from the opposite side, curled a scarcely perceptible column of thin blue smoke, which to any but the practised eye of a woodman would have been invisible.

Restraining a low whistle which at the first impulse was about to burst from his lips, Henry Folthorpe walked up to the edge of the bank, carefully screening himself behind the bushes, which rose so high as to prevent his catching the slightest glimpse of what was beyond. He now paused, and proceeded slowly, and without the slightest evidence of anxiety, to disencumber himself of everything which could in any way impede his movements. His rifle was laid gently against the fork of a sapling, his hatchet, knife, horn, &c., were deposited, with his cap, at its foot, and then, closing the breast of his tunic so as to conceal his red hunting-shirt, he prepared to investigate the cause of his alarm. Lying flat upon the ground, he crept with the slowness of the serpent beneath the bushes, and, soon

emerging from the thick gloom of his sinuous pathway, nought but a few tufts of grass concealed him from any eye which might have been upraised. His body motionless as a felled log of wood, his eye slowly took in all the features of the scene below.

The position occupied by the young hunter was some twenty feet above the level of the opposite bank, and about as much higher up the creek than the cataract. Opposite to him was a little cove, formed by a reflux of such portion of the stream as, catching the edge of the narrow gap through which alone the waters could find vent, was forced back in a constant eddy. The cove was of semicircular form, of very small dimensions, and closely surrounded by the forest, save one little spot beneath an outspreading oak. This was a rich green sward, reaching to the very brink of the water, which lay about a foot perpendicular below. Here sat an Indian girl, alone, and evidently in a sad and contemplative mood.

About sixteen, fairer than was wont, she seemed,

both in features and complexion, to have white blood in her veins. Her dress, however, was wholly Indian. Her head was bare, while over one shoulder, and under the other arm, was drawn an elegant mountain sheep-skin cloak, leaving one half of her neck and bosom bare. Porcupine-quills edged the garment, while ornaments of elks' teeth, and others of similar character, were profusely scattered over its surface. As she sat, this covered her to the knees, and, from thence down, leggings and mocassins completed her attire.

Before her lay the lake, seemingly, however, but two rivers branching from the Sycamore Falls, an island, thickly covered with willow that hung into the water, giving it this appearance. It was a calm and placid scene, of which the Indian girl appeared the presiding genius. Behind her, and to the right of Henry Folthorpe, were the numerous wigwams of the aborigines at some distance from the water. It was plainly a permanent village, as the buffalo-skin tents were surrounded by a stockade. Without the shelter of this ram-

part sat, round a diminutive fire, thirty-two Indians, evidently just returned from a war-party, many of them being wounded, and all bearing marks of a long and fatiguing journey. Henry Folthorpe knew them at once to be Sioux. Women and children, the former occupied in their laborious duties, the latter playing, filled the background.

The young hunter's sensations are scarcely to be defined. Close upon a party of Indians, his hereditary and deadly enemies, his attention was divided between them and the young Tuscarora half-breed, for such he soon found her to be; and he lay utterly immoveable examining every minute feature of the scene. A little way before him, growing out of the sloping bank, was a tree, the thick foliage of which screened a portion of the village from his sight, while, hanging over the stream as it did, and ending in the branches of a stunted cedar, Henry thought that, in all probability, it afforded the Indians a means of crossing the creek. The fact, too, of several of its branches being lopped away consider-

ably favoured the supposition. Other matters, however, of more immediate interest, drew the young man's attention from this subject.

The Indians, when Folthorpe first caught sight of them, were evidently discussing some question on which a considerable diversity of opinion appeared to exist. Though preserving all that gravity and decorum for which they are so justly celebrated, the contest was strong and warm. At length, however, a warrior, who appeared the chief of the party, but who seemed to have been in a minority up to that moment, quitted the council, and, gravely bending his steps in the direction of the captive, left the others to indulge in those dances and other ceremonies which occupy so many days after the return of a war-party, and which partake of a mingled sad and joyous character; the signs of rejoicing being for victory and the death of their enemies, those of grief being devoted to the memory of their own braves lost in the contest.

The warrior was a man of middle age, stern and

forbidding in his appearance, and, as he walked along, a frown gathered on his brow. Naked, save the blanket which covered his shoulders, he was begrimed with paint, which rendered his naturally coarse features perfectly frightful. A deep gash over his left eye, and a bandage round the arm on the same side, proved him to have suffered in the war-expedition which had recently taken place. An expression of deep cunning sat upon his countenance. In a word, he was one of those powerful-minded but evil-disposed Indians, so often met in command of marauding parties.

As the chief entered the little grove which concealed the girl, a sudden start, an alarmed glance in her rear, alone betokened consciousness of his approach, and then, relapsing into her former gravity, she continued to gaze mournfully at the water for some time after the Indian warrior stood by her side, looking upon the lovely form of the Tuscarora in undisguised admiration.

“My sister is very sad. She mourns for the

far-off wigwam of her people. It is good. Seet-se-be-a is a wise child. She will be sorry till the sun goes to sleep, then she will dream, and wake in the tent of a Sioux, and be glad."

"The Mid-day Sun can never be glad. The blood of her people has been spilt like water. Her father, her mother, her little sister, are in the happy hunting-ground. Seet-se-be-a is ready; let her go."

"Young blood is very hot," replied the chief, "and the braves would have sacrificed my daughter to the great spirit. They said we had no prisoners to put to the fire, and that the squaws would laugh. But Red Hand is a great chief, and the Rose of Ouisconsin was fair in his eyes. I have said."

"Red Hand is a Sioux, Mid-day Sun is a Tuscarora. His hand killed the father of his prisoner."

"But the Mid-day Sun has no tribe; she is alone. A great sachem offers her his wigwam."

"The Mid-day Sun is sad, her heart cannot see anything but burning villages, her ear is open and shrieks fill it, her eyes are blind."

"Red Hand is a great warrior, he has many horses; his tent is very warm; the Mid-day Sun shall be medicine; Red Hand has four wives. The Rose of Ouisconsin shall make wampum."

"The doe mates not with a wolf. I see a bird, a little bird, and it flies; a vulture chases it. It is bad."

"The Mid-day Sun," exclaimed the Indian sternly, "is very wise. But can she see a hot fire? does her eye show her red-hot gun-barrels? and will she choose? The young men ask her death. A great warrior says 'She is my squaw.' I have said."

"A Sioux is a dog," replied Mid-day Sun, "and the Tuscarora maiden can die."

The Sioux warrior glared at the girl with an intensity of rage, which for a moment overcame his self-possession, but, quickly recovering himself, he folded his blanket round his dusky form and then spoke.

"The wigwam of a great warrior is open. It is very warm. Red Hand will welcome the Rose of

Ouisconsin. To-morrow when the sun is highest, he will open his eyes and look into his tent. He will see a young bounding elk, and his heart will be glad."

"If Red Hand finds his wigwam empty?" said the girl scornfully.

"Seet-se-be-a will die."

The chief then turned on his heel and departed.

The sensations of Henry Folthorpe had been during this interview of a nature which to understand will require some little explanation. Ten years previous to the time the events of which we now record, the young man lived upon the border settlements in the happy home of his fond parents. One evening the homestead was attacked by a party of Sioux, and Mr. Folthorpe and his wife slain by the hand of the leader of the party ere they could gain the interior of their house. All the farm-servants and their only child were within, they taking their accustomed walk before their mansion ere they closed their doors for the night. Henry, forcibly restrained by the men from rushing out,

fought desperately, revenge at his heart. The Indians were repelled, not, however, before in his mind's eye the image of his parents' murderer was engraven by Henry Folthorpe. In the suitor of the Mid-day Sun the young hunter recognised this ruthless savage.

To crawl back in search of his rifle, to return to his post, and thence to shoot the Red Hand, was Henry's first impulse, but he knew that this act would bring death upon the innocent head of the Tuscarora maiden, whose gentle beauty and firmness of character had sufficiently interested the white man to render him anxious, while he punished the destroyer of his home and the murderer of his parents, to do so in such a manner as also to snatch another victim from his grasp.

The conversation above recorded was not half concluded ere the young man had fully made up his mind to rescue the Indian girl, at any risk, from her tormentors; he was of a generous and unselfish character, and, when the life of a fellow-creature was in peril, seldom thought of personal

danger in connexion with any attempt at a rescue. Aware too of the stern resolves of his Sioux enemies, he well knew how little time was left him in which to carry out his plans. He felt quite sure that in the curling nostril and lofty brow of the captive he read unalterable resolution. Death it was clear she preferred to an union with the murderer of her tribe, and, the more stoical her indifference, the more eager was Henry Folthorpe for her safety.

The young hunter, from his knowledge of Indian tactics, was quite satisfied that, though the Rose of Ouisconsin, or Mid-day Sun, as she had been variously designated, was apparently unwatched, yet that there were unseen obstacles to her immediate escape. His mind therefore discarded any such idea on the instant, but still he was unwilling to depart without holding some brief communication with the Indian girl. Moving slowly therefore along the bank, so as to bring the supposed bridge entirely between him and the warriors, distant about fifty yards, while the Rose was

not more than twenty feet, he soon found himself completely concealed from all observation on the side of the village. Assuring himself of this fact, and having distinctly heard the chief give loud orders for the girl to be left alone to consider his overtures, he gradually rose into a sitting posture, and prepared to emit some sound which should attract her notice. Since his father's death Harry Folthorpe had lived principally in the woods, and a great portion of the time amid a small band of Tuscaroras, to whom he was greatly endeared by his courage, his generosity, and his hatred of the Sioux. He was therefore perfectly versed in all their peculiar signs.

Suddenly the eye of the maiden flashed, her nostrils slightly dilated, and, though she moved not a muscle more than we have said, it was plain a new spirit had been infused into her bosom. It was a rude imitation of a beaver striking his tail, as if in the act of plastering, which had thus affected the Tuscarora girl.

"Hist!" said Harry, in her own tongue; "let

the heart of the Rose be glad, for the Red Hand shall die. Open Hand is a white warrior, but with the Túscaroras his heart is very red. When the sun is as high as the top of the far sycamore, Open Hand will come. Then let the Rose be ready."

"Open Hand is a great warrior," replied the Indian girl, in low, rich, musical tones, very different from those which she had assumed towards Red Hand, "and the Mid-day Sun hears what he says. It is very good. The heart of the Tuscarora girl is glad. The sun has opened the first buds of the Rose."

Henry would gladly have held further converse with the maiden, but, well knowing the cunning of the Indians, and the almost incredible keenness of their hearing, he spoke no more; but, shaking his clinched fist in the direction of Red Hand, crept slowly out from beneath the bushes.

All his movements were now executed with a degree of caution very different from his manner on arriving near the creek. Donning all his hunt-

ing accoutrements, and carefully looking to the flint and priming of his rifle, he quietly examined his trail from that spot to the wood; a trail which was not to be left so plainly marked without considerable danger. To eradicate it was now his task, and, as it was necessarily to be accomplished in a short space of time, Harry's tactics were soon decided on. The prairie-grass was some ten inches high, and, wherever the hunter's heavy foot had rested, was trodden down in a manner sufficiently obvious to Indian eyes.

Walking backwards, and treading carefully in the same marks, Harry quickly raised the drooping grass to an erect position, by a few artistic touches of his hickory ramrod. In this manner, tedious enough it is true, when the hunter gained the skirt of the timber, all trace of his two journeys across the prairie was removed.

"That will bother the Ingian varmint, I'll be bound," muttered Harry, with a laugh; "and now for the camp, to carry good and bad news both."

Harry made no attempt to conceal his steps in

the forest, being only anxious that the Indians should not suspect their camp to be discovered, and therefore made rapid progress in the direction of the lake, the borders of which he soon reached, some two hundred yards below the waterfall. Here lay a bark canoe, into which stepping lightly, and placing his rifle across his knees, the young man very shortly would have been paddling on the waters, had not other circumstances again intervened to frustrate his views.

The bark canoe lay beneath a thick overhanging mass of trees, where Harry had purposely concealed it; and it was when in the very act of drawing himself from under cover that his intentions were rapidly changed. His right hand grasped a sturdy bough, by means of which he was pulling himself forth, and which, by a rapid exertion of strength, enabled him to check the onward impulse given to the canoe, and next moment to remain perfectly stationary behind the native cover of the drooping trees. No sooner was he satisfied as to the immoveableness of his little craft, than Harry

Folthorpe cocked his rifle, loosened his knife, and placed his axe within reach of his hand.

It was the sound of several paddles dipping in the water which had alarmed the young hunter, who now gazed cautiously through the trees for an explanation of the noise. The circle of Harry's vision was somewhat circumscribed, the island before alluded to lying within a short distance of his place of concealment. Towards this the paddlers were evidently advancing; and presently a large canoe, manned by a dozen Indians, coming from the village, shot in sight. They were a small party from another tribe; and, from the sullen frown upon their countenances, the young hunter suspected them to have quarrelled with their allies. In the bow of the canoe sat a young chief, whose countenance Harry scanned with intense curiosity; and having, apparently, satisfied himself concerning certain doubts which crossed his mind, just as the light craft reached the shore of the little island, himself burst forth into view, and made directly for the savages.

These latter remained perfectly still, their swarthy faces animated by looks of surprise, until the white hunter was alongside their boat, all at the same time curiously examining the shore to discover if others were concealed under the same cover. Harry's first impulse was to satisfy himself that they were not in sight of the village, of which fact being satisfactorily assured, he turned to the young chief and grasped his hand with somewhat of a merry and gleesome manner.

"And how is the Dancing Bear up in these regions?" said Harry, in English; "and how is he mating with Red Hand?" continued the young hunter, who had his own reasons for not appearing as yet to have any cause of enmity against the Sioux chief.

"Red Hand is a sneaking panther," replied Dancing Bear scornfully, while he suffered a slight elevation of the eyebrows to betray his surprise at the extent of the white man's information; "and the Winnebagoes were women to trust a Sioux dog."

“Red Hand is a dog,” said Harry, warmly, though still conquering his emotion; “he took the scalps of the father and mother of Open Hand, and Open Hand cannot let him live. Would the Dancing Bear be revenged?”

The young chief replied calmly and gravely to this question, after a moment's silence—

“My young men are hungry and cold. The water is a bad place for camp. Presently the Dancing Bear and his friend will smoke the pipe of peace, and talk.”

“My camp is at the outlet of the lake; will the Winnebags eat with their white brother?”

“Open Hand is not alone.”

“No; his friends are with him,” replied the young man, somewhat surprised at the Indian's knowledge of this fact.

“White friend and Tuscarora friend,” said the Dancing Bear with a slight smile, and speaking in English; “but Winnebags go when sun down. Lie still now. Cheat the Sioux dogs.”

Harry Folthorpe was seriously alarmed at the

discovery of how little concealed was the presence of himself and companions in the forest, and, a portion of this alarm being communicated by his troubled physiognomy, the young Winnebago chief eased the mind of his friend by a whisper, in which he informed him that he alone had penetrated his secret. Both the white man and the Indians now landed on the island, and in a very short time were enjoying a luxurious meal of boiled fish and venison, which once despatched, the chief and Harry, lighting their pipes, entered into the promised explanations.

The young hunter was not a little startled to find that his red-skin friend had been a candidate for the hand of the Mid-day Sun, but that Red Hand, having more power, had outweighed him, upon which he, Dancing Bear, had joined those who demanded her death. This surprised Harry the more, his Indian friend having been a prisoner among the Tuscaroras, and having been saved from death and set at liberty at his own earnest intercession, the cause of their mutual

regard. Dancing Bear, however, had always declared himself bound in no gratitude towards the Tuscaroras, reserving this feeling wholly for his white friend.

Harry then detailed the events above recorded, it now being the turn of the Indian chief to feel surprised; Dancing Bear indeed was singularly astonished at the coolness and dexterity exhibited by his white brother throughout the whole affair. When, however, the hunter sternly recapitulated his causes of hatred against Red Hand, the savage grew stoical in his gravity, and the more the white man grew warm and impassioned the more did he shrink behind his cold exterior. At length Henry concluded, with the expression of a wish that the Dancing Bear would aid him in his meditated retribution on the murderer of his parents.

“And the Mid-day Sun,” said the young Indian, fixing his eyes keenly on the face of his friend, “what will my brother do with her?”

“Spare her life,” replied Harry with the utmost

coolness, "and give her to the Dancing Bear, if she will go to him freely."

"My brother then did not think her fair; the Rose of Ouisconsin will not be his squaw?" said the Indian chief, again fixing his keen eyes upon the young hunter, with a look of anxious inquiry.

"Open Hand has no squaw," replied Harry, a cloud suddenly darkening his brow; "but the New Moon will give him Alice Murray for a bride. No red-skin; the Mid-day Sun will be no wife of mine."

"Hugh!" exclaimed Dancing Bear with much satisfaction; "the red-skin and his white brother then will fight the Sioux. The Winnebagoes and the Tuscaroras will bury the hatchet and smoke the same calumet."

This important point in their negotiations once settled, the two young men indulged in friendly conversation for some time, and then, after having decided upon their plans, Harry intimated his wish to take some repose. The Winnebag assented by a nod, and shortly after the white hunter lay

wrapped in a deep sleep, which the Indian no sooner observed to be the case, than, after carefully and even affectionately covering the man who had saved his life, with his own blanket, he followed his example.

Harry Folthorpe slept soundly and long, and, as he afterwards declared, would have indulged in this pleasing amusement for even a more lengthened period, had not a heavy hand been laid upon his shoulder. Harry arose and looked around him. The Dancing Bear and Open Hand were alone, and the shades of evening wrapped all around in a gradually increasing gloom. In that sheltered spot, surrounded by tall trees, lofty bois-d'arcs, elms, and willows, with the wild cherry and plum trees beneath, it was even darker than usual, while no sound was heard save the croaking in the distance of the sand-hill crane, and the long moaning howl of the restless wolf.

A small camp-fire still burned, by the dim light of which the young Indian chief placed his hand upon his lips, motioning his white friend to pre-

serve utter silence. Harry obeyed, following the Winnebago, who led him without a word towards the water's edge. Here he found his own canoe, in which taking their places, the two men were shortly gliding noiselessly along the waters of Cedar Lake. It was a dark night, no gentle moon shed her dim blue radiance on the dancing waters, and, the whole journey being performed without a word, Harry had ample leisure to notice, as far as the gloom would allow him, the picturesque nature of the locality on which he had happened. The lake was dotted with islands, some low and flat, and almost unapproachable, from the quantity of saw-grass, as high as a man's head, which surrounded them, while others, mound-like, rose black against the sky, a dark mass of foliage. Little bays, deeply indented in the forest, projecting necks of land, one or two little rippling streams, and then myriads of fish leaping at times above the water, and overhead flocks of wild fowl flying to roost upon the islands, were all pleasing pictures in this night landscape.

A journey of some twenty minutes brought the two wayfarers in sight of the camp of the white man, by far too plainly visible, between the trees, by the light of a blazing fire, the only excuse for which was, that not one of the members of the party was aware of the presence of a hostile Indian within fifty miles. Dancing Bear, however, shook his head, and, as Harry silently guided the bark canoe into a little cove, he too joined in blaming the carelessness of his friends. From the point now taken up by the young hunter and his companion, every minute feature of the camp was to be distinguished.

The position occupied by the wanderers was a hollow at the foot of a somewhat high bank, surrounded by trees of an unusually lofty character, fully concealing the party on every side save the lake, so thick and impenetrable were the bushes. The centre of the picture was formed by a blazing fire of logs, over which, suspended from three solid poles, hung a huge iron pot, emitting a savoury odour of flesh and fowl. To the right of

this sat a group of white men and women; the former fourteen in number, the latter about half as many. Seated on a pile of wood was a tall elderly man of pleasing physiognomy, gravely occupied in reading to himself from a volume which evidently was the Bible. Behind him, occupying a felled tree, was a pair, whom, but for a dash of sadness on their countenances, one would have unhesitatingly pronounced happy lovers. The first and nearest to Harry was a lovely girl of eighteen, whose resemblance to the old man was sufficiently striking to cause him to be taken by the merest stranger for her father. Her cheeks were slightly pale, though gently flushing as she listened to what was evidently the impassioned pleading of the young man beside her, a slight, pale, handsome youth under twenty. Harry frowned and bit his lip as his eye fell on this pair, but he remained silent, though the Indian chief felt from the quivering in his frame how strong and violent were his emotions. The remaining white men were chiefly youths of stalwart frame, evidently

farm-servants. To the left were seated eight Indians, all males, quietly smoking, while Harry, as his keen eye ran rapidly over the surrounding trees and bushes, thought he discovered several dusky forms concealed; and completely surrounding the camp. The young hunter shuddered as he felt how deep and fatal was the security of his friends, and how terrible might have been the result.

“What ho ! Will Murray,” exclaimed he, aloud, stepping ashore, followed by his companion; “here is a pretty fire to keep up, and a pretty keen watch too, with the woods alive with Sioux. Why, man, lower that fire, if you would not have fifty red-skin devils to supper here more than are wanted.”

As he uttered these words, Harry stood with his Indian friend in the centre of the group, his eye fixed severely all the time upon Alice Murray, his affianced bride, and him who was evidently no unwelcome wooer. The old man started at the sound of his nephew's voice, the younger leaped up and sought their arms, the Tuscaroras looked

askance at the proud form of the young Winnebag, while Alice Murray and Edward Fulton drew apart hastily, their cheeks suffused with crimson, and mutually betraying the utmost confusion.

“Art joking, lad?” inquired old Murray, rising, “or have we really happened upon evil days? We were all becoming right anxious at your long absence; Alice there twice sent out an Indian in search of you; the girl was naturally uneasy, the rest having all been in these two hours.”

“Joking I am not,” replied Harry, with a bitter smile, gazing all the while reproachfully at Alice, “but in terrible earnest. I and my friend Dancing Bear here have a dozen red-skins with us; but the enemy of whom I speak is the Bloody Red Hand, who slew my father, and on whom I will have revenge ere to-morrow’s sun sets in the western sky.”

“Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord,” said Will Murray, calmly; “and though the news you bring is dire, let us be still, and hearken to your tale.”

A glance of terror and alarm passed through the whole group as the name of this ruthless savage, who had murdered the parents of the gallant young hunter, was uttered ; the Tuscaroras looked grimly one at the other, while the patriarch of the party called upon Harry to detail his day's adventures. Young Folthorpe first explained the presence of the eleven Winnebagoes, who then entered the camp, and, a brief conference having taken place, sat down among their new red allies. This done, Harry prepared to tell his tale, first taking up a position against a tree in full view of the whole group, and refusing, with something of a sneer upon his lip, the seat offered him by Edward Fulton beside Alice.

Harry then, in a clear and manly voice, detailed the events of the day. When he came to that part of the story when the Indian girl was mentioned, both Alice and Edward fixed their eyes curiously on his face with a kind of undefined hope, which they would have found considerable difficulty in explaining even to themselves. Whatever, how-

ever, was passing in their minds, the young hunter gave them no clue to his; for he spoke with the utmost calmness on the subject, and ended his address by saying that one of his reasons for desiring an attack upon the Sioux was with a view to bear the Mid-day Sun to the wigwam of his friend the Dancing Bear.

The chief of the Tuscaroras rose as soon as Open Hand had finished, and expressed the intentions of himself and followers. Red Hand was their bitterest foe, whose haunts had long been concealed; he had just annihilated one of their bands, and the daughter of its departed chief was a prisoner in his hands. They were ready to join in the onslaught at any time when their services were required. Dancing Bear rose after the Tuscarora, with whom he had smoked a pipe; and, while expressing his regret for ever having leagued with Red Hand, offered himself and men as colleagues in the fight which had been decided on. Harry, to whom the post of chieftain was unanimously assigned, these assurances having been

given, directed all his followers to sup and then prepare for the contest. This done, he leaned his rifle against the tree which had just supported him, and, making a sign to Alice, disappeared in the wood.

Alice Murray and Harry Folthorpe had, since the death of the latter's parents, been brought up together. Old Murray had taken his loved sister's son to his home, there to abide until manhood was reached, when he could appropriately shift for himself. An intimacy of course ensued between the young people, which, as the father of the fair girl had all along desired, gradually ripened into mutual affection; and, two years before, they had gladly and fondly been affianced one to the other. Harry was above all delighted, and, though his roving tastes took him away for months at a time, always returned with a heightened sense of his happiness in having such a being as Alice to welcome him with glad eyes on these occasions. Time flew with no leaden wings, and but six months were wanting to the time when they were to

be united. About this period old Murray decided on selling his location near a thriving town, and on further braving the perils of a forest life, principally at the persuasion of the young hunter, who dearly loved the green wood and the lovely prairies of the bright Ouisconsin. Hearing of this intention, Dr. Fulton, of New York, an old friend of Murray's, determined to confide his son to his care, he being in delicate health, which a residence in the west, it was hoped, would renovate. Edward came. He was a gentle, mild, amiable lad, full of the fire of genius, well read, and altogether a different person from the hearty but somewhat rude hunter. At first Alice tended him as a nurse, listening to his gifted discourse with smiling interest. It is needless to narrate how friendship grew between them; how, during Harry's absence in search of a western location, the heart of his affianced wife was, almost unconsciously to herself, stolen from him. It was some time ere he made the discovery; but then most bitter, most wretched did he become. In the first impulse of his wrath,

he would have sacrificed Edward to his jealous fury; but when the young man owned his error, and promised to err no more—when Alice, weeping, implored his forgiveness, and vowed that she loved him still, and would yet be his wife, he grew more patient, and allowed things to remain as they were. When Alice, awakening to a sense of how much she had wronged her faithful lover, declared that she loved him still, she at the moment spoke truth. At the sight of his passionate sorrow all her early affection gushed back in floods, but not to endure for more than an instant. No sooner had she uttered the words which again bound her to the man she no longer felt that deep affection for which she was wont to feel, than her soul appeared to shrink within her. Still her word was passed; and from that day both Alice and Edward strove to repress those feelings which, however, are not so easily to be trodden under foot.

When Alice noticed the sign given her by Harry Folthorpe, she started and trembled like an aspen-leaf. She felt that, in a momentary impulse of re-

gret at the barrier which was soon for ever to be placed between her and the one her heart truly, fondly loved, she had yielded to the weakness of allowing him to bid her a fond adieu. Between the bitter feelings of regret experienced by both had arisen a momentary forgetfulness of their sorrow. The lovers only recollected that they loved, and, in so doing, promised as her hand was to another, Alice felt that she had grievously erred. The interview which her affianced suitor demanded was granted by the girl with something akin to fear. Though far from being guilty of any crime, she still felt as if some terrible sin weighed her down as she approached the spot where the meeting was to take place.

It was on the edge of the lake, in a lovely little open glade, that Harry Folthorpe, his arms folded and his cheek pale, stood leaning against a tree, when Alice came hesitatingly to his side, and in a voice faltering with emotion inquired if he had anything very particular to say to her. The young man did not reply on the instant, and then, turning

quickly round, caught her two hands in his, exclaiming passionately, "Alice! Alice! I have loved you long and fondly, and is this the return which my affection is to receive?"

But what passed at that interview is of too sacred a character to be intruded on by the eyes of the multitude. In the mean time the young men hastily supped, and then set to work to prepare for the night-work which lay before them. Among these was Edward Fulton, whose health being completely restored by his hardy open-air existence, he was now fully able to stand the brunt of a contest such as it was expected would speedily take place. Besides, his delicate state had hitherto placed him in all the struggles of their long journey in a disadvantageous light in comparison with Harry, and he now felt determined to win in the eyes of all, and principally of his successful rival, a right to be considered their equal in the scale of physical manhood, while intellectually he felt himself their superior.

The feelings of the young man during the ab-

sence of the hunter and his affianced were acute in the extreme. Conscious that he had not acted rightly, he was deeply grieved that Alice should bear the blame and suffer the punishment, for he felt the just remonstrances of Harry must be so considered. His mind, therefore, was much relieved when he saw the lovely girl, her eyes red with weeping, come slowly from out of the forest gloom, followed by Folthorpe, grave and calm, his fine face lit up with all those noble emotions which were for ever overflowing within his bosom. Edward expected to gain some information from Alice as to what had passed, but, to his great surprise, she studiously avoided him, not even giving him the opportunity of exchanging a single look, but bustling about Harry and supplying him with everything which could refresh him after his day's labour, and prepare him for what was yet to come. The heart of the young man sank within him; he felt sure that the noble nature of the young hunter had recalled Alice to her duty, if indeed a consciousness of wrong had not reawakened within her the pure,

happy, contented affection, which once she had felt towards him. Edward Fulton sighed, and then, obedient to the impulses of a conscience which was honour itself, he muttered, "If she is to be his, God send he have her love!"

Henry Folthorpe was in a few minutes on foot, when, in obedience to his directions, the women and old Murray took to the large boat, which had borne them up the river thus far, and which had been dragged on rollers to the lake. Long ere the hunter came forth from his conference in the wood had everything been stowed therein. In a few minutes all were ready, and then none but men stood around the smouldering fire. Harry now turned to Edward, and said in a friendly tone, which he was not wont often to assume towards his rival, "Mr. Fulton, you are not yet strong enough to bear the fatigues of such a night as this. Take my advice, and be one to guard the women."

For a moment young Fulton was inclined to take this as a taunt, and, consequently, to fire up at what he thought a premeditated insult; but

quickly, as he gazed upon the countenance of the hunter, discarding the unworthy thought, replied, "I thank you, Harry, but you have few men as it is; and, trust me, I am well enough to fight like a true man at your side. I will but—for who knows, Harry, what may happen?—run and say good-by to the old man and Miss Murray, and then I am yours." With these words he turned towards the beach, followed by the stout hunter, who suddenly took his arm, exclaiming, "Edward, give me your hand"—he had never called him so before—"you shall go. We have terrible work before us to-night, and, as you say, God only knows what may happen. Let us fight friends, let the morrow bring what it will. Come, therefore, with me to the island where we shelter the women."

Young Fulton grasped his hand, and the two young men entered the boat together. Their only male companion, save old Murray, was the Dancing Bear, who, seating himself in the stern, took the helm. No sooner had this sign of his

being ready been given than the three white men began to pole the heavy boat out of its little harbour, which was quickly executed. The oars were then shipped and stoutly bent to, as the rippling of the tiny waves, under the pressure of the cutwater, plainly showed. It was quite dark; so much so, that Harry, who sat near the Indian, could, on turning round, scarcely distinguish the form of Edward Fulton occupying the bow. The latter and old Murray pulled on the starboard side, while only one oar gave play upon the other. The boat was very heavy, and proceeded much more slowly than appeared to please the Indian. Three of the women accordingly took oars, and, with no unskilled hand, propelled the craft through the water.

“Now, red-skin,” muttered Harry, in English, “art satisfied now when hast set the women to play? An’ they always work as hard as this, they would make excellent Indian squaws. Starboard oars making too much way, are they? Ease starboard. Gently. Now pull again. Heartily there.

Way enough; in with your oars." With these words, the oars being unshipped and placed in board, the heavy eight-oar cutter grated gently against a sandy obstacle, and then lay motionless.

A position had now been reached between two islands, the left of which was that on which the women were to be sheltered. Landing quickly, the Indian led the party some twenty feet from the bank, beneath thickly overhanging trees, to a little hollow, or rather hole, which it was he said utterly impossible to approach on any other side, and which being over-arched with boughs, a fire could be made without fear of gilding the summits of any of them, and thus betraying their presence. Materials for a tent, and one or two other articles, were brought on shore, while Dancing Bear lit a bundle of Spanish moss, and procured a sparkling blaze, by the glimmer of which it was clearly seen how often others had used the spot as a hiding-place. This done, and several muskets placed in the women's hands, Harry and Edward bade them a hurried adieu, Alice beseeching the former to be

careful of his life, while a similar request, conveyed in a hasty glance, failing to reach the eyes for which it was intended, caused much misery to young Fulton. A light bark canoe, which had trailed in the wake of the boat, received the three young men, who, without the interchange of a single word, were speedily in the middle of their followers. There now remained the second boat of the white men, the Indian periagua, and two bark canoes. The first was manned by eight white men, under the command of Harry, the second by Dancing Bear and the Winnebagoes, accompanied by Edward Fulton, leading four followers, the last by the Tuscaroras, commanded by Black Kettle.

Every white man had a rifle, every Indian fusil, while all were abundantly supplied with powder and lead. Entering their several crafts, the whole party pushed out into the lake, the periagua taking the lead. Rapid was now the progress of this little host of hardy spirits, bent on an errand of very questionable character; for though an anxious desire to rescue the fair Tuscarora was

a very strong motive in the breast of Harry, still vengeance was very far from asleep. In no case could such a feeling be less blamable than when experienced towards the murderer of a man's parents, yet never could it be wholly excused. However, we are not describing men as they should be, but recording a narrative of American border life in the last century, when the Indians were scarcely considered human creatures, and when to slay and exterminate the red-skins was the glory of most white men; when a little before venerable patriarchs offered rewards for scalps, and when the commissioners of the United Colonies assembled at Boston connived at the murder of Miantonimoh!

For some time the progress of the party continued unabated, and then suddenly slackened. The sound of the fall of Sycamore Creek explained the cause to Harry. They were near the enemies' camp. A halt took place, and, the whole crowding together, young Folthorpe sternly recapitulated a fact he had formerly impressed upon the Indians

and white men. The Sioux were to be taken alive if possible, and no woman or child was to be slain on pain of death to the wrong-doer. A hurried assent being given, they then divided; Edward Fulton and the Winnebags taking the rear, while Harry and the Tuscaroras landed, and made, under their leader's guidance, way in the direction of his morning post. Walking in Indian file, dead silence was preserved, and the edge of the creek reached without the slightest interruption. They now halted a moment for Harry to reconnoitre.

The clouds had passed away from the sky, and, though there was yet no moon, still the stars twinkled faintly, and shed a dim light. Harry hesitated but a moment, then, stooping low, motioned for all to follow. Each man obeyed, holding his breath and clutching his ready fire-arms. The young hunter soon reached the tree before mentioned. As he suspected, it was so arranged as to facilitate the crossing of the creek. Creeping along slowly and methodically, and pausing each moment to listen for any sound which should be-

tray the awakening of the Sioux watchdogs, Harry presently reached the opposite side, and with ease descended the notched tree. In a few minutes more the whole party were congregated in the little cove where Mid-day Sun had first been discovered by the white hunter. Still not a sound was heard from the wigwams of their enemies; and Harry began to hope that the capture of Red Hand, and the rescue of the Rose of Ouisconsin, might be effected without bloodshed.

The Tuscarora chief now took the lead, with Harry at his side, all crawling on the ground upon their knees, and dragging their guns in the right hand. The surface of the prairie between the wood and the wigwams was soft and velvety, and admitted of progress being made with scarcely any perceptible noise. In this manner the rude stockade of the Sioux village was reached. Still not a sound was heard from within. By crossing the little plain diagonally, one of the entrances of the village had been gained—a considerable advantage, as it enabled the party to avoid the noise

which must have been made while creeping round the outer wall. Harry now raised his finger in sign of utter silence, and then alone entered the Sioux camp.

Rounding the corner of the stockade, still upon his hands and knees, the young hunter found himself at the upper end of a double row of wigwams, terminating in a small open space, where burnt the low embers of a fire, near a stout upright post, as Harry supposed it to be. On crept the white hero, hesitating to give the signal for the onslaught, a sickening feeling coming o'er his soul as he thought how soon that breathless stillness would be changed to whooping yells, cries of death, the shout of victory, and the despairing groans of the vanquished. On therefore he went, making for the centre fire, and often pausing to listen for the least sound ; his eyes for some minutes had been fixed suspiciously on what he had at first taken for a post. He pauses, takes a long breath, clutches his rifle and knife. It is an Indian, his face turned directly towards him, and though, for

fear of betraying himself, he dares not raise his head too high, he feels that his hot eyeballs are glaring full upon him. Harry sank slowly upon the ground, in the posture of a log, keeping his eyes fixed upon the red-skin, and striving to still the loud beating of his heart. It was a fearful moment. Harry felt himself discovered, and in the power of the Indian, upon whom the moon just risen was now shining in all her brilliance. Still he stirred not. At length, however, the figure moved, and exhibited his profile to the light, in the act of turning round, and at the same moment the low half-silent laugh of the wild American savage smote upon Harry's ear—next instant, rising gently, the hunter stood beside the Dancing Bear.

“Hist!” exclaimed Harry, in a whisper; “shall we call in our men?” The Winnebag answered, in a voice sweet in its low melancholy, “Too late; Sioux gone.”

“The Sioux gone!” thundered Harry Folthorpe, in a voice which brought the out-

lying parties leaping madly in among the wigwams; "gone! and has all my care, then, been for nought? Is my revenge to be thus baulked?"

The Dancing Bear replied not; but, turning to one of his young men, bade him go and count the canoes of the Sioux. Meantime the men entered the wigwams, in the vain hope of discovering a solitary straggler—some bedridden old man or ailing woman. Every sign of their enemies had disappeared, save the desolate wigwams. Harry was furious—for a moment rage and disappointment completely overcame him; but, quickly recovering himself, he awaited, with Dancing Bear and Edward Fulton, the return of the young Winnebag. After a very brief delay the Indian lad stood before them, and intimated that the canoes were gone. A light flashed across Harry's mind. His cheek grew pale; and, violently clutching the arm of the Winnebag chief, he said, between his clinched teeth, "The Sioux dogs have eyes, they have seen the women."

"Merciful God!" cried Edward Fulton, "what

is your meaning, Harry? What horrible thought is yours?"

"We shall quickly see," replied the young hunter, bitterly. "To the boats! to the boats! Come, Dancing Bear, we'll unkennel the Sioux devils."

"White man go now, Winnebago stay here," said the Indian chief, coldly; "Open Hand too hot for leader. Let Dancing Bear alone—get back the squaws."

"Red-skin, you are right," cried Folthorpe; "take the lead. You Ingians know one another's devilry, and can circumvent it. Go on—we follow."

The Winnebagoe did not reply; but, turning in the opposite direction to Sycamore Creek, walked slowly away, followed by the whole party, and in a few moments stood again upon the water's edge, where, by his directions, the whole of the boats had been collected. Dancing Bear and Harry entered a small canoe together, motioning for the rest to follow, and then began a secret conference

as to their plans, which ended by the young white hunter's resigning himself wholly to the guidance of his red-skin friend, who appeared fully convinced that the women were in the hands of the Sioux, and, more than that, intimated his belief that some of them were close at hand watching their every movement. To deceive these spies, therefore, was now the sole object of his thoughts.

Dancing Bear paddled his canoe in the direction of the island where he and Harry had camped on the previous day, but not towards the same landing, the rest of the boats following in close order; each man clutching his arms and peering across the dimly-illuminated waters, as if at each moment expecting to discover an enemy. The island was soon reached, when the Indian chief, stooping low, drew his canoe beneath thickly overhanging bushes, and floated noiselessly in an inner channel, to the great surprise of Harry Folthorpe, and no less to that of those who occupied the other boats.

Dancing Bear now directed the whole party to

halt, giving strict injunctions that no man should go beyond a certain camping-ground pointed out, where he desired them to light a fire and keep a strict watch. These orders being given, and Edward Fulton with Black Kettle appointed temporary leaders, the two friends floated down the narrow bayou which cut the island in twain. The spot was lovely in the extreme. On each side of the small stream, utterly motionless in its course to all appearance, with the moon sheathing its surface with silvery hue, with cotton-wood, huckleberry, and willow pendant in the water, and high trees raising their proud heads aloft, it looked a very fairy domain, snatched whilome from the nether spheres. The all but silent dip of the paddle in the bayou was the sole sound, save the low musical breathing of coming wind, just sighing o'er the tree-tops.

Harry sat still in the bows, clutching his rifle with fearful energy; his cheek pale, his eye flashing, while his very soul sickened at the thought of what consequences had already ensued from his

desire for revenge. That Alice, as well as the Rose of Ouisconsin, was in the power of the enemy he felt sure, and bitter and sad were the regrets of the young white hunter. The object in view, however, now was to ascertain the position of the Sioux, and to this end it was that the Indian chief led him in the direction of the spot where they had secreted the women, and where they felt persuaded the hostile tribe were in possession of the camp. Dancing Bear appeared to know every inch of the ground, and never once paused in his course. We must, however, leave him and Harry, and rejoin the objects of their solicitude.

In half an hour after the women and old Murray were left to themselves, a couple of tents had been erected, and every preparation made for passing the night in comfort. As a matter of precaution, the fire was kept low, and round this the whole party, whom sleep was naturally shy of courting on so eventful an occasion, congregated. Every woman had a lover, a husband, or a brother, whose life was to be perilled in the coming

conflict; and deep and solemn were the prayers offered up for their safety. Mild and gentle as were all these females, they earnestly entreated that victory might crown the efforts of their friends; while not a thought was bestowed on the Sioux who must perish, or upon the wives and little ones to whom they were equally dear. Selfishness is native to man; and while charity to all the world would be a noble feeling, yet thought for those we know and love must ever be paramount in the human heart. Alice and her father sat apart, conversing of the absent in low and whispered tones, which, in the utter stillness of the night, were clear and audible. Every now and then all voices were hushed, and every ear strained to catch the slightest sound of strife; but none came, though the report of musketry at that hour would have been fearfully distinct.

“Who knows,” said Alice, anxiously, “but they may have surprised the Sioux, and captured them without bloodshed? God send it be so, and that many lives be thus happily spared!”

“Amen!” replied old Will Murray, fervently; “but I fear me it will not be so. These red-skins have fifty devilries for deceiving their enemies, and may have discovered the meditated attack and our retreat; when Heaven protect us, my child!”

“Ah! my dear father,” continued Alice, the tears streaming down her cheeks, “’tis a fearful thing to be in these wild woods. Would we had never left the town; there, at all events, we were safe from these terrible Indians. Hush! what step is that? A messenger, perhaps, from up the lake.”

“Who goes there?” cried Will Murray, fiercely, clutching his gun and listening, when the crackling of dry boughs instantly betrayed the approach of some personage. “Speak, or I will send a bullet among you. Stand to your arms, my lads.”

Every woman in an instant crouched low, musket in hand, and the click of a dozen locks was heard. The individual, whoever it was, halted, and cried out, plainly declaring himself an Indian by his

tones, "No shoot—me friend—Tuscarora—come from Sioux camp."

"A message from our friends, God be thanked!" cried the impetuous Alice, just as, before a musket could be used or an arm raised, twenty Indians came whooping and yelling upon them. To resist was vain, as death would have been the instant result; and in five minutes the whole Sioux band, men, women, and children, were congregated round the party of unhappy whites. Red Hand was among them, remarkable by his ugliness and fierceness, and still more by the air of dignified command which he strove to assume. To camp the women, to assign to the prisoners their tents, where Seet-se-be-a was also placed, was the work of a few moments, and then the whole of the warriors disappeared as suddenly as they had arrived.

The events of the few moments, which sufficed to place the Sioux entirely in possession of Will Murray and his party, were executed with a rapidity so astonishing, that Alice was quite unable,

under the influence of excitement and alarm, to collect her thoughts until some little time after the Sioux warriors had disappeared. At the expiration of that period, opening her eyes, which in the blindness of fear she had closed, dreading to look upon some terrible scene, she found herself alone in one of the tents, with the Mid-day Sun seated calmly by her side, and gazing upon her face with no little curiosity. The fire threw its glare upon them through the narrow opening of the tent, and Alice started as she recognised, from the eloquent and well-remembered description of Harry, the beautiful Rose of Ouisconsin.

“ You too are a prisoner, Mid-day Sun,” said Alice, speaking almost incoherently, and trembling in every limb, “ and hence I hope a friend. Tell me, have you seen aught of the white men? have they attacked the Sioux camp?”

“ Open Hand not fox enough for Sioux—Indian got sharp eyes—see his trail—know him come fight—run away,” replied Mid-day Sun, in broken English, with a slight tendency to smile at the su-

perior cunning of the Indian over that displayed by the white man.

“Then there has been no fight?” exclaimed Alice, much relieved; “they did not find the Sioux?”

“When white man find the *onassa hunwa* (wigwam*), the Sioux warriors gone. *Ote* empty. No fight.” And then, noticing the anxious look of the young girl, “Lily-face, Open Hand Kaunuh wah? You Open Hand squaw?”

“No!” replied Alice, warmly, a deep blush suffusing her cheeks, and a shade passing across her brow; “I am no man’s squaw; and pray God I may never be, unless I love the man.”

“No love Open Hand? Lily-face no love Open Hand?” exclaimed the Rose of Ouisconsin, somewhat warmly. “Open Hand brave, Open Hand handsome, take plenty *onahray* (scalp); Open Hand Tuscarora!”

“Open Hand very brave and good,” continued Alice, fixing her eyes upon the ground, “and

* The Indian words are pure Tuscarora.

Alice love him as a brother, not enough to be his wife. But why do we talk thus? Am I not a prisoner, my fate unknown, perhaps doomed to die?"

"Lily-face very pretty," replied the Rose of Ouisconsin, with a sadness of tone which alarmed Alice, "and no die. Red Hand great Sioux warrior, and love plenty squaw."

"What means the girl?" cried Alice, rising, her pale cheek becoming still paler than before, and then, as the dread truth burst upon her, blushing crimson. "I will die first. Tell me; speak, I pray; where is my father? I will go to him."

"Father quite safe," said Mid-day Sun, gently, "and Lily-face stay here. Pretend go to sleep, and perhaps good come." With these words, she looked out of the tent upon the scene around, pointing out to Alice the tree to which her father was bound, and then closed up the entrance of the tent, after fetching a brand from the fire, and making a small pile of wood in the centre, which she set in a blaze, the smoke escaping from a hole

in the upper part. Mid-day Sun then induced Alice to lie down on one side, while she occupied the other, and commenced chanting, in a low tone, one of those monotonous collections of verses known alone to the Indians. Her ears all the time were keenly alive to every sound, appearing, as Alice thought, as if she was momentarily in expectation of hearing something unusual. As yet, however, none but the ordinary sounds of the camp could be collected, the Sioux women chattering round the fire, the dogs wrangling over the bones on the side near the entrance of the hiding-place, the plaintive sobs of the female prisoners, and the murmuring of the wind aloft in the trees.

Alice lay still, listening to the voice of the lovely Tuscarora, her mind racked by doubts and fears. The fate of Harry and Edward, now that their meditated attack was discovered, was more than doubtful, and, like all those ignorant of passing events, the poor girl created in her mind vague ills, which could scarcely have been equalled by the reality. Still the Rose of Ouisconsin chanted

her endless ballad, a tale of love and war, in rich musical tones, which, though monotonous, were inexpressibly sweet.

Suddenly her voice ceased, and, placing a finger on her lips in sign of caution, she motioned for Alice to listen. The young girl did so, but her ear caught no sound save those of the camp, unless it were something gently rubbing the canvas in the rear of the tent. Alice trembled, but, the bright eyes of the Indian girl reassuring her, she conquered all emotion, and in whispered tones inquired the meaning of her signs. Mid-day Sun did not reply, but, moving to the edge of the tent, resuming her chanting at the same time, pulled away a stone which kept the canvas from fluttering, and gave passage to two men covered with the signs of a long crawl, their faces being begrimed with dirt and blood, the latter caused by countless scratches from the thorny bushes which surrounded the camp, and rendered all approach so difficult.

"Alice!" whispered Harry Folthope, in a low tone, the Rose continuing all the while to chant

her ballad; "thank Heaven, you are yet safe. You, too, Seet-se-be-a," added he, turning towards the Tuscarora girl, whose eyes were fixed admiringly upon his manly form. "Please Heaven, we'll rescue you both."

"But has there been no fight? Are all safe?" cried Alice, anxiously, fervently pressing the young hunter's hands in hers. "As yet all are safe. But we have no time for speech; it will be dawn in half an hour, and then comes the struggle." Dancing Bear by a few well-directed questions, obtained from the Rose every required information, and then, breaking in upon his friend's anxious conference with Alice, turned to go. "Open Hand stay in bushes," said he. "Bear send Indian to him, take Sioux behind. Winnebag fight him front." Harry assenting to this, the Indian disappeared, followed, after a few words of comfort to Alice, and of thanks to the Rose, by the young white hunter.

Great as had been Alice Murray's previous excitement, it had now increased tenfold. She knew

that the conflict was near at hand ; about, too, to take place before her eyes ; and the moments were fearful as they wore away like torture-drops. Each instant of peace was precious, in proportion as it verged upon the hour of strife. Mid-day Sun, accustomed from childhood to the danger and struggles of an Indian life, felt comparatively easy on this score. Still her eyes were fixed upon the ground, her gentle bosom heaved an occasional sigh, and now and then she cast a curious glance at the tearful white girl. Suddenly she rose, deep emotion depicted on her countenance, and, advancing to the side of Alice, put her arms round her and burst into a passionate flood of tears.

Though aware that the Rose of Ouisconsin was half French in blood and nature, still Alice was much surprised at such powerful emotion in one tutored among the Indians ; she therefore said, with some surprise, “ What ails my red sister ? is her heart very sad ? ”

The Rose of Ouisconsin raised her brimming eyes up to the face of the fair Alice, and whispered,

“The Mid-day Sun not all red, she got white blood too; but,” added she, shaking her head, “Lily-face all white, and white man love white woman for squaw.” “No!” replied Alice, her pale cheek becoming crimson, and a darling hope rising into her heart, “white man not always love white woman. Might love red and be very happy. But why does the Rose of Ouisconsin weep? does she love a white man?”

The fair Mid-day Sun raised her mild and lovely face proudly. “Open Hand great warrior, brave; Seet-se-be-a prisoner, die when sun so high,” pointing to the heavens. “Open Hand risk life—save Seet-se-be-a. Seet-se-be-a very grateful. Well, suppose Tuscarora girl say love him; no, not Tuscarora girl, her half white; well, suppose half white, half Tuscarora girl say love Open Hand; Open Hand brave warrior, and Rose of Ouisconsin right.”

Alice pressed the Indian girl warmly to her without answering, and was about to reply, when Red Hand strode into the tent. At that instant a

gentle tap was heard in the rear, to the inexpressible terror of the two girls. Ere the Sioux warrior spoke, the Tuscarora maiden whispered a few rapid words to Alice, who, though still more alarmed at her request than she was before, could make no sign of dissent.

“Red Hand great warrior,” said the Sioux, with a savage glance at the Indian girl. “Red Hand have two new squaws—Tuscarora squaw, long-knife squaw.

“Sioux *jir* ! Sioux dog !” replied the Mid-day Sun, scornfully. “Seet-se-be-a has answered ; she will die ; long-knife girl die too, Tuscarora white sister die ; better die than Red Hand squaw.

The group now presented was one of singular interest. Their arms encircling one another fondly, the pale English girl sat beside her Indian friend, whose deep rosy skin formed a singular contrast, the very picture of youth and beauty ; while, sublime in his ugliness, stood the unarmed Sioux chief, his arms folded, glaring at the pair, a terrific scowl upon his face. “The Tuscarora girl and the

daughter of the pale-faces shall die," exclaimed he, after a moment's pause, as he turned as if to fetch his weapons. Mid-day Sun at this instant leaped towards him, calling upon Alice to do the same. The Sioux chief started, but, catching a glimpse of Harry's head, and the protruding barrel of a rifle advancing into the tent, he seemed to comprehend her design, and, with a terrific bound, shouting the tremendous Sioux war-whoop, dashed out into the open air, rushed down the declivity of the hollow, up the other side, and into the forest.

Before this shelter was gained, however, a dozen rifles had been discharged upon him.

The whole body of the Sioux women were secured and bound, the white women now taking the part of guards, and keeping in the very bottom of the hollow out of reach of missiles. The tents were struck, and then Harry, followed by four white men, Black Kettle, and the whole of the Tuscaroras, rushed in pursuit of the Sioux. It was now on the very verge of day; the grey dawn

was spreading over the whole sky, and all objects were plainly distinguished. Harry, followed by his men, plunged into the forest and reached the shore of the island just in time to descry the last Sioux warrior disappearing on the opposite side of the channel. That Dancing Bear was near at hand became instantly plain, as a running fire welcomed the advent of the Indians to their hiding-place.

The spot occupied by the Sioux was a long and narrow strip of forest, dividing the channel between two islands in twain. Its shape was that of a crescent, one end of which curved round out of sight. Harry distributed his men along the shore so as to command as large a portion of it as possible, and then a deep silence ensued, while both parties took breath and reconnoitred. A small neck of land, projecting towards the Sioux retreat, and covered with very lofty trees, while several fallen logs formed a native breastwork, was occupied by Harry and Black Kettle, the rest of his men being within sight along the shore.

For some few moments all was still, utter silence

prevailed over the whole scene. Harry in vain peered through the pine-logs, not a Sioux was to be seen; while that they were equally well concealed on the opposite side was clear from the fact that not a shot had been fired after the first arrival of the Sioux upon the narrow strip of land. Black Kettle, apparently anxious for this inactivity being put an end to, retreated a step or two, and, leaning his rifle against a sycamore, commenced climbing. In a minute the agile Indian warrior was aloft, and, Harry handing him up his gun, the Tuscarora ascended to the loftiest branches of the tree, and, carefully secreting himself, peered down upon the position of the enemy. Harry watched him anxiously, and for some time imagined that he had failed in his object; presently, however, he saw him lower the muzzle of his gun. At this instant a rustling in the bushes caught Harry's attention to his left. He was crouching down behind the logs, and could see without being seen.

On the same side of the channel with himself, kneeling behind a bush, was an Indian, where

Harry had the minute before seen a Tuscarora, in the act of levelling his fusil towards Black Kettle. It was a Sioux. Quick as thought Harry let his gun fall into the hollow of his hand and fired, the report of three guns breaking upon the previous still and silent scene at the same time. When the young hunter shot, it was, as he thought, without aiming, but the ball hit the Indian's wrist, and frustrated his intentions. Next minute, dropping his arms, the Sioux plunged into the water, whooping a yell of victory, and waving over his head a *bloody scalp*! A loud shout from the Tuscaroras, and the discharge of all their guns, testified how plainly they had distinguished the disgusting trophy. On examination, the body of one was found on the spot where Harry had first discovered the Sioux, who reached the opposite side unhurt, and caught hold of a drooping branch, thinking to swing himself on shore.

The tree, however, occupied by Black Kettle, was exactly opposite to this spot; and he, dropping his rifle, plunged furiously from the tree-top into

the stream beside the Sioux, who lost his hold, and, disappearing first below the water, the Tuscarora rose again, tomahawk in hand, out of breath, but ready for the conflict. The other, seeing that his victory was not complete, and that his savage triumph was yet to be dearly contested, turned, and, ere the chief could recover himself sufficiently, closed with him and grappled, in the struggle Black Kettle losing his only weapon. The Indians, both admirable swimmers, had now nothing but their physical strength to depend upon; each striving to drag the other to his own shore, there to meet with certain death. They were now side by side, clasping each other's waists with one arm, while with the other they struck out furiously for the land. In the first onset the middle of the stream was gained; and there it was that Harry, watching with fearful interest the deadly struggle, recognised in the Sioux the hated Red Hand. His rifle was reloaded and instantly levelled, but in vain. The movements of the Indians were so rapid—they were so closely entwined—that to shoot

one without the other was utterly impossible. Harry saw this; and, accordingly, with reluctance again watched the progress of the struggle.

It was quite clear that Red Hand was the more powerful man of the two, as he was fast nearing his own side, and in a few moments would have brought the Tuscarora within reach of the arm of some of his followers. Black Kettle at length appeared aware of this, for, pausing a moment, he threw his whole strength into one final effort, and, plunging furiously, disengaged himself from the Sioux, reappearing behind the neck of land where Harry was located. Red Hand also gained cover ere any effort could be made to prevent him.

As matters now stood, the Sioux had gained a decided advantage, their chief having dared the enemy upon their own ground, killed a Tuscarora, and escaped with his scalp unscathed. Black Kettle and his followers were furious, and, after conference with Harry, determined upon bringing the combat to a rapid and final issue. No sooner had a few words passed between the Tuscarora and

the young white hunter, than the former disappeared towards the interior of the island. Harry, meantime, again peered forth in search of an enemy; but so densely thick was the dry undergrowth, that not a glimpse was to be caught of the Sioux. The young hunter, equally tired of this inactivity with the Tuscaroras, had recourse therefore to a stratagem which he hoped would bring one at least within range of his gun. Drawing his ramrod, and hoisting his cap on its summit, he slowly and methodically raised it above the breastwork of logs, in such a manner as to give an idea of a man cautiously reconnoitring. The trick told, three rifles being instantly protruded from a close knot of cane; before they could fire, however, half a dozen guns were discharged by Harry and his companions, as they, with a mocking laugh, hoisted the cap higher, and exposed the deceit. A fearful cry from the Sioux proclaimed the fatal success of the Tuscarora rifles, and then all again was silent.

This stillness lasted some ten minutes, during

which time Harry and his companions were engaged in charging their guns with arrows, the points of which were loaded with combustibles. Suddenly, while they were thus occupied, a dense column of smoke rose to windward, a loud crackling was heard, and then out burst the flames. The strip of forest, with its thick and dry undergrowth, was on fire. A dozen blazing arrows were instantly poured in to add to the confusion.

"To the boats! to the boats!" cried Harry, as Dancing Bear came furiously up the channel in his canoe, followed by all his men, the dense volumes of smoke almost smothering him. At this moment a loud wailing cry burst upon the ear of Harry, and, before the Winnebag could stay him, the young man had bounded back in the direction of the women. The rest all rushed to the boats, and followed the young chief in chase of the Sioux, whom all knew to have taken to their canoes, the whole strip of forest being one dense mass of flame and smoke.

The tall reeds, the thick bushes, the lofty trees,

heavily pendant with Spanish moss, had almost all been caught by the fierce and ruthless element, which, driven by the morning breeze, galloped over the surface of the ground, pouring vast clouds of smoke onward as an advanced guard, beneath which the subtle flame crept on and on, until the whole strip was one sheet of fire. The tall reeds crackled like musketry, the thick bushes sent forth a sputtering sound, the lofty trees groaned as if in anguish, and the whole combined gave vent to a roar so terrific, that every animal within miles fled, scared with the awful sound. It was quite clear that not a solitary human being could by any possibility be still upon the island.

When Harry plunged into the forest in the direction of the women, the shrieks became still more terrific. In a moment, however, he was upon the spot, and his eye greedily devouring the whole details of the scene. The Sioux women, vastly outnumbering the whites, were, when Harry bounded suddenly upon them, engaged in a struggle, the object of which clearly was to drag off

their late guards as prisoners, while some half-dozen were occupied in a similar attempt upon old Murray. The arrival of Harry, however, soon changed the face of things, the Sioux squaws, expecting others to follow, flying with loud shrieks. But Henry Folthorpe minded them not, his eye was fixed on one group from the moment of his arrival in the hollow. Red Hand, with Alice upon his shoulder, was striving, when Harry came in sight, to disengage himself from the grasp of the fair Rose of Ouisconsin, who, regardless of his upraised tomahawk, was clinging to his feet, and thus successfully preventing his escape. Harry now sprang forward, his axe in hand, while the Rose loosened her grasp. The Red Hand dropped his burthen to his feet, motioning the young white man at the same time to stand off, while with his tomahawk he threatened the girl's life. The group was now one of awful interest. Alice lay senseless on the ground, her long hair twined in the Indian's fingers, while above was suspended the dread weapon in the very act of striking. To

the left stood the Rose of Ouisconsin, leaning with flashing eye against the tree which supported the Sioux chief's rifle; to the right, his hands clasped in speechless agony, was the father, almost in an attitude of prayer, imploring the Indian to have mercy on his child. Facing Red Hand was Harry, with uplifted axe, rooted to the very ground with horror.

"Stay, Indian, devil, cursed red-skin! touch but a hair of her head, and no torment shall suffice wherewith to tear thy vile soul from thy outcast body."

"Pale-face girl die, or go to Sioux wigwam," replied the chief, calmly; "Red Hand want a white squaw."

"Never!" cried Harry, quite beside himself with fury; "never! come forth, red-skin, and let us in fair fight contend for her; come, I say."

"Sioux chief got one scalp," said Red Hand, pointing out the disgusting trophy: "enough. Got father and mother scalp, don't want son. Indian in a hurry; shall pale-face girl die, or go?"

Harry's heart beat with terrible violence as the Indian raised the fatal axe. He knew not what to do. To refuse to let Alice go was to seal her death, to rush upon Red Hand was a most doubtful risk. While he yet paused, a dark object described a circle in the air and came down upon the Indian's arm, almost crushing it, and sending his tomahawk spinning out of his hand. Uttering a fearful yell, the Sioux plunged back into the forest.

"God be thanked!" cried Harry; "who did that deed?"

There was no reply given to the question, but the Rose of Ouisconsin, standing against the tree, her cheek unusually flushed, her bosom heaving as after a violent effort, and the Sioux rifle still in her hand, betrayed the saviour of Alice. Harry uttered a cry of delight, thanking the Mid-day Sun in terms so warm and earnest as to bring the warm blood coursing through her dark skin as plain as upon the fairest damsel of the north.

Bidding Seet-se-be-a and old Murray strive to

restore the insensible Alice, Harry again flew in chase of the Sioux, after cautioning them against another surprise, and came up with him just as he was about to step into the small bark canoe which had brought him to the island, but not in time to prevent his egress upon the water, where he joined the rest of his band in hand-to-hand contest with the Winnebags, Tuscaroras, and white men.

Harry paused and gazed upon the scene, his heart beating violently, and his whole frame trembling with emotion. On one side were the Sioux canoes, containing some thirty men (four had perished, one white man, a Tuscarora, and two Winnebags, being the casualties in the opposite scale), while on the other thirteen whites, ten Winnebags, and seven Tuscaroras exactly matched them. The Dancing Bear and Edward Fulton, who jointly occupied a small canoe, and were opposed to two Sioux, suddenly made a feint of rushing on, but, by a skilful stroke of the Indian paddle, wheeled round, and rushed to meet Red Hand. The baffled Sioux gave instant chase, and Harry shuddered as he saw his two friends about to con-

tend with a party so infinitely their superiors. Fire-arms had for some time been abandoned; Edward wielded a cutlass, Dancing Bear a tomahawk, and the Sioux the same, while Red Hand had before him one of the same instruments. Next moment the three canoes closed. Edward turned to meet the hind boat, while the Bear aimed a furious blow at Red Hand. Edward, however, was no match for two Indians, and would in an instant have fallen a victim, had not the ready rifle of Harry, choosing a moment when the Sioux were in a line, deprived him of both his assailants at once. Red Hand and the Bear, meantime, had closed, but neither could master the other for the moment. They were equally matched; both were warriors of vast muscular power, and, as they clutched each other's armed hand, they gazed with hate and fury at one another for some moments. Edward profited by this pause to push the Sioux canoe toward the shore, to which it slowly glided, while Harry was engaged in loading his rifle.

Young Fulton now assumed the paddle, en-

deavouring, as much as possible, to aid his companion by a series of skilful manœuvres. It was with difficulty the canoes were prevented from upsetting, as the pair of Indians struggled with all their might for mastery. At length they closed still nearer, and Dancing Bear, choosing a good opportunity, sprang up, and, leaping into Red Hand's boat, sent the one containing Edward spinning some twenty yards off. It was, however, an almost fatal error on the part of the Winnebag, as he missed his footing, and fell upon his back, while the Sioux, with a loud yell of triumph, waved his tomahawk on high, and next minute lay dead beside his foe. The rifle of Harry Folthorpe had killed the murderer of his parents.

The three friends now rushed to the aid of their companions, but the contest was over. The death of Red Hand, and the disparity in numbers, dispirited the Sioux, who, on Harry's loudly offering quarter, contrary to Indian usages, quietly surrendered, assured by Open Hand that their lives would be spared.

* * * *

On the afternoon of the day which had proved so eventful to all the persons concerned in this history a group was collected apart from the general camp, which still occupied the hollow, the Sioux being well guarded therein. Harry, Alice, Edward, and Old Murray, were there congregated away from the rest, and opposite to the still smouldering strip of forest. Alice sat beside Harry on one of the logs which had served as a breastwork during the fight, while Edward stood pale and anxious, leaning against a tree. Old Murray, utterly unconscious of what had been passing around him for so many months, sat still, not a little surprised and anxious as to the object of so mysterious and solemn a meeting. Harry had been several times wounded, as well as Edward, during the day, which, added to the deeply-excited state of his feelings, rendered him deadly pale. Alice was equally anxious with himself, and sat, with downcast eyes and heaving bosom, awaiting the words which were to decide her future fate.

“Will Murray,” said Harry, after a brief pause,

during which he appeared collecting his thoughts, "your daughter and I have been sweet now many years, and we thought of marrying and settling in three weeks' time from this."

"You did," replied Will Murray, with a smile; "and I suppose you want me, in consideration of your having waited so very long a time, to shorten the period. You wish to be married at once. Well, Harry, you're a good lad, have this day more than saved my life, and, if Alice says not nay, you shall have her to-morrow. Life is here so uncertain, that perhaps 't would be better."

A dead silence followed this speech, so unsuited to the temper of the trio whom Will Murray addressed.

"Why, Harry!—Alice!—you look terrified—alarmed!—why, what is the matter, child? speak."

Alice muttered some indistinct words, but their meaning it was impossible to catch.

"Nay, Will Murray, my kind guardian and best friend, you quite mistake me," said Harry, fetching a deep sigh. "Alice and I had some talk

last night, and—and—we agreed to think no more of one another, except as friends. That is what I had to tell you, my dear friend, and, now it's told, my mind is lightened of a great weight."

Will Murray was for a moment speechless; then, recovering himself, he exclaimed, "Why, children, what do you mean? Have you quarrelled, and can't you make it up? Come! come! nonsense, my dear children! what was it about? Tell me, and we'll soon put an end to this."

Harry saw that he must speak plainer; he therefore added—"Alice no longer loves me as a wife should love a husband."

"Tush! tush! all maiden nonsense. Say, is it not so, Alice, to please your own dear father, that since you were a baby has set his heart on this union?"

Alice sobbed aloud, but spoke not a word.

"Father!" exclaimed Harry, "I see the truth must out. Alice loves another, and that other is Edward Fulton."

"You jest, man!" cried the old man, passionately. "Surely you jest?"

"'Tis a jest then that has lasted six months," replied Harry, bitterly. "But, Will Murray, list to me. It was my own fault; I deserved it, and I must pay the price of my folly. I neglected her for my wild humours, for my love of sport and the green forest life."

"No, Harry, no!" cried Alice; "you never deserved from me aught save love and kindness."

"Then, why—?" exclaimed her father, passionately

"Stay!" interrupted Harry. "I have yet much to say. I was always absent; and, when present, my habits made me rude and unpolished. Edward here had ways to win a woman's heart, and he won your daughter's."

"May Heaven's, and an old man's——"

"Father! father! curse him not," cried Alice, falling on her knees.

"Will Murray," exclaimed Harry, calmly, "curse not him who will be your child's husband. I said he won your daughter. I saw it plainly, but I saw more; I saw that she strove to bring her

heart back to me, and that he tried to wean his from her. That they failed was natural, but fail they did; and now, Will Murray, you gave me your daughter with a blessing, for which God reward you! With her love 'twould have been the sweetest gift this side Heaven, which knows how I did love her." And a big tear rolled down the young man's cheek. "But that is gone. You gave her to me, and, Will Murray, in the name of the sacred friendship you have ever shown me, in the name of that affection I still bear your daughter, let me give her with a father's holy blessing to the man she loves."

Will Murray hesitated but a moment, and then cried, "Harry, my son, you are a noble fellow; Alice, you are an ungrateful jade. But I can refuse him nothing. Here, Edward Fulton, take her with a father's blessing; and all I can say more is, be unto her such a husband as Harry Folthorpe would have been."

"Sir, I will try," was all Edward could say, as he wrung the hand of his late rival, and then pressed Alice to his heart.

“But,” added the young hunter, with a smile,—for, despite his deeply-moved feelings, the proud consciousness of dispensing joy made him feel happy,—“I have not done with my match-making.” And he gave a shrill whistle, which brought to his side the Dancing Bear and the Rose of Ouisconsin. Seet-se-be-a, to the astonishment of all save Alice, no longer wore an Indian dress, but, in a neat cotton gown, and hair braided in the English fashion, stood with downcast eyes before the surprised and puzzled group. A slight smile on the lips of his cousin, with the hot blushes and English raiment of the Mid-day Sun, caused a light to break in upon the mind of Harry, who next moment was alone with Alice.

“What means this change?” said the young man somewhat anxiously, taking his cousin’s hand in his.

“’Tis useless, Harry, to disguise it. The poor girl, without a friend, an orphan, abandoned by all, has clung to the hand that saved her. Deep gratitude has given rise to love. And oh, Harry !

though Indian blood be in her veins, she is a most lovely creature. Noble too,—for how gallantly she saved my life !”

“ She did,” replied Harry, warmly ; “ she saved you, Alice ; and for that alone I love her at once. You are now another’s ; still, let me for once say again, my heart can never feel to you but as it has been wont. I will, however, have something to depend upon me, something to share my existence. In the forest life to which we are fated, a mate is necessary. I will wed the woman who saved my Alice’s life.”

“ God bless you, Harry !” cried Alice, deeply moved ; “ would to God I had been yours six months back !”

“ No more of this,” replied the young hunter ; and he led his cousin back to where the Indian girl was still standing.

“ Dancing Bear,” said Harry, gravely, in a whisper, “ speak : the Mid-day Sun will answer. But my friend is very brave, and will not be sad if Tuscarora girl say no.”

The Dancing Bear replied by what can be called by no other name save a grunt, and then addressed the Indian girl.

“The Dancing Bear great warrior, chief, Winnebago! Wigwam in a valley—green, plenty with fish, where the deer sleep thick as the leaves of the mountain-ash. Wigwam warm, piled with skins. Dancing Bear great hunter, never tired—six black bears have gone before him to happy hunting-ground, to tell him brave warrior. But the wigwam is empty, and Winnebago want a squaw. I have said.”

This was said in English, the chief being too proud to avow his knowledge of the Tuscarora dialect; and the Rose was about to reply, when Harry made a sign for silence.

“It is not the gift of a white man to boast, but here I stand as Heaven made me. My wigwam is empty, and, if the Rose of Ouisconsin will take a man who will learn to love her, Harry Folthorpe will make her his wife.”

Edward and Will Murray had been prepared by

Alice for this extraordinary act on the part of Harry; no one, therefore, manifested any surprise. The Dancing Bear stood immoveable. The Rose of Ouisconsin alone trembled.

“Open Hand great warrior, Tuscarora girl nothing; Open Hand save life of Mid-day Sun, Mid-day Sun very grateful; but—”

“Then you will not have me?” said Harry, much surprised.

The beautiful Indian girl raised her gentle eyes with an expression of alarm, and said—

“Mid-day Sun not good squaw for Open Hand, but try be so.”

Harry took her hand kindly; and Alice, delighted beyond measure, ran to the Tuscarora girl and led her away, glad to hide her happiness and her confusion.

We have now little more to tell. The site of the Sioux village was selected as a location; where Will Murray, his daughter, and her husband, established themselves; while the original proprietors were led away into captivity by Dancing

Bear and Black Kettle. The place, however, was found too far in the heart of the Indian country; and, some months after, the whole party made a slight retreat, and finally settled in a lovely and fertile spot nearer the settlements. Alice and Edward were happy in the extreme, and lived to see one of their daughters united to the eldest son of Harry Folthorpe and the fair Rose of Ouisconsin. Harry, too, was happy, as he deserved to be; though the first passionate love of youth was no longer his to bestow, he loved and cherished his half-Indian bride, and never repented the day when he first saw her seated near the lovely waters of Sycamore Creek.

THE END.





