



“The bushes that formed the thicket were moved aside, and a human visage, as fiercely wild as unbridled passions could make it, peered on the retiring footsteps of the travellers.”

—*The Last of the Mohicans*, page 24.

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

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INTRODUCTION.

It is believed that the scene of this tale, and most of the information necessary to understand its allusions, are rendered sufficiently obvious to the reader in the text itself, or in the accompanying notes. Still there is so much obscurity in the Indian traditions, and so much confusion in the Indian names, as to render some explanation useful.

Few men exhibit greater diversity, or, if we may so express it, greater antithesis of character, than the native warrior of North America. In war, he is daring, boastful, cunning, ruthless, self-denying, and self-devoted; in peace, just, generous, hospitable, revengeful, superstitious, modest, and commonly chaste. These are qualities, it is true, which do not distinguish all alike; but they are so far the predominating traits of these remarkable people, as to be characteristic.

It is generally believed that the Aborigines of the American continent have an Asiatic origin. There are many physical as well as moral facts which corroborate this opinion, and some few that would seem to weigh against it.

The color of the Indian, the writer believes, is peculiar to himself, and while his cheek-bones have a very striking indication of a Tartar origin, his eyes have not. Climate may have had great influence on the former, but it is difficult to see how it can have produced the substantial difference which exists in the latter. The imagery of the Indian, both in his poetry and in his oratory, is Oriental; chastened, and perhaps improved, by the limited range of practical knowledge. He draws his metaphors from the clouds, the seasons, the birds, the beasts, and the vegetable world. In this, perhaps, he does no more than any other energetic and imagina-

tive race would do, being compelled to set bounds to fancy by experience ; but the North American Indian clothes his ideas in a dress which is different from that of the African, and is Oriental in itself. His language has the richness and sententious fulness of the Chinese. He will express a phrase in a word, and he will qualify the meaning of an entire sentence by a syllable ; he will even convey different significations by the simplest inflexions of the voice.

Philologists have said that there are but two or three languages, properly speaking, among all the numerous tribes which formerly occupied the country that now composes the United States. They ascribe the known difficulty one people have to understand another to corruptions and dialects. The writer remembers to have been present at an interview between two chiefs of the Great Prairies west of the Mississippi, and when an interpreter was in attendance who spoke both their languages. The warriors appeared to be on the most friendly terms, and seemingly conversed much together ; yet, according to the account of the interpreter, each was absolutely ignorant of what the other said. They were of hostile tribes, brought together by the influence of the American government ; and it is worthy of remark, that a common policy led them both to adopt the same subject. They mutually exhorted each other to be of use in the event of the chances of war throwing either of the parties into the hands of his enemies. Whatever may be the truth, as respects the root and genius of the Indian tongues, it is quite certain they are now so distinct in their words as to possess most of the disadvantages of strange languages ; hence much of the embarrassment that has arisen in learning their histories, and most of the uncertainty which exists in their traditions.

Like nations of higher pretensions, the American Indian gives a very different account of his own tribe or race from that which is given by other people. He is much addicted to overestimating his own perfections, and to undervalue those of his rival or his enemy ; a trait which may possibly be thought corroborative of the Mosaic account of the creation.

The Whites have assisted greatly in rendering the traditions of the Aborigines more obscure by their own manner of corrupting names. Thus the term used in the title of this book has undergone the changes of Mahicanni, Mohicans, and Mohigans ; the latter being the word commonly used by the Whites. When it is remembered that the Dutch (who first

settled New York), the English, and the French, all gave appellations to the tribes that dwelt within the country which is the scene of this story, and that the Indians not only gave different names to their enemies, but frequently to themselves. the cause of the confusion will be understood.

In these pages, Lenni-Lenape, Lenape, Delawares, Wapanachki, and Mohicans, all mean the same people, or tribes of the same stock. The Mengwe, the Maquas, the Mingoes, and the Iroquois, though not all strictly the same, are identified frequently by the speakers, being politically confederated and opposed to those just named. Mingo was a term of peculiar reproach as were Mengwa and Maqua in a less degree.

The Mohicans were the possessors of the country first occupied by the Europeans in this portion of the continent. They were, consequently, the first dispossessed; and the seemingly inevitable fate of all these people, who disappear before the advances, or it might be termed the inroads of civilization, as the verdure of their native forests fall before the nipping frosts, is represented as having already befallen them. There is sufficient historical truth in the picture to justify the use that has been made of it.

In point of fact, the country which is the scene of the following tale has undergone as little change, since the historical events alluded to had place, as almost any other district of equal extent within the whole limits of the United States. There are fashionable and well-attended watering-places at and near the spring where Hawk-eye halted to drink, and roads traverse the forests where he and his friends were compelled to journey without even a path. Glenn's has a large village; and while William Henry, and even a fortress of later date, are only to be traced as ruins, there is another village on the shores of the Horican. But, beyond this, the enterprise and energy of a people who have done so much in other places have done little here. The whole of that wilderness, in which the latter incidents of the legend occurred, is nearly a wilderness still, though the red man has entirely deserted this part of the state. Of all the tribes named in these pages, there exists only a few half-civilized beings of the Oneidas, on the reservations of their people in New York. The rest have disappeared, either from the regions in which their fathers dwelt, or altogether from the earth.

There is one point on which we would wish to say a word before closing this preface. Hawk-eye calls the *Lac du Saint*

Sacrement, the "Horican." As we believe this to be an appropriation of the name that has its origin with ourselves, the time has arrived, perhaps, when the fact should be frankly admitted. While writing this book, fully a quarter of a century since, it occurred to us that the French name of this lake was too complicated, the American too common-place, and the Indian too unpronounceable, for either to be used familiarly in a work of fiction. Looking over an ancient map, it was ascertained that a tribe of Indians, called "Les Horicans" by the French, existed in the neighborhood of this beautiful sheet of water. As every word uttered by Natty Bumppo was not to be received as rigid truth, we took the liberty of putting the "Horican" into his mouth, as the substitute for "Lake George." The name has appeared to find favor, and all things considered, it may possibly be quite as well to let it stand, instead of going back to the House of Hanover for the appellation of our finest sheet of water. We relieve our conscience by the confession, at all events, leaving it to exercise its authority as it may see fit.

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS.

CHAPTER I.

My ear is open, and my heart prepared :
The worst is worldly loss thou canst unfold :—
Say, is my kingdom lost ?

SHAKESPEARE.

—It was a feature peculiar to the colonial wars of North America, that the toils and dangers of the wilderness were to be encountered before the adverse hosts could meet. A wide and apparently an impervious boundary of forests severed the possessions of the hostile provinces of France and England. The hardy colonist, and the trained European who fought at his side, frequently expended months in struggling against the rapids of the streams, or in effecting the rugged passes of the mountains, in quest of an opportunity to exhibit their courage in a more martial conflict. But, emulating the patience and self-denial of the practised native warriors, they learned to overcome every difficulty ; and it would seem that, in time, there was no recess of the woods so dark, nor any secret place so lovely, that it might claim exemption from the inroads of those who had pledged their blood to satiate their vengeance, or to uphold the cold and selfish policy of the distant monarchs of Europe.

Perhaps no district throughout the wide extent of the intermediate frontiers can furnish a livelier picture of the cruelty and fierceness of the savage warfare of those periods than the country which lies between the head waters of the Hudson and the adjacent lakes.

The facilities which nature had there offered to the march of the combatants were too obvious to be neglected. The lengthened sheet of the Champlain stretched from the fron

tiers of Canada, deep within the borders of the neighboring province of New York, forming a natural passage across half the distance that the French were compelled to master in order to strike their enemies. Near its southern termination, it received the contributions of another lake, whose waters were so limpid as to have been exclusively selected by the Jesuit missionaries to perform the typical purification of baptism, and to obtain for it the title of lake "du Saint Sacrement." The less zealous English thought they conferred a sufficient honor on its unsullied fountains, when they bestowed the name of their reigning prince, the second of the house of Hanover. The two united to rob the untutored possessors of its wooded scenery of their native right to perpetuate its original appellation of "Horican."*

Winding its way among countless islands, and imbedded in mountains; the "holy lake" extended a dozen leagues still further to the south. With the high plain that there interposed itself to the further passage of the water, commenced a portage of as many miles, which conducted the adventurer to the banks of the Hudson, at a point where, with the usual obstructions of the rapids or rifts, as they were then termed in the language of the country, the river became navigable to the tide.

While in the pursuit of their daring plans of annoyance, the restless enterprise of the French even attempted the distant and difficult gorges of the Alleghany, it may easily be imagined that their proverbial acuteness would not overlook the natural advantages of the district we have just described. It became, emphatically, the bloody arena, in which most of the battles for the mastery of the colonies were contested. Forts were erected at the different points that commanded the facilities of the route, and were taken and retaken, razed and rebuilt, as victory alighted on the hostile banners. While the husbandman shrank back from the dangerous passes, within the safer boundaries of the more ancient settlements, armies larger than those that had often disposed of the sceptres of the mother countries, were seen to bury themselves in these forests, whence they rarely returned but

* As each nation of the Indians had either its language or its dialect, they usually gave different names to the same places, though nearly all of their appellations were descriptive of the object. Thus a literal translation of the name of this beautiful sheet of water, used by the tribe that dwelt on its banks, would be "The Tail of the Lake." Lake George, as it is vulgarly, and now indeed legally, called, forms a sort of tail to Lake Champlain, when viewed on the map. Hence the name.

in skeleton bands, that were haggard with care, or dejected by defeat. Though the arts of peace were unknown to this fatal region, its forests were alive with men; its shades and glens rang with the sounds of martial music, and the echoes of its mountains threw back the laugh, or repeated the wanton cry, of many a gallant and reckless youth, as he hurried by them, in the noontide of his spirits, to slumber in a long night of forgetfulness.

It was in this scene of strife and bloodshed that the incidents we shall attempt to relate occurred, during the third year of the war which England and France last waged for the possession of a country that neither was destined to retain.

The imbecility of her military leaders abroad, and the fatal want of energy in her councils at home, had lowered the character of Great Britain from the proud elevation on which it had been placed, by the talents and enterprise of her former warriors and statesmen. No longer dreaded by her enemies, her servants were fast losing the confidence of self-respect. In this mortifying abasement, the colonists, though innocent of her imbecility, and too humble to be the agents of her blunders, were but the natural participators. They had recently seen a chosen army from that country, which, reverencing as a mother, they had blindly believed invincible—an army led by a chief who had been selected from a crowd of trained warriors, for his rare military endowments, disgracefully routed by a handful of French and Indians, and only saved from annihilation by the coolness and spirit of a Virginian boy, whose riper fame has since diffused itself, with the steady influence of moral truth, to the uttermost confines of Christendom.* A wide frontier had been laid naked by this unexpected disaster, and more substantial evils were preceded by a thousand fanciful and imaginary dangers. The alarmed colonists believed that the yells of the savages mingled with every fitful gust of wind that issued from the interminable forests of the west. The terrific character of their merciless enemies increased immeasurably the natural horrors of war-

* Washington: who, after uselessly admonishing the European general of the danger into which he was heedlessly running, saved the remnants of the British army, on this occasion, by his decision and courage. The reputation earned by Washington in this battle was the principal cause of his being selected to command the American armies at a later day. It is a circumstance worthy of observation, that while all America rang with his well-merited reputation, his name does not occur in any European account of the battle; at least the author has searched for it without success. In this manner does the mother country absorb even the fame under that system of rule.

fare. Numberless recent massacres were still vivid in their recollections ; nor was there any ear in the provinces so deaf as not to have drunk in with avidity the narrative of some fearful tale of midnight murder, in which the natives of the forests were the principle and barbarous actors. As the credulous and excited traveller related the hazardous chances of the wilderness, the blood of the timid curdled with terror, and mothers cast anxious glances even at those children which slumbered within the security of the largest towns. In short, the magnifying influence of fear began to set at naught the calculations of reason, and to render those who should have remembered their manhood, the slaves of the basest of passions. Even the most confident and the stoutest hearts began to think the issue of the contest was becoming doubtful ; and that abject class was hourly increasing in numbers, who thought they foresaw all the possessions of the English crown in America subdued by their Christian foes, or laid waste by the inroads of their relentless allies.

When, therefore, intelligence was received at the fort which covered the southern termination of the portage between the Hudson and the lakes, that Montcalm had been seen moving up the Champlain, with an army "numerous as the leaves on the trees," its truth was admitted with more of the craven reluctance of fear than with the stern joy that a warrior should feel, in finding an enemy within reach of his blow. The news had been brought, towards the decline of a day in midsummer, by an Indian runner, who also bore an urgent request from Munro, the commander of a work on the shore of the "holy lake," for a speedy and powerful reinforcement. It has already been mentioned that the distance between these two posts was less than five leagues. The rude path, which originally formed their line of communication, had been widened for the passage of wagons ; so that the distance which had been travelled by the son of the forest in two hours, might easily be effected by a detachment of troops, with their necessary baggage, between the rising and setting of a summer sun. The loyal servants of the British crown had given to one of these forest fastnesses the name of William Henry, and to the other that of Fort Edward ; calling each after a favorite prince of the reigning family. The veteran Scotchman just named held the first, with a regiment of regulars and a few provincials ; a force really by far too small to make head against the formidable power that Montcalm was leading to the foot of his earthen mounds. At the

latter, however, lay General Webb, who commanded the armies of the king in the northern provinces, with a body of more than five thousand men. By uniting the several detachments of his command, this officer might have arrayed nearly double that number of combatants against the enterprising Frenchman, who had ventured so far from his reinforcements, with an army but little superior in numbers.

But under the influence of their degraded fortunes, both officers and men appeared better disposed to await the approach of their formidable antagonists, within their works, than to resist the progress of their march, by emulating the successful example of the French at Fort du Quesne, and striking a blow on their advance.

After the first surprise of the intelligence had a little abated, a rumor was spread through the entrenched camp, which stretched along the margin of the Hudson, forming a chain of outworks to the body of the fort itself, that a chosen detachment of fifteen hundred men was to depart, with the dawn, for William Henry, the post at the northern extremity of the portage. That which at first was only rumor, soon became certainty, as orders passed from the quarters of the commander-in-chief to the several corps he had selected for this service, to prepare for their speedy departure. All doubts as to the intention of Webb now vanished, and an hour or two of hurried footsteps and anxious faces succeeded. The novice in the military art flew from point to point, retarding his own preparation by the excess of his violent and somewhat distempered zeal; while the more practised veteran made his arrangements with a deliberation that scorned every appearance of haste; though his sober lineaments and anxious eye sufficiently betrayed that he had no very strong professional relish for the, as yet, untried and dreaded warfare of the wilderness. At length the sun set in a flood of glory behind the distant western hills, and as darkness drew its veil around the secluded spot the sounds of preparation diminished; the last light finally disappeared from the log cabin of some officer; the trees cast their deeper shadows over the mounds and the rippling stream, and a silence soon pervaded the camp, as deep as that which reigned in the vast forest by which it was environed.

According to the orders of the preceding night, the heavy sleep of the army was broken by the rolling of the warning drums, whose rattling echoes were heard issuing, on the damp morning air, out of every vista of the woods, just as day began to draw the shaggy outlines of some tall pines of the vicinity,

on the opening brightness of a soft and cloudless eastern sky. In an instant the whole camp was in motion ; the meanest soldier arousing from his lair to witness the departure of his comrades, and to share in the excitement and incidents of the hour. The simple array of the chosen band was soon completed. While the regular and trained hirelings of the king marched with haughtiness to the right of the line, the less pretending colonists took their humble position on its left, with a docility that long practise had rendered easy. The scouts departed ; strong guards preceded and followed the lumbering vehicles that bore the baggage ; and before the gray light of the morning was mellowed by the rays of the sun, the main body of the combatants wheeled into column, and left the encampment with a show of high military bearing, that served to drown the slumbering apprehensions of many a novice, who was now about to make his first essay in arms. While in view of their admiring comrades, the same proud front and ordered array was observed, until the notes of their fifes growing fainter in distance, the forest at length appeared to swallow up the living mass which had slowly entered its bosom.

The deepest sounds of the retiring and invisible column had ceased to be borne on the breeze to the listeners, and the latest straggler had already disappeared in pursuit ; but there still remained the signs of another departure, before a log cabin of unusual size and accommodations, in front of which those sentinels paced their rounds, who were known to guard the person of the English general. At this spot were gathered some half dozen horses, caparisoned in a manner which showed that two, at least, were destined to bear the persons of females, of a rank that it was not usual to meet so far in the wilds of the country. A third wore the trappings and arms of an officer of the staff ; while the rest, from the plainness of the housings, and the travelling mails with which they were encumbered, were evidently fitted for the reception of as many menials, who were, seemingly, already awaiting the pleasure of those they served. At a respectful distance from this unusual show, were gathered divers groups of curious idlers ; some admiring the blood and bone of the high-mettled military charger, and others gazing at the preparations, with the dull wonder of vulgar curiosity. There was one man, however, who, by his countenance and actions, formed a marked exception to those who composed the latter class of spectators, being neither idle, nor seemingly very ignorant.

The person of this individual was to the last degree un-

gainly without being in any particular manner deformed. He had all the bones and joints of other men, without any of their proportions. Erect, his stature surpassed that of his fellows; though, seated, he appeared reduced within the ordinary limits of the race. The same contrariety in his members seemed to exist throughout the whole man. His head was large, his shoulders narrow, his arms long and dangling, while his hands were small, if not delicate. His legs and thighs were thin, nearly to emaciation, but of extraordinary length; and his knees would have been considered tremendous, had they not been outdone by the broader foundations on which this false superstructure of blended human orders was so profanely reared. The ill-assorted and injudicious attire of the individual, only served to render his awkwardness more conspicuous. A sky-blue coat, with short and broad skirts, and low cape, exposed a long, thin neck, and longer and thinner legs, to the worst animadversions of the evil disposed. His nether garment was of yellow nankeen, closely fitted to the shape, and tied at his bunches of knees by large knots of white ribbon, a good deal sullied by use. Clouted cotton stockings, and shoes, on one of the latter of which was a plated-spur, completed the costume of the lower extremity of this figure, no curve or angle of which was concealed, but, on the other hand, studiously exhibited, through the vanity or simplicity of its owner. From beneath the flap of an enormous pocket of a soiled vest of embossed silk, heavily ornamented with tarnished silver lace, projected an instrument, which, from being seen in such martial company, might have been easily mistaken for some mischievous and unknown implement of war. Small as it was, this uncommon engine had excited the curiosity of most of the Europeans in the camp, though several of the provincials were seen to handle it, not only without fear, but with the utmost familiarity. A large, civil cocked hat, like those worn by clergymen within the last thirty years, surmounted the whole, furnishing dignity to a good-natured and somewhat vacant countenance, that apparently needed such artificial aid, to support the gravity of some high and extraordinary trust.

While the common herd stood aloof, in deference to the quarters of Webb, the figure we have described stalked into the centre of the domestics, freely expressing his censures or commendations on the merits of the horses, as by chance they displeased or satisfied his judgment.

“This beast, I rather conclude, friend, is not of home raising, but is from foreign lands, or perhaps from the little island

itself, over the blue water ? ” he said, in a voice as remarkable for the softness and sweetness of its tones, as was his person for its rare proportions : “ I may speak of these things, and be no braggart ; for I have been down at both havens ; that which is situate at the mouth of Thames, and is named after the capital of Old England, and that which is called ‘ Haven, with the addition of the word ‘ New ; ’ and have seen the snows and brigantines collecting their droves, like the gathering to the ark, being outward bound to the Island of Jamaica, for the purpose of barter and traffic in four-footed animals ; but never before have I beheld a beast which verified the true scripture war-horse like this, ‘ He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength ; he goeth on to meet the armed men. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha ; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.’ It would seem that the stock of the horse of Israel has descended to our own time ; would it not, friend ? ”

Receiving no reply to this extraordinary appeal, which, in truth, as it was delivered with the vigor of full and sonorous tones, merited some sort of notice, he who had thus sung forth the language of the holy book turned to the silent figure to whom he had unwittingly addressed himself, and found a new and more powerful subject of admiration in the object that encountered his gaze. His eyes fell on the still, upright, and rigid form of the “ Indian runner,” who had borne to the camp the unwelcome tidings of the preceding evening. Although in a state of perfect repose, and apparently disregarding, with characteristic stoicism, the excitement and bustle around him, there was a sullen fierceness mingled with the quiet of the savage, that was likely to arrest the attention of much more experienced eyes than those which now scanned him, in unconcealed amazement. The native bore both the tomahawk and knife of his tribe ; and yet his appearance was not altogether that of a warrior. On the contrary, there was an air of neglect about his person, like that which might have proceeded from great and recent exertion, which he had not yet found leisure to repair. The colors of the war-paint had blended in dark confusion about his fierce countenance, and rendered his swarthy lineaments still more savage and repulsive, than if art had attempted an effect, which had been thus produced by chance. His eye, alone, which glistened like a fiery star amid lowering clouds, was to be seen in its state of native wildness. For a single instant, his searching and yet wary glance, met the wondering look of the other, and then, changing its direc-

tion, partly in cunning, and partly in disdain, it remained fixed, as if penetrating the distant air.

It is impossible to say what unlooked-for remark this short and silent communication, between two such singular men, might have elicited from the white man, had not his active curiosity been again drawn to other objects. A general movement amongst the domestics, and a low sound of gentle voices, announced the approach of those whose presence alone was wanted to enable the cavalcade to move. The simple admirer of the war-horse instantly fell back to a low, gaunt, switch-tailed mare, that was unconsciously gleaning the faded herbage of the camp nigh by ; where, leaning with one elbow on the blanket that concealed an apology for a saddle, he became a spectator of the departure, while a foal was quietly making its morning repast, on the opposite side of the same animal.

A young man, in the dress of an officer, conducted to their steeds two females, who, as it was apparent by their dresses, were prepared to encounter the fatigues of a journey in the woods. One, and she was the most juvenile in her appearance, though both were young, permitted glimpses of her dazzling complexion, fair golden hair, and bright blue eyes, to be caught as she artlessly suffered the morning air to blow aside the green veil which descended low from her beaver. The flush which still lingered above the pines in the western sky, was not more bright nor delicate than the bloom on her cheek ; nor was the opening day more cheering than the animated smile which she bestowed on the youth, as he assisted her into the saddle. The other, who appeared to share equally in the attentions of the young officer, concealed her charms from the gaze of the soldiery with a care that seemed better fitted to the experience of four or five additional years. It could be seen, however, that her person, though moulded with the same exquisite proportions, of which none of the graces were lost by the travelling dress she wore, was rather fuller and more mature than that of her companion.

No sooner were these females seated, than their attendant sprang lightly into the saddle of the war-horse, when the whole three bowed to Webb, who in courtesy awaited their parting on the threshold of his cabin, and turning their horses' heads, they proceeded at a slow amble, followed by their train, towards the northern entrance of the encampment. As they traversed that short distance, not a voice was heard amongst them ; but a slight exclamation proceeded from the younger of the females, as the Indian runner glided by her, unexpect

edly, and led the way along the military road in her front. Though this sudden and startling movement of the Indian produced no sound from the other, in the surprise, her veil also was allowed to open its folds, and betrayed an indescribable look of pity admiration, and horror, as her dark eye followed the easy motions of the savage. The tresses of this lady were shining and black, like the plumage of the raven. Her complexion was not brown, but it rather appeared charged with the color of the rich blood, that seemed ready to burst its bounds. And yet there was neither coarseness nor want of shadowing in a countenance that was exquisitely regular and dignified, and surpassingly beautiful. She smiled, as if in pity at her own momentary forgetfulness, discovering by the act a row of teeth that would have shamed the purest ivory; when, replacing the veil, she bowed her face, and rode in silence, like one whose thoughts were abstracted from the scene around her.

CHAPTER II.

Sola, sola, wo ha, ho, sola!

SHAKESPEARE.

WHILE one of the lovely beings we have so cursorily presented to the reader was thus lost in thought, the other quickly recovered from the alarm which induced the exclamation, and, laughing at her own weakness, she inquired of the youth who rode by her side,—

“Are such spectres frequent in the woods, Heyward; or is this sight an especial entertainment ordered on our behalf? If the latter, gratitude must close our mouths; but if the former, both Cora and I shall have need to draw largely on that stock of hereditary courage which we boast, even before we are made to encounter the redoubtable Montcalm.”

“Yon Indian is a ‘runner’ of the army; and, after the fashion of his people, he may be accounted a hero,” returned the officer. “He has volunteered to guide us to the lake, by a path but little known, sooner than if we followed the tardy movements of the column; and, by consequence, more agreeably.”

"I like him not," said the lady, shuddering, partly in assumed, yet more in real terror. "You know him, Duncan, or you would not trust yourself so freely to his keeping?"

"Say, rather, Alice, that I would not trust you. I do know him, or he would not have my confidence, and least of all at this moment. He is said to be a Canadian, too; and yet he served with our friends the Mohawks, who, as you know, are one of the six allied nations.* He was brought amongst us, as I have heard, by some strange accident in which your father was interested, and in which the savage was rigidly dealt by; but I forget the idle tale; it is enough, that he is now our friend."

"If he has been my father's enemy, I like him still less!" exclaimed the now really anxious girl. "Will you not speak to him, Major Heyward, that I may hear his tones? Foolish though it may be, you have often heard me avow my faith in the tones of the human voice!"

"It would be in vain; and answered most probably, by an ejaculation. Though he may understand it, he affects, like most of his people, to be ignorant of the English; and least of all will he condescend to speak it now, that the war demands the utmost exercise of his dignity. But he stops; the private path by which we are to journey, is, doubtless, at hand."

The conjecture of Major Heyward was true. When they reached the spot where the Indian stood, pointing into the thicket that fringed the military road, a narrow and blind path, which might, with some little inconvenience, receive one person at a time, became visible.

"Here, then, lies our way," said the young man in a low voice. "Manifest no distrust, or you may invite the danger you appear to apprehend."

"Cora, what think you?" asked the reluctant fair one. "If we journey with the troops, though we may find their presence irksome, shall we not feel better assurance of our safety?"

* There existed for a long time a confederation among the Indian tribes which occupied the north-western part of the colony of New York, which was at first known as the "Five Nations." At a later day it admitted another tribe, when the appellation was changed to that of the "Six Nations." The original confederation consisted of the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Senecas, the Cayugas, and the Onondagoes. The sixth tribe was the Tuscaroras. There are remnants of all these people still living on lands secured to them by the state; but they are daily disappearing, either by deaths, or by removals to scenes more congenial to their habits. In a short time there will be no remains of these extraordinary people, in those regions in which they dwelt for centuries, but their names. The state of New York has counties named after all of them but the Mohawks and the Tuscaroras. The second river of that state is called the Mohawk.

"Being little accustomed to the practices of the savages, Alice, you mistake the place of real danger," said Heyward. "If enemies have reached the portage at all, a thing by no means probable, as our scouts are abroad, they will surely be found skirting the columns, where scalps abound the most. The route of the detachment is known, while ours, having been determined within the hour, must still be secret."

"Should we distrust the man because his manners are not our manners, and that his skin is dark?" coldly asked Cora.

Alice hesitated no longer; but giving her Narraganset * a smart cut of the whip, she was the first to dash aside the slight branches of the bushes, and to follow the runner along the dark and tangled pathway. The young man regarded the last speaker in open admiration, and even permitted her fairer, though certainly not more beautiful companion, to proceed unattended, while he sedulously opened the way himself for the passage of her who has been called Cora. It would seem that the domestics had been previously instructed; for, instead of penetrating the thicket, they followed the route of the column; a measure which Heyward stated had been dictated by the sagacity of their guide, in order to diminish the marks of their trail, if, haply, the Canadian savages should be lurking so far in advance of their army. For many minutes the intricacy of the route admitted of no further dialogue; after which they emerged from the broad border of under-brush which grew along the line of the highway, and entered under the high but dark arches of the forest. Here their progress was less interrupted; and the instant the guide perceived that the females could command their steeds, he moved on, at a pace between a trot and a walk, and at a rate which kept the sure-footed and peculiar animals they rode, at a fast yet easy amble. The youth had turned to speak to the dark-eyed Cora, when the distant sounds of horses' hoofs, clattering over the roots of the broken way in his rear, caused him to check his charger; and, as his com-

* In the state of Rhode Island there is a bay called Narraganset, so named after a powerful tribe of Indians which formerly dwelt on its banks. Accident, or one of those unaccountable freaks which nature sometimes plays in the animal world, gave rise to a breed of horses which were once well known in America by the name of the Narragansets. They were small, commonly of the color called sorrel in America, and distinguished by their habit of pacing. Horses of this race were, and are still, in much request as saddle horses, on account of their hardiness and the ease of their movements. As they were also sure of foot, the Narragansets were greatly sought for by females who were obliged to travel over the roots and holes in the "new countries."

panions drew their reins at the same instant, the whole party came to a halt, in order to obtain an explanation of the unlooked-for interruption.

In a few moments a colt was seen gliding, like a fallow deer, amongst the straight trunks of the pines, and, in another instant, the person of the ungainly man, described in the preceding chapter, came into view, with as much rapidity as he could excite his meagre beast to endure without coming to an open rupture. Until now this personage had escaped the observation of the travellers. If he possessed the power to arrest any wandering eye when exhibiting the glories of his altitude on foot, his equestrian graces were still more likely to attract attention. Notwithstanding a constant application of his one armed heel to the flanks of the mare, the most confirmed gait that he could establish was a Canterbury gallop with the hind legs, in which those more forward assisted for doubtful moments, though generally content to maintain a lopeing trot. Perhaps the rapidity of the changes from one of these paces to the other created an optical illusion, which might thus magnify the powers of the beast ; for it is certain that Heyward, who possessed a true eye for the merits of a horse, was unable, with his utmost ingenuity, to decide by what sort of movements his pursuer worked his sinuous way on his footsteps with such presevering hardihood.

The industry and movement of the rider were not less remarkable than those of the ridden. At each change in the evolutions of the latter, the former raised his tall person in the stirrups ; producing, in this manner, by the undue elongation of his legs, such sudden growths and diminishings of the stature, as baffled every conjecture that might be made as to his dimensions. If to this be added the fact that, in consequence of the *ex parte* application of the spur, one side of the mare appeared to journey faster than the other ; and that the aggrieved flank was resolutely indicated by unremitting flourishes of a bushy tail, we finish the picture of both horse and man.

The frown which had gathered around the handsome, open, and manly brow of Heyward, gradually relaxed, and his lips curled into a slight smile, as he regarded the stranger. Alice made no very powerful effort to control her merriment ; and even the dark thoughtful eye of Cora lighted with a humor that, it would seem, the habit, rather than the nature, of its mistress repressed.

“ Seek you any here ? ” demanded Heyward, when the

other had arrived sufficiently nigh to abate his speed ; “ I trust you are no messenger of evil tidings.”

“ Even so,” replied the stranger, making diligent use of his triangular castor, to produce a circulation in the close air of the woods, and leaving his hearers in doubt to which of the young man’s questions he responded ; when, however, he had cooled his face, and recovered his breath, he continued : “ I hear you are riding to William Henry ; as I am journeying thitherward myself, I concluded good company would seem consistent to the wishes of both parties.”

“ You appear to possess the privilege of a casting vote,” returned Heyward : “ we are three, whilst you have consulted no one but yourself.”

“ Even so. The first point to be obtained is to know one’s own mind. Once sure of that,—and where women are concerned it is not easy,—the next is, to act up to the decision. I have endeavored to do both, and here I am.”

“ If you journey to the lake, you have mistaken the route,” said Heyward, haughtily ; “ the highway thither is at least half a mile behind you.”

“ Even so,” returned the stranger, nothing daunted by this cold reception ; “ I have tarried at ‘ Edward ’ a week, and I should be dumb not to have inquired the road I was to journey ; and if dumb there would be an end to my calling.” After simpering in a small way, like one whose modesty prohibited a more open expression of his admiration of a witticism that was perfectly unintelligible to his hearers, he continued, “ It is not prudent for any one of my profession to be too familiar with those he has to instruct ; for which reason I follow not the line of the army ; besides which, I conclude that a gentleman of your character has the best judgment in matters of wayfaring ; I have therefore decided to join company, in order that the ride may be made agreeable, and partake of social communion.”

“ A most arbitrary, if not a hasty decision !” exclaimed Heyward, undecided whether to give vent to his growing anger, or to laugh in the other’s face. “ But you speak of instruction, and of a profession ; are you an adjunct to the provincial corps, as a master of the noble science of defence and offence ; or, perhaps, you are one who draws lines and angles, under the pretence of expounding the mathematics ?”

The stranger regarded his interrogator a moment in wonder ; and then, losing every mark of self-satisfaction in an expression of solemn humility, he answered :

“Of offence, I hope there is none to either party : of defence, I make none—by God’s good mercy, having committed no palpable sin since last entreating his pardoning grace. I understand not your allusions about lines and angles ; and I leave expounding to those who have been called and set apart for that holy office. I lay claim to no higher gift than a small insight into the glorious art of petitioning and thanksgiving, as practised in psalmody.”

“The man is, most manifestly, a disciple of Apollo,” cried the amused Alice, “and I take him under my own especial protection. Nay, throw aside that frown, Heyward, and in pity to my longing ears, suffer him to journey in our train. Besides,” she added, in a low and hurried voice, casting a glance at the distant Cora, who slowly followed the footsteps of their silent but sullen guide, “it may be a friend added to our strength, in time of need.”

“Think you, Alice, that I would trust those I love by this secret path, did I imagine such need could happen ?”

“Nay, nay, I think not of it now ; but this strange man amuses me ; and if he ‘hath music in his soul,’ let us not churlishly reject his company.” She pointed persuasively along the path with her riding-whip, while their eyes met in a look which the young man lingered a moment to prolong ; then, yielding to her gentle influence, he clapped his spurs into his charger, and in a few bounds was again at the side of Cora.

“I am glad to encounter thee, friend,” continued the maiden, waving her hand to the stranger to proceed, as she urged her Narraganset to renew its amble. “Partial relatives have almost persuaded me that I am not entirely worthless in a duet myself ; and we may enliven our wayfaring by indulging in our favorite pursuit. It might be of signal advantage to one, ignorant as I, to hear the opinions and experience of a master in the art.”

“It is refreshing both to the spirits and to the body to indulge in psalmody, in befitting seasons,” returned the master of song, unhesitatingly complying with her intimation to follow, ‘and nothing would relieve the mind more than such a consol-ing communion. But four parts are altogether necessary to the perfection of melody. You have all the manifestations of a soft and rich treble ; I can, by especial aid, carry a full tenor to the highest letter ; but we lack counter and bass ! You officer of the king, who hesitated to admit me to his company, might fill the latter, if one may judge from the intonations of his voice in common dialogue.”

“Judge not too rashly from hasty and deceptive appearances,” said the lady smiling; “though Major Heyward can assume such deep notes on occasion, believe me, his natural tones are better fitted for a mellow tenor than the bass you heard.”

“Is he, then, much practised in the art of psalmody?” demanded her simple companion.

Alice felt disposed to laugh, though she succeeded in suppressing her merriment, ere she answered—

“I apprehend that he is rather addicted to profane song. The chances of a soldier’s life are but little fitted for the encouragement of more sober inclinations.”

“Man’s voice is given to him, like his other talents, to be used, and not to be abused. None can say they have ever known me neglect my gifts! I am thankful that, though my boyhood may be said to have been set apart, like the youth of the royal David, for the purposes of music, no syllable of rude verse has ever profaned my lips.”

“You have, then, limited your efforts to sacred song?”

“Even so. As the psalms of David exceed all other language, so does the psalmody that has been fitted to them by the divines and sages of the land, surpass all vain poetry. Happily, I may say that I utter nothing but the thoughts and the wishes of the King of Israel himself; for though the times may call for some slight changes, yet does this version which we use in the colonies of New England so much exceed all other versions, that, by its richness, its exactness, and its spiritual simplicity, it approacheth, as near as may be, to the great work of the inspired writer. I never abide in any place, sleeping or waking, without an example of this gifted work. ’Tis the six-and-twentieth edition, promulgated at Boston, Anno Domini 1744; and is entitled, ‘The Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs of the Old and New Testaments; faithfully translated into English Metre, for the Use, Edification, and Comfort of the Saints, in Public and Private, especially in New England.’”

During this eulogium on the rare production of his native poets, the stranger had drawn the book from his pocket, and fitting a pair of iron-rimmed spectacles to his nose, opened the volume with a care and veneration suited to its sacred purposes. Then, without circumlocution or apology, first pronouncing the word “Standish,” and placing the unknown engine, already described, to his mouth, from which he drew a high, shrill sound, that was followed by an octave below,

from his own voice, he commenced singing the following words, in full, sweet, and melodious tones, that set the music, the poetry, and even the uneasy motion of his ill-trained beast at defiance :

“ How good it is, O see,
 And how it pleaseth well,
 Together, e'en in unity,
 For brethren so to dwell.
 It's like the choice ointment,
 From the head to th' beard did go :
 Down Aaron's beard, that downward went,
 His garment's skirts unto.”

The delivery of these skilful rhymes was accompanied, on the part of the stranger, by a regular rise and fall of his right hand, which terminated at the descent, by suffering the fingers to dwell a moment on the leaves of the little volume ; and on the ascent, by such a flourish of the member as none but the initiated may ever hope to imitate. It would seem that long practice had rendered this manual accompaniment necessary ; for it did not cease until the preposition which the poet had selected for the close of his verse, had been duly delivered like a word of two syllables.

Such an innovation on the silence and retirement of the forest could not fail to enlist the ears of those who journeyed at so short a distance in advance. The Indian muttered a few words in broken English to Heyward, who, in his turn, spoke to the stranger ; at once interrupting, and, for the time, closing his musical efforts.

“ Though we are not in danger, common prudence would teach us to journey through this wilderness in as quiet a manner as possible. You will, then, pardon me, Alice, should I diminish your enjoyments, by requesting this gentleman to postpone his chant until a safer opportunity.”

“ You will diminish them, indeed,” returned the arch girl ; “ for never did I hear a more unworthy conjunction of execution and language, than that to which I have been listening ; and I was far gone in a learned inquiry in the causes of such an unfitness between sound and sense, when you broke the charm of my musings by that bass of yours, Duncan ! ”

“ I know not what you call my bass,” said Heyward, piqued at her remark, “ but I know that your safety, and that of Cora, is far dearer to me than could be any orchestra of Handel's music.” He paused and turned his head quickly towards a thicket, and then bent his eyes suspiciously on their guide, who continued his steady pace, in undisturbed gravity.

The young man smiled to himself, for he believed he had mistaken some shining berry of the woods for the glistening eyeballs of a prowling savage, and he rode forward, continuing the conversation which had been interrupted by the passing thought.

Major Heyward was mistaken only in suffering his youthful and generous pride to suppress his active watchfulness. The cavalcade had not long passed, before the branches of the bushes that formed the thicket were cautiously moved asunder, and a human visage, as fiercely wild as savage art and unbridled passions could make it, peered out on the retiring footsteps of the travellers. A gleam of exultation shot across the darkly-painted lineaments of the inhabitant of the forest, as he traced the route of his intended victims, who rode unconsciously onward; the light and graceful forms of the females waving among the trees, in the curvatures of their path, followed at each bend by the manly figure of Heyward, until, finally, the shapeless person of the singing master was concealed behind the numberless trunks of trees, that rose, in dark lines, in the intermediate space.

CHAPTER III.

Before these fields were shorn and till'd
 Full to the brim our rivers flow'd;
 The melody of waters fill'd
 The fresh and boundless wood;
 And torrents dash'd, and rivulets play'd,
 And fountains spouted in the shade.

BRYANT.

LEAVING the unsuspecting Heyward and his confiding companions to penetrate still deeper into a forest that contained such treacherous inmates, we must use an author's privilege, and shift the scene a few miles to the westward of the place where we have last seen them.

On that day, two men were lingering on the banks of a small but rapid stream, within an hour's journey of the encampment of Webb, like those who awaited the appearance of an absent person, or the approach of some expected event. The vast canopy of woods spread itself to the margin of the river over-hanging the water, and shadowing its dark current

with a deeper hue. The rays of the sun were beginning to grow less fierce, and the intense heat of the day was lessened, as the cooler vapors of the springs and fountains rose above their leafy beds, and rested in the atmosphere. Still that breathing silence, which marks the drowsy sultriness of an American landscape in July, pervaded the secluded spot, interrupted only by the low voices of the men, the occasional and lazy tap of a woodpecker, the discordant cry of some gaudy jay, or a swelling on the ear, from the dull roar of a distant waterfall.

These feeble and broken sounds were, however, too familiar to the foresters, to draw their attention from the more interesting matter of their dialogue. While one of these loiterers showed the red skin and wild accoutrements of a native of the woods, the other exhibited, through the mask of his rude and nearly savage equipments, the brighter, though sun-burnt and long-faded complexion of one who might claim descent from a European parentage. The former was seated on the end of a mossy log, in a posture that permitted him to heighten the effect of his earnest language, by the calm but expressive gestures of an Indian engaged in debate. His body, which was nearly naked, presented a terrific emblem of death, drawn in intermingled colors of white and black. His closely-shaved head, on which no other hair than the well known and chivalrous scalping tuft* was preserved, was without ornament of any kind, with the exception of a solitary eagle's plume, that crossed his crown, and depended over the left shoulder. A tomahawk and scalping-knife, of English manufacture, were in his girdle; while a short military rifle, of that sort with which the policy of the whites armed their savage allies, lay carelessly across his bare and sinewy knee. The expanded chest, full formed limbs, and grave countenance of this warrior, would denote that he had reached the vigor of his days, though no symptoms of decay appeared to have yet weakened his manhood.

The frame of the white man, judging by such parts as were not concealed by his clothes, was like that of one who had known hardships and exertion from his earliest youth.

* The North American warrior caused the hair to be plucked from his whole body; a small tuft, only, was left on the crown of his head, in order that his enemy might avail himself of it, in wrenching off the scalp in the event of his fall. The scalp was the only admissible trophy of victory. Thus, it was deemed more important to obtain the scalp, than to kill the man. Some tribes lay great stress on the honor of striking a dead body. These practices have nearly disappeared among the Indians of the Atlantic states.

His person, though muscular, was rather attenuated than full ; but every nerve and muscle appeared strung and indurated by unremitted exposure and toil. He wore a hunting-shirt of forest-green, fringed with faded yellow,* and a summer cap of skins which had been shorn of their fur. He also bore a knife in a girdle of wampum, like that which confined the scanty garments of the Indian, but no tomahawk. His moccasins were ornamented after the gay fashion of the natives, while the only part of his under dress which appeared below the hunting frock, was a pair of buckskin leggings, that laced at the sides, and which were gartered above the knees, with the sinews of a deer. A pouch and horn completed his personal accoutrements, though a rifle of great length,† which the theory of the more ingenious whites had taught them was the most dangerous of all fire-arms, leaned against a neighboring sapling. The eye of the hunter, or scout, whichever he might be, was small, quick, keen, and restless, roving while he spoke, on every side of him, as if in quest of game, or distrusting the sudden approach of some lurking enemy. Notwithstanding these symptoms of habitual suspicion, his countenance was not only without guile, but at the moment at which he is introduced, it was charged with an expression of sturdy honesty.

“ Even your traditions make the case in my favor, Chingachgook,” he said, speaking in the tongue which was known to all the natives who formerly inhabited the country between the Hudson and the Potomac, and of which we shall give a free translation for the benefit of the reader ; endeavoring, at the same time, to preserve some of the peculiarities, both of the individual and of the language. “ Your fathers came from the setting sun, crossed the big river,‡ fought the people of the country, and took the land ; and mine came from the red sky of the morning, over the salt lake, and did their work much after the fashion that had been set them by yours ; then let God judge the matter between us, and friends spare their words ! ”

* The hunting-shirt is a picturesque smock-frock, being shorter, and ornamented with fringes and tassels. The colors are intended to imitate the hues of the wood, with a view to concealment. Many corps of American riflemen have been thus attired ; and the dress is one of the most striking of modern times. The hunting-shirt is frequently white.

† The rifle of the army is short ; that of the hunter is always long.

‡ The Mississippi. The scout alludes to a tradition which is very popular among the tribes of the Atlantic states. Evidence of their Asiatic origin is deduced from the circumstances, though great uncertainty hangs over the whole history of the Indians.

“My fathers fought with the naked red man!” returned the Indian, sternly, in the same language. “Is there no difference, Hawk-eye, between the stone-headed arrow of the warrior, and the leaden bullet with which you kill?”

“There is reason in an Indian, though nature has made him with a red skin!” said the white man, shaking his head like one on whom such an appeal to his justice was not thrown away. For a moment he appeared to be conscious of having the worst of the argument, then rallying again, he answered the objection of his antagonist in the best manner his limited information would allow: “I am no scholar, and I care not who knows it; but, judging from what I have seen, at deer chases and squirrel hunts, of the sparks below, I should think a rifle in the hands of their grandfathers was not so dangerous as a hickory bow and a good flint-head might be, if drawn with Indian judgment, and sent by an Indian eye.”

“You have the story told by your fathers,” returned the other, coldly waving his hand. “What say your old men? do they tell the young warriors, that the pale faces met the red men, painted for war and armed with the stone hatchet and wooden gun?”

“I am not a prejudiced man, nor one who vaunts himself on his natural privileges, though the worst enemy I have on earth, and he is an Iroquois, daren’t deny that I am genuine white,” the scout replied, surveying, with secret satisfaction, the faded color of his bony and sinewy hand; “and I am willing to own that my people have many ways, of which, as an honest man, I can’t approve. It is one of their customs to write in books what they have done and seen, instead of telling them in their villages, where the lie can be given to the face of a cowardly boaster, and the brave soldier can call on his comrades to witness for the truth of his words. In consequence of this bad fashion, a man, who is too conscientious to misspend his days among the women, in learning the names of black marks, may never hear of the deeds of his fathers, nor feel a pride in striving to outdo them. For myself, I conclude all the Bumppos could shoot; for I have a natural turn with a rifle, which must have been handed down from generation to-generation, as our holy commandments tell us all good and evil gifts are bestowed; though I should be loth to answer for other people in such a matter. But every story has its two sides: so I ask you, Chingachgook, what passed, according to the traditions of the red men, when our fathers first met?”

A silence of a minute succeeded, during which the Indian sat mute ; then, full of the dignity of his office, he commenced his brief tale, with a solemnity that served to heighten its appearance of truth.

“ Listen, Hawk-eye, and your ear shall drink no lie. ” ’Tis what my fathers have said, and what the Mohicans have done.” He hesitated a single instant, and bending a cautious glance towards his companion, he continued, in a manner that was divided between interrogation and assertion. “ Does not this stream at our feet run towards the summer, until its waters grow salt, and the current flows upward ? ”

“ It can’t be denied that your traditions tell you true in both these matters,” said the white man ; “ for I have been there, and have seen them ; though, why water, which is so sweet in the shade, should become bitter in the sun, is an alteration for which I have never been able to account.”

“ And the current ! ” demanded the Indian, who expected his reply with that sort of interest that a man feels in the confirmation of testimony, at which he marvels even while he respects it ; “ the fathers of Chingachcook have not lied ! ”

“ The holy Bible is not more true, and that is the truest thing in nature. They call this up-stream current the tide, which is a thing soon explained, and clear enough. Six hours the waters run in, and six hours they run out, and the reason is this : when there is higher water in the sea than in the river, they run in until the river gets to be highest, and then it runs out again.”

“ The waters in the woods, and on the great lakes, run downward until they lie like my hand,” said the Indian, stretching the limb horizontally before him, “ and then they run no more.”

“ No honest man will deny it,” said the scout a little nettled at the implied distrust of his explanation of the mystery of the tides ; “ and I grant that it is true on the small scale, and, where the land is level. But everything depends on what scale you look at things. Now, on the small scale, the ’arth is level ; but on the large scale, it is round. In this manner, pools and ponds, and even the great fresh-water lakes, may be stagnant, as you and I both know they are, having seen them ; but when you come to spread water over a great tract, like the sea, where the earth is round, how in reason can the water be quiet ? You might as well expect the river to lie still on the brink of those black rocks a mile above us, though your own ears tell you that it is tumbling over them at this very moment.”

If unsatisfied by the philosophy of his companion, the Indian was far too dignified to betray his unbelief. He listened like one who was convinced, and resumed his narrative in his former solemn manner.

“We came from the place where the sun is hid at night, over great plains where the buffaloes live, until we reached the big river. There we fought the Alligewi, till the ground was red with their blood. From the banks of the big river to the shores of the salt lake, there was none to meet us. The Maquas followed at a distance. We said the country should be ours from the place where the water runs up no longer on this stream to a river twenty sun’s journey toward the summer. The land we had taken like warriors we kept like men. We drove the Maquas into the woods with the bears. They only tasted salt at the licks; they drew no fish from the great lake; we threw them the bones.”

“All this I have heard and believe,” said the white man, observing that the Indian paused; “but it was long before the English came into the country.”

“A pine grew then where this chestnut now stands. The first palefaces who came among us spoke no English. They came in a large canoe, when my fathers had buried the tomahawk with the red men around them. Then, Hawk-eye,” he continued, betraying his deep emotion, only by permitting his voice to fall to those low, guttural tones, which render his language, as spoken at times, so very musical; “then, Hawk-eye, we were one people, and we were happy. The salt lake gave us its fish, the wood its deer, and the air its birds. We took wives who bore us children; we worshipped the Great Spirit; and we kept the Maquas beyond the sound of our songs of triumph.”

“Know you anything of your own family at that time?” demanded the white. “But you are a just man, for an Indian; and as I suppose you hold their gifts, your fathers must have been brave warriors, and wise men at the council-fire.”

“My tribe is the grandfather of nations, but I am an un-mixed man. The blood of chiefs is in my veins, where it must stay forever. The Dutch landed, and gave my people the fire-water; they drank until the heavens and the earth seemed to meet, and they foolishly thought they had found the Great Spirit. Then they parted with their land. Foot by foot, they were driven back from the shores, until I, that am a chief and a Sagamore, have never seen the sun shine but through the trees, and have never visited the graves of my fathers.”

“Graves bring solemn feelings over the mind,” returned the scout, a good deal touched at the calm suffering of his companion; “and they often aid a man in his good intentions; though, for myself, I expect to leave my own bones unburied, to bleach in the woods, or to be torn asunder by the wolves. But where are to be found those of your race who came to their kin in the Delaware country, so many summers since?”

“Where are the blossoms of those summers!—fallen one by one; so all of my family departed, each in his turn, to the land of spirits. I am on the hill-top and must go down into the valley; and when Uncas follows in my footsteps, there will no longer be any of the blood of the Sagamores, for my boy is the last of the Mohicans.”

“Uncas is here,” said another voice, in the same soft guttural tones, near his elbow; “who speaks to Uncas?”

The white man loosened his knife in his leathern sheath, and made an involuntary movement of the hand towards his rifle, at this sudden interruption; but the Indian sat composed, and without turning his head at the unexpected sounds.

At the next instant, a youthful warrior passed between them, with a noiseless step, and seated himself on the bank of the rapid stream. No exclamation of surprise escaped the father, nor was any question asked, or reply given, for several minutes, each appearing to await the moment when he might speak, without betraying womanish curiosity or childish impatience. The white man seemed to take counsel from their customs, and, relinquishing his grasp of the rifle, he also remained silent and reserved. At length Chingachgook turned his eyes slowly towards his son, and demanded—

“Do the Maquas dare to leave the print of their moc-casins in these woods?”

“I have been on their trail,” replied the young Indian, “and know that they number as many as the fingers of my two hands; but they lie hid like cowards.”

“The thieves are out-lying for scalps and plunder,” said the white man, whom we shall call Hawk-eye, after the manner of his companions. “That busy Frenchman, Mont-calm, will send his spies into our very camp, but he will know what road we travel.”

“’Tis enough,” returned the father, glancing his eye towards the setting sun; “they shall be driven like deer from their bushes. Hawk-eye, let us eat to-night, and show the Maquas that we are men to-morrow.”

"I am as ready to do the one as the other; but to fight the Iroquois 'tis necessary to find the skulkers; and to eat, 'tis necessary to get the game—talk of the devil and he will come; there is a pair of the biggest antlers I have seen this season, moving the bushes below the hill! Now, Uncas," he continued in a half whisper, and laughing with a kind of inward sound, like one who had learnt to be watchful, "I will bet my charger three times full of powder, against a foot of wampum, that I take him atwixt the eyes, and nearer to the right than to the left."

"It cannot be!" said the young Indian, springing to his feet with youthful eagerness; "all but the tips of his horns are hid!"

"He's a boy!" said the white man, shaking his head while he spoke, and addressing the father. "Does he think when a hunter sees a part of the creatur', he can't tell where the rest of him should be!"

Adjusting his rifle, he was about to make an exhibition of that skill on which he so much valued himself, when the warrior struck up the piece with his hand, saying,

"Hawk-eye! will you fight the Maquas?"

"These Indians know the nature of the woods, as it might be by instinct!" returned the scout, dropping his rifle, and turning away like a man who was convinced of his error. "I must leave the buck to your arrow, Uncas, or we may kill a deer for them thieves, the Iroquois, to eat."

The instant the father seconded this intimation by an expressive gesture of the hand, Uncas threw himself on the ground, and approached the animal with wary movements. When within a few yards of the cover, he fitted an arrow to his bow with the utmost care, while the antlers moved, as if their owner snuffed an enemy in the tainted air. In another moment the twang of the cord was heard, a white streak was seen glancing into the bushes, and the wounded buck plunged from the cover, to the very feet of his hidden enemy. Avoiding the horns of the infuriated animal, Uncas darted to his side, and passed his knife across the throat, when bounding to the edge of the river it fell, dyeing the waters with its blood.

"'Twas done with Indian skill," said the scout, laughing inwardly, but with vast satisfaction; "and 'twas a pretty sight to behold! Though an arrow is a near shot, it needs a knife to finish the work."

"Hugh!" ejaculated his companion, turning quickly, like a hound who scented game.

“By the Lord, there is a drove of them!” exclaimed the scout, whose eyes began to glisten with the ardor of his usual occupation; “if they come within range of a bullet I will drop one, though the whole Six Nations should be lurking within sound! What do you hear, Chingachook? for to my ears the woods are dumb.”

“There is but one deer, and he is dead,” said the Indian, bending his body till his ear nearly touched the earth. “I hear the sounds of feet!”

“Perhaps the wolves have driven the buck to shelter, and are following on his trail.”

“No. The horses of white men are coming!” returned the other, raising himself with dignity, and resuming his seat on the log with his former composure. “Hawk-eye, they are your brothers; speak to them.”

“That will I, and in English that the king needn’t be ashamed to answer,” returned the hunter, speaking in the language of which he boasted; “but I see nothing, nor do I hear the sounds of man or beast; ’tis strange that an Indian should understand white sounds better than a man who, his very enemies will own, has no cross in his blood, although he may have lived with the red skins long enough to be suspected! Ha! there goes something like the crackling of a dry stick, too—now I hear the bushes move—yes, yes, there is a trampling that I mistook for the falls—and—but here they come themselves; God keep them from the Iroquois!”

CHAPTER IV.

Well, go thy way; thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM.

THE words were still in the mouth of the scout, when the leader of the party, whose approaching footsteps had caught the vigilant ear of the Indian, came openly into view. A beaten path, such as those made by the periodical passage of the deer, wound through a little glen at no great distance, and struck the river at the point where the white man and his red companions had posted themselves. Along this track the travellers, who had produced a surprise so unusual in the

depths of the forest, advanced slowly towards the hunter, who was in front of his associates, in readiness to receive them.

"Who comes?" demanded the scout, throwing his rifle carelessly across his left arm, and keeping the fore-finger of his right hand on the trigger, though he avoided all appearance of menace in the act—"Who come hither, among the beasts and dangers of the wilderness?"

"Believers in religion, and friends to the law and to the king," returned he who rode foremost. "Men who have journeyed since the rising sun, in the shades of this forest, without nourishment, and are sadly tired of their wayfaring."

"You are, then, lost," interrupted the hunter, "and have found how helpless 'tis not to know whether to take the right hand or the left?"

"Even so; sucking babes are not more dependent on those who guide them than we who are of larger growth, and who may now be said to possess the stature without the knowledge of men. Know you the distance to a post of the crown called William Henry?"

"Hoot!" shouted the scout, who did not spare his open laughter, though, instantly checking the dangerous sounds, he indulged his merriment at less risk of being overheard by any lurking enemies. "You are as much off the scent as a hound would be with Horican atwixt him and the deer! William Henry, man! if you are friends to the king, and have business with the army, your better way would be to follow the river down to Edward, and lay the matter before Webb, who tarries there, instead of pushing into the defiles, and driving this saucy Frenchman back across Champlain, into his den again."

Before the stranger could make any reply to this unexpected proposition, another horseman dashed the bushes aside, and leaped his charger into the pathway, in front of his companion.

"What then may be our distance from Fort Edward?" demanded the new speaker; "the place you advise us to seek we left this morning, and our destination is the head of the lake."

"Then you must have lost your eyesight afore losing your way, for the road across the portage is cut to a good two rods, and is as grand a path, I calculate, as any that runs into London, or even before the palace of the king himself."

"We will not dispute concerning the excellence of the passage," returned Hevward, smiling; for, as the reader has

anticipated, it was he. "It is enough, for the present, that we trusted to an Indian guide to take us by a nearer though blinder path, and that we are deceived in his knowledge. In plain words, we know not where we are."

"An Indian lost in the woods!" said the scout, shaking his head doubtingly; "when the sun is scorching the tree tops, and the water courses are full; when the moss on every beech he sees, will tell him in which quarter the north star will shine at night! The woods are full of deer-paths which run to the streams and licks,—places well known to everybody; nor have the geese done their flight to the Canada waters altogether! 'Tis strange that an Indian should be lost atwixt Horican and the bend in the river! Is he a Mohawk?"

"Not by birth, though adopted in that tribe; I think his birthplace was further north, and he is one of those you call a Huron."

"Hugh!" exclaimed the two companions of the scout, who had continued until this part of the dialogue, seated immovable, and apparently indifferent to what passed, but who now sprang to their feet with an activity and interest that had evidently got the better of their reserve, by surprise.

"A Huron!" repeated the sturdy scout, once more shaking his head in open distrust; "they are a thievish race, nor do I care by whom they are adopted; you can never make anything of them but skulks and vagabonds. Since you trusted yourself to the care of one of that nation, I only wonder that you have not fallen in with more."

"Of that there is little danger, since William Henry is so many miles in our front. You forget that I have told you our guide is now a Mohawk, and that he serves with our forces as a friend."

"And I tell you that he who is born a Mingo will die a Mingo," returned the other, positively. "A Mohawk! No, give me a Delaware or a Mohican for honesty; and when they will fight, which they won't all do, having suffered their cunning enemies, the Maquas, to make them women—but when they will fight at all, look to a Delaware, or a Mohican, for a warrior!"

"Enough of this," said Heyward, impatiently; "I wish not to inquire into the character of a man that I know, and to whom you must be a stranger. You have not yet answered my question; what is our distance from the main army at Edward?"

“ It seems that may depend on who is your guide. One would think such a horse as that might get over a good deal of ground atwixt sun-up and sun-down.”

“ I wish no contention of idle words with you, friend,” said Heyward, curbing his dissatisfied manner, and speaking in a more gentle voice ; “ if you will tell me the distance to Fort Edward, and conduct me thither, your labor shall not go without its reward.”

“ And in so doing, how know I that I don’t guide an enemy and a spy of Montcalm, to the works of the army? It is not every man who can speak the English tongue that is an honest subject.”

“ If you serve with the troops, of whom I judge you to be a scout, you should know of such a regiment of the king as the 60th.”

“ The 60th ! you can tell me little of the Royal Americans that I don’t know, though I do wear a hunting-shirt instead of a scarlet jacket.”

“ Well, then, among other things, you may know the name of its major ? ”

“ Its major ! ” interrupted the hunter, elevating his body like one who was proud of its trust. “ If there is a man in the country who knows Major Effingham, he stands before you.”

“ It is a corps which has many majors ; the gentleman you name is the senior, but I speak of the junior of them all ; he who commands the companies in garrison at William Henry.”

“ Yes, yes, I have heard that a young gentleman of vast riches, from one of the provinces far south, has got the place. He is over young, too, to hold such rank, and to be put above men whose heads are beginning to bleach ; and yet they say he is a soldier in his knowledge, and a gallant gentleman ! ”

“ Whatever he may be, or however he may be qualified for his rank, he now speaks to you, and of course can be no enemy to dread.”

The scout regarded Heyward in surprise, and then lifting his cap, he answered, in a tone less confident than before— though still expressing doubt—

“ I have heard a party was to leave the encampment this morning, for the lake shore ? ”

“ You have heard the truth ; but I preferred a nearer route, trusting to the knowledge of the Indian I mentioned.”

“ And he deceived you, and then deserted ? ”

“ Neither, as I believe ; certainly not the latter, for he is to be found in the rear.”

"I should like to look at the creatur'; if it is a true Iroquois I can tell him by his knavish look, and by his paint," said the scout, stepping past the charger of Heyward, and entering the path behind the mare of the singing master, whose foal had taken advantage of the halt to exact the maternal contribution. After shoving aside the bushes, and proceeding a few paces, he encountered the females, who awaited the result of the conference with anxiety, and not entirely without apprehension. Behind these, the runner leaned against a tree, where he stood the close examination of the scout with an air unmoved, though with a look so dark and savage, that it might in itself excite fear. Satisfied with his scrutiny, the hunter soon left him. As he repassed the females, he paused a moment to gaze upon their beauty, answering to the smile and nod of Alice with a look of open pleasure. Thence he went to the side of the motherly animal, and spending a minute in a fruitless inquiry into the character of her rider, he shook his head and returned to Heyward.

"A Mingo is a Mingo, and God having made him so, neither the Mohawks nor any other tribe can alter him," he said, when he had regained his former position. "If we were alone, and you would leave that noble horse at the mercy of the wolves to-night, I could show you the way to Edward, myself, within an hour, for it lies only about an hour's journey hence; but with such ladies in your company 'tis impossible!"

"And why? they are fatigued, but they are quite equal to a ride of a few more miles."

"'Tis a natural impossibility!" repeated the scout; "I wouldn't walk a mile in these woods after night gets into them, in company with that runner, for the best rifle in the colonies. They are full of outlying Iroquois, and your mongrel Mohawk knows where to find them too well, to be my companion."

"Think you so?" said Heyward, leaning forward in the saddle, and dropping his voice nearly to a whisper; "I confess I have not been without my own suspicions, though I have endeavored to conceal them, and affected a confidence I have not always felt, on account of my companions. It was because I suspected him that I would follow no longer; making him, as you see, follow me."

"I knew he was one of the cheats as soon as I laid eyes on him!" returned the scout, placing a finger on his nose, in sign of caution. "The thief is leaning against the foot of the sugar sapling, that you can see over them bushes; his

right leg is in a line with the bark of the tree, and," tapping his rifle, "I can take him from where I stand, between the ankle and the knee, with a single shot, putting an end to his tramping through the woods, for at least a month to come. If I should go back to him, the cunning varmint would suspect something, and be dodging through the trees like a frightened deer."

"It will not do. He may be innocent, and I dislike the act. Though if I felt confident of his treachery—"

"Tis a safe thing to calculate on the knavery of an Iroquois," said the scout, throwing his rifle forward, by a sort of instinctive movement.

"Hold!" interrupted Heyward, "it will not do—we must think of some other scheme;—and yet, I have much reason to believe the rascal has deceived me."

The hunter, who had already abandoned his intention of maiming the runner, mused a moment and then made a gesture, which instantly brought his two red companions to his side. They spoke together earnestly in the Delaware language, though in an undertone; and by the gestures of the white man, which were frequently directed towards the top of the sapling, it was evident he pointed out the situation of their hidden enemy. His companions were not long in comprehending his wishes, and laying aside their fire-arms, they parted, taking opposite sides of the path, and burying themselves in the thicket, with such cautious movements, that their steps were inaudible.

"Now, go you back," said the hunter, speaking again to Heyward, "and hold the imp in talk; these Mohicans here will take him without breaking his paint."

"Nay," said Heyward proudly, "I will seize him myself."

"Hist! what could you do mounted, against an Indian in the bushes?"

"I will dismount."

"And, think you, when he saw one of your feet out of the stirrup, he would wait for the other to be free? Whoever comes into the woods to deal with the natives, must use Indian fashions, if he would wish to prosper in his undertakings. Go, then; talk openly to the miscreant, and seem to believe him the truest friend you have on 'arth."

Heyward prepared to comply, though with strong disgust at the nature of the office he was compelled to execute. Each moment, however, pressed upon him a conviction of the critical situation in which he had suffered his invaluable trust to

be involved through his own confidence. The sun had already disappeared, and the woods, suddenly deprived of his light,* were assuming a dusky hue, which keenly reminded him that the hour the savage usually chose for his most barbarous and remorseless acts of vengeance or hostility, was speedily drawing near. Stimulated by apprehension, he left the scout, who immediately entered into a loud conversation with the stranger that had so unceremoniously enlisted himself in the party of travellers that morning. In passing his gentler companions Heyward uttered a few words of encouragement, and was pleased to find, that, though fatigued with the exercise of the day, they appeared to entertain no suspicion that their present embarrassment was other than the result of accident. Giving them reason to believe he was merely employed in a consultation concerning the future route, he spurred his charger, and drew the reins again, when the animal had carried him within a few yards of the place where the sullen runner still stood, leaning against a tree.

"You may see, Magua," he said, endeavoring to assume an air of freedom and confidence, "that the night is closing around us, and yet we are no nearer to William Henry than when we left the encampment of Webb with the rising sun. You have missed the way, nor have I been more fortunate. But, happily, we have fallen in with a hunter, he whom you hear talking to the singer, that is acquainted with the deer-paths and by-ways of the woods, and who promises to lead us to a place where we may rest securely till morning."

The Indian riveted his glowing eyes on Heyward as he asked, in his imperfect English, "Is he alone?"

"Alone!" hesitatingly answered Heyward, to whom deception was too new to be assumed without embarrassment. "Oh! not alone, surely, Magua, for you know that we are with him."

"Then *le Renard Subtil* will go," returned the runner, coolly raising his little wallet from the place where it had lain at his feet; "and the pale faces will see none but their own color."

"Go! Whom call you *le Renard*?"

"'Tis the name his Canada fathers have given to Magua," returned the runner, with an air that manifested his pride at the distinction. Night is the same as day to *le Subtil*, when Munro waits for him."

* The scene of this tale was in the 46d degree of latitude, where the twilight is never of long continuance.

“And what account will le Renard give the chief of William Henry concerning his daughters? Will he dare to tell the hot-blooded Scotsman that his children are left without a guide, though Magua promised to be one?”

“Though the gray head has a loud voice, and a long arm, le Renard will not hear him, nor feel him, in the woods.”

“But what will the Mohawks say? They will make him petticoats, and bid him stay in the wigwam with the women, for he is no longer to be trusted with the business of a man.”

“Le Subtil knows the path to the great lakes, and he can find the bones of his fathers,” was the answer of the unmoved runner.

“Enough, Magua,” said Heyward; “are we not friends? Why should there be bitter words between us? Munro has promised you a gift for your services when performed, and I shall be your debtor for another. Rest your weary limbs, then, and open your wallet to eat. We have a few moments to spare; let us not waste them in talk like wrangling women. When the ladies are refreshed we will proceed.”

“The pale faces make themselves dogs to their women, muttered the Indian, in his native language, “and when they want to eat, their warriors must lay aside the tomahawk to feed their laziness.”

“What say you, Renard?”

“Le Subtil says it is good.”

The Indian then fastened his eyes keenly on the open countenance of Heyward, but meeting his glance, he turned them quickly away, and seating himself deliberately on the ground, he drew forth the remnant of some former repast, and began to eat, though not without first bending his looks slowly and cautiously around him.

“This is well,” continued Heyward; “and le Renard will have strength and sight to find the path in the morning;”—he paused, for sounds like the snapping of a dried stick, and the rustling of leaves, rose from the adjacent bushes, but recollecting himself instantly, he continued—“we must be moving before the sun is seen, or Montcalm may lie in our path, and shut us out from the fortress.”

The hand of Magua dropped from his mouth to his side, and though his eyes were fastened on the ground, his head was turned aside, his nostrils expanded, and his ears seemed even to stand more erect than usual, giving to him the

appearance of a statue that was made to represent intense attention.

Heyward, who watched his movements with a vigilant eye, carelessly extricated one of his feet from the stirrup, while he passed a hand towards the bear-skin covering of his holsters. Every effort to detect the point most regarded by the runner, was completely frustrated by the tremulous glances of his organs, which seemed not to rest a single instant on any particular object, and which, at the same time, could be hardly said to move. While he hesitated how to proceed, le Subtil cautiously raised himself to his feet, though with a motion so slow and guarded, that not the slightest noise was produced by the change. Heyward felt it had now become incumbent on him to act. Throwing his leg over the saddle, he dismounted, with a determination to advance and seize his treacherous companion, trusting the results to his own manhood. In order, however, to prevent unnecessary alarm, he still preserved an air of calmness and friendship.

“Le Renard Subtil does not eat,” he said, using the appellation he had found most flattering to the vanity of the Indian. “His corn is not well parched, and it seems dry. Let me examine; perhaps something may be found among my own provisions that will help his appetite.”

Magua held out the wallet to the proffer of the other. He even suffered their hands to meet, without betraying the least emotion, or varying his riveted attitude of attention. But when he felt the fingers of Heyward moving gently along his own naked arm, he struck up the limb of the young man, and uttering a piercing cry as he darted beneath it, plunged, at a single bound, into the opposite thicket. At the next instant the form of Chingachgook appeared from the bushes, looking like a spectre in his paint, and glided across the path in swift pursuit. Next followed the shout of Uncas, when the woods were lighted by a sudden flash, that was accompanied by the sharp report of the hunter's rifle.

CHAPTER V.

—————"In such a night
 Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew;
 And saw the lion's shadow ere himself."

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

THE suddenness of the light by his guide, and the wild cries of the pursuers, caused Heyward to remain fixed, for a few moments, in inactive surprise. Then recollecting the importance of securing the fugitive, he dashed aside the surrounding bushes, and pressed eagerly forward to lend his aid in the chase. Before he had, however, proceeded a hundred yards, he met the three foresters already returning from their unsuccessful pursuit.

"Why so soon disheartened!" he exclaimed, "the scoundrel must be concealed behind some of these trees, and may yet be secured. We are not safe while he goes at large."

"Would you set a cloud to chase the wind?" returned the disappointed scout; "I heard the imp, brushing over the dry leaves, like a black snake, and blinking a glimpse of him, just over ag'in yon big pine, I pulled as it might be on the scent; but 'twouldn't do! and yet for a reasoning aim, if anybody but myself had touched the trigger, I should call it a quick sight; and I may be accounted to have experience in these matters, and one who ought to know. Look at this sumach; its leaves are red, though everybody knows the fruit is in the yellow blossom, in the month of July!"

"'Tis the blood of le Subtil! he is hurt, and may yet fall!"

"No, no," returned the scout, in decided disapprobation of this opinion, "I rubbed the bark off a limb, perhaps, but the creature leaped the longer for it. A rifle bullet acts on a running animal, when it barks him, much the same as one of your spurs on a horse, that is, it quickens motion, and puts life into the flesh, instead of taking it away. But when it cuts the ragged hole, after a bound or two, there is, commonly, a stagnation of further leaping, be it Indian or be it deer!"

"We are four able bodies, to one wounded man!"

"Is life grievous to you?" interrupted the scout. "Yonder red devil would draw you within swing of the tomahawks of his comrades, before you were heated in the chase. It was

an unthoughtful act in a man who has so often slept with the war-whoop ringing in the air, to let off his piece within sound of an ambushment! But then it was a natural temptation! 'twas very natural! Come, friends, let us move our station, and in such a fashion, too, as will throw the cunning of a Mingo on a wrong scent, or our scalps will be drying in the wind in front of Montcalm's marquee, ag'in this hour to-morrow."

This appalling declaration, which the scout uttered with the cool assurance of a man who fully comprehended, while he did not fear to face the danger, served to remind Heyward of the importance of the charge with which he himself had been intrusted. Glancing his eyes around, with a vain effort to pierce the gloom that was thickening beneath the leafy arches of the forest, he felt as if, cut off from human aid, his unresisting companions would soon lie at the entire mercy of those barbarous enemies, who, like beasts of prey, only waited till the gathering darkness might render their blows more fatally certain. His awakened imagination, deluded by the deceptive light, converted each waving bush, or the fragment of some fallen tree, into human forms, and twenty times he fancied he could distinguish the horrid visages of his lurking foes, peering from their hiding places, in never ceasing watchfulness of the movements of his party. Looking upward, he found that the tiny fleecy clouds, which evening had painted on the blue sky, were already losing their faintest tints of rose-color, while the imbedded stream, which glided past the spot where he stood, was to be traced only by the dark boundary of its wooded banks.

"What is to be done?" he said, feeling the utter helplessness of doubt in such a pressing strait; "desert me not, for God's sake! remain to defend those I escort, and freely name your own reward!"

His companions, who conversed apart in the language of their tribe, heeded not this sudden and earnest appeal. Though their dialogue was maintained in low and cautious sounds, but little above a whisper, Heyward, who now approached, could easily distinguish the earnest tones of the younger warrior from the more deliberate speeches of his seniors. It was evident, that they debated on the propriety of some measure, that nearly concerned the welfare of the travellers. Yielding to his powerful interest in the subject, and impatient of a delay that seemed fraught with so much additional danger, Heyward drew still nigher to the dusky

group, with an intention of making his offers of compensation more definite, when the white man, motioning with his hand, as if he conceded the disputed point, turned away, saying in a sort of soliloquy, and in the English tongue:—

“Uncas is right! it would not be the act of men to leave such harmless things to their fate, even though it breaks up the harboring place forever. If you would save these tender blossoms from the fangs of the worst of serpents, gentleman, you have neither time to lose nor resolution to throw away!”

“How can such a wish be doubted! have I not already offered—”

“Offer your prayers to Him, who can give us wisdom to circumvent the cunning of the devils who fill these woods,” calmly interrupted the scout, “but spare your offers of money, which neither you may live to realize, nor I to profit by. These Mohicans and I will do what man’s thoughts can invent, to keep such flowers, which, though so sweet, were never made for the wilderness, from harm, and that without hope of any other recompense but such as God always gives to upright dealings. First, you must promise two things, both in your own name and for your friends, or without serving you, we shall only injure ourselves!”

“Name them.”

“The one is, to be still as these sleeping woods, let what will happen; and the other is, to keep the place where we shall take you forever a secret from all mortal men.”

“I will do my utmost to see both these conditions fulfilled.”

“Then follow, for we are losing moments that are as precious as the heart’s blood to a stricken deer.”

Heyward could distinguish the impatient gesture of the scout, through the increasing shadows of the evening, and he moved in his footsteps, swiftly, towards the place where he had left the remainder of his party. When they rejoined the expecting and anxious females, he briefly acquainted them with the conditions of their new guide, and with the necessity that existed for their hushing every apprehension, in instant and serious exertion. Although his alarming communication was not received without much secret terror by the listeners, his earnest and impressive manner, aided perhaps by the nature of the danger, succeeded in bracing their nerves to undergo some unlooked-for and unusual trial. Silently, and without a moment’s delay, they permitted him to assist them from their saddles, when they descended quick’y to the water’s

edge where the scout had collected the rest of the party, more by the agency of expressive gestures than by any use of words.

“What to do with these dumb creatures!” uttered the white man, on whom the sole control of their future movements appeared to devolve; “it would be time lost to cut their throats, and cast them into the river; and to leave them here, would be to tell the Mingoes that they have not far to seek to find their owners!”

“Then give them their bridles, and let them range the woods,” Heyward ventured to suggest.

“No; it would be better to mislead the imps, and make them believe they must equal a horse’s speed to run down their chase. Aye, aye, that will blind their fire-balls of eyes! Chingach—Hist! what stirs the bush?”

“The colt.”

“That colt, at least, must die,” muttered the scout, grasping at the mane of the nimble beast, which easily eluded his hand; “Uncas, your arrows!”

“Hold!” exclaimed the proprietor of the condemned animal aloud, without regard to the whispering tones used by the others; “spare the foal of Miriam! it is the comely offspring of a faithful dam, and would willingly injure naught!”

“When men struggle for the single life God has given them,” said the scout sternly, “even their own kind seem no more than the beasts of the wood. If you speak again, I shall leave you to the mercy of the Maquas! Draw to your arrow’s head, Uncas; we have no time for second blows.”

The low, muttering sounds of his threatening voice were still audible, when the wounded foal, first rearing on its hinder legs, plunged forward to its knees. It was met by Chingachgook, whose knife passed across its throat quicker than thought, and then precipitating the motions of the struggling victim, he dashed it into the river, down whose stream it glided away, gasping audibly for breath with its ebbing life. This deed of apparent cruelty, but of real necessity, fell upon the spirits of the travellers like a terrific warning of the peril in which they stood, heightened as it was by the calm though steady resolution of the actors in the scene. The sisters shuddered and clung closer to each other, while Heyward instinctively laid his hand on one of the pistols he had just drawn from their holsters, as he placed himself between his charge and those dense shadows that seemed to draw an impenetrable veil before the bosom of the forest.

The Indians, however, hesitated not a moment, but taking the bridles, they led the frightened and reluctant horses into the bed of the river.

At a short distance from the shore, they turned, and were soon concealed by the projection of the bank, under the brow of which they moved, in a direction opposite to the course of the waters. In the mean time, the scout drew a canoe of bark from its place of concealment beneath some low bushes, whose branches were waving with the eddies of the current, into which he silently motioned for the females to enter. They complied without hesitation, though many a fearful and anxious glance was thrown behind them, towards the thickening gloom, which now lay like a dark barrier along the margin of the stream.

So soon as Cora and Alice were seated, the scout, without regarding the element, directed Heyward to support one side of the frail vessel, and posting himself at the other, they bore it up against the stream, followed by the dejected owner of the dead foal. In this manner they proceeded, for many rods, in a silence that was only interrupted by the rippling of the water, as its eddies played around them, or the low dash made by their own cautious footsteps. Heyward yielded the guidance of the canoe implicitly to the scout, who approached or receded from the shore, to avoid the fragments of rocks, or deeper parts of the river, with a readiness that showed his knowledge of the route they held. Occasionally he would stop; and in the midst of a breathing stillness, that the dull but increasing roar of the waterfall only served to render more impressive, he would listen with painful intensesness, to catch any sounds that might arise from the slumbering forest. When assured that all was still, and unable to detect, even by the aid of his practised senses, any sign of his approaching foes, he would deliberately assume his slow and guarded progress. At length they reached a point in the river, where the roving eye of Heyward became riveted on a cluster of black objects, collected at a spot where the high bank threw a deeper shadow than usual on the dark waters. Hesitating to advance, he pointed out the place to the attention of his companion.

"Aye," returned the composed scout, "the Indians have hid the beasts with the judgment of natives! Water leaves no trail, and an owl's eye would be blinded by the darkness of such a hole."

The whole party was soon reunited, and another consulta-

tion was held between the scout and his new comrades, during which, they, whose fates depended on the faith and ingenuity of these unknown foresters, had a little leisure to observe their situation more minutely.

The river was confined between high and cragged rocks, one of which impended above the spot where the canoe rested. As these, again, were surmounted by tall trees, which appeared to totter on the brows of the precipice, it gave the stream the appearance of running through a deep and narrow dell. All beneath the fantastic limbs and ragged tree tops, which were, here and there, dimly painted against the starry zenith, lay alike in shadowed obscurity. Behind them, the curvature of the banks soon bounded the view, by the same dark and wooded outline; but in front, and apparently at no great distance, the water seemed piled against the heavens, whence it tumbled into caverns, out of which issued those sullen sounds that had loaded the evening atmosphere. It seemed, in truth, to be a spot devoted to seclusion, and the sisters imbibed a soothing impression of security, as they gazed upon its romantic, though not unappalling beauties. A general movement among their conductors, however, soon recalled them from a contemplation of the wild charms that night had assisted to end the place, to a painful sense of their real peril.

The horses had been secured to some scattering shrubs that grew in the fissures of the rocks, where, standing in the water, they were left to pass the night. The scout directed Heyward and his disconsolate fellow travellers to seat themselves in the forward end of the canoe, and took possession of the other himself, as erect and steady as if he floated in a vessel of much firmer materials. The Indians warily retraced their steps towards the place they had left, when the scout, placing his pole against a rock, by a powerful shove, sent his frail bark directly into the centre of the turbulent stream. For many minutes the struggle between the light bubble in which they floated, and the swift current was severe and doubtful. Forbidden to stir even a hand, and almost afraid to breathe, lest they should expose the frail fabric to the fury of the stream, the passengers watched the glancing waters in feverish suspense. Twenty times they thought the whirling eddies were sweeping them to destruction, when the master-hand of their pilot would bring the bows of the canoe to stem the rapid. A long, a vigorous, and, as it appeared to the females, a desperate effort, closed the struggle. Just as Alice veiled her eyes in horror, under the impression that they were

about to be swept within the vortex at the foot of the cataract, the canoe floated, stationary, at the side of a flat rock, that lay on a level with the water.

"Where are we? and what is next to be done?" demanded Heyward, perceiving that the exertions of the scout had ceased.

"You are at the foot of Glenn's," returned the other, speaking aloud, without fear of consequences within the roar of the cataract; "and the next thing is to make a steady landing, lest the canoe upset, and you should go down again the hard road we have travelled faster than you came up; 'tis a hard rift to stem, when the river is a little swelled; and five is an unnatural number to keep dry, in a hurry-skurry, with a little birchen bark and gum. There, go you all on the rock, and I will bring up the Mohicans with the venison. A man had better sleep without his scalp, than famish in the midst of plenty."

His passengers gladly complied with these directions. As the last foot touched the rock, the canoe whirled from its station, when the tall form of the scout was seen, for an instant, gliding above the waters, before it disappeared in the impenetrable darkness that rested on the bed of the river. Left by their guide, the travellers remained a few minutes in helpless ignorance, afraid even to move along the broken rocks, lest a false step should precipitate them down some one of the many deep and roaring caverns, into which the water seemed to tumble, on every side of them. Their suspense, however, was soon relieved; for aided by the skill of the natives, the canoe shot back into the eddy, and floated again at the side of the low rock, before they thought the scout had even time to rejoin his companions.

"We are now fortified, garrisoned, and provisioned," cried Heywood, cheerfully, "and may set Montcalm and his allies at defiance. How, now, my vigilant sentinel, can you see any thing of those you call the Iroquois on the main land?"

"I call them Iroquois, because to me every native, who speaks a foreign tongue, is accounted an enemy, though he may pretend to serve the king! If Webb wants faith and honesty in an Indian, let him bring out the tribes of the Delawares, and send these greedy and lying Mohawks and Oneidas, with their six nations of varlets, where in nature they belong, among the French!"

"We should then exchange a warlike for a useless friend! I have heard that the Delawares have laid aside the hatchet, and are content to be called women!"

“Aye, shame on the Hollanders * and Iroquois, who circumvented them by their deviltries, into such a treaty! But I have known them for twenty years, and I call him liar, that says cowardly blood runs in the veins of a Delaware. You have driven their tribes from the sea-shore, and would now believe what their enemies say, that you may sleep at night upon an easy pillow. No, no; to me every Indian who speaks a foreign tongue is an Iroquois, whether the castle † of his tribe be in Canada, or be in York.”

Heywood, perceiving that the stubborn adherence of the scout to the cause of his friends the Delawares, or Mohicans, for they were branches of the same numerous people, was likely to prolong a useless discussion, changed the subject.

“Treaty or no treaty, I know full well that your two companions are brave and cautious warriors. Have they heard or seen anything of our enemies?”

“An Indian is a mortal to be felt afore he is seen,” returned the scout, ascending the rock, and throwing the deer carelessly down. “I trust to other signs than such as come in at the eye, when I am outlying on the trail of the Mingoes.”

“Do your ears tell you that they have traced our retreat?”

“I should be sorry to think they had, though this is a spot that stout courage might hold for a smart skirmish. I will not deny, however, but the horses cowered when I passed them, as though they scented the wolves; and a wolf is a beast that is apt to hover about an Indian ambushment, craving the offals of the deer the savages kill.”

“You forget the buck at your feet! or, may we not owe their visit to the dead colt? Ha! what noise is that?”

“Poor Miriam!” murmured the stranger; “thy foal was foreordained to become a prey to ravenous beasts!” Then, suddenly lifting up his voice, amid the eternal din of the waters, he sang aloud—

“First born of Egypt, smite did he,
Of mankind, and of beast also;
O, Egypt! wonders sent ’midst thee,
On Pharaoh and his servants too!”

“The death of the colt sits heavy on the heart of its

* The reader will remember that New York was originally a colony of the Dutch.

† The principal villages of the Indians are still called “castles” by the whites of New York. “Oneida castle” is no more than a scattered hamlet; but the name is in general use.

owner," said the scout ; " but it's a good sign to see a man account upon his dumb friends. He has the religion of the matter, in believing what is to happen will happen ; and with such a consolation, it wont be long afore he submits to the rationality of killing a four-footed beast, to save the lives of human men. It may be as you say," he continued, reverting to the purport of Heyward's last remark ; " and the greater the reason why we should cut our steaks, and let the carcase drive down the stream, or we shall have the pack howling along the cliffs, begrudging every mouthful we swallow. Besides, though the Delaware tongue is the same as a book to the Iroquois, the cunning varlets are quick enough at understanding the reason of a wolf's howl."

The scout, whilst making this remark, was busied in collecting certain necessary implements ; as he concluded, he moved silently by the group of travellers, accompanied by the Mohicans, who seemed to comprehend his intentions with instinctive readiness, when the whole three disappeared in succession, seeming to vanish against the dark face of a perpendicular rock, that rose to the height of a few yards, within as many feet of the water's edge.

CHAPTER VI.

" Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide ;
 He wales a portion with judicious care ;
 And ' let us worship God,' he says, with solemn air."

BURNS.

HEYWARD, and his female companions, witnessed this mysterious movement with secret uneasiness ; for, though the conduct of the white man had hitherto been above reproach, his rude equipments, blunt address, and strong antipathies, together with the character of his silent associates, were all causes for exciting distrust in minds that had been so recently alarmed by Indian treachery.

The stranger alone disregarded the passing incidents. He seated himself on a projection of the rocks, whence he gave no other signs of consciousness than by the struggles of his spirit, as manifested in frequent and heavy sighs. Smothered

voices were next heard, as though men called to each other in the bowels of the earth, when a sudden light flashed upon those without, and laid bare the much-prized secret of the place.

At the further extremity of a narrow, deep cavern in the rock, whose length appeared much extended by the perspective and the nature of the light by which it was seen, was seated the scout, holding a blazing knot of pine. The strong glare of the fire fell full upon his sturdy, weather-beaten countenance and forest attire, lending an air of romantic wildness to the aspect of an individual, who, seen by the sober light of day, would have exhibited the peculiarities of a man remarkable for the strangeness of his dress, the iron-like inflexibility of his frame, and the singular compound of quick, vigilant sagacity, and of exquisite simplicity, that by turns usurped the possession of his muscular features. At a little distance in advance stood Uncas, his whole person thrown powerfully into view. The travellers anxiously regarded the upright, flexible figure of the young Mohican, graceful and unrestrained in the attitudes and movements of nature. Though his person was more than usually screened by a green and fringed hunting-shirt, like that of the white man, there was no concealment to his dark, glancing, fearless eye, alike terrible and calm; the bold outline of his high, haughty features, pure in their native red, or to the dignified elevation of his receding forehead, together with all the finest proportions of a noble head, bared to the generous scalping tuft. It was the first opportunity possessed by Duncan and his companions, to view the marked lineaments of either of their Indian attendants, and each individual of the party felt relieved from a burden of doubt, as the proud and determined, though wild expression of the features of the young warrior forced itself on their notice. They felt it might be a being partially benighted in the vale of ignorance, but it could not be one who would willingly devote his rich natural gifts to the purposes of wanton treachery. The ingenuous Alice gazed at his free air and proud carriage, as she would have looked upon some precious relic of the Grecian chisel, to which life had been imparted by the intervention of a miracle; while Heyward, though accustomed to see the perfection of form which abounds among the uncorrupted natives, openly expressed his admiration at such an unblemished specimen of the noblest proportions of man.

“I could sleep in peace,” whispered Alice, in reply, “with

such a fearless and generous-looking youth for my sentinel. Surely, Duncan, those cruel murders, those terrific scenes of torture, of which we read and hear so much, are never acted in the presence of such as he?"

"This, certainly, is a rare and brilliant instance of those natural qualities, in which these peculiar people are said to excel," he answered. "I agree with you, Alice, in thinking that such a front and eye were formed rather to intimidate than to deceive; but let us not practise a deception upon ourselves, by expecting any other exhibition of what we esteem virtue than according to the fashion of a savage. As bright examples of great qualities are but too uncommon among Christians, so are they singular and solitary with the Indians; though, for the honor of our common nature, neither are incapable of producing them. Let us then hope that this Mohican may not disappoint our wishes, but prove, what his looks assert him to be, a brave and constant friend."

"Now Major Heyward speaks as Major Heyward should," said Cora; "who that looks at this creature of nature, remembers the shade of his skin?"

A short, and apparently an embarrassed silence succeeded this remark, which was interrupted by the scout calling to them, aloud, to enter.

"This fire begins to show too bright a flame," he continued, as they complied, "and might light the Mingoes to our undoing. Uncas, drop the blanket, and show the knaves its dark side. This is not such a supper as a major of the Royal Americans has a right to expect, but I've known scout detachments of the corps glad to eat their venison raw, and without a relish, too.* Here, you see, we have plenty of salt, and can make a quick broil. There's fresh sassafras boughs for the ladies to sit on, which may not be as proud as their my-hog-guinea chairs, but which sends up a sweeter flavor than the skin of any hog can do, be it of Guinea, or be it of any other land. Come, friend, don't be mournful for the colt; 'twas an innocent thing, and had not seen much hardship. Its death will save the creature many a sore back and weary foot."

Uncas did as the other had directed, and when the voice

* In vulgar parlance the condiments of a repast are called by the American "a relish," substituting the thing for its effect. These provincial terms are frequently put in the mouths of the speakers, according to their several conditions in life. Most of them are of local use, and others quite peculiar to the particular class of men to which the character belongs. In the present instance, the scout uses the word with immediate reference to the "salt," with which his own party was so fortunate as to be provided.

of Hawk-eye ceased, the roar or the cataract sounded like the rumbling of distant thunder.

“Are we quite safe in this cavern?” demanded Heyward. “Is there no danger of surprise? A single armed man, at its entrance, would hold us at his mercy.”

A spectral-looking figure stalked from out the darkness behind the scout, and seizing a blazing brand, held it towards the further extremity of their place of retreat. Alice uttered a faint shriek, and even Cora rose to her feet, as this appalling object moved into the light; but a single word from Heyward calmed them, with the assurance it was only their attendant, Chingachgook, who, lifting another blanket, discovered that the cavern had two outlets. Then, holding the brand, he crossed a deep, narrow chasm in the rocks, which ran at right angles with the passage they were in, but which, unlike that, was open to the heavens, and entered another cave, answering to the description of the first, in every essential particular.

“Such old foxes as Chingachgook and myself are not often caught in a burrow with one hole,” said Hawk-eye, laughing; “you can easily see the cunning of the place—the rock is black limestone, which everybody knows is soft; it makes no uncomfortable pillow, where brush and pine wood is scarce; well, the fall was once a few yards below us, and I dare to say was, in its time, as regular and as handsome a sheet of water as any along the Hudson. But old age is a great injury to good looks, as these sweet young ladies have yet to learn! The place is sadly changed! These rocks are full of cracks, and in some places they are softer than at othersome, and the water has worked out deep hollows for itself, until it has fallen back, aye, some hundred feet, breaking here and wearing there, until the falls have neither shape nor consistency.”

“In what part of them are we?” asked Heyward.

“Why, we are nigh the spot that Providence first placed them at, but where, it seems, they were too rebellious to stay. The rock proved softer on each side of us, and so they left the centre of the river bare and dry, first working out these two little holes for us to hide in.”

“We are then on an island?”

“Aye! there are the falls on two sides of us and the river above and below. If you had daylight, it would be worth the trouble to step up on the height of this rock and look at the perversity of the water. It falls by no rule at all; sometimes it leaps, sometimes it tumbles; there, it skips; here, it shoots; in one place 'tis white as snow, and in another 'tis green as grass;

nerabouts, it pitches into deep hollows, that rumble and quake the 'arth; and thereaway, it ripples and sings like a brook, fashioning whirlpools and gulleys in the old stone, as if 'twas no harder than trodden clay. The whole design of the river seems disconcerted. First it runs smoothly, as if meaning to go down the descent as things were ordered; then it angles about and faces the shores; nor are there places wanting where it looks backward, as if unwilling to leave the wilderness, to mingle with the salt! Aye, lady, the fine cob-web-looking cloth you wear at your throat, is coarse, and like a fish-net, to little spots I can show you, where the river fabricates all sorts of images, as if, having broke loose from order, it would try its hand at everything. And yet what does it amount to! After the water has been suffered to have its will, for a time, like a headstrong man, it is gathered together by the hand that made it, and a few rods below you may see it all, flowing on steadily towards the sea, as was foreordained from the first foundation of the 'arth!"

While his auditors received a cheering assurance of the security of their place of concealment from this untutored description of Glenn's,* they were much inclined to judge differently from Hawk-eye, of its wild beauties. But they were not in a situation to suffer their thoughts to dwell on the charms of natural objects; and, as the scout had not found it necessary to cease his culinary labors while he spoke, unless to point out, with a broken fork, the direction of some particularly obnoxious point in the rebellious stream, they now suffered their attention to be drawn to the necessary though more vulgar consideration of their supper.

The repast, which was greatly aided by the addition of a few delicacies that Heyward had the precaution to bring with him when they left their horses, was exceedingly refreshing to the wearied party. Uncas acted as attendant to the females, performing all the little offices within his power, with a mixture of dignity and anxious grace, that served to amuse

* Glenn's Falls are on the Hudson, some forty or fifty miles above the head of tide, or the place where that river becomes navigable for sloops. The description of this picturesque and remarkable little cataract, as given by the scout, is sufficiently correct, though the application of the water to the uses of civilized life has materially injured its beauties. The rocky island and the two caverns are well known to every traveller, since the former sustains a pier of a bridge which is now thrown across the river, immediately above the fall. In explanation of the taste of Hawk-eye, it should be remembered that men always prize that most which is least enjoyed. Thus, in a new country, the woods and other objects, which in an old country would be maintained at great cost, are got rid of, simply with a view of "improving" as it is called.

Heyward, who well knew that it was an utter innovation on the Indian customs, which forbid their warriors to descend to any menial employment, especially in favor of their women. As the rights of hospitality were, however, considered sacred among them, this little departure from the dignity of manhood excited no audible comment. Had there been one there sufficiently disengaged to become a close observer, he might have fancied that the services of the young chief were not entirely impartial. That while he tendered to Alice the gourd of sweet water, and the venison in a trencher, neatly carved from the knot of the pepperidge, with sufficient courtesy, in performing the same offices to her sister, his dark eye lingered on her rich speaking countenance. Once or twice he was compelled to speak, to command the attention of those he served. In such cases, he made use of English, broken and imperfect, but sufficiently intelligible, and which he rendered so mild and musical, by his deep * guttural voice, that it never failed to cause both ladies to look up in admiration and astonishment. In the course of these civilities, a few sentences were exchanged, that served to establish the appearance of an amicable intercourse between the parties.

In the mean while, the gravity of Chingachgook remained immovable. * He had seated himself more within the circle of light, where the frequent uneasy glances of his guests were better enabled to separate the natural expression of his face from the artificial terrors of the war-paint. They found a strong resemblance between father and son, with the difference that might be expected from age and hardships. The fierceness of his countenance now seemed to slumber, and in its place was to be seen the quiet, vacant composure, which distinguishes an Indian warrior, when his faculties are not required for any of the greater purposes of his existence. It was, however, easy to be seen, by the occasional gleams that shot across his swarthy visage, that it was only necessary to arouse his passions, in order to give full effect to the terrific device which he had adopted to intimidate his enemies. On the other hand, the quick roving eye of the scout seldom rested. He ate and drank with an appetite that no sense of danger could disturb, but his vigilance seemed never to desert him. Twenty times the gourd or the venison was suspended before his lips, while his head was turned aside, as though he listened to some distant and distrusted sounds—a movement that never failed to recall his

* The meaning of Indian words is much governed by the emphasis and tones

guests from regarding the novelties of their situation, to a recollection of the alarming reasons that had driven them to seek it. As these frequent pauses were never followed by any remark, the momentary uneasiness they created quickly passed away, and for a time was forgotten.

"Come, friend," said Hawk-eye, drawing out a keg from beneath a cover of leaves, towards the close of the repast, and addressing the stranger who sat at his elbow, doing great justice to his culinary skill, "try a little spruce; 'twill wash away all thoughts of the colt, and quicken the life in your bosom. I drink to our better friendship, hoping that a little horseflesh may leave no heartburnings atween us. How do you name yourself?"

"Gamut—David Gamut," returned the singing-master, preparing to wash down his sorrows in a powerful draught of the woodman's high-flavored and well-laced compound.

"A very good name, and, I dare say, handed down from honest forefathers. I'm an admirer of names, though the Christian fashions fall far below savage customs in this particular. The biggest coward I ever knew was called Lyon; and his wife, Patience, would scold you out of hearing in less time than a hunted deer would run a rod. With an Indian 'tis a matter of conscience; what he calls himself, he generally is—not that Chingachgook, which signifies big serpent, is really a snake, big or little; but that he understands the windings and turnings of human nature, and is silent, and strikes his enemies when they least expect him. What may be your calling?"

"I am an unworthy instructor in the art of psalmody."

"Anan!"

"I teach singing to the youths of the Connecticut levy."

"You might be better employed. The young hounds go laughing and singing too much already through the woods, when they ought not to breathe louder than a fox in his cover. Can you use the smooth bore, or handle the rifle?"

"Praised be God, I have never had occasion to meddle with murderous implements!"

"Perhaps you understand the compass, and lay down the water-courses and mountains of the wilderness on paper, in order that they who follow may find places by their given names?"

"I practise no such employment."

"You have a pair of legs that might make a long path seem short! you journey sometimes, I fancy, with tidings for the general."

“Never ; I follow no other than my own high vocation, which is instruction in sacred music !”

“’Tis a strange calling !” muttered Hawk-eye, with an inward laugh, “to go through life, like a cat-bird, mocking all the ups and downs that may happen to come out of other men’s throats. Well, friend, I suppose it is your gift, and musn’t be denied any more than if ’twas shooting, or some other better inclination. Let us hear what you can do in that way ; ’twill be a friendly manner of saying good-night, for ’tis time that these ladies should be getting strength for a hard and a long push, in the pride of the morning, afore the Maquas are stirring.”

“With joyful pleasure do I consent,” said David, adjusting his iron-rimmed spectacles, and producing his beloved little volume, which he immediately tendered to Alice. “What can be more fitting and consolatory, than to offer up evening praise, after a day of such exceeding jeopardy !”

Alice smiled ; but regarding Heyward, she blushed and hesitated.

“Indulge yourself,” he whispered : “ought not the suggestion of the worthy namesake of the Psalmist to have its weight at such a moment ?”

Encouraged by his opinion, Alice did what her pious inclinations and her keen relish for gentle sounds, had before so strongly urged. The book was opened at a hymn not adapted to their situation, and in which the poet, no longer goaded by his desire to excel the inspired King of Israel, had discovered some chastened and respectable powers. Cora betrayed a disposition to support her sister, and the sacred song proceeded, after the indispensable preliminaries of the pitch-pipe and the tune had been duly attended to by the methodical David.

The air was solemn and slow. At times it rose to the fullest compass of the rich voices of the females, who hung over their little book in holy excitement, and again it sank so low, that the rushing of the waters ran through their melody, like a hollow accompaniment. The natural taste and true ear of David governed and modified the sounds to suit the confined cavern, every crevice and cranny of which was filled with the thrilling notes of their flexible voices. The Indians riveted their eyes on the rocks, and listened with an attention that seemed to turn them into stone. But the scout, who had placed his chin in his hand, with an expression of cold indifference, gradually suffered his rigid features to relax, until

as verse succeeded verse, he felt his iron nature subdued, while his recollection was carried back to boyhood, when his ears had been accustomed to listen to similar sounds of praise, in the settlements of the colony. His roving eyes began to moisten, and before the hymn was ended, scalding tears rolled out of fountains that had long seemed dry, and followed each other down those cheeks, that had oftener felt the storms of heaven than any testimonials of weakness. The singers were dwelling on one of those low, dying chords, which the ear devours with such greedy rapture, as if conscious that it is about to lose them, when a cry, that seemed neither human nor earthly, rose in the outward air, penetrating not only the recesses of the cavern, but to the inmost hearts of all who heard it. It was followed by a stillness apparently as deep as if the waters had been checked in their furious progress, at such a horrid and unusual interruption.

"What is it?" murmured Alice, after a few moments of terrible suspense.

"What is it?" repeated Heyward, aloud.

Neither Hawk-eye nor the Indians made any reply. They listened, as if expecting the sound would be repeated, with a manner that expressed their own astonishment. At length, they spoke together, earnestly, in the Delaware language, when Uncas, passing by the inner and most concealed aperture, cautiously left the cavern. When he had gone, the scout first spoke in English.

"What it is, or what it is not, none here can tell, though two of us have ranged the woods for more than thirty years. I did believe there was no cry that Indian or beast could make, that my ears had not heard; but this has proved that I was only a vain and conceited mortal."

"Was it not, then, the shout the warriors make when they wish to intimidate their enemies?" asked Cora, who stood drawing her veil about her person, with a calmness to which her agitated sister was a stranger.

"No, no; this was bad, and shocking, and had a sort of unhuman sound; but when you once hear the war-whoop, you will never mistake it for anything else. Well, Uncas!" speaking in Delaware to the young chief as he re-entered, "what see you? do our lights shine through the blankets?"

The answer was short, and apparently decided, being given in the same tongue.

"There is nothing to be seen without," continued Hawk-eye, shaking his head in discontent; "and our hiding-place is

still in darkness. Pass into the other cave you that need it, and seek for sleep ; we must be afoot long before the sun, and make the most of our time to get to Edward, while the Mingoes are taking their morning nap."

Cora set the example of compliance, with a steadiness that taught the more timid Alice the necessity of obedience. Before leaving the place, however, she whispered a request to Duncan, that he would follow. Uncas raised the blanket for their passage, and as the sisters turned to thank him for this act of attention, they saw the scout seated again before the dying embers, with his face resting on his hands, in a manner which showed how deeply he brooded on the unaccountable interruption which had broken up their evening devotions.

Heyward took with him a blazing knot, which threw a dim light through the narrow vista of their new apartment. Placing it in a favorable position, he joined the females, who now found themselves alone with him for the first time since they had left the friendly ramparts of Fort Edward.

"Leave us not, Duncan," said Alice ; "we cannot sleep in such a place as this, with that horrid cry still ringing in our ears."

"First let us examine into the security of your fortress," he answered, "and then we will speak of rest."

He approached the further end of the cavern, to an outlet which, like the others, was concealed by blankets ; and removing the thick screen, breathed the fresh and reviving air from the cataract. One arm of the river flowed through a deep, narrow ravine, which its current had worn in the soft rock, directly beneath his feet, forming an effectual defence, as he believed, against any danger from that quarter ; the water, a few rods above them, plunging, glancing, and sweeping along, in its most violent and broken manner.

"Nature has made an impenetrable barrier on this side," he continued, pointing down the perpendicular declivity into the dark current, before he dropped the blanket ; "and as you know that good men and true are on guard in front, I see no reason why the advice of our honest host should be disregarded. I am certain Cora will join me in saying, that sleep is necessary to you both."

"Cora may submit to the justice of your opinion, though she cannot put it in practice," returned the elder sister, who had placed herself by the side of Alice, on a couch of sassafras ; "there would be other causes to chase away sleep, though we had been spared the shock of this mysterious noise

Ask yourself, Heyward, can daughters forget the anxiety a father must endure, whose children lodge, he knows not where or how, in such a wilderness, and in the midst of so many perils."

"He is a soldier, and knows how to estimate the chances of the woods."

"He is a father, and cannot deny his nature."

"How kind has he ever been to all my follies! how tender and indulgent to all my wishes!" sobbed Alice. "We have been selfish, sister, in urging our visit at such hazard."

"I may have been rash in pressing his consent in a moment of so much embarrassment, but I would have proved to him, that however others might neglect him in his straits, his children at least were faithful."

"When he heard of your arrival at Edward," said Heyward, kindly, "there was a powerful struggle in his bosom between fear and love; though the latter, heightened, if possible, by so long a separation, quickly prevailed. 'It is the spirit of my noble-minded Cora that leads them, Duncan,' he said, 'and I will not balk it. Would to God, that he who holds the honor of our royal master in his guardianship, would show but half her firmness!'"

"And did he not speak of me, Heyward?" demanded Alice, with jealous affection. "Surely, he forgot not altogether his little Elsie?"

"That were impossible," returned the young man; "he called you by a thousand endearing epithets, that I may not presume to use, but to the justice of which I can warmly testify. Once, indeed, he said—"

Duncan ceased speaking; for while his eyes were riveted on those of Alice, who had turned towards him with the eagerness of filial affection, to catch his words, the same strong, horrid cry, as before, filled the air, and rendered him mute. A long, breathless silence succeeded, during which, each looked at the others in fearful expectation of hearing the sound repeated. At length, the blanket was slowly raised, and the scout stood in the aperture with a countenance whose firmness evidently began to give way, before a mystery that seemed to threaten some danger, against which all his cunning and experience might prove of no avail.

CHAPTER VII.

“ They do not sleep.
On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,
I see them sit.”

GRAY.

“ ’TWOULD be neglecting a warning that is given for our good, to lie hid any longer,” said Hawk-eye, “ when such sounds are raised in the forest. These gentle ones may keep close, but the Mohicans and I will watch upon the rock, where I suppose a major of the sixtieth would wish to keep us company.”

“ Is then our danger so pressing ? ” asked Cora.

“ He who makes strange sounds, and gives them out for man’s information, alone knows our danger. I should think myself wicked, unto rebellion against his will, was I to burrow with such warnings in the air. Even the weak soul who passes his days in singing, is stirred by the cry, and, as he says, is ‘ ready to go forth to the battle.’ If ’twere only a battle, it would be a thing understood by us all, and easily managed ; but I have heard that when such shrieks are atween heaven and ’arth, it betokens another sort of warfare.”

“ If all our reasons for fear, my friend, are confined to such as proceed from supernatural causes, we have but little occasion to be alarmed,” continued the undisturbed Cora ; “ are you certain that our enemies have not invented some new and ingenious method to strike us with terror, that their conquest may become more easy ? ”

“ Lady,” returned the scout solemnly, “ I have listened to all the sounds of the woods for thirty years, as a man will listen, whose life and death depend on the quickness of his ears. There is no whine of the panther, no whistle of the cat-bird, nor any invention of the devilish Mingoës, that can cheat me. I have heard the forest moan like mortal men in their affliction ; often, and again, have I listened to the wind playing its music in the branches of the girdled trees ; and I have heard the lightning cracking in the air, like the snapping of blazing brush as it spitted forth sparks and forked flames ;

but never have I thought that I heard more than the pleasure of him who sported with the things of his hand. But neither the Mohicans, nor I, who am a white man without a cross, can explain the cry just heard. We, therefore, believe it a sign given for our good."

"It is extraordinary," said Heyward, taking his pistols from the place where he had laid them on entering; "be it a sign of peace or a signal of war, it must be looked to. Lead the way, my friend; I follow."

On issuing from their place of confinement, the whole party instantly experienced a grateful renovation of spirits, by exchanging the pent air of the hiding-place for the cool and invigorating atmosphere which played around the whirlpools and pitches of the cataract. A heavy evening breeze swept along the surface of the river, and seemed to drive the roar of the falls into the recesses of their own caverns, whence it issued heavily and constant, like thunder rumbling beyond the distant hills. The moon had risen, and its light was already glancing here and there on the waters above them; but the extremity of the rock where they stood, still lay in shadow. With the exception of the sounds produced by the rushing waters, and an occasional breathing of the air, as it murmured past them in fitful currents, the scene was as still as night and solitude could make it. In vain were the eyes of each individual bent along the opposite shores, in quest of some signs of life, that might explain the nature of the interruption they had heard. Their anxious and eager looks were baffled by the deceptive light, or rested only on naked rocks, and straight and immovable trees.

"Here is nothing to be seen but the gloom and quiet of a lovely evening," whispered Duncan; "how much should we prize such a scene, and all this breathing solitude, at any other moment, Cora. Fancy yourself in security, and what now, perhaps, increases your terror, may be made conducive to enjoyment—"

"Listen!" interrupted Alice.

The caution was unnecessary. Once more the same sound arose, as if from the bed of the river, and having broken out of the narrow bounds of the cliffs, was heard undulating through the forest, in distant and dying cadences.

"Can any here give a name to such a cry?" demanded Hawk-eye, when the last echo was lost in the woods; "if so, let him speak; for myself, I judge it not to belong to 'arth!"

"Here, then, is one who can undeceive you," said Dun-

can: "I know the sound full well, for often have I heard it on the field of battle, and in situations which are frequent in a soldier's life. 'Tis the horrid shriek that a horse will give in his agony; oftener drawn from him in pain, though sometimes in terror. My charger is either a prey to the beasts of the forest, or he sees his danger, without the power to avoid it. The sound might deceive me in the cavern, but in the open air I know it too well to be wrong."

The scout and his companions listened to this simple explanation with the interest of men who imbibe new ideas, at the same time that they get rid of old ones, which had proved disagreeable inmates. The two latter uttered their usual and expressive exclamation, "hugh!" as the truth first glanced upon their minds, while the former, after a short musing pause, took upon himself to reply.

"I cannot deny your words," he said; "for I am little skilled in horses, though born where they abound. The wolves must be hovering above their heads on the bank, and the timorous creatures are calling on man for help, in the best manner they are able. Uncas"—he spoke in Delaware—"Uncas, drop down in the canoe, and whirl a brand among the pack; or fear may do what the wolves can't get at to perform, and leave us without horses in the morning, when we shall have so much need to journey swiftly!"

The young native had already descended to the water, to comply, when a long howl was raised on the edge of the river, and was borne swiftly off into the depths of the forest, as though the beasts, of their own accord, were abandoning their prey in sudden terror. Uncas, with instinctive quickness, receded, and the three foresters held another of their low, earnest conferences.

"We have been like hunters who have lost the points of the heavens, and from whom the sun has been held for days," said Hawk-eye, turning away from his companions; "now we begin again to know the signs of our course, and the paths are cleared from briers! Seat yourselves in the shade which the moon throws from yonder beach—'tis thicker than that of the pines—and let us wait for that which the Lord may choose to send next. Let all your conversation be in whispers; though it would be better, and perhaps, in the end, wiser, if each one held discourse with his own thoughts, for a time."

The manner of the scout was seriously impressive, though no longer distinguished by any signs of unmanly apprehen-

sion. It was evident that his momentary weakness had vanished with the explanation of a mystery which his own experience had not served to fathom ; and though he now felt all the realities of their actual condition, that he was prepared to meet them with the energy of his hardy nature. This feeling seemed also common to the natives, who placed themselves in positions which commanded a full view of both shores, while their own persons were effectually concealed from observation. In such circumstances, common prudence dictated that Heyward and his companions should imitate a caution that proceeded from so intelligent a source. The young man drew a pile of the sassafras from the cave, and placing it in the chasm which separated the two caverns, it was occupied by the sisters ; who were thus protected by the rocks from any missiles, while their anxiety was relieved by the assurance that no danger could approach without a warning. Heyward himself was posted at hand, so near that he might communicate with his companions without raising his voice to a dangerous elevation ; while David in imitation of the woodsmen, bestowed his person in such a manner among the fissures of the rocks, that his ungainly limbs were no longer offensive to the eye. .

In this manner, hours passed by without further interruption. The moon reached the zenith, and shed its mild light perpendicularly on the lovely sight of the sisters slumbering peacefully in each other's arms. Duncan cast the wide shawl of Cora before a spectacle he so much loved to contemplate, and then suffered his own head to seek a pillow on the rock. David began to utter sounds that would have shocked his delicate organs in more wakeful moments ; in short, all but Hawk-eye and the Mohicans lost every idea of consciousness, in uncontrollable drowsiness. But the watchfulness of these vigilant protectors neither tired nor slumbered. Immovable as that rock, of which each appeared to form a part, they lay, with their eyes roving, without intermission, along the dark margin of trees that bounded the adjacent shores of the narrow stream. Not a sound escaped them ; the most subtle examination could not have told they breathed. It was evident that this excess of caution proceeded from an experience that no subtlety on the part of their enemies could deceive. It was, however, continued without any apparent consequences, until the moon had set, and a pale streak above the tree-tops, at the bend of the river a little below, announced the approach of day.

Then, for the first time, Hawk-eye was seen to stir. He crawled along the rock, and shook Duncan from his heavy slumbers.

"Now is the time to journey," he whispered; "awake the gentle ones, and be ready to get into the canoe when I bring it to the landing-place."

"Have you had a quiet night?" said Heyward; "for my self, I believe sleep has got the better of my vigilance."

"All is yet still as midnight. Be silent, but be quick."

By this time Duncan was thoroughly awake, and he immediately lifted the shawl from the sleeping females. The motion caused Cora to raise her hand as if to repulse him, while Alice murmured, in her soft gentle voice, "No, no, dear father, we were not deserted; Duncan was with us!"

"Yes, sweet innocence," whispered the youth; "Duncan is here, and while life continues or danger remains, he will never quit thee. Cora! Alice! awake! The hour has come to move!"

A loud shriek from the younger of the sisters, and the form of the other standing upright before him, in bewildered horror, was the unexpected answer he received. While the words were still on the lips of Heyward, there had arisen such a tumult of yells and cries as served to drive the swift currents of his own blood back from its bounding course into the fountains of his heart. It seemed, for near a minute, as if the demons of hell had possessed themselves of the air about them, and were venting their savage humors in barbarous sounds. The cries came from no particular direction, though it was evident they filled the woods, and, as the appalled listeners easily imagined, the caverns of the falls, the rocks, the bed of the river, and the upper air. David raised his tall person in the midst of the infernal din, with a hand on either ear, exclaiming,—

"Whence comes this discord! Has hell broke loose, that man should utter sounds like these!"

The bright flashes and the quick reports of a dozen rifles, from the opposite banks of the stream, followed this incautious exposure of his person, and left the unfortunate singing master senseless on that rock where he had been so long slumbering. The Mohicans boldly sent back the intimidating yell of their enemies, who raised a shout of savage triumph at the fall of Gamut. The flash of rifles was then quick and close between them, but either party was too well skilled to leave even a limb exposed to the hostile aim. Duncan listened with intense anxiety for the strokes of the paddle, believing that

flight was now their only refuge. The river glanced by with its ordinary velocity but the canoe was nowhere to be seen on its dark waters. He had just fancied they were cruelly deserted by the scout, as a stream of flame issued from the rock beneath him, and a fierce yell, blended with a shriek of agony, announced that the messenger of death, sent from the fatal weapon of Hawk-eye, had found a victim. At this slight repulse the assailants instantly withdrew, and gradually the place became as still as before the sudden tumult.

Duncan seized the favorable moment to spring to the body of Gamut, which he bore within the shelter of the narrow chasm that protected the sisters. In another minute the whole party was collected in this spot of comparative safety.

"The poor fellow has saved his scalp," said Hawk-eye, coolly passing his hand over the head of David; "but he is a proof that a man may be born with too long a tongue! 'Twas downright madness to show six feet of flesh and blood, on a naked rock, to the raging savages. I only wonder he has escaped with life."

"Is he not dead!" demanded Cora, in a voice whose husky tones showed how powerfully natural horror struggled with her assumed firmness. "Can we do aught to assist the wretched man?"

"No, no! the life is in his heart yet, and after he has slept awhile he will come to himself, and be a wiser man for it, till the hour of his real time shall come," returned Hawk-eye, casting another oblique glance at the insensible body, while he filled his charger with admirable nicety. "Carry him in, Uncas, and lay him on the sassafras. The longer his nap lasts the better it will be for him, as I doubt whether he can find a proper cover for such a shape on these rocks; and singing won't do any good with the Iroquois."

"You believe, then, the attack will be renewed?" asked Heyward.

"Do I expect a hungry wolf will satisfy his craving with a mouthful! They have lost a man, and 'tis their fashion, when they meet a loss, and fail in the surprise, to fall back; but we shall have them on again, with new expedients to circumvent us, and master our scalps. Our main hope," he continued, raising his rugged countenance, across which a shade of anxiety just then passed like a darkening cloud, "will be to keep the rock until Munro can send a party to our help! God send it may be soon, and under a leader that knows the Indian customs!"

"You hear our probable fortunes, Cora," said Duncan; "and you know we have everything to hope from the anxiety and experience of your father. Come, then, with Alice, into this cavern, where you, at least, will be safe from the murderous rifles of our enemies, and where you may bestow a care suited to your gentle natures on our unfortunate comrade."

The sisters followed him into the outer cave, where David was beginning, by his sighs, to give symptoms of returning consciousness; and then commending the wounded man to their attention, he immediately prepared to leave them.

"Duncan!" said the tremulous voice of Cora, when he had reached the mouth of the cavern. He turned and beheld the speaker, whose color had changed to a deadly paleness, and whose lip quivered, gazing after him, with an expression of interest which immediately recalled him to her side. "Remember, Duncan, how necessary your safety is to our own—how you bear a father's sacred trust—now much depends on your discretion and care—in short," she added, while the tell-tale blood stole over her features, crimsoning her very temples, "how very deservedly dear you are to all of the name of Munro."

"If anything could add to my own base love of life," said Heyward, suffering his unconscious eyes to wander to the youthful form of the silent Alice, "it would be so kind an assurance. As major of the 60th, our honest host will tell you I must take my share of the fray; but our task will be easy; it is merely to keep these blood-hounds at bay for a few hours."

Without waiting for reply, he tore himself from the presence of the sisters, and joined the scout and his companions, who still lay within the protection of the little chasm between the two caves

"I tell you, Uncas," said the former, as Heyward joined them, "you are wasteful of your powder, and the kick of the rifle disconcerts your aim! Little powder, light lead, and a long arm, seldom fail of bringing the death screech from a Mingo! At least, such has been my experience with the creatures. Come, friends; let us to our covers, for no man can tell when or where a Maqua* will strike his blow."

The Indians silently repaired to their appointed stations,

* It will be observed that Hawk-eye applies different names to his enemies. Mingo and Maqua are terms of contempt, and Iroquois is a name given by the French. The Indians rarely use the same name when different tribes speak of each other.

which were fissures in the rocks, whence they could command the approaches to the foot of the falls. In the centre of the little island, a few short and stunted pines had found root, forming a thicket, into which Hawk-eye darted with the swiftness of a deer, followed by the active Duncan. Here they secured themselves, as well as circumstances would permit, among the shrubs and fragments of stone that were scattered about the place. Above them was a bare, rounded rock, on each side of which the water played its gambols, and plunged into the abysses beneath, in the manner already described. As the day had now dawned, the opposite shores no longer presented a confused outline, but they were able to look into the woods, and distinguish objects beneath a canopy of gloomy pines.

A long and anxious watch succeeded, but without any further evidence of a renewed attack; and Duncan began to hope that their fire had proved more fatal than was supposed, and that their enemies had been effectually repulsed. When he ventured to utter this impression to his companion, it was met by Hawk-eye with an incredulous shake of the head.

“You know not the nature of a Maqua, if you think he is so easily beaten back without a scalp!” he answered. “If there was one of the imps yelling this morning, there were forty! and they know our number and quality too well to give up the chase so soon. Hist! look into the water above, just where it breaks over the rocks. I am no mortal, if the risky devils haven’t swam down upon the very pitch, and, as bad luck would have it, they have hit the head of the island. Hist! man, keep close! or the hair will be off your crown in the turning of a knife!”

Heyward lifted his head from the cover, and beheld what he justly considered a prodigy of rashness and skill. The river had worn away the edge of the soft rock in such a manner, as to render its first pitch less abrupt and perpendicular than is usual at waterfalls. With no other guide than the ripple of the stream where it met the head of the island, a party of their insatiable foes had ventured into the current, and swam down upon this point, knowing the ready access it would give, if successful, to their intended victims. As Hawk-eye ceased speaking, four human heads could be seen peering above a few logs of drift wood that had lodged on these naked rocks, and which had probably suggested the idea of the practicability of the hazardous undertaking. At the next moment, a fifth form was seen floating over the green edge of the fall.

a little from the line of the island. The savage struggled powerfully to gain the point of safety, and, favored by the glancing water, he was already stretching forth an arm to meet the grasp of his companions, when he shot away again with the whirling current, appeared to rise in the air, with uplifted arms and starting eyeballs, and fell, with a sudden plunge, into that deep and yawning abyss over which he hovered. A single, wild, despairing shriek rose from the cavern, and all was hushed again, as the grave.

The first generous impulse of Duncan was to rush to the rescue of the hapless wretch ; but he felt himself bound to the spot by the iron grasp of the immovable scout.

“Would ye bring certain death upon us, by telling the Mingoes where we lie ?” demanded Hawk-eye, sternly ; “’tis a charge of powder saved, and ammunition is as precious now as breath to a worried deer ! Freshen the priming of your pistols—the mist of the falls is apt to dampen the brimstone—and stand firm for a close struggle, while I fire on their rush.”

He placed a finger in his mouth, and drew a long, shrill whistle, which was answered by the rocks that were guarded by the Mohicans. Duncan caught glimpses of heads above the scattered drift wood, as this signal rose on the air, but they disappeared again as suddenly as they had glanced upon his sight. A low, rustling sound, next drew his attention behind him, and turning his head, he beheld Uncas within a few feet, creeping to his side. Hawk-eye spoke to him in Delaware, when the young chief took his position with singular caution and undisturbed coolness. To Heyward this was a moment of feverish and impatient suspense ; though the scout saw fit to select it as a fit occasion to read a lecture to his more youthful associates on the art of using fire-arms with discretion.

“Of all we’pons,” he commenced, “the long-barrelled, true-grooved, soft-metaled rifle, is the most dangerous in skilful hands, though it wants a strong arm, a quick eye and great judgment in charging, to put forth all its beauties. The gunsmiths can have but little insight into their trade, when they make their fowling-pieces and short horsemen’s—”

He was interrupted by the low but expressive “hugh” of Uncas.

“I see them, boy, I see them !” continued Hawk-eye ; “they are gathering for the rush, or they would keep their dingy backs below the logs. Well, let them,” he added, ex

aming his flint ; “ the leading man certainly comes on to his death, though it should be Montcalm himself ! ”

At that moment the woods were filled with another burst of cries, and at the signal four savages sprang from the cover of the drift wood. Heyward felt a burning desire to rush forward to meet them, so intense was the delirious anxiety of the moment ; but he was restrained by the deliberate examples of the scout and Uncas.

When their foes, who leaped over the black rocks that divided them, with long bounds, uttering the wildest yells, were within a few rods, the rifle of Hawk-eye slowly rose among the shrubs, and poured out its fatal contents. The foremost Indian bounded like a stricken deer, and fell headlong among the clefts of the island.

“ Now, Uncas ! ” cried the scout, drawing his long knife, while his quick eyes began to flash with ardor, “ take the last of the screeching imps ; of the other two we are certain ! ”

He was obeyed ; and but two enemies remained to be overcome. Heyward had given on his pistols to Hawk-eye, and together they rushed down a little declivity towards their foes ; they discharged their weapons at the same instant, and equally without success.

“ I know’d it ! and I said it ! ” muttered the scout, whirling the despised little implement over the falls with bitter disdain. “ Come on, ye bloody minded hell-hounds ! ye meet a man without a cross ! ”

The words were barely uttered, when he encountered a savage of gigantic stature, and of the fiercest mien. At the same moment, Duncan found himself engaged with the other, in a similar contest of hand to hand. With ready skill, Hawk-eye and his antagonist each grasped that uplifted arm of the other which held the dangerous knife. For near a minute they stood looking one another in the eye, and gradually exerting the power of their muscles for the mastery. At length, the toughened sinews of the white man prevailed over the less practised limbs of the native. The arm of the latter slowly gave way before the increasing force of the scout, who, suddenly wresting his armed hand from his foe, drove the sharp weapon through his naked bosom to the heart. In the mean time, Heyward had been pressed in a more deadly struggle. His slight sword was snapped in the first encounter. As he was destitute of any other means of defence, his safety now depended entirely on bodily strength and resolution. Though deficient in neither of these qualities, he had met an enemy every

way his equal. Happily, he soon succeeded in disarming his adversary, whose knife fell on the rock at their feet; and from this moment it became a fierce struggle who should cast the other over the dizzy height into a neighboring cavern of the falls. Every successive struggle brought them nearer to the verge, where Duncan perceived the final and conquering effort must be made. Each of the combatants threw all his energies into that effort, and the result was, that both tottered on the brink of the precipice. Heyward felt the grasp of the other at his throat, and saw the grim smile the savage gave, under the revengeful hope that he hurried his enemy to a fate similar to his own, as he felt his body slowly yielding to a resistless power, and the young man experienced the passing agony of such a moment in all its horrors. At that instant of extreme danger, a dark hand and glancing knife appeared before him; the Indian released his hold, as the blood flowed freely from around the severed tendons of his wrist; and while Duncan was drawn backward by the saving arm of Uncas, his charmed eyes were still riveted on the fierce and disappointed countenance of his foe, who fell sullenly and disappointed down the irrecoverable precipice.

“To cover! to cover!” cried Hawk-eye, who just then had despatched his enemy; “to cover, for your lives! the work is but half ended!”

The young Mohican gave a shout of triumph, and, followed by Duncan, he glided up the acclivity they had descended to the combat, and sought the friendly shelter of the rocks and shrubs.

CHAPTER VIII.

They linger yet,
Avengers of their native land.

GRAY.

THE warning call of the scout was not uttered without occasion. During the occurrence of the deadly encounter just related, the roar of the falls was unbroken by any human sound whatever. It would seem that interest in the result had kept the natives on the opposite shores in breathless suspense, while the quick evolutions and swift changes in the

positions of the combatants, effectually prevented a fire that might prove dangerous alike to friend and enemy. But the moment the struggle was decided, a yell rose as fierce and savage as wild and revengeful passions could throw into the air. It was followed by the swift flashes of the rifles, which sent their leaden messengers across the rock in volleys, as though the assailants would pour out their impotent fury on the insensible scene of the fatal contest.

A steady, though deliberate return was made from the rifle of Chingachgook, who had maintained his post throughout the fray with unmoved resolution. When the triumphant shout of Uncas was borne to his ears, the gratified father raised his voice in a single responsive cry, after which his busy piece alone proved that he still guarded his pass with unwearied diligence. In this manner many minutes flew by with the swiftness of thought: the rifles of the assailants speaking, at times, in rattling volleys, and at others, in occasional, scattering shots. Though the rocks, the trees, and the shrubs, were cut and torn in a hundred places around the besieged, their cover was so close, and so rigidly maintained, that, as yet, David had been the only sufferer in their little band.

“Let them burn their powder,” said the deliberate scout, while bullet after bullet whizzed by the place where he securely lay; “there will be a fine gathering of lead when it is over, and I fancy the imps will tire of the sport, afore these old stones cry out for mercy! Uncas, boy, you waste your kernels by overcharging: and a kicking rifle never carries a true bullet. I told you to take that loping miscreant under the line of white paint; now, if your bullet went a hair’s breadth, it went two inches above it. The life lies low in a Mingo, and humanity teaches us to make a quick end of the serpents.”

A quiet smile lighted the haughty features of the young Mohican, betraying his knowledge of the English language, as well as of the other’s meaning; but he suffered it to pass away without vindication or reply.

“I cannot permit you to accuse Uncas of want of judgment or of skill,” said Duncan; “he saved my life in the coolest and readiest manner, and he has made a friend who never will require to be reminded of the debt he owes.”

Uncas partly raised his body, and offered his hand to the grasp of Heyward. During this act of friendship, the two young men exchanged looks of intelligence which caused Duncan to forget the character and condition of his wild as

sociate. In the mean while, Hawk-eye, who looked on this burst of youthful feeling with a cool but kind regard, made the following reply :—

“Life is an obligation which friends often owe to each other in the wilderness. I dare say I may have served Uncas some such turn myself before now ; and I very well remember that he has stood between me and death five different times : three times from the Mingoes, once in crossing Horican, and—”

“That bullet was better aimed than common!” exclaimed Duncan, involuntarily shrinking from a shot which struck the rock at his side with a smart rebound.

Hawk-eye laid his hand on the shapeless metal, and shook his head, as he examined it, saying, “Falling lead is never flattened ! had it come from the clouds this might have happened.”

But the rifle of Uncas was deliberately raised towards the heavens, directing the eyes of his companions to a point, where the mystery was immediately explained. A ragged oak grew on the right bank of the river, nearly opposite to their position, which, seeking the freedom of the open space, had inclined so far forward, that its upper branches overhung that arm of the stream which flowed nearest to its own shore. Among the topmost leaves, which scantily concealed the gnarled and stunted limbs, a savage was concealed by the trunk of the tree, and partly exposed, as though looking down upon them to ascertain the effect produced by his treacherous aim.

“These devils will scale heaven to circumvent us to our ruin,” said Hawk-eye ; “keep him in play, boy, until I can bring ‘kill-deer’ to bear, when we will try his metal on each side of the tree at once.”

Uncas delayed his fire until the scout uttered the word. The rifles flashed, the leaves and bark of the oak flew into the air, and were scattered by the wind, but the Indian answered their assault by a taunting laugh, sending down upon them another bullet in return, that struck the cap of Hawk-eye from his head. Once more the savage yells burst out of the woods, and the leaden hail whistled above the heads of the besieged, as if to confine them to a place where they might become easy victims to the enterprise of the warrior who had mounted the tree.

“This must be looked to,” said the scout, glancing about him with an anxious eye. “Uncas, call up your father ; we

have need of all our we'pons to bring the cunning varment from his roost."

The signal was instantly given ; and, before Hawk-eye had reloaded his rifle, they were joined by Chingachgook. When his son pointed out to the experienced warrior the situation of their dangerous enemy, the usual exclamatory "hugh" burst from his lips ; after which, no further expression of surprise or alarm was suffered to escape him. Hawk-eye and the Mohicans conversed earnestly together in Delaware for a few moments, when each quietly took his post, in order to execute the plan they had speedily devised.

The warrior in the oak had maintained a quick, though ineffectual fire, from the moment of his discovery. But his aim was interrupted by the vigilance of his enemies, whose rifles instantaneously bore on any part of his person that was left exposed. Still his bullets fell in the centre of the crouching party. The clothes of Heyward, which rendered him peculiarly conspicuous, were repeatedly cut, and once blood was drawn from a slight wound in his arm.

At length, emboldened by the long and patient watchfulness of his enemies, the Haron attempted a better and more fatal aim. The quick eye of the Mohicans caught the dark line of his lower limbs incautiously exposed through the thin foliage, a few inches from the trunk of the tree. Their rifles made a common report, when, sinking on his wounded limb, part of the body of the savage came into view. Swift as thought, Hawk-eye seized the advantage, and discharged his fatal weapon into the top of the oak. The leaves were unusually agitated ; the dangerous rifle fell from its commanding elevation, and after a few moments of vain struggling, the form of the savage was seen swinging in the wind, while he still grasped a ragged and naked branch of the tree, with hands clenched in desperation.

"Give him, in pity give him, the contents of another rifle," cried Duncan, turning away his eyes in horror from the spectacle of a fellow creature in such awful jeopardy.

"Not a karnel !" exclaimed the obdurate Hawk-eye ; "his death is certain, and we have no powder to spare, for Indian fights sometimes lasts for days ; 'tis their scalp or ours !—and God, who made us, has put into our nature the craving to keep the skin on the head."

Against this stern and unyielding morality, supported as it was by such visible policy, there was no appeal. From that moment the yells in the forest once more ceased, the fire was

suffered to decline, and all eyes, those of friends as well as enemies, became fixed on the hopeless condition of the wretch who was dangling between heaven and earth. The body yielded to the currents of air, and though no murmur or groan escaped the victim, there were instants when he grimly faced his foes, and the anguish of cold despair might be traced, through the intervening distance, in possession of his swarthy lineaments. Three several times the scout raised his piece in mercy, and as often, prudence getting the better of his intention, it was again silently lowered. At length one hand of the Huron lost its hold, and dropped exhausted to his side. A desperate and fruitless struggle to recover the branch succeeded, and then the savage was seen for a fleeting instant, grasping wildly at the empty air. The lightning is not quicker than was the flame from the rifle of Hawk-eye ; the limbs of the victim trembled and contracted, the head fell to the bosom, and the body parted the foaming waters like lead, when the element closed above it, in its ceaseless velocity, and every vestige of the unhappy Huron was lost forever.

No shout of triumph succeeded this important advantage, but even the Mohicans gazed at each other in silent horror. A single yell burst from the woods, and all was again still. Hawk-eye, who alone appeared to reason on the occasion, shook his head at his own momentary weakness, even uttering his self-disapprobation aloud.

"'Twas the last charge in my horn, and the last bullet in my pouch, and 'twas the act of a boy," he said ; "what mattered it whether he struck the rock living or dead ; feeling would soon be over. Uncas, lad, go down to the canoe, and bring up the big horn ; it is all the powder we have left, and we shall need it to the last grain, or I am ignorant of the Mingo nature."

The young Mohican complied, leaving the scout turning over the useless contents of his pouch, and shaking the empty horn with renewed discontent. From this unsatisfactory examination, however, he was soon called by a loud and piercing exclamation from Uncas, that sounded, even to the unpractised ears of Duncan, as the signal of some new and unexpected calamity. Every thought filled with apprehension for the precious treasure he had concealed in the cavern, the young man started to his feet, totally regardless of the hazard he incurred by such an exposure. As if actuated by a common impulse, his movement was imitated by his companions, and together they rushed down the pass to the friendly chasm, with a rapidity that rendered the scattering fire of their ene

ries perfectly harmless. The unwonted cry had brought the sisters, together with the wounded David, from their place of refuge; and the whole party, at a single glance, was made acquainted with the nature of the disaster that had disturbed even the practised stoicism of their youthful Indian protector.

At a short distance from the rock, their little bark was to be seen floating across the eddy, towards the swift current of the river, in a manner which proved that its course was directed by some hidden agent. The moment this unwelcome sight caught the eye of the scout, his rifle was levelled, as by instinct, but the barrel gave no answer to the bright sparks of the flint.

"'Tis too late, 'tis too late!" Hawk-eye exclaimed, dropping the useless piece in bitter disappointment; the miscreant has struck the rapid; and had we powder, it could hardly send the lead swifter than he now goes."

The adventurous Huron raised his head above the shelter of the canoe, and while it glided swiftly down the stream, he waved his hand, and gave forth the shout, which was the known signal of success. His cry was answered by a yell and a laugh from the woods, as tauntingly exulting as if fifty demons were uttering their blasphemies at the fall of some Christian soul.

"Well may you laugh, ye children of the devil," said the scout, seating himself on a projection of the rock, and suffering his gun to fall neglected at his feet, "for the three quickest and truest rifles in these woods are no better than so many stalks of mullen, or the last year's horns of a buck."

"What is to be done?" demanded Duncan, losing the first feeling of disappointment in a more manly desire for exertion; what will become of us?"

Hawk-eye made no other reply than by passing his finger around the crown of his head, in a manner so significant, that none who witnessed the action could mistake its meaning.

"Surely, surely, our case is not so desperate!" exclaimed the youth; "the Hurons are not here; we may make good the caverns; we may oppose their landing."

"With what?" coolly demanded the scout. "The arrows of Uncas, or such tears as women shed! No, no; you are young, and rich, and have friends, and at such an age I know it is hard to die; but," glancing his eyes at the Mohicans, "let us remember we are men without a cross, and let us teach these natives of the forest, that white blood can run as freely as red, when the appointed hour is come."

Duncan turned quickly in the direction indicated by the other's eyes, and read a confirmation of his worst apprehensions in the conduct of the Indians. Chingachgook, placing himself in a dignified posture on another fragment of the rock, had already laid aside his knife and tomahawk, and was in the act of taking the eagle's plume from his head and smoothing the solitary tuft of hair in readiness to perform its last and revolting office. His countenance was composed, though thoughtful, while his dark, gleaming eyes were gradually losing the fierceness of the combat in an expression better suited to the change he expected momentarily to undergo.

"Our case is not, cannot be so hopeless," said Duncan; "even at this very moment succor may be at hand. I see no enemies! they have sickened of a struggle in which they risk so much with so little prospect of gain."

"It may be a minute, or it may be an hour, afore the wily serpents steal upon us, and it is quite in natur' for them to be lying within hearing at this very moment," said Hawk-eye; "but come they will, and in such a fashion as will leave us nothing to hope. Chingachgook,"—he spoke in Delaware—"my brother, we have fought our last battle together, and the Maquas will triumph in the death of the sage man of the Mohicans, and of the pale face, whose eyes can make night as day, and level the clouds to the mists of the springs."

"Let the Mingo women go weep over their slain!" returned the Indian, with characteristic pride and unmoved firmness; "the Great Snake of the Mohicans has coiled himself in their wigwams, and has poisoned their triumph with the wailings of children, whose fathers have not returned! Eleven warriors lie hid from the graves of their tribes since the snows have melted, and none will tell where to find them when the tongue of Chingachgook shall be silent! Let them draw the sharpest knife, and whirl the swiftest tomahawk, for their bitterest enemy is in their hands. Uncas, topmost branch of a noble trunk, call on the cowards to hasten or their hearts will soften, and they will change to women!"

"They look among the fishes for their dead!" returned the low, soft voice of the youthful chieftain; "the Hurons float with the slimy eels! They drop from the oaks like fruit that is ready to be eaten! and the Delawares laugh!"

"Ay, ay," muttered the scout, who had listened to this peculiar burst of the natives with deep attention; "they have warmed their Indian feelings, and they'll soon provoke the Maquas to give them a speedy end. As for me, who am of

the whole blood of the whites, it is befitting that I should die as becomes my color, with no words of scoffing in my mouth, and without bitterness at the heart !”

“Why die at all !” said Cora, advancing from the place where natural horror had, until the moment, held her riveted to the rock ; “the path is open on every side ; fly, then, to the woods, and call on God for succor ! Go, brave men, we owe you too much already ; let us no longer involve you in our hapless fortunes !”

“You but little know the craft of the Iroquois, lady, if you judge they have left the path open to the woods !” returned Hawk-eye, who, however, immediately added in his simplicity : “the down stream current, it is certain, might soon sweep us beyond the reach of their rifles or the sound of their voices.”

“Then try the river. Why linger, to add to the number of the victims of our merciless enemies ?”

“Why,” repeated the scout, looking about him proudly, “because it is better for a man to die at peace with himself than to live haunted by an evil conscience ! What answer could we give Munro, when he asked us where and how we left his children ?”

“Go to him, and say, that you left them with a message to hasten to their aid,” returned Cora, advancing nigher to the scout, in her generous ardor ; “that the Hurons bear them into the northern wilds, but that by vigilance and speed they may yet be rescued ; and if, after all, it should please heaven that his assistance come too late, bear to him,” she continued, her voice gradually lowering, until it seemed nearly choked, “the blessings, the final prayers of his daughters, and bid him not mourn their early fate, but to look forward with humble confidence to the Christian’s goal to meet his children.”

The hard, weather-beaten features of the scout began to work, and when she had ended, he dropped his chin to his hand, like a man musing profoundly on the nature of the proposal.

“There is reason in her words !” at length broke from his compressed and trembling lips ; “ay, and they bear the spirit of Christianity ; what might be right and proper in a red skin, may be sinful in a man who has not even a cross in blood to plead for his ignorance. Chingachgook ! Uncas ! hear you the talk of the dark-eyed woman ?”

He now spoke in Delaware to his companions, and his address, though calm and deliberate, seemed very decided. The elder Mohican heard him with deep gravity, and appeared

to ponder on his words, as though he felt the importance of their import. After a moment of hesitation, he waved his hand in assent, and uttered the English word "Good," with the peculiar emphasis of his people. Then, placing his knife and tomahawk in his girdle, the warrior moved silently to the edge of the rock which was most concealed from the banks of the river. Here he paused a moment, pointing significantly to the woods below, and saying a few words in his own language, as if indicating his intended route, he dropped into the water, and sank from before the eyes of the witnesses of his movements.

The scout delayed his departure to speak to the generous girl, whose breathing became lighter as she saw the success of her remonstrance.

"Wisdom is sometimes given to the young, as well as to the old," he said; "and what you have spoken is wise, not to call it by a better word. If you are led into the woods, that is such of you as may be spared for a while, break the twigs on the bushes as you pass, and make the marks of your trail as broad as you can, when, if mortal eyes can see them, depend on having a friend who will follow to the ends of the earth afore he desarts you."

He gave Cora an affectionate shake of the hand, lifted his rifle, and after regarding it a moment with melancholy solicitude, laid it carefully aside, and descended to the place where Chingachook had just disappeared. For an instant he hung suspended by the rock; and looking about him, with a countenance of peculiar care, he added, bitterly, "Had the powder held out, this disgrace could never have befallen!" then, loosening his hold, the water closed above his head, and he also became lost to view.

All eyes were now turned on Uncas, who stood leaning against the ragged rock, in immovable composure. After waiting a short time, Cora pointed down the river, and said:—

"Your friends have not been seen, and are now, most probably, in safety; is it not time for you to follow?"

"Uncas will stay," the young Mohican calmly answered in English.

"To increase the horror of our capture, and to diminish the chances of our release! Go, generous young man," Cora continued, lowering her eyes under the gaze of the Mohican, and, perhaps, with an intuitive consciousness of her power; "go to my father, as I have said, and be the most confidential

of my messengers. Tell him to trust you with the means to buy the freedom of his daughters. Go! 'tis my wish, 'tis my prayer, that you will go!"

The settled, calm look of the young chief changed to an expression of gloom, but he no longer hesitated. With a noiseless step he crossed the rock, and dropped into the troubled stream. Hardly a breath was drawn by those he left behind, until they caught a glimpse of his head emerging for air, far down the current, when he again sank, and was seen no more.

These sudden and apparently successful experiments had all taken place in a few minutes of that time which had now become so precious. After the last look at Uncas, Cora turned, and, with a quivering lip, addressed herself to Heyward:—

"I have heard of your boasted skill in the water, too, Duncan," she said; "follow, then, the wise example set you by these simple and faithful beings."

"Is such the faith that Cora Munro would exact from her protector?" said the young man, smiling mournfully, but with bitterness.

"This is not a time for idle subtleties and false opinions," she answered; "but a moment when every duty should be equally considered. To us you can be of no further service here, but your precious life may be saved for other and nearer friends."

He made no reply, though his eyes fell wistfully on the beautiful form of Alice, who was clinging to his arm with the dependency of an infant.

"Consider," continued Cora, after a pause, during which she seemed to struggle with a pang even more acute than any that her fears had excited, "that the worst to us can be but death; a tribute that all must pay at the good time of God's appointment."

"There are evils worse than death," said Duncan, speaking hoarsely, and as if fretful at her importunity, "but which the presence of one who would die in your behalf may avert."

Cora ceased her entreaties; and, veiling her face in her shawl, drew the nearly insensible Alice after her into the deepest recess of the inner cavern.

CHAPTER IX.

“ Be gay securely ;
spel, my fair, with smiles, the tim'rous clouds,
That hang on thy clear brow.”

DEATH OF AGRIPPINA.

THE sudden and almost magical change, from the stirring incidents of the combat to the stillness that now reigned around him, acted on the heated imagination of Heyward like some exciting dream. While all the images and events he had witnessed remained deeply impressed on his memory, he felt a difficulty in persuading himself of their truth. Still ignorant of the fate of those who had trusted to the aid of the swift current, he at first listened intently to any signal, or sounds of alarm, which might announce the good or evil for tune of their hazardous undertaking. His attention was, however, bestowed in vain ; for, with the disappearance of Uncas, every sign of the adventurers had been lost, leaving him in total uncertainty of their fate.

In a moment of such painful doubt, Duncan did not hesitate to look about him, without consulting that protection from the rocks which just before had been so necessary to his safety. Every effort, however, to detect the least evidence of the approach of their hidden enemies, was as fruitless as the inquiry after his late companions. The wooded banks of the rivers seemed again deserted by everything possessing animal life. The uproar which had so lately echoed through the vaults of the forest was gone, leaving the rush of the waters to swell and sink on the currents of the air, in the unmingled sweetness of nature. A fish-hawk, which, secure on the topmost branches of a dead pine, had been a distant spectator of the fray, now stooped from his high and ragged perch, and soared, in wide sweeps, above his prey ; while a jay, whose noisy voice had been stilled by the hoarser cries of the savages, ventured again to open his discordant throat, as though once more in undisturbed possession of his wild domains. Duncan caught from these natural accompaniments of the solitary scene a glimmering of hope, and he began to rally his faculties to renewed exertions, with something like a reviving confidence of success.

“ The Hurons are not to be seen,” he said, addressing

David, who had by no means recovered from the effects of the stunning blow he had received ; "let us conceal ourselves in the cavern, and trust the rest to Providence."

"I remember to have united with two comely maidens, in lifting up our voices in praise and thanksgiving," returned the bewildered singing-master ; "since which time I have been visited by a heavy judgment for my sins. I have been mocked with the likeness of sleep, while sounds of discord have rent my ears, such as might manifest the fulness of time, and that nature had forgotten her harmony."

"Poor fellow ! thine own period was, in truth, near its accomplishment ! But arouse, and come with me ; I will lead you where all other sounds but those of your own psalmody shall be excluded."

"There is melody in the fall of the cataract, and the rushing of many waters is sweet to the senses." said David, pressing his hand confusedly on his brow. "Is not the air yet filled with shrieks and cries, as though the departed spirits of the damned—"

"Not now, not now," interrupted the impatient Heyward, "they have ceased, and they who raised them, I trust in God, they are gone, too ; everything but the water is still and at peace ; in, then, where you may create those sounds you love so well to hear."

David smiled sadly, though not without a momentary gleam of pleasure, at this allusion to his beloved vocation. He no longer hesitated to be led to a spot which promised such unalloyed gratification to his wearied senses ; and, leaning on the arm of his companion he entered the narrow mouth of the cave. Duncan seized a pile of the sassafras, which he drew before the passage, studiously concealing every appearance of an aperture. Within this fragile barrier he arranged the blankets abandoned by the foresters, darkening the inner extremity of the cavern, while its outer received a chastened light from the narrow ravine, through which one arm of the river rushed, to form the junction with its sister branch, a few rods below.

"I like not that principle of the natives, which teaches them to submit without a struggle, in emergencies that appear desperate," he said, while busied in this employment ; "our own maxim, which says, 'while life remains there is hope,' is more consoling, and better suited to a soldier's temperament. To, you, Cora, I will urge no words of idle encouragement ; your own fortitude and undisturbed reason will teach you all

that may become your sex, but cannot we dry the tears of that trembling weeper on your bosom ? ”

“ I am calmer, Duncan,” said Alice, raising herself from the arms of her sister, and forcing an appearance of composure through her tears ; “ much calmer, now. Surely in this hidden spot we are safe, we are secret, free from injury ; we will hope everything from those generous men who have risked so much already in our behalf.”

“ Now does our gentle Alice speak like a daughter of Munro ! ” said Heyward, pausing to press her hand as he passed towards the outer entrance of the cavern. “ With two such examples of courage before him, a man would be ashamed to prove other than a hero.” He then seated himself in the centre of the cavern, grasping his remaining pistol with a hand convulsively clenched, while his contracting and frowning eye announced the sullen desperation of his purpose. “ The Hurons, if they come, may not gain our position so easily as they think,” he lowly muttered ; and dropping his head back against the rock, he seemed to await the result in patience, though his gaze was unceasingly bent on the open avenue to their place of retreat.

With the last sound of his voice, a deep, a long, and almost breathless silence succeeded. The fresh air of the morning had penetrated the recess, and its influence was gradually felt on the spirits of its inmates. As minute after minute passed by, leaving them in undisturbed security, the insinuating feeling of hope was gradually gaining possession of every bosom, though each one felt reluctant to give utterance to expectations that the next moment might so fearfully destroy.

David alone formed an exception to these varying emotions. A gleam of light from the opening crossed his wan countenance, and fell upon the pages of the little volume, whose leaves he was again occupied in turning, as if searching for some song more fitted to their condition than any that had yet met his eye. He was, most probably, acting all this time under a confused recollection of the promised consolation of Duncan. At length, it would seem, his patient industry found its reward ; for, without explanation or apology, he pronounced aloud the words “ Isle of Wight,” drew a long, sweet sound from his pitch-pipe, and then ran through the preliminary modulations of the air, whose name he had just mentioned, with the sweeter tones of his own musical voice.

“ May not this prove dangerous ? ” asked Cora, glancing her dark eye at Major Heyward.

“Poor fellow! his voice is too feeble to be heard amid the din of the falls,” was the answer; “besides the cavern will prove his friend. Let him indulge his passion, since it may be done without hazard.”

“Isle of Wight!” repeated David, looking about him with that dignity with which he had long been wont to silence the whispering echoes of his school; “’tis a brave tune, and set to solemn words; let it be sung with meet respect!”

After allowing a moment of stillness to enforce his discipline, the voice of the singer was heard, in low, murmuring syllables, gradually stealing on the ear, until it filled the narrow vault with sounds rendered trebly thrilling by the feeble and tremulous utterance produced by his debility. The melody, which no weakness could destroy, gradually wrought its sweet influence on the senses of those who heard it. It even prevailed over the miserable travesty of the song of David which the singer had selected from a volume of similar effusions, and caused the sense to be forgotten in the insinuating harmony of the sounds. Alice unconsciously dried her tears, and bent her melting eyes on the pallid features of Gamut, with an expression of chastened delight that she neither affected nor wished to conceal. Cora bestowed an approving smile on the pious efforts of the namesake of the Jewish prince, and Heyward soon turned his steady, stern look from the outlet of the cavern, to fasten it, with a milder character, on the face of David, or to meet the wandering beams which at moments strayed from the humid eyes of Alice. The open sympathy of the listeners stirred the spirit of the votary of music, whose voice regained its richness and volume, without losing that touching softness which proved its secret charm. Exerting his renovated powers to their utmost, he was yet filling the arches of the cave with long and full tones, when a yell burst into the air without, that instantly stilled his pious strains, choking his voice suddenly, as though his heart had literally bounded into the passage of his throat.

“We are lost!” exclaimed Alice throwing herself into the arms of Cora.

“Not yet, not yet,” returned the agitated but undaunted Heyward; “the sound came from the centre of the island, and it has been produced by the sight of their dead companions. We are not yet discovered, and there is still hope.”

Faint and almost despairing as was the prospect of escape, the words of Duncan were not thrown away, for it awakened the powers of the sisters in such a manner, that they awaited

the result in silence. A second yell soon followed the first, when a rush of voices was heard pouring down the island, from its upper to its lower extremity, until they reached the naked rock above the caverns, where, after a shout of savage triumph, the air continued full of horrible cries and screams, such as man alone can utter, and he only when in a state of the fiercest barbarity.

The sounds quickly spread around them in every direction. Some called to their fellows from the water's edge, and were answered from the heights above. Cries were heard in the startling vicinity of the chasm between the two caves, which mingled with hoarser yells that arose out of the abyss of the deep ravine. In short, so rapidly had the savage sounds diffused themselves over the barren rock, that it was not difficult for the anxious listeners to imagine they could be heard beneath, as in truth they were above, and on every side of them.

In the midst of this tumult, a triumphant yell was raised within a few yards of the hidden entrance to the cave. Heyward abandoned every hope, with the belief that it was the signal that they were discovered. Again the impression passed away, as he heard the voices collect near the spot where the white man had so reluctantly abandoned his rifle. Amid the jargon of the Indian dialects that he now plainly heard, it was easy to distinguish not only words, but sentences, in the patois of the Canadas. A burst of voices had shouted simultaneously; "La longue Carabine!" causing the opposite woods to re-echo with a name which, Heyward well remembered, had been given by his enemies to a celebrated hunter and scout of the English camp, and who he now learnt for the first time, had been his late companion.

"La longue Carabine! la longue Carabine!" passed from mouth to mouth, until the whole band appeared to be collected around a trophy which would seem to announce the death of its formidable owner. After a vociferous consultation, which was, at times, deafened by bursts of savage joy, they again separated, filling the air with the name of a foe, whose body, Heyward could collect from their expressions, they hoped to find concealed in some crevice of the island.

"Now," he whispered to the trembling sisters. "now is the moment of uncertainty! if our place of retreat escape this scrutiny, we are still safe! In every event, we are assured, by what has fallen from our enemies, that our friends have

escaped, and in two short hours we may look for succor from Webb."

There were now a few minutes of fearful stillness, during which Heyward well knew that the savages conducted their search with greater vigilance and method. More than once he could distinguish their footsteps, as they brushed the sassafras, causing the faded leaves to rustle, and the branches to snap. At length the pile yielded a little, a corner of a blanket fell, and a faint ray of light gleamed into the inner part of the cave. Cora folded Alice to her bosom in agony, and Duncan sprang to his feet. A shout was at that moment heard, as if issuing from the centre of the rock, announcing that the neighboring cavern had at length been entered. In a minute, the number and loudness of the voices indicated that the whole party was collected in and around that secret place.

As the inner passages of the two caves were so close to each other, Duncan, believing that escape was no longer possible, passed David and the sisters, to place himself between the latter and the first onset of the terrible meeting. Grown desperate by his situation, he drew nigh the slight barrier which separated him only by a few feet from his relentless pursuers, and placing his face to the casual opening, he even looked out, with a sort of desperate indifference, on their movements.

Within reach of his arm was the brawny shoulder of a gigantic Indian, whose deep and authoritative voice appeared to give directions to the proceedings of his fellows. Beyond him again, Duncan could look into the vault opposite, which was filled with savages, upturning and rifling the humble furniture of the scout. The wound of David had died the leaves of sassafras with a color that the natives well knew was anticipating the season. Over this sign of their success, they set up a howl, like an opening from so many hounds who had recovered a lost trail. After this yell of victory, they tore up the fragrant bed of the cavern, and bore the branches into the chasm, scattering the boughs, as if they suspected them of concealing the person of the man they had so long hated and feared. One fierce and wild-looking warrior approached the chief, bearing a load of the brush, and pointing, exultingly, to the deep red stains with which it was sprinkled, uttered his joy in Indian yells, whose meaning Heyward was only enabled to comprehend by the frequent repetition of the name of "*La longue Carabine!*" When his triumph had ceased, he cast

the brush on the slight heap that Duncan had made before the entrance of the second cavern, and closed the view. His example was followed by others, who, as they drew the branches from the cave of the scout, threw them into one pile, adding, unconsciously, to the security of those they sought. The very slightness of the defence was its chief merit, for no one thought of disturbing a mass of brush, which all of them believed, in that moment of hurry and confusion, had been accidentally raised by the hands of their own party.

As the blankets yielded before the outward pressure, and the branches settled in the fissure of the rock by their own weight, forming a compact body, Duncan once more breathed freely. With a light step, and lighter heart, he returned to the centre of the cave, and took the place he had left, where he could command a view of the opening next the river. While he was in the act of making this movement, the Indians, as if changing their purpose by a common impulse, broke away from the chasm in a body, and were heard rushing up the island again, towards the point whence they had originally descended. Here another wailing cry betrayed that they were again collecting around the bodies of their dead comrades.

Duncan now ventured to look at his companions ; for, during the most critical moments of their danger, he had been apprehensive that the anxiety of his countenance might communicate some additional alarm to those who were so little able to sustain it.

“They are gone, Cora,” he whispered ; “Alice, they are returned whence they came, and we are saved. To heaven, that has alone delivered us from the grasp of so merciless an enemy, be all the praise !”

“Then to heaven will I return my thanks,” exclaimed the younger sister, rising from the encircling arms of Cora, and casting herself with enthusiastic gratitude on the naked rock ; “to that heaven who has spared the tears of a gray-headed father, has saved the lives of those I so much love—”

Both Heyward and the more even-tempered Cora witnessed the act of involuntary emotion with powerful sympathy, the former secretly believing that piety had never worn a form so lovely as it had now assumed in the youthful person of Alice. Her eyes were radiant with the glow of grateful feelings ; the flush of her beauty was again seated on her cheeks, and her whole soul seemed ready and anxious to pour out its thanksgivings, through the medium of her eloquent features. But

when her lips moved, the words they should have uttered appeared frozen by some new and sudden chill. Her bloom gave place to the paleness of death; her soft melting eyes grew hard, and seemed contracting with horror; while those hands which she had raised, clasped in each other, towards heaven, dropped in horizontal lines before her, the fingers pointed forward in convulsed motion. Heyward turned, the instant she gave a direction to his suspicions, and, peering just above the ledge which formed the threshold of the open outlet of the cavern, he beheld the malignant, fierce, and savage features of *Le Renard Subtil*.

In that moment of surprise, the self-possession of Heyward did not desert him. He observed by the vacant expression of the Indian's countenance, that his eye, accustomed to the open air, had not yet been able to penetrate the dusky light which pervaded the depth of the cavern. He had even thought of retreating beyond a curvature in the natural wall, which might still conceal him and his companions, when, by the sudden gleam of intelligence that shot across the features of the savage, he saw that it was too late, and that they were betrayed.

The look of exultation and brutal triumph which announced this terrible truth was irresistibly irritating. Forgetful of everything but the impulses of his hot blood, Duncan levelled his pistol and fired. The report of the weapon made the cavern bellow like an eruption from a volcano; and when the smoke it vomited had been driven away before the current of air which issued from the ravine, the place so lately occupied by the features of his treacherous guide was vacant. Rushing to the outlet, Heyward caught a glimpse of his dark figure stealing around a low and narrow ledge, which soon hid him from sight.

Among the savages, a frightful stillness succeeded the explosion, which had just been heard bursting from the bowels of the rock. But when *Le Renard* raised his voice in a long and intelligible whoop, it was answered by a spontaneous yell from the mouth of every Indian within hearing of the sound. The clamorous noises again rushed down the island; and before Duncan had time to recover from the shock, his feeble barrier of brush was scattered to the winds, the cavern was entered at both extremities, and he and his companions were dragged from their shelter and borne into the day, where they stood surrounded by the whole band of the triumphant Hurons.

CHAPTER X.

I fear we shall outsleep the coming morn,
As much as we this night have overwatched ! ”

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

THE instant the shock of this sudden misfortune had abated, Duncan began to make his observations on the appearance and proceedings of their captors. Contrary to the usages of the natives in the wantonness of their success, they had respected, not only the persons of the trembling sisters, but his own. The rich ornaments of his military attire had indeed been repeatedly handled by different individuals of the tribe with eyes expressing a savage longing to possess the baubles ; but before the customary violence could be resorted to, a mandate, in the authoritative voice of the large warrior already mentioned, stayed the uplifted hand, and convinced Heyward that they were to be reserved for some object of particular moment.

While, however, these manifestations of weakness were exhibited by the young and vain of the party, the more experienced warriors continued their search throughout both caverns, with an activity that denoted they were far from being satisfied with those fruits of their conquest which had already been brought to light. Unable to discover any new victim, these diligent workers of vengeance soon approached their male prisoners, pronouncing the name of “*La longue Carabine,*” with a fierceness that could not easily be mistaken. Duncan affected not to comprehend the meaning of their repeated and violent interrogatories, while his companion was spared the effort of a similar deception by his ignorance of French. Wearied, at length, by their importunities, and apprehensive of irritating his captors by too stubborn a silence, the former looked about him in quest of Magua, who might interpret his answer to questions which were, at each moment, becoming more earnest and threatening.

The conduct of this savage had formed a solitary exception to that of all his fellows. While the others were busily occupied in seeking to gratify their childish passion for finery, by plundering even the miserable effects of the scout, or had

been searching, with such bloodthirsty vengeance in their looks, for their absent owner, Le Renard had stood a little distance from the prisoners, with a demeanor so quiet and satisfied, as to betray that he had already effected the grand purpose of his treachery. When the eyes of Heyward first met those of his recent guide, he turned them away in horror at the sinister, though calm look he encountered. Conquering his disgust, however, he was able, with an averted face, to address his successful enemy.

“Le Renard Subtil is too much of a warrior,” said the reluctant Heyward, “to refuse telling an unarmed man what his conquerors say.”

“They ask for the hunter who knows the path through the woods,” returned Magua, in his broken English, laying his hand, at the same time, with a ferocious smile, on the bundle of leaves with which a wound on his own shoulder was bandaged. “La longue Carabine ! his rifle is good, and his eye never shut ; but, like the short gun of the white chief, it is nothing against the life of Le Subtil.”

“Le Renard is too brave to remember the hurts received in war, or the hands that gave them.”

“Was it war, when the tired Indian rested at the sugar-tree to taste his corn ? who filled the bushes with creeping enemies, who drew the knife ? whose tongue was peace, while his heart was covered with blood ? Did Magua say that the hatchet was out of the ground, and that his hand had dug it up ?”

As Duncan dared not retort upon his accuser by reminding him of his own premeditated treachery, and disdained to deprecate his resentment by any words of apology, he remained silent. Magua seemed also content to rest the controversy as well as all further communication there, for he resumed the leaning attitude against the rock, from which, in momentary energy, he had arisen. But the cry of “La longue Carabine” was renewed the instant the impatient savages perceived that the short dialogue was ended.

“You hear,” said Magua, with stubborn indifference ; “the red Hurons call for the life of ‘The Long Rifle,’ or they will have the blood of them that keep him hid.”

“He is gone—escaped ; he is far beyond their reach.”

Renard smiled with cold contempt as he answered—

“When the white man dies, he thinks he is at peace ; but the red men know how to torture even the ghosts of their enemies. Where is his body ? Let the Hurons see his scalp !”

"He is not dead, but escaped."

Magua shook his head incredulously.

"Is he a bird, to spread his wings; or is he a fish, to swim without air? The white chief reads in his books, and he believes the Hurons are fools."

"Though no fish, 'the long Rifle' can swim. He floated down the stream when the powder was all burnt, and when the eyes of the Hurons were behind a cloud."

"And why did the white chief stay?" demanded the still incredulous Indian. "Is he a stone that goes to the bottom, or does the scalp burn his head?"

"That I am not a stone, your dead comrade, who fell into the falls, might answer, were the life still in him," said the provoked young man, using, in his anger, that boastful language which was most likely to excite the admiration of an Indian. "The white man thinks none but cowards desert their women."

Magua uttered a few words, inaudibly, between his teeth, before he continued, aloud,—

"Can the Delawares swim, too, as well as crawl in the bushes? Where is 'Le gros Serpent?'"

Duncan, who perceived by the use of these Canadian appellations, that his late companions were much better known to his enemies than to himself, answered reluctantly, "He also is gone down with the water."

"'Le Cerf agile' is not here!"

"I know not whom you call 'The nimble Deer,'" said Duncan, gladly profiting by any excuse to create delay.

"Uncas," returned Magua, pronouncing the Delaware name with even greater difficulty than he spoke his English words. "'Bounding Elk' is what the white man says, when he calls to the young Mohican."

"Here is some confusion in names between us, Le Renard," said Duncan, hoping to provoke a discussion. "Daim is the French for deer, and cerf for stag; elan is the true term, when one would speak of an elk."

"Yes," muttered the Indian, in his native tongue; "the pale faces are prattling women! they have two words for each thing, while a red skin will make the sound of his voice speak for him." Then changing his language, he continued, adhering to the imperfect nomenclature of his provincial instructors, "The deer is swift, but weak; the elk is swift, but strong; and the son of 'Le Serpent' is 'Le Cerf agile.' Has he leaped the river to the woods?"

“If you mean the younger Delaware, he too is gone down with the water.”

As there was nothing improbable to an Indian in the manner of the escape, Magua admitted the truth of what he had heard, with a readiness that afforded additional evidence how little he would prize such worthless captives. With his companions, however, the feeling was manifestly different.

The Hurons had awaited the result of this short dialogue with characteristic patience, and with a silence that increased until there was a general stillness in the band. When Heyward ceased to speak, they turned their eyes as one man on Magua, demanding, in this expressive manner, an explanation of what had been said. Their interpreter pointed to the river and made them acquainted with the result, as much by the action as by the few words he uttered. When the fact was generally understood, the savages raised a frightful yell, which declared the extent of their disappointment. Some ran furiously to the water's edge, beating the air with frantic gestures, while others spat upon the element, to resent the supposed treason it had committed against their acknowledged rights as conquerors. A few, and they not the least powerful and terrific of the band, threw lowering looks, in which the fiercest passion was only tempered by habitual self-command, at those captives who still remained in their power; while one or two even gave vent to their malignant feelings by the most menacing gestures, against which neither the sex nor the beauty of the sisters was any protection. The young soldier made a desperate, but fruitless effort, to spring to the side of Alice, when he saw the dark hand of a savage twisted in the rich tresses which were flowing in volumes over her shoulders, while a knife was passed around the head from which they fell, as if to denote the horrid manner in which it was about to be robbed of its beautiful ornament. But his hands were bound; and at the first movement he made, he felt the grasp of the powerful Indian who directed the band, pressing his shoulder like a vice. Immediately conscious how unavailing any struggle against such an overwhelming force must prove, he submitted to his fate, encouraging his gentle companions by a few low and tender assurances, that the natives seldom failed to threaten more than they performed.

But, while Duncan resorted to these words of consolation to quiet the apprehensions of the sisters, he was not so weak as to deceive himself. He well knew that the authority of an

Indian chief was so little conventional, that it was often maintained by physical superiority than by any moral supremacy he might possess. The danger was, therefore, magnified exactly in proportion to the number of the savage spirits by which they were surrounded. The most positive mandate from him who seemed the acknowledged leader, was liable to be violated at each moment, by any rash hand that might chose to sacrifice a victim to the manes of some dead friend or relative. While, therefore, he sustained an outward appearance of calmness and fortitude, his heart leaped into his throat, whenever any of their fierce captors drew nearer than common to the helpless sisters, or fastened one of their sullen wandering looks on those fragile forms which were so little able to resist the slightest assault.

His apprehensions were, however, greatly relieved, when he saw that the leader had summoned his warriors to himself in council. Their deliberations were short, and it would seem, by the silence of most of the party, the decision unanimous. By the frequency with which the few speakers pointed in the direction of the encampment of Webb, it was apparent they dreaded the approach of danger from that quarter. This consideration probably hastened their determination, and quickened the subsequent movements.

During this short conference, Heyward, finding a respite from his greatest fears, had leisure to admire the cautious manner in which the Hurons had made their approaches, even after hostilities had ceased.

It has already been stated, that the upper half of the island was a naked rock, and destitute of any other defences than a few scattered logs of drift-wood. They had selected this point to make their descent, having borne the canoe through the wood around the cataract for that purpose. Placing their arms in the little vessel, a dozen men, clinging to its sides, had trusted themselves to the direction of the canoe, which was controlled by two of the most skilful warriors, in attitudes that enabled them to command a view of the dangerous passage. Favored by this arrangement, they touched the head of the island at that point which had proved so fatal to their first adventure, but with the advantages of superior numbers and the possession of fire-arms. That such had been the manner of their descent was rendered quite apparent to Duncan ; for they now bore the light bark from the upper end of the rock, and placed it in the water, near the mouth of the outer cavern. As soon as this change was made, the leader made signs to the prisoners to descend and enter.

As resistance was useless, Heyward set the example of submission, by leading the way into the canoe, where he was soon seated with the sisters, and the still wondering David. Notwithstanding the Hurons were necessarily ignorant of the little channels among the eddies and rapids of the stream, they knew the common signs of such a navigation too well to commit any material blunder. When the pilot chosen for the task of guiding the canoe had taken his station, the whole band plunged again into the river, the vessel glided down the current, and in a few moments the captives found themselves on the south bank of the stream, nearly opposite to the point where they had struck it the preceding evening.

Here was held another short but earnest consultation, during which the horses, to whose panic their owners ascribed their heaviest misfortune, were led from the cover of the woods, and brought to the sheltered spot. The band now divided. The great chief so often mentioned, mounting the charger of Heyward, led the way directly across the river, followed by most of his people, and disappeared in the woods, leaving the prisoners in charge of six savages, at whose head was Le Renard Subtil. Duncan witnessed all their movements with renewed uneasiness.

He had been fond of believing, from the uncommon forbearance of the savages, that he was reserved as a prisoner to be delivered to Montcalm. As the thoughts of those who are in misery seldom slumber, and the invention is never more lively than when it is stimulated by hope, however feeble and remote, he had even imagined that the parental feelings of Munro were to be made instrumental in seducing him from his duty to the king. For though the French commander bore a high character for courage and enterprise, he was also thought to be expert in those political practices which do not always respect the nicer obligations of morality, and which so generally disgraced the European diplomacy of that period.

All those busy and ingenious speculations were now annihilated by the conduct of his captors. That portion of the band who had followed the huge warrior took the route towards the foot of the Horican, and no other expectation was left for himself and companions, than that they were to be retained as hopeless captives by their savage conquerors. Anxious to know the worst, and willing, in such an emergency, to try the potency of gold, he overcame his reluctance to speak to Magua. Addressing himself to his former guide, who had now assumed the authority and manner of one who was to direct the

future movements of the party, he said, in tones as friendly and confident as he could assume,—

“I would speak to Magua, what is fit only for so great a chief to hear.”

The Indian turned his eyes on the young soldier scornfully, as he answered—

“Speak; trees have no ears!”

“But the red Hurons are not deaf; and counsel that is fit for the great men of a nation would make the young warriors drunk. If Magua will not listen, the officer of the king knows how to keep silent.”

The savage spoke carelessly to his comrades, who were busied, after their awkward manner, in preparing the horses for the reception of the sisters, and moved a little to one side, whither, by a cautious gesture, he induced Heyward to follow.

“Now speak,” he said; “if the words are such as Magua should hear.”

“Le Renard Subtil has proved himself worthy of the honorable name given to him by his Canada fathers,” commenced Heyward; “I see his wisdom and all that he has done for us, and shall remember it, when the hour to reward him arrives. Yes! Renard has proved that he is not only a great chief in council, but one who knows how to deceive his enemies!”

“What has Renard done?” coldly demanded the Indian.

“What! has he not seen that the woods were filled with outlying parties of the enemies, and that the serpent could not steal through them without being seen? Then, did he not lose his path to blind the eyes of the Hurons? Did he not pretend to go back to his tribe, who had treated him ill, and driven him from their wigwams like a dog? And, when we saw what he wished to do, did we not aid him, by making a false face, that the Hurons might think the white man believed that his friend was his enemy? Is not all this true? And when Le Subtil had shut the eyes and stopped the ears of his nation by his wisdom, did they not forget that they had once done him wrong, and forced him to flee to the Mohawks? And did they not leave him on the south side of the river, with their prisoners, while they have gone foolishly on the north? Does not Renard mean to turn like a fox on his footsteps, and carry to the rich and gray-headed Scotchman his daughters? Yes, Magua, I see it all, and I have already been thinking how so much wisdom and honesty should be repaid. First, the chief of William Henry will give as a

great chief should for such a service. The medal * of Magua will no longer be of tin, but of beaten gold ; his horn will run over with powder ; dollars will be as plenty in his pouch as pebbles on the shores of Horican ; and the deer will lick his hand, for they will know it to be vain to fly from the rifle he will carry ! As for myself, I know not how to exceed the gratitude of the Scotchman, but I—yes, I will——”

“ What will the young chief, who comes from towards the sun, give ? ” demanded the Huron, observing that Heyward hesitated in his desire to end the enumeration of benefits with that which might form the climax of an Indian’s wishes.

“ He will make the fire-water from the Islands in the salt lake flow before the wigwam of Magua, until the heart of the Indian shall be lighter than the feathers of the humming-bird, and his breath sweeter than the wild honey-suckle.”

Le Renard had listened gravely as Heyward slowly proceeded in this subtle speech. When the young man mentioned the artifice he supposed the Indian to have practiced on his own nation, the countenance of the listener was veiled in an expression of cautious gravity. At the allusion to the injury which Duncan affected to believe had driven the Huron from his native tribe, a gleam of such ungovernable ferocity flashed from the other’s eyes, as induced the adventurous speaker to believe that he had struck the proper chord. And by the time he reached the part where he so artfully blended the thirst of vengeance with the desire of gain, he had, at least, obtained a command of the deepest attention of the savage. The question put by Le Renard had been calm, and with all the dignity of an Indian ; but it was quite apparent, by the thoughtful expression of the listener’s countenance, that the answer was most cunningly devised. The Huron mused a few moments, and then, laying his hand on the rude bandages of his wounded shoulder, he said, with some energy,—

“ Do friends make such marks ? ”

“ Would ‘ La longue Carabine ’ cut one so light on an enemy ? ”

“ Do the Delawares crawl upon those they love like snakes, twisting themselves to strike ! ”

“ Would ‘ Le gros Serpent ’ have been heard by the ears of one he wished to be deaf ? ”

* It has long been a practice with the whites, to conciliate the important men of the Indians, by presenting medals, which are worn in the place of their own rude ornaments. Those given by the English generally bear the impression of the reigning king, and those given by the Americans, that of the president.

“ Does the white chief burn his powder in the faces of his brothers ? ”

“ Does he ever miss his aim, when seriously bent to kill ? ” returned Duncan, smiling with well-acted sincerity.

Another long and deliberate pause succeeded these sententious questions and ready replies. Duncan saw that the Indian hesitated. In order to complete his victory, he was in the act of recommencing the enumeration of the rewards, when Magua made an expressive gesture, and said—

“ Enough ; Le Renard is a wise chief, and what he does will be seen. Go, and keep the mouth shut. When Magua speaks, it will be the time to answer.”

Heyward, perceiving that the eyes of his companion were warily fastened on the rest of the band, fell back immediately, in order to avoid the appearance of any suspicious confederacy with their leader. Magua approached the horses, and affected to be well pleased with the diligence and ingenuity of his comrades. He then signed to Heyward to assist the sisters into the saddles, for he seldom deigned to use the English tongue, unless urged by some motive of more than usual moment.

There was no longer any plausible pretext for delay ; and Duncan was obliged, however reluctantly, to comply. As he performed this office, he whispered his reviving hopes in the ears of the trembling females, who, through dread of encountering the savage countenances of their captors, seldom raised their eyes from the ground. The mare of David had been taken with the followers of the large chief ; in consequence, its owner, as well as Duncan, were compelled to journey on foot. The latter did not, however, so much regret this circumstance, as it might enable him to retard the speed of the party ; for he still turned his longing looks in the direction of Fort Edward, in the vain expectation of catching some sound from that quarter of the forest, which might denote the approach of succor.

When all were prepared, Magua made the signal to proceed, advancing in front to lead the party in person. Next followed David, who was gradually coming to a true sense of his condition, as the effects of the wound became less and less apparent. The sisters rode in his rear, with Heyward at their side, while the Indians flanked the party, and brought up the close of the march, with a caution that seemed never to tire.

In this manner they proceeded in uninterrupted silence,

except when Heyward addressed some solitary word of comfort to the females, or David gave vent to the moanings of his spirit, in piteous exclamations, which he intended should express the humility of resignation. Their direction lay towards the south, and in a course nearly opposite to the road to William Henry. Notwithstanding the apparent adherence in Magua to the original determination of his conquerors, Heyward could not believe his tempting bait was so soon forgotten ; and he knew the windings of an Indian path too well, to suppose that its apparent course led directly to its object, when artifice was at all necessary. Mile after mile was, however, passed through the boundless woods, in this painful manner, without any prospect of a termination to their journey. Heyward watched the sun, as he darted his meridian rays through the branches of the trees, and pined for the moment when the policy of Magua should change their route to one more favorable to his hopes. Sometimes he fancied the wary savage, despairing of passing the army of Montcalm in safety, was holding his way towards a well known border settlement, where a distinguished officer of the crown, and a favored friend of the Six Nations, held his large possessions, as well as his usual residence. To be delivered into the hands of Sir William Johnson, was far preferable to being led into the wilds of Canada ; but in order to effect even the former, it would be necessary to traverse the forest for many weary leagues, each step of which was carrying him further from the scene of the war, and, consequently, from the post, not only of honor, but of duty.

Cora alone remembered the parting injunctions of the scout, and whenever an opportunity offered, she stretched forth her arm to bend aside the twigs that met her hands. But the vigilance of the Indians rendered this act of precaution both difficult and dangerous. She was often defeated in her purpose, by encountering their watchful eyes, when it became necessary to feign an alarm she did not feel, and occupy the limb by some gesture of feminine apprehension. Once and once only was she completely successful ; when she broke down the bough of a large sumach, and, by a sudden thought, let her glove fall at the same instant. This sign, intended for those that might follow, was observed by one of her conductors, who restored the glove, broke the remaining branches of the bush in such a manner that it appeared to proceed from the struggling of some beast in its branches, and then laid his hand on his tomahawk, with a look so significant, that

put an effectual end to these stolen memorials of their passage.

As there were horses to leave the prints of their footsteps, in both bands, of the Indians, this interruption cut off any probable hopes of assistance being conveyed through the means of their trail.

Heyward would have ventured a remonstrance, had there been anything encouraging in the gloomy reserve of Magua. But the savage during all this time, seldom turned to look at his followers, and never spoke. With the sun for his only guide, or aided by such blind marks as are only known to the sagacity of a native, he held his way along the barrens of pine, through occasional little fertile vales, across brooks and rivulets, and over undulating hills, with the accuracy of instinct, and nearly with the directness of a bird. He never seemed to hesitate. Whether the path was hardly distinguishable, whether it disappeared, or whether it lay beaten and plain before him, made no sensible difference in his speed or certainty. It seemed as if fatigue could not affect him. Whenever the eyes of the wearied travellers arose from the decayed leaves over which they trod, his dark form was to be seen glancing among the stems of the trees in front, his head immovably fastened in a forward position, with the light plume on his crest fluttering in a current of air, made solely by the swiftness of his own motion.

But all this diligence and speed were not without an object. After crossing a low vale, through which a gushing brook meandered, he suddenly ascended a hill, so steep and difficult of ascent that the sisters were compelled to alight, in order to follow. When the summit was gained, they found themselves on a level spot, but thinly covered with trees, under one of which Magua had thrown his dark form, as if willing and ready to seek that rest which was so much needed by the whole party.

CHAPTER XI.

“ — Cursed be my tribe
If I forgive him.”

SHYLOCK.

THE Indian had selected, for this desirable purpose, one of those steep, pyramidical hills, which bear a strong resemblance to artificial mounds, and which so frequently occur in the valleys of America. The one in question was high and precipitous ; its top flattened, as usual ; but with one of its sides more than ordinarily irregular. It possessed no other apparent advantage, for a resting-place, than in its elevation and form, which might render defence easy, and surprise nearly impossible. As Heyward, however, no longer expected that rescue which time and distance now rendered so improbable, he regarded these little peculiarities with an eye devoid of interest, devoting himself entirely to the comfort and condolence of his feebler companions. The Narragansets were suffered to browse on the branches of the trees and shrubs that were thinly scattered over the summit of the hill, while the remains of their provisions were spread under the shade of a beech, that stretched its horizontal limbs like a canopy above them.

Notwithstanding the swiftness of their flight, one of the Indians had found an opportunity to strike a straggling fawn with an arrow, and had borne the more preferable fragments of the victim patiently, on his shoulders, to the stopping-place. Without any aid from the science of cookery, he was immediately employed, in common with his fellows, in gorging himself with this digestible sustenance. Magua alone sat apart, without participating in the revolting meal, and apparently buried in the deepest thought.

This abstinence, so remarkable in an Indian when he possessed the means of satisfying hunger, at length attracted the notice of Heyward. The young man willingly believed that the Huron deliberated on the most eligible manner of eluding the vigilance of his associates. With a view to assist his plans, by any suggestion of his own, and to strengthen the temptation, he left the beech, and straggled, as if without an object, to the spot where Le Renard was seated.

“Has not Magua kept the sun in his face long enough to escape all danger from the Canadians?” he asked, as though no longer doubtful of the good intelligence established between them; “and will not the chief of William Henry be better pleased to see his daughters before another night may have hardened his heart to their loss, to make him less liberal in his reward?”

“Do the pale-faces love their children less in the morning than at night?” asked the Indian, coldly.

“By no means,” returned Heyward, anxious to recall his error, if he had made one; “the white man may, and does often, forget the burial-place of his fathers; he sometimes ceases to remember those he should love and has promised to cherish; but the affection of a parent for his child is never permitted to die.”

“And is the heart of the white-headed chief soft, and will he think of the babes that his squaws have given him? He is hard to his warriors, and his eyes are made of stone!”

“He is severe to the idle and wicked, but to the sober and deserving he is a leader, both just and humane. I have known many fond and tender parents, but never have I seen a man whose heart was softer towards his child. You have seen the gray-head in front of his warriors, Magua; but I seen his eyes swimming in water, when he spoke of those children who are now in your power.”

Heyward paused, for he knew not how to construe the remarkable expression that gleamed across the swarthy features of the attentive Indian. At first it seemed as if the remembrance of the promised reward grew vivid in his mind, while he listened to the sources of parental feeling, which were to assure its possession; but as Duncan proceeded, the expression of joy became so fiercely malignant that it was impossible not to apprehend it proceeded from some passion more sinister than avarice.

“Go,” said the Huron, suppressing the alarming exhibition in an instant, in a death-like calmness of countenance; “go to the dark-haired daughter, and say, Magua waits to speak. The father will remember what the child promises.”

Duncan, who interpreted this speech to express a wish for some additional pledge that the promised gifts should not be withheld, slowly and reluctantly repaired to the place where the sisters were now resting from their fatigue, to communicate its purport to Cora.

“You understand the nature of an Indian’s wishes,” he

concluded, as he led her towards the place where she was expected, "and must be prodigal of your offers of powder and blankets. Ardent spirits are, however, the most prized by such as he ; nor would it be amiss to add some boon from your own hand, with that grace you so well know how to practise. Remember, Cora, that on your presence of mind and ingenuity even your life, as well as that of Alice, may in some measure depend."

"Heyward, and yours."

"Mine is of little moment ; it is already sold to my king, and is a prize to be seized by any enemy who may possess the power. I have no father to expect me, and but few friends to lament a fate which I have courted with the unsatiable longings of youth after distinction. But hush ; we approach the Indian. Magua, the lady with whom you wish to speak, is here."

The Indian rose slowly from his seat, and stood for near a minute silent and motionless. He then signed with his hand for Heyward to retire, saying coldly,—

"When the Huron talks to the woman, his tribe shut their ears."

Duncan, still lingering, as if refusing to comply, Cora said, with a calm smile,

"You hear, Heyward, and delicacy at least should urge you to retire. Go to Alice, and comfort her with our reviving prospects."

She waited until he had departed, and then turning to the native, with the dignity of sex in her voice and manner, she added, "What would Le Renard say to the daughter of Munro ?"

"Listen," said the Indian, laying his hand firmly upon her arm, as if willing to draw her utmost attention to his words ; a movement that Cora as firmly but quietly repulsed, by extricating the limb from his grasp—"Magua was born a chief and a warrior among the red Hurons of the lakes ; he saw the sun of twenty summers make the snows of twenty winters run off in the streams, before he saw a pale face ; and he was happy ! Then his Canada fathers came into the woods, and taught him to drink the fire-water, and he became a rascal. The Hurons drove him from the graves of his fathers, as they would chase the hunted buffalo. He ran down the shores of the lakes, and followed their outlet to the 'city of cannon.' There he hunted and fished, till the people chased him again through the woods into the arms of his enemies. The chief,

who was born a Huron, was at last a warrior among the Mohawks !”

“Something like this I had heard before,” said Cora, observing that he paused to suppress those passions which began to burn with too bright a flame, as he recalled the recollection of his supposed injuries.

“Was it the fault of Le Renard that his head was not made of rock ? Who gave him the fire-water ? who made him a villain ? ’Twas the pale-faces, the people of your own color.”

“And am I answerable that thoughtless and unprincipled men exist, whose shades of countenance may resemble mine ?” Cora calmly demanded of the excited savage.

“No ; Magua is a man, and not a fool ; such as you never open their lips to the burning stream ; the Great Spirit has given you wisdom !”

“What then have I to do, or say, in the matter of your misfortunes, not to say of your errors ?”

“Listen,” repeated the Indian, resuming his earnest attitude ; “when his English and French fathers dug up the hatchet, Le Renard struck the war-post of the Mohawks, and went out against his own nation. The pale-faces have driven the red-skins from their hunting grounds, and now, when they fight, a white man leads the way. The old chief at Horican, your father, was the great captain of our war-party. He said to the Mohawks do this, and do that, and he was minded. He made a law, that if an Indian swallowed the fire-water, and came into the cloth wigwams of his warriors, it should not be forgotten. Magua foolishly opened his mouth, and the hot liquor led him into the cabin of Munro. What did the gray-head ? let his daughter say.”

“He forgot not his words, and did justice, by punishing the offender,” said the undaunted daughter.

“Justice !” repeated the Indian, casting an oblique glance of the most ferocious expression at her unyielding countenance ; “is it justice to make evil, and then punish for it ? Magua was not himself ; but it was the fire-water that spoke and acted for him ! but Munro did not believe it. The Huron chief was tied up before all the pale-faced warriors, and whipped like a dog.”

Cora remained silent, for she knew not how to palliate this imprudent severity on the part of her father, in a manner to suit the comprehension of an Indian.

“See !” continued Magua, tearing aside the slight calico that very imperfectly concealed his painted breast ; “here

are scars given by knives and bullets—of these a warrior may boast before his nation ; but the gray-head has left marks on the back of the Huron chief, that he must hide, like a squaw, under this painted cloth of the whites.”

“I had thought,” resumed Cora, “that an Indian warrior was patient, and that his spirits felt not, and knew not, the pain his body suffered?”

“When the Chippewas tied Magua to the stake, and cut this gash,” said the other, laying his finger on a deep scar, “the Huron laughed in their faces, and told them, Women struck so light! His spirit was then in the clouds! But when he felt the blows of Munro, his spirit lay under the birch. The spirit of a Huron is never drunk ; it remembers forever!”

“But it may be appeased. If my father has done you this injustice, show him how an Indian can forgive an injury, and take back his daughters. You have heard from Major Heyward—”

Magua shook his head, forbidding the repetition of offers he so much despised.

“What would you have?” continued Cora, after a most painful pause, while the conviction forced itself on her mind, that the too sanguine and generous Duncan had been cruelly deceived by the cunning of the savage.

“What a Huron loves—good for good ; bad for bad !

“You would then revenge the injury inflicted by Munro on his helpless daughters. Would it not be more like a man to go before his face, and take the satisfaction of a warrior?”

“The arms of the pale-faces are long, and their knives sharp !” returned the savage, with a malignant laugh : “why should Le Renard go among the muskets of his warriors, when he holds the spirit of the gray-head in his hand?”

“Name your intention, Magua,” said Cora, struggling with herself to speak with steady calmness. “Is it to lead us prisoners to the woods, or do you contemplate even some greater evil? Is there no reward, no means of palliating the injury and of softening your heart? At least, release my gentle sister, and pour out all your malice on me. Purchase wealth by her safety and satisfy your revenge with a single victim. The loss of both his daughters might bring the aged man to his grave, and where would then be the satisfaction of Le Renard?”

“Listen,” said the Indian again. “The light eyes can go back to the Horican, and tell the old chief what has been done, if the dark-haired woman will swear by the Great Spirit of her fathers to tell no lie.”

“What must I promise ;” demanded Cora, still maintaining a secret ascendancy over the fierce native, by the collected and feminine dignity of her presence.

“When Magua left his people, his wife was given to another chief ; he has now made friends with the Hurons, and will go back to the graves of his tribe, on the shores of the great lake. Let the daughter of the English chief follow, and live in his wigwam forever.”

However revolting a proposal of such a character might prove to Cora, she retained, notwithstanding her powerful disgust, sufficient self-command to reply, without betraying the weakness.

“And what pleasure would Magua find in sharing his cabin with a wife he did not love ; one who would be of a nation and color different from his own ? It would be better to take the gold of Munro, and buy the heart of some Huron maid with his gifts.”

The Indian made no reply for near a minute, but bent his fierce looks on the countenance of Cora, in such wavering glances, that her eyes sank with shame, under an impression that, for the first time, they had encountered an expression, that no chaste female might endure. While she was shrinking within herself, in dread of having her ears wounded by some proposal still more shocking than the last, the voice of Magua answered, in its tones of deepest malignancy,—

“When the blows scorched the back of the Huron, he would know where to find a woman to feel the smart. The daughter of Munro would draw his water, hoe his corn, and cook his venison. The body of the gray-head would sleep among his cannon, but his heart would lie within the reach of the knife of *Le Subtil*.”

“Monster ! well dost thou deserve thy treacherous name !” cried Cora in an ungovernable burst of filial indignation. “None but a fiend could meditate such a vengeance ! But thou overratest thy power ! You shall find it is, in truth, the heart of Munro you hold, and that it will defy your utmost malice !”

The Indian answered this bold defiance by a ghastly smile, that showed an unaltered purpose, while he motioned her away, as if to close the conference forever. Cora, already regretting her precipitation, was obliged to comply ; for Magua instantly left the spot, and approached his gluttonous comrades. Heyward flew to the side of the agitated female, and demanded the result of a dialogue, that he had watched at a

distance with so much interest. But unwilling to alarm the fears of Alice, she evaded a direct reply, betraying only by her countenance her utter want of success, and keeping her anxious looks fastened on the slightest movements of their captors. To the reiterated and earnest questions of her sister, concerning their probable destination, she made no other answer than by pointing towards the dark group with an agitation she could not control, and murmuring as she folded Alice to her bosom,—

“There, there ; read our fortunes in their faces ; we shall see ; we shall see ! ”

The action, and the choked utterance of Cora, spoke more impressively than any words, and quickly drew the attention of her companions on that spot, where her own was riveted with an intensesness that nothing but the importance of the stake could create.

When Magua reached the cluster of lolling savages, who, gorged with their disgusting meal, lay stretched on the earth in brutal indulgence, he commenced speaking with the dignity of an Indian chief. The first syllables he uttered had the effect to cause his listeners to raise themselves in attitudes of respectful attention. As the Huron used his native language, the prisoners, notwithstanding the caution of the natives had kept them within the swing of their tomahawks, could only conjecture the substance of his harangue, from the nature of those significant gestures with which an Indian always illustrates his eloquence.

At first, the language, as well as the action of Magua, appeared calm and deliberate. When he succeeded in sufficiently awakening the attention of his comrades, Heyward fancied, by his pointing so frequently towards the direction of the great lakes, that he spoke of the land of their fathers, and of their distant tribe. Frequent indications of applause escaped the listeners, who, as they uttered the expressive “*Hugh!*” looked at each other in commendation of the speaker. Le Renard was too skilful to neglect his advantage. He now spoke of the long and painful route by which they had left those spacious grounds and happy villages, to come and battle against the enemies of their Canadian fathers. He enumerated the warriors of the party ; their several merits ; their frequent services to the nation ; their wounds ; and the number of the scalps they had taken. Whenever he alluded to any present (and the subtle Indian neglected none), the dark countenance of the flattered individual gleamed with exulta-

tion, nor did he even hesitate to assert the truth of the words, by gestures of applause and confirmation. Then the voice of the speaker fell, and lost the loud, animated tones of triumph with which he had enumerated their deeds of success and victory. He described the cataract of Glenn's; the impregnable position of its rocky island, with its caverns, and its numerous rapids and whirlpools; he named the name of "La longue Carabine," and paused until the forest beneath them had sent up the last echo of a loud and long yell, with which the hated appellation was received. He pointed toward the youthful military captive, and described the death of a favorite warrior, who had been precipitated into the deep ravine by his hand. He not only mentioned the fate of him who, hanging between heaven and earth, had presented such a spectacle of horror to the whole band, but he acted anew the terrors of his situation, his resolution, and his death, on the branches of a sapling; and, finally, he rapidly recounted the manner in which each of their friends had fallen, never failing to touch upon their courage and their most acknowledged virtues. When this recital of events was ended, his voice once more changed, and became plaintive, and even musical, in its low guttural sounds. He now spoke of the wives and children of the slain; their destitution; their misery, both physical and moral; their distance; and, at last, of their unavenged wrongs. Then, suddenly lifting his voice to a pitch of terrific energy, he concluded, by demanding,—

"Are the Hurons dogs to bear this? Who shall say to the wife of Menowgua that the fishes have his scalp, and that his nation have not taken revenge! Who will dare meet the mother of Wassawattimie, that scornful woman, with his hands clean! What shall be said to the old men when they ask us for scalps, and we have not a hair from a white head to give them! The women will point their fingers at us. There is a dark spot on the names of the Hurons, and it must be hid in blood!"

His voice was no longer audible in the burst of rage which now broke into the air, as if the wood, instead of containing so small a band, was filled with the nation. During the foregoing address the progress of the speaker was too plainly read by those most interested in his success, through the medium of the countenances of the men he addressed. They had answered his melancholy and mourning by sympathy and sorrow; his assertions, by gestures of confirmation; and his boastings with the exultation of savages. When he spoke of

courage, their looks were firm and responsive ; when he alluded to their injuries, their eyes kindled with fury ; when he mentioned the taunts of the women, they dropped their heads in shame ; but when he pointed out their means of vengeance, he struck a chord which never failed to thrill in the breast of an Indian. With the first intimation that it was within their reach, the whole band sprung upon their feet as one man ; giving utterance to their rage in the most frantic cries, they rushed upon their prisoners in a body with drawn knives and uplifted tomahawks. Heyward threw himself between the sisters and the foremost, whom he grappled with a desperate strength that for a moment checked his violence. This unexpected resistance gave Magua time to interpose, and with rapid enunciation and animated gesture, he drew the attention of the band again to himself. In that language he knew so well how to assume, he diverted his comrades from that instant purpose, and invited them to prolong the misery of their victims. His proposal was received with acclamations, and executed with the swiftness of thought.

Two powerful warriors cast themselves on Heyward, while another was occupied in securing the less active singing-master. Neither of the captives, however, submitted without a desperate though fruitless struggle. Even David hurled his assailant to the earth ; nor was Heyward secured until the victory over his companion enabled the Indians to direct their united force to that object. He was then bound and fastened to the body of a sapling, on whose branches Magua had acted the pantomime of the falling Huron. When the young soldier regained his recollection, he had the painful certainty before his eyes that a common fate was intended for the whole party. On his right was Cora, in a durance similar to his own, pale and agitated, but with an eye, whose steady look still read the proceedings of their enemies. On his left, the withes which bound her to a pine, performed that office for Alice which her trembling limbs refused, and alone kept her fragile form from sinking. Her hands were clasped before her in prayer, but instead of looking upwards towards that power which alone could rescue them, her unconscious looks wandered to the countenance of Duncan with infantile dependency. David had contended, and the novelty of the circumstance held him silent, in deliberation on the propriety of the unusual occurrence.

The vengeance of the Hurons had now taken a new direction, and they prepared to execute it with that barbarous in

genuity with which they were familiarized by the practice of centuries. Some sought knots, to raise the blazing pile ; one was riving the splinters of pine, in order to pierce the flesh of their captives with the burning fragments ; and others bent the tops of two saplings to the earth, in order to suspend Heyward by the arms between the recoiling branches. But the vengeance of Magua sought a deeper and a more malignant enjoyment.

While the less refined monsters of the band prepared, before the eyes of those who were to suffer, these well-known and vulgar means of torture, he approached Cora, and pointed out, with the most malign expression of countenance, the speedy fate that awaited her—

“Ha !” he added, “what says the daughter of Munro ? Her head is too good to find a pillow in the wigwam of Le Renard ; will she like it better when it rolls about this hill a plaything for the wolves ? Her bosom cannot nurse the children of a Huron ; she will see it spit upon by Indians !”

“What means the monster !” demanded the astonished Heyward.

“Nothing !” was the firm reply. “He is a savage, a barbarous and ignorant savage, and knows not what he does. Let us find leisure, with our dying breath, to ask for him penitence and pardon.”

“Pardon !” echoed the fierce Huron, mistaking, in his anger, the meaning of her words ; “the memory of an Indian is longer than the arm of the pale faces ; his mercy shorter than their justice ! Say ; shall I send the yellow hair to her father, and will you follow Magua to the great lakes, to carry his water, and feed him with corn ?”

Cora beckoned him away, with an emotion of disgust she could not control.

“Leave me,” she said, with a solemnity that for a moment checked the barbarity of the Indian ; “you mingle bitterness in my prayers ; you stand between me and my God !”

The slight impression produced on the savage was, however, soon forgotten, and he continued pointing, with taunting irony, towards Alice.

“Look ! the child weeps ! She is too young to die ! Send her to Munro, to comb his gray hairs, and keep life in the heart of the old man.”

Cora could not resist the desire to look upon her youthful sister, in whose eyes she met an imploring glance that betrayed the longings of nature.

“What says he, dearest Cora?” asked the trembling voice of Alice. “Did he speak of sending me to our father?”

For many moments the elder sister looked upon the younger, with a countenance that wavered with powerful and contending emotions. At length she spoke, though her tones had lost their rich and calm fulness in an expression of tenderness that seemed maternal.

“Alice,” she said, “the Huron offers us both life—nay, more than both; he offers to restore Duncan—our invaluable Duncan, as well as you, to our friends—to our father—to our heart-stricken, childless father, if I will bow down this rebellious, stubborn pride of mine and consent”—

Her voice became choked, and clasping her hands, she looked upward, as if seeking, in her agony, intelligence from a wisdom that was infinite.

“Say on,” cried Alice; “to what, dearest Cora? Oh! that the proffer were made to me! to save you, to cheer our aged father! to restore Duncan, how cheerful could I die!”

“Die!” repeated Cora, with a calmer and a firmer voice, “that were easy! Perhaps the alternative may not be less so. He would have me,” she continued, her accents sinking under a deep consciousness; go to the habitations of the Hurons; to remain there: in short, to become his wife! Speak, then, Alice; child of my affections! sister of my love! And you, too, Major Heyward, aid my weak reason with your counsel. Is life to be purchased by such a sacrifice? Will you, Alice, receive it at my hands at such a price? And *you*, Duncan; guide me; control me between you; for I am wholly yours.”

“Would I!” echoed the indignant and astonished youth. “Cora! Cora! you jest with our misery! Name not the horrid alternative again; the thought itself is worse than a thousand deaths.”

“That such would be *your* answer, I well knew!” exclaimed Cora, her cheeks flushing, and her dark eyes once more sparkling with the lingering emotions of a woman. “What says my Alice? for her will I submit without another marmur.”

Although both Heyward and Cora listened with painful suspense and the deepest attention, no sounds were heard in reply. It appeared as if the delicate and sensitive form of Alice would shrink into itself, as she listened to this proposal. Her arms had fallen lengthwise before her, the fingers moving in slight convulsions; her head dropped upon her bosom.

and her whole person seemed suspended against the tree, looking like some beautiful emblem of the wounded delicacy of her sex, devoid of animation, and yet keenly conscious. In a few moments, however, her head began to move slowly, in a sign of deep, unconquerable disapprobation.

“No, no, no; better that we die as we have lived, together!”

“Then die!” shouted Magua, hurling his tomahawk with violence at the unresisting speaker, and gnashing his teeth with a rage that could no longer be bridled, at this sudden exhibition of firmness in the one he believed the weakest of the party. The axe cleaved the air in front of Heyward, and cutting some of the flowing ringlets of Alice, quivered in the tree above her head. The sight maddened Duncan to desperation. Collecting all his energies in one effort, he snapped the twigs which bound him, and rushed upon another savage, who was preparing, with loud yells, and a more deliberate aim, to repeat the blow. They encountered, grappled, and fell to the earth together. The naked body of his antagonist afforded Heyward no means of holding his adversary, who glided from his grasp, and rose again with one knee on his chest, pressing him down with the weight of a giant. Duncan already saw the knife gleaming in the air, when a whistling sound swept past him, and was rather accompanied, than followed, by the sharp crack of a rifle. He felt his breast relieved from the load it had endured; he saw the savage expression of his adversary’s countenance change to a look of vacant wildness, when the Indian fell dead of the faded leaves by his side.

CHAPTER XII.

Clo.—I am gone, sir,
And anon, sir,
I’ll be with you again.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

THE Hurons stood aghast at this sudden visitation of death on one of their band. But, as they regarded the fatal accuracy of an aim which had dared to immolate an enemy at so much hazard to a friend, the name of “La longue Carabine” burst simultaneously from every lip, and was succeeded by a wild and a sort of plaintive howl. The cry was answered

by a loud shout from a little thicket, where the incautious party had piled their arms ; and, at the next moment, Hawk-eye, too eager to load the rifle he had regained, was seen advancing upon them, brandishing the clubbed weapon, and cutting the air with wide and powerful sweeps. Bold and rapid as was the progress of the scout, it was succeeded by that of a light and vigorous form, which, bounding past him, leaped, with incredible activity and daring, into the very centre of the Hurons, where it stood, whirling a tomahawk, and flourishing a glittering knife, with fearful menaces, in front of Cora. Quicker than the thoughts could follow these unexpected and audacious movements, an image, armed in the emblematic panoply of death, glided before their eyes, and assumed a threatening attitude at the other side. The savage tormenters recoiled before these warlike intruders, and uttered as they appeared in such quick succession, the often repeated and peculiar exclamation of surprise, followed by the well known and dreaded appellations of—

“Le Cerf agile ! Le gros Serpent !”

But the wary and vigilant leader of the Hurons was not so easily disconcerted. Casting his keen eyes around the little plain, he comprehended the nature of the assault at a glance, and encouraging his followers by his voice as well as by his example, he unsheathed his long and dangerous knife, and rushed with a loud whoop upon the expecting Chingachgook. It was the signal for a general combat. Neither party had fire-arms, and the contest was to be decided in the deadliest manner ; hand to hand, with weapons of offence, and none of defence.

Uncas answered the whoop, and leaping on an enemy, with a single, well-directed blow of his tomahawk, cleft him to the brain. Heyward tore the weapon of Magua from the sapling, and rushed eagerly towards the fray. As the combatants were now equal in number, each singled an opponent from the adverse band. The rush and blows passed with the fury of a whirlwind, and the swiftness of lightning. Hawk-eye soon got another enemy within reach of his arm, and with one sweep of his formidable weapon he beat down the slight and inartificial defences of his antagonist, crushing him to the earth with the blow. Heyward ventured to hurl the tomahawk he had seized, too ardent to await the moment of closing. It struck the Indian he had selected on the forehead, and checked for an instant his onward rush. Encouraged by this slight advantage, the impetuous young man continued his

onset, and sprang upon his enemy with naked hands. A single instant was sufficient to assure him of the rashness of the measure, for he immediately found himself fully engaged, with all his activity and courage, in endeavoring to ward the desperate thrusts made with the knife of the Huron. Unable longer to foil an enemy so alert and vigilant, he threw his arms about him, and succeeded in pinning the limbs of the other to his side, with an iron grasp, but one that was far too exhausting to himself to continue long. In this extremity he heard a voice near him, shouting,—

“Extarminate the varlets! no quarter to an accursed Mingo!”

At the next moment, the breech of Hawk-eye’s rifle fell on the naked head of his adversary, whose muscles appeared to wither under the shock, as he sank from the arms of Duncan, flexible and motionless.

When Uncas had brained his first antagonist, he turned, like a hungry lion, to seek another. The fifth and only Huron disengaged at the first onset had paused a moment, and then seeing that all around him were employed with the deadly strife, he had sought, with hellish vengeance, to complete the baffled work of revenge. Raising a shout of triumph, he sprang towards the defenceless Cora, sending his keen axe, as the dreadful precursor of his approach. The tomahawk grazed her shoulder, and cutting the withes which bound her to the tree, left the maiden at liberty to fly. She eluded the grasp of the savage, and reckless of her own safety, threw herself on the bosom of Alice, striving, with convulsed and ill directed fingers, to tear asunder the twigs which confined the person of her sister. Any other than a monster would have relented at such an act of generous devotion to the best and purest affection; but the breast of the Huron was a stranger to sympathy. Seizing Cora by the rich tresses which fell in confusion about her form, he tore her from her frantic hold, and bowed her down with brutal violence to her knees. The savage drew the flowing curls through his hand, and raising them on high with an outstretched arm, he passed the knife around the exquisitely moulded head of his victim, with a taunting and exulting laugh. But he purchased this moment of fierce gratification with the loss of the fatal opportunity. It was just then the sight caught the eye of Uncas. Bounding from his footsteps he appeared for an instant darting through the air, and descending in a ball he fell on the chest of his enemy, driving him many yards from the spot, headlong and prostrate. The violence of the

exertion cast the young Mohican at his side. They arose together, fought and bled, each in his turn. But the conflict was soon decided; the tomahawk of Heyward and the rifle of Hawk-eye descended on the skull of the Huron, at the same moment that the knife of Uncas reached his heart.

The battle was now entirely terminated, with the exception of the protracted struggle between "Le Renard Subtil" and "Le gros Serpent." Well did these barbarous warriors prove that they deserved those significant names which had been bestowed for deeds in former wars. When they engaged, some little time was lost in eluding the quick and vigorous thrusts which had been aimed at their lives. Suddenly darting on each other, they closed and came to the earth, twisted together like twining serpents, in pliant and subtle folds. At the moment when the victors found themselves unoccupied, the spot where these experienced and desperate combatants lay, could only be distinguished by a cloud of dust and leaves which moved from the centre of the little plain towards its boundary, as if raised by the passage of a whirlwind. Urged by the different motives of filial affection, friendship, and gratitude, Heyward and his companions rushed with one accord to the place, encircling the little canopy of dust which hung above the warriors. In vain did Uncas dart around the cloud, with a wish to strike his knife into the heart of his father's foe; the threatening rifle of Hawk-eye was raised and suspended in vain, while Duncan endeavored to seize the limbs of the Huron with hands that appeared to have lost their power. Covered as they were, with dust and blood, the swift evolutions of the combatants seemed to incorporate their bodies into one. The death-like looking figure of the Mohican, and the dark form of the Huron, gleamed before their eyes in such quick and confused succession, that the friends of the former knew not where nor when to plant the succoring blow. It is true, there were short and fleeting moments, when the fiery eyes of Magua were seen glittering, like the fabled organs of the basilisk, through the dusty wreath by which he was enveloped, and he read by those short and deadly glances the fate of the combat in the presence of his enemies; ere, however, any hostile hand could descend on his devoted head, its place was filled by the scowling visage of Chingachgook. In this manner the scene of the combat was removed from the centre of the little plain to its verge. The Mohican now found an opportunity to make a powerful thrust with his knife; Magua suddenly relinquished his grasp,

and fell backward without motion, and seemingly without life. His adversary leaped from his feet, making the arches of the forest ring with the sounds of triumph.

"Well done for the Delawares! victory to the Mohican!" cried Hawk-eye, once more elevating the butt of the long and fatal rifle; "a finishing blow from a man without a cross will never tell against his honor, nor rob him of his right to the scalp."

But, at the very moment when the dangerous weapon was in the act of descending, the subtle Huron rolled swiftly from beneath the danger, over the edge of the precipice, and falling on his feet, was seen leaping, with a single bound, into the centre of a thicket of low bushes, which clung along its sides. The Delawares who had believed their enemy dead, uttered their exclamation of surprise, and were following with speed and clamor, like hounds in open view of the deer, when a shrill and peculiar cry from the scout instantly changed their purpose, and recalled them to the summit of the hill.

'Twas like himself," cried the inveterate forester, whose prejudices contributed so largely to veil his natural sense of justice in all matters which concerned the Mingoës, "a lying and deceitful varlet as he is. An honest Delaware now, being fairly vanquished, would have lain still, and been knocked on the head, but these knavish Maquas cling to life like so many cats-o'-the-mountain. Let him go—let him go; 'tis but one man, and he without rifle or bow, many a long mile from his French comrades; and, like a rattler that has lost his fangs, he can do no farther mischief, until such time as he, and we too, may leave the prints of our moccasins over a long reach of sandy plain. See, Uncas," he added, in Delaware, "your father is flaying the scalps already. It may be well to go round and feel the vagabonds that are left, or we may have another of them loping through the woods, and screeching like a jay that has been winged."

So saying, the honest, but implacable scout, made the circuit of the dead, into whose senseless bosoms he thrust his long knife, with as much coolness as though they had been so many brutal carcasses. He had, however, been anticipated by the elder Mohican, who had already torn the emblems of victory from the unresisting heads of the slain.

But Uncas, denying his habits, he had almost said his nature, flew with instinctive delicacy, accompanied by Heyward, to the assistance of the females, and quickly releasing Alice, placed her in the arms of Cora. We shall not attempt

to describe the gratitude to the Almighty Disposer of events which glowed in the bosoms of the sisters, who were thus unexpectedly restored to life and to each other. Their thanksgivings were deep and silent; the offerings of the gentle spirits, burning brightest and purest on the secret altars of their hearts; and their renovated and more earthly feeling exhibiting themselves in long and fervent, though speechless caresses. As Alice rose from her knees, where she had sunk by the side of Cora, she threw herself on the bosom of the latter, and sobbed aloud the name of their aged father, while her soft, dove-like eyes, sparkled with the rays of hope.

"We are saved! we are saved!" she murmured; "to return to the arms of our dear, dear father, and his heart will not be broken with grief. And you too, Cora, my sister; my more than sister, my mother; you too are spared. And Duncan," she added, looking round upon the youth with a smile of ineffable innocence, "even our own brave and noble Duncan has escaped without a hurt."

To these ardent and nearly incoherent words, Cora made no other answer than by straining the youthful speaker to her heart, as she bent over her in melting tenderness. The manhood of Heyward felt no shame in dropping tears over this spectacle of affectionate rapture; and Uncas stood, fresh and blood-stained from the combat, a calm, and, apparently, an unmoved looker-on, it is true, but with eyes that had already lost their fierceness, and were beaming with a sympathy that elevated him far above the intelligence, and advanced him probably centuries before the practices of his nation.

During this display of emotion so natural in their situation, Hawk-eye, whose vigilant distrust had satisfied itself that the Hurons, who disfigured the heavenly scene, no longer possessed the power to interrupt its harmony, approached David, and liberated him from the bonds he had, until that moment, endured with the most exemplary patience.

"There," exclaimed the scout, casting the last withe behind him, "you are once more master of your own limbs, though you seem not to use them with much greater judgment than that in which they were first fashioned. If advice from one who is not older than yourself, but who, having lived most of his time in the wilderness, may be said to have experience beyond his years, will give no offence, you are welcome to my thoughts; and those are, to part with the little tooting instrument in your jacket to the first fool you meet with, and buy some useful we'pon with the money, if it be only the barrel

of a horseman's pistol. By industry and care, you might thus come to some preferment ; for by this time, I should think your eyes would plainly tell you that a carrion crow is a better bird than a mocking thrasher. The one will, at least, remove foul sights from before the face of man, while the other is only good to brew disturbances in the woods, by cheating the ears of all that hear them."

"Arms and the clarion for the battle, but the song of thanksgiving to the victory!" answered the liberated David. "Friend," he added, thrusting forth his lean, delicate hand towards Hawk-eye, in kindness, while his eyes twinkled and grew moist, "I thank thee that the hairs of my head still grow where they were first rooted by Providence ; for, though those of other men may be more glossy and curling, I have ever found mine own well suited to the brain they shelter. That I did not join myself to the battle, was less owing to disinclination, than to the bonds of the heathen. Valiant and skilful hast thou proved thyself in the conflict, and I hereby thank thee, before proceeding to discharge other and more important duties, because thou hast proved thyself well worthy of a Christian's praise."

"The thing is but a trifle, and what you may often see, if you tarry long among us," returned the scout, a good deal softened towards the man of song, by this unequivocal expression of gratitude. "I have got back my old companion, 'kill-deer,'" he added, striking his hand on the breech of rifle ; "and that in itself is a victory. These Iroquois are cunning, but they outwitted themselves when thy placed their fire-arms out of reach ; and had Uncas or his father been gifted with only their common Indian patience, we should have come in upon the knaves with three bullets instead of one, and that would have made a finish of the whole pack ; yon loping varlet, as well as his comrades. But 'twas all fore-ordered, and for the best."

"Thou sayest well," returned David, "and hast caught the true spirit of Christianity. He that is to be saved will be saved, and he that is predestined to be damned will be damned. This is the doctrine of truth, and most consoling and refreshing it is to the true believer."

The scout, who by this time was seated, examining into the state of his rifle with a species of parental assiduity, now looked up at the other in a displeasure that he did not affect to conceal, roughly interrupting further speech.

"Doctrine or no doctrine," said the sturdy woodsman

“’tis the belief of knaves, and the curse of an honest man. I can credit that yonder Huron was to fall by my hand, for with my own eyes I have seen it ; but nothing short of being a witness, will cause me to think he has met with any reward, or that Chingachgook, there, will be condemned at the final day.”

“ You have no warranty for such an audacious doctrine, nor any covenant to support it,” cried David, who was deeply tintured with the subtle distinctions which, in his time, and more especially in his province, had been drawn around the beautiful simplicity of revelation, by endeavoring to penetrate the awful mystery of the divine nature, supplying faith by self-sufficiency, and by consequence, involving those who reasoned from such human dogmas in absurdities and doubt ; “ your temple is reared on the sands, and the first tempest will wash away its foundation. I demand your authorities for such an uncharitable assertion.” Like other advocates of a system, David was not always accurate in his use of terms. “ Name chapter and verse ; in which of the holy books do you find language to support you ? ”

“ Book ! ” repeated Hawk-eye, with singular and ill-concealed disdain ; “ do you take me for a whimpering boy at the apron string of one of your old gals ; and this good rifle on my knee for the feather of a goose’s wing, my ox’s horn for a bottle of ink, and my leathern pouch for a cross-barred handkerchief to carry my dinner ? Book ! what have such as I who am a warrior of the wilderness, though a man without a cross, to do with books ? I never read but one, and the words that are written there are too simple and too plain to need much schooling ; though I may boast that of forty long and hard-working years.”

“ What call you the volume ? ” said David, misconceiving the other’s meaning.

“ ’Tis open before your eyes,” returned the scout ; “ and he who owns it is not a niggard of its use. I have heard it said that there are men who read in books to convince themselves there is a God. I know not but man may so deform his works in the settlements, as to leave that which is so clear in the wilderness a matter of doubt among traders and priests. If any such there be, and he will follow me from sun to sun, through the windings of the forest, he shall see enough to teach him that he is a fool, and that the greatest of his folly lies in striving to rise to the level of one he can never equal, be it in goodness, or be it in power.”

The instant David discovered that he battled with a disputant who imbibed his faith from the lights of nature, eschewing all subtleties of doctrine, he willingly abandoned a controversy, from which he believed neither profit nor credit was to be derived. While the scout was speaking, he had also seated himself, and producing the ready little volume and the iron-rimmed spectacles, he prepared to discharge a duty, which nothing but the unexpected assault he had received in his orthodoxy could have so long suspended. He was, in truth, a minstrel of the western continent—of a much later day, certainly, than those gifted bards, who formerly sang the profane renown of baron and prince, but after the spirit of his own age and country; and he was now prepared to exercise the cunning of his craft, in celebration of, or rather in thanksgiving for, the recent victory. He waited patiently for Hawk-eye to cease, then lifting his eyes, together with his voice, he said, aloud,—

“I invite you, friends, to join in praise for this signal deliverance from the hands of barbarians and infidels, to the comfortable and solemn tones of the tune called ‘Northampton.’”

He next named the page and verse where the rhymes selected were to be found, and applied the pitch-pipe to his lips, with the decent gravity that he had been wont to use in the temple. This time he was, however, without any accompaniment, for the sisters were just then pouring out those tender effusions of affection which have been already alluded to. Nothing deterred by the smallness of his audiences, which, in truth, consisted only of the discontented scout, he raised his voice, commencing and ending the sacred song without accident or interruption of any kind.

Hawk-eye listened, while he coolly adjusted his flint and reloaded his rifle; but the sounds, wanting the extraneous assistance of scene and sympathy, failed to awaken his slumbering emotions. Never minstrel, or by whatever more suitable name David should be known, drew upon his talents in the presence of more insensible auditors; though, considering the singleness and sincerity of his motive, it is probable that no bard of profane song ever uttered notes that ascended so near to that throne where all homage and praise is due. The scout shook his head, and muttering some unintelligible words, among which “Throat” and “Iroquois,” were alone audible, he walked away, to collect, and to examine into the state of the captured arsenal of the Hurons.

In this office he was now joined by Chingachgook, who found his own, as well as the rifle of his son, among the arms. Even Heyward and David were furnished with weapons; nor was ammunition wanting to render them all effectual.

When the foresters had made their selection, and distributed their prizes, the scout announced that the hour had arrived when it was necessary to move. By this time the song of Gamut had ceased, and the sisters had learned to still the exhibition of their emotions. Aided by Duncan and the younger Mohican, the two latter descended the precipitous sides of that hill which they had so lately ascended under so very different auspices, and whose summit had so nearly proved the scene of their massacre. At the foot, they found the Narragansets browsing the herbage of the bushes; and having mounted they followed the movements of the guide, who, in the most deadly straits, had so often proved himself their friend. The journey was, however, short. Hawk-eye, leaving the blind path that the Hurons had followed, turned short to his right, and entering the thicket, he crossed a babbling brook, and halted in a narrow dell, under the shade of a few water elms. Their distance from the base of the fatal hill was but a few rods, and the steeds had been serviceable only in crossing the shallow stream.

The scout and the Indians appeared to be familiar with the sequestered place where they now were; for, leaning their rifles against the trees, they commenced throwing aside the dried leaves, and opening the blue clay, out of which a clear and sparkling spring of bright, glancing water, quickly bubbled. The white man then looked about him, as though seeking for some object which was not to be found as readily as he expected.

“Thems carless imps, the Mohawks, with their Tuscarora and Onondaga brethren, have been here slaking their thirst,” he muttered, “and the vagabonds have thrown away the gourd! This is the way with benefits, when they are bestowed on such disremembering hounds! Here has the Lord laid his hand, in the midst of the howling wilderness, or their good, and raised a fountain of water from the bowels of the earth, that might laugh at the richest shop of a apothecary’s ware in all the colonies; and see! the knaves have trodden in the clay, and deformed the cleanliness of the place, as though they were brute beasts, instead of human men.”

Uncas silently extended towards him the desired gourd, which the spleen of Hawk-eye had hitherto prevented him

from observing, on a branch of an elm. Filling it with water he retired a short distance, to a place where the ground was more firm and dry; here he coolly seated himself, and after taking a long and apparently a grateful draught, he commenced a very strict examination of the fragments of food left by the Hurons, which had hung in a wallet on his arm.

"Thank you, lad," he continued, returning the empty gourd to Uncas; "now we will see how these rampaging Hurons lived, when outlying in ambushments. Look at this! The varlets know the better pieces of the deer; and one would think they might carve and roast a saddle, equal to the best cook in the land. But everything is raw, for the Iroquois are thorough savages. Uncas, take my steel, and kindle a fire; a mouthful of a tender broil will give nature a helping hand, after so long a trail."

Heyward, perceiving that their guides now set about their repast in sober earnest, assisted the ladies to alight, and placed himself at their side, not unwilling to enjoy a few moments of grateful rest, after the bloody scene he had just gone through. While the culinary process was in hand, curiosity induced him to inquire into the circumstances which had led to their timely and unexpected rescue—

"How is it that we see you so soon, my generous friend," he asked, "and without aid from the garrison of Edward?"

"Had we gone to the bend in the river, we might have been in time to rake the leaves over your bodies, but too late to have saved your scalps," coolly answered the scout. "No, no; instead of throwing away strength and opportunity by crossing to the fort, we lay by, under the bank of the Hudson, waiting to watch the movements of the Hurons."

"You were, then, witnesses of all that passed?"

"Not of all; for Indian sight is too keen to be easily cheated, and we kept close. A difficult matter it was, too, to keep this Mohican boy snug in the ambushment. Ah! Uncas, Uncas, your behavior was more like that of a curious woman than of a warrior on his scent."

Uncas permitted his eyes to turn for an instant on the sturdy countenance of the speaker, but he neither spoke nor gave any indication of repentance. On the contrary, Heyward thought the manner of the young Mohican was disdainful, if not a little fierce, and that he suppressed passions that were ready to explode, as much in compliment to the listeners, as from the deference he usually paid to his white associate.

“You saw our capture?” Heyward next demanded.

“We heard it,” was the significant answer. “An Indian yell is plain language to men who have passed their days in the woods. But when you landed, we were driven to crawl, like serpents, beneath the leaves; and then we lost sight of you entirely, until we placed eyes on you again, trussed to the trees, and ready bound for an Indian massacre.”

“Our rescue was the deed of Providence. It was nearly a miracle that you did not mistake the path, for the Hurons divided, and each band had its horses.”

“Ay! there we were thrown off the scent, and might, indeed, have lost the trail, had it not been for Uncas; we took the path, however, that led into the wilderness; for we judged, and judged rightly, that the savages would hold that course with their prisoners. But when we had followed it for many miles, without finding a single twig broken, as I had advised, my mind misgave me; especially as all the footsteps had the prints of moccasins.”

“Our captors had the precaution to see us shod like themselves,” said Duncan, raising a foot, and exhibiting the buckskin he wore.

“Ay! ’twas judgmatical, and like themselves: though we were too expert to be thrown from a trail by so common an invention.”

“To what, then, are we indebted for our safety?”

“To what, as a white man who has no taint of Indian blood, I should be ashamed to own; to the judgment of the young Mohican, in matters which I should know better than he, but which I can now hardly believe to be true, though my own eyes tell me it is so.”

“’Tis extraordinary! will you not name the reason?”

“Uncas was bold enough to say, that the beasts ridden by the gentle ones,” continued Hawk-eye, glancing his eyes, not without curious interest, on the fillies of the ladies, “planted the legs of one side on the ground at the same time, which is contrary to the movements of all trotting four-footed animals of my knowledge, except the bear. And yet here are horses that always journey in this manner, as my own eyes have seen, and as their trail has shown for twenty long miles.”

“’Tis the merit of the animal! They come from the shores of Narragansett Bay, in the small province of Providence plantations, and are celebrated for their hardihood, and the ease of this peculiar movement; though other horses are not unfrequently trained to the same.”

‘It may be—it may be,’ said Hawk-eye, who had listened with singular attention to this explanation, “though I am a man who has the full blood of the whites, my judgment in deer and beaver is greater than in beasts of burden. Major Effingham has many noble chargers, but I have never seen one travel after such a sideling gait.”

“True for he would value the animals for very different properties. Still is this a breed highly esteemed, and, as you witness, much honored with the burdens it is often destined to bear.”

The Mohicans had suspended their operations about the glimmering fire to listen; and when Duncan had done, they looked at each other significantly, the father uttering the never-failing exclamation of surprise. The scout ruminated like a man digesting his newly-acquired knowledge, and once more stole a curious glance at the horses.

“I dare to say there are even stranger sights to be seen in the settlements,” he said at length; “nature is sadly abused by man, when he once gets the mastery. But, go sidelong or go straight, Uncas had seen the movement, and their trail led us on to the broken bush. The outer branch, near the prints of one of the horses, was bent upward, as a lady breaks a flower from its stem, but all the rest were ragged and broken down, as if the strong hand of a man had been tearing them! So I concluded, that the cunning varments had seen the twig bent, and had torn the rest, to make us believe a buck had been feeling the boughs with his antlers.”

“I do believe your sagacity did not deceive you; for some such thing occurred.”

“That was easy to see,” added the scout, in no degree conscious of having exhibited any extraordinary sagacity; “and a very different matter it was from a waddling horse. It then struck me the Mingoes would push for this spring, for the knaves well know the virtue of its waters.”

“Is it, then, so famous?” demanded Heyward, examining, with a more curious eye, the secluded dell, with its bubbling fountain, surrounded, as it was, by earth of a deep, dingy brown.

“Few red-skins, who travel south and east of the great lakes, but have heard of its qualities. Will you taste for yourself?”

Heyward took the gourd, and after swallowing a little of the water, threw it aside with grimaces of discontent. The scout laughed in his silent, but heartfelt manner, and shook his head with vast satisfaction.

“ Ah ! you want the flavor that one gets by habit ; the time was when I liked it as little as yourself ; but I have come to my taste, and I now crave it, as the deer does the licks.* Your high-spiced wines are not better liked than the red-skin relishes this water ; especially when his nature is ailing. But Uncas has made his fire, and it is time we think of eating, for our journey is long, and all before us.”

Interrupting the dialogue by his abrupt transition, the scout had instant recourse to the fragments of food which had escaped the voracity of the Hurons. A very summary process completed the simple cookery, when he and the Mohicans commenced their humble meal, with the silence and characteristic diligence of men, who ate in order to enable themselves to endure great and unremitting toil.

When this necessary, and, happily, grateful duty had been performed, each of the foresters stooped and took a long and parting draught at that solitary and silent spring, † around which and its sister fountains, within fifty years, the wealth, beauty, and talents, of a hemisphere, were to assemble in throngs, in pursuit of health and pleasure. Then Hawk-eye announced his determination to proceed. The sisters resumed their saddles ; Duncan and David grasped their rifles, and followed on their footsteps ; the scout leading the advance, and the Mohicans bringing up the rear. The whole party moved swiftly through the narrow path, towards the north, leaving the healing waters to mingle unheeded with the adjacent brook, and the bodies of the dead to fester on the neighboring mount, without the rites of sepulture ; a fate but too common to the warriors of the woods, to excite either commiseration or comment.

* Many of the animals of the American forests resort to those spots where salt springs are found. These are called “ licks,” or “ salt licks” in the language of the country, from the circumstance that the quadruped is often obliged to lick the earth, in order to obtain the saline particles. These licks are great places of resort with the hunters, who waylay their game near the paths that lead to them.

† The scene of the foregoing incidents is on the spot where the village of Ballston now stands ; one of the two principal watering-places of America.

CHAPTER XIII.

I'll seek a readier path.

PARNELL.

THE route taken by Hawk-eye lay across those sandy plains, relieved by occasional valleys and swells of land, which had been traversed by their party on the same morning of the day, with the baffled Magua for their guide. The sun had now fallen low towards the distant mountains; and as their journey lay through the interminable forest, the heat was no longer oppressive. Their progress, in consequence, was proportionate; and long before the twilight gathered about them, they had made a good many toilsome miles on their return.

The hunter, like the savage whose place he filled, seemed to select among the blind signs of their wild route, with a species of instinct, seldom abating his speed, and never pausing to deliberate. A rapid and oblique glance at the moss on the trees, with an occasional upward gaze towards the setting sun, or a steady but passing look at the direction of the numerous watercourses through which he waded, were sufficient to determine his path, and remove his greatest difficulties. In the mean time, the forest began to change its hues, losing that lively green which had embellished its arches, in the graver light which is the usual precursor of the close of day.

While the eyes of the sisters were endeavoring to catch glimpses through the trees, of the flood of golden glory which formed a glittering halo around the sun, tinging here and there with ruby streaks, or bordering with narrow edgings of shining yellow, a mass of clouds that lay piled at no great distance above the western hills, Hawk-eye turned suddenly, and, pointing upwards towards the gorgeous heavens, he spoke.

"Yonder is the signal given to man to seek his food and natural rest," he said; "better and wiser would it be, if he could understand the signs of nature, and take a lesson from the fowls of the air and the beasts of the fields! Our night, however, will soon be over; for, with the moon, we must be up and moving again. I remember to have fou't the Maquas, hereaways, in the first war in which I ever drew blood from

man ; and we threw up a work of blocks to keep the ravenous varments from handling our scalps. If my marks do not fail me, we shall find the place a few rods further to our left."

Without waiting for an assent, or, indeed, for any reply, the sturdy hunter moved boldly into a dense thicket of young chestnuts, shoving aside the branches of the exuberant shoots which nearly covered the ground, like a man who expected, at each step, to discover some object he had formerly known. The recollection of the scout did not deceive him. After penetrating through the brush, matted as it was with briers, for a few hundred feet, he entered an open space that surrounded a low, green hillock, which was crowned by the decayed block-house in question. This rude and neglected building was one of those deserted works, which having been thrown up on an emergency, had been abandoned with the disappearance of danger, and was now quietly crumbling in the solitude of the forest, neglected and nearly forgotten, like the circumstances which had caused it to be reared. Such memorials of the passage and struggles of man are yet frequent throughout the broad barrier of wilderness which once separated the hostile provinces, and form a species of ruins that are intimately associated with the recollections of colonial history, and which are in appropriate keeping with the gloomy character of the surrounding scenery.* The roof of bark had long since fallen, and mingled with the soil ; but the huge logs of pine, which had been hastily thrown together, still preserved their relative positions, though one angle of the work had given way under the pressure, and threatened a speedy downfall to the remainder of the rustic edifice. While Heyward and his companions hesitated to approach a building so decayed, Hawk-eye and the Indians entered within the low walls, not only without fear, but with obvious interest. While the former surveyed the ruins, both internally and externally,

* Some years since, the writer was shooting in the vicinity of the ruins of Fort Oswego, which stands on the shores of Lake Ontario. His game was deer, and his chase a forest that stretched, with little interruption, fifty miles inland. Unexpectedly he came upon six or eight ladders lying in the woods within a short distance of each other. They were rudely made, and much decayed. Wondering what could have assembled so many of these instruments in such a place, he sought an old man who resided near for the explanation.

During the war of 1776 Fort Oswego was held by the British. An expedition had been sent two hundred miles through the wilderness to surprise the fort. It appears that the Americans, on reaching the spot named, which was within a mile or two of the fort, first learned that they were expected, and in great danger of being cut off. They threw away their scaling ladders, and made a rapid retreat. These ladders had lain unmolested thirty years, in the spot where they had thus been cast.

with the curiosity of one whose recollections were reviving at each moment, Chingachgook related to his son, in the language of the Delawares, and with the pride of a conqueror, the brief history of the skirmish which had been fought in his youth, in that secluded spot. A strain of melancholy, however, blended with his triumph, rendering his voice, as usual soft and musical.

In the meantime the sisters gladly dismounted, and prepared to enjoy their halt in the coolness of the evening, and in a security which they believed nothing but the beasts of the forest could invade.

"Would not our resting-place have been more retired, my worthy friend," demanded the more vigilant Duncan, perceiving that the scout had already finished his short survey, "had we chosen a spot less known, and one more rarely visited than this?"

"Few live who know the block-house was ever raised," was the slow and musing answer; "'tis not often that books are made, and narratives written, of such a skrimage as was here fout atween the Mohicans and the Mohawks, in a war of their own waging. I was then a younker, and went out with the Delawares, because I know'd they were a scandalized and wronged race. Forty days and forty nights did the imps crave our blood around this pile of logs, which I designed and partly reared, being, as you'll remember, no Indian myself, but a man without a cross. The Delawares lent themselves to the work, and we made it good, ten to twenty, until our numbers were nearly equal, and then we sallied out upon the hounds, and not a man of them ever got back to tell the fate of his party. Yes, yes; I was then young, and new to the sight of blood; and not relishing the thought that creatures who had spirits like myself should lay on the naked ground, to be torn asunder by beasts, or to bleach in the rains, I buried the dead with my own hands, under that very little hillock where you have placed yourselves; and no bad seat does it make neither, though it be raised by the bones of mortal men."

Heyward and the sisters arose, on the instant, from the grassy sepulchre; nor could the two latter, notwithstanding the terrific scenes they had so recently passed through, entirely suppress an emotion of natural horror, when they found themselves in such familiar contact with the grave of the dead Mohawks. The gray light, the gloomy little area of dark grass, surrounded by its border of brush, beyond which the pines rose, in breathing silence, apparently, into the very

clouds, and the deathlike stillness of the vast forest, were all in unison to deepen such a sensation.

"They are gone, and they are harmless," continued Hawk-eye, waving his hand, with a melancholy smile, at their manifest alarm: "they'll never shout the war-whoop nor strike a blow with the tomahawk again! And of all those who aided in placing them where they lie, Chingachgook and I only are living! The brothers and family of the Mohican formed our war-party; and you see before you all that are now left of his race."

The eyes of the listeners involuntarily sought the forms of the Indians, with a compassionate interest in their desolate fortune. Their dark persons were still to be seen within the shadows of the block-house, the son listening to the relation of his father with that sort of intensesness which would be created by a narrative that redounded so much to the honor of those whose names he had long revered for their courage and savage virtues.

"I had thought the Delawares a pacific people," said Duncan, "and that they never waged war in person; trusting the defence of their lands to those very Mohawks that you slew!"

"'Tis true in part," returned the scout, "and yet, at the bottom, 'tis a wicked lie. Such a treaty was made in ages gone by, through the deviltries of the Dutchers, who wished to disarm the natives that had the best right to the country, where they had settled themselves. The Mohicans, though a part of the same nation, having to deal with the English, never entered into the silly bargain, but kept to their manhood; as in truth did the Delawares, when their eyes were opened to their folly. You see before you a chief of the great Mohican Sagamores! Once his family could chase their deer over tracts of country wider than that which belongs to the Albany Patternoon, without crossing brook or hill that was not their own; but what is left to their descendant! He may find his six feet of earth when God chooses, and keep it in peace, perhaps, if he has a friend who will take the pains to sink his head so low that the ploughshares cannot reach it!"

"Enough!" said Heyward, apprehensive that the subject might lead to a discussion that would interrupt the harmony so necessary to the preservation of his fair companions: "we have journeyed far, and few among us are blessed with forms like that of yours, which seems to know neither fatigue nor weakness."

"The sinews and bones of a man carry me through it all,"

said the hunter, surveying his muscular limbs with a simplicity that betrayed the honest pleasure the compliment afforded him: "there are larger and heavier men to be found in the settlements, but you might travel many days in a city before you could meet one able to walk fifty miles without stopping to take breath, or who has kept the hounds within hearing during a chase of hours. However, as flesh and blood are not always the same, it is quite reasonable to suppose that the gentle ones are willing to rest, after all they have seen and done this day. Uncas, clear out the spring, while your father and I make a cover for their tender heads of these chestnut shoots, and a bed of grass and leaves."

The dialogue ceased, while the hunter and his companions busied themselves in preparations for the comfort and protection of those they guided. A spring, which many long years before had induced the natives to select the place for their temporary fortification, was soon cleared of leaves, and a fountain of crystal gushed from the bed, diffusing its waters over the verdant hillock. A corner of the building was then roofed in such a manner as to exclude the heavy dew of the climate, and piles of sweet shrubs and dried leaves were laid beneath it for the sisters to repose on.

While the diligent woodsmen were employed in this manner, Cora and Alice partook of that refreshment which duty required much more than inclination prompted them to accept. They then retired within the walls, and first offering up their thanksgivings for past mercies, and petitioning for a continuance of the Divine favor throughout the coming night, they laid their tender forms on the fragrant couch, and, in spite of recollections and forebodings, soon sank into those slumbers which nature so imperiously demanded, and which were sweetened by hopes for the morrow. Duncan had prepared himself to pass the night in watchfulness near them, just without the ruin, but the scout, perceiving his intentions, pointed towards Chingachgook, as he coolly disposed his own person on the grass, and said,—

"The eyes of a white man are too blind for such a watch as this! The Mohican will be our sentinel, therefore let us sleep."

"I proved myself a sluggard on my post during the past night," said Heyward, "and have less need of repose than you, who did more credit to the character of a soldier. Let all the party seek their rest, then, while I hold the guard."

"If we lay among the white tents of the 60th, and in front

of an enemy like the French, I could not ask for a better watchman," returned the scout; "but in the darkness and among the signs of the wilderness your judgment would be like the folly of a child, and your vigilance thrown away. Do then, like Uncas and myself, sleep, and sleep in safety."

Heyward perceived, in truth, that the younger Indian had thrown his form on the side of the hillock while they were talking, like one who sought to make the most of the time allotted to rest, and that his example had been followed by David, whose voice literally "clove to his jaws" with the fever of his wound, heightened as it was by their toilsome march. Unwilling to prolong a useless discussion, the young man affected to comply, by posting his back against the logs of the block-house, in a half-recumbent posture, though resolutely determined, in his own mind, not to close an eye until he had delivered his precious charge into the arms of Munro himself. Hawk-eye, believing he had prevailed, soon fell asleep, and a silence as deep as the solitude in which they had found it, pervaded the retired spot.

For many minutes Duncan succeeded in keeping his senses on the alert, and alive to every moaning sound that arose from the forest. His vision became more acute as the shades of evening settled on the place; and even after the stars were glimmering above his head, he was able to distinguish the recumbent forms of his companions, as they lay stretched on the grass, and to note the person of Chingachgook, who sat upright and motionless as one of the trees which formed the dark barrier on every side of them. He still heard the gentle breathings of the sisters, who lay within a few feet of him, and not a leaf was ruffled by the passing air, of which his ear did not detect the whispering sound. At length, however, the mournful notes of a whip-poor-will became blended with the moanings of an owl; his heavy eyes occasionally sought the bright rays of the stars, and then he fancied he saw them through the fallen lids. At instants of momentary wakefulness he mistook a bush for his associate sentinel; his head next sank upon his shoulder, which, in its turn, sought the support of the ground; and, finally, his whole person became relaxed and pliant, and the young man sank into a deep sleep, dreaming that he was a knight of ancient chivalry, holding his midnight vigils before the tent of a recaptured princess, whose favor he did not despair of gaining, by such a proof of devotion and watchfulness.

How long the tired Duncan lay in this insensible state he

never knew himself, but his slumbering visions had been long lost in total forgetfulness, when he was awakened by a light tap on the shoulder. Aroused by this signal, slight as it was, he sprang upon his feet with a confused recollection of the self-imposed duty he had assumed with the commencement of the night—

“Who comes?” he demanded, feeling for his sword, at the place where it was usually suspended. “Speak! friend or enemy?”

“Friend,” replied the low voice of Chingachgook; who, pointing upwards at the luminary which was shedding its mild light through the opening in the trees, directly on their bivouac, immediately added in his rude English, “moon comes, and white man’s fort far—far off; time to move when sleep shuts both eyes of the Frenchman!”

“You say true! call up your friends, and bridle the horses, while I prepare my own companions for the march!”

“We are awake, Duncan,” said the soft, silvery tones of Alice within the building, “and ready to travel very fast, after so refreshing a sleep; but you have watched through the tedious night in our behalf, after having endured so much fatigue the livelong day!”

“Say, rather, I would have watched, but my treacherous eyes betrayed me; twice have I proved myself unfit for the trust I bear.”

“Nay, Duncan, deny it not,” interrupted the smiling Alice, issuing from the shadows of the building into the light of the moon, in all the loveliness of her freshened beauty; “I know you to be a heedless one, when self is the object of your care, and but too vigilant in favor of others. Can we not tarry here a little longer, while you find the rest you need? Cheerfully, most cheerfully, will Cora and I keep the vigils, while you, and all these brave men, endeavor to snatch a little sleep!”

“If shame could cure me of my drowsiness, I should never close an eye again,” said the uneasy youth, gazing at the ingenuous countenance of Alice, where, however, in its sweet solicitude, he read nothing to confirm his half-awakened suspicion. “It is but too true, that after leading you into danger by my heedlessness, I have not even the merit of guarding your pillows as should become a soldier.”

“No one but Duncan himself should accuse Duncan of such a weakness. Go, then, and sleep; believe me, neither of us, weak girls as we are, will betray our watch.”

The young man was relieved from the awkwardness of making any further protestations of his own demerits, by an exclamation from Chingachgook, and the attitude of riveted attention assumed by his son.

"The Mohicans hear an enemy!" whispered Hawk-eye, who, by this time, in common with the whole party, was awake and stirring. "They scent danger in the wind!"

"God forbid!" exclaimed Heyward. "Surely we have had enough of bloodshed!"

While he spoke, however, the young soldier seized his rifle, and advancing towards the front, prepared to atone for his venial remissness, by freely exposing his life in defence of those he attended.

"'Tis some creature of the forest prowling around us in quest of food," he said, in a whisper, as soon as the low, and apparently distant sounds, which had startled the Mohicans, reached his own ears.

"Hist!" returned the attentive scout; "'tis man; even I can now tell his tread, poor as my senses are when compared to an Indian's! That scampering Huron has fallen in with one of Montcalm's outlying parties, and they have struck upon our trail! I shouldn't like, myself, to spill more human blood in this spot," he added, looking around with anxiety in his features, at the dim objects by which he was surrounded; "but what must be, must! Lead the horses into the block house Uncas, and, friends, do you follow to the same shelter. Poor and old as it is, it offers a cover, and has rung with the crack of a rifle afore to-night!"

He was instantly obeyed, the Mohicans leading the Naragansets within the ruin, whither the whole party repaired, with the most guarded silence.

The sounds of approaching footsteps were now too distinctly audible, to leave any doubts as to the nature of the interruption. They were soon mingled with voices calling to each other in an Indian dialect, which the hunter, in a whisper, affirmed to Heyward, was the language of the Hurons. When the party reached the point where the horses had entered the thicket which surrounded the block-house, they were evidently at fault, having lost those marks which, until that moment, had directed their pursuit.

It would seem by the voices that twenty men were soon collected at that one spot mingling their different opinions and advice in noisy clamor.

"The knaves know our weakness," whispered Hawk-eye

who stood by the side of Heyward, in deep shade, looking through an opening in the logs, "or they wouldn't indulge their idleness in such a squaw's march. Listen to the reptiles! Each man among them seems to have two tongues, and but a single leg."

Duncan, brave as he was in the combat, could not, in such a moment of painful suspense, make any reply to the cool and characteristic remark of the scout. He only grasped his rifle more firmly, and fastened his eyes upon the narrow opening, through which he gazed upon the moonlight view with increasing anxiety. The deeper tones of one who spoke of having authority were next heard, amid a silence that denoted the respect with which his orders, or rather advice, was received. After which, by the rustling of leaves, and cracking of dried twigs, it was apparent the savages were separating in pursuit of the lost trail. Fortunately for the pursued, the light of the moon, while it shed a flood of mild lustre upon the little area around the ruin, was not sufficiently strong to penetrate the deep arches of the forest, where the objects still lay in deceptive shadow. The search proved fruitless; for so short and sudden had been the passage from the faint path the travellers had journeyed into the thicket, that every trace of their footsteps was lost in the obscurity of the woods.

It was not long, however, before the restless savages were heard beating the brush, and gradually approaching the inner edge of that dense border of young chestnuts which encircled the little area.

"They are coming," muttered Heyward, endeavoring to thrust his rifle through the chink in the logs; "let us fire on their approach."

"Keep everything in the shade," returned the scout; "the snapping of a flint, or even the smell of a single kernel of the brimstone, would bring the hungry varlets upon us in a body. Should it please God that we must give battle for the scalps, trust to the experience of men who know the ways of the savages, and who are not often backward when the war-whoop is howled."

Duncan cast his eyes behind him, and saw that the trembling sisters were cowering in the far corner of the building, while the Mohicans stood in the shadow, like two upright posts, ready, and apparently willing, to strike, when the blow should be needed. Curbing his impatience, he again looked out upon the area, and awaited the result in silence. At that

instant the thicket opened, and a tall and armed Huron advanced a few paces into the open space. As he gazed upon the silent block-house, the moon fell full upon his swarthy countenance, and betrayed its surprise and curiosity. He made the exclamation which usually accompanies the former emotion in an Indian, and, calling in a low voice, soon drew a companion to his side.

These children of the woods stood together for several moments pointing at the crumbling edifice, and conversing in the unintelligible language of their tribe. They then approached, though with slow and cautious steps, pausing every instant to look at the building, like startled deer, whose curiosity struggled powerfully with their awakened apprehensions for the mastery. The foot of one of them suddenly rested on the mound, and he stooped to examine its nature. At this moment, Heyward observed that the scout loosened his knife in its sheath, and lowered the muzzle of his rifle. Imitating these movements, the young man prepared himself for the struggle, which now seemed inevitable.

The savages were so near, that the least motion in one of the horses, or even a breath louder than common, would have betrayed the fugitives. But, in discovering the character of the mound, the attention of the Hurons appeared directed to a different object. They spoke together, and the sounds of their voices were low and solemn, as if influenced by a reverence that was deeply blended with awe. Then they drew warmly back, keeping their eyes riveted on the ruin, as if they expected to see the apparitions of the dead issue from its silent walls, until having reached the boundary of the area, they moved slowly into the thicket and disappeared.

Hawk-eye dropped the breech of his rifle to the earth, and drawing a long, free breath, exclaimed in an audible whisper—

“Ay! they respect the dead, and it has this time saved their own lives, and it may be the lives of better men too.”

Heyward lent his attention, for a single moment, to his companion, but without replying, he again turned towards those who just then interested him more. He heard the two Hurons leave the bushes, and it was soon plain that all the pursuers were gathered about them, in deep attention to their report. After a few minutes of earnest and solemn dialogue, altogether different from the noisy clamor with which they had first collected about the spot, the sounds grew fainter and more distant, and finally were lost in the depths of the forest.

Hawk-eye waited until a signal from the listening Chingachgook assured him that every sound from the retiring party was completely swallowed by the distance, when he motioned to Heyward to lead forth the horses, and to assist the sisters into their saddles. The instant this was done they issued through the broken gateway, and stealing out by a direction opposite to the one by which they had entered, they quitted the spot, the sisters casting furtive glances at the silent grave and crumbling ruin, as they left the soft light of the moon to bury themselves in the gloom of the woods.

CHAPTER XIV.

Guard.— Qui est la ?

Puc.— Paisans, pauvres gens de France.

KING HENRY VI.

DURING the rapid movement from the block-house, and until the party was deeply buried in the forest, each individual was too much interested in the escape, to hazard a word even in whispers. The scout resumed his post in the advance, though his steps, after he had thrown a safe distance between himself and his enemies, were more deliberate than in their previous march, in consequence of his utter ignorance of the localities of the surrounding woods. More than once he halted to consult with his confederates, the Mohicans, pointing upwards at the moon, and examining the barks of the trees with care. In these brief pauses, Heyward and the sisters listened, with senses rendered doubly acute by the danger, to detect any symptoms which might announce the proximity of their foes. At such moments, it seemed as if a vast range of country lay buried in eternal sleep, not the least sound arising from the forest, unless it was the distant and scarcely audible rippling of a water-course. Bird, beasts, and man, appeared to slumber alike, if, indeed, any of the latter were to be found in that wide tract of wilderness. But the sounds of the rivulet, feeble and murmuring as they were, relieved the guides at once from no trifling embarrassment, and towards it they immediately held their way.

When the banks of the little stream were gained, Hawk eye made another halt ; and, taking the moccasins from his feet, he invited Heyward and Gamut to follow his example,

He then entered the water, and for near an hour they travelled in the bed of the brook, leaving no trail. The moon had already sunk into an immense pile of black clouds, which lay impending above the western horizon, when they issued from the low and devious water-course to rise again to the light and level of the sandy but wooded plain. Here the scout seemed to be once more at home, for he held on his way with the certainty and diligence of a man who moved in the security of his own knowledge. The path soon became more uneven, and the travellers could plainly perceive that the mountains drew nigher to them on each hand, and that they were, in truth, about entering one of their gorges. Suddenly, Hawk-eye made a pause, and waiting until he was joined by the whole party, he spoke, though in tones so low and cautious, that they added to the solemnity of his words, in the quiet and darkness of the place.

"It is easy to know the pathways, and to find the licks and water-courses of the wilderness," he said; "but who that saw this spot could venture to say, that a mighty army was at rest among yonder silent trees and barren mountains?"

"We are then at no great distance from William Henry?" said Heyward, advancing nigher to the scout.

"It is yet a long and weary path, and when and where to strike it, is now our greatest difficulty. See," he said, pointing through the trees towards a spot where a little basin of water reflected the stars from its placid bosom, "here is the 'bloody pond;' and I am on ground that I have not only often travelled, but over which I have fou't the enemy, from the rising to the setting sun."

"Ha! that sheet of dull and dreary water, then, is the sepulchre of the brave men who fell in the contest. I have heard it named, but never have I stood on its banks before."

"Three battles did we make with the Dutch-Frenchman^{*} in a day," continued Hawk-eye, pursuing the train of his own thoughts, rather than replying to the remark of Duncan. "He met us hard by, in our outward march to ambush his advance, and scattered us, like driven deer, through the defile to the shores of Horican. Then we rallied behind our fallen trees, and made head against him, under Sir William—who was made Sir William for that very deed; and well did we

* Baron Dieskau, a German, in the service of France. A few years previously to the period of the tale, this officer was defeated by Sir William Johnson, of Johnson, New York, on the shores of Lake George.

pay him for the disgrace of the morning. Hundreds of Frenchmen saw the sun that day for the last time; and even their leader, Dieskau himself, fell into our hands, so cut and torn with the lead, that he has gone back to his own country, unfit for further acts in war."

"'Twas a noble repulse!" exclaimed Heyward in the heat of his youthful ardor; "the fame of it reached us early, in our southern army"

"Ay! but it did not end there. I was sent by Major Effingham, at Sir William's own bidding, to outflank the French, and carry the tidings of their disaster across the portage, to the fort on the Hudson. Just hereaway, where you see the trees rise into a mountain swell, I met a party coming down to our aid, and I led them where the enemy were taking their meal, little dreaming that they had not finished the bloody work of the day."

"And you surprised them?"

"If death can be a surprise to men who are thinking only of the cravings of their appetites. We gave them but little breathing time, for they had borne hard upon us in the fight of the morning, and there were few in our party who had not lost friend or relative by their hands. When all was over, the dead, and some say the dying, were cast into that little pond. These eyes have seen its waters colored with blood, as natural water never yet flowed from the bowels of the 'arth."

"It was a convenient, and, I trust, will prove a peaceful grave for a soldier. You have, then, seen much service on this frontier?"

"I!" said the scout, erecting his tall person with an air of military pride; "there are not many echoes among these hills that haven't rung with the crack of my rifle, nor is there the space of a square mile atwixt Horican and the river, that 'Kill Deer' hasn't dropped a living body on, be it an enemy or be it a brute beast. As for the grave there being as quiet as you mention, it is another matter. There are them in the camp who say and think, man, to lie still, should not be buried while the breath is in the body; and certain it is that in the hurry of that evening, the doctors had but little time to say who was living and who was dead. Hist! see you nothing walking on the shore of the pond?"

"'Tis not probable that any are as houseless as ourselves, in this dreary forest."

"Such as he may care but little for house or shelter, and night dew can never wet a body that passes its days in the

water," returned the scout, grasping the shoulder of Heyward with such convulsive strength as to make the young soldier painfully sensible how much superstitious terror had got the mastery of a man usually so dauntless.

"By heaven! there is a human form, and it approaches. Stand to your arms, my friends; for we know not whom we encounter."

"Qui vive?" demanded a stern, quick voice, which sounded like a challenge from another world, issuing out of that solitary and solemn place.

"What says it?" answered the scout; "it speaks neither Indian nor English."

"Qui vive?" repeated the same voice, which was quickly followed by the rattling of arms, and a menacing attitude.

"France!" cried Heyward, advancing from the shadow of the trees to the shore of the pond, within a few yards of the sentinel.

"D'où venez-vous—où allez-vous, d'aussi bonne heure?" demanded the grenadier, in the language and with the accent of a man from old France.

Je viens de la découverte, et je vais me coucher."

"Êtes-vous officier du roi?"

Sans doute, mon camarade; me prends-tu pour un provincial. Je suis capitaine de chasseurs (Heyward well knew that the other was of a regiment in the line)—j'ai ici, avec moi, les filles du commandant de la fortification. Aha! tu en as entendu parler! je les ai fait prisonnières près de l'autre fort, et je les conduis au général."

"Ma foi! mesdames; j'en suis fâché pour vous," exclaimed the young soldier, touching his cap with grace; "mais—fortune de guerre! vous trouverez notre général un brave homme, et bien poli avec les dames."

"C'est le caractère des gens de guerre," said Cora, with admirable self-possession. "Adieu, mon ami; je vous souhaiterais un devoir plus agréable à remplir."

The soldier made a low and humble acknowledgment for her civility; and Heyward adding a "bonne nuit, mon camarade," they moved deliberately forward, leaving the sentinel pacing the banks of the silent pond, little suspecting an enemy of so much effrontery, and humming to himself those words, which were recalled to his mind by the sight of women, and perhaps by recollections of his own distant and beautiful France—

"'Tis well you understood the knave," whispered the scout, when they had gained a little distance from the place, and letting his rifle fall into the hollow of his arm again ; " I soon saw that he was one of them uneasy Frenchers ; and well for him it was that his speech was friendly and his wishes kind, or a place might have been found for his bones amongst those of his countrymen."

He was interrupted by a long and heavy groan which arose from the little basin, as though, in truth, the spirits of the departed lingered about their watery sepulchre.

" Surely, it was of flesh," continued the scout ; " no spirit could handle its arms so steadily."

" It *was* of flesh ; but whether the poor fellow still belongs to this world may well be doubted," said Heyward, glancing his eyes around him, and missing Chingachgook from their little band. Another groan more faint than the former was succeeded by a heavy and sullen plunge into the water, and all was as still again as if the borders of the dreary pool had never been awakened from the silence of creation. While they yet hesitated in uncertainty, the form of the Indian was seen gliding out of the thicket. As the chief rejoined them, with one hand he attached the reeking scalp of the unfortunate young Frenchman to his girdle, and with the other he replaced the knife and tomahawk that had drunk his blood. He then took his wonted station, with the air of a man who believed he had done a deed of merit.

The scout dropped one end of his rifle to the earth, and leaning his hands on the other, he stood musing in profound silence. Then, shaking his head in a mournful manner, he muttered—

" 'Twould have been a cruel and an inhuman act for a white-skin ; but 'tis the gift and natur' of an Indian, and I suppose it should not be denied. I could wish, though, it had befallen an accursed Mingo, rather than that gay young boy from the old countries."

" Enough," said Heyward, apprehensive the unconscious sisters might comprehend the nature of the detention, and conquering his disgust by a train of reflections very much like that of the hunter ; "'tis done ; and though better it were left undone, cannot be amended. You see we are, too obviously, within the sentinels of the enemy ; what course do you propose to follow ? "

" Yes," said Hawk-eye, rousing himself again, "'tis as you say, too late to harbor further thoughts about it. Ay, the

French have gathered around the fort in good earnest, and we have a delicate needle to thread in passing them."

"And but little time to do it in," added Heyward, glancing his eyes upwards, towards the bank of vapor that concealed the setting moon.

"And little time to do it in," repeated the scout. "The thing may be done in two fashions, by the help of Providence, without which it may not be done at all."

"Name them quickly, for time presses."

"One would be to dismount the gentle ones, and let their beasts range the plain; by sending the Mohicans in front, we might then cut a lane through their sentries, and enter the fort over the dead bodies."

"It will not do—it will not do!" interrupted the generous Heyward; "a soldier might force his way in this manner, but never with such a convoy."

"'Twould be, indeed, a bloody path for such tender feet to wade in," returned the equally reluctant scout; "but I thought it befitting my manhood to name it. We must then turn on our trail, and get without the line of their look-outs, when we will bend short to the west, and enter the mountains; where I can hide you, so that all the devil's hounds in Montcalm's pay would be thrown off the scent for months to come."

"Let it be done and that instantly."

Further words were unnecessary; for Hawk-eye, merely uttering the mandate to "follow," moved along the route by which they had just entered their present critical and even dangerous situation. Their progress, like their late dialogue, was guarded, and without noise; for none knew at what moment a passing patrol, or a crouching picket, of the enemy, might rise upon their path. As they held their silent way along the margin of the pond, again Heyward and the scout stole furtive glances at its appalling dreariness. They looked in vain for the form they had so recently seen stalking along its silent shores, while a low and regular wash of the little waves, by announcing that the waters were not yet subsided, furnished a frightful memorial of the deed of blood they had just witnessed. Like all that passing and gloomy scene, the low basin, however quickly melted in the darkness, and became blended with the mass of black objects, in the rear of the travellers.

Hawk-eye soon deviated from the line of their retreat, and striking off towards the mountains which form the western boundary of the narrow plain, he led his followers, with swift

steps, deep within the shadows that were cast from their high and broken summits. The route was now painful; lying over ground ragged with rocks, and intersected with ravines, and their progress proportionately slow. Bleak and black hills lay on every side of them, compensating in some degree for the additional toil of the march, by the sense of security they imparted. At length the party began slowly to rise a steep and rugged ascent, by a path that curiously wound among rocks and trees, avoiding the one, and supported by the other, in a manner that showed it had been devised by men long practised in the arts of the wilderness. As they gradually rose from the level of the valleys, the thick darkness which usually precedes the approach of day began to disperse, and objects were seen in the plain and palpable colors with which they had been gifted by nature. When they issued from the stunted woods which clung to the barren sides of the mountain, upon a flat and mossy rock that formed its summit, they met the morning as it came blushing above the green pines of a hill that lay on the opposite side of the valley of the Horican.

The scout now told the sisters to dismount; and taking the bridles from the mouths, and the saddles off the backs of the jaded beasts, he turned them loose, to glean a scanty subsistence among the shrubs and meagre herbage of that elevated region.

“Go,” he said, “and seek your food where natur’ gives it you; and beware that you become not food to ravenous wolves yourselves among these hills.”

“Have we no further need of them?” demanded Heyward.

“See, and judge with your own eyes,” said the scout, advancing towards the eastern brow of the mountain, whither he beckoned for the whole party to follow: “if it was as easy to look into the heart of man as it is to spy out the nakedness of Montcalm’s camp from this spot, hypocrites would grow scarce, and the cunning of a Mingo might prove a losing game, compared to the honesty of a Delaware.”

When the travellers reached the verge of the precipice, they saw at a glance, the truth of the scout’s declaration, and the admirable foresight with which he had led them to their commanding station.

The mountain on which they stood, elevated, perhaps, a thousand feet in the air, was a high cone that rose a little in advance of that range which stretches for miles along the western shores of the lake, until meeting its sister piles, beyond the water, it ran off towards the Canadas, in confused

and broken masses of rocks, thinly sprinkled with evergreen. Immediately at the feet of the party, the southern shore of the Horican swept in a broad semicircle, from mountain to mountain, marking a wide strand, that soon rose into an uneven and somewhat elevated plain. To the north, stretched the limpid, and, as it appeared from that dizzy height, the narrow sheet of the "holy lake," indented with numberless bays, embellished by fantastic headlands, and dotted with countless islands. At the distance of a few leagues, the bed of the waters became lost among mountains, or was wrapped in the masses of vapor that came slowly rolling along their bosom, before a light morning air. But a narrow opening between the crests of the hills pointed out the passage by which they found their way still further north, to spread their pure and ample sheets again, before pouring out their tribute to the distant Champlain. To the south stretched the defile, or rather broken plain, so often mentioned. For several miles in this direction, the mountains appeared reluctant to yield their dominion, but within reach of the eye they diverged, and finally melted into the level and sandy lands, across which we have accompanied our adventurers in their double journey. Along both ranges of hills, which bounded the opposite sides of the lake and valley, clouds of light vapor were arising in spiral wreaths from the uninhabited woods, looking like the smokes of hidden cottages; or rolled lazily down the declivities, to mingle with the fogs of the lower land. A single, solitary, snow-white cloud floated above the valley, and marked the spot beneath which lay the silent pool of the "bloody pond."

Directly on the shore of the lake, and nearer to its western than to its eastern margin, lay the extensive earthen ramparts and low buildings of William Henry. Two of the sweeping bastions appeared to rest on the water which washed their bases, while a deep ditch and extensive morasses guarded its other sides and angles. The land had been cleared of wood for a reasonable distance around the work, but every other part of the scene lay in the green livery of nature, except where the limpid water mellowed the view, or the bold rocks thrust their black and naked heads above the undulating outline of the mountain ranges. In its front might be seen the scattered sentinels, who held a weary watch against their numerous foes; and within the walls themselves, the travellers looked down upon men still drowsy with a night of vigilance. Towards the south-east, but in immediate con-

tact with the fort, was an entrenched camp, posted on a rocky eminence that would have been far more eligible for the work itself, in which Hawk-eye pointed out the presence of those auxiliary regiments that had so recently left the Hudson in their company. From the woods, a little further to the south, rose numerous dark and lurid smokes, that were easily to be distinguished from the purer exhalations of the springs, and which the scout also showed to Heyward, as evidence that the enemy lay in force in that direction.

But the spectacle which most concerned the young soldier was on the western bank of the lake, though quite near to its southern termination. On a strip of land, which appeared, from his stand, too narrow to contain such an army, but which, in truth, extended many hundreds of yards from the shores of the Horican to the base of the mountain, were to be seen the white tents and military engines of an encampment of ten thousand men. Batteries were already thrown up in their front, and even while the spectators above them were looking down, with such different emotions, on a scene which lay like a map beneath their feet, the roar of artillery rose from the valley, and passed off in thundering echoes, along the eastern hills.

“Morning is just touching them below,” said the deliberate and musing scout, “and the watchers have a mind to wake up the sleepers by the sound of cannon. We are a few hours too late! Montcalm has already filled the woods with his accursed Iroquois.”

“The place is, indeed, invested,” returned Duncan, “but is there no expedient by which we may enter? Capture in the works would be far preferable to falling again into the hands of roving Indians.”

“See!” exclaimed the scout, unconsciously directing the attention of Cora to the quarters of her own father, “how that shot has made the stones fly from the side of the commandant’s house! Ay! these Frenchers will pull it to pieces faster than it was put together, solid and thick though it be.”

“Heyward, I sicken at the sight of danger that I cannot share,” said the undaunted, but anxious daughter. “Let us go to Montcalm, and demand admission; he dare not deny a child the boon.”

“You would scarce find the tent of the Frenchman with the hair on your head,” said the blunt scout. “If I had but one of the thousand boats which lie empty along that shore, it might be done. Ha! here will soon be an end of the firing,

for yonder comes a fog that will turn day into night, and make an Indian arrow more dangerous than a moulded cannon. Now, if you are equal to the work, and will follow, I will make a push; for I long to get down into that camp, if it be only to scatter some Mingo dogs that I see lurking in the skirts of yonder thicket of birch."

"We are equal," said Cora firmly; "on such an errand we will follow to any danger."

The scout turned to her with a smile of honest and cordial approbation, as he answered,—

"I would I had a thousand men, of brawny limbs and quick eyes, that feared death as little as you! I'd send them jabbering Frenchers back into their den again, afore the week was ended, howling like so many fettered hounds or hungry wolves. But stir," he added, turning from her to the rest of the party, "the fog comes rolling down so fast, we shall have but just the time to meet it on the plain, and use it as a cover. Remember, if any accident should befall me, to keep the air blowing on your left cheeks—or, rather, follow the Mohicans; they'd scent their way, be it in day or be it at night."

He then waved his hand for them to follow, and threw himself down the steep declivity, with free but careful footsteps. Heyward assisted the sisters to descend, and in a few minutes, they were all far down a mountain whose sides they had climbed with so much toil and pain.

The direction taken by Hawk-eye soon brought the travellers to the level of the plain, nearly opposite to a sally-port in the western curtain of the fort, which lay, itself, at the distance of about half a mile from the point where he halted to allow Duncan to come up with his charge. In their eagerness, and favored by the nature of the ground, they had anticipated the fog, which was rolling heavily down to the lake, and it became necessary to pause, until the mists had wrapped the camp of the enemy in their fleecy mantle. The Mohicans profited by the delay, to steal out of the woods, and to make a survey of surrounding objects. They were followed at a distance by the scout, with a view to profit early by their report, and to obtain some faint knowledge for himself of the more immediate localities.

In a very few moments he returned, his face reddened with vexation, while he muttered his disappointment in words of no very gentle import.

"Here has the cunning Frenchman been posting a picket directly in our path," he said; "red-skins and whites; and

we shall be as likely to fall into their midst as to pass them in the fog !”

“ Cannot we make a circuit to avoid the danger,” asked Heyward, “ and come into our path again when it is passed ? ”

“ Who that once bends from the line of his march in a fog can tell when or how to turn to find it again ! The mists of Horican are not like the curls from a peace-pipe, or the smoke which settles above a mosquito fire.”

He was yet speaking, when a crashing sound was heard, and a cannon ball entered the thicket, striking the body of a sapling, and rebounding to the earth, its force being much expended by previous resistance. The Indians followed instantly like busy attendants on the terrible messenger, and Uncas commenced speaking earnestly, and with much action, in the Delaware tongue.

“ It may be so, lad,” muttered the scout, when he had ended ; “ for desperate fevers are not to be treated like a toothache. Come then, the fog is shutting in.”

“ Stop ! ” cried Heyward ; “ first explain your expectations.”

“ ’Tis soon done, and a small hope it is ; but it is better than nothing. This shot that you see,” added the scout, kicking the harmless iron with his foot, “ has ploughed the ’arth in its road from the fort, and we shall hunt for the furrow it has made, when all other signs may fail. No more words, but follow, or the fog may leave us in the middle of our path, a mark for both armies to shoot at.”

Heyward perceiving that, in fact, a crisis had arrived, when acts were more required than words, placed himself between the sisters, and drew them swiftly forward, keeping the dim figure of their leader in his eye. It was soon apparent that Hawk-eye had not magnified the power of the fog, for before they had proceeded twenty yards, it was difficult for the different individuals of the party to distinguish each other, in the vapor.

They had made their little circuit to the left, and were already inclining again towards the right, having, as Heyward thought, got over nearly half the distance to the friendly works, when his ears were saluted with the fierce summons, apparently within twenty feet of them, of—

“ *Qui va là ?* ”

“ Push on ! ” whispered the scout, once more bending to the left.

“ Push on ! ” repeated Heyward ; when the summons was

renewed by a dozen voices, each of which seemed charged with menace.

“C'est moi,” cried Duncan, dragging, rather than leading those he supported, swiftly onward.

“Bête!—qui?—moi!”

“Ami de la France.”

“Tu m'as plus l'air d'un *ennemi* de la France; arrete! ou pardieu je te ferai ami du diable. Non! feu, camarades! feu!”

The order was instantly obeyed, and the fog was stirred by the explosion of fifty muskets. Happily, the aim was bad, and the bullets cut the air in a direction a little different from that taken by the fugitives; though still so nigh them, that to the unpractised ears of David and the two females, it appeared as if they whistled within a few inches of the organs. The outcry was renewed, and the order, not only to fire again, but to pursue, was too plainly audible. When Heyward briefly explained the meaning of the words they heard Hawk-eye halted, and spoke with quick decision and great firmness.

“Let us deliver our fire,” he said; “they will believe it a sortie, and give way, or they will wait for reinforcements.”

The scheme was well conceived, but failed in its effect. The instant the French heard the pieces, it seemed as if the plain was alive with men, muskets rattling along its whole extent, from the shores of the lake to the furthest boundary of the woods.

“We shall draw their entire army upon us, and bring on a general assault,” said Duncan: “lead on, my friend, for your life, and ours.”

The scout seemed willing to comply; but, in the hurry of the moment, and in the change of position, he had lost the direction. In vain he turned either cheek towards the light air; they felt equally cool. In this dilemma, Uncas lighted on the furrow of the cannon ball, where it had cut the ground in three adjacent ant-hills.

“Give me the range!” said Hawk-eye, bending to catch a glimpse of the direction, and then instantly moving onward.

Cries, oaths, voices calling to each other, and the reports of muskets, were now quick and incessant, and, apparently, on every side of them. Suddenly, a strong glare of light flashed across the scene, the fog rolled upwards in thick wreaths, and several cannon belched across the plain, and the roar was thrown heavily back from the bellowing echoes of the mountain.

“'Tis from the fort!” exclaimed Hawk-eye, turning short

on his tracks ; “and we, like stricken fools, were rushing to the woods, under the very knives of the Maquas.”

The instant their mistake was rectified, the whole party retraced the error with the utmost diligence. Duncan willingly relinquished the support of Cora to the arm of Uncas, and Cora as readily accepted the welcome assistance. Men, hot and angry in pursuit, were evidently on their footsteps, and each instant threatened their capture, if not their destruction.

“Point de quartier aux coquins !” cried an eager pursuer, who seemed to direct the operations of the enemy.

“Stand firm, and be ready, my gallant 60ths !” suddenly exclaimed a voice above them ; “wait to see the enemy ; fire low, and sweep the glacis.”

“Father ! father !” exclaimed a piercing cry from out the mist ; “it is I ! Alice ! thy own Elsie ! spare, O, save your daughters !”

“Hold !” shouted the former speaker, in the awful tones of parental agony, the sound reaching even to the woods, and rolling back in solemn echo. “’Tis she ! God has restored me my children ! Throw open the sally-port ; to the field, 60ths, to the field ; pull not a trigger, lest ye kill my lambs ! Drive off these dogs of France with your steel.”

Duncan heard the grating of the rusty hinges, and darting to the spot, directed by the sound, he met a long line of dark-red warriors, passing swiftly towards the glacis. He knew them for his own battalion of the royal Americans, and flying to their head, soon swept every trace of his pursuers from before the works.

For an instant, Cora and Alice had stood trembling and bewildered by this unexpected desertion ; but, before either had leisure for speech, or even thought, an officer of gigantic frame, whose locks were bleached with years and service, but whose air of military grandeur had been rather softened than destroyed by time, rushed out of the body of the mist, and folded them to his bosom, while large scalding tears rolled down his pale and wrinkled cheeks, and he exclaimed, in the peculiar accent of Scotland,—

“For this I thank thee, Lord ! Let danger come as it will, thy servant is now prepared !”

CHAPTER XV.

Then go we in, to know his embassy ;
Which I could, with ready guess, declare,
Before the Frenchmen speak a word of it.

KING HENRY V.

A FEW succeeding days were passed amid the privations, the uproar, and the dangers of the siege, which was vigorously pressed by a power, against whose approaches Munro possessed no competent means of resistance. It appeared as if Webb, with his army, which lay slumbering on the banks of the Hudson, had utterly forgotten the strait to which his countrymen were reduced. Montcalm had filled the woods of the portage with his savages, every yell and whoop from whom rang through the British encampment, chilling the hearts of men who were already but too much disposed to magnify the danger.

Not so, however, with the besieged. Animated by the words, and stimulated by the examples, of their leaders, they had found their courage, and maintained their ancient reputation, with a zeal that did justice to the stern character of their commander. As if satisfied with the toil of marching through the wilderness to encounter his enemy, the French general, though of approved skill, had neglected to seize the adjacent mountains, whence the besieged might have been exterminated with impunity, and which, in the more modern warfare of the country, would not have been neglected for a single hour. This sort of contempt for eminences, or rather dread of the labor of ascending them, might have been termed the besetting weakness of the simplicity of the Indian contests, in which, from the nature of the combats, and the density of the forests, fortresses were rare, and artillery next to useless. The carelessness engendered by these usages descended even to the war of the revolution, and lost the States the important fortress of Ticonderoga, opening the way for the army of Burgoyne into what was then the bosom of the country. We look back at this ignorance, or infatuation, whichever it may be called, with wonder, knowing that the neglect of an eminence, whose difficulties, like those of Mount Defiance, have been so greatly exaggerated, would, at the present

time, prove fatal to the reputation of the engineer who had planned the works at their base, or to that of the general whose lot it was to defend them.

The tourist, the valetudinarian, or the amateur of the beauties of nature, who, in the train of his four-in-hand, now rolls through the scenes we have attempted to describe, in quest of information, health, or pleasure, or floats steadily towards his object on those artificial waters which have sprung up under the administration of a statesman * who has dared to stake his political character on the hazardous issue, is not to suppose that his ancestors traversed those hills, or struggled with the same currents with equal facility. The transportation of a single heavy gun was often considered equal to a victory gained ; if, happily, the difficulties of the passage had not so far separated it from its necessary concomitant, the ammunition, as to render it no more than a useless tube of unwieldy iron.

The evils of this state of things pressed heavily on the fortunes of the resolute Scotsman who now defended William Henry. Though his adversary neglected the hills, he had planted his batteries with judgment on the plain, and caused them to be served with vigor and skill. Against this assault, the besieged could only oppose the imperfect and hasty preparations of a fortress in the wilderness.

It was in the afternoon of the fifth day of the siege, and the fourth of his own service in it, that Major Heyward profited by a parley that had just been beaten, by repairing to the ramparts of one of the water bastions, to breathe the cool air from the lake, and to take a survey of the progress of the siege. He was alone, if the solitary sentinel who paced the mound be excepted ; for the artillerists, had hastened also to profit by the temporary suspension of their arduous duties. The evening was delightfully calm, and the light air from the limpid water fresh and soothing. It seemed as if, with the termination to the roar of artillery and the plunging of shot, nature had also seized the moment to assume her mildest and most captivating form. The sun poured down his parting glory on the scene, without the oppression of those fierce rays that belong to the climate and the season. The mountains looked green, and fresh, and lovely ; tempered with the milder light, or softened in shadow, as thin vapors floated between them and the sun. The numerous islands rested on the bosom of the Horican, some low and sunken,

* Evidently the late De Witt Clinton, who died governor of New York, in 1828.

as if imbedded in the waters, and others appearing to hover above the element, in little hillocks of green velvet ; among which the fishermen of the beleaguering army peacefully rowed their skiffs, or floated at rest on the glassy mirror, in quiet pursuit of their employment.

The scene was at once animated and still. All that pertained to nature, was sweet, or simply grand ; while those parts which depended on the temper and movements of man were lively and playful.

Two little spotless flags were abroad, the one on a salient angle of the fort, and the other on the advanced battery of the besiegers ; emblems of the truce which existed, not only to the acts, but it would seem, also, to the enmity of the combatants.

Behind these, again, swung, heavily opening and closing in silken folds, the rival standards of England and France.

A hundred gay and thoughtless young Frenchmen were drawing a net to the pebbly beach, within dangerous proximity to the sullen but silent cannon of the fort, while the eastern mountain was sending back the loud shouts and gay merriment that attended their sport. Some were rushing eagerly to enjoy the aquatic games of the lake, and others were already toiling their way up the neighboring hills, with the restless curiosity of their nation. To all these sports and pursuits, those of the enemy who watched the besieged, and the besieged themselves, were, however, merely the idle, though sympathizing spectators. Here and there a picket had, indeed, raised a song, or mingled in a dance, which had drawn the dusky savages around them, from their lairs in the forest. In short, everything wore rather the appearance of a day of pleasure, than of an hour stolen from the dangers and toil of a bloody and vindictive warfare.

Duncan had stood in a musing attitude, contemplating this scene a few minutes, when his eyes were directed to the glacis in front of the sally-port already mentioned, by the sounds of approaching footsteps. He walked to an angle of the bastion, and beheld the scout advancing, under the custody of a French officer, to the body of the fort. The countenance of Hawk-eye was haggard and careworn, and his air dejected, as though he felt the deepest degradation at having fallen into the power of his enemies. He was without his favorite weapon, and his arms were even bound behind him, with thongs, made of the skin of a deer. The arrival of flags to cover the messengers of summons, had occurred so often

of late, that when Heyward first threw his careless glance on this group, he expected to see another of the officers of the enemy, charged with a similar office ; but the instant he recognized the tall person, and still sturdy, though downcast, features of his friend, the woodsman, he started with surprise, and turned to descend from the bastion into the bosom of the work.

The sounds of other voices, however, caught his attention, and for a moment caused him to forget his purpose. At the inner angle of the mound he met the sisters, walking along the parapet, in search, like himself, of air and relief from confinement. They had not met since that painful moment when he deserted them on the plain, only to assure their safety. He had parted from them, worn with care and jaded with fatigue ; he now saw them refreshed and blooming, though timid and anxious. Under such an inducement, it will cause no surprise that the young man lost sight, for a time, of other objects in order to address them. He was, however, anticipated by the voice of the ingenuous and youthful Alice.

“ Ah ! thou truant ! thou recreant knight ! he who abandons his damsels in the very lists ! ” she cried ; “ here have we been days, nay, ages, expecting you at our feet, imploring mercy and forgetfulness of your craven backsliding ; or, I should rather say, back-running,—for verily you fled in a manner that no stricken deer, as our worthy friend the scout would say, could equal ! ”

“ You know that Alice means our thanks and our blessings,” added the grave and more thoughtful Cora. “ In truth, we have a little wondered why you should so rigidly absent yourself from a place where the gratitude of the daughters might receive the support of a parent’s thanks.”

“ Your father himself could tell you, that though absent from your presence, I have not been altogether forgetful of your safety,” returned the young man ; “ the mastery of yonder village of huts,” pointing to the neighboring entrenched camp, “ has been keenly disputed ; and he who holds it is sure to be possessed of this fort, and that which it contains. My days and my nights have all been passed there since we separated, because I thought that my duty called me thither. But, he added with an air of chagrin, which he endeavored, though unsuccessfully, to conceal, “ had I been aware that what I then believed a soldier’s conduct could be so construed, shame would have been added to the list of reasons.”

“Heyward!—Duncan!” exclaimed Alice, bending forward to read his half-averted countenance, until a lock of her golden hair rested on her flushed cheek, and nearly concealed the tear that had started to her eye; “did I think this idle tongue of mine had pained you, I would silence it forever. Cora can say, if Cora would, how justly we have prized your services, and how deep—I had almost said how fervent—is our gratitude.”

“And will Cora attest the truth of this?” cried Duncan, suffering the cloud to be chased from his countenance by a smile of open pleasure. “What says our graver sister? Will she find an excuse for the neglect of the knight in the duty of a soldier?”

Cora made no immediate answer, but turned her face towards the water, as if looking on the sheet of the Horican. When she did bend her dark eyes on the young man, they were yet filled with an expression of anguish that at once drove every thought but that of kind solicitude from his mind.

“You are not well, dearest Miss Munro!” he exclaimed; “we have trifled while you are in suffering.”

“’Tis nothing,” she answered, refusing his offered support with feminine reserve. “That I cannot see the sunny side of the picture of life, like this artless but ardent enthusiast,” she added, laying her hand lightly, but affectionately, on the arm of her sister, “is the penalty of experience, and, perhaps, the misfortune of nature. See,” she continued, as if determined to shake off infirmity, in a sense of duty; “look around you, Major Heyward, and tell me what a prospect is this for the daughter of a soldier whose greater happiness is his honor and his military renown.”

“Neither ought nor shall be tarnished by circumstances over which he has had no control,” Duncan warmly replied. “But your words recall me to my own duty. I go now to your gallant father, to hear his determination in matters of the last moment to the defence. God bless you in every fortune, noble—Cora—I may, and must call you.” She frankly gave him her hand, though her lip quivered, and her cheeks gradually became of an ashy paleness. “In every fortune, I know you will be an ornament and honor to your sex. Alice, adieu,”—his tone changed from admiration to tenderness—“adieu, Alice; we shall soon meet again; as conquerors, I trust, and amid rejoicings!”

Without waiting for an answer from either, the young man

threw himself down the grassy steps of the bastion, and moving rapidly across the parade, he was quickly in the presence of their father. Munro was pacing his narrow apartment, with a disturbed air and gigantic strides, as Duncan entered.

"You have anticipated my wishes, Major Heyward," he said; "I was about to request this favor."

"I am sorry to see, sir, that the messenger I so warmly recommended has returned in custody of the French! I hope there is no reason to distrust his fidelity?"

"The fidelity of 'The Long Rifle' is well known to me," returned Munro, "and is above suspicion; though his usual good fortune seems, at last, to have failed. Montcalm has got him, and with the accursed politeness of his nation, he has sent him in with a doleful tale, of 'knowing how I valued the fellow, he could not think of retaining him.' A Jesuitical way, that, Major Duncan Heyward, of telling a man of his misfortunes!"

"But the general and his succor!—"

"Did ye look to the south as ye enterea, and could ye not see them?" said the old soldier, laughing bitterly. "Hoot! hoot! you're an impatient boy, sir, and cannot give the gentlemen leisure for their march."

"They are coming then? The scout has said as much?"

"When? and by what path? for the dunce has omitted to tell me this. There is a letter, it would seem, too, and that is the only agreeable part of the matter. For the customary attentions of your Marquis of Montcalm—I warrant me, Duncan, that he of Lothian would buy a dozen such marquises—but, if the news of the letter were bad, the gentility of this French monsieur would certainly compel him to let us know it."

"He keeps the letter, then, while he releases the messenger?"

"Ay, that does he, and all for the sake of what you call your 'bonhomme.' I would venture, if the truth was known, the fellow's grandfather taught the noble science of dancing."

"But what says the scout? he has eyes and ears, and a tongue: what verbal report does he make?"

"Oh! sir, he is not wanting in natural organs, and he is free to tell all that he has seen and heard. The whole amount is this; there is a fort of his majesty's on the banks on the Hudson, called Edward, in honor of his gracious highness of York, you'll know; and it is well filled with armed men, as such a work should be."

“But was there no movement, no signs of any intentions to advance to our relief?”

“There were the morning and evening parades; and when one of the provincial loons—you’ll know, Duncan, you’re half a Scotsman yourself—when one of them dropped his powder over his porretch, if it touched the coals, it just burnt!” Then suddenly changing his bitter, ironical manner, to one more grave and thoughtful, he continued; “and yet there might, and must be something in that letter which it would be well to know!”

“Our decision should be speedy,” said Duncan, gladly availing himself of this change of humor, to press the more important objects of their interview. “I cannot conceal from you, sir, that the camp will not be much longer tenable; and I am sorry to add, that things appear no better in the fort;—more than half the guns are bursted.”

“And how should it be otherwise? Some were fished from the bottom of the lake; some have been rusting in the woods since the discovery of the country; and some were never guns at all—mere privateersmen’s playthings! Do you think, sir, you can have Woolwich Warren in the midst of a wilderness, three thousand miles from Great Britain?”

“The walls are crumbling about our ears, and provisions begin to fail us,” continued Heyward, without regarding this new burst of indignation; “even the men show signs of discontent and alarm.”

“Major Heyward,” said Munro, turning to his youthful associate with the dignity of his years and superior rank; “I should have served his majesty for half a century, and earned these gray hairs in vain, were I ignorant of all you say, and of the pressing nature of our circumstances; still, there is everything due to the honor of the king’s arms and something to ourselves. While there is hope of succor, this fortress will I defend, though it be to be done with pebbles gathered on the lake shore. It is a sight of the letter, therefore, that we want, that we may know the intentions of the man the Earl of Loudon has left among us as his substitute.”

“And can I be of service in the matter?”

“Sir, you can; the Marquis of Montcalm has, in addition to his other civilities, invited me to a personal interview between the works and his own camp; in order, as he says, to impart some additional information. Now, I think it would not be wise to show any undue solicitude to meet him, and I would employ you, an officer of rank, as my substitute; for it

would but ill comport with the honor of Scotland to let it be said one of her gentlemen was outdone in civility by a native of any other country on earth."

Without assuming the supererogatory task of entering into a discussion of the comparative merits of national courtesy, Duncan cheerfully assented to supply the place of the veteran in the approaching interview. A long and confidential communication now succeeded, during which the young man received some additional insight into his duty, from the experience and native acuteness of his commander, and then the former took his leave.

As Duncan could only act as the representative of the commandant of the fort, the ceremonies which should have accompanied a meeting between the heads of the adverse forces were, of course, dispensed with. The truce still existed, and with a roll and beat of the drum, and covered by a little white flag, Duncan left the sally-port, within ten minutes after his instructions were ended. He was received by the French officer in advance with the usual formalities, and immediately accompanied to a distant marquee of the renowned soldier who led the forces of France.

The general of the enemy received the youthful messenger, surrounded by his principal officers, and by a swarthy band of the native chiefs, who had followed him to the field, with the warriors of their several tribes. Heyward paused short, when, in glancing his eyes rapidly over the dark group of the latter, he beheld the malignant countenance of Magua, regarding him with the calm but sullen attention which marked the expression of that subtle savage. A slight exclamation of surprise even burst from the lips of the young man; but, instantly recollecting his errand, and the presence in which he stood, he suppressed every appearance of emotion, and turned to the hostile leader, who had already advanced a step to receive him.

The Marquis of Montcalm was, at the period of which we write, in the flower of his age, and, it may be added, in the zenith of his fortunes. But, even in that enviable situation, he was affable, and distinguished as much for his attention to the forms of courtesy, as for that chivalrous courage which, only two short years afterwards, induced him to throw away his life on the plains of Abraham. Duncan, in turning his eyes from the malign expression of Magua, suffered them to rest with pleasure on the smiling and polished features, and the noble military air, of the French general.

“Monsieur,” said the latter, “j’ai beaucoup de plaisir à—bah!—où est cet interprète?”

“Je crois, monsieur, qu’il ne sera pas nécessaire,” Heyward modestly replied; “je parle un peu Français.”

“Ah! j’en suis bien aise,” said Montcalm, taking Duncan familiarly by the arm, and leading him deep into the marquee, a little out of ear-shot; “je déteste ces fripons-là; on ne sait jamais sur quel pié on est avec eux. Eh, bien! monsieur,” he continued, still speaking in French; “though I should have been proud of receiving your commandant, I am very happy that he has seen proper to employ an officer so distinguished, and who, I am sure, is so amiable as yourself.”

Duncan bowed low, pleased with the compliment, in spite of a most heroic determination to suffer no artifice to allure him into forgetfulness of the interest of his prince; and Montcalm, after a pause of a moment, as if to collect his thoughts, proceeded,—

“Your commandant is a brave man, and well qualified to repel my assault. Mais, monsieur, is it not time to begin to take more council of humanity, and less of your courage? The one as strongly characterizes the hero as the other.”

“We consider the qualities as inseparable,” returned Duncan, smiling; “but while we find in the vigor of your excellency every motive to stimulate the one, we can, as yet, see no particular call for the exercise of the other.”

Montcalm, in his turn, slightly bowed, but it was with the air of a man too practised to remember the language of flattery. After musing a moment, he added,—

“It is possible my glasses have deceived me, and that your works resist our cannon better than I had supposed. You know our force?”

“Our accounts vary,” said Duncan, carelessly; “the highest, however, has not exceeded twenty thousand men.”

The Frenchman bit his lip, and fastened his eyes keenly on the other as if he read his thoughts; then, with a readiness peculiar to himself, he continued, as if assenting to the truth of an enumeration which quite doubled his army,—

“It is a poor compliment to the vigilance of us soldiers, monsieur, that, do what we will, we never can conceal our numbers. If it were to be done at all, one would believe it might succeed in these woods. Though you think it too soon to listen to the calls of humanity,” he added, smiling archly, “I may be permitted to believe that gallantry is not forgotten by one so young as yourself. The daughters of the

commandant, I learn, have passed into the fort since it was invested?"

"It is true, monsieur; but, so far from weakening our efforts, they set us an example of courage in their own fortitude. Were nothing but resolution necessary to repel so accomplished a soldier as M. de Montcalm, I would gladly trust the defence of William Henry to the elder of those ladies."

"We have a wise ordinance in our Salique laws, which says, 'the crown of France shall never degrade the lance to the distaff,'" said Montcalm, dryly, and with a little hauteur; but instantly adding, with his former frank and easy air, "as all the nobler qualities are hereditary, I can easily credit you; though, as I said before, courage has its limits, and humanity must not be forgotten. I trust, monsieur, you come authorized to treat for the surrender of the place?"

"Has your excellency found our defence so feeble as to believe the measure necessary?"

"I should be sorry to have the defence protracted in such a manner as to irritate my red friends there," continued Montcalm, glancing his eyes at the group of grave and attentive Indians, without attending to the other's question; "I find it difficult, even now, to limit them to the usages of war."

Heyward was silent; for a painful recollection of the dangers he had so recently escaped came over his mind, and recalled the images of those defenceless beings who had shared in all his sufferings.

"Ces messieurs-là," said Montcalm, following up the advantage which he conceived he had gained, "are most formidable, when baffled; and it is unnecessary to tell you with what difficulty they are restrained in their anger. Eh bien, monsieur! shall we speak of the terms?"

"I fear your excellency has been deceived as to the strength of William Henry, and the resources of its garrison!"

"I have not sat down before Quebec, but an earthen work, that is defended by twenty-three hundred gallant men," was the laconic reply.

"Our mounds are earthen, certainly—nor are they seated on the rocks of Cape Diamond;—but they stand on that shore which proved so destructive to Dieskau and his army. There is also a powerful force within a few hours' march of us, which we account upon as part of our means."

"Some six or eight thousand men," returned Montcalm, with much apparent indifference, "whom their leader wisely judges to be safer in their works than in the field."

It was now Heyward's turn to bite his lip with vexation, as the other so coolly alluded to a force which the young man knew to be overrated. Both mused a little while in silence, when Montcalm renewed the conversation, in a way that showed he believed the visit of his guest was solely to propose terms of capitulation. On the other hand, Heyward began to throw sundry inducements in the way of the French general, to betray the discoveries he had made through the intercepted letter. The artifice of neither, however, succeeded; and after a protracted and fruitless interview, Duncan took his leave, favorably impressed with an opinion of the courtesy and talents of the enemy's captain, but as ignorant of what he came to learn as when he arrived. Montcalm followed him as far as the entrance of the marquee, renewing his invitations to the commandant of the fort to give him an immediate meeting in the open ground, between the two armies.

There they separated, and Duncan returned to the advanced post of the French, accompanied as before; whence he instantly proceeded to the fort, and to the quarters of his own commander.

CHAPTER XVI.

Edg.—Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.

LEAR.

MAJOR HEYWARD found Munro attended only by his daughters. Alice sate upon his knee, parting the gray hairs on the forehead of the old man with her delicate fingers; and, whenever he affected to frown on her trifling, appeasing his assumed anger by pressing her ruby lips fondly on his wrinkled brow. Cora was seated nigh them, a calm and amused looker-on: regarding the wayward movements of her more youthful sister, with that species of maternal fondness which characterized her love for Alice. Not only the dangers through which they had passed, but those which still im-

pended above them, appeared to be momentarily forgotten, in the soothing indulgence of such a family meeting. It seemed as if they had profited by the short truce, to devote an instant to the purest and best affections ; the daughters forgetting their fears, and the veteran his cares, in the security of the moment. Of this scene, Duncan, who in his eagerness to report his arrival had entered unannounced, stood many moments an unobserved and a delighted spectator. But the quick and dancing eyes of Alice soon caught a glimpse of his figure reflected from a glass, and she sprang blushing from her father's knee, exclaiming aloud,—

“ Major Heyward ! ”

“ What of the lad ? ” demanded her father ; “ I have sent him to crack a little with the Frenchman. Ha ! sir, you are young, and you're nimble ! Away with you, ye baggage ; as if there were not troubles enough for a soldier, without having his camp filled with such prattling hussies as yourself ! ”

Alice laughingly followed her sister, who instantly led the way from an apartment where she perceived their presence was no longer desirable. Munro, instead of demanding the result of the young man's mission, paced the room for a few moments, with his hands behind his back, and his head inclined towards the floor, like a man lost in thought. At length he raised his eyes, glistening with a father's fondness, and exclaimed,—

“ They are a pair of excellent girls, Heyward, and such as any one may boast of.”

“ You are not now to learn my opinion of your daughters, Colonel Munro.”

“ True, lad, true,” interrupted the impatient old man ; “ you were about opening your mind more fully on that matter the day you got in ; but I did not think it becoming in an old soldier to be talking of nuptial blessings and wedding jokes when the enemies of his king were likely to be unbidden guests at the feast ! But I was wrong, Duncan, boy, I was wrong there ; and I am now ready to hear what you have to say.”

“ Notwithstanding the pleasure your assurance gives me, dear sir, I have, just now, a message from Montcalm,—”

“ Let the Frenchman and all his host go to the devil, sir ! ” exclaimed the hasty veteran. “ He is not yet master of William Henry, nor shall he ever be, provided Webb proves himself the man he should. No, sir ! thank heaven, we are not yet in such a strait that it can be said Munro is too much

pressed to discharge the little domestic duties of his own family. Your mother was the only child of my bosom friend, Duncan ; and I'll just give you a hearing, though all the knights of St. Louis were in a body at the sally-port, with the French saint at their head, craving to speak a word under favor. A pretty degree of knighthood, sir, is that which can be bought with sugar-hogsheads ! and then your two-penny marquises ! The thistle is the order for dignity and antiquity ; the veritable ' nemo me impune lacessit ' of chivalry ! Ye had ancestors in that degree, Duncan, and they were an ornament to the nobles of Scotland."

Heyward, who perceived that his superior took a malicious pleasure in exhibiting his contempt for the message of the French general, was fain to humor a spleen that he knew would be short-lived ; he therefore replied with as much indifference as he could assume on such a subject,—

"My request, as you know, sir, went so far as to presume to the honor of being your son."

"Ay, boy, you found words to make yourself very plainly comprehended. But, let me ask ye, sir, have ye been as intelligible to the girl ?"

"On my honor, no," exclaimed Duncan, warmly ; "there would have been an abuse of a confided trust, had I taken advantage of my situation for such a purpose."

"Your notions are those of a gentleman, Major Heyward, and well enough in their place. But Cora Munro is a maiden too discreet, and of a mind too elevated and improved, to need the guardianship even of a father"

"Cora !"

"Ay—Cora ! we are talking of your pretensions to Miss Munro, are we not, sir ?"

"I—I—I was not conscious of having mentioned her name," said Duncan, stammering.

"And to marry whom, then, did you wish my consent, Major Heyward ?" demanded the old soldier, erecting himself in the dignity of offended feeling.

"You have another, and not less lovely child."

"Alice !" exclaimed the father, in an astonishment equal to that with which Duncan had just repeated the name of her sister.

"Such was the direction of my wishes, sir."

The young man waited in silence the result of the extraordinary effect produced by a communication which, as it now appeared, was so unexpected. For several minutes Munro

paced the chamber with long and rapid strides, his rigid features working convulsively, and every faculty seemingly absorbed in the musings of his own mind. At length, he paused directly in front of Heyward, and riveting his eyes upon those of the other, he said, with a lip that quivered violently,—

“Duncan Heyward, I have loved you for the sake of him whose blood is in your veins; I have loved you for your own good qualities; and I have loved you, because I thought you would contribute to the happiness of my child. But all this love would turn to hatred, were I assured that what I so much apprehend is true.”

“God forbid that any act or thought of mine should lead to such a change!” exclaimed the young man, whose eye never quailed under the penetrating look it encountered. Without adverting to the impossibility of the other’s comprehending those feelings which were hid in his own bosom, Munro suffered himself to be appeased by the unaltered countenance he met, and with a voice sensibly softened, he continued—

“You would be my son, Duncan, and you’re ignorant of the history of the man you wish to call your father. Sit ye down, young man, and I will open to you the wounds of a seared heart, in as few words as may be suitable.”

By this time, the message of Montcalm was as much forgotten by him who bore it as by the man for whose ears it was intended. Each drew a chair, and while the veteran communed a few moments with his own thoughts, apparently in sadness, the youth suppressed his impatience in a look and attitude of respectful attention. At length the former spoke—

“You know, already, Major Heyward, that my family was both ancient and honorable,” commenced the Scotsman; “though it might not altogether be endowed with that amount of wealth that should correspond with its degree. I was, maybe, such an one as yourself when I plighted my faith to Alice Graham, the only child of a neighboring laird of some estate. But the connection was disagreeable to her father, on more accounts than my poverty. I did, therefore, what an honest man should—restored the maiden her troth, and departed the country in the service of my king. I had seen many regions, and had shed much blood in different lands, before duty called me to the islands of the West Indies. There it was my lot to form a connection with one who in

time became my wife, and the mother of Cora. She was the daughter of a gentleman of those isles, by a lady whose misfortune it was, if you will," said the old man, proudly, "to be descended, remotely, from that unfortunate class who are so basely enslaved to administer to the wants of a luxurious people. Ay, sir, that is a curse entailed on Scotland by her unnatural union with a foreign and trading people. But could I find a man among them who would dare to reflect on my child, he should feel the weight of a father's anger! Ha! Major Heyward, you are yourself born at the south, where these unfortunate beings are considered of a race inferior to your own."

"'Tis most unfortunately true, sir," said Duncan, unable any longer to prevent his eyes from sinking to the floor in embarrassment.

"And you cast it on my child as a reproach! You scorn to mingle the blood of the Heywards with one so degraded—lovely and virtuous though she be?" fiercely demanded the jealous parent.

"Heaven protect me from a prejudice so unworthy of my reason!" returned Duncan, at the same time conscious of such a feeling, and that as deeply rooted as if it had been ingrafted in his nature. "The sweetness, the beauty, the witchery of your younger daughter, Colonel Munro, might explain my motives, without imputing to me this injustice."

"Ye are right, sir," returned the old man, again changing his tones to those of gentleness, or rather softness; "the girl is the image of what her mother was at her years, and before she had become acquainted with grief. When death deprived me of my wife I returned to Scotland, enriched by the marriage; and would you think it, Duncan! the suffering angel had remained in the heartless state of celibacy twenty long years, and that for the sake of a man who could forget her! She did more, sir; she overlooked my want of faith, and all difficulties being now removed, she took me for her husband."

"And became the mother of Alice?" exclaimed Duncan, with an eagerness that might have proved dangerous at a moment when the thoughts of Munro were less occupied than at present.

"She did, indeed," said the old man, "and dearly did she pay for the blessing she bestowed. But she is a saint in heaven, sir; and it ill becomes one whose foot rests on the grave to mourn a lot so blessed. I had her but a single year,

though ; a short term of happiness for one who had seen her youth fade in hopeless pining."

There was something so commanding in the distress of the old man, that Heyward did not dare to venture a syllable of consolation. Munro sat utterly unconscious of the other's presence, his features exposed and working with the anguish of his regrets, while heavy tears fell from his eyes, and rolled unheeded from his cheeks to the floor. At length he moved, as if suddenly recovering his recollection ; when he arose, and taking a single turn across the room, he approached his companion with an air of military grandeur, and demanded,—

"Have you not, Major Heyward, some communication that I should hear from the Marquis de Montcalm?"

Duncan started, in his turn, and immediately commenced, in an embarrassed voice, the half-forgotten message. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the evasive, though polite manner, with which the French general had eluded every attempt of Heyward to worm from him the purport of the communication he had proposed making, or on the decided, though still polished message, by which he now gave his enemy to understand, that unless he chose to receive it in person, he should not receive it at all. As Munro listened to the detail of Duncan, the excited feelings of the father gradually gave way before the obligations of his station, and when the other was done, he saw before him nothing but the veteran, swelling with the wounded feelings of a soldier.

"You have said enough, Major Heyward!" exclaimed the angry old man ; "enough to make a volume of commentary on French civility. Here has this gentleman invited me to a conference, and when I send him a capable substitute, for ye're all that, Duncan, though your years are but few, he answers me with a riddle."

"He may have thought less favorably of the substitute, my dear sir ; and you will remember that the invitation, which he now repeats, was to the commandant of the works, and not to his second."

"Well, sir, is not a substitute clothed with all the power and dignity of him who grants the commission? He wishes to confer with Munro! Faith, sir, I have much inclination to indulge the man, if it should only be to let him behold the firm countenance we maintain in spite of his numbers and his summons. There might be no bad policy in such a stroke upon a young man."

Duncan, who believed it of the last importance that they should speedily come at the contents of the letter borne by the scout, gladly encouraged this idea.

"Without doubt, he could gather no confidence by witnessing our indifference," he said.

"You never said truer word. I could wish, sir, that he would visit the works in open day, and in the form of a storming party: that is the least failing method of proving the countenance of an enemy, and would be far preferable to the battering system he has chosen. The beauty and manliness of warfare have been much deformed, Major Heyward, by the arts of your Monsieur Vauban. Our ancestors were far above such scientific cowardice."

"It may be very true, sir; but we are now obliged to repel art by art. What is your pleasure in the matter of the interview?"

"I will meet the Frenchman, and that without fear or delay; promptly, sir, as becomes a servant of my royal master. Go, Major Heyward, and give them a flourish of the music; and send out a messenger to let them know who is coming. We will follow with a small guard, for such respect is due to one who holds the honor of his king in keeping; hark'ee, Duncan," he added, in a half whisper, though they were alone, "it may be prudent to have some aid at hand, in case there should be treachery at bottom of it all."

The young man availed himself of this order to quit the apartment; and, as the day was fast coming to a close, he hastened, without delay, to make the necessary arrangements. A very few minutes only were necessary to parade a few files, and to despatch an orderly with a flag to announce the approach of the commandant of the fort. When Duncan had done both these he led the guard to the sally port, near which he found his superior ready, waiting his appearance. As soon as the usual ceremonials of a military departure were observed the veteran and his more youthful companion left the fortress, attended by the escort.

They had proceeded only a hundred yards from the works, when the little array which attended the French general to the conference, was seen issuing from the hollow way, which formed the bed of a brook that ran between the batteries of the besiegers and the fort. From the moment that Munro left his own works to appear in front of his enemies, his air had been grand, and his step and countenance highly military. The instant he caught a glimpse of the white plume that

waved in the hat of Montcalm, his eye lighted, and age no longer appeared to possess any influence over his vast and still muscular person.

“Speak to the boys to be watchful, sir,” he said, in an undertone, to Duncan; “and to look well to their flints and steel, for one is never safe with a servant of these Louis; at the same time, we will show them the front of men in deep security. Ye’ll understand me, Major Heyward!”

He was interrupted by the clamor of a drum from the approaching Frenchmen, which was immediately answered, when each party pushed an orderly in advance, bearing a white flag, and the wary Scotsman halted, with his guard close at his back. As soon as this slight salutation had passed, Montcalm moved towards them with a quick but graceful step, baring his head to the veteran, and dropping his spotless plume nearly to the earth in courtesy. If the air of Munro was more commanding and manly, it wanted both the ease and insinuating polish of that of the Frenchman. Neither spoke for a few moments, each regarding the other with curious and interested eyes. Then, as became his superior rank and the nature of the interview, Montcalm broke the silence. After uttering the usual words of greeting, he turned to Duncan, and continued, with a smile of recognition, speaking always in French,—

“I am rejoiced, monsieur, that you have given us the pleasure of your company on this occasion. There will be no necessity to employ an ordinary interpreter; for, in your hands, I feel the same security as if I spoke your language myself.”

Duncan acknowledged the compliment, when Montcalm, turning to his guard, which, in imitation of that of their enemies, pressed close upon him, continued,—

“En arrière, mes enfans—il fait chaud; retirez-vous un peu.”

Before Major Heyward would imitate his proof of confidence, he glanced his eyes around the plain, and beheld with uneasiness the numerous dusky groups of savages, who looked out from the margin of the surrounding woods, curious spectators of the interview.

“Monsieur de Montcalm will readily acknowledge the difference in our situation,” he said, with some embarrassment, pointing at the same time towards those dangerous foes, who were to be seen in almost every direction. “Were

we to dismiss our guard, we should stand here at the mercy of our enemies."

"Monsieur, you have the plighted faith of 'un gentilhomme Français,' for your safety," returned Montcalm, laying his hand impressively on his heart; "it should suffice."

"It shall. Fall back," Duncan added to the officer who led the escort; "fall back, sir, beyond hearing, and wait for orders."

Munro witnessed this movement with manifest uneasiness; nor did he fail to demand an instant explanation.

"Is it not our interest, sir, to betray no distrust?" retorted Duncan. "Monsieur de Montcalm pledges his word for our safety, and I have ordered the men to withdraw a little, in order to prove how much we depend on his assurance."

"It may be all right, sir, but I have no overweening reliance on the faith of these marquesses, or marquis, as they call themselves. Their patents of nobility are too common to be certain that they bear the seal of true honor."

"You forget, dear sir, that we confer with an officer, distinguished alike in Europe and America for his deeds. From a soldier of his reputation we can have nothing to apprehend."

The old man made a gesture of resignation, though his rigid features still betrayed his obstinate adherence to a distrust, which he derived from a sort of hereditary contempt of his enemy, rather than from any present signs which might warrant so uncharitable a feeling. Montcalm waited patiently until this little dialogue in demi-voice was ended, when he drew nigher, and opened the subject of their conference.

"I have solicited this interview from your superior, monsieur," he said, "because I believe he will allow himself to be persuaded, that he has already done everything which is necessary for the honor of his prince, and will now listen to the admonitions of humanity. I will forever bear testimony that his resistance has been gallant, and was continued as long as there was hope."

When this opening was translated to Munro, he answered with dignity, but with sufficient courtesy,—

"However I may prize such testimony from Monsieur Montcalm, it will be more valuable when it shall be better merited."

The French general smiled, as Duncan gave him the purport of this reply, and observed—

"What is now so freely accorded to approved courage, may

be refused to useless obstinacy. Monsieur would wish to see my camp, and witness for himself our numbers, and the impossibility of his resisting them with success?"

"I know that the king of France is well served," returned the unmoved Scotsman, as soon as Duncan ended his translation; "but my own royal master has as many and as faithful troops."

"Though not at hand, fortunately for us," said Montcalm, without waiting, in his rador, for the interpreter. "There is a destiny in war, to which a brave man knows how to submit with the same courage that he faces his foes."

"Had I been conscious that Monsieur Montcalm was master of the English, I should have spared myself the trouble of so awkward a translation," said the vexed Duncan, dryly; remembering instantly his recent by-play with Munro.

"Your pardon, monsieur," rejoined the Frenchman, suffering a slight color to appear on his dark cheek. "There is a vast difference between understanding and speaking a foreign tongue; you will, therefore, please to assist me still." Then after a short pause, he added, "These hills afford us every opportunity of reconnoitring your works, messieurs, and I am, possibly, as well acquainted with their weak condition as you can be yourselves."

"Ask the French general if his glasses can reach to the Hudson," said Munro, proudly; "and if he knows when and where to expect the army of Webb."

"Let General Webb be his own interpreter," returned the politic Montcalm, suddenly extending an open letter towards Munro as he spoke. "You will there learn, monsieur, that his movements are not likely to prove embarrassing to my army."

The veteran seized the offered paper, without waiting for Duncan to translate the speech, and with an eagerness that betrayed how important he deemed its contents. As his eye passed hastily over the words, his countenance changed from its look of military pride to one of deep chagrin; his lip began to quiver, and, suffering the paper to fall from his hand, his head dropped upon his chest, like that of a man whose hopes were withered at a single blow. Duncan caught the letter from the ground, and without apology for the liberty he took, he read at a glance its cruel purport. Their common superior, so far from encouraging them to resist, advised a speedy surrender, urging in the plainest language as a reason,

the utter impossibility of his sending a single man to their rescue.

"Here is no deception!" exclaimed Duncan, examining the billet both inside and out; "this is the signature of Webb, and must be the captured letter."

"The man has betrayed me!" Munro at length bitterly exclaimed: "he has brought dishonor to the door of one where disgrace was never before known to dwell, and shame has he heaped heavily on my gray hairs."

"Say not so," cried Duncan; "we are yet masters of the fort, and of our honor. Let us then sell our lives at such a rate as shall make our enemies believe the purchase too dear."

"Boy, I thank thee," exclaimed the old man, rousing himself from his stupor; "you have, for once, reminded Munro of his duty. We will go back, and dig our graves behind those ramparts."

"Messieurs," said Montcalm, advancing towards them a step, in generous interest, "you little know Louis de St. Veran, if you believe him capable of profiting by this letter to humble brave men, or to build up a dishonest reputation for himself. Listen to my terms before you leave me."

"What says the Frenchman?" demanded the veteran, sternly; "does he make a merit of having captured a scout, with a note from head-quarters? Sir, he had better raise this siege, to go and sit down before Edward if he wishes to frighten his enemy with words."

Duncan explained the other's meaning.

"Monsieur de Montcalm, we will hear you," the veteran added, more calmly, as Duncan ended.

"To retain the fort is now impossible," said his liberal enemy; "it is necessary to the interests of my master that it should be destroyed; but, as for yourselves, and your brave comrades, there is no privilege dear to a soldier that shall be denied."

"Our colors?" demanded Heyward.

"Carry them to England, and show them to your king."

"Our arms?"

"Keep them; none can use them better."

"Our march; the surrender of the place?"

"Shall all be done in a way most honorable to yourselves."

Duncan now turned to explain these proposals to his commander, who heard him with amazement, and a sensibility

that was deeply touched by so unusual and unexpected generosity.

“Go you, Duncan,” he said; “go with this marquis, as indeed marquis he should be; go to his marquis, and arrange it all. I have lived to see two things in my old age, that never did I expect to behold,—an Englishman afraid to support a friend, and a Frenchman too honest to profit by his advantage.”

So saying, the veteran again dropped his head to his chest, and returned slowly towards the fort, exhibiting, by the dejection of his air, to the anxious garrison, a harbinger of evil tidings.

From the shock of this unexpected blow the haughty feelings of Munro never recovered; but from that moment there commenced a change in his determined character, which accompanied him to a speedy grave. Duncan remained to settle the terms of the capitulation. He was seen to re-enter the works during the first watches of the night, and immediately after a private conference with the commandant, to leave them again. It was then openly announced, that hostilities must cease—Munro having signed a treaty, by which the place was to be yielded to the enemy, with the morning; the garrison to retain their arms, their colors, and their baggage, and consequently, according to military opinion, their honor.

CHAPTER XVII.

Weave we the woof. The thread is spun.
The web is wove. The work is done.

GRAY.

THE hostile armies, which lay in the wilds of the Horican, passed the night of the ninth of August, 1757, much in the manner they would had they encountered on the fairest field of Europe. While the conquered were still, sullen, and dejected, the victors triumphed. But there are limits alike to grief and joy; and long before the watches of the morning came, the stillness of those boundless woods was only broken by a gay call from some exulting young Frenchman of the advanced pickets, or a menacing challenge from the fort, which sternly forbade the approach of any hostile footsteps before

the stipulated moment. Even these occasional threatening sounds ceased to be heard in that dull hour which precedes the day, at which period a listener might have sought in vain any evidence of the presence of those armed powers that then slumbered on the shores of the "holy lake."

It was during these moments of deep silence, that the canvas which concealed the entrance to a spacious marquee in the French encampment was shoved aside, and a man issued from beneath the drapery into the open air. He was enveloped in a cloak that might have been intended as a protection from the chilling damps of the woods, but which served equally well as a mantle, to conceal his person. He was permitted to pass the grenadier, who watched over the slumbers of the French commander, without interruption, the man making the usual salute which betokens military deference, as the other passed swiftly through the little city of tents, in the direction of William Henry. Whenever this unknown individual encountered one of the numberless sentinels who crossed his path, his answer was prompt and, as it appeared, satisfactory; for he was uniformly allowed to proceed, without further interrogation.

With the exception of such repeated, but brief interruptions, he had moved, silently, from the centre of the camp, to its most advanced outposts, when he drew nigh the soldier who held his watch nearest to the works of the enemy. As he approached he was received with the usual challenge,—

"Qui vive?"

"France," was the reply.

"Le mot d'ordre?"

"La victoire," said the other, drawing so nigh as to be heard in a loud whisper.

"C'est bien," returned the sentinel, throwing his musket from the charge to his shoulder; "vous vous promenez bien matin, monsieur!"

"Il est nécessaire d'être vigilant, mon enfant," the other observed, dropping a fold of his cloak, and looking the soldier close in the face, as he passed him, still continuing his way towards the British fortification. The man started; his arms rattled heavily, as he threw them forward, in the lowest and most respectful salute; and when he had again recovered his piece, he turned to walk his post, muttering between his teeth—

"Il faut être vigilant, en vérité! je crois que nous avons là, un caporal qui ne dort jamais!"

The officer proceeded, without affecting to hear the words which escaped the sentinel in his surprise ; nor did he again pause until he had reached the low strand, and in a somewhat dangerous vicinity to the western water bastion of the fort. The light of an obscure moon was just sufficient to render objects, though dim, perceptible in their outlines. He, therefore, took the precaution to place himself against the trunk of a tree, where he leaned for many minutes, and seemed to contemplate the dark and silent mounds of the English works in profound attention. His gaze at the ramparts was not that of a curious or idle spectator ; but his looks wandered from point to point, denoting his knowledge of military usages, and betraying that his search was not unaccompanied by distrust. At length he appeared satisfied ; and having cast his eyes impatiently upward towards the summit of the eastern mountain, as if anticipating the approach of the morning, he was in the act of turning on his footsteps, when a light sound on the nearest angle of the bastion caught his ear and induced him to remain.

Just then a figure was seen to approach the edge of the rampart, where it stood, apparently contemplating in its turn the distant tents of the French encampment. Its head was then turned towards the east, as though equally anxious for the appearance of light, when the form leaned against the mound, and seemed to gaze upon the glassy expanse of the waters, which, like a submarine firmament, glittered with its thousand mimic stars. The melancholy air, the hour, together with the vast frame of the man who thus leaned, in musing, against the English ramparts, left no doubt as to his person, in the mind of the observant spectator. Delicacy, no less than prudence, now urged him to retire ; and he had moved cautiously round the body of the tree for that purpose, when another sound drew his attention, and once more arrested his footsteps. It was a low, and almost inaudible movement of the water, and was succeeded by a grating of pebbles one against the other. In a moment he saw a dark form rise, as it were out of the lake, and steal without further noise to the land, within a few feet of the place where he himself stood. A rifle next slowly rose between his eyes and the watery mirror ; but before it could be discharged his own hand was on the lock.

“ Hugh ! ” exclaimed the savage, whose treacherous aim was so singularly and so unexpectedly interrupted.

Without making any reply, the French officer laid his hand

on the shoulder of the Indian, and led him in profound silence to a distance from the spot, where their subsequent dialogue might have proved dangerous and where it seemed that one of them, at least, sought a victim. Then, throwing open his cloak, so as to expose his uniform and the cross of St. Louis which was suspended at his breast, Montcalm sternly demanded,—

“What means this! does not my son know that the hatchet is buried between the English and his Canadian Father?”

“What can the Hurons do?” returned the savage, speaking also, though imperfectly, in the French language. “Not a warrior has a scalp, and the pale faces make friends!”

“Ha! *Le Renard Subtil!* Methinks this is an excess of zeal for a friend who was so late an enemy? How many suns have set since *Le Renard* struck the war post of the English?”

“Where is that sun?” demanded the sullen savage. “Behind the hill; and it is dark and cold. But when he comes again, it will be bright and warm. *Le Subtil* is the sun of his tribe. There have been clouds, and many mountains between him and his nation; but now he shines, and it is a clear sky!”

“That *Le Renard* has power with his people, I well know,” said Montcalm; “for yesterday he hunted for their scalps, and to-day they hear him at the council fire.”

“*Magua* is a great chief.”

“Let him prove it, by teaching his nation how to conduct towards our new friends.”

“Why did the chief of the Canadas bring his young men into the woods, and fire his cannon at the earthen house?” demanded the subtle Indian.

“To subdue it. My master owns the land, and your father was ordered to drive off these English squatters. They have consented to go, and now he calls them enemies no longer.”

“’Tis well. *Magua* took the hatchet to color it with blood. It is now bright; when it is red, it shall be buried.”

“But *Magua* is pledged not to sully the lilies of France. The enemies of the great king across the salt lake are his enemies; his friends, the friends of the Hurons.”

“Friends!” repeated the Indian, in scorn. “Let his father give *Magua* a hand.”

Montcalm, who felt that his influence over the warlike tribes he had gathered was to be maintained by concession

rather than by power, complied reluctantly with the other's request. The savage placed the finger of the French commander on a deep scar on his bosom, and then exultingly demanded,—

“Does my father know that?”

“What warrior does not? 'tis where a leaden bullet has cut.”

“And this?” continued the Indian, who had turned his naked back to the other, his body being without its usual calico mantle.

“This, my son, has been sadly injured, here; who has done this?”

“Magua slept hard in the English wigwams, and the sticks have left their mark,” returned the savage with a hollow laugh, which did not conceal the fierce temper that nearly choked him. Then recollecting himself, with sudden and native dignity, he added—“Go; teach your young men it is peace. Le Renard Subtil knows how to speak to a Huron warrior.”

Without deigning to bestow further words, or to wait for any answer, the savage cast his rifle into the hollow of his arm, and moved silently through the encampment towards the woods where his own tribe was known to lie. Every few yards as he proceeded he was challenged by the sentinels; but he stalked sullenly onward, utterly disregarding the summons of the soldiers, who only spared his life because they knew the air and tread no less than the obstinate daring of an Indian.

Montcalm lingered long and melancholy on the strand where he had been left by his companion, brooding deeply on the temper which his ungovernable ally had just discovered. Already had his fair fame been tarnished by one horrid scene, and in circumstances fearfully resembling those under which he now found himself. As he mused he became keenly sensible of the deep responsibility they assume, who disregard the means to attain their end, and of all the danger of setting in motion an engine which it exceeds human power to control. Then shaking off a train of reflections, that he accounted a weakness in such a moment of triumph, he retraced his steps towards his tent, giving the order as he passed, to make the signal that should arouse the army from its slumbers.

The first tap of the French drums was echoed from the bosom of the fort, and presently the valley was filled with the strains of martial music, rising long, thrilling, and lively above

the rattling accompaniment. The horns of the victors sounded merry and cheerful flourishes, until the last laggard of the camp was at his post; but the instant the British fifes had blown their shrill signal, they became mute. In the meantime the day had dawned, and when the line of the French army was ready to receive its general the rays of a brilliant sun were glancing along the glittering array. Then that success, which was already so well known, was officially announced; the favored band who were selected to guard the gates of the fort were detailed, and defiled before their chief; the signal of their approach was given, and all the usual preparations for a change of masters were ordered and executed directly under the guns of the contested works.

A very different scene presented itself within the lines of the Anglo-American army. As soon as the warning signal was given, it exhibited all the signs of a hurried and forced departure. The sullen soldiers shouldered their empty tubes and fell into their places, like men whose blood had been heated by the past contest, and who only desired the opportunity to revenge an indignity which was still wounding to their pride, concealed as it was under all the observances of military etiquette. Women and children ran from place to place, some bearing the scanty remnants of their baggage, and others searching in the ranks for those countenances they looked up to for protection.

Munro appeared among his silent troops firm but dejected. It was evident that the unexpected blow had struck deep into his heart, though he struggled to sustain his misfortune with the port of a man.

Duncan was touched at the quiet and impressive exhibition of his grief. He had discharged his own duty, and he now pressed to the side of the old man, to know in what particular he might serve him.

"My daughters," was the brief but expressive reply.

"Good heavens! are not arrangements already made for their convenience?"

"To-day I am only a soldier, Major Heyward," said the veteran. "All that you see here, claim alike to be my children."

Duncan had heard enough. Without losing one of those moments which had now become so precious, he flew towards the quarters of Munro, in quest of the sisters. He found them on the threshold of the low edifice, already prepared to depart, and surrounded by a clamorous and weeping assem-

blage of their own sex, that had gathered about the place, with a sort of instinctive consciousness that it was the point most likely to be protected. Though the cheeks of Cora were pale, and her countenance anxious, she had lost none of her firmness; but the eyes of Alice were inflamed, and betrayed how long and bitterly she had wept. They both, however received the young man with undisguised pleasure; the former, for a novelty, being the first to speak.

"The fort is lost," she said, with a melancholy smile; "though our good name, I trust, remains."

"'Tis brighter than ever. But, dearest Miss Munro, it is time to think less of others, and to make some provision for yourself. Military usage—pride—that pride on which you so much value yourself, demands that your father and I should for a little while continue with the troops. Then where to seek a proper protector for you against the confusion and chances of such a scene?"

"None is necessary," returned Cora; "who will dare to injure or insult the daughter of such a father, at a time like this?"

"I would not leave you alone," continued the youth, looking about him in a hurried manner, "for the command of the best regiment in the pay of the king. Remember, our Alice is not gifted with all your firmness, and God only knows the terror she might endure."

"You may be right," Cora replied, smiling again, but far more sadly than before. "Listen; chance has already sent us a friend when he is most needed."

Duncan did listen, and on the instant comprehended her meaning. The low and serious sounds of the sacred music, so well known to the eastern provinces, caught his ear, and instantly drew him to an apartment in an adjacent building, which had already been deserted by its customary tenants. There he found David, pouring out his pious feelings, through the only medium in which he ever indulged. Duncan waited, until, by the cessation of the movement of the hand, he believed the strain was ended, when, by touching his shoulder, he drew the attention of the other to himself, and in a few words explained his wishes.

"Even so," replied the single-minded disciple of the King of Israel, when the young man had ended; "I have found much that is comely and melodious in the maidens, and it is fitting that we who have consorted in so much peril, should abide together in peace. I will attend them, when I have

completed my morning praise, to which nothing is now wanting but the doxology. Wilt thou bear a part, friend? The metre is common, and the tune 'Southwell.' "

Then extending the little volume, and giving the pitch of the air anew with considerate attention, David recommenced and finished his strains, with a fixedness of manner that it was not easy to interrupt. Heyward was fain to wait until the verse was ended; when, seeing David relieving himself from the spectacles, and replacing the book, he continued,—

"It will be your duty to see that none dare to approach the ladies with any rude intention, or to offer insult or taunt at the misfortune of their brave father. In this task you will be seconded by the domestics of their household."

"Even so."

"It is possible that the Indians and stragglers of the enemy may intrude, in which case you will remind them of the terms of the capitulation, and threaten to report their conduct to Montcalm. A word will suffice."

"If not I have that here which shall," returned David, exhibiting his book with an air in which meekness and confidence were singularly blended. "Here are words which, uttered, or rather thundered, with proper emphasis, and in measured time, shall quiet the most unruly temper:—

'Why rage the heathen furiously!'

"Enough," said Heyward, interrupting the burst of his musical invocation: "we understand each other; it is time that we should now assume our respective duties."

Gamut cheerfully assented, and together they sought the females. Cora received her new, and somewhat extraordinary protector, courteously at least; and even the pallid features of Alice lighted again with some of their native archness as she thanked Heyward for his care. Duncan took occasion to assure them he had done the best that circumstances permitted, and, as he believed, quite enough for the security of their feelings; of danger there was none. He then spoke gladly of his intention to rejoin them the moment he had led the advance a few miles towards the Hudson, and immediately took his leave.

By this time the signal of departure had been given, and the head of the English column was in motion. The sisters started at the sound, and glancing their eyes around, they saw the white uniforms of the French grenadiers, who had already taken possession of the gates of the fort. At that moment, an enormous cloud seemed to pass suddenly above

their heads, and looking upward, they discovered that they stood beneath the white folds of the standard of France.

“Let us go,” said Cora; “this is no longer a fit place for the children of an English officer.”

Alice clung to the arm of her sister, and together they left the parade, accompanied by the moving throng that surrounded them.

As they passed the gates, the French officers, who had learned their rank, bowed often and low, forbearing, however, to intrude those attentions, which they saw, with peculiar tact, might not be agreeable. As every vehicle and each beast of burden was occupied by the sick and wounded, Cora had decided to endure the fatigues of a foot march, rather than interfere with their comforts. Indeed, many a maimed and feeble soldier was compelled to drag his exhausted limbs in the rear of the columns, for the want of the necessary means of conveyance, in that wilderness. The whole, however, was in motion: the weak and wounded, groaning, and in suffering; their comrades, silent and sullen; and the women and children in terror, they knew not of what.

As the confused and timid throng left the protecting mounds of the fort, and issued on the open plain, the whole scene was at once presented to their eyes. At a little distance on the right, and somewhat in the rear, the French army stood to their arms, Montcalm having collected his parties, so soon as his guards had possession of the works. They were attentive but silent observers of the proceedings of the vanquished, failing in none of their stipulated military honors, and offering no taunt or insult, in their success, to their less fortunate foes. Living masses of the English, to the amount, in the whole, of near three thousand, were moving slowly across the plain, towards the common centre, and gradually approached each other, as they converged to the point of their march. A vista cut through the lofty trees, where the road to the Hudson entered the forest. Along the sweeping borders of the woods, hung a dark cloud of savages, eyeing the passage of their enemies, and hovering at a distance, like vultures, who were only kept from swooping on their prey, by the presence and restraint of a superior army. A few had straggled among the conquered columns, where they stalked in sullen discontent; attentive, though, as yet, passive observers of the moving multitude.

The advance, with Heyward at its head, had already reached the defile, and was slowly disappearing, when the attention of Cora was drawn to a collection of stragglers, by the

sounds of contention. A truant provincial was paying the forfeit of his disobedience, by being plundered of those very effects which had caused him to desert his place in the ranks. The man was of powerful frame, and too avaricious to part with his goods without a struggle. Individuals from either party interfered; the one side to prevent, and the other to aid in the robbery. Voices grew loud and angry, and a hundred savages appeared, as it were by magic, where a dozen only had been seen a minute before. It was then that Cora saw the form of Magua gliding among his countrymen, and speaking with his fatal and artful eloquence. The mass of women and children stopped, and hovered together like alarmed and fluttering birds. But the cupidity of the Indian was soon gratified, and the different bodies again moved slowly onward.

The savages now fell back, and seemed content to let their enemies advance without further molestation. But as the female crowd approached them, the gaudy colors of a shawl attracted the eyes of a wild and untutored Huron. He advanced to seize it, without the least hesitation. The woman, more in terror than through love of the ornament, wrapped her child in the coveted article, and folded both more closely to her bosom. Cora was in the act of speaking, with an intent to advise the woman to abandon the trifle, when the savage relinquished his hold of the shawl, and tore the screaming infant from her arms. Abandoning everything to the greedy grasp of those around her, the mother darted, with distraction in her mien, to reclaim her child. The Indian smiled grimly, and extended one hand, in sign of a willingness to exchange, while with the other, he flourished the babe over his head, holding it by the feet as if to enhance the value of the ransom.

“Here—here—there—all—any—everything!” exclaimed the breathless woman; tearing the lighter articles of dress from her person, with ill-directed and trembling fingers,—“take all, but give me my babe.”

“The savage spurned the worthless rags and perceiving that the shawl had already become a prize to another, his bantering but sullen smile changing to a gleam of ferocity, he dashed the head of the infant against a rock, and cast its quivering remains to her very feet. For an instant, the mother stood, like a statue of despair, looking wildly down at the unseemly object, which had so lately nestled in her bosom and smiled in her face; and then she raised her eyes and

countenance towards heaven, as if calling on God to curse the perpetrator of the foul deed. She was spared the sin of such a prayer ; for, maddened at his disappointment, and excited at the sight of blood, the Huron mercifully drove his tomahawk into her own brain. The mother sank under the blow, and fell, grasping at her child, in death, with the same engrossing love that had caused her to cherish it when living.

At that dangerous moment, Magua, placed his hands to his mouth, and raised the fatal and appalling whoop. The scattered Indians started at the well known cry, as coursers bound at the signal to quit the goal ; and, directly, there arose such a yell along the plain, and through the arches of the wood, as seldom burst from human lips before. They who heard it, listened with a curdling horror at the heart, little inferior to that dread which may be expected to attend the blasts of the final summons.

More than two thousand raving savages broke from the forest at the signal, and threw themselves across the fatal plain with instinctive alacrity. We shall not dwell on the revolting horrors that succeeded. Death was everywhere, and in his most terrific and disgusting aspects. Resistance only served to inflame the murderers, who inflicted their furious blows long after their victims were beyond the power of their resentment. The flow of blood might be likened to the outbreaking of a torrent, and as the natives became heated and maddened by the sight, many among them even kneeled to the earth, and drank freely, exultingly, hellishly, of the crimson tide.

The trained bodies of the troops threw themselves quickly into solid masses, endeavoring to awe their assailants by the imposing appearance of a military front. The experiment in some measure succeeded, though far too many suffered their unloaded muskets to be torn from their hands, in the vain hope of appeasing the savages.

In such a scene none had leisure to note the fleeting moments. It might have been ten minutes (it seemed an age), that the sisters had stood riveted to one spot, horror-stricken, and nearly helpless. When the first blow was struck, their screaming companions had pressed upon them in a body, rendering flight impossible ; and now that fear or death had scattered most, if not all, from around them, they saw no avenue open, but such as conducted to the tomahawks of their foes. On every side arose shrieks, groans, exhortations, and curses. At this moment, Alice caught a glimpse of the vast form of

her father, moving rapidly across the plain, in the direction of the French army. He was, in truth, proceeding to Montcalm, fearless of every danger, to claim the tardy escort, for which he had before conditioned. Fifty glittering axes and barbed spears were offered unheeded at his life, but the savages respected his rank and calmness, even in their fury. The dangerous weapons were brushed aside by the still nervous arm of the veteran, or fell of themselves, after menacing an act that it would seem no one had courage to perform. Fortunately, the vindictive Magua was searching for his victim in the very band the veteran had just quitted.

“Father—father—we are here!” shrieked Alice, as he passed, at no great distance, without appearing to heed them. “Come to us, father, or we die!”

The cry was repeated, and in terms and tones that might have melted a heart of stone, but it was unanswered. Once, indeed, the old man appeared to catch the sounds, for he paused and listened; but Alice had dropped senseless on the earth, and Cora had sunk at her side, hovering in untiring tenderness over her lifeless form. Munro shook his head in disappointment, and proceeded, bent on the high duty of his station.

“Lady,” said Gamut, who, helpless and useless as he was, had not yet dreamed of deserting his trust, “it is the jubilee of the devils, and this is not a meet place for Christians to tarry in. Let us up and fly.”

“Go,” said Cora, still gazing at her unconscious sister; “save thyself. To me thou canst not be of further use.”

David comprehended the unyielding character of her resolution, by the simple but expressive gesture that accompanied her words. He gazed, for a moment, at the dusky forms that were acting their hellish rites on every side of him, and his tall person grew more erect, while his chest heaved, and every feature swelled, and seemed to speak with the power of the feelings by which he was governed.

“If the Jewish boy might tame the evil spirit of Saul by the sound of his harp, and the words of sacred song, it may not be amiss,” he said, “to try the potency of music here.”

Then raising his voice to its highest tones, he poured out a strain so powerful as to be heard even amid the din of that bloody field. More than one savage rushed towards them, thinking to rifle the unprotected sisters of their attire and bear away their scalps; but when they found this strange and unmoved figure riveted to his post, they paused to listen. Astonishment soon changed to admiration, and they passed on to

other, and less courageous victims, openly expressing their satisfaction at the firmness with which the white warrior sang his death song. Encouraged and deluded by his success, David exerted all his powers to extend what he believed so holy an influence. The unwonted sounds caught the ears of a distant savage, who flew raging from group to group, like one who, scorning to touch the vulgar herd, hunted for some victim more worthy of his renown. It was Magua, who uttered a yell of pleasure when he beheld his ancient prisoners again at his mercy.

"Come," he said, laying his soiled hands on the dress of Cora, "the wigwam of the Huron is still open. Is it not better than this place?"

"Away!" cried Cora, veiling her eyes from his revolting aspect.

The Indian laughed tauntingly, as he held up his reeking hand, and answered, "It is red, but it comes from white veins!"

"Monster! there is blood, oceans of blood, upon thy soul: thy spirit has moved this scene."

"Magua is a great chief!" returned the exulting savage:—"will the dark hair go to his tribe?"

"Never! strike, if thou wilt, and complete thy revenge."

He hesitated a moment; and then catching the light and senseless form of Alice in his arms, the subtle Indian moved swiftly across the plain towards the woods.

"Hold!" shrieked Cora, following wild lyon his footsteps; "release the child! wretch! what is't you do?"

But Magua was deaf to her voice; or, rather, he knew his power, and was determined to maintain it.

"Stay—lady—stay," called Gamut, after the unconscious Cora. "The holy charm is beginning to be felt, and soon shall thou see this horrid tumult stilled."

Perceiving that, in his turn, he was unheeded, the faithful David followed the distracted sister, raising his voice again in sacred song, and sweeping the air to the measure, with his long arm, in diligent accompaniment. In this manner they traversed the plain, through the flying, the wounded and the dead. The fierce Huron was, at any time, sufficient for himself and the victim that he bore; though Cora would have fallen, more than once, under the blows of her savage enemies, but for the extraordinary being who stalked in her rear, and who now appeared to the astonished native gifted with the protecting spirit of madness.

Magua, who knew how to avoid the more pressing dangers

and also to elude pursuit, entered the woods through a low ravine, where he quickly found the Narragansetts, which the travellers had abandoned so shortly before, awaiting his appearance, in custody of a savage as fierce and as malign in his expression as himself. Laying Alice on one of the horses, he made a sign to Cora to mount the other.

Notwithstanding the horror excited by the presence of her captor, there was a present relief in escaping from the bloody scene enacting on the plain, to which Cora could not be altogether insensible. She took her seat, and held forth her arms for her sister, with an air of entreaty and love that even the Huron could not deny. Placing Alice, then, on the same animal with Cora, he seized the bridle, and commenced his route by plunging deeper into the forest. David, perceiving that he was left alone, utterly disregarded as a subject too worthless even to destroy, threw his long limb across the saddle of the beast they had deserted, and made such progress in the pursuit as the difficulties of the path permitted.

They soon began to ascend ; but as the motion had a tendency to revive the dormant faculties of her sister, the attention of Cora was too much divided between the tenderest solicitude in her behalf, and in listening to the cries which were still too audible on the plain, to note the direction in which they journeyed. When, however, they gained the flattened surface of the mountain-top, and approached the eastern precipice, she recognized the spot to which she had once before been led under the more friendly auspices of the scout. Here Magua suffered them to dismount ; and, notwithstanding their own captivity the curiosity which seems inseparable from horror, induced them to gaze at the sickening sight below.

The cruel work was still unchecked. On every side the captured were flying before their relentless persecutors, while the armed columns of the Christian king stood fast in an apathy which has never been explained, and which has left an immovable blot on the otherwise fair escutcheon of their leader. Nor was the sword of death stayed until cupidity got the mastery of revenge. Then, indeed, the shrieks of the wounded and the yell of their murderers grew less frequent until, finally, the cries of horror were lost to their ear, or were drowned in the loud, long, and piercing whoops of the triumphant savages.*

* The accounts of the number who fell in this unhappy affair, vary between five and fifteen hundred

CHAPTER XVIII.

Why, anything ;
 An honorable murderer, if you will ;
 For naught I did in hate, but all in honor.

OTHELLO.

THE bloody and inhuman scene, rather incidentally mentioned than described in the preceding chapter, is conspicuous in the pages of colonial history, by the merited title of "The Massacre of William Henry." It so far deepened the stain which a previous and very similar event had left upon the reputation of the French commander, that it was not entirely erased by his early and glorious death. It is now becoming obscured by time ; and thousands, who know that Montcalm died like a hero on the plains of Abraham, have yet to learn how much he was deficient in that moral courage without which no man can be truly great. Pages might be written to prove, from this illustrious example, the defects of human excellence ; to show how easy it is for generous sentiments, high courtesy, and chivalrous courage, to lose their influence beneath their chilling blight of selfishness, and to exhibit to the world a man who was great in all the minor attributes of character, but who was found wanting when it became necessary to prove how much principle is superior to policy. But the task would exceed our prerogatives ; and, as history, like love, is so apt to surround her heroes with an atmosphere of imaginary brightness, it is probable that Louis de Saint Veran will be viewed by posterity only as the gallant defender of his country, while his cruel apathy on the shores of the Oswego and of the Horican will be forgotten. Deeply regretting this weakness on the part of a sister muse, we shall at once retire from her sacred precincts, within the proper limits of our humble vocation.

The third day from the capture of the fort was drawing to a close, but the business of the narrative must still detain the reader on the shores of the "holy lake." When last seen, the environs of the works were filled with violence and uproar. They were now possessed by stillness and death. The blood

stained conquerors had departed ; and their camp, which had so lately rung with the merry rejoicings of a victorious army, lay a silent and deserted city of huts. The fortress was a smouldering ruin ; charred rafters, fragments of exploded artillery, and rent mason-work, covering its earthen mounds in confused disorder.

A frightful change had also occurred in the season. The sun had hid its warmth behind an impenetrable mass of vapor, and hundreds of human forms, which had blackened beneath the fierce heats of August, were stiffening in their deformity, before the blasts of a premature November. The curling and spotless mists, which had been seen sailing above the hills towards the north, were now returning in an interminable dusky sheet, that was urged along by the fury of a tempest. The crowded mirror of the Horican was gone ; and, in its place, the green and angry waters lashed the shores, as if indignantly casting back its impurities to the polluted strand. Still the clear fountain retained a portion of its charmed influence, but it reflected only the sombre gloom that fell from the impending heavens. That humid and congenial atmosphere which commonly adorned the view, veiling its harshness, and softening its asperities, had disappeared, and the northern air poured across the waste of water so harsh and unmingled, that nothing was left to be conjectured by the eye or fashioned by the fancy.

The fiercer element had cropped the verdure of the plain, which looked as though it were scathed by the consuming lightning. But, here and there, a dark green tuft rose in the midst of the desolation ; the earliest fruits of a soil that had been fattened with human blood. The whole landscape, which, seen by a favoring light, and in a genial temperature, had been found so lovely, appeared now like some pictured allegory of life, in which objects were arrayed in their hardest but truest colors, and without the relief of any shadowing.

The solitary and arid blades of grass arose from the passing gusts fearfully perceptible ; the bold and rocky mountains were too distinct in their barrenness, and the eye even sought relief in vain, by attempting to pierce the illimitable void of heaven, which was shut to its gaze by the dusky sheet of ragged and driving vapor.

The wind blew unequally ; sometimes sweeping heavily along the ground, seeming to whisper its moanings in the cold ears of the dead, then, rising in a shrill and mournful whistling, it entered the forest with a rush that filled the air with

the leaves and branches it scattered in its path. Amid the unnatural shower, a few hungry ravens struggled with the gale; but no sooner was the green ocean of woods which stretched beneath them, passed, than they gladly stopped, at random, to their hideous banquet.

In short, it was a scene of wildness and desolation, and it appeared as if all who had profanely entered it had been stricken, at a blow, by the relentless arm of death. But the prohibition had ceased; and, for the first time since the perpetrators of those foul deeds which had assisted to disfigure the scene, were gone, living human beings had now presumed to approach the place.

About an hour before the setting of the sun, on the day already mentioned, the forms of five men might have been seen issuing from the narrow vista of trees, where the path to the Hudson entered the forest, and advancing in the direction of the ruined works. At first their progress was slow and guarded, as though they entered with reluctance amid the horrors of the spot, or dreaded the renewal of its frightful incidents. A light figure preceded the rest of the party, with the caution and activity of a native; ascending every hillock to reconnoitre, and indicating by gestures, to his companions, the route he deemed it most prudent to pursue. Nor were those in the rear wanting in every caution and foresight known to forest warfare. One among them—he also was an Indian—moved a little on one flank, and watched the margin of the woods, with eyes long accustomed to read the smallest sign of danger. The remaining three were white, though clad in vestments adapted, both in quality and color, to their present hazardous pursuit,—that of hanging on the skirts of a retiring army in the wilderness.

The effects produced by the appalling sights that constantly arose in their path to the lake shore, were as different as the characters of the respective individuals who composed the party. The youth in front threw serious but furtive glances at the mangled victims, as he stepped lightly across the plain, afraid to exhibit his feelings, and yet too inexperienced to quell entirely their sudden and powerful influence. His red associate, however, was superior to such a weakness. He passed the groups of dead with a steadiness of purpose, and an eye so calm, that nothing but long and inveterate practice could enable him to maintain. The sensations produced in the minds of even the white men were different, though uniformly sorrowful. One, whose gray locks

and furrowed lineaments, blending with a martial air and tread, betrayed, in spite of the disguise of a woodman's dress, a man long experienced in scenes of war, was not ashamed to groan aloud, whenever a spectacle of more than usual horror came under his view. The young man at his elbow shuddered, but seemed to suppress his feelings in tenderness to his companion. Of them all, the straggler who brought up the rear, appeared alone to betray his real thoughts, without fear of observation or dread of consequences. He gazed at the most appalling sight with eyes and muscles that knew not how to waver, but with execrations so bitter and deep as to denote how much he denounced the crime of his enemies.

The readers will perceive at once, in these respective characters, the Mohicans, and their white friend, the scout; together with Munro and Heyward. It was, in truth, the father in quest of his children, attended by the youth who felt so deep a stake in their happiness, and those brave and trusty foresters, who had already proved their skill and fidelity through the trying scenes related.

When Uncas, who moved in front, had reached the centre of the plain, he raised a cry that drew his companions in a body to the spot. The young warrior had halted over a group of females who lay in a cluster, a confused mass of dead. Notwithstanding the revolting horror of the exhibition, Munro and Heyward flew towards the festering heap, endeavoring, with a love that no unseemliness could extinguish, to discover whether any vestiges of those they sought were to be seen among the tattered and many-colored garments. The father and the lover found instant relief in the search; though each was condemned again to experience the misery of an uncertainty that was hardly less insupportable than the most revolting truth. They were standing, silent and thoughtful, around the melancholy pile, when the scout approached. Eying the sad spectacle with an angry countenance, the sturdy woodsman, for the first time since his entering the plain, spoke intelligibly and aloud,—

“I have been on many a shocking-field, and have followed a trail of blood for weary miles,” he said, “but never have I found the hand of the devil so plain as it is here to be seen! Revenge is an Indian feeling, and all who know me know that there is no cross in my veins; but this much will I say, —here, in the face of heaven, and with the power of the Lord so manifest in this howling wilderness,—that should these Frenchers ever trust themselves again within the range

of a ragged bullet, there is one rifle shall play its part, so long as flint will fire or powder burn! I leave the tomahawk and knife to such as have a natural gift to use them. What say you, Chingachgook," he added in Delaware; "shall the Hurons boast of this to their women when the deep snows come?"

A gleam of resentment flashed across the dark lineaments of the Mohican chief; he loosened his knife in his sheath; and then, turning calmly from the sight, his countenance settled into a repose as deep as if he never knew the instigation of passion.

"Montcalm! Montcalm!" continued the deeply resentful and self-restrained scout; "they say a time must come, when all the deeds done in the flesh will be seen at a single look; and that by eyes cleared from mortal infirmities. Woe betide the wretch who is born to behold this plain, with the judgment hanging about his soul! Ha—as I am a man of white blood, yonder lies a red-skin, without the hair of his head where nature rooted it! Look to him, Delaware; it may be one of your missing people; and he should have burial like a stout warrior. I see it in your eye, Sagamore; a Huron pays for this, afore the fall winds have blown away the scent of the blood!"

Chingachgook approached the mutilated form, and turning it over, he found the distinguished marks of one of those six allied tribes, or nations, as they were called, who, while they fought in the English ranks, were so deadly hostile to his own people. Spurning the loathsome object with his foot, he turned from it with the same indifference he would have quitted a brute carcass. The scout comprehended the action, and very deliberately pursued his own way, continuing, however, his denunciations against the French commander in the same resentful strain.

"Nothing but vast wisdom and unlimited power should dare to sweep off men in multitudes," he added; "for it is only the one that can know the necessity of the judgment; and what is there short of the other that can replace the creatures of the Lord? I hold it a sin to kill the second buck afore the first is eaten, unless a march in the front, or an ambushment, be contemplated. It is a different matter with a few warriors in open and rugged fight, for 'tis their gift to die with the rifle or the tomahawk in hand, according as their natures may happen to be white or red. Uncas, come this way, lad, and let the ravens settle upon the Mingo. I know,

from often seeing it, that they have a craving for the flesh of an Oneida ; and it is as well to let the bird follow the gift of its natural appetite."

"Hugh!" exclaimed the young Mohican, rising on the extremities of his feet, and gazing intently in his front, frightening the raven to some other prey, by the sound and the action.

"What is it, boy?" whispered the scout, lowering his tall form into a crouching attitude, like a panther about to take his leap. "God send it be a tardy Frencher, skulking for plunder. I do believe 'Killdeer' would take an uncommon range to-day!"

Uncas, without making any reply, bounded away from the spot, and in the next instant he was seen tearing from a bush, and waving in triumph, a fragment of the green riding veil of Cora. The movement, the exhibition, and the cry, which again burst from the lips of the young Mohican, instantly drew the whole party about him.

"My child!" said Munro, speaking quick and wildly ; "give me my child!"

"Uncas will try," was the short and touching answer.

The simple but meaning assurance was lost on the father, who seized the piece of gauze, and crushed it in his hand, while his eyes roamed fearfully among the bushes, as if he equally dreaded and hoped for the secrets they might reveal.

"Here are no dead," said Heyward ; "the storm seems not to have passed this way."

"That's manifest ; and clearer than the heavens above our heads," returned the undisturbed scout ; "but either she or they that have robbed her, have passed the bush ; for I remember the rag she wore to hide a face that all did love to look upon. Uncas, you are right ; the dark-hair has been here, and she has fled, like a frightened fawn, to the wood ; none who could fly would remain to be murdered. Let us search for the marks she left ; for to Indian eyes, I sometimes think even a humming-bird leaves his trail in the air."

The young Mohican darted away at the suggestion, and the scout had hardly done speaking, before the former raised a cry of success from the margin of the forest. On reaching the spot, the anxious party perceived another portion of the veil fluttering on the lower branch of the beech.

"Softly, softly," said the scout, extending his long rifle in front of the eager Heyward ; "we now know our work, but the beauty of the trail must not be deformed. A step too

soon may give us hours of trouble. We have them though; that much is beyond denial."

"Bless ye, bless ye, worthy man!" exclaimed Munro: "whither, then, have they fled, and where are my babes?"

"The path they have taken depends on many chances. If they have gone alone, they are quite as likely to move in a circle as straight, and they may be within a dozen miles of us, but if the Hurons, or any of the French Indians, have laid hands on them, 'tis probable they are now near the borders of the Canadas. But what matters that?" continued the deliberate scout, observing the powerful anxiety and disappointment the listeners exhibited; "here are the Mohicans and I on one end of the trail, and rely on it, we find the other, though they should be a hundred leagues asunder! Gently, gently, Uncas, you are as impatient as a man in the settlements; you forget that light feet leave but faint marks!"

"Hugh!" exclaimed Chingachgook, who had been occupied in examining an opening that had been evidently made through the low underbrush which skirted the forest; and who now stood erect, as he pointed downwards, in the attitude and with the air of a man who beheld a disgusting serpent.

"Here is the palpable impression of the footstep of a man," cried Heyward, bending over the indicated spot: "he has trod in the margin of this pool, and the mark cannot be mistaken. They are captives."

"Better so than left to starve in the wilderness," returned the scout; "and they will leave a wider trail. I would wager fifty beaver skins against as many flints, that the Mohicans and I enter their wigwams within the month! Stoop to it, Uncas, and try what you can make of the moccasin; for moccasin it plainly is, and no shoe."

The young Mohican bent over the track, and removing the scattered leaves from around the place, he examined it with much of that sort of scrutiny, that a money-dealer, in these days of pecuniary doubts, would bestow on a suspected due-bill. At length he arose from his knees, satisfied with the result of the examination.

"Well, boy," demanded the attentive scout, "what does it say? can you make anything of the tell-tale?"

"Le Renard Subtil!"

"Ha! that rampaging devil again! there never will be an end of his loping, till 'Kill-deer' has said a friendly word to him."

Heyward reluctantly admitted the truth of this intelligence,

and now expressed rather his hopes than his doubts by saying,—

“One moccasin is so much like another, it is probable there is some mistake.”

“One moccasin like another ! you may as well say that one foot is like another ; though we all know that some are long, and others short ; some broad, and others narrow ; some with high, and some with low insteps ; some in-toed, and some out. One moccasin is no more like another than one book is like another ; though they who can read in one are seldom able to tell the marks of the other. Which is all ordered for the best, giving to every man his natural advantages. Let me get down to it, Uncas ; neither book nor moccasin is the worse for having two opinions, instead of one.” The scout stooped to the task, and instantly added, “You are right, boy ; here is the patch we saw so often in the other chase. And the fellow will drink when he can get an opportunity : your drinking Indian always learns to walk with a wider toe than the natural savage, it being the gift of a drunkard to straddle, whether of white or red skin. ’Tis just the length and breadth, too ! look at it, Sagamore : you measured the prints more than once, when we hunted the varments from Glenn’s to the health-springs.”

Chingachgook complied ; and after finishing his short examination, he arose, and with a quiet demeanor, he merely pronounced the word,—

“Magua.”

“Ay, ’tis a settled thing ; here then have passed the dark-hair and Magua ”

“And not Alice ?” demanded Heyward.

“Of her we have not yet seen the signs,” returned the scout, looking closely around at the trees, the bushes, and the ground. “What have we there ? Uncas, bring hither the thing you see dangling from yonder thorn-bush.”

When the Indian had complied, the scout received the prize, and holding it on high, he laughed in his silent but heartfelt manner.

“’Tis the tooting we’pon of the singer ! now we shall have a trail a priest might travel,” he said. “Uncas, look for the marks of a shoe that is long enough to uphold six feet two of tottering human flesh. I begin to have some hopes of the fellow, since he has given up squalling to follow some better trade.”

“At least, he has been faithful to his trust,” said Heyward ; “and Cora and Alice are not without a friend.”

“Yes,” said Hawk-eye, dropping his rifle, and leaning on it with an air of visible contempt, “he will do their singing! Can he slay a buck for their dinner; journey by the moss on the beeches, or cut the throat of a Huron? If not, the first cat-bird* he meets is the cleverest of the two. Well, boy, any signs of such a foundation?”

“Here is something like the footstep of one who has worn a shoe; can it be that our friend?”

“Touch the leaves lightly, or you’ll disconcert the formation. That! that is the print of a foot, but ’tis the dark-hair’s; and small it is, too, for one of such a noble height and grand appearance. The singer would cover it with his heel.”

“Where! let me look on the footsteps of my child,” said Munro, shoving the bushes aside, and bending fondly over the nearly obliterated impression. Though the tread, which had left the mark, had been light and rapid, it was still plainly visible. The aged soldier examined it with eyes that grew dim as he gazed; nor did he rise from his stooping posture until Heyward saw that he had watered the trace of his daughter’s passage with a scalding tear. Willing to divert a distress which threatened each moment to break through the restraint of appearance, by giving the veteran something to do, the young man said to the scout,—

“As we now possess these infallible signs, let us commence our march. A moment, at such a time, will appear an age to the captives.”

“It is not the swiftest leaping deer that gives the longest chase,” returned Hawk-eye, without moving his eyes from the different marks that had come under his view; “we know that the rampaging Huron has passed—and the dark-hair—and the singer—but where is she of the yellow locks and blue eyes? Though little, and far from being as bold as her sister, she is fair to the view, and pleasant in discourse. Has she no friend, that none care for her?”

“God forbid she should ever want hundreds! Are we not now in her pursuit? for one, I will never cease the search till she be found.”

“In that case we may have to journey by different paths;

* The powers of the American mocking-bird are generally known. But the true mocking-bird is not found so far north as the State of New York, where it has, however, two substitutes of inferior excellence; the cat-bird, so often named by the scout, and the bird vulgarly called ground-thresher. Either of these two last birds is superior to the nightingale, or the lark, though, in general, the American birds are less musical than those of Europe.

for here she has not passed, light and little as her footstep would be."

Heyward drew back, all his ardor to proceed seeming to vanish on the instant. Without attending to this sudden change in the other's humor, the scout, after musing a moment, continued,—

"There is no woman in this wilderness could leave such a print as that, but the dark-hair or her sister. We know that the first has been here, but where are the signs of the other? Let us push deeper on the trail, and if nothing offers, we must go back to the plain and strike another scent. Move on, Uncas, and keep your eyes on the dried leaves. I will watch the bushes, while your father shall run with a low nose to the ground. Move on, friends; the sun is getting behind the hills."

"Is there nothing that I can do?" demanded the anxious Heyward.

"You!" repeated the scout, who, with his red friends, was already advancing in the order he had prescribed; "yes, you can keep in our rear, and be careful not to cross the trail."

Before they had proceeded many rods, the Indians stopped, and appeared to gaze at some signs on the earth, with more than their usual keenness. Both father and son spoke quick and loud, now looking at the objects of their mutual admiration, and now regarding each other with the most unequivocal pleasure.

"They have found the little foot!" exclaimed the scout, moving forward, without attending further to his own portion of the duty. "What have we here? An ambushment has been planted in the spot! No, by the truest rifle on the frontier, here have been them one-sided horses again! Now the whole secret is out, and all is plain as the north star at midnight. Yes, here they have mounted. There the beasts have been bound to a sapling, in waiting; and yonder runs the broad path away to the north, in full sweep for the Canadas."

"But still there are no signs of Alice—of the younger Miss Munro,"—said Duncan.

"Unless the shining bauble Uncas has just lifted from the ground should prove one. Pass it this way, lad, that we may look at it."

Heyward instantly knew it for a trinket that Alice was fond of wearing, and which he recollected, with the tenacious memory of a lover, to have seen, on the fatal morning of the

massacre, dangling from the fair neck of his mistress. He seized the highly prized jewel ; and as he proclaimed the fact, it vanished from the eyes of the wondering scout, who in vain looked for it on the ground, long after it was warmly pressed against the beating heart of Duncan.

“ Pshaw ! ” said the disappointed Hawk-eye, ceasing to rake the leaves with the breech of his rifle ; “ ’tis a certain sign of age, when the sight begins to weaken. Such a glittering gewgaw, and not to be seen ! Well, well, I can squint along a clouded barrel yet, and that is enough to settle all disputes between me and the Mingoes. I should like to find the thing, too, if it were only to carry it to the right owner, and that would be bringing the two ends of what I call a long trail together ; for by this time the broad St. Lawrence, or perhaps the Great Lakes themselves, are atwixt us.”

“ So much the more reason why we should not delay our march,” returned Heyward ; “ let us proceed.”

“ Young blood and hot blood, they say, are much the same thing. We are not about to start on a squirrel hunt, or to drive a deer into the Horican, but to outlie for days and nights, and to stretch across a wilderness where the feet of men seldom go, and where no bookish knowledge would carry you through harmless. An Indian never starts on such an expedition without smoking over his council fire ; and though a man of white blood, I honor their customs in this particular, seeing that they are deliberate and wise. We will, therefore, go back and light our fire to-night in the ruins of the old fort, and in the morning we shall be fresh, and ready to undertake our work like men, and not like babbling women and eager boys.”

Heyward saw, by the manner of the scout, that altercation would be useless. Munro had again sunk into that sort of apathy which had beset him since his late overwhelming misfortunes, and from which he was apparently to be roused only by some new and powerful excitement. Making a merit of necessity, the young man took the veteran by the arm, and followed in the footsteps of the Indians and the scout, who had already begun to retrace the path which conducted them to the plain.

CHAPTER XIX.

Alar. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh? What's that good for?

Shy. To bait fish withal : if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge.
SHAKESPEARE.

THE shades of evening had come to increase the dreariness of the place, when the party entered the ruins of William Henry. The scout and his companions immediately made their preparations to pass the night there ; but with an earnestness and sobriety of demeanor that betrayed how much the unusual horrors they had just witnessed worked on even their practised feelings. A few fragments of rafters were reared against a blackened wall ; and when Uncas had covered them slightly with brush, the temporary accommodations were deemed sufficient. The young Indian pointed towards his rude hut, when his labor was ended ; Heyward, who understood the meaning of the silent gesture, gently urged Munro to enter. Leaving the bereaved old man alone with his sorrows, Duncan immediately returned into the open air, too much excited himself to seek the repose he had recommended to his veteran friend.

While Hawk-eye and the Indians lighted their fire, and took their evening's repast, a frugal meal of dried bear's meat, the young man paid a visit to that curtain of the dilapidated fort which looked out on the sheet of the Horican. The wind had fallen, and the waves were already rolling on the sandy beach beneath him, in a more regular and tempered succession. The clouds, as if tired of their furious chase, were breaking asunder ; the heavier volumes, gathering in black masses about the horizon, while the lighter scud still hurried above the water, or eddied among the tops of the mountains, like broken flights of birds, hovering around their roosts. Here and there a red and fiery star struggled through the drifting vapor, furnishing a lurid gleam of brightness to the dull aspect of the heavens. Within the bosom of the encircling hills, an impenetrable darkness had already settled ; and the plain lay like a vast and deserted charnel-house, without omen or whisper to disturb the slumbers of its numerous and hapless tenants.

Of this scene, so chillingly in accordance with the past, Duncan stood for many minutes a rapt observer. His eyes wandered from the bosom of the mound, where the foresters were seated around their glimmering fire, to the fainter light which still lingered in the skies, and then rested long and anxiously on the embodied gloom, which lay like a dreary void on that side of him where the dead reposed. He soon fancied that inexplicable sounds arose from the place, though so indistinct and stolen, as to render not only their nature but even their existence uncertain. Ashamed of his apprehensions the young man turned towards the water, and strove to divert his attention to the mimic stars that dimly glimmered on its moving surface. Still, his too conscious ears performed their ungrateful duty, as if to warn him of some lurking danger. At length a swift trampling seemed, quite audibly, to rush athwart the darkness. Unable any longer to quiet his uneasiness, Duncan spoke in a low voice to the scout, requesting him to ascend the mound to the place where he stood. Hawk eye threw his rifle across an arm and complied, but with an air so unmoved and calm as to prove how much he counted on the security of their position.

"Listen," said Duncan, when the other placed himself deliberately at his elbow; "there are suppressed noises on the plain which may show that Montcalm has not yet entirely deserted his conquest."

"Then ears are better than eyes," said the undisturbed scout, who having just deposited a portion of a bear between his grinders, spoke thick and slow, like one whose mouth was doubly occupied. "I, myself, saw him caged in Ty, with all his host; for your Frenchers when they have done a clever thing, like to get back and have a dance, or a merry-making with the women over their success."

"I know not. An Indian seldom sleeps in war, and plunder may keep a Huron here after his tribe has departed. It would be well to extinguish the fire and have a watch. Listen! you hear the noise I mean!"

"An Indian more rarely lurks about the graves. Though ready to slay, and not over regardful of the means, he is commonly content with the scalp, unless when blood is hot and temper up; but after the spirit is once fairly gone, he forgets his enmity and is willing to let the dead find their natural rest. Speaking of spirits, major, are you of opinion that the heaven of a red-skin and of us whites will be one and the same?"

“No doubt—no doubt. I thought I heard it again! or was it the rustling of the leaves in the top of the beech?”

“For my own part,” continued Hawk-eye, turning his face for a moment in the direction indicated by Heyward, but with a vacant and careless manner, “I believe that paradise is ordained for happiness; and that men will be indulged in it according to their dispositions and gifts. I therefore judge that a red-skin is not far from the truth when he believes he is to find them glorious hunting-grounds of which his traditions tell; nor, for that matter, do I think it would be any disparagement to a man without a cross to pass his time—”

“You hear it again?” interrupted Duncan.

“Ay, ay, when food is scarce, and when food is plenty, a wolf grows bold,” said the unmoved scout. “There would be picking, too, among the skins of the devils, if there was light and time for the sport. But, concerning the life that is to come, major: I have heard preachers say in the settlements, that Heaven was a place of rest. Now men’s minds differ as to their ideas of enjoyment. For myself, and I say it with reverence to the ordering of Providence, it would be no great indulgence to be kept shut up in those mansions of which they preach, having a natural longing for motion and the chase.”

Duncan, who was now made to understand the nature of the noises he had heard, answered, with more attention to the subject which the humor of the scout had chosen for discussion, by saying,—

“It is difficult to account for the feelings that may attend the last great change.”

“It would be a change indeed for a man who has passed his days in the open air,” returned the single-minded scout; “and who has so often broken his fast on the head waters of the Hudson, to sleep within sound of the roaring Mohawk. But it is a comfort to know we serve a merciful master, though we do it each after his fashion, and with great tracts of wilderness atween us—What goes there?”

“Is it not the rushing of the wolves you have mentioned?”

Hawk-eye slowly shook his head, and beckoned for Duncan to follow him to a spot, to which the glare from the fire did not extend. When he had taken this precaution, the scout placed himself in an attitude of intense attention, and listened long and keenly for a repetition of the low sound that had so unexpectedly startled him. His vigilance, however, seemed

exercised in vain ; for, after a fruitless pause, he whispered to Duncan,—

“ We must give a call to Uncas. The boy has Indian senses, and may hear what is hid from us ; for, being a white-skin, I will not deny my nature.”

The young Mohican, who was conversing in a low voice with his father, started as he heard the moaning of an owl, and springing on his feet, he looked towards the black mounds, as if seeking the place whence the sounds proceeded. The scout repeated the call, and in a few moments, Duncan saw the figure of Uncas stealing cautiously along the rampart, to the spot where they stood.

Hawk-eye explained his wishes in a very few words, which were spoken in the Delaware tongue. So soon as Uncas was in possession of the reason why he was summoned, he threw himself flat on the turf ; where, to the eyes of Duncan, he appeared to lie quiet and motionless. Surprised at the immovable attitude of the young warrior, and curious to observe the manner in which he employed his faculties to obtain the desired information, Heyward advanced a few steps, and bent over the dark object, on which he had kept his eyes riveted. Then it was that he discovered that the form of Uncas had vanished, and that he beheld only the dark outline of an inequality in the embankment.

“ What has become of the Mohican ? ” he demanded of the scout stepping back in amazement ; “ it was here that I saw him fall, and I could have sworn that here he yet remained.”

“ Hist ! speak lower ; for we know not what ears are open, and the Mingoes are a quick-witted breed. As for Uncas, he is out on the plain, and the Maquas, if any such are about us, will find their equal.”

“ You think that Montcalm has not called off all his Indians ? Let us give the alarm to our companions, that we may stand to our arms. Here are five of us, who are not unused to meet an enemy.”

“ Not a word to either, as you value your life. Look at the Sagamore, how like our grand Indian chief he sits by the fire. If there are any skulkers out in the darkness, they will never discover, by his countenance, that we suspect danger at hand.”

“ But they may discover him, and it will prove his death. His person can be too plainly seen by the light of that fire, and he will become the first and most certain victim.”

“It is undeniable that now you speak the truth,” returned the scout, betraying more anxiety than usual; “yet what can be done? A single suspicious look might bring on an attack before we are ready to receive it. He knows, by the call I gave to Uncas, that we have struck a scent: I will tell him that we are on the trail of the Mingoes; his Indian nature will teach him how to act.”

The scout applied his fingers to his mouth, and raised a low hissing sound, that caused Duncan, at first, to start aside, believing that he heard a serpent. The head of Chingachgook was resting on a hand, as he sat musing by himself; but the moment he heard the warning of the animal whose name he bore it rose to an upright position, and his dark eyes glanced swiftly and keenly on every side of him. With this sudden and perhaps involuntary movement, every appearance of surprise or alarm ended. His rifle lay untouched, and apparently unnoticed, within reach of his hand. The tomahawk that he had loosened in his belt for the sake of ease, was even suffered to fall from its usual situation to the ground, and his form seemed to sink, like that of a man whose nerves and sinews were suffered to relax for the purpose of rest. Cunningly resuming his former position, though with a change of hands, as if the movement had been made merely to relieve the limb, the native awaited the result with a calmness and fortitude that none but an Indian warrior would have known how to exercise.

But Heyward saw, that while to a less instructed eye the Mohican chief appeared to slumber, his nostrils were expanded, his head was turned a little to one side, as if to assist the organs of hearing, and that his quick and rapid glances ran incessantly over every object, within the power of his vision.

“See the noble fellow!” whispered Hawk-eye pressing the arm of Heyward. “he knows that a look or a motion might disconcert our schemes, and put us at the mercy of them imps—”

He was interrupted by the flash and report of a rifle. The air was filled with sparks of fire around that spot where the eyes of Heyward were still fastened with admiration and wonder. A second look told him, that Chingachgook had disappeared in the confusion. In the meantime, the scout had thrown forward his rifle, like one prepared for service, and awaited impatiently the moment when an enemy might rise to view. But with the solitary and fruitless attempt made on the life of Chingachgook, the attack appeared to have terminated.

Once or twice the listeners thought they could distinguish the distant rustling of bushes, as bodies of some unknown description rushed through them; nor was it long before Hawk-eye pointed out the "scampering of the wolves," as they fled precipitately before the passage of some intruder on their proper domains. After an impatient and breathless pause, a plunge was heard in the water, and it was immediately followed by the report of another rifle.

"There goes Uncas!" said the scout; "the boy bears a smart piece! I know its crack, as well as a father knows the language of his child, for I carried the gun myself until a better offered."

"What can this mean?" demanded Duncan; "we are watched, and, as it would seem, marked for destruction."

"Yonder scattered brand can witness that no good was intended, and this Indian will testify that no harm has been done," returned the scout, dropping his rifle across his arm again, and following Chingachgook, who just then re-appeared within the circle of light, into the bosom of the works. "How is it, Sagamore? Are the Mingoës upon us in earnest, or is it only one of those reptiles who hang upon the skirts of a war party, to scalp the dead, go in, and make their boasts among the squaws of the valiant deeds done on the pale-faces?"

Chingachgook very quietly resumed his seat; nor did he make any reply, until after he had examined the firebrand which had been struck by the bullet, that had nearly proved fatal to himself. After which, he was content to reply, holding a single finger up to view, with the English monosyllable—

"One."

"I thought as much," returned Hawk-eye, seating himself; "and as he had got the cover of the lake afore Uncas pulled upon him, it is more than probable the knave will sing his lies about some great ambushment, in which he was outlying on the trail of two Mohicans and a white hunter—for the officers can be considered as little better than idlers in such a skirmish. Well, let him—let him. There are always some honest men in every nation, though heaven knows too, that they are scarce among the Maquas, to look down an upstart when he brags ag'in the face of reason. The varlet sent his lead within whistle of your ears, Sagamore."

Chingachgook turned a calm and incurious eye toward the place where the ball had struck, and then resumed his former attitude, with a composure that could not be disturbed

by so trifling an incident. Just then Uncas glided into the circle, and seated himself at the fire, with the same appearance of indifference as was maintained by his father.

Of these several movements Heyward was a deeply interested and wondering observer. It appeared to him as though the foresters had some secret means of intelligence, which had escaped the vigilance of his own faculties. In place of that eager and garrulous narration with which a white youth would have endeavored to communicate, and perhaps exaggerate, that which had passed out in the darkness of the plain, the young warrior was seemingly content to let his deeds speak for themselves. It was, in fact, neither the moment nor the occasion for the Indian to boast of his exploits; and it is probable, that had Heyward neglected to inquire, not another syllable would, just then, have been uttered on the subject.

“What has become of our enemy, Uncas?” demanded Duncan; “we heard your rifle, and hoped you had not fired in vain.”

The young chief removed a fold of his hunting shirt, and quietly exposed the fatal tuft of hair, which he bore as the symbol of victory. Chingachgook had his hand on the scalp, and considered it for a moment with deep attention. Then dropping it, with disgust depicted in his strong features, he ejaculated—

“Oneida!”

“Oneida!” repeated the scout, who was fast losing his interest in the scene, in an apathy nearly assimilated to that of his red associates, but who now advanced with uncommon earnestness to regard the bloody badge. “By the lord, if the Oneidas are outlying upon the trail, we shall be flanked by devils on every side of us! Now, to white eyes there is no difference between this bit of skin and that of any other Indian, and yet the Sagamore declares it came from the poll of a Mingo; nay, he even names the tribe of the poor devil with as much ease as if the scalp was a leaf of a book, and each hair a letter. What right have Christian whites to boast of their learning, when a savage can read a language that would prove too much for the wisest of them all! What say you, lad; of what people was the knave?”

Uncas raised his eyes to the face of the scout, and answered, in his soft voice,—

“Oneida.”

“Oneida, again! when one Indian makes a declaration it

is commonly true ; but when he is supported by his people, set it down as gospel !”

“ The poor fellow has mistaken us for French,” said Heyward ; “ or he would not have attempted the life of a friend.”

“ He mistake a Mohican in his paint for a Huron ! You would be as likely to mistake the white coated grenadiers of Montcalm for the scarlet jackets of the ‘ Royal Americans,’ ” returned the scout. “ No, no, the serpent knew his errand ; nor was there any great mistake in the matter, for there is but little love atween a Delaware and a Mingo, let their tribes go out to fight for whom they may, in a white quarrel. For that matter, though the Oneidas do serve his sacred Majesty, who is my own sovereign lord and master, I should not have deliberated long about letting off ‘ Kill-deer ’ at the imp myself, had luck thrown him in my way.”

“ That would have been an abuse of our treaties, and unworthy of your character.”

“ When a man consorts much with a people ” continued Hawk-eye, “ if they are honest and he no knave, love will grow up atwixt them. It is true that white cunning has managed to throw the tribes into great confusion, as respects friends and enemies ; so that the Hurons and the Oneidas, who speak the same tongue, or what may be called the same, take each other’s scalps, and the Delawares are divided among themselves ; a few hanging about their great council fire on their own river, and fighting on the same side with the Mingo, while the greater part are in the Canadas, out of natural enmity to the Maquas—thus throwing everything into disorder, and destroying all the harmony of warfare. Yet a red natur’ is not likely to alter with every shift of policy ; so that the love atwixt a Mohican and a Mingo is much like the regard between a white man and a serpent.”

“ I regret to hear it ; for I had believed those natives who dwelt within our boundaries had found us too just and liberal, not to identify themselves fully with our quarrels.”

“ Why, I believe it is natur’ to give a preference to one’s own quarrels before those of strangers. Now, for myself, I do love justice ; and therefore I will not say I hate a Mingo, —for that may be unsuitable to my color and my religion,—though I will just repeat, it may have been owing to the night that ‘ Kill-deer ’ had no hand in the death of this skulking Oneida.”

Then, as if satisfied with the force of his own reasons, whatever might be their effect on the opinions of the other

disputant, the honest but implacable woodsman turned from the fire, content to let the controversy slumber. Heyward withdrew to the rampart, too uneasy and too little accustomed to the warfare of the woods, to remain at ease under the possibility of such insidious attacks. Not so, however, with the scout and the Mohicans. Those acute and long practised senses, whose powers so often exceed the limits of all ordinary credulity, after having detected the danger, had enabled them to ascertain its magnitude and duration. Not one of the three appeared in the least to doubt their perfect security, as was indicated by the preparations that were soon made to sit in council over their future proceedings.

The confusion of nations, and even of tribes, to which Hawk-eye alluded, existed at that period in the fullest force. The great tie of language, and, of course, of a common origin, was severed in many places; and it was one of its consequences, that the Delaware and the Mingo (as the people of the Six Nations were called) were found fighting in the same ranks, while the latter sought the scalp of the Huron, though believed to be the root of his own stock. The Delawares were even divided among themselves. Though love for the soil which had belonged to his ancestors kept the Sagamore of the Mohicans with a small band of followers who were serving at Edward, under the banners of the English king, by far the largest portion of his nation were known to be in the field as allies of Montcalm. The reader probably knows, if enough has not already been gleaned from this narrative, that the Delaware, or Lenape, claimed to be the progenitors of that numerous people, who once were masters of most of the eastern and northern states of America, of whom the community of the Mohicans was an ancient and highly honored member.

It was, of course, with a perfect understanding of the minute and intricate interests which had armed friend against friend, and brought natural enemies to combat by each other's side, that the scout and his companions now disposed themselves to deliberate on the measures that were to govern their future movements, amid so many jarring and savage races of men. Duncan knew enough of Indian customs to understand the reason that the fire was replenished, and why the warriors, not excepting Hawk-eye, took their seats within the curl of its smoke with so much gravity and decorum. Placing himself at an angle of the works, where he might be spectator of the scene within, while he kept a watchful eye against any danger from without, he awaited the result with as much patience as he could summon.

After a short and impressive pause, Chingachgook lighted a pipe whose bowl was curiously carved in one of the soft stones of the country, and whose stem was a tube of wood, and commenced smoking. When he had inhaled enough of the fragrance of the soothing weed, he passed the instrument into the hands of the scout. In this manner the pipe had made its rounds three several times, amid the most profound silence, before either of the party opened his lips. Then the Sagamore, as the oldest and highest in rank, in a few calm and dignified words, proposed the subject for deliberation. He was answered by the scout; and Chingachgook rejoined, when the other objected to his opinions. But the youthful Uncas continued a silent and respectful listener, until Hawk-eye, in complaisance, demanded his opinion. Heyward gathered from the manners of the different speakers, that the father and son espoused one side of a disputed question, while the white man maintained the other. The contest gradually grew warmer, until it was quite evident the feelings of the speakers began to be somewhat enlisted in the debate.

Notwithstanding the increasing warmth of the amicable contest, the most decorous Christian assembly, not even excepting those in which its reverend ministers are collected, might have learned a wholesome lesson of moderation from the forbearance and courtesy of the disputants. The words of Uncas were received with the same deep attention as those which fell from the maturer wisdom of his father; and so far from manifesting any impatience, neither spoke in reply, until a few moments of silent meditation were, seemingly, bestowed in deliberating on what had already been said.

The language of the Mohicans was accompanied by gestures so direct and natural, that Heyward had but little difficulty in following the thread of their argument. On the other hand, the scout was obscure; because, from the lingering pride of color, he rather affected the cold and artificial manner which characterizes all classes of Anglo-Americans, when unexcited. By the frequency with which the Indians described the marks of a forest trail, it was evident they urged a pursuit by land, while the repeated sweep of Hawk-eye's arm towards the Horican denoted that he was for a passage across its waters.

The latter was, to every appearance, fast losing ground, and the point was about to be decided against him, when he arose to his feet and shaking off his apathy, he suddenly assumed the manner of an Indian, and adopted all the arts of native eloquence. Elevating an arm, he pointed out the track

of the sun, repeating the gesture for every day that was necessary to accomplish their object. Then he delineated a long and painful path, amid rocks and watercourses. The age and weakness of the slumbering and unconscious Munro were indicated by signs too palpable to be mistaken. Duncan perceived that even his own powers were spoken lightly of, as the scout extended his palm, and mentioned him by the appellation of the "Open Hand,"—a name his liberality had purchased of all the friendly tribes. Then came a representation of the light and graceful movements of a canoe, set in forcible contrast to the tottering steps of one enfeebled and tired. He concluded by pointing to the scalp of the Oneida, and apparently urging the necessity of their departing speedily, and in a manner that should leave no trail.

The Mohicans listened gravely, and with countenances that reflected the sentiments of the speaker. Conviction gradually wrought its influence, and towards the close of Hawk-eye's speech, his sentences were accompanied by the customary exclamation of commendation. In short, Uncas and his father became converts to his way of thinking, abandoning their own previously expressed opinions with a liberality and candor, that, had they been the representatives of some great and civilized people, would have infallibly worked their political ruin, by destroying, forever, their reputation for consistency.

The instant the matter in discussion was decided, the debate, and everything connected with it, except the result, appeared to be forgotten. Hawk-eye, without looking round to read his triumph in applauding eyes, very composedly stretched his tall frame before the dying embers, and closed his own organs in sleep.

Left now in a measure to themselves, the Mohicans, whose time had been so much devoted to the interests of others, seized the moment to devote some attention to themselves. Casting off, at once, the grave and austere demeanor of an Indian chief, Chingachgook commenced speaking to his son in the soft and playful tones of affection. Uncas gladly met the familiar air of his father, and before the hard breathing of the scout announced that he slept, a complete change was effected in the manner of his two associates.

It is impossible to describe the music of their language, while thus engaged in laughter and endearments, in such a way as to render it intelligible to those whose ears have never listened to its melody. The compass of their voices, particularly that of the youth, was wonderful,—extending from the

deepest bass to tones that were even feminine in softness. The eyes of the father followed the plastic and ingenious movements of the son with open delight, and he never failed to smile in reply to the other's contagious, but low laughter. While under the influence of these gentle and natural feelings, no trace of ferocity was to be seen in the softened features of the Sagamore. His figured panolpy of death looked more like a disguise assumed in mockery, than a fierce annunciation of a desire to carry destruction and desolation in his footsteps.

After an hour passed in the indulgence of their better feelings, Chingachgook abruptly announced his desire to sleep, by wrapping his head in his blanket, and stretching his form on the naked earth. The merriment of Uncas instantly ceased ; and carefully raking the coals in such a manner that they should impart their warmth to his father's feet, the youth sought his own pillow among the ruins of the place.

Imbibing renewed confidence from the security of these experienced foresters, Heyward soon imitated their example ; and long before the night had turned, they who lay in the bosom of the ruined work, seemed to slumber as heavily as the unconscious multitude whose bones were already beginning to bleach on the surrounding plain.

CHAPTER XX.

Land of Albania ! let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men!

CHILDE HAROLD.

THE heavens were still studded with stars, when Hawk-eye came to rouse the sleepers. Casting aside their cloaks, Munro and Heyward were on their feet, while the woodsman was still making his low calls, at the entrance of the rude shelter where they had passed the night. When they issued from beneath its concealment, they found the scout awaiting their appearance nigh by, and the only salutation between them was the significant gesture for silence, made by their sagacious leader.

"Think over your prayers," he whispered, as they approached him ; "for he, to whom you make them, knows all tongues ; that of the heart, as well as those of the mouth

But speak not a syllable ; it is rare for a white voice to pitch itself properly in the woods, as we have seen by the example of that miserable devil, the singer. Come," he continued, turning towards a curtain of the works ; "let us get into the ditch on this side, and be regardful to step on the stones and fragments of wood as you go."

His companions complied, though to two of them the reasons of this extraordinary precaution were yet a mystery. When they were in the low cavity that surrounded the earthen fort on three of its sides, they found the passage nearly choked by the ruins. With care and patience, however, they succeeded in clambering after the scout, until they reached the sandy shore of the Horican.

"That's a trail that nothing but a nose can follow," said the satisfied scout looking back along their difficult way ; "grass is a treacherous carpet for a flying party to tread on, but wood and stone take no print from a moccasin. Had you worn your armed boots, there might, indeed, have been something to fear ; but with the deer-skin suitably prepared, a man may trust himself, generally, on rocks with safety. Shove in the canoe nigher to the land, Uncas ; this sand will take a stamp as easily as the butter of the Jarman on the Mohawk. Softly, lad, softly, it must not touch the beach, or the knaves will know by what road we have left the place."

The young man observed the precaution ; and the scout, laying a board from the ruins to the canoe, made a sign for the two officers to enter. When this was done, everything was studiously restored to its former disorder ; and then Hawk-eye succeeded in reaching his little birchen vessel, without leaving behind him any of those marks which he appeared so much to dread. Heyward was silent, until the Indians had cautiously paddled the canoe some distance from the fort, and within the broad and dark shadow that fell from the eastern mountain, on the glassy surface of the lake ; then he demanded—

"What need have we for this stolen and hurried departure ?"

"If the blood of an Oneida could stain such a sheet of pure water as this we float on," returned the scout, "your two eyes would answer your own question. Have you forgotten the skulking reptyle that Uncas slew ?"

"By no means. But he was said to be alone, and dead men give no cause for fear."

"Ay, he was alone in his deviltry ! but an Indian, whose

tribe counts so many warriors, need seldom fear his blood will run, without the death-shriek coming speedily from some of his enemies."

"But our presence—the authority of Colonel Munro would prove a sufficient protection against the anger of our allies, especially in a case where the wretch so well merited his fate. I trust in Heaven you have not deviated a single foot from the direct line of our course, with so slight a reason."

"Do you think the bullet of that varlet's rifle would have turned aside, though his sacred Majesty the King had stood in its path?" returned the stubborn scout. "Why did not the grand Frencher, he who is captain-general of the Canadas, bury the tomahawks of the Hurons, if a word from a white can work so strongly on the natur' of an Indian?"

The reply of Heyward was interrupted by a groan from Munro; but after he had paused a moment, in deference to the sorrow of his aged friend, he resumed the subject.

"The Marquis of Montcalm can only settle that error with his God," said the young man solemnly.

"Ay, ay, now there is reason in your words, for they are bottomed on religion and honesty. There is a vast difference between throwing a regiment of white coats atwixt the tribes and the prisoners, and coaxing an angry savage to forget he carries a knife and a rifle, with words that must begin with calling him 'your son.' No, no," continued the scout, looking back at the dim shore of William Henry, which was now fast receding, and laughing in his own silent but heartfelt manner; "I have put a trail of water atween us; and unless the imps can make friends with the fishes, and hear who has paddled across their basin, this fine morning, we shall throw the length of the Horican behind us, before they have made up their mind which path to take."

"With foes in front, and foes in our rear, our journey is like to be one of danger."

"Danger!" repeated Hawk-eye calmly; "no, not absolutely of danger; for, with vigilant ears, and quick eyes, we can manage to keep a few hours ahead of the knaves; or, if we must try the rifle, there are three of us who understand its gifts as well as any you can name on the borders. No, not of danger; but that we shall have what you may call a brisk push of it, is probable; and it may happen a brush, a skirmish, or some such divarsion, but always where covers are good, and ammunition abundant."

It is possible that Heyward's estimate of danger differed

in some degree from that of the scout, for, instead of replying, he now sat in silence while the canoe glided over several miles of water. Just as the day dawned, they entered the narrows of the lake,* and stole swiftly and cautiously among their numberless little islands. It was by this road that Montcalm had retired with his army, and the adventurers knew not but he had left some of his Indians in ambush, to protect the rear of his forces, and collect the stragglers. They therefore approached the passage with the customary silence of their guarded habits.

Chingachgook laid aside his paddle ; while Uncas and the scout urged the light vessel through crooked and intricate channels, where every foot that they advanced exposed them to the danger of some sudden rising on their progress. The eyes of the Sagamore moved warily from islet to islet and and cove to cove, as the canoe proceeded ; and when a clearer sheet of water permitted, his keen vision was bent along the bold rocks and impending forests, that frowned upon the narrow strait.

Heyward who was a doubly interested spectator, as well from the beauties of the place as from the apprehension natural to his situation, was just believing that he had permitted the latter to be excited without sufficient reason, when the paddle ceased moving, in obedience to a signal from Chingachgook.

"Hugh!" exclaimed Uncas, nearly at the moment that the light tap his father had made on the side of the canoe notified them of the vicinity of danger.

"What now?" asked the scout; "the lake is as smooth as if the winds had never blown, and I can see along its sheet for miles; there is not so much as the black head of a loon dotting the water."

The Indian gravely raised his paddle, and pointed in the direction in which his own steady look was riveted. Dun-

* The beauties of Lake George are well known to every American tourist. In the height of the mountains which surround it, and in artificial accessories it is inferior to the finest of the Swiss and Italian lakes, while in outline and purity of water it is fully their equal! and in the number and disposition of its isles and islets, much superior to them altogether. There are said to be some hundreds of islands in a sheet of water less than thirty miles long. The narrows which connect what may be called, in truth, two lakes, are crowded with islands to such a degree as to leave passages between them, frequently of only a few feet in width. The lake, itself, varies in breadth from one to three miles.

The state of New York is remarkable for the number and beauty of its lakes. One of its frontiers lies on the vast sheet of Ontario, while Champlain stretches nearly a hundred miles along another. Oneida, Cayuga, Canadaigua, Seneca, and George, are all lakes of thirty miles in length, while those of a size smaller are without number. On most of these lakes there are now beautiful villages, and on many of them steamboats.

can's eyes followed the motion. A few rods in their front lay another of the low wooded islets, but it appeared as calm and peaceful as if its solitude had never been disturbed by the foot of man.

"I see nothing," he said, "but land and water; and a lovely scene it is."

"Hist!" interrupted the scout. "Ay, Sagamore, there is always a reason for what you do. 'Tis but a shade, and yet it is not natural. You see the mist, Major, that is rising above the island; you can't call it a fog, for it is more like a streak of thin cloud,—"

"It is vapor from the water."

"That a child could tell. But what is the edging of blacker smoke that hangs along its lower side, and which you may trace down into the thicket of hazel? 'Tis from a fire; but one that, in my judgment, has been suffered to burn low."

"Let us then push for the place, and relieve our doubts," said the impatient Duncan; "the party must be small that can lie on such a bit of land."

"If you judge of Indian cunning by the rules you find in books, or by white sagacity, they will lead you astray, if not to your death," returned Hawk-eye, examining the signs of the place with that acuteness which distinguished him. "If I may be permitted to speak in this matter, it will be to say, that we have but two things to choose between: the one is, to return, and give up all thoughts of following the Huron—"

"Never!" exclaimed Heyward, in a voice far too loud for their circumstances.

"Well, well," continued Hawk-eye, making a hasty sign to repress his impatience; "I am much of your mind myself; though I thought it becoming my experience to tell the whole. We must then make a push, and if the Indians or Frenchers are in the narrows, run the gauntlet through these toppling mountains. Is there reason in my words, Sagamore?"

The Indian made no other answer than by dropping his paddle into the water, and urging forward his canoe. As he held the office of directing its course, his resolution was sufficiently indicated by the movement. The whole party now plied their paddles vigorously, and in a very few moments they had reached a point whence they might command an entire view of the northern shore of the island, the side that had hitherto been concealed.

"There they are, by all the truth of signs," whispered the scout; "two canoes and a smoke. The knaves haven't yet

got their eyes out of the mist, or we should hear the accursed whoop. Together, friends,—we are leaving them, and are already nearly out of whistle of a bullet.”

The well known crack of a rifle, whose ball came skipping along the placid surface of the strait, and a shrill yell from the island, interrupted his speech, and announced that their passage was discovered. In another instant several savages were seen rushing into the canoes, which were soon dancing over the water, in pursuit. These fearful precursors of a coming struggle produced no change in the countenances and movements of his three guides, so far as Duncan could discover, except that the strokes of their paddles were longer and more in unison, and caused the little bark to spring forward like a creature possessing life and volition.

“Hold them there, Sagamore,” said Hawk-eye, looking coolly backward over his left shoulder, while he still plied his paddle; “keep them just there. Them Hurons have never a piece in their nation that will execute at this distance; but ‘Kill-deer’ has a barrel on which a man may calculate.”

The scout having ascertained that the Mohicans were sufficient of themselves to maintain the requisite distance, deliberately laid aside his paddle and raised the fatal rifle. Three several times he brought the piece to his shoulder, and when his companions were expecting its report, he as often lowered it to request the Indians would permit their enemies to approach a little nigher. At length his accurate and fastidious eye seemed satisfied, and throwing out his left arm on the barrel, he was slowly elevating the muzzle, when an exclamation from Uncas, who sat in the bow, once more caused him to suspend the shot.

“What now, lad!” demanded Hawk-eye; “you saved a Huron from the death-shriek by that word; have you reason for what you do?”

Uncas pointed towards the rocky shore a little in their front, whence another war canoe was darting directly across their course. It was too obvious now that their situation was imminently perilous, to need the aid of language to confirm it. The scout laid aside his rifle, and resumed the paddle, while Chingachgook inclined the bows of the canoe a little towards the western shore, in order to increase the distance between them and this new enemy. In the mean time they were reminded of the presence of those who pressed upon their rear, by wild and exulting shouts. The stirring scene awakened even Munro from his apathy.

“Let us make for the rocks on the main,” he said, with the mien of a tried soldier, “and give battle to the savages. God forbid that I, or those attached to me and mine, should ever trust again to the faith of any servant of the Louises!”

“He who wishes to prosper in Indian warfare,” returned the scout, “must not be too proud to learn from the wit of a native. Lay her more along the land, Sagamore; we are doubling on the varlets, and perhaps they may try to strike our trail on the long calculation.”

Hawk-eye was not mistaken; for when the Hurons found their course was likely to throw them behind their chase, they rendered it less direct until, by gradually bearing more and more obliquely, the two canoes were, ere long, gliding on parallel lines, within two hundred yards of each other. It now became entirely a trial of speed. So rapid was the progress of the light vessels, that the lake curled in their front, in miniature waves, and their motion became undulating by its own velocity. It was, perhaps, owing to this circumstance, in addition to the necessity of keeping every hand employed at the paddles, that the Hurons had not immediate recourse to their fire-arms. The exertions of the fugitives were too severe to continue long, and the pursuers had the advantage of numbers. Duncan observed, with uneasiness, that the scout began to look anxiously about him, as if searching for some further means of assisting their flight.

“Edge her a little more from the sun, Sagamore,” said the stubborn woodsman; “I see the knaves are sparing a man to the rifle. A single broken bone might lose us our scalps. Edge more from the sun and we will put the island between us.”

The expedient was not without its use. A long, low island lay at a little distance before them, and as they closed with it, the chasing canoe was compelled to take a side opposite to that on which the pursued passed. The scout and his companions did not neglect this advantage, but the instant they were hid from observation by the bushes, they redoubled efforts that before had seemed prodigious. The two canoes came round the last low point, like two coursers at the top of their speed, the fugitives taking the lead. This change had brought them nigher to each other, however, while it altered their relative positions.

“You showed knowledge in the shaping of birchen bark, Uncas, when you choose this from among the Huron canoes,” said the scout, smiling, apparently more in satisfaction at their

superiority in the race, than from that prospect of final escape which now began to open a little upon them. "The imps have put all their strength again at the paddles, and we are to struggle for our scalps with bits of flattened wood, instead of clouded barrels and true eyes. A long stroke, and together friends."

"They are preparing for a shot," said Heyward; "and as we are in a line with them, it can scarcely fail."

"Get you then into the bottom of the canoe," returned the scout; "you and the colonel; it will be so much taken from the size of the mark."

Heyward smiled, as he answered,—

"It would be but an ill example for the highest in rank to dodge, while the warriors were under fire!"

"Lord! Lord! that is now a white man's courage!" exclaimed the scout; "and like too many of his notions, not to be maintained by reason. Do you think the Sagamore, or Uncas, or even I, who am a man without a cross, would deliberate about finding a cover in the skrimmage, when an open body would do good? For what have the Frenchers reared up their Quebec, if fighting is always to be done in the clearings?"

"All that you say is very true, my friend," replied Heyward; "still, our customs must prevent us from doing as you wish."

A volley from the Hurons interrupted the discourse, and as the bullets whistled about them, Duncan saw the head of Uncas turned, looking back at himself and Munro. Notwithstanding the nearness of the enemy, and his own great personal danger, the countenance of the young warrior expressed no other emotion, as the former was compelled to think, than amazement at finding men willing to encounter so useless an exposure. Chingachgook was probably better acquainted with the notions of white men, for he did not even cast a glance aside from the riveted look his eye maintained on the object by which he governed their course. A ball soon struck the light and polished paddle from the hands of the chief, and drove it through the air, far in the advance. A shout arose from the Hurons, who seized the opportunity to fire another volley. Uncas described an arc in the water with his own blade, and as the canoe passed swiftly on, Chingachgook recovered his paddle, and flourishing it on high, he gave the warwhoop of the Mohicans, and then lent his strength and skill again to the important task.

The clamorous sounds of "Le gros Serpent!" "La longue Carabine!" "Le Cerf agile!" burst at once from the canoes behind, and seemed to give new zeal to the pursuers. The scout seized "Kill-deer" in his left hand, and elevating it above his head, he shook it in triumph at his enemies. The savages answered the insult with a yell, and immediately another volley succeeded. The bullets pattered along the lake, and one even pierced the bark of their little vessel. No perceptible emotion could be discovered in the Mohicans during this critical moment, their rigid features expressing neither hope nor alarm; but the scout again turned his head, and laughing in his own silent manner, he said to Heyward,—

"The knaves love to hear the sound of their pieces; but the eye is not to be found among the Mingoes that can calculate a true range in a dancing canoe! You see the dumb devils have taken off a man to charge, and by the smallest measurement that can be allowed, we move three feet to their two!"

Duncan, who was not altogether as easy under this nice estimate of distance as his companions, was glad to find, however, that owing to their superior dexterity, and the diversion among their enemies, they were very sensibly obtaining the advantage. The Hurons soon fired again, and a bullet struck the blade of Hawk-eye's paddle without injury.

"That will do," said the scout, examining the slight indentation with a curious eye; "it would not have cut the skin of an infant, much less of men, who, like us, have been blown upon by the Heavens in their anger. Now, Major, if you will try to use this piece of flattened wood, I'll let 'Kill-deer' take a part in the conversation."

Heyward seized the paddle, and applied himself to the work with an eagerness that supplied the place of skill, while Hawk-eye was engaged in inspecting the priming of his rifle. The latter then took a swift aim, and fired. The Huron in the bows of the leading canoe had risen with a similar object, and he now fell backward, suffering his gun to escape from his hands into the water. In an instant, however, he recovered his feet, though his gestures were wild and bewildered. At the same moment his companions suspended their efforts, and the chasing canoes clustered together, and became stationary. Chingachgook and Uncas profited by the interval to regain their wind, though Duncan continued to work with the most persevering industry. The father and son now cast calm but inquiring glances at each other, to learn if either

had sustained any injury by the fire ; for both well knew that no cry or exclamation would, in such a moment of necessity, have been permitted to betray the accident. A few large drops of blood were trickling down the shoulder of the Sagamore, who, when he perceived that the eyes of Uncas dwelt too long on the sight, raised some water in the hollow of his hand, and washing off the stain, was content to manifest, in this simple manner, the slightness of the injury.

"Softly, softly, Major," said the scout, who by this time had reloaded his rifle ; "we are a little too far already for a rifle to put forth its beauties, and you see yonder imps are holding a council. Let them come up within striking distance—my eye may well be trusted in such a matter—and I will trail the varlets the length of the Horican, guaranteeing that not a shot of theirs shall, at the worst, more than break the skin, while 'Kill-deer' shall touch the life twice in three times."

"We forget our errand," returned the diligent Duncan. "For God's sake let us profit by this advantage, and increase our distance from the enemy."

"Give me my children," said Munro, hoarsely ; "trifle no longer with a father's agony, but restore me my babes."

Long and habitual deference to the mandates of his superior had taught the scout the virtue of obedience. Throwing a last and lingering glance at the distant canoes, he laid aside his rifle, and relieving the wearied Duncan, resumed the paddle, which he wielded with sinews that never tired. His efforts were seconded by those of the Mohicans, and a very few minutes served to place such a sheet of water between them and their enemies, that Heyward once more breathed freely.

The lake now began to expand, and their route lay along a wide reach, that was lined, as before, by high and ragged mountains. But the islands were few, and easily avoided. The strokes of the paddles grew more measured and regular, while they who plied them continued their labor, after the close and deadly chase from which they had just relieved themselves, with as much coolness as though their speed had been tried in sport, rather than under such pressing, nay, almost desperate circumstances.

Instead of following the western shore whither their errand led them, the wary Mohican inclined his course more towards those hills behind which Montcalm was known to have led his army into the formidable fortress of Ticonderoga

As the Hurons, to every appearance, had abandoned the pursuit, there was no apparent reason for this excess of caution. It was, however, maintained for hours, until they had reached a bay, nigh the northern termination of the lake. Here the canoe was driven upon the beach, and the whole party landed. Hawk-eye and Heyward ascended an adjacent bluff, where the former, after considering the expanse of water beneath him, pointed out to the latter a small black object, hovering under a headland, at the distance of several miles.

“Do you see it?” demanded the scout. “Now, what would you account that spot, were you left alone to white experience to find your way through this wilderness?”

“But for its distance and its magnitude, I should suppose it a bird. Can it be a living object?”

“’Tis a canoe of good birchen bark, and paddled by fierce and crafty Mingoos. Though Providence has lent to those who inhabit the woods eyes that would be needless to men in the settlements, where there are inventions to assist the sight, yet no human organs can see all the dangers which at this moment circumvent us. These varlets pretend to be bent chiefly on their sun-down meal, but the moment it is dark they will be on our trail, as true as hounds on the scent. We must throw them off, or our pursuit of *Le Renard Subtil* may be given up. These lakes are useful at times, especially when the game takes the water,” continued the scout, gazing about him with a countenance of concern, “but they give no cover, except it be to the fishes. God knows what the country would be, if the settlements should ever spread far from the two rivers. Both hunting and war would lose their beauty.”

“Let us not delay a moment, without some good and obvious cause.”

“I little like that smoke, which you may see worming up along the rock above the canoe,” interrupted the abstracted scout. “My life on it, other eyes than ours see it, and know its meaning. Well, words will not mend the matter, and it is time that we were doing.”

Hawk-eye moved away from the look-out, and descended, musing profoundly, to the shore. He communicated the result of his observations to his companions, in Delaware, and a short and earnest consultation succeeded. When it terminated, the three instantly set about executing their new resolutions.

The canoe was lifted from the water, and borne on the shoulders of the party. They proceeded into the wood, making as broad and obvious a trail as possible. They soon reached a water-course, which they crossed, and continued onward, until they came to an extensive and naked rock. At this point, where their footsteps might be expected to be no longer visible, they retraced their route to the brook, walking backwards, with the utmost care. They now followed the bed of the little stream to the lake, into which they immediately launched their canoe again. A low point concealed them from the headland, and the margin of the lake was fringed for some distance with dense and over-hanging bushes. Under the cover of these natural advantages, they toiled their way, with patient industry, until the scout pronounced that he believed it would be safe once more to land.

The halt continued until evening rendered objects indistinct and uncertain to the eye. Then they resumed their route, and, favored by the darkness, pushed silently and vigorously towards the western shore. Although the rugged outline of mountain, to which they were steering, presented no distinctive marks to the eyes of Duncan, the Mohican entered the little haven he had selected with the confidence and accuracy of an experienced pilot.

The boat was again lifted and borne into the woods, where it was carefully concealed under a pile of brush. The adventurers assumed their arms and packs, and the scout announced to Munro and Heyward that he and the Indians were at last in readiness to proceed.

CHAPTER V.

If you find a man there, he shall die a flea's death.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

THE party had landed on the border of a region that is, even to this day, less known to the inhabitants of the states, than the deserts of Arabia, or the steppes of Tartary. It was the sterile and rugged district which separates the tributaries of Champlain from those of the Hudson, the Mohawk,

and the St. Lawrence. Since the period of our tale, the active spirit of the country has surrounded it with a belt of rich and thriving settlements, though none but the hunter or the savage is ever known, even now, to penetrate its wild recesses.

As Hawk-eye and the Mohicans had, however, often traversed the mountains and valleys of this vast wilderness, they did not hesitate to plunge into its depths, with the freedom of men accustomed to its privations and difficulties. For many hours the travellers toiled on their laborious way, guided by a star, or following the direction of some water-course, until the scout called a halt, and holding a short consultation with the Indians, they lighted their fire, and made the usual preparations to pass the remainder of the night where they then were.

Imitating the example, and emulating the confidence, of their more experienced associates, Munro and Duncan slept without fear, if not without uneasiness. The dews were suffered to exhale, and the sun had dispersed the mists, and was shedding a strong and clear light in the forest, when the travellers resumed their journey.

After proceeding a few miles, the progress of Hawk-eye, who led the advance, became more deliberate and watchful. He often stopped to examine the trees; nor did he cross a rivulet, without attentively considering the quantity, the velocity, and the color of its waters. Distrusting his own judgment, his appeals to the opinion of Chingachgook were frequent and earnest. During one of these conferences, Heyward observed that Uncas stood a patient and silent, though, as he imagined, an interested listener. He was strongly attempted to address the young chief, and demand his opinion of their progress; but the calm and dignified demeanor of the native induced him to believe that, like himself, the other was wholly dependent on the sagacity and intelligence of the seniors of the party. At last, the scout spoke in English, and at once explained the embarrassment of their situation.

“When I found that the home path of the Hurons run north,” he said, “it did not need the judgment of many long years to tell that they would follow the valleys, and keep atween the waters of the Hudson and the Horican, until they might strike the springs of the Canada streams, which would lead them into the heart of the country of the Frenchers. Yet here are we, within a short range of the Scaroon, and

not a sign of a trail have we crossed! Human natur' is weak, and it is possible we may not have taken the proper scent."

"Heaven protect us from such an error!" exclaimed Duncan. "Let us retrace our steps, and examine as we go with keener eyes. Has Uncas no council to offer in such a strait?"

The young Mohican cast a glance at his father, but maintaining his quiet and reserved mien, he continued silent. Chingachgook had caught the look, and motioning with his hand, he bade him speak. The moment this permission was accorded, the countenance of Uncas changed from its grave composure to a gleam of intelligence and joy. Bounding forward like a deer, he sprang up the side of a little acclivity, a few rods in advance, and stood, exultingly, over a spot of fresh earth, that looked as though it had been recently upturned by the passage of some heavy animal. The eyes of the whole party followed the unexpected movement, and read their success in the air of triumph that the youth assumed.

"'Tis the trail," exclaimed the scout, advancing to the spot; "the lad is quick of sight and keen of wit for his years."

"'Tis extraordinary that he should have withheld his knowledge so long," muttered Duncan, at his elbow.

"It would have been more wonderful had he spoken without a bidding. No, no; your young white, who gathers his learning from books and can measure what he knows by the page, may conceit that his knowledge, like his legs, outruns that of his father; but where experience is the master, the scholar is made to know the value of years, and respects them accordingly."

"See!" said Uncas, pointing north and south, at the evident marks of the broad trail on either side of him; "the dark-hair has gone towards the frost."

"Hound never ran on a more beautiful scent," responded the scout, dashing forward, at once, on the indicated route; "we are favored, greatly favored, and can follow with high noses. Ay, here are both your waddling beasts; this Huron travels like a white general. The fellow is stricken with a judgment, and is mad! Look sharp for wheels, Sagamore," he continued, looking back, and laughing in his newly awakened satisfaction; "we shall have the fool journeying in a coach, and that with three of the best pair of eyes on the borders, in his rear."

The spirits of the scout, and the astonishing success of the chase, in which a circuitous distance of more than forty miles had been passed, did not fail to impart a portion of hope to the whole party. Their advance was rapid; and made with as much confidence as a traveller would proceed along a wide highway. If a rock, or a rivulet, or a bit of earth harder than common, severed the links of the clue they followed, the true eye of the scout recovered them at a distance, and seldom rendered the delay of a single moment necessary. Their progress was much facilitated by the certainty that Magua had found it necessary to journey through the valleys; a circumstance which rendered the general direction of the route sure. Nor had the Huron entirely neglected the arts uniformly practised by the native when retiring in front of an enemy. False trails, and sudden turnings, were frequent, wherever a brook, or the formation of the ground, rendered them feasible; but his pursuers were rarely deceived, and never failed to detect their error, before they had lost either time or distance on the deceptive track.

By the middle of the afternoon they had passed the Scaron, and were following the route of the declining sun. After descending an eminence to a low bottom, through which a swift stream glided, they suddenly came to a place where the party of Le Renard had made a halt. Extinguished brands were lying around a spring, the offals of a deer were scattered about the place, and the trees bore evident marks of having been browsed by the horses. At a little distance, Heyward discovered, and contemplated with tender emotion, the small bower under which he was fain to believe that Cora and Alice had reposed. But while the earth was trodden, and the footsteps of both men and beasts were so plainly visible around the place, the trail appeared to have suddenly ended.

It was easy to follow the tracks of the Narragansetts, but they seemed only to have wandered without guides, or any other object than the pursuit of food. At length Uncas, who, with his father, had endeavored to trace the route of the horses, came upon a sign of their presence that was quite recent. Before following the clue, he communicated his success to his companions; and while the latter were consulting on the circumstance, the youth reappeared, leading the two fillies, with their saddles broken, and the housings soiled, as though they had been permitted to run at will for several days.

“What should this prove?” said Duncan, turning pale, and glancing his eyes around him, as if he feared the brush and leaves were about to give up some horrid secret.

“That our march is come to a quick end, and that we are in an enemy’s country,” returned the scout. “Had the knaves been pressed, and the gentle ones wanted horses to keep up with the party, he might have taken their scalps; but without an enemy at his heels, and with such ragged beasts as these, he would not hurt a hair of their heads. I know your thoughts, and shame be it to our color, that you have reason for them; but he who thinks that even a Mingo would ill-treat a woman, unless it be to tomahawk her, knows nothing of Indian natur’, or the law of the woods. No, no; I have heard that the French Indians had come into these hills, to hunt the moose, and we are getting within scent of their camp. Why should they not? the morning and evening guns of Ty may be heard any day among these mountains; for the Frenchers are running a new line atween the provinces of the King and the Canadas. It is true that the horses are here, but the Hurons are gone; let us hunt for the path by which they departed.”

Hawk-eye and the Mohican now applied themselves to their task in good earnest. A circle of a few hundred feet in circumference was drawn, and each of the party took a segment for his portion. The examination, however, resulted in no discovery. The impressions of footsteps were numerous, but they all appeared like those of men who had wandered about the spot, without any design to quit it. Again the scout and his companions made the circuit of the halting-place, each slowly following the other, until they assembled in the centre once more, no wiser than when they started.

“Such cunning is not without its deviltry,” exclaimed Hawk-eye, when he met the disappointed looks of his assistants.

“We must get down to it, Sagamore, beginning at the spring, and going over the ground by inches. The Huron shall never brag in his tribe that he has a foot which leaves no print.”

Setting the example himself, the scout engaged in the scrutiny with renewed zeal. Not a leaf was left unturned. The sticks were removed, and the stones lifted—for Indian cunning was known frequently to adopt these objects as covers, laboring with the utmost patience and industry, to conceal each footstep as they proceeded. Still no discovery was

made. At length Uncas, whose activity had enabled him to achieve his portion of the task the soonest, raked the earth across the turbid little rill which ran from the spring, and diverted its course into another channel. So soon as its narrow bed below the dam was dry, he stooped over it with keen and curious eyes. A cry of exultation immediately announced the success of the young warrior. The whole party crowded to the spot, where Uncas pointed out the impression of a mocasin in the moist alluvium.

"The lad will be an honor to his people," said Hawk-eye, regarding the trial with as much admiration as a naturalist would spend on the tusk of a mammoth, or the rib of a mastodon; "ay, and a thorn in the sides of the Hurons. Yet that is not the footstep of an Indian! the weight is too much on the heel, and the toes are squared, as though one of the French dancers had been in, pigeon-winging his tribe! Run back, Uncas, and bring me the size of the singer's foot. You will find a beautiful print of it just opposite yon rock, ag'in the hill-side."

While the youth was engaged in this commission, the scout and Chingachgook were attentively considering the impressions. The measurements agreed, and the former unhesitatingly pronounced that the footstep was that of David, who had, once more, been made to exchange his shoes for mocasins.

"I can now read the whole of it, as plainly as if I had seen the arts of *Le Subtil*," he added; "the singer being a man whose gifts lay chiefly in his throat and feet, was made to go first, and the others have trod in his steps, imitating their formation."

"But," cried Duncan, "I see no signs of—"

"The gentle ones," interrupted the scout; "the varlet has found a way to carry them, until he supposed he had thrown any followers off the scent. My life on it, we see their pretty little feet again, before many rods go by."

The whole party now proceeded, following the course of the rill, keeping anxious eyes on the regular impressions. The water soon flowed into its bed again, but watching the ground on either side, the foresters pursued their way, content with knowing that the trail lay beneath. More than half a mile was passed before the rill rippled close around the base of an extensive and dry rock. Here they paused to make sure that the Hurons had not quitted the water:

It was fortunate they did so. For the quick and active

Uncas soon found the impression of a foot on a bunch of moss, where it would seem an Indian had inadvertently trodden. Pursuing the direction given by this discovery he entered the neighboring thicket, and struck the trail, as fresh and obvious as it had been before they reached the spring. Another shout announced the good fortune of the youth to his companions, and at once terminated the search.

"Ay, it has been planned with Indian judgment," said the scout, when the party was assembled around the place; "and would have blinded white eyes."

"Shall we proceed?" demanded Heyward.

"Softly, softly! we know our path; but it is good to examine the formation of things. This is my schooling, major; and if one neglects the book, there is little chance of learning from the open hand of Providence. All is plain but one thing, which is the manner that the knave contrived to get the gentle ones along the blind trail. Even a Huron would be too proud to let their tender feet touch the water."

"Will this assist in explaining the difficulty?" said Heyward, pointing towards the fragments of a sort of handbarrow, that had been rudely constructed of boughs, and bound together with withes, and which now seemed carelessly cast aside as useless.

"'Tis explained!" cried the delighted Hawk-eye. "If them varlets have passed a minute, they have spent hours in striving to fabricate a lying end to their trail! Well, I've known them waste a day in the same manner, to as little purpose. Here we have three pair of moccasins, and two of little feet. It is amazing that any mortal beings can journey on limbs so small! Pass me the thong of buckskin, Uncas, and let me take the length of this foot. By the Lord, it is no longer than a child's, and yet the maidens are tall and comely. That Providence is partial in its gifts, for its own wise reasons, the best and most contented of us must allow."

"The tender limbs of my daughters are unequal to these hardships," said Munro, looking at the light footsteps of his children, with a parent's love: "we shall find their fainting forms in this desert."

"Of that there is little cause of fear," returned the scout, slowly shaking his head; "this is a firm and straight, though a light step, and not over long. See, the heel has hardly touched the ground; and there the dark-hair has made a little jump, from root to root. No, no; my knowledge for it, neither of them was nigh fainting, hereaway. Now, the singer was be-

ginning to be foot-sore and leg-weary, as is plain by his trail. There, you see, he slipped ; here he has travelled wide, and tottered ; and there, again, it looks as though he journeyed on snow-shoes. Ay, ay, a man who uses his throat altogether, can hardly give his legs a proper training."

From such undeniable testimony, did the practised woodsman arrive at the truth, with nearly as much certainty and precision as if he had been a witness of all those events, which his ingenuity so easily elucidated. Cheered by these assurances, and satisfied by a reasoning that was so obvious, while it was so simple, the party resumed its course, after making a short halt, to take a hurried repast.

When the meal was ended, the scout cast a glance upwards at the setting sun, and pushed forward with a rapidity which compelled Heyward and the still vigorous Munro to exert all their muscles to equal. Their route, now, lay along the bottom which has already been mentioned. As the Hurons had made no further efforts to conceal their footsteps, the progress of the pursuers was no longer delayed by uncertainty. Before an hour had elapsed, however, the speed of Hawk-eye sensibly abated, and his head, instead of maintaining its former direct and forward look, began to turn suspiciously from side to side, as if he were conscious of approaching danger. He soon stopped again and waited for the whole party to come up.

"I scent the Hurons," he said, speaking to the Mohicans ; "yonder is open sky through the tree-tops, and we are getting too nigh their encampment. Sagamore, you will take the hill-side, to the right ; Uncas will bend along the brook to the left, while I will try the trail. If anything should happen, the call will be three croaks of a crow. I saw one of the birds fanning himself in the air, just beyond the dead oak—another sign that we are touching an encampment."

The Indians departed their several ways without reply, while Hawk-eye cautiously proceeded with the two gentlemen. Heyward soon pressed to the side of their guide, eager to catch an early glimpse of those enemies he had pursued with so much toil and anxiety. His companion told him to steal to the edge of the wood, which, as usual was fringed with a thicket, and wait his coming, for he wished to examine certain suspicious signs a little on one side. Duncan obeyed, and soon found himself in a situation to command a view which he found as extraordinary as it was novel.

The trees of many acres had been felled, and the glow of a mild summer's evening had fallen on the clearing, in beau-

tiful contrast to the gray light of the forest. A short distance from the place where Duncan stood, the stream had seemingly expanded into a little lake, covering most of the low land, from mountain to mountain. The water fell out of this wide basin, in a cataract so regular and gentle, that it appeared rather to be the work of human hands, than fashioned by nature. A hundred earthen dwellings stood on the margin of the lake, and even in its water, as though the latter had overflowed its usual banks. Their rounded roofs, admirably moulded for defence against the weather, denoted more of industry and foresight than the natives were wont to bestow on their regular habitations, much less on those they occupied for the temporary purposes of hunting and war. In short, the whole village or town, whichever it might be termed, possessed more of method and neatness of execution than the white men had been accustomed to believe belonged, ordinarily, to the Indian habits. It appeared, however, to be deserted. At least, so thought Duncan for many minutes ; but at length he fancied he discovered several human forms advancing towards him on all-tours, and apparently dragging in their train some heavy, and as he was quick to apprehend, some formidable engine. Just then a few dark-looking heads gleamed out of the dwellings, and the place seemed suddenly alive with beings, which, however, glided from cover to cover so swiftly as to allow no opportunity of examining their humors or pursuits. Alarmed at these suspicious and inexplicable movements, he was about to attempt the signal of the crows, when the rustling of leaves at hand drew his eyes in another direction.

The young man started, and recoiled a few paces instinctively, when he found himself within a hundred yards of a stranger Indian. Recovering his recollection on the instant, instead of sounding an alarm, which might prove fatal to himself, he remained stationary, an attentive observer of the other's motions.

An instant of calm observation served to assure Duncan that he was undiscovered. The native, like himself, seemed occupied in considering the low dwellings of the village, and the stolen movements of its inhabitants. It was impossible to discover the expression of his features, through the grotesque mask of paint under which they were concealed ; though Duncan fancied it was rather melancholy than savage. His head was shaved as usual, with the exception of the crown, from whose tuft three or four faded feathers from a hawk's

wing were dangling. A ragged calico mantle half encircled his body, while his nether garment was composed of an ordinary shirt, the sleeves of which were made to perform the office that is usually executed by a much more commodious arrangement. His legs were bare, and sadly cut and torn by briars. The feet were, however, covered with a pair of good deer-skin moccasins. Altogether the appearance of the individual was forlorn and miserable.

Duncan was still curiously observing the person of his neighbor, when the scout stole silently and cautiously to his side.

"You see we have reached their settlement or encampment," whispered the young man; and here is one of the savages himself, in a very embarrassing position for our further movements."

Hawk-eye started, and dropped his rifle, when directed by the finger of his companion, the stranger came under his view. Then lowering the dangerous muzzle, he stretched forward his long neck, as if to assist a scrutiny that was already intensely keen.

"The imp is not a Huron," he said, "nor of any of the Canada tribes; and yet you see by his clothes the knave has been plundering a white. Ay, Montcalm has raked the weeds for his inroad, and a whooping, murdering set of varlets has he gathered together. Can you see where he has put his rifle or his bow?"

"He appears to have no arms; nor does he seem to be viciously inclined. Unless he communicates the alarm to his fellows, who, as you see, are dodging about the water, we have but little to fear from him."

The scout turned to Heyward, and regarded him a moment with unconcealed amazement. Then opening wide his mouth, he indulged in unrestrained and heartfelt laughter, though in that silent and peculiar manner which danger had so long taught him to practice.

Repeating the words, "fellows who are dodging about the water," he added, "so much for schooling and passing a boyhood in the settlements! The knave has long legs, though, and shall not be trusted. Do you keep him under your rifle while I creep in behind, through the bush, and take him alive. Fire on no account."

Heyward had already permitted his companion to bury part of his person in the thicket, when, stretching forth an arm, he arrested him, in order to ask,—

“If I see you in danger, may I not risk a shot?”

Hawk-eye regarded him a moment, like one who knew not how to take the question; then nodding his head, he answered, still laughing, though inaudibly,—

“Fire a whole platoon, Major.”

In the next moment he was concealed by the leaves. Duncan waited several minutes in feverish impatience, before he caught another glimpse of the scout. Then he re-appeared, creeping along the earth, from which his dress was hardly distinguishable, directly in the rear of his intended captive. Having reached within a few yards of the latter, he arose to his feet, silently and slowly. At that instant, several loud blows were struck on the water, and Duncan turned his eyes just in time to perceive that a hundred dark forms were plunging, in a body, into the troubled little sheet. Grasping his rifle, his looks were again bent on the Indian near him. Instead of taking the alarm, the unconscious savage stretched forward his neck, as if he also watched the movements about the gloomy lake, with a sort of silly curiosity. In the mean time, the uplifted hand of Hawk-eye was above him. But, without any apparent reason, it was withdrawn, and its owner indulged in another long, though still silent, fit of merriment. When the peculiar and hearty laughter of Hawk-eye was ended, instead of grasping his victim by the throat, he tapped him lightly on the shoulder, and exclaimed aloud—

“How now, friend, have you a mind to teach the beavers to sing?”

“Even so,” was the ready answer. “It would seem that the Being that gave them power to improve his gifts so well, would not deny them voices to proclaim his praise.”

CHAPTER XXII.

Bot. Are we all met?

Qui. Pat pat; and here's a marvellous
Convenient place for our rehearsal.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE reader may better imagine, than we describe, the surprise of Heyward. His lurking Indians were suddenly converted into four-footed beasts; his lake into a beaver pond; his cataract into a dam, constructed by those in-

dustrious and ingenious quadrupeds ; and a suspected enemy into his tried friend, David Gamut, the master of psalmody. The presence of the latter created so many unexpected hopes relative to the sisters that, without a moment's hesitation, the young man broke out of his ambush, and sprang forward to join the two principal actors in the scene.

The merriment of Hawk-eye was not easily appeased. Without ceremony, and with a rough hand, he twirled the supple Gamut around on his heel, and more than once affirmed that the Hurons had done themselves great credit in the fashion of his costume. Then seizing the hand of the other, he squeezed it with a gripe that brought the tears into the eyes of the placid David, and wished him joy on his new condition.

"You were about opening your throat-practysings among the beavers, were ye?" he said. "The cunning devils know half the trade, already, for they beat the time with their tales, as you heard just now; and in good time it was too, or 'Kill-deer' might have sounded the first note among them. I have known greater fools, who could read and write, than an experienced old beaver; but as for squalling, the animals are born dumb!—What think you of such a song as this?"

David shut his sensitive ears, and even Heyward, apprised as he was of the nature of the cry, looked upwards in quest of the bird, as the cawing of a crow rang in the air about them.

"See," continued the laughing scout, as he pointed towards the remainder of the party, who, in obedience to the signal, were already approaching: "this is music which has its natural virtues; it brings two good rifles to my elbow, to say nothing of the knives and tomahawks. But we see that you are safe; now tell us what has become of the maidens."

"They are captives to the heathen," said David, "and though greatly troubled in spirit, enjoying comfort and safety in the body."

"Both?" demanded the breathless Heyward.

"Even so. Though our wayfaring has been sore and our sustenance scanty, we have had little other cause for complaint, except the violence done our feelings, by being thus led in captivity into a far land."

"Bless ye for these very words!" exclaimed the trembling Munro; "I shall then receive my babes, spotless and angel-like, as I lost them!"

"I know not that their delivery is at hand," returned the doubting David; "the leader of these savages is possessed of an evil spirit that no power short of Omnipotence can tame. I have tried him sleeping and waking, but neither sounds nor language seem to touch his soul."

"Where is the knave?" bluntly interrupted the scout.

"He hunts the moose to-day, with his young men; and to-morrow, as I hear, they pass further into these forests, and nigher to the borders of Canada. The elder maiden is conveyed to a neighboring people, whose lodges are situate beyond yonder black pinnacle of rock; while the younger is detained among the women of the Hurons, whose dwellings are but two short miles hence, on a table land, where the fire has done the office of the axe, and prepared the place for their reception."

"Alice, my gentle Alice!" murmured Heyward; "she has lost the consolation of her sister's presence!"

"Even so. But so far as praise and thanksgiving in psalmody can temper the spirit in affliction, she has not suffered."

"Has she then a heart for music?"

"Of the graver and more solemn character; though it must be acknowledged that, in spite of all my endeavors, the maiden weeps oftener than she smiles. At such moments I forbear to press the holy songs; but there are many sweet and comfortable periods of satisfactory communication, when the ears of the savages are astounded with the upliftings of our voices."

"And why are you permitted to go at large, unwatched?"

David composed his features into what he intended should express an air of modest humility, before he meekly replied,—

"Little be the praise to such a worm as I. But, though the power of psalmody was suspended in the terrible business of that field of blood through which we passed, it has recovered its influence even over the souls of the heathen, and I am suffered to go and come at will."

The scout laughed, and tapping his own forehead significantly, he perhaps explained the singular indulgence more satisfactorily when he said,—

"The Indians never harm a non-composser. But why, when the path lay open before your eyes, did you not strike back on your own trail (it is not so blind as that which a squirrel would make), and bring in the tidings to Edward?"

The scout, remembering only his own sturdy and iron

nature, had probably exacted a task that David, under no circumstances, could have performed. But, without entirely losing the meekness of his air, the latter was content to answer—

“Though my soul would rejoice to visit the habitations of Christendom once more, my feet would rather follow the tender spirits intrusted to my keeping, even into the idolatrous province of the Jesuits, than take one step backward, while they pined in captivity and sorrow.”

Though the figurative language of David was not very intelligible, the sincere and steady expression of his eye, and the glow on his honest countenance, were not easily mistaken. Uncas pressed closer to his side, and regarded the speaker with a look of commendation, while his father expressed his satisfaction by the ordinary pithy exclamation of approbation. The scout shook his head as he rejoiced,—

“The Lord never intended that the man should place all his endeavors in his throat, to the neglect of other and better gifts! But he has fallen into the hands of some silly woman, when he should have been gathering his education under a blue sky, among the beauties of the forest. Here, friend; I did intend to kindle a fire with this tooting whistle of thine; but as you value the thing, take it, and blow your best on it!”

Gamut received his pitch-pipe with as strong an expression of pleasure as he believed compatible with the grave functions he exercised. After essaying its virtues repeatedly, in contrast with his own voice, and satisfying himself that none of its melody was lost, he made a very serious demonstration towards achieving a few stanzas of one of the longest effusions in the little volume so often mentioned.

Heyward, however, hastily interrupted his pious purpose, by continuing questions concerning the past and present condition of his fellow-captives, and in a manner more methodical than had been permitted by his feelings in the opening of their interview. David, though he regarded his treasure with longing eyes, was constrained to answer: especially as the venerable father took a part in the interrogatories, with an interest too imposing to be denied. Nor did the scout fail to throw in a pertinent inquiry, whenever a fitting occasion presented. In this manner, though with frequent interruptions, which were filled with certain threatening sounds from the recovered instrument, the pursuers was put in possession of such leading circumstances as were likely to prove useful in accomplishing their great and engrossing object—the recov-

ery of the sisters. The narrative of David was simple, and the facts but few.

Magua had waited on the mountain until a safe moment to retire presented itself, when he had descended, and taken the route along the western side of the Horican, in the direction of the Canadas. As the subtle Huron was familiar with the paths, and well knew there was no immediate danger of pursuit, their progress had been moderate, and far from fatiguing. It appeared, from the unembellished statement of David, that his own presence had been rather endured than desired; though even Magua had not been entirely exempt from that veneration with which the Indians regard those whom the Great Spirit has visited in their intellects. At night, the utmost care had been taken of the captives, both to prevent injury from the damps of the woods, and to guard against an escape. At the spring, the horses were turned loose, as has been seen; and notwithstanding the remoteness and length of their trail, the artifices already named were resorted to, in order to cut off every clue to their place of retreat. On their arrival at the encampment of his people, Magua, in obedience to a policy seldom departed from, separated his prisoners. Cora had been sent to a tribe that temporarily occupied an adjacent valley, though David was far too ignorant of the customs and history of the natives, to be able to declare anything satisfactory concerning their name or character. He only knew that they had not engaged in the late expedition against William Henry; that, like the Hurons themselves, they were allies of Montcalm; and that they maintained an amicable, though a watchful intercourse with the warlike and savage people, whom chance had, for a time, brought in such close and disagreeable contact with themselves.

The Mohicans and the scout listened to his interrupted and imperfect narrative with an interest that obviously increased as he proceeded; and it was while attempting to explain the pursuits of the community in which Cora was detained, that the latter abruptly demanded,—

“Did you see the fashion of their knives? were they of English or French formation?”

“My thoughts were bent on no such vanities, but rather mingled in consolation with those of the maidens.”

“The time may come when you will not consider the knife of a savage such a despicable vanity,” returned the scout, with a strong expression of contempt for the other’s

dulness. "Had they held their corn-feast,—or can you say anything of the totems of their tribe?"

"Of corn, we had many and plentiful feasts; for the grain, being in the milk, is both sweet to the mouth and comfortable to the stomach. Of totem, I know not the meaning; but if it appertaineth in any wise to the art of Indian music, it need not be inquired after at their hands. They never join their voices in praise, and it would seem that they are among the profanest of the idolatrous."

"Therein you belie the nature of an Indian. Even the Mingo adores but the true and living God. 'Tis a wicked fabrication of the whites, and I say it to the shame of my color, that would make the warrior bow down before images of his own creation. It is true, they endeavor to make truces with the wicked one—as who would not with an enemy he cannot conquer!—but they look up for favor and assistance to the Great and Good Spirit only."

"It may be so," said David; "but I have seen strange and fantastic images drawn in their paint, of which their admiration and care savored of spiritual pride; especially one, and that, too, a foul and loathsome object."

"Was it a serpent?" quickly demanded the scout.

"Much the same. It was in the likeness of an abject and creeping tortoise."

"Hugh!" exclaimed both the attentive Mohicans in a breath; while the scout shook his head with the air of one who had made an important, but by no means a pleasing discovery. Then the father spoke, in the language of the Delawares, and with a calmness and dignity that instantly arrested the attention even of those to whom his words were unintelligible. His gestures were impressive, and at times energetic. Once he lifted his arm on high; and as it descended, the action threw aside the folds of his light mantle, a finger resting on his breast, as if he would enforce his meaning by the attitude. Duncan's eyes followed the movement, and he perceived that the animal just mentioned was beautifully, though faintly, worked in a blue tint, on the swarthy breast of the chief. All that he had ever heard of the violent separation of the vast tribes of the Delawares rushed across his mind, and he awaited the proper moment to speak, with a suspense that was rendered nearly intolerable by his interest in the stake. His wish, however, was anticipated by the scout, who turned from his friend, saying,—

"We have found that which may be good or evil to us, as

Heaven disposes. The Sagamore is of the high blood of the Delawares, and is the great chief of their Tortoises! That some of this stock are among the people of whom the singer tells us, is plain by his words; and had he but spent half the breath in prudent questions, that he has blown away in making a trumpet of his throat, we might have known how many warriors they numbered. It is, altogether, a dangerous path we move in; for a friend whose face is turned from you often bears a bloodier mind than the enemy who seeks your scalp."

"Explain," said Duncan.

"'Tis a long and melancholy tradition, and one I little like to think of; for it is not to be denied, that the evil has been mainly done by men with white skins. But it has ended in turning the tomahawk of brother against brother, and brought the Mingo and the Delaware to travel in the same path."

"You then suspect it is a portion of that people among whom Cora resides?"

The scout nodded his head in assent, though he seemed anxious to waive the further discussion of a subject that appeared painful. The impatient Duncan now made several hasty and desperate propositions to attempt the release of the sisters. Munro seemed to shake off his apathy, and listened to the wild schemes of the young man with a deference that his gray hairs and reverend years should have denied. But the scout, after suffering the ardor of the lover to expend itself a little, found means to convince him of the folly of precipitation, in a matter that would require their coolest judgment and utmost fortitude.

"It would be well," he added, "to let this man go in again, as usual, and for him to tarry in the lodges, giving notice to the gentle ones of our approach, until we call him out, by signal, to consult. You know the cry of a crow, friend, from the whistle of the whip-poor-will?"

"'Tis a pleasing bird," returned David, "and has a soft and melancholy note! though the time is rather quick and ill measured."

"He speaks of the wish-ton-wish," said the scout; "well, since you like his whistle, it shall be your signal. Remember, then, when you hear the whip-poor-will's call three times repeated, you are to come into the bushes where the bird might be supposed—"

"Stop," interrupted Heyward; "I will accompany him."

"You!" exclaimed the astonished Hawk-eye; "are you tired of seeing the sun rise and set?"

"David is a living proof that the Huron can be merciful."

"Ay, but David can use his throat, as no man in his senses would pervert the gift."

"I too can play the madman, the fool, the hero ; in short, any or everything to rescue her I love. Name your objections no longer ; I am resolved."

Hawk-eye regarded the young man a moment in speechless amazement. But Duncan, who in deference to the other's skill and services, had hitherto submitted somewhat implicitly to his dictation, now assumed the superior, with a manner that was not easily resisted. He waved his hand, in sign of his dislike to all remonstrance, and then, in more tempered language, he continued,—

"You have the means of disguise ; change me ; paint me too, if you will. in short, alter me to anything—a fool."

"It is not for one like me to say that he who is already formed by so powerful a hand as Providence, stands in need of change," muttered the discontented scout. "When you send your parties abroad in war, you find it prudent, at least, to arrange the marks and places of encampment, in order that they who fight on your side may know when and where to expect a friend."

"Listen," interrupted Duncan ; "you have heard from this faithful follower of the captives, that the Indians are of two tribes, if not of different nations. With one, whom you think to be a branch of the Delawares, is she you call the 'dark hair ;' the other, and younger of the ladies, is undeniably with our declared enemies, the Hurons. It becomes my youth and rank to attempt the latter adventure. While you, therefore, are negotiating with your friends for the release of one of the sisters, I will effect that of the other, or die."

The awakened spirit of the young soldier gleamed in his eyes, and his form became imposing under its influence. Hawk-eye, though too much accustomed to Indian artifices not to foresee the danger of the experiment, knew not well how to combat this sudden resolution.

Perhaps there was something in the proposal that suited his own hardy nature, and that secret love of desperate adventure, which had increased with his experience, until hazard and danger had become, in some measure, necessary to the enjoyment of existence. Instead of continuing to oppose the scheme of Duncan, his humor suddenly altered, and he lent himself to its execution.

"Come," he said, with a good-humored smile ; "the buck

that will take to the water must be headed, and not followed. Chingachgook has as many different paints as the engineer officer's wife, who takes down *natur'* on scraps of paper, making the mountains look like cocks of rusty hay, and placing the blue sky in reach of your hand. The Sagamore can use them too. Seat yourself on the log, and my life on it, he can soon make a natural fool of you, and that well to your liking."

Duncan complied ; and the Mohican, who had been an attentive listener to the discourse, readily undertook the office. Long practised in all the subtle arts of his race, he drew, with great dexterity and quickness, the fantastic shadow that the natives were accustomed to consider as the evidence of a friendly and jocular disposition. Every line that could possibly be interpreted into a secret inclination for war, was carefully avoided ; while, on the other hand, he studied those conceits that might be construed into amity.

In short, he entirely sacrificed every appearance of the warrior to the masquerade of a buffoon. Such exhibitions were not uncommon among the Indians, and as Duncan was already sufficiently disguised in his dress, there certainly did exist some reason for believing that, with his knowledge of French, he might pass for a juggler from Ticonderoga, straggling among the allied and friendly tribes.

When he was thought to be sufficiently painted, the scout gave him much friendly advice, concerted signals, and appointed the place where they should meet, in the event of mutual success. The parting between Munro and his young friend was more melancholy ; still, the former submitted to the separation with an indifference that his warm and honest nature would never have permitted in a more healthful state of mind. The scout led Heyward aside, and acquainted him with his intention to leave the veteran in some safe encampment, in charge of Chingachgook, while he and Uncas pursued their inquiries among the people they had reason to believe were Delawares. Then renewing his cautions and advice, he concluded by saying, with a solemnity and warmth of feeling, with which Duncan was deeply touched—

"And now God bless you ! You have shown a spirit that I like ; for it is the gift of youth, more especially one of warm blood and a stout heart. But believe the warning of a man who has reason to know all he says to be true. You will have occasion for your best manhood, and for a sharper wit than what is to be gathered in books, afore you outdo the cur-

ning, or get the better of the courage of a Mingo. God bless you ! if the Hurons master your scalp, rely on the promise of one who has two stout warriors to back him. They shall pay for their victory, with a life for every hair it holds. I say, young gentleman, may Providence bless your undertaking, which is altogether for good ; and remember, that to outwit the knaves it is lawful to practise things that may not be naturally the gift of a white skin."

Duncan shook his worthy and reluctant associate warmly by the hand, once more recommended his aged friend to his care, and returning his good wishes, he motioned to David to proceed. Hawk-eye gazed after the high-spirited and adventurous young man for several moments, in open admiration ; then shaking his head doubtingly, he turned and led his own division of the party into the concealment of the forest.

The route taken by Duncan and David lay directly across the clearing of the beavers, and along the margin of their pond.

When the former found himself alone with one so simple, and so little qualified to render any assistance in desperate emergencies, he first began to be sensible of the difficulties of the task he had undertaken. The fading light increased the gloominess of the bleak and savage wilderness that stretched so far on every side of him ; and there was even a fearful character in the stillness of those little huts, that he knew was so abundantly peopled. It struck him, as he gazed at the admirable structures and the wonderful precautions of their sagacious inmates, that even the brutes of these vast wilds were possessed of an instinct nearly commensurate with his own reason ; and he could not reflect, without anxiety, on the unequal contest that he had so rashly courted. Then came the glowing image of Alice ; her distress ; her actual danger ; and all the peril of his situation was forgotten. Cheering David, he moved on with the light and vigorous step of youth and enterprise.

After making nearly a semicircle around the pond, they diverged from the water-course, and began to ascend to the level of a slight elevation in that bottom land, over which they journeyed. Within half an hour they gained the margin of another opening that bore all the signs of having been also made by the beavers, and which those sagacious animals had probably been induced, by some accident, to abandon, for the more eligible position they now occupied. A very natural sensation caused Duncan to hesitate a moment, unwilling to

leave the cover of their bushy path, as a man pauses to collect his energies before he essays any hazardous experiment, in which he is secretly conscious they will all be needed. He profited by the halt, to gather such information as might be obtained from his short and hasty glances.

On the opposite side of the clearing, and near the point where the brook tumbled over some rocks, from a still higher level, some fifty or sixty lodges, rudely fabricated of logs, brush, and earth intermingled, were to be discovered. They were arranged without any order, and seemed to be constructed with very little attention to neatness or beauty. Indeed, so very inferior were they in the two latter particulars to the village Duncan had just seen, that he began to expect a second surprise, no less astonishing than the former. This expectation was in no degree diminished, when, by the doubtful twilight, he beheld twenty or thirty forms rising alternately from the cover of the tall, coarse grass, in front of the lodges, and then sinking again from the sight, as it were to burrow in the earth. By the sudden and hasty glimpses that he caught of these figures, they seemed more like dark glancing spectres, or some other unearthly beings, than creatures fashioned with the ordinary and vulgar materials of flesh and blood. A gaunt, naked form was seen, for a single instant, tossing its arms wildly in the air, and then the spot it had filled was vacant; the figure appearing suddenly in some other and distant place, or being succeeded by another possessing the same mysterious character. David observing that his companion lingered, pursued the direction of his gaze, and in some measure recalled the recollection of Heyward, by speaking.

“There is much fruitful soil uncultivated here,” he said; “and I may add, without the sinful leaven of self-commendation, that since my short sojourn in these heathenish abodes, much good seed has been scattered by the way-side.”

“The tribes are fonder of the chase than of the arts of men of labor,” returned the unconscious Duncan, still gazing at the objects of his wonder.

“It is rather joy than labor to the spirit, to lift up the voice in praise; but sadly do these boys abuse their gifts. Rarely have I found any of their age, on whom nature has so freely bestowed the elements of psalmody; and surely, surely, there are none who neglect them more. Three nights have I now tarried here, and three several times have I assembled the urchins to join in sacred song; and as often have they

responded to my efforts with whooping and howlings that have chilled my soul !”

“Of whom speak you?”

“Of those children of the devil, who waste the precious moments in yonder idle antics. Ah ! the wholesome restraint of discipline is but little known among this self-abandoned people. In a country of birches, a rod is never seen ; and it ought not to appear a marvel in my eyes, that the choicest blessings of Providence are wasted in such cries as these.”

David closed his ears against the juvenile pack, whose yell just then rang shrilly through the forest ; and Duncan, suffering his lip to curl, as in mockery of his own superstition, said firmly,—

“We will proceed.”

Without removing the safeguards from his ears, the master of song complied, and together they pursued their way towards what David was sometimes wont to call “the tents of the Philistines.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

———But though the beast of game
The privilege of chase may claim ;
Though space and law the stag we lend,
Ere hound we slip, or bow we bend ;
Who ever recked, where, how, or when
The prowling fox was trapped or slain ?

LADY OF THE LAKE.

It is unusual to find an encampment of the natives, like those of the more instructed whites, guarded by the presence of armed men. Well informed of the approach of every danger, while it is yet at a distance, the Indian generally rests secure under his knowledge of the signs of the forest, and the long and difficult paths that separate him from those he has most reason to dread. But the enemy who, by any lucky concurrence of accidents, has found means to elude the vigilance of the scouts, will seldom meet with sentinels nearer home to sound the alarm. In addition to this general usage, the tribes friendly to the French knew too well the weight of the blow that had just been struck, to apprehend any immediate danger from the hostile nations that were tributary to the crown of Britain.

When Duncan and David, therefore, found themselves in the centre of the children, who played the antics already mentioned, it was without the least previous intimation of their approach. But so soon as they were observed, the whole of the juvenile pack raised, by common consent, a shrill and warning whoop; and then sank, as it were, by magic, from before the sight of their visitors. The naked, tawny bodies of the crouching urchins blended so nicely, at that hour, with the withered herbage, that at first it seemed as if the earth had, in truth, swallowed up their forms; though when surprise permitted Duncan to bend his look more curiously about the spot, he found it everywhere met by dark, quick, and rolling eye-balls.

Gathering no encouragement from this startling presage of the nature of the scrutiny he was likely to undergo from the more mature judgments of the men, there was an instant when the young soldier would have retreated. It was, however, too late to appear to hesitate. The cry of the children had drawn a dozen warriors to the door of the nearest lodge, where they stood clustered in a dark and savage group, gravely awaiting the nearer approach of those who had unexpectedly come among them.

David, in some measure familiarized to the scene, led the way, with a steadiness that no slight obstacle was likely to disconcert, into this very building. It was the principal edifice of the village, though roughly constructed of the bark and branches of trees; being the lodge in which the tribe held its councils and public meetings during their temporary residence on the borders of the English province. Duncan found it difficult to assume the necessary appearance of unconcern, as he brushed the dark and powerful frames of the savages who thronged its threshold; but, conscious that his existence depended on his presence of mind, he trusted to the discretion of his companion, whose footsteps he closely followed, endeavoring, as he proceeded, to rally his thoughts for the occasion. His blood curdled when he found himself in absolute contact with such fierce and implacable enemies; but he so far mastered his feelings as to pursue his way into the centre of the lodge, with an exterior that did not betray the weakness. Imitating the example of the deliberate Gamut, he drew a bundle of fragrant brush from beneath a pile that filled a corner of the hut, and seated himself in silence.

So soon as their visitor had passed, the observant warriors fell back from the entrance, and arranging themselves about him, they seemed patiently to await the moment when it might comport with the dignity of the stranger to speak. By far the greater number stood leaning, in lazy, lounging attitudes, against the upright posts that supported the crazy building, while three or four of the oldest and most distinguished of the chiefs placed themselves on the earth a little more in advance.

A flaring torch was burning in the place, and set its red glare from face to face and figure to figure, as it waved in the currents of air. Duncan profited by its light to read the probable character of his reception in the countenances of his hosts. But his ingenuity availed him little against the cold artifices of the people he had encountered. The chiefs in front scarce cast a glance at his person, keeping their eyes on the ground with an air that might have been intended for respect, but which it was quite easy to construe into distrust. The men in shadow were less reserved. Duncan soon detected their searching, but stolen looks, which, in truth, scanned his person and attire inch by inch; leaving no emotion of the countenance, no gesture, no line of the paint, nor even the fashion of a garment, unheeded, and without comment.

At length one whose hair was beginning to be sprinkled with gray, but whose sinewy limbs and firm tread announced that he was still equal to the duties of manhood, advanced out of the gloom of a corner, whither he had probably posted himself to make his observations unseen, and spoke. He used the language of the Wyandots, or Hurons; his words were, consequently, unintelligible to Heyward, though they seemed, by the gestures that accompanied them, to be uttered more in courtesy than anger. The latter shook his head, and made a gesture indicative of his inability to reply.

"Do none of my brothers speak the French or the English?" he said, in the former language, looking about him from countenance to countenance, in hopes of finding a nod of assent.

Though more than one had turned, as if to catch the meaning of his words, they remained unanswered.

"I should be grieved to think," continued Duncan, speaking slowly, and using the simplest French of which he was the master, "to believe that none of this wise and brave nation understand the language that the 'Grand Monarque'

uses when he talks to his children. His heart would be heavy did he believe his red warriors paid him so little respect ! ”

A long and grave pause succeeded, during which no movement of a limb, nor any expression of an eye, betrayed the impression produced by his remark. Duncan who knew that silence was a virtue amongst his hosts, gladly had recourse to the custom, in order to arrange his ideas. At length the same warrior who had before addressed him replied, by dryly demanding, in the language of the Canadas,—

“ When our Great Father speaks to his people, is it with the tongue of a Huron ? ”

“ He knows no difference in his children, whether the color of the skin be red, or black, or white,” returned Duncan, evasively ; “ though chiefly is he satisfied with the brave Hurons.”

“ In what manner will he speak,” demanded the wary chief, “ when the runners count to him the scalps which five nights ago grew on the heads of the Yengeese ? ”

“ They were his enemies,” said Duncan, shuddering involuntarily ; “ and, doubtless, he will say, It is good—my Hurons are very gallant.”

“ Our Canada father does not think it. Instead of looking forward to reward his Indians, his eyes are turned backward. He sees the dead Yengeese, but no Huron. What can this mean ? ”

“ A great chief like him has more thoughts than tongues. He looks to see that no enemies are on his trail.”

“ The canoe of a dead warrior will not float on the Horican,” returned the savage gloomily. “ His ears are open to the Delawares, who are not our friends, and they will fill them with lies.”

“ It cannot be. See ; he has bid me, who am a man that knows the art of healing, to go to his children, the red Hurons of the great lakes, and ask if any are sick ! ”

Another silence succeeded this annunciation of the character Duncan had assumed. Every eye was simultaneously bent on his person, as if to inquire into the truth or falsehood of the declaration, with an intelligence and keenness that caused the subject of their scrutiny to tremble for the result. He was, however, relieved again by the former speaker.

“ Do the cunning men of the Canadas paint their skins ? ” the Huron coldly continued ; “ we have heard them boast that their faces were pale.”

“ When an Indian chief comes among his white fathers,”

returned Duncan, with great steadiness, "he lays aside his buffalo robe, to carry the shirt that is offered him. My brothers have given me paint, and I wear it."

A low murmur of applause announced that the compliment to the tribe was favorably received. The elderly chief made a gesture of commendation, which was answered by most of his companions, who each threw forth a hand, and uttered a brief exclamation of pleasure. Duncan began to breathe more freely, believing that the weight of his examination was past; and as he had already prepared a simple and probable tale to support his pretended occupation, his hopes of ultimate success grew brighter.

After a silence of a few moments, as if adjusting his thoughts, in order to make a suitable answer to the declaration their guests had just given, another warrior arose and placed himself in an attitude to speak. While his lips were yet in the act of parting, a low but fearful sound arose from the forest, and was immediately succeeded by a high, shrill yell, that was drawn out, until it equalled the longest and most plaintive howl of the wolf. The sudden and terrible interruption caused Duncan to start from his seat, unconscious of everything but the effect produced by so frightful a cry. At the same moment, the warriors glided in a body from the lodge, and the outer air was filled with loud shouts, that nearly drowned those awful sounds, which were still ringing beneath the arches of the woods. Unable to command himself any longer, the youth broke from the place, and presently stood in the centre of a disorderly throng, that included nearly everything having life, within the limits of the encampment. Men, women, and children; the aged, the infirm, the active, and the strong, were alike abroad, some exclaiming aloud, others clapping their hands with a joy that seemed frantic, and all expressing their savage pleasure in some unexpected event. Though astounded at first by the uproar, Heyward was soon enabled to find its solution by the scene that followed.

There yet lingered sufficient light in the heavens to exhibit those bright openings among the tree-tops, where different paths left the clearing to enter the depths of the wilderness. Beneath one of them, a line of warriors issued from the woods and advanced slowly towards the dwellings. One in front bore a short pole, on which, as it afterwards appeared, were suspended several human scalps. The startling sounds that Duncan had heard, were what the whites have,

not inappropriately called the "death-hallo;" and each repetition of the cry was intended to announce to the tribe the fate of an enemy. Thus far the knowledge of Heyward assisted him in the explanation; and as he knew that the interruption was caused by the unlooked-for return of a successful war-party, every disagreeable sensation was quieted in inward congratulations, for the opportune relief and insignificance it conferred on himself.

When at the distance of a few hundred feet from the lodges, the newly arrived warriors halted. The plaintive and terrific cry, which was intended to represent equally the wailings of the dead and the triumph of the victors, had entirely ceased. One of their number now called aloud, in words that were far from appalling, though not more intelligible to those for whose ears they were intended, than their expressive yells. It would be difficult to convey a suitable idea of the savage ecstasy with which the news, thus imparted, was received. The whole encampment, in a moment, became a scene of the most violent bustle and commotion. The warriors drew their knives, and flourishing them, they arranged themselves in two lines, forming a lane that extended from the war-party to the lodges. The squaws seized clubs, axes, or whatever weapon of offence first offered itself to their hands, and rushed eagerly to act their part in the cruel game that was at hand. Even the children would not be excluded; but boys, little able to wield the instruments, tore the tomahawks from the belts of their fathers, and stole into the ranks, apt imitators of the savage traits exhibited by their parents.

Large piles of brush lay scattered about the clearing, and a wary and aged squaw was occupied firing as many as might serve to light the coming exhibition. As the flame arose, its power exceeded that of the parting day, and assisted to render objects at the same time more distinct and more hideous. The whole scene formed a striking picture, whose frame was composed of the dark and tall border of pines. The warriors just arrived were the most distant figures. A little in advance stood two men, who were apparently selected from the rest, as the principal actors in what was to follow. The light was not strong enough to render their features distinct, though it was quite evident that they were governed by very different emotions. While one stood erect and firm, prepared to meet his fate like a hero, the other bowed his head, as if palsied by terror or stricken with shame. The high-spirited Duncan felt a powerful impulse of admiration and pity towards the former, though

no opportunity could offer to exhibit his generous emotions. He watched his slightest movement, however, with eager eyes ; and as he traced the fine outline of his admirably proportioned and active frame, he endeavored to persuade himself that if the powers of man, seconded by such noble resolution, could bear one harmless through so severe a trial, the youthful captive before him might hope for success in the hazardous race he was about to run. Insensibly the young man drew nigher to the swarthy lines of the Hurons, and scarcely breathed, so intense became his interest in the spectacle. Just then the signal yell was given, and the momentary quiet which had preceded it was broken by a burst of cries, that far exceeded any before heard. The most abject of the two victims continued motionless ; but the other bounded from the place at the cry, with the activity and swiftness of a deer. Instead of rushing through the hostile lines, as had been expected, he just entered the dangerous defile, and before time was given for a single blow, turned short, and leaping the heads of a row of children, he gained at once the exterior and safer side of the formidable array. The artifice was answered by a hundred voices raised in imprecations ; and the whole of the excited multitude broke from their order, and spread themselves about the place in wild confusion.

A dozen blazing piles now shed their lurid brightness on the place, which resembled some unhallowed and supernatural arena, in which malicious demons had assembled to act their bloody and lawless rites. The forms in the background looked like unearthly beings, gliding before the eye, and cleaving the air, with frantic and unmeaning gestures ; while the savage passions of such as passed the flames, were rendered fearfully distinct by the gleams that shot athwart their inflamed visages.

It will easily be understood, that amid such a concourse of vindictive enemies, no breathing time was allowed the fugitive. There was a single moment when it seemed as if he would have reached the forest, but the whole body of his captors threw themselves before him, and drove him back into the centre of his relentless persecutors. Turning like a headed deer, he shot, with the swiftness of an arrow, through a pillar of forked flame, and passing the whole multitude harmless, he appeared on the opposite side of the clearing. Here, too, he was met and turned by a few of the older and more subtle of the Hurons. Once more he tried the throng,

as if seeking safety in its blindness, and then several moments succeeded, during which Duncan believed the active and courageous young stranger was lost.

Nothing could be distinguished but a dark mass of human forms tossed and involved in inexplicable confusion. Arms, gleaming knives, and formidable clubs, appeared above them, but the blows were evidently given at random. The awful effect was heightened by the piercing shrieks of the women and the fierce yells of the warriors. Now and then Duncan caught a glimpse of a light form cleaving the air in some desperate bound, and he rather hoped than believed that the captive yet retained the command of his astonishing powers of activity. Suddenly the multitude rolled backward, and approached the spot where he himself stood. The heavy body in the rear pressed upon the women and children in front, and bore them to the earth. The stranger reappeared in the confusion. Human power could not, however, much longer endure so severe a trial. Of this the captive seemed conscious. Profiting by the momentary opening, he darted from among the warriors, and made a desperate, and, what seemed to Duncan, a final effort to gain the wood. As if aware that no danger was to be apprehended from the young soldier, the fugitive nearly brushed his person in his flight. A tall and powerful Huron, who had husbanded his forces, pressed close upon his heels, and with an uplifted arm menaced a fatal blow. Duncan thrust forth a foot, and the shock precipitated the eager savage headlong, many feet in advance of his intended victim. Thought itself is not quicker than was the motion with which the latter profited by the advantage; he turned, gleamed like a meteor again before the eyes of Duncan, and at the next moment, when the latter recovered his recollection, and gazed around in quest of the captive, he saw him quietly leaning against a small painted post, which stood before the door of the principal lodge.

Apprehensive that the part he had taken in the escape might prove fatal to himself, Duncan left the place without delay. He followed the crowd, which drew nigh the lodges, gloomy and sullen, like any other multitude that had been disappointed in an execution. Curiosity, or perhaps a better feeling, induced him to approach the stranger. He found him standing with one arm cast about the protecting post, and breathing thick and hard, after his exertions, but disdain-
ing to permit a single sign of suffering to escape. His person was now protected by immemorial and sacred usage, until the

tribe in council had deliberated and determined on his fate. It was not difficult, however, to foretell the result, if any presage could be drawn from the feelings of those who crowded the place.

There was no term of abuse known to the Huron vocabulary that the disappointed women did not lavishly expend on the successful stranger. They flouted at his efforts and told him, with bitter scoffs, that his feet were better than his hands, and that he merited wings, while he knew not the use of an arrow or a knife. To all this the captive made no reply, but was content to preserve an attitude in which dignity was singularly blended with disdain. Exasperated as much by his composure as by his good fortune, their words became unintelligible, and were succeeded by shrill piercing yells. Just then the crafty squaw, who had taken the necessary precautions to fire the piles, made her way through the throng, and cleared a place for herself in front of the captive. The squalid and withered person of this hag might well have obtained for her the character of possessing more than human cunning. Throwing back her light vestment, she stretched forth her long skinny arm, in derision, and using the language of the Lenape, as more intelligible to the subject of her jibes, she commenced aloud,—

“Look you, Delaware!” she said, snapping her fingers in his face; “your nation is a race of women, and the hoe is better fitted to your hands than the gun. Your squaws are the mothers of deer; but if a bear, or a wild cat, or a serpent, were born among you, ye would flee. The Huron girls shall make you petticoats, and we will find you a husband.”

A burst of savage laughter succeeded this attack, during which the soft and musical merriment of the younger females strangely chimed with the cracked voice of their older and more malignant companion. But the stranger was superior to all their efforts. His head was immovable; nor did he betray the slightest consciousness that any were present, except when his haughty eye rolled towards the dusky forms of the warriors, who stalked in the background, silent and sullen observers of the scene.

Infuriated at the self-command of the captive, the woman placed her arms akimbo, and throwing herself into a posture of defiance, she broke out anew, in a torrent of words that no art of ours could commit successfully to paper. Her breath was, however, expended in vain; for, although distinguished in her nation as a proficient in the art of abuse, she was per

mitted to work herself into such a fury as actually to foam at the mouth, without causing a muscle to vibrate in the motionless figure of the stranger. The effect of his indifference began to extend itself to the other spectators, and a youngster, who was just quitting the condition of a boy, to enter the state of manhood, attempted to assist the termagant, by flourishing his tomahawk before their victim, and adding his empty boasts to the taunts of the woman. Then, indeed, the captive turned his face towards the light, and looked down on the stripling with an expression that was superior to contempt. At the next moment he resumed his quiet and reclining attitude against the post. But the change of posture had permitted Duncan to exchange glances with the firm and piercing eyes of Uncas.

Breathless with amazement, and heavily oppressed with the critical situation of his friend, Heyward recoiled before the look, trembling lest its meaning might, in some unknown manner, hasten the prisoner's fate. There was not however, any instant cause for such an apprehension. Just then a warrior forced his way into the exasperated crowd. Motioning the women and children aside with a stern gesture, he took Uncas by the arm, and led him towards the door of the council lodge. Thither all the chiefs, and most of the distinguished warriors followed, among whom the anxious Heyward found means to enter without attracting any dangerous attention to himself.

A few minutes were consumed in disposing of those present in a manner suitable to their rank and influence in the tribe. An order very similar to that adopted in the preceding interview was observed ; the aged and superior chiefs occupying the area of the spacious apartment, within the powerful light of a glaring torch, while their juniors and inferiors were arranged in the background, presenting a dark outline of swarthy and marked visages. In the very centre of the lodge, immediately under an opening that admitted the twinkling light of one or two stars, stood Uncas, calm, elevated, and collected. His high and haughty carriage was not lost on his captors, who often bent their looks on his person, with eyes which, while they lost none of their inflexibility of purpose, plainly betrayed their admiration of the stranger's daring.

The case was different with the individual whom Duncan had observed to stand forth with his friend, previously to the desperate trial of speed ; and who, instead of joining in the chase, had remained throughout its turbulent uproar like a

cringing statue, expressive of shame and disgrace. Though not a hand had been extended to greet him, nor yet an eye had condescended to watch his movements, he had also entered the lodge, as though impelled by a fate to whose decrees he submitted, seemingly, without a struggle. Heyward profited by the first opportunity to gaze in his face, secretly apprehensive he might find the features of another acquaintance; but they proved to be those of a stranger, and, what was still more inexplicable, of one who bore all the distinctive marks of a Huron warrior. Instead of mingling with his tribe, however, he sat apart, a solitary being in a multitude, his form shrinking into a crouching and abject attitude, as if anxious to fill as little space as possible. When each individual had taken his proper station, and silence reigned in the place, the gray-haired chief already introduced to the reader spoke aloud, in the language of the Lenni Lenape.

"Delaware," he said, "though one of a nation of women, you have proved yourself a man. I would give you food; but he who eats with a Huron should become his friend. Rest in peace till the morning sun, when our last words shall be spoken."

"Seven nights, and as many summer days, have I fasted on the trail of the Hurons," Uncas coldly replied; "the children of the Lenape know how to travel the path of the just without lingering to eat."

"Two of my young men are in pursuit of your companion," resumed the other, without appearing to regard the boast of his captive; "when they get back, then will our wise men say to you 'live or die.'"

"Has a Huron no ears?" scornfully exclaimed Uncas; "twice, since he has been your prisoner, has the Delaware heard a gun that he knows. Your young men will never come back."

A short and sullen pause succeeded this bold assertion. Duncan, who understood the Mohican to allude to the fatal rifle of the scout, bent forward in earnest observation of the effect it might produce on the conquerors; but the chief was content with simply retorting,—

"If the Lenape are so skilful, why is one of their bravest warriors here?"

"He followed in the steps of a flying coward, and fell into a snare. The cunning beaver may be caught."

As Uncas thus replied, he pointed with his finger towards the solitary Huron, but without deigning to bestow any other

notice on so unworthy an object. The words of the answer and the air of the speaker produced a strong sensation among his auditors. Every eye rolled sullenly towards the individual indicated by the simple gesture, and a low, threatening murmur passed through the crowd. The ominous sounds reached the outer door, and the women and children pressing into the throng, no gap had been left, between shoulder and shoulder, that was not now filled with the dark lineaments of some eager and curious human countenance.

In the mean time the more aged chiefs, in the centre, communed with each other in short and broken sentences. Not a word was uttered that did not convey the meaning of the speaker, in the simplest and most energetic form. Again, a long and deeply solemn pause took place. It was known, by all present, to be the grave precursor of a weighty and important judgment. They who composed the outer circle of faces were on tiptoe to gaze ; and even the culprit for an instant forgot his shame in a deeper emotion, and exposed his abject features, in order to cast an anxious and troubled glance at the dark assemblage of chiefs. The silence was finally broken by the aged warrior so often named. He arose from the earth, and moving past the immovable form of Uncas, placed himself in a dignified attitude before the offender. At that moment, the withered squaw already mentioned moved into the circle, in a slow, sideling sort of a dance, holding the torch, and muttering the indistinct words of what might have been a species of incantation. Though her presence was altogether an intrusion, it was unheeded.

Approaching Uncas, she held the blazing brand in such a manner as to cast its red glare on his person, and to expose the slightest emotion of his countenance. The Mohican maintained his firm and haughty attitude ; and his eye, so far from deigning to meet her inquisitive look, dwelt steadily on the distance, as though it penetrated the obstacles which impeded the view, and looked into futurity. Satisfied with her examination, she left him, with a slight expression of pleasure, and proceeded to practise the same trying experiment on her delinquent countrymen.

The young Huron was in his war paint, and very little of a finely moulded form was concealed by his attire. The light rendered every limb and joint discernible, and Duncan turned away in horror when he saw they were writhing in inexpressible agony. The woman was commencing a low and plaintive howl at the sad and shameful spectacle, when the chief put forth his hand and gently pushed her aside.

“Reed-that-bends,” he said, addressing the young culprit by name, and in his proper language, “though the Great Spirit has made you pleasant to the eyes, it would have been better that you had not been born. Your tongue is loud in the village, but in battle it is still. None of my young men strike the tomahawk deeper into the war-post—none of them so lightly on the Yengeese. The enemy know the shape of your back, but they have never seen the color of your eyes. Three times have they called on you to come, and as often did you forget to answer. Your name will never be mentioned again in your tribe—it is already forgotten.”

As the chief slowly uttered these words, pausing impressively between each sentence, the culprit raised his face, in deference to the other's rank and years. Shame, horror, and pride struggled in its lineaments. His eye, which was contracted with inward anguish, gleamed on the persons of those whose breath was his fame; and the latter emotion for an instant predominated. He arose to his feet, and baring his bosom, looked steadily on the keen, glittering knife, that was already upheld by his inexorable judge. As the weapon passed slowly into his heart he even smiled, as if in joy at having found death less dreadful than he had anticipated, and fell heavily on his face, at the feet of the rigid and unyielding form of Uncas.

The squaw gave a loud and plaintive yell, dashed the torch to the earth, and buried everything in darkness. The whole shuddering groups of spectators glided from the lodge, like troubled sprites; and Duncan thought that he and the yet throbbing body of the victim of an Indian judgment had now become its only tenan

CHAPTER XXIV.

Thus spoke the sage : the kings without delay
Dissolve the council, and their chief obey.

POPE'S ILIAD.

A SINGLE moment served to convince the youth that he was mistaken. A hand was laid, with a powerful pressure, on his arm, and the low voice of Uncas muttered in his ears,—

“The Hurons are dogs. The sight of a coward's blood

can never make a warrior tremble. The 'Grey Head' and the Sagamore are safe, and the rifle of Hawk-eye is not asleep. Go—Uncas and the 'Open Hand' are now strangers. It is enough."

Heyward would gladly have heard more, but the gentle push from his friend urged him towards the door, and admonished him of the danger that might attend the discovery of their intercourse. Slowly and reluctantly yielding to the necessity, he quitted the place, and mingled with the throng that hovered nigh. The dying fires in the clearing cast a dim and uncertain light on the dusky figures that were silently stalking to and fro; and occasionally a brighter gleam than common glanced into the lodge, and exhibited the figure of Uncas still maintaining his upright attitude near the dead body of the Huron.

A knot of warriors soon entered the place again, and re-issuing they bore the senseless remains into the adjacent woods. After this termination of the scene, Duncan wandered among the lodges, unquestioned and unnoticed, endeavoring to find some trace of her in whose behalf he incurred the risk he ran. In the present temper of the tribe, it would have been easy to have fled and rejoined his companions, had such a wish crossed his mind. But, in addition to the never-ceasing anxiety on account of Alice, a fresher, though feebler, interest in the fate of Uncas assisted to chain him to the spot. He continued, therefore, to stray from hut to hut, looking into each only to encounter additional disappointment, until he had made the entire circuit of the village. Abandoning a species of inquiry that proved so fruitless, he retraced his steps to the council lodge, resolved to seek and question David, in order to put an end to his doubts.

On reaching the building which had proved alike the seat of judgment and the place of execution, the young man found that the excitement had already subsided. The warriors had re-assembled, and were now calmly smoking, while they conversed gravely on the chief incidents of their recent expedition to the head of the Horican. Though the return of Duncan was likely to remind them of his character, and the suspicious circumstances of his visit, it produced no visible sensation. So far, the terrible scene that had just occurred proved favorable to his views, and he required no other prompter than his own feelings to convince him of the expediency of profiting by so unexpected an advantage.

Without seeming to hesitate, he walked into the lodge

and took his seat with a gravity that accorded admirably with the deportment of his hosts. A hasty but searching glance sufficed to tell him that, though Uncas still remained where he had left him, David had not reappeared. No other restraint was imposed on the former than the watchful looks of a young Huron, who had placed himself at hand ; though an armed warrior leaned against the post that formed one side of the narrow door-way. In every other respect, the captive seemed at liberty ; still he was excluded from all participation in the discourse, and possessed much more of the air of some finely moulded statue than a man having life and volition.

Heyward had too recently witnessed a frightful instance of the prompt punishments of the people into whose hands he had fallen, to hazard an exposure by any officious boldness. He would greatly have preferred silence and meditation to speech, when a discovery of his real condition might prove so instantly fatal. Unfortunately for this prudent resolution, his entertainers appeared otherwise disposed. He had not long occupied the seat wisely taken a little in the shade, when another of the elder warriors, who spoke the French language, addressed him :—

“ My Canada father does not forget his children,” said the chief ; “ I thank him. An evil spirit lives in the wife of one of my young men. Can the cunning stranger frighten him away ? ”

Heyward possessed some knowledge of the mummery practised among the Indians, in the cases of such supposed visitations. He saw at a glance, that the circumstances might possibly be improved to further his own ends. It would, therefore, have been difficult, just then, to have uttered a proposal that would have given him more satisfaction. Aware of the necessity of preserving the dignity of his imaginary character, however, he repressed his feelings, and answered with suitable mystery,—

“ Spirits differ ; some yield to the power of wisdom, while others are too strong.”

“ My brother is a great medicine,” said the cunning savage ; “ he will try ? ”

A gesture of assent was the answer. The Huron was content with the assurance, and resuming his pipe, he awaited the proper moment to move. The impatient Heyward, inwardly execrating the cold customs of the savages, which required such sacrifices to appearance, was fain to assume an air of indifference, equal to that maintained by the chief, who

was, in truth, a near relative of the afflicted woman. The minutes lingered, and the delay had seemed an hour to the adventurer in empiricism, when the Huron laid aside his pipe, and drew his robe across his breast, as if about to lead the way to the lodge of the invalid. Just then a warrior of powerful frame darkened the door, and stalking silently among the attentive group, he seated himself on one end of the low pile of brush which sustained Duncan. The latter cast an impatient look at his neighbor, and felt his flesh creep with uncontrollable horror when he found himself in actual contact with Magua.

The sudden return of this artful and dreaded chief caused a delay in the departure of the Huron. Several pipes, that had been extinguished, were lighted again, while the new-comer, without speaking a word, drew his tomahawk from his girdle, and filling the bowl on its head, began to inhale the vapors of the weed through the hollow handle, with as much indifference as if he had not been absent two weary days on a long and toilsome hunt. Ten minutes, which appeared so many ages to Duncan, might have passed in this manner; and the warriors were fairly enveloped in a cloud of white smoke before any of them spoke.

"Welcome!" one at length uttered; "has my friend found the moose?"

"The young men stagger under their burdens," returned Magua. "Let 'Reed-that-bends' go on the hunting path; he will meet them."

A deep and awful silence succeeded the utterance of the forbidden name. Each pipe dropped from the lips of its owner as though all had inhaled an impurity at the same instant. The smoke wreathed above their heads in little eddies, and curling in a spiral form, it ascended swiftly through the opening in the roof of the lodge, leaving the place beneath clear of its fumes, and each dark visage distinctly visible. The looks of most of the warriors were riveted on the earth; though a few of the younger and less gifted of the party suffered their wild and glaring eye-balls to roll in the direction of a white-headed savage, who sat between two of the most venerated chiefs of the tribe. There was nothing in the air or attire of this Indian that would seem to entitle him to such a distinction. The former was rather depressed, than remarkable for the bearing of the natives; and the latter was such as was commonly worn by the ordinary men of the nation. Like most around him, for more than a minute his

look too was on the ground ; but, trusting his eyes at length to steal a glance aside, he perceived he was becoming an object of general attention. Then he arose and lifted his voice in the general silence.

“ It was a lie,” he said ; “ I had no son. He who was called by that name is forgotten ; his blood was pale, and it came not from the veins of a Huron ; the wicked Chippewas cheated my squaw. The Great Spirit has said, that the family of Wiss-en-tush should end—he is happy who knows that the evil of his race dies with himself. I have done.”

The speaker, who was the father of the recreant young Indian, looked round and about him, as if seeking commendation of his stoicism in the eyes of his auditors. But the stern customs of his people had made too severe an exaction of the feeble old man. The expression of his eye contradicted his figurative and boastful language, while every muscle in his wrinkled visage was working with anguish. Standing a single minute to enjoy his bitter triumph, he turned away, as if sickening at the gaze of men, and veiling his face in his blanket, he walked from the lodge with the noiseless step of an Indian, seeking, in the privacy of his own abode, the sympathy of one like himself, aged, forlorn, and childless.

The Indians, who believe in the hereditary transmission of virtues and defects in character, suffered him to depart in silence. Then, with an elevation of breeding that many in a more cultivated state of society might profitably emulate, one of the chiefs drew the attention of the young men from the weakness they had just witnessed, by saying in a cheerful voice, addressing himself in courtesy to Magua, as the newest comer,—

“ The Delawares have been like bears after the honeypots, prowling around my village. But who has ever found a Huron asleep ? ”

The darkness of the impending cloud which precedes a burst of thunder was not blacker than the brow of Magua as he exclaimed,—

“ The Delawares of the Lakes ! ”

“ Not so. They who wear the petticoats of squaws, on their own river. One of them has been passing the tribe.”

“ Did my young men take his scalp ? ”

“ His legs were good, though his arm is better for the hoe than the tomahawk,” returned the other, pointing to the immovable form of Uncas.

Instead of manifesting any womanish curiosity to feast his

eyes with the sight of a captive from a people he was known to have so much reason to hate, Magua continued to smoke, with the meditative air that he usually maintained, when there was no immediate call on his cunning or his eloquence. Although secretly amazed at the facts communicated by the speech of the aged father, he permitted himself to ask no questions, reserving his inquiries for a more suitable moment. It was only after a sufficient interval that he shook the ashes from his pipe, replaced the tomahawk, tightened his girdle, and arose, casting for the first time a glance in the direction of the prisoner, who stood a little behind him. The wary, though seemingly abstracted Uncas, caught a glimpse of the movement, and turning suddenly to the light their looks met. Near a minute these two bold and untamed spirits stood regarding one another steadily in the eye, neither quailing in the least before the fierce gaze he encountered. The form of Uncas dilated, and his nostrils opened like those of a tiger at bay; but so rigid and unyielding was his posture, that he might easily have been converted by the imagination into an exquisite and faultless representation of the warlike deity of his tribe. The lineaments of the quivering features of Magua proved more ductile; his countenance gradually lost its character of defiance in an expression of ferocious joy, and heaving a breath from the very bottom of his chest, he pronounced aloud the formidable name of,—

“Le Cerf agile!”

Each warrior sprang upon his feet at the utterance of the well-known appellation, and there was a short period during which the stoical constancy of the natives was completely conquered by surprise. The hated and yet respected name was repeated as by one voice, carrying the sound even beyond the limits of the lodge. The women and children who lingered around the entrance, took up the words in an echo, which was succeeded by another shrill and plaintive howl. The latter was not yet ended, when the sensation among the men had entirely abated. Each one in presence seated himself, as though ashamed of his precipitation; but it was many minutes before their meaning eyes ceased to roll towards their captive, in curious examination of a warrior who had so often proved his prowess on the best and proudest of their nation. Uncas enjoyed his victory, but was content with merely exhibiting his triumph by a quiet smile—an emblem of scorn which belongs to all time and every nation.

Magua caught the expression, and raising his arm, he

shook it at the captive—the light silver ornaments attached to his bracelet rattling with the trembling agitation of the limb as, in a tone of vengeance, he exclaimed, in English,—

“Mohican, you die!”

“The healing waters will never bring the dead Hurons to life,” returned Uncas, in the music of the Delawares; “the tumbling river washes their bones; their men are squaws; their women owls. Go call together the Huron dogs, that they may look upon a warrior. My nostrils are offended; they sent the blood of a coward.”

The latter allusion struck deep, and the injury rankled. Many of the Hurons understood the strange tongue in which the captive spoke, among which number was Magua. This cunning savage beheld, and instantly profited by his advantage. Dropping the light robe of skin from his shoulder, he stretched forth his arm, and commenced a burst of his dangerous and artful eloquence. However much his influence among his people had been impaired by his occasional and besetting weakness, as well as by his desertion of the tribe, his courage and his fame as an orator were undeniable. He never spoke without auditors, and rarely without making converts to his opinions. On the present occasion, his native powers were stimulated by the thirst of revenge.

He again recounted the events of the attack on the Island at Glenn's; the death of his associates; and the escape of their most formidable enemies. Then he described the nature and position of the mount whither he had led such captives as had fallen into their hands. Of his own bloody intentions towards the maidens, and of his baffled malice he made no mention, but passed rapidly on to the surprise of the party by “*La longue Carabine*,” and its fatal termination. Here he paused and looked about him, in affected veneration for the departed, but, in truth, to note the effect of his opening narrative. As usual, every eye was riveted on his face. Each dusky figure seemed a breathing statue, so motionless was the posture, so intense the attention of the individual.

Then Magua dropped his voice, which had hitherto been clear, strong, and elevated, and touched upon the merits of the dead. No quality that was likely to command the sympathy of an Indian escaped his notice. One had never been known to follow the chase in vain; another had been indefatigable on the trail of their enemies. This was brave, that generous. In short, he so managed his allusions, that in a nation which was composed of so few families he contrived to

strike every chord that might find, in its turn, some breast in which to vibrate.

“Are the bones of my young men,” he concluded, “in the burial-place of the Hurons? You know they are not. Their spirits are gone towards the setting sun, and are already crossing the great waters, to the happy hunting-grounds. But they departed without food, without guns or knives, without moccasins, naked and poor as they were born. Shall this be? Are their souls to enter the land of the just like hungry Iroquois or unmanly Delawares; or shall they meet their friends with arms in their hands and robes on their backs? What will our fathers think the tribes of the Wyandots have become? They will look on their children with a dark eye, and say, Go; a Chippewa has come hither with the name of a Huron. Brothers, we must not forget the dead; a red-skin never ceases to remember. We will load the back of this Mohican until he staggers under our bounty, and dispatch him after my young men. They call to us for aid, though our ears are not open; they say, Forget us not. When they see the spirit of this Mohican toiling after them with his burden, they will know we are of that mind. Then will they go on happy; and our children will say, ‘So did our fathers to their friends, so must we do to them.’ What is a Yengee? we have slain many, but the earth is still pale. A stain on the name of a Huron can only be hid by blood that comes from the veins of an Indian. Let this Delaware die.”

The effect of such an harangue, delivered in the nervous language and with the emphatic manner of a Huron orator, could scarcely be mistaken. Magua had so artfully blended the natural sympathies with the religious superstition of his auditors, that their minds, already prepared by custom to sacrifice a victim to the manes of their countrymen, lost every vestige of humanity in a wish for revenge. One warrior in particular, a man of wild and ferocious mien, had been conspicuous for the attention he had given to the words of the speaker. His countenance had changed with each passing emotion, until it settled into a look of deadly malice. As Magua ended he arose, and uttering the yell of a demon, his polished little axe was seen glancing in the torchlight as he whirled it above his head. The motion and the cry were too sudden for words to interrupt his bloody intention. It appeared as if a bright gleam shot from his hand, which was crossed at the same moment by a dark and powerful line.

The former was the tomahawk in its passage ; the latter the arm that Magua darted forward to divert its aim. The quick and ready motion of the chief was not entirely too late. The keen weapon cut the war-plume from the scalping tuft of Uncas, and passed through the frail wall of the lodge as though it were hurled from some formidable engine.

Duncan had seen the threatening action, and sprang upon his feet, with a heart which, while it leaped into his throat, swelled with the most generous resolution in behalf of his friend. A glance told him that the blow failed, and terror changed to admiration. Uncas stood still, looking his enemy in the eye with features that seemed superior to emotion. Marble could not be colder, calmer, or steadier than the countenance he put upon this sudden and vindictive attack. Then, as if pitying a want of skill which had proved so fortunate to himself, he smiled, and muttered a few words of contempt in his own tongue.

“No!” said Magua, after satisfying himself of the safety of the captive ; “the sun must shine on his shame ; the squaws must see his flesh tremble, or our revenge will be like the play of boys. Go—take him where there is silence ; let us see if a Delaware can sleep at night, and in the morning die.”

The young men whose duty it was to guard the prisoner instantly passed their ligaments of bark across his arms, and led him from the lodge, amid a profound and ominous silence. It was only as the figure of Uncas stood in the opening of the door that his firm step hesitated. There he turned, and, in the sweeping and haughty glance that he threw around the circle of his enemies, Duncan caught a look, which he was glad to construe into an expression that he was not entirely deserted by hope.

Magua was content with his success, or too much occupied with his secret purposes to push his inquiries any further. Shaking his mantle, and folding it on his bosom, he also quitted the place, without pursuing a subject which might have proved so fatal to the individual at his elbow. Notwithstanding his rising resentment, his natural firmness, and his anxiety in behalf of Uncas, Heyward felt sensibly relieved by the absence of so dangerous and so subtle a foe. The excitement produced by the speech gradually subsided. The warriors resumed their seats, and clouds of smoke once more filled the lodge. For near half an hour, not a syllable was uttered, or scarcely a look cast aside—a grave and meditative

silence being in the ordinary succession to every scene of violence and commotion amongst those beings, who were alike so impetuous and yet so self-restrained.

When the chief who had solicited the aid of Duncan finished his pipe, he made a final and successful movement towards departing. A motion of a finger was the intimation he gave the supposed physician to follow; and passing through the clouds of smoke, Duncan was glad, on more accounts than one, to be able, at last, to breathe the pure air of a cool and refreshing summer evening.

Instead of pursuing his way among those lodges where Heyward had already made his unsuccessful search, his companion turned aside, and proceeded directly towards the base of an adjacent mountain, which overhung the temporary village. A thicket of brush skirted its foot, and it became necessary to proceed through a crooked and narrow path. The boys had resumed their sports in the clearing, and were enacting a mimic chase to the post among themselves. In order to render their games as like the reality as possible, one of the boldest of their number had conveyed a few brands into some piles of tree tops that had hitherto escaped the burning. The blaze of one of these fires lighted the way of the chief and Duncan, and gave a character of additional wildness to the rude scenery. At a little distance from a bald rock, and directly in its front, they entered a grassy opening, which they prepared to cross. Just then fresh fuel was added to the fire, and a powerful light penetrated even to that distant spot. It fell upon the white surface of the mountain and was reflected downwards upon a dark and mysterious-looking being that arose unexpectedly in their path.

The Indian paused, as if doubtful whether to proceed, and permitted his companion to approach his side. A large black ball, which at first seemed stationary, now began to move in a manner that to the latter was inexplicable. Again the fire brightened, and its glare fell more distinctly on the object. Then, even Duncan knew it—by its restless and sideling attitudes, which kept the upper part of its form in constant motion while the animal itself appeared seated—to be a bear. Though it growled loudly and fiercely, and there were instants when its glistening eyeballs might be seen, it gave no other indications of hostility. The Huron, at least, seemed assured that the intentions of this singular intruder were peaceable, for, after giving it an attentive examination, he quietly pursued his course.

Duncan, who knew that the animal was often domesticated among the Indians, followed the example of his companion, be

lieving that some favorite of the tribe had found its way into the thicket, in search of food. They passed it unmolested. Though obliged to come nearly in contact with the monster, the Huron, who had at first so warily determined the character of his strange visitor, was now content with proceeding without wasting a moment in further examination ; but Heyward was unable to prevent his eyes from looking backward, in salutary watchfulness against attacks in the rear. His uneasiness was in no degree diminished when he perceived the beast rolling along their path and following their footsteps. He would have spoken, but the Indian at that moment shoved aside a door of bark, and entered a cavern in the bosom of the mountain.

Profiting by so easy a method of retreat, Duncan stepped after him, and was gladly closing the slight cover to the opening when he felt it drawn from his hand by the beast, whose shaggy form immediately darkened the passage. They were now in a straight and long gallery, in a chasm of the rocks, where retreat without encountering the animal was impossible. Making the best of the circumstances, the young man pressed forward, keeping as close as possible to his conductor. The bear growled frequently at his heels, and once or twice its enormous paws were laid on his person, as if disposed to prevent his further passage into the den.

How long the nerves of Heyward would have sustained him in this extraordinary situation, it might be difficult to decide ; for, happily, he soon found relief. A glimmer of light had constantly been in their front, and they now arrived at the place whence it proceeded.

A large cavity in the rock had been rudely fitted to answer the purposes of many apartments. The subdivisions were simple but ingenious, being composed of stone, sticks, and bark intermingled. Openings above admitted the light by day, and at night fires and torches supplied the place of the sun. Hither the Hurons had brought most of their valuables, especially those which more particularly pertained to the nation ; and hither, as it now appeared, the sick woman, who was believed to be the victim of supernatural power, had been transported also, under an impression that her tormentor would find more difficulty in making his assaults through walls of stone than through the leafy coverings of the lodges. The apartment into which Duncan and his guide first entered had been exclusively devoted to her accommodation. The latter approached her bedside, which was surrounded by females, in the centre of

whom Heyward was surprised to find his missing friend David.

A single look was sufficient to apprise the pretended leech that the invalid was far beyond his powers of healing. She lay in a sort of paralysis, indifferent to the objects which crowded before her sight, and happily unconscious of suffering. Heyward was far from regretting that his mummeries were to be performed on one who was much too ill to take an interest in their failure or success. The slight qualm of conscience which had been excited by the intended deception was instantly appeased, and he began to collect his thoughts, in order to enact his part with suitable spirit, when he found he was about to be anticipated in his skill by an attempt to prove the power of music.

Gamut, who had stood prepared to pour forth his spirit in song when the visitors entered, after delaying a moment, drew a strain from his pipe, and commenced a hymn that might have worked a miracle, had faith in its efficacy been of much avail. He was allowed to proceed to the close, the Indians respecting his imaginary infirmity, and Duncan too glad of the delay to hazard the slightest interruption. As the dying cadence of his strains was falling on the ears of the latter, he started aside at hearing them repeated behind him, in a voice half human and half sepulchral. Looking round, he beheld the shaggy monster seated on end in a shadow of the cavern, where, while his restless body swung in the uneasy manner of the animal, it repeated, in a sort of low growl, sounds, if not words, which bore some slight resemblance to the melody of the singer.

The effect of so strange an echo on David may better be imagined than described. His eyes opened as if he doubted their truth; and his voice became instantly mute in excess of wonder. A deep-laid scheme, of communicating some important intelligence to Heyward, was driven from his recollection by an emotion which very nearly resembled fear, but which he was fain to believe was admiration. Under its influence, he exclaimed aloud—"She expects you and is at hand;" and precipitately left the cavern.

CHAPTER XXV.

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

ince. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

THERE was a strange blending of the ridiculous with that which was solemn in this scene. The beast still continued its rolling, and apparently untiring movements, though its ludicrous attempt to imitate the melody of David ceased the instant the latter abandoned the field. The words of Gamut were, as has been seen, in his native tongue; and to Duncan they seemed pregnant with some hidden meaning, though nothing present assisted him in discovering the object of their allusion. A speedy end was, however, put to every conjecture on the subject, by the manner of the chief, who advanced to the bedside of the invalid, and beckoned away the whole group of female attendants that had clustered there to witness the skill of the stranger. He was implicitly, though reluctantly, obeyed; and when the low echo which rang along the hollow, natural gallery, from the distant closing door, had ceased, pointing towards his insensible daughter, he said,—

“Now let my brother show his power.”

Thus unequivocally called on to exercise the functions of his assumed character, Heyward was apprehensive that the smallest delay might prove dangerous. Endeavoring then to collect his ideas, he prepared to perform that species of incantation, and those uncouth rites under which the Indian conjurers are accustomed to conceal their ignorance and impotency. It is more than probable that, in the disordered state of his thoughts, he would soon have fallen into some suspicious, if not fatal error, had not his incipient attempts been interrupted by a fierce growl from the quadruped. Three several times did he renew his efforts to proceed, and as often was he met by the same unaccountable opposition, each interruption seeming more savage and threatening than the preceding.

“The cunning ones are jealous,” said the Huron; “I go,

brother, the woman is the wife of one of my bravest young men; deal justly by her. Peace!" he added, beckoning to the discontented beast to be quiet; "I go."

The chief was as good as his word, and Duncan now found himself alone in that wild and desolate abode, with the helpless invalid, and the fierce and dangerous brute. The latter listened to the movements of the Indian with that air of sagacity that a bear is known to possess until another echo announced that he had also left the cavern, when it turned and came waddling up to Duncan, before whom it seated itself, in its natural attitude, erect like a man. The youth looked anxiously about him for some weapon with which he might make a resistance against the attack he now seriously expected.

It seemed, however, as if the humor of the animal had suddenly changed. Instead of continuing its discontented growls, or manifesting any further signs of anger, the whole of its shaggy body shook violently, as if agitated by some strange internal convulsion. The huge and unwieldy talons pawed stupidly about the grinning muzzle, and while Heyward kept his eyes riveted on its movements with jealous watchfulness, the grim head fell on one side, and in its place appeared the honest, sturdy countenance of the scout, who was indulging, from the bottom of his soul, in his own peculiar expression of merriment. "Hist!" said the wary woodsman, interrupting Heyward's exclamation of surprise: "the varlets are about the place, and any sounds that are not natural to witchcraft would bring them back upon us in a body."

"Tell me the meaning of this masquerade, and why you have attempted so desperate an adventure?"

"Ah! reason any calculation are often o one by accident," returned the scout. "But as a story should always commence at the beginning, I will tell you the whole in order. After we parted I placed the commandant and the Sagamore in an old beaver lodge, where they are safer from the Hurons than they would be in the garrison of Edward; for your high northwest Indians, not having as yet got the traders among them, continue to venerate the beaver. After which Uncas and I pushed for the other encampment, as was agreed; have you seen the lad?"

"To my great grief!—he is captive, and condemned to die at the rising of the sun."

"I had misgivings that such would be his fate," resumed the scout, in a less confident and joyous tone. But, soon re-

gaining his naturally firm voice again, he continued,—“ His bad fortune is the true reason of my being here, for it would never do to abandon such a boy to the Hurons. A rare time the knaves would have of it, could they tie ‘The bounding Elk’ and ‘The long Carabine,’ as they call me, to the same stake! ‘Though why they have given me such a name I never knew, there being as little likeness between the gifts of ‘Kill-deer’ and the performance of one of your real Canada carabynes, as there is between the natur’ of a pipe-stone and a flint!”

“Keep to your tale,” said the impatient Heyward; “we know not at what moment the Hurons may return.”

“No fear of them. A conjurer must have his time, like a straggling priest in the settlements. We are as safe from interruption as a missionary would be at the beginning of a two hours’ discourse. Well, Uncas and I fell in with a return party of the varlets; the lad was much too forward for a scout; nay, for that matter, being of hot blood, he was not so much to blame; and, after all, one of the Hurons proved a coward, and in fleeing led him into an ambushment.”

“And dearly has he paid for the weakness!”

The scout significantly passed his hand across his own throat, and nodded, as if he said, “I comprehend your meaning.” After which he continued, in a more audible though scarcely more intelligible language,—

“After the loss of the boy I turned upon the Hurons, as you may judge. There have been skrimmages atween one or two of their outlyers and myself; but that is neither here nor there. So, after I had shot the imps, I got in pretty nigh to the lodges without further commotion. Then what should luck do in my favor, but lead me to the very spot where one of the most famous conjurers of the tribe was dressing himself, as I well knew, for some great battle with Satan—though why should I call that luck, which it now seems was an especial ordering from Providence. So a judgmatical rap over the head stiffened the lying impostor for a time, and leaving him a bit of walnut for his supper, to prevent an uproar, and stringing him up atween two saplings, I made free with his finery, and took the part of the bear on myself, in order that the operations might proceed.”

“And admirably did you enact the character; the animal itself might have been shamed by the representation.”

“Lord, major,” returned the flattered woodsman, “I should be but a poor scholar for one who has studied so long in the wilderness, did I not know how to set forth the move

ments and natur' of such a beast. Had it been now a catamount or even a full-sized panther, I would have embellished a performance for you worth regarding. But it is no such marvellous feat to exhibit the feats of so dull a beast ; though, for that matter, too, a bear may be over-acted. Yes, yes ; it is not every imitator that knows natur' may be outdone easier than she is equalled. But all our work is yet before us. Where is the gentle one ? ”

“ Heaven knows ; I have examined every lodge in the village, without discovering the slightest trace of her presence in the tribe.”

“ You heard what the singer said, as he left us,—‘ She is at hand, and expects you.’ ”

“ I have been compelled to believe he alluded to this unhappy woman.”

“ The simpleton was frightened, and blundered through his message ; but he had a deeper meaning. Here are walls enough to separate the whole settlement. A bear ought to climb ; therefore will I take a look above them. There may be honey-pots hid in these rocks, and I am a beast, you know, that has a hankering for the sweets.”

The scout looked behind him, laughing at his own conceit, while he clambered up the partition, imitating, as he went, the clumsy motions of the beast he represented ; but the instant the summit was gained he made a gesture for silence, and slid down with the utmost precipitation.

“ She is here,” he whispered, “ and by that door you will find her. I would have spoken a word of comfort to the afflicted soul ; but the sight of such a monster might upset her reason. Though for that matter, major, you are none of the most inviting yourself in your paint.”

Duncan, who had already sprung eagerly forward, drew instantly back on hearing these discouraging words.

“ Am I, then, so very revolting ? ” he demanded with an air of chagrin.

“ You might not startle a wolf, or turn the Royal Americans from a charge ; but I have seen the time when you had a better-favored look. Your streaked countenances are not ill-judged of by the squaws, but young women of white blood give the preference to their own color. See,” he added, pointing to a place where the water trickled from a rock, forming a little crystal spring before it found an issue through the adjacent crevice ; “ you may easily get rid of the Sagamore’s daub, and when you come back I will try my hand at a new

embellishment. It's as common for a conjurer to alter his paint as for a buck in the settlements to change his finery."

The deliberate woodsman had little occasion to hunt for arguments to enforce his advice. He was yet speaking when Duncan availed himself of the water. In a moment every frightful or offensive mark was obliterated, and the youth appeared again in the lineaments with which he had been gifted by nature. Thus prepared for an interview with his mistress, he took a hasty leave of his companion, and disappeared through the indicated passage. The scout witnessed his departure with complacency, nodding his head after him, and muttering his good wishes; after which he very coolly set about an examination of the state of the larder, among the Hurons—the cavern, among other purposes, being used as a receptacle for the fruits of their hunts.

Duncan had no other guide than a distant glimmering light, which served, however, the office of a polar star to the lover. By its aid he was able to enter the haven of his hopes, which was merely another apartment of the cavern, that had been solely appropriated to the safe-keeping of so important a prisoner as a daughter of the commandant of William Henry. It was profusely strewed with the plunder of that unlucky fortress. In the midst of this confusion he found her he sought, pale, anxious, and terrified, but lovely. David had prepared her for such a visit.

"Duncan!" she exclaimed, in a voice that seemed to tremble at the sounds created by himself.

"Alice!" he answered, leaping carelessly among trunks, boxes, arms, and furniture, until he stood at her side.

"I knew that you would never desert me," she said, looking up with a momentary glow on her otherwise dejected countenance. "But you are alone! grateful as it is to be thus remembered, I could wish to think you are not entirely alone."

Duncan observing that she trembled in a manner which betrayed her inability to stand, gently induced her to be seated while he recounted those leading incidents which it has been our task to record. Alice listened with breathless interest; and though the young man touched lightly on the sorrows of the stricken father, taking care, however, not to wound the self-love of his auditor, the tears ran as freely down the cheeks of the daughter as though she had never wept before. The soothing tenderness of Duncan, however, soon quieted the first burst of her emotions, and she then heard him to the close with undivided attention, if not with **composure**.

"And now, Alice," he added, "you will see how much is still expected of you. By the assistance of our experienced and invaluable friend, the scout, we may find our way from this savage people, but you will have to exert your utmost fortitude. Remember that you fly to the arms of your venerable parent, and how much his happiness, as well as your own, depends on those exertions."

"Can I do otherwise for a father who has done so much for me?"

"And for me too," continued the youth, gently pressing the hand he held in both his own.

The look of innocence and surprise which he received in return convinced Duncan of the necessity of being more explicit.

"This is neither the place nor the occasion to detain you with selfish wishes," he added; "but what heart loaded like mine would not wish to cast its burden? They say misery is the closest of all ties; our common suffering in your behalf left but little to be explained between your father and myself."

"And dearest Cora, Duncan; surely, Cora was not forgotten?"

"Not forgotten! no; regretted, as woman was seldom mourned before. Your venerable father knew no difference between his children; but I—Alice, you will not be offended when I say, that to me, her worth was in a degree obscured—"

"Then you knew not the merit of my sister," said Alice, withdrawing her hand; "of you she ever speaks as of one who is her dearest friend."

"I would gladly believe her such," returned Duncan, hastily; "I could wish her to be even more; but with you, Alice, I have the permission of your father to aspire to a still nearer and dearer tie."

Alice trembled violently, and there was an instant during which she bent her face aside, yielding to the emotions common to her sex; but they quickly passed away, leaving her mistress of her deportment, if not of her affections.

"Hayward," she said, looking him full in the face with a touching expression of innocence and dependency, "give me the sacred presence and the holy sanction of that parent before you urge me further."

"Though more I should not, less I could not say," the youth was about to answer, when he was interrupted by a light tap on his shoulder. Starting to his feet, he turned and

confronting the intruder, his looks fell on the dark form and malignant visage of Magua. The deep, guttural laugh of the savage sounded, at such a moment, to Duncan like the hellish taunt of a demon. Had he pursued the sudden and fierce impulse of the instant, he would have cast himself on the Huron, and committed their fortunes to the issue of a deadly struggle. But, without arms of any description, ignorant of what succor his subtle enemy could command, and charged with the safety of one who was just then dearer than ever to his heart, he no sooner entertained than he abandoned the desperate intention.

“What is your purpose?” said Alice, meekly folding her arms on her bosom, and struggling to conceal an agony of apprehension in behalf of Heyward, in the usual cold and distant manner with which she received the visits of her captor.

The exulting Indian had resumed his austere countenance, though he drew warily back before the menacing glance of the young man’s fiery eye. He regarded both his captives for a moment with a steady look, and then stepping aside, he dropped a log of wood across a door different from that by which Duncan had entered. The latter now comprehended the manner of his surprise, and believing himself irretrievably lost, he drew Alice to his bosom, and stood prepared to meet a fate which he hardly regretted, since it was to be suffered in such company. But Magua meditated no immediate violence. His first measures were very evidently taken to secure his new captive; nor did he even bestow a second glance at the motionless form in the centre of the cavern, until he had completely cut off every hope of retreat through the private outlet he had himself used. He was watched in all his movements by Heyward, who, however, remained firm, still holding the fragile form of Alice to the heart, at once too proud and too hopeless to ask favor of an enemy so often foiled. When Magua had effected his object he approached his prisoners, and said in English—

“The pale-faces trap the cunning beavers; but the red-skins know how to take the Yengeese.”

“Huron, do your worst!” exclaimed the excited Heyward, forgetful that a double stake was involved in his life; “you and your vengeance are alike despised.”

“Will the white man speak these words at the stake?” asked Magua, manifesting at the same time how little faith he had in the other’s resolution by the sneer that accompanied his words.

“Here, singly to your face, or in the presence of your nation?”

“Le Renard Subtil is a great chief!” returned the Indian; “he will go and bring his young men, to see how bravely a pale-face can laugh at the tortures.”

He turned away while speaking, and was about to leave the place through the avenue by which Duncan had approached, when a growl caught his ear, and caused him to hesitate. The figure of the bear appeared in the door, where it sat, rolling from side to side in its customary restlessness. Magua, like the father of the sick woman, eyed it keenly for a moment, as if to ascertain its character. He was far above the more vulgar superstitions of his tribe, and so soon as he recognized the well-known attire of the conjurer, he prepared to pass it in cool contempt. But a louder and more threatening growl caused him again to pause. Then he seemed as if suddenly resolved to trifle no longer, and moved resolutely forward. The mimic animal, which had advanced a little, retired slowly in his front, until it arrived again at the pass, when rearing on its hinder legs it beat the air with its paws, in the manner practised by its brutal prototype.

“Fool!” exclaimed the chief, in Huron, “go play with the children and squaws; leave men to their wisdom.”

He once more endeavored to pass the supposed empiric, scorning even the parade of threatening to use the knife, or tomahawk, that was pendent from his belt. Suddenly the beast extended its arms, or rather legs, and enclosed him in a grasp, that might have vied with the far-famed power of the bear’s “hug” itself. Heyward had watched the whole procedure, on the part of Hawk-eye, with breathless interest. At first he relinquished his hold of Alice; then he caught up a thong of buckskin, which had been used around some bundle, and when he beheld his enemy with his two arms pinned to his side by the iron muscles of the scout, he rushed upon him, and effectually secured them there. Arms, legs, and feet were encircled in twenty folds of the thong, in less time than we have taken to record the circumstance. When the formidable Huron was completely pinioned, the scout released his hold, and Duncan laid his enemy on his back, utterly helpless.

Throughout the whole of this sudden and extraordinary operation Magua, though he had struggled violently, until assured he was in the hands of one whose nerves were far better strung than his own, had not uttered the slightest exclamation. But when Hawk-eye, by way of making a sum-

mary explanation of his conduct, removed the shaggy jaws of the beast, and exposed his own rugged and earnest countenance to the gaze of the Huron, the philosophy of the latter was so far mastered as to permit him to utter the never-failing—

“Hugh!”

“Ay! you’ve found your tongue,” said his undisturbed conqueror; “now, in order that you shall not use it to our ruin, I must make free to stop your mouth.”

As there was no time to be lost, the scout immediately set about effecting so necessary a precaution; and when he had gagged the Indian, his enemy might safely have been considered as “hors de combat.”

“By what place did the imp enter?” asked the industrious scout, when his work was ended. “Not a soul has passed my way since you left me.”

Duncan pointed out the door by which Magua had come, and which now presented too many obstacles to a quick retreat.

“Bring on the gentle one then,” continued his friend; “we must make a push for the woods by the other outlet.”

“’Tis impossible!” said Duncan, “fear has overcome her, and she is helpless. Alice! my sweet, my own Alice, arouse yourself! now is the moment to fly. ’Tis in vain! she hears, but is unable to follow. Go, noble and worthy friend; save yourself, and leave me to my fate!”

“Every trail has its end, and every calamity brings its lesson,” returned the scout. “There, wrap her in them Indian cloths. Conceal all of her little form. Nay, that foot has no fellow in the wilderness; it will betray her. All, every part. Now take her in your arms, and follow. Leave the rest to me.”

Duncan, as may be gathered from the words of his companion, was eagerly obeying; and as the other finished speaking, he took the light person of Alice in his arms, and followed on the footsteps of the scout. They found the sick woman as they had left her, still alone, and passed swiftly on, by the natural gallery, to the place of entrance. As they approached the little door of bark, a murmur of voices without announced that the friends and relatives of the invalid were gathered about the place, patiently awaiting a summons to re-enter.

“If I open my lips to speak,” Hawk-eye whispered, “my English, which is the genuine tongue of a white-skin, will tell

the varlets that an enemy is among them. You must give 'em your jargon, major ; and say that we have shut the evil spirit in the cave, and are taking the woman to the woods in order to find strengthening roots. Practyse all your cunning, for it is a lawful undertaking."

The door opened a little, as if one without was listening to the proceedings within, and compelled the scout to cease his directions. A fierce growl repelled the eaves-dropper, and then the scout boldly threw open the covering of bark, and left the place, enacting the character of the bear as he proceeded. Duncan kept close at his heels, and soon found himself in the centre of a cluster of twenty anxious relatives and friends.

The crowd fell back a little, and permitted the father, and one who appeared to be the husband of the woman to approach.

"Has my brother driven away the evil spirit?" demanded the former. "What has he in his arms?"

"Thy child," returned Duncan, gravely ; "the disease has gone out of her ; it is shut up in the rocks. I take the woman to a distance, where I will strengthen her against any further attacks. She shall be in the wigwam of the young man when the sun comes again."

When the father had translated the meaning of the stranger's words into the Huron language, a suppressed murmur announced the satisfaction with which this intelligence was received. The chief himself waved his hand for Duncan to proceed, saying aloud, in a firm voice, and with a lofty manner,—

"Go—I am a man, and I will enter the rock and fight the wicked one."

Heyward had gladly obeyed, and was already past the little group, when these startling words arrested him.

"Is my brother mad!" he exclaimed ; "is he cruel! He will meet the disease, and it will enter him ; or he will drive out the disease, and it will chase his daughter into the woods. No—let my children wait without, and if the spirit appears beat him down with clubs. He is cunning, and will bury himself in the mountain when he sees how many are ready to fight him."

This singular warning had the desired effect. Instead of entering the cavern the father and husband drew their tomahawks and posted themselves in readiness to deal their vengeance on the imaginary tormentor of their sick relative, while the women and children broke branches from the bushes, or

seized fragments of the rock, with a similar intention. At this favorable moment the counterfeit conjurers disappeared.

Hawk-eye, at the same time that he had presumed so far on the nature of the Indian superstitions, was not ignorant that they were rather tolerated than relied on by the wisest of the chiefs. He well knew the value of time in the present emergency. Whatever might be the extent of the self-delusions of his enemies, and however it had tended to assist his schemes, the slightest cause of suspicion, acting on the subtle nature of an Indian, would be likely to prove fatal. Taking the path, therefore, that was most likely to avoid observation, he rather skirted than entered the village. The warriors were still to be seen in the distance, by the fading light of the fires, stalking from lodge to lodge. But the children had abandoned their sports for their beds of skin, and the quiet of night was already beginning to prevail over the turbulence and excitement of so busy and important an evening.

Alice revived under the renovating influence of the open air, and as her physical rather than her mental powers had been the subject of weakness, she stood in no need of any explanation of that which had occurred.

"Now let me make an effort to walk," she said, when they had entered the forest, blushing, though unseen, that she had not been sooner able to quit the arms of Duncan; "I am indeed restored."

"Nay, Alice, you are yet too weak."

The maiden struggled gently to release herself, and Heyward was compelled to part with his precious burden. The representative of the bear had certainly been an entire stranger to the delicious emotions of the lover while his arms encircled his mistress; and he was, perhaps, a stranger also to the nature of that feeling of ingenuous shame that oppressed the trembling Alice. But when he found himself at a suitable distance from the lodges he made a halt, and spoke on a subject of which he was thoroughly the master.

"This path will lead you to the brook," he said: "follow its northern bank until you come to a fall; mount the hill on your right, and you will see the fires of the other people. There you must go, and demand protection; if they are true Delawares, you will be safe. A distant flight with that gentle one, just now, is impossible. The Hurons would follow up our trail, and master our scalps before we had got a dozen miles. Go, and Providence be with you."

"And you!" demanded Heyward, in surprise; "surely we part not here?"

"The Hurons hold the pride of the Delawares: the last of the high blood of the Mohicans is in their power," returned their scout; "I go to see what can be done in his favor. Had they mastered your scalp, major, a knave should have fallen for every hair it held, as I promised; but if the young Sagamore is to be led to the stake, the Indians shall see, also, how a man without a cross can die."

Not in the least offended with the decided preference that the sturdy woodsman gave to one who might, in some degree, be called the child of his adoption, Duncan still continued to urge such reasons against so desperate an effort as presented themselves. He was aided by Alice, who mingled her entreaties with those of Heyward that he would abandon a resolution that promised so much danger, with so little hope of success. Their eloquence and ingenuity were expended in vain. The scout heard them attentively, but impatiently, and finally closed the discussion by answering, in a tone that instantly silenced Alice, while it told Heyward how fruitless any further remonstrances would be.

"I have heard," he said, "that there is a feeling in youth which binds man to woman closer than the father is tied to the son. It may be so. I have seldom been where women of my color dwell; but such may be the gifts of nature in the settlements. You have risked life and all that is dear to you to bring off this gentle one, and I suppose that some such disposition is at the bottom of it all. As for me, I taught the lad the real character of a rifle; and well has he paid me for it. I have fou't at his side in many a bloody skrimmage; and so long as I could hear the crack of his piece in one ear and that of the Sagamore in the other, I knew no enemy was on my back. Winters and summers, nights and days, have we roved the wilderness in company, eating of the same dish, one sleeping while the other watched; and afore it shall be said that Uncas was taken to the torment, and I at hand—There is but a single ruler of us all, whatever may be the color of the skin; and him I call to witness—that before the Mohican boy shall perish for the want of a friend, good faith shall depart the 'arth, and 'Kill-deer' become as harmless as the tooting we'pon of the singer!"

Duncan released his hold on the arm of the scout, who turned and steadily retraced his steps towards the lodges. After passing a moment to gaze at his retiring form, the successful and yet sorrowful Heyward and Alice took their way together towards the distant village of the Delawares.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Bot. Let me play the lion, too.
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

NOTWITHSTANDING the high resolution of Hawk-eye, he fully comprehended all the difficulties and dangers he was about to incur. In his return to the camp, his acute and practised intellects were intently engaged in devising means to counteract a watchfulness and suspicion on the part of his enemies, that he knew were in no degree inferior to his own. Nothing but the color of his skin had saved the lives of Magua and the conjurer, who would have been the first victims sacrificed to his own security, had not the scout believed such an act, however congenial it might be to the nature of an Indian, utterly unworthy of one who boasted a descent from men that knew no cross of blood. Accordingly, he trusted to the withes and ligaments with which he had bound his captives, and pursued his way directly towards the centre of the lodges.

As he approached the buildings, his steps became more deliberate, and his vigilant eye suffered no sign, whether friendly or hostile, to escape him. A neglected hut was a little in advance of the others, and appeared as if it had been deserted when half completed—most probably on account of failing in some of the more important requisites; such as wood or water. A faint light glimmered through its cracks, however, and announced that, notwithstanding its imperfect structure, it was not without a tenant. Thither, then, the scout proceeded like a prudent general, who was about to feel the advance positions of his enemy, before he hazarded the main attack.

Thr wing himself into a suitable posture for the beast he represented, Hawk-eye crawled to a little opening, where he might command a view of the interior. It proved to be the abiding-place of David Gamut. Hither the faithful singing-master had now brought himself, together with all his sorrows, his apprehensions, and his meek dependence on the protection of Providence. At the precise moment when his ungainly person came under the observation of the scout, in the manner just mentioned, the woodsman himself, though in his

assumed character, was the subject of the solitary being's profoundest reflections.

However implicit the faith of David was in the performance of ancient miracles, he eschewed the belief of any direct supernatural agency in the management of modern morality. In other words, while he had implicit faith in the ability of Balaam's ass to speak, he was somewhat skeptical on the subject of a bear's singing; and yet he had been assured of the latter, on the testimony of his own exquisite organs. There was something in his air and manner that betrayed to the scout the utter confusion of the state of his mind. He was seated on a pile of brush, a few twigs from which occasionally fed his low fire, with his head leaning on his arm, in a posture of melancholy musing. The costume of the votary of music had undergone no other alteration from that so lately described, except that he had covered his bald head with the triangular beaver, which had not proved sufficiently alluring to excite the cupidity of any of his captors.

The ingenious Hawk-eye, who recalled the hasty manner in which the other had abandoned his post at the bedside of the sick woman, was not without his suspicions concerning the subject of so much solemn deliberation. First making the circuit of the hut, and ascertaining that it stood quite alone, and that the character of its inmate was likely to protect it from visitors, he ventured through its low door, into the very presence of Gamut. The position of the latter brought the fire between them; and when Hawk-eye had seated himself on end, near a minute elapsed, during which the two remained regarding each other without speaking. The suddenness and the nature of the surprise had nearly proved too much for—we will not say the philosophy—but for the faith and resolution of David. He fumbled for his pitch-pipe, and arose with a confused intention of attempting a musical exorcism.

“Dark and mysterious monster!” he exclaimed, while with trembling hands he disposed of his auxiliary eyes, and sought his never-failing resource in trouble, the gifted version of the Psalms; “I know not your nature nor intents; but if aught you meditate against the person and rights of one of the humblest servants of the temple, listen to the inspired language of the youth of Israel, and repent.”

The bear shook his shaggy sides, and then a well-known voice replied,—

“Put up the tooting we'pon, and teach your throat modesty.

five words of plain and comprehensible English are worth just now, an hour of squalling."

"What art thou?" demanded David, utterly disqualified to pursue his original intention, and nearly gasping for breath.

"A man like yourself; and one whose blood is as little tainted by the cross of a bear, or an Indian, as your own. Have you so soon forgotten from whom you received the foolish instrument you hold in your hand?"

"Can these things be?" returned David, breathing more freely, as the truth began to dawn upon him. "I have found many marvels during my sojourn with the heathen, but surely nothing to excel this!"

"Come, come," returned Hawk-eye, uncasing his honest countenance, the better to assure the wavering confidence of his companion; "you may see a skin, which, if it be not as white as one of the gentle ones, has no tinge of red to it that the winds of the heaven and the sun have not bestowed. Now let us to business."

"First, tell me of the maiden, and of the youth who so bravely sought her," interrupted David.

"Ay, they are happily freed from the tomahawks of these varlets. But can you put me on the scent of Uncas?"

"The young man is in bondage, and much I fear his death is decreed. I greatly mourn that one so well-disposed should die in his ignorance, and I have sought a goodly hymn—"

"Can you lead me to him?"

"The task will not be difficult," returned David, hesitating; "though I greatly fear your presence would rather increase than mitigate his unhappy fortunes."

"No more words, but lead on," returned Hawk-eye, concealing his face again, and setting the example in his own person by instantly quitting the lodge.

As they proceeded, the scout ascertained that his companion found access to Uncas, under privilege of his imaginary infirmity, aided by the favor he had acquired with one of the guards who, in consequence of speaking a little English, had been selected by David as the subject of a religious conversion. How far the Huron comprehended the intentions of his new friend, may well be doubted; but as exclusive attention is as flattering to a savage as to a more civilized individual, it had produced the effect we have mentioned. It is unnecessary to repeat the shrewd manner with which the scout extracted these particulars from the simple David;

neither shall we dwell, in this place, on the nature of the instructions he delivered, when completely master of all the necessary facts ; as the whole will be sufficiently explained to the reader in the course of the narrative.

The lodge in which Uncas was confined was in the very centre of the village, and in a situation, perhaps, more difficult than any other to approach, or leave, without observation. But it was not the policy of Hawk-eye to affect the least concealment. Presuming on his disguise, and his ability to sustain the character he had assumed, he took the most plain and direct route to the place. The hour, however, afforded him some little of that protection which he appeared so much to despise. The boys were already buried in sleep, and all the women and most of the warriors had retired to the lodges for the night. Four or five of the latter only lingered about the door of the prison of Uncas, wary but close observers of the manner of their captive.

At the sight of Gamut, accompanied by one in the well known masquerade of their most distinguished conjurer, they readily made way for them both. Still they betrayed no intention to depart. On the other hand, they were evidently disposed to remain bound to the place by an additional interest in the mysterious mummeries that they of course expected from such a visit

From the total inability of the scout to address the Hurons in their own language, he was compelled to trust the conversation entirely to David. Notwithstanding the simplicity of the latter, he did ample justice to the instructions he had received, more than fulfilling the strongest hopes of his teacher.

“The Delawares are women !” he exclaimed, addressing himself to the savage who had a slight understanding of the language in which he spoke ; “the Yengeese, my foolish countrymen, have told them to take up the tomahawk, and strike their fathers in the Canadas, and they have forgotten their sex. Does my brother wish to hear ‘*Le Cerf agile*’ ask for his petticoats, and see him weep before the Hurons at the stake ?”

The exclamation “hugh !” delivered in a strong tone of assent, announced the gratification the savage would receive in witnessing such an exhibition of weakness in an enemy so long hated and so much feared.

“Then let him step aside, and the cunning man will blow upon the dog ! Tell it to my brothers.”

The Huron explained the meaning of David to his fellows, who, in their turn, listened to the project with that sort of satisfaction that their untamed spirits might be expected to find in such a refinement in cruelty. They drew back a little from the entrance, and motioned to the supposed con-jurer to enter. But the bear, instead of obeying, maintained the seat it had taken, and growled.

“The cunning man is afraid that his breath will blow upon his brothers, and take away their courage too,” continued David, improving the hint he had received ; “they must stand further off.”

The Hurons, who would have deemed such a misfortune the heaviest calamity that could befall them, fell back in a body, taking a position where they were out of earshot, though at the same time they could command a view of the entrance of the lodge. Then, as if satisfied of their safety, the scout left his position, and slowly entered the place. It was silent and gloomy, being tenanted solely by the captive, and lighted by the dying embers of a fire, which had been used for the purposes of cookery.

Uncas occupied a distant corner, in a reclining attitude, being rigidly bound, both hands and feet, by strong and painful withes. When the frightful object first presented itself to the young Mohican, he did not deign to bestow a single glance on the animal. The scout, who had left David at the door, to ascertain they were not observed, thought it prudent to preserve his disguise until assured of their privacy. Instead of speaking, therefore, he exerted himself to enact one of the antics of the animal he represented. The young Mohican, who at first believed his enemies had sent in a real beast to torment him, and try his nerves, detected, in those performances that to Heyward had appeared so accurate, certain blemishes, that at once betrayed the counterfeit. Had Hawk-eye been aware of the low estimation in which the more skilful Uncas held his representations, he would probably have prolonged the entertainment a little in pique. But the scornful expression of the young man’s eye admitted of so many constructions, that the worthy scout was spared the mortification of such a discovery. As soon, therefore, as David gave the preconcerted signal, a low hissing sound was heard in the lodge, in place of the fierce growlings of the bear.

Uncas had cast his body back against the wall of the hut, and closed his eyes, as if willing to exclude so contemptible and disagreeable an object from his sight. But the moment

the noise of the serpent was heard, he arose, and cast his looks on each side of him, bending his head low, and turning it inquiringly in every direction, until his keen eye rested on the shaggy monster where it remained riveted, as though fixed by the power of a charm. Again the same sounds were repeated, evidently proceeding from the mouth of the beast. Once more the eyes of the youth roamed over the interior of the lodge, and returning to their former resting-place, he uttered, in a deep, suppressed voice,—

“Hawk-eye!”

“Cut his bands,” said Hawk-eye to David, who just then approached them.

The singer did as he was ordered, and Uncas found his limbs released. At the same moment the dried skin of the animal rattled, and presently the scout arose to his feet, in proper person. The Mohican appeared to comprehend the nature of the attempt his friend had made, intuitively; neither tongue nor feature betraying another symptom of surprise. When Hawk-eye had cast his shaggy vestment, which was done by simply loosing certain thongs of skin, he drew a long glittering knife, and put it in the hands of Uncas.

“The red Hurons are without,” he said; “let us be ready.”

At the same time he laid his finger significantly on another similar weapon, both being the fruits of his prowess among their enemies during the evening.

“We will go,” said Uncas.

“Whither?”

“To the tortoises; they are the children of my grandfathers.”

“Ay, lad,” said the scout in English—a language he was apt to use when a little abstracted in mind; “the same blood runs in your veins, I believe; but time and distance has a little changed its color. What shall we do with the Mingoes at the door? They count six, and this singer is as good as nothing.”

“The Hurons are boasters,” said Uncas scornfully; “their ‘totem’ is a moose, and they run like snails. The Delawares are children of the tortoise, and they outstrip the deer.”

“Ay, lad, there is truth in what you say; and I doubt not, on a rush, you would pass the whole nation; and in a straight race of two miles, would be in, and get your breath again, afore a knave of them all was within hearing of the other

village. But the gift of a white man lies more in his arms than in his legs. As for myself, I can brain a Huron as well as a better man ; but when it comes to a race, the knaves would prove too much for me."

Uncas, who had already approached the door, in readiness to lead the way, now recoiled and placed himself, once more, in the bottom of the lodge. But Hawk-eye, who was too much occupied with his own thoughts to note the movement, continued speaking more to himself than to his companion.

"After all," he said, "it is unreasonable to keep one man in bondage to the gifts of another. So, Uncas, you had better take the leap, while I put on the skin again, and trust to cunning for want of speed."

The young Mohican made no reply, but quietly folded his arms, and leaned his body against one of the upright posts that supported the wall of the hut.

"Well," said the scout, looking up at him, "why do you tarry? There will be time enough for me, as the knaves will give chase to you at first."

"Uncas will stay," was the calm reply.

"For what?"

"To fight with his father's brother, and die with the friend of the Delawares."

"Ay, lad," returned Hawk-eye, squeezing the hand of Uncas between his own iron fingers ; "'twould have been more like a Mingo than a Mohican had you left me. But I thought I would make the offer, seeing that youth commonly loves life. Well, what can't be done by main courage in war, must be done by circumvention. Put on the skin ; I doubt not you can play the bear nearly as well as myself."

Whatever might have been the private opinion of Uncas of their respective abilities in this particular, his grave countenance manifested no opinion of his own superiority. He silently and expeditiously encased himself in the covering of the beast, and then awaited such other movements as his more aged companion saw fit to dictate.

"Now, friend," said Hawk-eye, addressing David, "an exchange of garments will be a great convenience to you, inasmuch as you are but little accustomed to the make-shifts of the wilderness. Here, take my hunting shirt and cap, and give me your blanket and hat. You must trust me with the book and spectacles, as well as the tooter, too ; if we ever meet again, in better times, you shall have all back again, with many thanks into the bargain."

David parted with the several articles named with a readiness that would have done great credit to his liberality, had he not certainly profited, in many particulars, by the exchange. Hawk-eye was not long in assuming his borrowed garments; and when his restless eyes were hid behind the glasses, and his head was surmounted by the triangular beaver, as their statures were not dissimilar, he might readily have passed for the singer by star-light. As soon as these dispositions were made, the scout turned to David, and gave him his parting instructions.

“Are you much given to cowardice?” he bluntly asked, by way of obtaining a suitable understanding of the whole case before he ventured a prescription.

“My pursuits are peaceful, and my temper, I humbly trust, is greatly given to mercy and love,” returned David, a little nettled at so direct an attack on his manhood; “but there are none who can say that I have ever forgotten my faith in the Lord, even in the greatest straits.”

“Your chiefest danger will be at the moment when the savages find out that they have been deceived. If you are not then knocked in the head, your being a non-composer will protect you; and you’ll then have good reason to expect to die in your bed. If you stay, it must be to sit down here in the shadow, and take the part of Uncas, until such times as the cunning of the Indians discover the cheat, when, as I have already said, your time of trial will come. So choose for yourself,—to make a rush or tarry here.”

“Even so,” said David, firmly; “I will abide in the place of the Delaware. Bravely and generously has he battled in my behalf; and this, and more, will I dare in his service.”

“You have spoken as a man, and like one who, under wiser schooling, would have been brought to better things. Hold your head down, and draw in your legs; their formation might tell the truth too early. Keep silent as long as may be; and it would be wise when you do speak, to break out suddenly in one of your shoutings, which will serve to remind the Indians that you are not altogether as responsible as men should be. If, however, they take your scalp, as I trust and believe they will not, depend on it, Uncas and I will not forget the deed, but revenge it as becomes true warriors and trusty friends.”

“Hold!” said David, perceiving that with this assurance they were about to leave him; “I am an unworthy and humble follower of one who taught not the damnable principle of

revenge. Should I fall, therefore, seek no victims to my manes, but rather forgive my destroyers ; and if you remember them at all, let it be in prayers for the enlightening of their minds and for their eternal welfare."

The scout hesitated, and appeared to muse.

"There is a principle in that," he said, "different from the law of the woods ; and yet it is fair and noble to reflect upon." Then, heaving a heavy sigh, probably among the last he ever drew in pining for a condition he had so long abandoned, he added,—“it is what I would wish to practise myself, as one without a cross of blood, though it is not always easy to deal with an Indian as you would with a fellow-Christian. God bless you, friend ; I do believe your scent is not greatly wrong, when the matter is duly considered, and keeping eternity before the eyes, though much depends on the natural gifts, and the force of temptation."

So saying, the scout returned and shook David cordially by the hand ; after which act of friendship he immediately left the lodge, attended by the new representative of the beast.

The instant Hawk-eye found himself under the observation of the Hurons, he drew up his tall form in the rigid manner of David, threw out his arm in the act of keeping time, and commenced what he intended for an imitation of his psalmody. Happily for the success of this delicate adventure, he had to deal with ears but little practised in the concord of sweet sounds, or the miserable effort would infallibly have been detected. It was necessary to pass within a dangerous proximity of the dark group of the savages, and the voice of the scout grew louder as they drew nigher. When at the nearest point, the Huron who spoke the English thrust out an arm, and stopped the supposed singing master.

"The Delaware dog!" he said, leaning forward, and peering through the dim light to catch the expression of the other's features ; "is he afraid? will the Hurons hear his groans?"

A growl so exceedingly fierce and natural proceeded from the beast, that the young Indian released his hold and started aside, as if to assure himself that it was not a veritable bear, and no counterfeit, that was rolling before him. Hawk-eye, who feared his voice would betray him to his subtle enemies, gladly profited by the interruption, to break out anew in such a burst of musical expression as would probably, in a more refined state of society, have been termed "a grand crash." Among his actual auditors, however, it merely gave him an

additional claim to that respect which they never withhold from such as are believed to be the subjects of mental alienation. The little knot of Indians drew back in a body and suffered, as they thought, the conjurer and his inspired assistant to proceed.

It required no common exercise of fortitude in Uncas and the scout, to continue the dignified and deliberate pace they had assumed in passing the lodges ; especially as they immediately perceived that curiosity had so far mastered fear, as to induce the watchers to approach the hut, in order to witness the effect of the incantations. The least injudicious or impatient movement on the part of David might betray them, and time was absolutely necessary to insure the safety of the scout. The loud noise the latter conceived it politic to continue, drew many curious gazers to the doors of the different huts as they passed ; and once or twice a dark-looking warrior stepped across their path, led to the act by superstition or watchfulness. They were not, however, interrupted ; the darkness of the hour and the boldness of the attempt, proving their principal friends.

The adventurers had got clear of the village, and were now swiftly approaching the shelter of the woods, when a loud and long cry arose from the lodge where Uncas had been confined. The Mohican started on his feet, and shook his shaggy covering, as though the animal he counterfeited was about to make some desperate effort.

“Hold !” said the scout, grasping his friend by the shoulder, “let them yell again. ’Twas nothing but wonderment.”

He had no occasion to delay, for at the next instant a burst of cries filled the outer air, and ran along the whole extent of the village. Uncas cast his skin, and stepped forth in his own beautiful proportions. Hawk-eye tapped him lightly on the shoulder, and glided ahead.

“Now let the devils strike our scent,” said the scout, tearing two rifles, with all their attendant accoutrements, from beneath a bush, and flourishing “kill-deer” as he handed Uncas his weapon ; “two at least, will find it to their deaths.”

Then throwing their pieces to a low trail, like sportsmen in readiness for their game, they dashed forward, and were soon buried in the sombre darkness of the forest.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Ant. I shall remember :
When Cæsar says, *do this*, it is performed.
JULIUS CÆSAR.

THE impatience of the savages who lingered about the prison of Uncas, as has been seen, had overcome their dread of the conjurer's breath. They stole cautiously, and with beating hearts, to a crevice, through which the faint light of the fire was glimmering. For several minutes they mistook the form of David for that of their prisoner ; but the very accident which Hawk-eye had foreseen occurred. Tired of keeping the extremities of his long person so near together, the singer gradually suffered the lower limbs to extend themselves, until one of his misshapen feet actually came in contact with and shoved aside the embers of the fire. At first the Hurons believed the Delaware had been thus deformed by witchcraft. But when David, unconscious of being observed, turned his head, and exposed his simple, mild countenance, in place of the haughty lineaments of their prisoner, it would have exceeded the credulity of even a native to have doubted any longer. They rushed together into the lodge, and laying their hands, with but little ceremony, on their captive, immediately detected the imposition. Then arose the cry first heard by the fugitives. It was succeeded by the most frantic and angry demonstrations of vengeance. David, however firm in his determination to cover the retreat of his friends, was compelled to believe that his own final hour had come. Deprived of his book and his pipe, he was fain to trust to a memory that rarely failed him on such subjects ; and breaking forth in a loud and impassioned strain, he endeavored to smooth his passage into the other world, by singing the opening verse of a funeral anthem. The Indians were seasonably reminded of his infirmity, and rushing into the open air, they aroused the village in the manner described.

A native warrior fights as he sleeps, without the protection of anything defensive. The sounds of the alarm were, therefore, hardly uttered, before two hundred men were afoot, and ready for the battle or the chase, as either might be re-

quired. The escape was soon known ; and the whole tribe crowded, in a body, around the council lodge, impatiently awaiting the instruction of their chiefs. In such a sudden demand on their wisdom, the presence of the cunning Magua could scarcely fail of being needed. His name was mentioned, and all looked round in wonder that he did not appear. Messengers were then despatched to his lodge, requiring his presence.

In the mean time, some of the swiftest and most discreet of the young men were ordered to make the circuit of the clearing, under cover of the woods, in order to ascertain that their suspected neighbors, the Delawares, designed no mischief. Women and children ran to and fro ; and, in short, the whole encampment exhibited another scene of wild and savage confusion. Gradually, however, these symptoms of disorder diminished ; and in a few minutes the oldest and most distinguished chiefs were assembled in the lodge, in grave consultation.

The clamor of many voices soon announced that a party approached, who might be expected to communicate some intelligence that would explain the mystery of the novel surprise. The crowd without gave way, and several warriors entered the place, bringing with them the hapless conjurer, who had been left so long by the scout in duress.

Notwithstanding this man was held in very unequal estimation among the Hurons, some believing implicitly in his power, and others deeming him an impostor, he was now listened to by all with the deepest attention. When his brief story was ended, the father of the sick woman stepped forth, and, in a few pithy expressions, related, in his turn, what he knew. These two narratives gave a proper direction to the subsequent inquiries, which were now made with the characteristic cunning of savages.

Instead of rushing in a confused and disorderly throng to the cavern, ten of the wisest and firmest among the chiefs were selected to prosecute the investigation. As no time was to be lost, the instant the choice was made the individuals appointed arose in a body, and left the place without speaking. On reaching the entrance, the younger men in advance made way for their seniors ; and the whole proceeded along the low, dark gallery, with the firmness of warriors ready to devote themselves to the public good, though, at the same time, secretly doubting the nature of the power with which they were about to contend.

The outer apartment of the cavern was silent and gloomy. The woman lay in her usual place and posture, though there were those present who affirmed that they had seen her borne to the woods, by the supposed "medicine of the white man." Such a direct and palpable contradiction of the tale related by the father, caused all eyes to be turned on him. Chafed by the silent imputation, and inwardly troubled by so unaccountable a circumstance, the chief advanced to the side of the bed, and stooping, cast an incredulous look at the features, as if distrusting their reality. His daughter was dead.

The unerring feeling of nature for a moment prevailed, and the old warrior hid his eyes in sorrow. Then recovering his self-possession, he faced his companions, and pointing towards the corpse, he said, in the language of his people,—

"The wife of my young man has left us! the Great Spirit is angry with his children."

The mournful intelligence was received in solemn silence. After a short pause, one of the elder Indians was about to speak, when a dark-looking object was seen rolling out of an adjoining apartment, into the very centre of the room where they stood. Ignorant of the nature of the beings they had to deal with, the whole party drew back a little, and gazed in admiration, until the object fronted the light, and rising on end, exhibited the distorted, but still fierce and sullen, features of Magua. The discovery was succeeded by a general exclamation of amusement.

As soon, however, as the true situation of the chief was understood, several ready knives appeared, and his limbs and tongue were quickly released. The Huron arose, and shook himself like a lion quitting his lair. Not a word escaped him, though his hand played convulsively with the handle of his knife, while his lowering eyes scanned the whole party, as if they sought an object suited to the first burst of his vengeance.

It was happy for Uncas and the scout, and even David, that they were all beyond the reach of his arm at such a moment; for, assuredly, no refinement in cruelty would then have deferred their death, in opposition to the promptings of the fierce temper that nearly choked him. Meeting everywhere faces that he knew as friends, the savage grated his teeth together like rasps of iron, and swallowed his passion for want of a victim on whom to vent it. This exhibition of anger was noted by all present; and, from an apprehension of exasperating a temper that was already chafed nearly to madness, several minutes were suffered to pass before another

word was uttered. When, however, suitable time had elapsed, the oldest of the party spoke.

"My friend has found an enemy," he said. "Is he nigh, that the Hurons may take revenge?"

"Let the Delaware die!" exclaimed Magua, in a voice of thunder.

Another long and expressive silence was observed, and was broken, as before, with due precaution, by the same individual.

"The Mohican is swift of foot, and leaps far," he said; "but my young men are on his trail."

"Is he gone?" demanded Magua in tones so deep and guttural, that they seemed to proceed from his inmost chest.

"An evil spirit has been among us, and the Delaware has blinded our eyes."

"An evil spirit!" repeated the other mockingly; "'tis the spirit that has taken the lives of so many Hurons. The spirit that slew my young men at 'the tumbling river;' that took their scalps at the 'healing spring;' and who has, now, bound the arms of *Le Renard Subtil!*"

"Of whom does my friend speak?"

"Of the dog who carries the heart and cunning of a Huron under a pale skin—*La longue Carabine.*"

The pronunciation of so terrible a name produced the usual effect among his auditors. But when time was given for reflection, and the warriors remembered that their formidable and daring enemy had even been in the bosom of their encampment, working injury, fearful rage took the place of wonder, and all those fierce passions with which the bosom of Magua had just been struggling were suddenly transferred to his companions. Some among them gnashed their teeth in anger, others vented their feelings in yells, and some, again, beat the air as frantically as if the object of their resentment were suffering under their blows. But this sudden outbreaking of temper as quickly subsided in the still and sullen restraint they most affected, in their moments of inaction.

Magua, who had, in his turn, found leisure for reflection, now changed his manner, and assumed the air of one who knew how to think and act with a dignity worthy of so grave a subject.

"Let us go to my people," he said; "they wait for us."

His companions consented in silence, and the whole of the savage party left the cavern and returned to the council lodge. When they were seated, all eyes turned on Magua,

who understood, from such an indication, that, by common consent, they had devolved the duty of relating what had passed on him. He arose, and told his tale, without duplicity or reservation. The whole deception practised by both Duncan and Hawk-eye was, of course, laid naked; and no room was found, even for the most superstitious of the tribe, any longer to affix a doubt on the character of the occurrences. It was but too apparent that they had been insultingly, shamefully, disgracefully, deceived. When he had ended, and resumed his seat, the collected tribe—for his auditors, in substance, included all the fighting men of the party—sat regarding each other like men astonished equally at the audacity and the success of their enemies. The next consideration, however, was the means and opportunities for revenge.

Additional pursuers were sent on the trail of the fugitives; and then the chiefs applied themselves, in earnest, to the business of consultation. Many different expedients were proposed by the elder warriors, in succession, to all of which Magua was a silent and respectful listener. That subtle savage had recovered his artifice and self-command, and now proceeded towards his object with his customary caution and skill. It was only when each one disposed to speak had uttered his sentiments, that he prepared to advance his own opinions. They were given with additional weight from the circumstance, that some of the runners had already returned, and reported, that their enemies had been traced so far as to leave no doubt of their having sought safety in the neighboring camp of their suspected allies the Delawares. With the advantage of possessing this important intelligence, the chief warily laid his plans before his fellows, and, as might have been anticipated from his eloquence and cunning, they were adopted without a dissenting voice. They were, briefly, as follows, both in opinions and in motives.

It has been already stated that, in obedience to a policy rarely departed from, the sisters were separated as soon as they reached the Huron village. Magua had early discovered, that in retaining the person of Alice, he possessed the most effectual check on Cora. When they parted, therefore, he kept the former within reach of his hand, consigning the one he most valued to the keeping of their allies. The arrangement was understood to be merely temporary, and was made as much with a view to flatter his neighbors as in obedience to the invariable rule of Indian policy.

While goaded incessantly by those revengeful impulses

that in a savage seldom slumber, the chief was still attentive to his more permanent personal interests. The follies and disloyalty committed in his youth were to be expiated by a long and painful penance ere he could be restored to the full enjoyment of the confidence of his ancient people, and without confidence there could be no authority in an Indian tribe. In this delicate and arduous situation, the crafty native had neglected no means of increasing his influence ; and one of the happiest of his expedients had been, the success with which he had cultivated the favor of their powerful and dangerous neighbors. The result of his experiment had answered all the expectations of his policy ; for the Hurons were in no degree exempt from that governing principle of nature, which induces man to value his gifts precisely in the degree that they are appreciated by others.

But while he was making this ostensible sacrifice to general considerations, Magua never lost sight of his individual motives. The latter had been frustrated by the unlooked-for events which had placed all his prisoners beyond his control ; and he now found himself reduced to the necessity of suing for favors to those whom it had so lately been his policy to oblige.

Several of the chiefs had proposed deep and treacherous schemes to surprise the Delawares, and, by gaining possession of their camp, to recover their prisoners by the same blow ; for all agreed that their honor, their interest, and the peace and happiness of their dead countrymen, imperiously required them speedily to immolate some victims to their revenge. But plans so dangerous to attempt, and of such doubtful issue, Magua found little difficulty in defeating. He exposed their risk and fallacy with his usual skill ; and it was only after he had removed every impediment, in the shape of opposing advice, that he ventured to propose his own projects.

He commenced by flattering the self-love of his auditors ; a never-failing method of commanding attention. When he had enumerated the many different occasions on which the Hurons had exhibited their courage and prowess, in the punishment of insults, he digressed in a high encomium on the virtue of wisdom. He painted the quality, as forming the great point of difference between the beaver and other brutes ; between brutes and men ; and, finally, between the Hurons, in particular, and the rest of the human race. After he had sufficiently extolled the property of discretion, he undertook to exhibit in what manner its use was applicable to the present

situation of their tribe. On the one hand, he said, was their great pale father, the governor of the Canadas, who had looked upon his children with a hard eye, since their tomahawks had been so red ; on the other, a people as numerous as themselves, who spoke a different language, possessed different interests, and loved them not, and who would be glad of any pretence to bring them in disgrace with the great white chief. Then he spoke of their necessities ; of the gifts they had a right to expect for their past services ; of their distance from their proper hunting-grounds and native villages ; and of the necessity of consulting prudence more, and inclination less, in so critical circumstances. When he perceived that, while the old men applauded his moderation, many of the fiercest and most distinguished of the warriors listened to these politic plans with lowering looks, he cunningly led them back to the subject which they most loved. He spoke openly of the fruits of their wisdom, which he boldly pronounced would be a complete and final triumph over their enemies. He even darkly hinted that their success might be extended, with proper caution, in such a manner as to include the destruction of all whom they had reason to hate. In short, he so blended the warlike with the artful, the obvious with the obscure, as to flatter the propensities of both parties, and to leave to each subject of hope, while neither could say it clearly comprehended his intentions.

The orator, or the politician, who can produce such a state of things, is commonly popular with his contemporaries, however he may be treated by posterity. All perceived that more was meant than was uttered, and each one believed that the hidden meaning was precisely such as his own faculties enabled him to understand, or his own wishes led him to anticipate.

In this happy state of things, it is not surprising that the management of Magua prevailed. The tribe consented to act with deliberation, and with one voice they committed the direction of the whole affair to the government of the chief who had suggested such wise and intelligible expedients.

Magua had now attained one great object of all his cunning and enterprise. The ground he had lost in the favor of his people was completely regained, and he found himself even placed at the head of affairs. He was in truth their ruler ; and so long as he could maintain his popularity, no monarch could be more despotic, especially while the tribe continued in a hostile country. Throwing off, therefore, th

appearance of consultation, he assumed the grave air of authority necessary to support the dignity of his office.

Runners were despatched for intelligence in different directions; spies were ordered to approach and feel the encampment of the Delawares; the warriors were dismissed to their lodges, with an intimation that their services would soon be needed; and the women and children were ordered to retire, with a warning that it was their province to be silent. When these several arrangements were made, Magua passed through the village, stopping here and there to pay a visit where he thought his presence might be flattering to the individual. He confirmed his friends in their confidence, fixed the wavering, and gratified all. Then he sought his own lodge. The wife the Huron chief had abandoned, when he was chased from among his people, was dead. Children he had none; and he now occupied a hut, without companion of any sort. It was, in fact, the dilapidated and solitary structure in which David had been discovered, and whom he had tolerated in his presence, on those few occasions when they met, with the contemptuous indifference of a haughty superiority.

Hither, then, Magua retired, when his labors of policy were ended. While others slept, however, he neither knew nor sought repose. Had there been one sufficiently curious to have watched the movements of the newly-elected chief, he would have seen him seated in a corner of his lodge, musing on the subject of his future plans, from the hour of his retirement to the time he had appointed for the warriors to assemble again. Occasionally the air breathed through the crevices of the hut, and the low flames that fluttered about the embers of the fire threw their wavering light on the person of the sullen recluse. At such moments it would not have been difficult to have fancied the dusky savage the Prince of Darkness, brooding on his own fancied wrongs, and plotting evil.

Long before the day dawned, however, warrior after warrior entered the solitary hut of Magua, until they had collected to the number of twenty. Each bore his rifle, and all the other accoutrements of war, though the paint was uniformly peaceful. The entrance of these fierce-looking beings was unnoticed; some seating themselves in the shadows of the place, and others standing like motionless statues, until the whole of the designated band was collected.

Then Magua arose and gave the signal to proceed, marching himself in advance. They followed their leader singly,

and in that well-known order which has obtained the distinguishing appellation of "Indian file." Unlike other men engaged in the spirit-stirring business of war, they stole from their camp unostentatiously and unobserved, resembling a band of gliding spectres, more than warriors seeking the bubble reputation by deeds of desperate daring.

Instead of taking the path which led directly towards the camp of the Delawares, Magua led his party for some distance down the windings of the stream, and along the little artificial lake of the beavers. The day began to dawn as they entered the clearing which had been formed by those sagacious and industrious animals. Though Magua, who had resumed his ancient garb, bore the outline of a fox on the dressed skin which formed his robe, there was one chief of his party who carried the beaver as his peculiar symbol, or "totem." There would have been a species of profanity in the omission, had this man passed so powerful a community of his fancied kindred, without bestowing some evidence of his regard. Accordingly, he paused, and spoke in words as kind and friendly as if he were addressing more intelligent beings. He called the animals his cousins, and reminded them that his protecting influence was the reason they remained unharmed, while so many avaricious traders were prompting the Indians to take their lives. He promised a continuance of his favors, and admonished them to be grateful. After which he spoke of the expedition in which he was himself engaged, and intimated, though with sufficient delicacy and circumlocution, the expediency of bestowing on their relatives a portion of that wisdom for which they were so renowned.*

During the utterance of this extraordinary address, the companions of the speaker were as grave and as attentive to his language as though they were all equally impressed with its propriety. Once or twice black objects were seen rising to the surface of the water, and the Huron expressed pleasure, conceiving that his words were not bestowed in vain. Just as he had ended his address, the head of a large beaver was thrust from the door of a lodge, whose earthen walls had been much injured, and which the party had believed, from its situation, to be uninhabited. Such an extraordinary sign of confidence was received by the orator as a highly favorable omen; and though the animal retreated a little precipitately, he was lavish of his thanks and commendations.

* These harangues to the beasts are frequent among the Indians. They often address their victims in this way, reproaching them for cowardice, or commending their resolution, as they may happen to exhibit fortitude, or the reverse, in suffering

When Magua thought sufficient time had been lost in gratifying the family affection of the warrior, he again made the signal to proceed. As the Indians moved away in a body, and with a step that would have been inaudible to the ears of any common man, the same venerable-looking beaver once more ventured his head from its cover. Had any of the Hurons turned to look behind them, they would have seen the animal watching their movements with an interest and sagacity that might easily have been mistaken for reason. Indeed, so very distinct and intelligible were the devices of the quadruped, that even the most experienced observer would have been at a loss to account for its actions, until the moment when the party entered the forest, when the whole would have been explained, by seeing the entire animal issue from the lodge, uncasing, by the act, the grave features of Chingachgook from his mask of fur.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Brief, I pray you ; for you see, 'tis a busy time with me.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

THE tribe, or rather half tribe, of Delawares, which has been so often mentioned, and whose present place of encampment was so nigh the temporary village of the Hurons, could assemble about an equal number of warriors with the latter people. Like their neighbors, they had followed Montcalm into the territories of the English crown, and were making heavy and serious inroads on the hunting grounds of the Mohawks ; though they had seen fit, with the mysterious reserve so common among the natives, to withhold their assistance at the moment when it was most required. The French had accounted for this unexpected defection on the part of their ally in various ways. It was the prevalent opinion, however, that they had been influenced by veneration for the ancient treaty, that had once made them dependent on the Six Nations for military protection, and now rendered them reluctant to encounter their former masters. As for the tribe itself, it had been content to announce to Montcalm, through his emissaries, with Indian brevity, that their hatchets were

dull, and time was necessary to sharpen them. The politic Captain of the Canadas had deemed it wiser to submit to entertain a passive friend, than by any acts of ill-judged severity to convert him into an open enemy.

On that morning when Magua led his silent party from the settlement of the beavers into the forest, in the manner described, the sun rose upon the Delaware encampment, as if it had suddenly burst upon a busy people, actively employed in all the customary avocations of high noon. The women ran from lodge to lodge, some engaged in preparing their morning's meal, a few earnestly bent on seeking the comforts necessary to their habits, but more pausing to exchange hasty and whispered sentences with their friends. The warriors were lounging in groups, musing more than they conversed ; and when a few words were uttered, speaking like men who deeply weighed their opinions. The instruments of the chase were to be seen in abundance among the lodges ; but none departed. Here and there a warrior was examining his arms, with an attention that is rarely bestowed on the implements, when no other enemy that the beasts of the forest is expected to be encountered. And, occasionally, the eyes of a whole group were turned simultaneously towards a large and silent lodge, in the centre of the village, as if it contained the subject of their common thoughts.

During the existence of this scene, a man suddenly appeared at the furthest extremity of a platform of rock which formed the level of the village. He was without arms, and his paint tended rather to soften than increase the natural sternness of his austere countenance. When in full view of the Delawares he stopped, and made a gesture of amity, by throwing his arm upward towards heaven, and then letting it fall impressively on his breast. The inhabitants of the village answered his salute by a low murmur of welcome, and encouraged him to advance by similar indications of friendship. Fortified by these assurances, the dark figure left the brow of the natural rocky terrace, where it had stood a moment, drawn in a strong outline against the blushing morning sky, and moved with dignity into the very centre of the huts. As he approached, nothing was audible but the rattling of the light silver ornaments that loaded his arms and neck, and the tinkling of the little bells that fringed his deer skin moccasins. He made, as he advanced, many courteous signs of greeting to the men he passed, neglecting to notice the women, however, like one who deemed their favor, in the present enter

prise, of no importance. When he had reached the group in which it was evident, by the haughtiness of their common mien, that the principal chiefs were collected, the stranger paused, and then the Delawares saw that the active and erect form that stood before them was that of the well-known Huron chief, Le Renard Subtil.

His reception was grave, silent, and wary. The warriors in front stepped aside, opening the way to their most approved orator by the action ; one who spoke all those languages that were cultivated among the northern aborigines.

“The wise Huron is welcome,” said the Delaware, in the language of the Maquas ; “he is come to eat his ‘succa tash,’* with his brothers of the lakes.”

“He is come,” repeated Magua, bending his head with the dignity of an eastern prince.

The chief extended his arm, and taking the other by the wrist, they once more exchanged friendly salutations. Then the Delaware invited his guest to enter his own lodge, and share his morning meal. The invitation was accepted ; and the two warriors, attended by three or four of the old men, walked calmly away, leaving the rest of the tribe devoured by a desire to understand the reasons of so unusual a visit, and yet not betraying the least impatience by sign or word.

During the short and frugal repast that followed, the conversation was extremely circumspect, and related entirely to the events of the hunt, in which Magua had so lately been engaged. It would have been impossible for the most finished breeding to wear more of the appearance of considering the visit as a thing of course, than did his hosts, notwithstanding every individual present was perfectly aware that it must be connected with some secret object, and that probably of importance to themselves. When the appetites of the whole were appeased, the squaws removed the trenchers and gourds, and the two parties began to prepare themselves for a subtle trial of their wits.

“Is the face of my great Canada father turned again towards his Huron children?” demanded the orator of the Delawares.

“When was it ever otherwise?” returned Magua. “He calls my people ‘most beloved.’”

The Delaware gravely bowed his acquiescence to what he knew to be false, and continued,—

* A dish composed of cracked corn and beans. It is much used also by the whites. By corn is meant maize.

“The tomahawks of your young men have been very red!”

“It is so; but they are now bright and dull; for the Yengeese are dead, and the Delawares are our neighbors.”

The other acknowledged the pacific compliment by a gesture of the hand, and remained silent. Then Magua, as if recalled to such a recollection, by the allusion to the massacre, demanded,—

“Does my prisoner give trouble to my brothers?”

“She is welcome.”

“The path between the Hurons and the Delawares is short, and it is open; let her be sent to my squaws, if she gives trouble to my brother.”

“She is welcome,” returned the chief of the latter nation still more emphatically.

The baffled Magua continued silent several minutes, apparently indifferent, however, to the repulse he had received in this his opening effort to regain possession of Cora.

“Do my young men leave the Delawares room on the mountains for their hunts?” he at length continued.

“The Lenape are rulers of their own hills,” returned the other a little haughtily.

“It is well. Justice is the master of a red-skin! Why should they brighten their tomahawks, and sharpen their knives against each other? Are not the pale-faces thicker than the swallows in the season of flowers?”

“Good!” exclaimed two or three of his auditors at the same time.

Magua waited a little, to permit his words to soften the feelings of the Delawares, before he added,—

“Have there not been strange moccasins in the woods? Have not my brothers scented the feet of white men?”

“Let my Canada father come,” returned the other, evasively; “his children are ready to see him.”

“When the great chief comes, it is to smoke with the Indians in their wigwams. The Hurons say, too, he is welcome. But the Yengeese have long arms, and legs that never tire! My young men dreamed they had seen the trail of the Yengeese nigh the village of the Delawares.”

“They will not find the Lenape asleep.”

“It is well. The warrior whose eye is open can see his enemy,” said Magua, once more shifting his ground, when he found himself unable to penetrate the caution of his companion. “I have brought gifts to my brother. His nation

would not go on the war-path, because they did not think it well; but their friends have remembered where they lived."

When he had thus announced his liberal intention, the crafty chief arose, and gravely spread his presents before the dazzled eyes of his hosts. They consisted principally of trinkets of little value, plundered from the slaughtered females of William Henry. In the division of the baubles the cunning Huron discovered no less art than in their selection. While he bestowed those of greater value on the two most distinguished warriors, one of whom was his host, he seasoned his offerings to their inferiors with such well-timed and apposite compliments, as left them no grounds for complaint. In short, the whole ceremony contained such a happy blending of the profitable with the flattering, that it was not difficult for the donor immediately to read the effect of a generosity so aptly mingled with praise, in the eyes of those he addressed.

This well-judged and politic stroke on the part of Magua was not without instantaneous results. The Delawares lost their gravity in a much more cordial expression; and the host, in particular, after contemplating his own liberal share of the spoil for some moments with peculiar gratification, repeated with strong emphasis, the words,—

"My brother is a wise chief. He is welcome."

"The Hurons love their friends the Delawares," returned Magua. "Why should they not? they are colored by the same sun, and their just men will hunt in the same grounds after death. The red-skins should be friends, and look with open eye on the white men. Has not my brother scented spies in the woods?"

The Delaware whose name in English signified "Hard heart," an appellation that the French had translated into "*Le cœur-dur*," forgot that obduracy of purpose, which had probably obtained him so significant a title. His countenance grew very sensibly less stern, and he now deigned to answer more directly.

"There have been strange moccasins about my camp. They have been tracked into my lodges."

"Did my brother beat out the dogs?" asked Mugua, without adverting in any manner to the former equivocation of the chief.

"It would not do. The stranger is always welcome to the children of the Lenape."

“The stranger, but not the spy.”

“Would the Yengeese send their women as spies? Did not the Huron chief say he took women in the battle?”

“He told no lie. The Yengeese have sent out their scouts. They have been in my wigwams, but they found no one to say welcome. Then they fled to the Delawares—for, say they, the Delawares are our friends; their minds are turned from their Canada father.”

This insinuation was a home thrust, and one that in a more advanced state of society, would have entitled Magua to the reputation of a skilful diplomatist. The recent defection of the tribe had, as they well knew themselves, subjected the Delawares to much reproach among their French allies; and they were now made to feel that their future actions were to be regarded with jealousy and distrust. There was no deep insight into causes and effects necessary to foresee that such a situation of things was likely to prove highly prejudicial to their future movements. Their distant villages, their hunting grounds, and hundreds of their women and children, together with a material part of their physical force, were actually within the limits of the French territory. Accordingly, this alarming annunciation was received, as Magua intended, with manifest disapprobation, if not with alarm.

“Let my father look in my face,” said Le-cœur-dur; “he will see no change. It is true, my young men did not go out on the war-path; they had dreams for not doing so. But they love and venerate the great white chief.”

“Will he think so when he hears that his greatest enemy is fed in the camp of his children? When he is told a bloody Yengee smokes at your fire? That the pale-face who has slain so many of his friends goes in and out among the Delawares? Go; my great Canada father is not a fool!”

“Where is the Yengee that the Delawares fear?” returned the other; “who has slain my young men? who is the mortal enemy of my Great Father?”

“La longue Carabine.”

The Delaware warriors started at the well known name, betraying, by their amazement, that they now learnt, for the first time, one so famous among the Indian allies of France was within their power.

“What does my brother mean?” demanded Le-cœur-dur, in a tone that, by its wonder, far exceeded the usual apathy of his race.

“A Huron never lies,” returned Magua, coldly, leaning his

head against the side of the lodge, and drawing his slight robe across his tawny breast. "Let the Delawares count their prisoners; they will find one whose skin is neither red nor pale."

A long and musing pause succeeded. The chief consulted apart with his companions, and messengers were despatched to collect certain others of the most distinguished men of the tribe.

As warrior after warrior dropped in, they were each made acquainted, in turn, with the important intelligence that Magua had just communicated. The air of surprise, and the usual low, deep, guttural exclamation, were common to them all. The news spread from mouth to mouth, until the whole encampment became powerfully agitated. The women suspended their labors, to catch such syllables as unguardedly fell from the lips of the consulting warriors. The boys deserted their sports, and walking fearlessly among their fathers, looked up in curious admiration, as they heard the brief exclamations of wonder they so freely expressed at the temerity of their hated foe. In short, every occupation was abandoned for the time, and all other pursuits seemed discarded, in order that the tribe might freely indulge, after their own peculiar manner, in an open expression of feeling.

When the excitement had a little abated, the old men disposed themselves seriously to consider that which it became the honor and safety of their tribe to perform, under circumstances of so much delicacy and embarrassment. During all these movements, and in the midst of the general commotion, Magua had not only maintained his seat but the very attitude he had originally taken, against the side of the lodge, where he continued as immovable, and, apparently, as unconcerned, as if he had no interest in the result. Not a single indication of the future intentions of his hosts, however, escaped his vigilant eyes. With his consummate knowledge of the nature of the people with whom he had to deal, he anticipated every measure on which they decided; and it might almost be said, that, in many instances, he knew their intentions, even before they became known to themselves.

The council of the Delawares was short. When it was ended, a general bustle announced that it was to be immediately succeeded by a solemn and formal assemblage of the nation. As such meetings were rare, and only called on occasions of the last importance, the subtle Huron, who still sat apart, a wily and dark observer of the proceedings, now

knew that all his projects must be brought to their final issue. He, therefore, left the lodge, and walked silently forth to the place, in front of the encampment, whither the warriors were already beginning to collect.

It might have been half an hour before each individual, including even the women and children, was in his place. The delay had been created by the grave preparations that were deemed necessary to so solemn and unusual a conference. But when the sun was seen climbing above the tops of that mountain, against whose bosom the Delawares had constructed their encampment, most were seated ; and as his bright rays darted from behind the outline of trees that fringed the eminence, they fell upon as grave, as attentive, and as deeply interested a multitude, as was probably ever before lighted by his morning beams. Its number somewhat exceeded a thousand souls.

In a collection of so serious savages, there is never to be found any impatient aspirant after premature distinction, standing ready to move his auditors to some hasty, and, perhaps, injudicious discussion, in order that his own reputation may be the gainer. An act of so much precipitancy and presumption would seal the downfall of the precocious intellect forever. It rested solely with the oldest and most experienced of the men to lay the subject of the conference before the people. Until such a one chose to make some movement, no deeds in arms, no natural gifts, nor any renown as an orator, would have justified the slightest interruption. On the present occasion, the aged warrior whose privilege it was to speak, was silent, seemingly oppressed with the magnitude of his subject. The delay had already continued long beyond the usual deliberative pause that always precedes a conference ; but no sign of impatience or surprise escaped even the youngest boy. Occasionally, an eye was raised from the earth, where the looks of most were riveted, and strayed towards a particular lodge, that was, however, in no manner distinguished from those around it, except in the peculiar care that had been taken to protect it against the assaults of the weather.

At length, one of those low murmurs that are so apt to disturb a multitude, was heard, and the whole nation arose to their feet by a common impulse. At that instant the door of the lodge in question opened, and three men issuing from it, slowly approached the place of consultation. They were all aged, even beyond that period to which the oldest present had reached ; but one in the centre, who leaned on his com-

panions for support, had numbered an amount of years to which the human race is seldom permitted to attain. His frame, which had once been tall and erect, like the cedar, was now bending under the pressure of more than a century. The elastic, light step of an Indian was gone, and in its place he was compelled to toil his tardy way over the ground, inch by inch. His dark, wrinkled countenance was in singular and wild contrast with the long white locks which floated on his shoulders, in such thickness, as to announce that generations had probably passed away since they had last been shorn.

The dress of this patriarch—for such, considering his vast age, in conjunction with his affinity and influence with his people, he might very properly be termed—was rich and imposing, though strictly after the simple fashions of the tribe. His robe was of the finest skins, which had been deprived of their fur, in order to admit of a hieroglyphical representation of various deeds in arms, done in former ages. His bosom was loaded with medals, some in massive silver, and one or two even in gold, the gifts of various Christian potentates during the long period of his life. He also wore armlets, and cinctures above the ankles, of the latter precious metal. His head, on the whole of which the hair had been permitted to grow, the pursuits of war having so long been abandoned, was encircled by a sort of plated diadem, which, in its turn, bore lesser and more glittering ornaments, that sparkled amid the glossy hues of three drooping ostrich feathers, dyed a deep black, in touching contrast to the color of his snow-white locks. His tomahawk was nearly hid in silver, and the handle of his knife shone like a horn of solid gold.

So soon as the first hum of emotion and pleasure, which the sudden appearance of this venerated individual created, had a little subsided, the name of "Tamenund" was whispered from mouth to mouth. Magua had often heard the fame of this wise and just Delaware; a reputation that even proceeded so far as to bestow on him the rare gift of holding secret communion with the Great Spirit, and which has since transmitted his name, with some slight alteration, to the white usurpers of his ancient territory, as the imaginary tutelar saint* of a vast empire. The Huron chief, therefore, stepped eagerly out a little from the throng, to a spot whence

* The Americans sometimes call their tutelar saint Tamenay, a corruption of the name of the renowned chief here introduced. There are many traditions which speak of the character and power of Tamenund.

he might catch a nearer glimpse of the features of the man, whose decision was likely to produce so deep an influence on his own fortunes.

The eyes of the old man were closed, as though the organs were wearied with having so long witnessed the selfish workings of the human passions. The color of his skin differed from that of most around him, being richer and darker, the latter hue having been produced by certain delicate and mazy lines of complicated and yet beautiful figures, which had been traced over most of his person by the operation of tattooing. Notwithstanding the position of the Huron, he passed the observant and silent Magua without notice, and leaning on his two venerable supporters proceeded to the high place of the multitude, where he seated himself in the centre of his nation, with the dignity of a monarch and the air of a father.

Nothing could surpass the reverence and affection with which this unexpected visit from one who belonged rather to another world than to this was received by his people. After a suitable and decent pause, the principal chiefs arose; and approaching the patriarch, they placed his hands reverently on their heads, seeming to entreat a blessing. The young men were content with touching his robe, or even drawing nigh his person, in order to breathe in the atmosphere of one so aged, so just, and so valiant. None but the most distinguished among the youthful warriors even presumed so far as to perform the latter ceremony; the great mass of the multitude deeming it a sufficient happiness to look upon a form so deeply venerated, and so well beloved. When these acts of affection and respect were performed, the chiefs drew back again to their several places, and silence reigned in the whole encampment.

After a short delay, a few of the young men, to whom instructions had been whispered by one of the aged attendants of Tamenund, arose, left the crowd, and entered the lodge which has already been noted as the object of so much attention throughout that morning. In a few minutes they reappeared, escorting the individual who had caused all these solemn preparations towards the seat of judgment. The crowd opened in a lane; and when the party had re-entered, it closed in again, forming a large and dense belt of human bodies, arranged in an open circle.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The assembly seated, rising o'er the rest,
Achilles thus the king of men addressed.

POPE'S HOMER.

CORA stood foremost among the prisoners, entwining her arms in those of Alice, in the tenderness of sisterly love. Notwithstanding the fearful and menacing array of savages on every side of her, no apprehension on her own account could prevent the noble-minded maiden from keeping her eyes fastened on the pale and anxious features of the trembling Alice. Close at their side stood Heyward, with an interest in both, that, at such a moment of intense uncertainty, scarcely knew a preponderance in favor of her whom he most loved. Hawk-eye had placed himself a little in the rear, with a deference to the superior rank of his companions, that no similarity in the state of their present fortunes could induce him to forget. Uncas was not there.

When perfect silence was again restored, and after the usual long, impressive pause, one of the two aged chiefs who sat at the side of the patriarch arose, and demanded aloud, in very intelligible English,—

“Which of my prisoners is *La longue Carabine*?”

Neither Duncan nor the scout answered. The former, however, glanced his eyes around the dark and silent assembly, and recoiled a pace, when they fell on the malignant visage of Magua. He saw, at once, that this wily savage had some secret agency in their present arraignment before the nation, and determined to throw every possible impediment in the way of the execution of his sinister plans. He had witnessed one instance of the summary punishments of the Indians, and now dreaded that his companion was to be selected for a second. In this dilemma, with little or no time for reflection, he suddenly determined to cloak his invaluable friend, at any or every hazard to himself. Before he had time, however, to speak, the question was repeated in a louder voice, and with a clearer utterance.

"Give us arms," the young man haughtily replied, "and place us in yonder woods. Our deeds shall speak for us!"

"This is the warrior whose name has filled our ears!" returned the chief, regarding Heyward with that sort of curious interest which seems inseparable from man, when first beholding one of his fellows to whom merit or accident, virtue or crime, has given notoriety. "What has brought the white man into the camp of the Delawares?"

"My necessities. I come for food, shelter, and friends."

"It cannot be. The woods are full of game. The head of a warrior needs no other shelter than a sky without clouds; and the Delawares are the enemies, and not the friends, of the Yengeese. Go—the mouth has spoken, while the heart said nothing."

Duncan, a little at a loss in what manner to proceed, remained silent; but the scout, who had listened attentively to all that passed, now advanced steadily to the front.

"That I did not answer to the call for *La longue Carabine*, was not owing either to shame or fear," he said; "for neither one nor the other is the gift of an honest man. But I do not admit the right of the Mingoes to bestow a name on one whose friends have been mindful of his gifts, in this particular; especially as their title is a lie, 'kill-deer' being a grooved barrel and no carabine. I am the man, however, that got the name of Nathaniel from my kin; the compliment of Hawk-eye from the Delawares, who live on their own river; and whom the Iroquois have presumed to style the 'Long Rifle,' without any warranty from him who is most concerned in the matter."

The eyes of all present, which had hitherto been gravely scanning the person of Duncan, were now turned, on the instant, towards the upright, iron frame of this new pretender to the distinguished appellation. It was in no degree remarkable that there should be found two who were willing to claim so great an honor, for impostors, though rare, were not unknown amongst the natives; but it was altogether material to the just and severe intentions of the Delawares, that there should be no mistake in the matter. Some of their old men consulted together in private, and then, as it would seem, they determined to interrogate their visitor on the subject.

"My brother has said that a snake crept into my camp," said the chief to Magua; "which is he?"

The Huron pointed to the scout.

"Will a wise Delaware believe the barking of a wolf.

exclaimed Duncan, still more confirmed in the evil intentions of his ancient enemy ; " a dog never lies, but when was a wolf known to speak the truth ? "

The eyes of Magua flashed fire ; but suddenly recollecting the necessity of maintaining his presence of mind, he turned away, in silent disdain, well assured that the sagacity of the Indians would not fail to extract the real merits of the point in controversy. He was not deceived ; for, after another short consultation, the wary Delaware turned to him again, and expressed the determination of the chiefs, though in the most considerate language.

" My brother has been called a liar," he said, " and his friends are angry. They will show that he has spoken the truth. Give my prisoners guns, and let them prove which is the man."

Magua affected to consider the expedient, which he well knew proceeded from distrust of himself, as a compliment, and made a gesture of acquiescence, well content that his veracity should be supported by so skilful a marksman as the scout. The weapons were instantly placed in the hands of the friendly opponents, and they were bid to fire, over the heads of the seated multitude, at an earthen vessel, which lay by accident on a stump, some fifty yards from the place where they stood.

Heyward smiled to himself at the idea of a competition with the scout, though he determined to persevere in the deception, until apprised of the real designs of Magua. Raising his rifle with the utmost care, and renewing his aim three several times, he fired. The bullet cut the wood within a few inches of the vessel ; and a general exclamation of satisfaction announced that the shot was considered a proof of great skill in the use of the weapon. Even Hawk-eye nodded his head, as if he would say, it was better than he had expected. But, instead of manifesting an intention to contend with the successful marksman, he stood leaning on his rifle for more than a minute, like a man who was completely buried in thought. From this reverie he was, however, awakened by one of the young Indians who had furnished the arms, and who now touched his shoulder, saying in exceedingly broken English,—

" Can the pale-face beat it ? "

" Yes, Huron ! " exclaimed the scout, raising the short rifle in his right hand, and shaking it at Magua, with as much apparent ease as if it were a reed ; " yes, Huron, I could

strike you now, and no power of earth could prevent the deed! The soaring hawk is not more certain of the dove than I am this moment of you, did I choose to send a bullet to your heart! Why should I not? Why—because the gifts of my color forbid it, and I might draw down evil on tender and innocent heads! If you know such a being as God, thank him, therefore, in your inward soul—for you have reason!”

The flushed countenance, angry eye, and swelling figure of the scout, produced a sensation of secret awe in all that heard him. The Delawares held their breath in expectation; but Magua himself, even while he distrusted the forbearance of his enemy, remained immovable and calm, where he stood wedged in by the crowd, as one who grew to the spot.

“Beat it,” repeated the young Delaware at the elbow of the scout.

“Beat what! fool!—what!”—exclaimed Hawk-eye, still flourishing the weapon angrily above his head, though his eye no longer sought the person of Magua.

“If the white man is the warrior he pretends,” said the aged chief, “let him strike nigher to the mark.”

The scout laughed aloud—a noise that produced the startling effect of an unnatural sound on Heyward—then dropping the piece, heavily, into his extended left hand, it was discharged, apparently by the shock, driving the fragments of the vessel into the air, and scattering them on every side. Almost at the same instant, the rattling sound of the rifle was heard, as he suffered it to fall, contemptuously, to the earth.

The first impression of so strange a scene was engrossing admiration. Then a low, but increasing murmur, ran through the multitude, and finally swelled into sounds that denoted a lively opposition in the sentiments of the spectators. While some openly testified their satisfaction at so unexampled dexterity, by far the larger portion of the tribe were inclined to believe the success of the shot was the result of the accident. Heyward was not slow to confirm an opinion that was so favorable to his own pretensions.

“It was chance!” he exclaimed; “none can shoot without an aim!”

“Chance!” echoed the excited woodsman, who was now stubbornly bent on maintaining his identity at every hazard, and on whom the secret hints of Heyward to acquiesce in the deception were entirely lost. “Does yonder lying Huron,

too, think it chance? Give him another gun, and place us face to face, without cover or dodge, and let Providence, and our own eyes, decide the matter atween us! I do not make the offer to you, major; for our blood is of a color, and we serve the same master."

"That the Huron is a liar, is very evident," returned Heyward, coolly; "you have yourself heard him assert you to be *La longue Carabine*."

It were impossible to say what violent assertion the stubborn Hawk-eye would have next made, in his headlong wish to vindicate his identity, had not the aged Delaware once more interposed.

"The hawk which comes from the clouds can return when he will," he said; "give them the guns."

This time the scout seized the rifle with avidity; nor had Magua, though he watched the movement of the marksman with jealous eyes, any further cause for apprehension.

"Now let it be proved, in the face of this tribe of Delawares, which is the better man," cried the scout, tapping the butt of his piece with that finger which had pulled so many fatal triggers. "You see the gourd hanging against yonder tree, major; if you are a marksman fit for the borders, let me see you break its shell."

Duncan noted the object, and prepared himself to renew the trial. The gourd was one of the usual little vessels used by the Indians, and it was suspended from a dead branch of a small pine, by a thong of deer-skin, at the full distance of a hundred yards. So strangely compounded is the feeling of self-love, that the young soldier, while he knew the utter worthlessness of the suffrages of his savage umpires, forgot the sudden motives of the contest in a wish to excel. It has been seen, already, that his skill was far from being contemptible, and he now resolved to put forth its nicest qualities. Had his life depended on the issue, the aim of Duncan could not have been more deliberate or guarded. He fired; and three or four young Indians, who sprang forward at the report, announced with a shout, that the ball was in the tree, a very little on one side of the proper object. The warriors uttered a common ejaculation of pleasure, and then turned their eyes inquiringly on the movements of his rival.

"It may do for the Royal Americans!" said Hawk-eye, laughing once more in his own silent, heartfelt manner; "but had my gun often turned so much from the true line, many a marten, whose skin is now in a lady's muff, would

still be in the woods; ay, and many a bloody Mingo, who has departed to his final account, would be acting his deviltries at this very day, atween the provinces. I hope the squaw who owns the gourd has more of them in her wigwam, for this will never hold water again!"

The scout had shook his priming, and cocked his piece, while speaking; and, as he ended, he threw back a foot, and slowly raised the muzzle from the earth; the motion was steady, uniform, and in one direction. When on a perfect level, it remained for a single moment, without tremor or variation, as though both man and rifle were carved in stone. During that stationary instant, it poured forth its contents, in a bright glancing sheet of flame. Again the young Indians bounded forward; but their hurried search and disappointed looks announced that no traces of the bullet were to be seen.

"Go," said the old chief to the scout, in a tone of strong disgust; "thou art a wolf in the skin of a dog. I will talk to the 'Long Rifle' of the Yengeese."

"Ah! had I that piece which furnished the name you use, I would obligate myself to cut the thong, and drop the gourd without breaking it!" returned Hawk-eye, perfectly undisturbed by the other's manner. "Fools, if you would find the bullet of a sharpshooter of these woods, you must look *in* the object and not around it!"

The Indian youths instantly comprehended his meaning—for this time he spoke in the Delaware tongue—and tearing the gourd from the tree, they held it on high with an exulting shout, displaying a hole in its bottom, which had been cut by the bullet, after passing through the usual orifice in the centre of its upper side. At this unexpected exhibition, a loud and vehement expression of pleasure burst from the mouth of every warrior present. It decided the question, and effectually established Hawk-eye in the possession of his dangerous reputation. Those curious and admiring eyes, which had been turned again on Heyward, were finally directed to the weather-beaten form of the scout, who immediately became the principal object of attention to the simple and unsophisticated beings by whom he was surrounded. When the sudden and noisy commotion had a little subsided, the aged chief resumed his examination.

"Why did you wish to stop my ears?" he said, addressing Duncan; "are the Delawares fools, that they could not know the young panther from the cat?"

“They will yet find the Huron a singing bird,” said Duncan, endeavoring to adopt the figurative language of the natives.

“It is good. We will know who can shut the ears of men. Brother,” added the chief, turning his eyes on Magua, “the Delawares listen.”

Thus singled, and directly called on to declare his object, the Huron arose ; and advancing with great deliberation and dignity, into the very centre of the circle, where he stood confronted to the prisoners, he placed himself in an attitude to speak. Before opening his mouth, however, he bent his eyes slowly along the whole living boundary of earnest faces, as if to temper his expression to the capacities of his audience. On Hawk-eye he cast a glance of respectful enmity ; on Duncan, a look of inextinguishable hatred ; the shrinking figure of Alice he scarcely deigned to notice ; but when his glance met the firm, commanding, and yet lovely form of Cora, his eyes lingered a moment, with an expression that it might have been difficult to define. Then, filled with his own dark intentions, he spoke in the language of the Canadas, a tongue that he well knew was comprehended by most of his auditors.

“The Spirit that made men colored them differently,” commenced the subtle Huron. “Some are blacker than the sluggish bear. These he said should be slaves ; and he ordered them to work forever like the beaver. You may hear them groan, when the south wind blows louder than the lowing buffaloes, along the shores of the great salt lake, where the big canoes come and go with them in droves. Some he made with faces paler than the ermine of the forests : and these he ordered to be traders ; dogs to their women, and wolves to their slaves. He gave this people the nature of the pigeon ; wings that never tire ; young, more plentiful than the leaves on the trees, and appetites to devour the earth. He gave them tongues like the false call of the wild-cat ; hearts like rabbits ; the cunning of the hog (but none of the fox), and arms longer than the legs of the moose. With his tongue, he stops the ears of the Indians ; his heart teaches him to pay warriors to fight his battles ; his cunning tells him how to get together the goods of the earth ; and his arms inclose the land from the shores of the salt-water to the islands of the great lake. His gluttony makes him sick, God gave him enough, and yet he wants all. Such are the pale-faces.

“Some the Great Spirit made with skins brighter and

redder than yonder sun," continued Magua, pointing impressively upwards to the lurid luminary, which was struggling through the misty atmosphere of the horizon; "and these did he fashion to his own mind. He gave them this island as he had made it, covered with trees, and filled with game. The wind made their clearings; the sun and rains ripened their fruits; and the snows came to tell them to be thankful. What need had they of roads to journey by! They saw through the hills! When the beavers worked, they lay in the shade and looked on. The winds cooled them in summer; in winter, skins kept them warm. If they fought among themselves, it was to prove that they were men. They were brave; they were just; they were happy."

Here the speaker paused, and again looked around him, to discover if his legend had touched the sympathies of his listeners. He met everywhere with eyes riveted on his own, heads erect, and nostrils expanded, as if each individual present felt himself able and willing, singly, to redress the wrongs of his race.

"If the Great Spirit gave different tongues to his red children," he continued, in a low, still melancholy voice, "it was that all animals might understand them. Some he placed among the snows, with their cousin the bear. Some he placed near the setting sun, on the road to the happy hunting-grounds. Some on the lands around the great fresh waters; but to his greatest, and most beloved, he gave the sands of the salt lake. Do my brothers know the name of this favored people?"

"It was the Lenape!" exclaimed twenty eager voices, in a breath.

"It was the Lenni Lenape!" returned Magua, affecting to bend his head in reverence to their former greatness. "It was the tribe of the Lenape! The sun rose from water that was salt, and set in water that was sweet, and never hid himself from their eyes. But why should I, a Huron of the woods, tell a wise people their own traditions? Why remind them of their injuries; their ancient greatness; their deeds; their glory; their happiness:—their losses; their defeats; their misery? Is there not one among them who has seen it all, and who knows it to be true? I have done. My tongue is still, for my heart is of lead. I listen."

As the voice of the speaker suddenly ceased, every face and all eyes turned, by a common movement, towards the venerable Tamenund. From the moment that he took his seat,

until the present instant, the lips of the patriarch had not severed, and scarcely a sign of life had escaped him. He sat bent in feebleness, and apparently unconscious of the presence he was in, during the whole of that opening scene, in which the skill of the scout had been so clearly established. At the nicely graduated sounds of Magua's voice, however, he betrayed some evidence of consciousness, and once or twice he even raised his head, as if to listen. But when the crafty Huron spoke of his nation by name, the eyelids of the old man raised themselves, and he looked out upon the multitude with that sort of dull unmeaning expression which might be supposed to belong to the countenance of a spectre. Then he made an effort to rise, and being upheld by his supporters, he gained his feet, in a posture commanding by its dignity, while he tottered with weakness.

"Who calls upon the children of the Lenape?" he said, in a deep guttural voice, that was rendered awfully audible by the breathless silence of the multitude; "who speaks of things gone? Does not the egg become a worm—the worm a fly, and perish? Why tell the Delawares of good that is past? Better thank the Manitto for that which remains."

"It is a Wyandot," said Magua, stepping nigher to the rude platform on which the other stood; "a friend of Tamenund."

"A friend!" repeated the sage, on whose brow a dark frown settled, imparting a portion of that severity which had rendered his eye so terrible in middle age,—“Are the Mingoes rulers of the earth? What brings a Huron here?”

"Justice. His prisoners are with his brothers, and he comes for his own."

Tamenund turned his head towards one of his supporters, and listened to the short explanation the man gave. Then facing the applicant, he regarded him a moment, with deep attention; after which he said, in a low and reluctant voice,—

"Justice is the law of the great Manitto. My children, give the stranger food. Then, Huron, take thine own and depart."

On the delivery of this solemn judgment, the patriarch seated himself, and closed his eyes again, as if better pleased with the images of his own ripened experience than with the visible objects of the world. Against such a decree there was no Delaware sufficiently hardy to murmur, much less oppose himself. The words were barely uttered when four or five of the younger warriors stepping behind Heyward and

the scout, passed things so dexterously and rapidly around their arms, as to hold them both in instant bondage. The former was too much engrossed with his precious and nearly insensible burden, to be aware of their intentions before they were executed ; and the latter, who considered even the hostile tribes of the Delawares a superior race of beings, submitted without resistance. Perhaps, however, the manner of the scout would not have been so passive, had he fully comprehended the language in which the preceding dialogue had been conducted.

Magua cast a look of triumph around the whole assembly before he proceeded to the execution of his purpose. Perceiving that the men were unable to offer any resistance, he turned his looks on her he valued most. Cora met his gaze with an eye so calm and firm, that his resolution wavered. Then recollecting his former artifice, he raised Alice from the arms of the warrior against whom she leaned, and beckoning Heyward to follow, he motioned for the encircling crowd to open. But Cora, instead of obeying the impulse he had expected, rushed to the feet of the patriarch, and raising her voice, exclaimed aloud,—

“Just and venerable Delaware, on thy wisdom and power we lean for mercy ! Be deaf to yonder artful and remorseless monster, who poisons thy ears with falsehoods to feed his thirst for blood. Thou that hast lived long, and that hast seen the evil of the world, should know how to temper its calamities to the miserable.”

The eyes of the old man opened heavily, and he once more looked upwards at the multitude. As the piercing tones of the supplicant swelled on his ears, they moved slowly in the direction of her person, and finally settled there in a steady gaze. Cora had cast herself to her knees ; and, with hands clenched in each other and pressed upon her bosom, she remained like a beauteous and breathing model of her sex, looking up in his faded, but majestic countenance, with a species of holy reverence. Gradually the expression of Tamemund's features changed, and losing their vacancy in admiration, they lighted with a portion of that intelligence which, a century before, had been wont to communicate his youthful fire to the extensive bands of the Delawares. Rising without assistance, and seemingly without an effort, he demanded, in a voice that startled its auditors by its firmness,—

“What art thou ? ”

“A woman. One of a hated race, if thou wilt—a Yengee.

But one who has never harmed thee, and who cannot harm thy people, if she would ; who asks for succor."

"Tell me, my children," continued the patriarch, hoarsely, motioning to those around him, though his eyes still dwelt upon the kneeling form of Cora, "where have the Delawares camped?"

"In the mountains of the Iroquois, beyond the clear springs of the Horican."

"Many parching summers are come and gone," continued the sage, "since I drank of the waters of my own river. The children of Minquon * are the justest white men ; but they were thirsty, and they took it to themselves. Do they follow us so far?"

"We follow none ; we covet nothing," answered Cora. "Captives against our wills, have we been brought amongst you ; and we ask but permission to depart to our own in peace. Art thou not Tamenund—the father—the judge—I had almost said, the prophet—of this people?"

"I am Tamenund of many days."

"'Tis now some seven years that one of thy people was at the mercy of a white chief on the borders of this province. He claimed to be of the blood of the good and just Tamenund. 'Go,' said the white man, 'for thy parent's sake thou art free.' Dost thou remember the name of that English warrior?"

"I remember, that when a laughing boy," returned the patriarch, with the peculiar recollection of vast age, "I stood upon the sands of the sea-shore, and saw a big canoe with wings whiter than the swan's, and wider than any eagles, come from the rising sun."

"Nay, nay ; I speak not of a time so very distant, but of favor shown to thy kindred by one of mine, within the memory of thy youngest warrior."

"Was it when the Yengeese and Dutchmanne fought for the hunting-grounds of the Delawares? Then Tamenund was a chief, and first laid aside the bow for the lightning of the pale-faces—"

"Nor yet then," interrupted Cora, "by many ages ; I

* William Penn was termed Minquon by the Delawares, and, as he never used violence or injustice in his dealings with them, his reputation for probity passed into a proverb. The American is justly proud of the origin of his nation, which is, perhaps, unequalled in the history of the world ; but the Pennsylvanian and Jerseyman have more reason to value themselves in their ancestors, than the natives of any other states, since no wrong was done the original owners of the soil.

“speak of a thing of yesterday. Surely, surely, you forget it not.”

“It was but yesterday,” rejoined the aged man with touching pathos, “that the children of the Lenape were masters of the world. The fishes of the salt lake, the birds, the beasts, and the Mengwee of the woods, owned them for Sagamores.”

Cora bowed her head in disappointment, and for a bitter moment struggled with her chagrin. Then elevating her rich features and beaming eyes, she continued, in tones scarcely less penetrating than the unearthly voice of the patriarch himself,—

“Tell me, is Tamenund a father?”

The old man looked down upon her from his elevated stand, with a benignant smile on his wasted countenance, and then casting his eyes slowly over the whole assemblage, he answered,—

“Of a nation.”

“For myself I ask nothing. Like thee and thine, venerable chief,” she continued, pressing her hands convulsively on her heart, and suffering her head to droop until her burning cheeks were nearly concealed in the maze of dark glossy tresses that fell in disorder upon her shoulders, “the curse of my ancestors has fallen heavily on their child. But yonder is one who has never known the weight of Heaven’s displeasure until now. She is the daughter of an old and failing man, whose days are near their close. She has many, very many, to love her, and delight in her; and she is too good, much too precious to become the victim of that villain.”

“I know that the pale-faces are a proud and hungry race. I know that they claim not only to have the earth, but that the meanest of their color is better than the Sachems of the red man. The dogs and crows of their tribes,” continued the earnest old chieftain, without heeding the wounded spirit of his listener, whose head was nearly crushed to the earth in shame, as he proceeded, “would bark and caw before they would take a woman to their wigwams whose blood was not of the color of snow. But let them not boast before the face of the Manitto too loud. They entered the land at the rising, and may yet go off at the setting sun. I have often seen the locusts strip the leaves from the trees, but the season of blossoms has always come again.”

“It is so,” said Cora, drawing a long breath, as if reviving from a trance, raising her face, and shaking back her shining veil, with a kindling eye, that contradicted the death-like pale

ness of her countenance ; “ but why—it is not permitted us to inquire. There is yet one of thine own people who has not been brought before thee ; before thou lettest the Huron depart in triumph, hear him speak.”

Observing Tamenund to look about him doubtingly, one of his companions said,—

“ It is a snake—a red-skin in the pay of the Yengeese. We keep him for the torture.”

“ Let him come,” returned the sage.

Then Tamenund once more sank into his seat, and a silence so deep prevailed, while the young men prepared to obey his simple mandate, that the leaves which fluttered in the draught of the light morning air, were distinctly heard rustling in the surrounding forest.

CHAPTER XXX.

If you deny me, fie upon your law !
There is no force in the decrees of Venice :
I stand for judgment ; answer, shall I have it ?

SHAKSPEARE.

THE silence continued unbroken by human sounds for many anxious minutes. Then the waving multitude opened and shut again, and Uncas stood in the living circle. All those eyes, which had been curiously studying the lineaments of the sage as the source of their own intelligence, turned on the instant, and were now bent in secret admiration on the erect, agile, and faultless person of the captive. But neither the presence in which he found himself, nor the exclusive attention that he attracted, in any manner disturbed the self-possession of the young Mohican. He cast a deliberate and observing look on every side of him, meeting the settled expression of hostility that lowered in the visages of the chiefs, with the same calmness as the curious gaze of the attentive children. But when, last in his haughty scrutiny, the person of Tamenund came under his glance, his eye became fixed, as though all other objects were already forgotten. Then advancing with a slow and noiseless step up the area, he placed himself immediately before the footstool of the sage. Here he stood unnoted, though keenly observant himself, until one of the chiefs apprised the latter of his presence.

"With what tongue does the prisoner speak to the Manitto?" demanded the patriarch, without unclosing his eyes.

"Like his fathers," Uncas replied; "with the tongue of a Delaware."

At this sudden and unexpected annunciation, a low, fierce yell ran through the multitude, that might not inaptly be compared to the growl of the lion, as his choler is first awakened—a fearful omen of the weight of his future anger. The effect was equally strong on the sage, though differently exhibited. He passed a hand before his eyes, as if to exclude the least evidence of so shameful a spectacle, while he repeated, in his low, guttural tones, the words he had just heard.

"A Delaware! I have lived to see the tribes of the Lenape driven from their council fires, and scattered, like broken herds of deer, among the hills of the Iroquois! I have seen the hatchets of a strange people sweep woods from the valleys, that the winds of Heaven had spared! The beasts that run on the mountains, and the birds that fly above the trees, have I seen living in the wigwams of men; but never before have I found a Delaware so base as to creep, like a poisonous serpent, into the camps of his nation.

"The singing-birds have opened their bills," returned Uncas, in the softest notes of his own musical voice; "and Tamenund has heard their song."

The sage started, and bent his head aside, as if to catch the fleeting sounds of some passing melody.

"Does Tamenund dream!" he exclaimed. "What voice is at his ear! Have the winters gone backward! Will summer come again to the children of the Lenape!"

A solemn and respectful silence succeeded this incoherent burst from the lips of the Delaware prophet. His people readily construed his unintelligible language into one of those mysterious conferences he was believed to hold so frequently with a superior intelligence, and they awaited the issue of the revelation in awe. After a patient pause, however, one of the aged men, perceiving that the sage had lost the recollection of the subject before them, ventured to remind him again of the presence of the prisoner.

"The false Delaware trembles lest he should hear the words of Tamenund," he said. "'Tis a hound that howls when the Yengeese show him a trail."

"And ye," returned Uncas, looking sternly around him,

“are dogs that whine, when the Frenchman casts ye the offals of his deer !”

Twenty knives gleamed in the air, and as many warriors sprang to their feet, at this biting, and perhaps merited, re-tort ; but a motion from one of the chiefs suppressed the out-breaking of their tempers, and restored the appearance of quiet. The task might probably have been more difficult, had not a movement made by Tamenund indicated that he was again about to speak.

“ Delaware ! ” resumed the sage, “ little art thou worthy of thy name. My people have not seen a bright sun in many winters ; and the warrior who deserts his tribe when hid in clouds is doubly a traitor. The law of the Manitto is just. It is so ; while the rivers run and the mountains stand, while the blossoms come and go on the trees, it must be so. He is thine, my children ; deal justly by him.”

Not a limb was moved, nor was a breath drawn louder and longer than common, until the closing syllable of this final decree had passed the lips of Tamenund. Then a cry of vengeance burst at once, as it might be, from the united lips of the nation ; a frightful augury of their ruthless intentions. In the midst of these prolonged and savage yells, a chief proclaimed, in a high voice, that the captive was condemned to endure the dreadful trial of torture by fire. The circle broke its order, and screams of delight mingled with the bustle and tumult of preparation. Heyward struggled madly with his captors ; the anxious eyes of Hawk-eye began to look around him, with an expression of peculiar earnestness ; and Cora again threw herself at the feet of the patriarch, once more a suppliant for mercy.

Throughout the whole of these trying moments, Uncas had alone preserved his serenity. He looked on the preparations with a steady eye, and when the tormentors came to seize him, he met them with a firm and upright attitude. One among them, if possible more fierce and savage than his fellows, seized the hunting shirt of the young warrior, and at a single effort tore it from his body. Then, with a yell of frantic pleasure, he leaped towards his unresisting victim, and prepared to lead him to the stake. But at that moment, when he appeared most a stranger to the feelings of humanity, the purpose of the savage was arrested as suddenly as if a supernatural agency had interposed in the behalf of Uncas. The eye-balls of the Delaware seemed to start from their sockets ; his mouth opened, and his whole form became frozen in an

attitude of amazement. Raising his hand with a slow and regulated motion, he pointed with a finger to the bosom of the captive. His companions crowded about him in wonder, and every eye was, like his own, fastened intently on the figure of a small tortoise, beautifully tattooed on the breast of the prisoner, in a bright blue tint.

For a single instant Uncas enjoyed his triumph, smiling calmly on the scene. Then motioning the crowd away with a high and haughty sweep of his arm, he advanced in front of the nation with the air of a king, and spoke in a voice louder than the murmur of admiration that ran through the multitude.

“Men of the Lenni Lenape!” he said, “my race upholds the earth! Your feeble tribe stands on my shell! What fire that a Delaware can light would burn the child of my fathers,” he added, pointing proudly to the simple blazonry on his skin; “the blood that came from such a stock would smother your flames! My race is the grandfather of nations!”

“Who art thou?” demanded Tamenund, rising at the startling tones he heard, more than at any meaning conveyed by the language of the prisoner.

“Uncas, the son of Chingachgook,” answered the captive modestly, turning from the nation, and bending his head in reverence to the other’s character and years; “a son of the great Unamis.”*

“The hour of Tamenund is nigh!” exclaimed the sage; “the day is come, at last, to the night! I thank the Manitto, that one is here to fill my place at the council-fire. Uncas, the child of Uncas, is found! Let the eyes of a dying eagle gaze on the rising sun.”

The youth stepped lightly, but proudly, on the platform, where he became visible to the whole agitated and wondering multitude. Tamenund held him long at the length of his arm, and read every turn in the fine lineaments of his countenance, with the untiring gaze of one who recalled days of happiness.

“Is Tamenund a boy?” at length the bewildered prophet exclaimed. “Have I dreamt of so many snows—that my people were scattered like floating sands—of Yengeese, more plenty than the leaves on the trees! The arrow of Tamenund would not frighten the fawn; his arm is withered like the branch of a dead oak; the snail would be swifter in the race; yet is Uncas before him as they went to battle against the

* Turtle.

pale-faces! Uncas, the panther of his tribe, the eldest son of the Lenape, the wisest Sagamore of the Mohicans! Tell me, ye Delawares, has Tamenund been a sleeper for a hundred winters?"

The calm and deep silence which succeeded these words, sufficiently announced the awful reverence with which his people received the communication of the patriarch. None dared to answer, though all listened in breathless expectation of what might follow. Uncas, however, looking in his face with the fondness and veneration of a favored child, presumed on his own high and acknowledged rank to reply.

"Four warriors of his race have lived, and died," he said, "since the friend of Tamenund led his people in battle. The blood of the turtle has been in many chiefs, but all have gone back into the earth from whence they came except Chingachgook and his son."

"It is true—it is true," returned the sage—a flash of recollection destroying all his pleasing fancies, and restoring him at once to a consciousness of the true history of his nation. "Our wise men have often said that two warriors of the unchanged race were in the hills of the Yengeese; why have their seats at the council fires of the Delawares been so long empty?"

At these words the young man raised his head, which he had still kept bowed a little in reverence; and lifting his voice so as to be heard by the multitude, as if to explain at once and forever the policy of his family, he said aloud—

"Once we slept where we could hear the salt lake speak in its anger. Then we were rulers and Sagamores over the land. But when a pale-face was seen on every brook, we followed the deer back to the river of our nation. The Delawares were gone. Few warriors of them all stayed to drink of the stream they loved. Then said my fathers, 'Here will we hunt. The waters of the rivers go into the salt lake. If we go towards the setting sun, we shall find streams that run into the great lakes of sweet water; there would a Mohican die, like fishes of the sea, in the clear springs. When the Manitto is ready, and shall say, "Come," we will follow the river to the sea, and take our own again.' Such, Delawares, is the belief of the children of the Turtle. Our eyes are on the rising, and not towards the setting sun. We know whence he comes, but we know not whither he goes. It is enough."

The men of the Lenape listened to his words with all the

respect that superstition could lend, finding a secret charm even in the figurative language with which the young Sagamore imparted his ideas. Uncas himself watched the effect of his brief explanation with intelligent eyes, and gradually dropped the air of authority he had assumed as he perceived that his auditors were content. Then permitting his looks to wander over the silent throng that crowded around the elevated seat of Tamenund, he first perceived Hawk-eye in his bonds. Stepping eagerly from his stand, he made way for himself to the side of his friend; and cutting his thongs with a quick and angry stroke of his own knife, he motioned to the crowd to divide. The Indians silently obeyed, and once more they stood ranged in their circle, as before his appearance among them. Uncas took the scout by the hand, and led him to the feet of the patriarch.

"Father," he said, "look at this pale-face; a just man and the friend of the Delawares."

"Is he a son of Miquon?"

"Not so; a warrior known to the Yengeese, and feared by the Maquas."

"What name has he gained by his deeds?"

"We call him Hawk-eye," Uncas replied, using the Delaware phrase; "for his sight never fails. The Mingoese know him better by the death he gives their warriors; with them he is 'The long rifle.'"

"La longue Carabine!" exclaimed Tamenund, opening his eyes, and regarding the scout sternly. "My son has not done well to call him friend."

"I call him so who proves himself such," returned the young chief, with great calmness, but with a steady mien. "If Uncas is welcome among the Delawares, then is Hawk-eye with his friends."

"The pale face has slain my young men; his name is great for the blows he has struck the Lenape."

"If a Mingo has whispered that much in the ear of the Delaware, he has only shown that he is a singing-bird," said the scout, who now believed that it was time to vindicate himself from such offensive charges, and who spoke in the tongue of the man he addressed, modifying his Indian figures, however, with his own peculiar notions. "That I have slain the Maquas I am not the man to deny, even at their own council-fires; but that, knowingly, my hand has ever harmed a Delaware, is opposed to the reason of my gifts, which is friendly to them, and all that belongs to their nation."

A low exclamation of applause passed among the warriors, who exchanged looks with each other like men that first began to perceive their error.

"Where is the Huron?" demanded Tamenund. "Has he stopped my ears?"

Magua, whose feelings during that scene in which Uncas had triumphed may be much better imagined than described, answered to the call by stepping boldly in front of the patriarch.

"The just Tamenund," he said, "will not keep what a Huron has lent."

"Tell me, son of my brother," returned the sage, avoiding the dark countenance of Le Subtil, and turning gladly to the more ingenious features of Uncas, "has the stranger a conqueror's right over you?"

"He has none. The panther may get into snares set by the women; but he is strong, and knows how to leap through them."

"La longue Carabine?"

"Laughs at the Mingo. Go, Huron, ask your squaws the color of a bear."

"The stranger and the white maiden that came into my camp together?"

"Should journey on an open path."

"And the woman that the Huron left with my warriors?"

Uncas made no reply.

"And the woman that the Mingo has brought into my camp," repeated Tamenund, gravely.

"She is mine," cried Magua, shaking his hand in triumph at Uncas. "Mohican, you know that she is mine."

"My son is silent," said Tamenund, endeavoring to read the expression of the face that the youth turned from him in sorrow.

"It is so," was the low answer.

A short and impressive pause succeeded, during which it was very apparent with what reluctance the multitude admitted the justice of the Mingo's claim. At length the sage, on whom alone the decision depended, said, in a firm voice,—

"Huron, depart."

"As he came, just Tamenund," demanded the wily Magua, "or with hands filled with the faith of the Delawares? The wigwam of Le Renard Subtil is empty. Make him strong with his own."

The aged man mused with himself for a time; and then

bending his head towards one of his venerable companions, he asked,—

“Are my ears open?”

“It is true.”

“Is this Mingo a chief?”

“The first in his nation.”

“Girl, what wouldst thou? A great warrior takes thee to wife. Go; thy race will not end.”

“Better, a thousand times, it should,” exclaimed the horror-struck Cora, “than meet with such a degradation!”

“Huron, her mind is in the tents of her fathers. An unwilling maiden makes an unhappy wigwam.”

“She speaks with the tongue of her people,” returned Magua, regarding his victim with a look of bitter irony. “She is of a race of traders, and will bargain for a bright look. Let Tamenund speak the words.”

“Take you the wampum, and our love.”

“Nothing hence but what Magua brought hither.”

“Then depart with thine own. The great Manitto forbids that a Delaware should be unjust.”

Magua advanced, and seized his captive strongly by the arm; the Delawares fell back, in silence; and Cora, as if conscious that remonstrance would be useless, prepared to submit to her fate without resistance.

“Hold, hold!” cried Duncan, springing forward; “Huron, have mercy! her ransom shall make thee richer than any of thy people were ever yet known to be.”

“Magua is a red-skin; he wants not the beads of the pale-faces.”

“Gold, silver, powder, lead—all that a warrior needs shall be in thy wigwam; all that becomes the greatest chief.”

“Le Subtil is very strong,” cried Magua, violently shaking the hand which grasped the unresisting arm of Cora; “he has his revenge!”

“Mighty ruler of providence!” exclaimed Heyward, clasping his hands together in agony, “can this be suffered! To you, just Tamenund, I appeal for mercy.”

“The words of the Delaware are said,” returned the sage, closing his eyes, and dropping back into his seat, alike wearied with his mental and his bodily exertion. “Men speak not twice.”

“That a chief should not misspend his time in unsaying what has once been spoken, is wise and reasonable,” said Hawk-eye, motioning to Duncan to be silent; “but it is also

prudent in every warrior to consider well before he strikes his tomahawk into the head of his prisoner. Huron, I love you not; nor can I say that any Mingo has ever received much favor at my hands. It is fair to conclude, that, if this war does not soon end, many more of your warriors will meet me in the woods. Put it to your judgment, then, whether you would prefer taking such a prisoner as that into your encampment, or one like myself, who am a man that it would greatly rejoice your nation to see with naked hands."

"Will 'The long Rifle' give his life for the woman?" demanded Magua, hesitatingly; for he had already made a motion towards quitting the place with his victim.

"No, no; I have not said so much as that," returned Hawk-eye, drawing back with suitable discretion, when he noted the eagerness which Magua listened to his proposal. "It would be an unequal exchange, to give a warrior, in the prime of his age and usefulness, for the best woman on the frontiers. I might consent to go into winter quarters, now—at least six weeks afore the leaves will turn—on condition you will release the maiden."

Magua shook his head, and made an impatient sign for the crowd to open.

"Well, then," added the scout, with the musing air of a man who had not half made up his mind, "I will throw 'Kill-deer' into the bargain. Take the word of an experienced hunter, the piece has not its equal atween the provinces."

Magua still disdained to reply, continuing his efforts to disperse the crowd.

"Perhaps," added the scout, losing his dissembled coolness, exactly in proportion as the other manifested an indifference to the exchange, "if I should condition to teach your young men the real virtue of the we'pon, it would smooth the little differences in our judgments."

Le Renard fiercely ordered the Delawares, who still lingered in an impenetrable belt around him, in hopes he would listen to the amicable proposal, to open his path, threatening, by the glance of his eye, another appeal to the infallible justice of their "prophet."

"What is ordered must sooner or later arrive," continued Hawk eye, turning with a sad and humbled look to Uncas. "The varlet knows his advantage, and will keep it! God bless you, boy; you have found friends among your natural kin, and I hope they will prove as true as some you have met who had no Indian cross. As for me, sooner or later, I must

die ; it is therefore fortunate there are but few to make my death-howl. After all, it is likely the imps would have managed to master my scalp, so a day or two will make no great difference in the everlasting reckoning of time. God bless you," added the rugged woodsman, bending his head aside, and then instantly changing its direction again, with a wistful look towards the youth ; " I loved both you and your father, Uncas, though our skins are not altogether of a color, and our gifts are somewhat different. Tell the Sagamore I never lost sight of him in my greatest trouble ; and, as for you, think of me sometimes when on a lucky trail ; and depend on it, boy, whether there be one heaven or two, there is a path in the other world by which honest men may come together again. You'll find the rifle in the place where we hid it ; take it, and keep it for my sake ; and harkee, lad, as your natural gifts don't deny you the use of vengeance, use it a little freely on the Mingoes ; it may unburden grief at my loss, and ease your mind. Huron, I accept your offer ; release the woman. I am your prisoner."

A suppressed, but still distinct murmur of approbation, ran through the crowd at this generous proposition ; even the fiercest among the Delaware warriors manifesting pleasure at the manliness of the intended sacrifice. Magua paused, and for an anxious moment, it might be said, he doubted ; then casting his eyes on Cora, with an expression in which ferocity and admiration were strangely mingled, his purpose became fixed forever.

He intimated his contempt of the offer with a backward motion of his head, and said, in a steady and settled voice—

" Le Renard Subtil is a great chief ; he has but one mind. Come," he added, laying his hand too familiarly on the shoulder of his captive to urge her onward ; " a Huron is no tattler ; we will go."

The maiden drew back in lofty womanly reserve, and her dark eye kindled, while the rich blood shot, like the passing brightness of the sun, into her very temples, at the indignity.

" I am your prisoner, and at a fitting time shall be ready to follow, even to my death. But violence is unnecessary," she coldly said ; and immediately turning to Hawk-eye, added, " Generous hunter, from my soul I thank you. Your offer is vain, neither could it be accepted ; but still you may serve me, even more than in your own noble intention. Look at that drooping, humbled child ! Abandon her not until you leave her in the habitations of civilized men. I will not say,"

wringing the hard hand of the scout, "that her father will reward you—for such as you are above the rewards of men—but he will thank you and bless you. And, believe me, the blessing of a just and aged man has virtue in the sight of Heaven. Would to God, I could hear one from his lips at this awful moment!" Her voice became choked, and, for an instant, she was silent; then advancing a step nigher to Duncan, who was supporting her unconscious sister, she continued, in more subdued tones, but in which feeling and the habits of her sex maintained a fearful struggle,—“I need not tell you to cherish the treasure you will possess. You love her, Heyward; that would conceal a thousand faults, though she had them. She is kind, gentle, sweet, good, as mortal may be. There is not a blemish in mind or person at which the proudest of you all would sicken. She is fair—Oh! how surpassingly fair,” laying her own beautiful, but less brilliant hand, in melancholy affection on the alabaster forehead of Alice, and parting the golden hair which clustered about her brows; “and yet her soul is pure and spotless as her skin. I could say much—more perhaps than cooler reason would approve; but I will spare you and myself—” Her voice became inaudible, and her face was bent over the form of her sister. After a long and burning kiss, she arose, and with features of the hue of death, but without even a tear in her feverish eye, she turned away, and added, to the savage, with all her former elevation of manner,—“Now, sir, if it be your pleasure, I will follow.”

“Ay, go,” cried Duncan, placing Alice in the arms of an Indian girl; “go, Magua, go. These Delawares have their laws, which forbid them to detain you; but I—I have no such obligation. Go, malignant monster—why do you delay?”

It would be difficult to describe the expression with which Magua listened to this threat to follow. There was at first a fierce and manifest display of joy, and then it was instantly subdued in a look of cunning coldness.

“The woods are open,” he was content with answering. “The Open Hand’ can come.”

“Hold,” cried Hawk-eye, seizing Duncan by the arm, and detaining him by violence; “you know not the craft of the imp. He would lead you to an ambushment and your death—”

“Huron,” interrupted Uncas, who, submissive to the stern customs of his people, had been an attentive and grave lis-

tener to all that passed ; “ Huron, the justice of the Delawares comes from the Manitto. Look at the sun. He is now in the upper branches of the hemlock. Your path is short and open. When he is seen above the trees, there will be men on your trail.”

“ I hear a crow,” exclaimed Magua, with a taunting laugh. “ Go,” he added, shaking his hand at the crowd, which had slowly opened to admit his passage. “ Where are the petticoats of the Delawares? Let them send their arrows and their guns to the Wyandots ; they shall have venison to eat, and corn to hoe. Dogs, rabbits, thieves—I spit on you.”

His parting gibes were listened to in a dead, boding silence, and, with these biting words in his mouth, the triumphant Magua passed unmolested into the forest followed by his passive captive, and protected by the inviolable laws of Indian hospitality.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Plue. Kill the poys and the luggage ! 'Tis expressly against the law of arms, 'tis as arrant a piece of knavery, mark you now, as can be offered in the 'orld.

KING HENRY V.

So long as their enemy and his victim continued in sight, the multitude remained motionless as beings charmed to the place by some power that was friendly to the Hurons ; but the instant he disappeared, it became tossed and agitated by fierce and powerful passion. Uncas maintained his elevated stand, keeping his eyes on Cora, until the colors of her dress were blended with the foliage of the forest ; when he descended, and moving silently through the throng, he disappeared in that lodge from which he had so recently issued. A few of the graver and more attentive warriors, who caught the gleams of anger that shot from the eyes of the young chief in passing, followed him to the place he had selected for his meditations. After which, Tamenund and Alice were removed, and the women and children were ordered to disperse. During the momentous hour that succeeded, the encampment resembled a hive of troubled bees, who only awaited the appearance and example of their leader to take some distant and momentous flight.

A young warrior at length issued from the lodge of Uncas ; and moving deliberately, with a sort of grave march, towards a dwarf pine that grew in the crevices of the rocky terrace, he tore the bark from its body, and then returned whence he came without speaking. He was soon followed by another, who stripped the sapling of its branches, leaving it a naked and blazed* trunk. A third colored the post with stripes of a dark red paint ; all which indications of a hostile design in the leaders of the nation were received by the men without in a gloomy and ominous silence. Finally, the Mohican himself reappeared, divested of all his attire except his girdle and leggings, and with one-half of his fine features hid under a cloud of threatening black.

Uncas moved with a slow and dignified tread towards the post, which he immediately commenced encircling with a measured step, not unlike an ancient dance, raising his voice, at the same time, in the wild and irregular chant of his war-song. The notes were in the extremes of human sounds ; being sometimes melancholy and exquisitely plaintive, even rivalling the melody of birds—and then, by sudden and startling transitions, causing the auditors to tremble by their depth and energy. The words were few and often repeated, proceeding gradually from a sort of invocation, or hymn to the Deity, to an intimation of the warrior's objects, and terminating as they commenced with an acknowledgment of his own dependence on the Great Spirit. If it were possible to translate the comprehensive and melodious language in which he spoke, the ode might read something like the following :—

“ Manitto ! Manitto ! Manitto !
 Thou art great, thou art good, thou art wise
 Manitto ! Manitto !
 Thou art just.

“ In the heavens, in the clouds, oh ! I see
 Many spots—many dark, many red :
 In the heavens, oh ! I see
 Many clouds.

“ In the woods, in the air, oh ! I hear
 The whoop, the long yell, and the cry :
 In the woods, oh ! I hear
 The loud whoop.

* A tree which has been partially or entirely stripped of its bark is said in the language of the country, to be “blazed.” The term is strictly English for a horse is said to be blazed when it has a white mark.

“Manitto! Manitto! Manitto!
I am weak—thou art strong; I am slow—
Manitto! Manitto!
Give me aid.”

At the end of what might be called each verse, he made a pause, by raising a note louder and longer than common, that was peculiarly suited to the sentiment just expressed. The first close was solemn, and intended to convey the idea of veneration; the second descriptive, bordering on the alarming; and the third was the well-known and terrific war-whoop, which burst from the lips of the young warrior, like a combination of all the frightful sounds of battle. The last was like the first, humble and imploring. Three times did he repeat this song, and as often did he encircle the post in his dance.

At the close of the first turn, a grave and highly esteemed chief of the Lenape followed his example, singing words of his own, however, to music of a similar character. Warrior after warrior enlisted in the dance, until all of any renown and authority were numbered in its mazes. The spectacle now became wildly terrific; the fierce-looking and menacing visages of the chiefs receiving additional power from the appalling strains in which they mingled their guttural tones. Just then Uncas struck his tomahawk deep into the post, and raised his voice in a shout, which might be termed his own battle-cry. The act announced that he had assumed the chief authority in the intended expedition.

It was a signal that awakened all the slumbering passions of the nation. A hundred youths, who had hitherto been restrained by the diffidence of their years, rushed in a frantic body on the fancied emblem of their enemy, and severed it asunder, splinter by splinter, until nothing remained of the trunk but its roots in the earth. During this moment of tumult, the most ruthless deeds of war were performed on the fragments of the tree, with as much apparent ferocity as if they were the living victims of their cruelty. Some were scalped; some received the keen and trembling axe; and others suffered by thrusts from the fatal knife. In short, the manifestations of zeal and fierce delight were so great and unequivocal, that the expedition was declared to be a war of the nation.

The instant Uncas had struck the blow, he moved out of the circle, and cast his eyes up to the sun, which was just gaining the point, when the truce with Magua was to end. The fact was soon announced by a significant gesture, accompanied by a corresponding cry; and the whole of the excited

multitude abandoned their mimic warfare, with shrill yells of pleasure, to prepare for the more hazardous experiment of the reality.

The whole face of the encampment was instantly changed. The warriors, who were already armed and painted, became as still as if they were incapable of any uncommon burst of emotion. On the other hand, the women broke out of the lodges, with the songs of joy and those of lamentation so strangely mingled, that it might have been difficult to have said which passion preponderated. None, however, were idle.

Some bore their choicest articles, others their young, and some their aged and infirm, into the forest, which spread itself like a verdant carpet of bright green against the side of the mountain. Thither Tamenund also retired, with calm composure, after a short and touching interview with Uncas ; from whom the sage separated with the reluctance that a parent would quit a long lost and just recovered child. In the mean time, Duncan saw Alice to a place of safety, and then sought the scout, with a countenance that denoted how eagerly he also panted for the approaching contest.

But Hawk-eye was too much accustomed to the war-song and the enlistments of the natives, to betray any interest in the passing scene. He merely cast an occasional look at the number and quality of the warriors, who, from time to time, signified their readiness to accompany Uncas to the field. In this particular he was soon satisfied ; for, as has been already seen, the power of the young chief quickly embraced every fighting man in the nation. After this material point was so satisfactorily decided, he despatched an Indian boy in quest of " Kill-deer " and the rifle of Uncas, to the place where they had deposited the weapons on approaching the camp of the Delawares ; a measure of double policy, inasmuch as it protected the arms from their own fate, if detained as prisoners, and gave them the advantage of appearing among the strangers rather as sufferers than as men provided with the means of defence and subsistence. In selecting another to perform the office of reclaiming his highly-prized rifle, the scout had lost sight of none of his habitual caution. He knew that Magua had not come unattended, and he also knew that Huron spies watched the movements of their new enemies, along the whole boundary of the woods. It would, therefore, have been fatal to himself to have attempted the experiment ; a warrior would have fared no better ; but the danger of a boy would not be likely to commence until after his object was discov-

ered. When Heyward joined him, the scout was coolly awaiting the result of this experiment.

The boy, who had been well instructed, and was sufficiently crafty, proceeded, with a bosom that was swelling with the pride of such a confidence, and all the hopes of young ambition, carelessly across the clearing to the wood, which he entered at a point at some little distance from the place where the guns were secreted. The instant, however, he was concealed by the foliage of the bushes, his dusky form was to be seen gliding, like that of a serpent, towards the desired treasure. He was successful; and in another moment he appeared flying across the narrow opening that skirted the base of the terrace on which the village stood, with the velocity of an arrow, and bearing a prize in each hand. He had actually gained the crags, and was leaping up their sides with incredible activity, when a shot from the woods showed how accurate had been the judgment of the scout. The boy answered it with a feeble but contemptuous shout; and immediately a second bullet was sent after him from another part of the cover. At the next instant he appeared on the level above, elevating his guns in triumph while he moved with the air of a conqueror towards the renowned hunter who had honored him by so glorious a commission.

Notwithstanding the lively interest Hawk-eye had taken in the fate of his messenger, he received "Kill-deer" with a satisfaction that, momentarily, drove all other recollections from his mind. After examining the piece with an intelligent eye, and opening and shutting the pan some ten or fifteen times, and trying sundry other equally important experiments on the lock, he turned to the boy, and demanded with great manifestations of kindness, if he was hurt. The urchin looked proudly up in his face, but made no reply.

"Ah! I see, lad, the knaves have barked your arm!" added the scout, taking up the limb of the patient sufferer, across which a deep flesh wound had been made by one of the bullets; "but a little bruised alder will act like a charm. In the mean time I will wrap it in a badge of wampum. You have commenced the business of a warrior early, my brave boy, and are likely to bear a plenty of honorable scars to your grave. I know many young men that have taken scalps who cannot show such a mark as this. Go," having bound up the arm; "you will be a chief!"

The lad departed, prouder of his flowing blood than the vainest courtier could be of his blushing ribbon; and stalked

among the fellows of his age, an object of general admiration and envy.

But in a moment of so many serious and important duties, this single act of juvenile fortitude did not attract the general notice and commendation it would have received under milder auspices. It had, however, served to apprise the Delawares of the position and the intentions of their enemies. Accordingly a party of adventurers, better suited to the task than the weak though spirited boy, was ordered to dislodge the skulkers. The duty was soon performed; for most of the Hurons retired of themselves when they found they had been discovered. The Delawares followed to a sufficient distance from their own encampment, and then halted for orders, apprehensive of being led into an ambush. As both parties secreted themselves, the woods were again as still and quiet as a mild summer morning and deep solitude could render them.

The calm but still impatient Uncas now collected his chiefs, and divided his power. He presented Hawk-eye as a warrior, often tried, and always found deserving of confidence. When he found his friend met with a favorable reception, he bestowed on him the command of twenty men, like himself, active, skilful, and resolute. He gave the Delawares to understand the rank of Heyward among the troops of the Yengeese, and then tendered to him a trust of equal authority. But Duncan declined the charge, professing his readiness to serve as a volunteer by the side of the scout. After this disposition, the young Mohican appointed various native chiefs to fill the different situations of responsibility, and the time pressing, he gave forth the word to march. He was cheerfully, but silently, obeyed by more than two hundred men.

Their entrance into the forest was perfectly unmolested; nor did they encounter any living objects, that could either give the alarm, or furnish the intelligence they needed, until they came upon the lairs of their own scouts. Here a halt was ordered, and the chiefs were assembled to hold a "whispering council." At this meeting divers plans of operation were suggested, though none of a character to meet the wishes of their ardent leader. Had Uncas followed the prompting of his own inclinations, he would have led his followers to the charge without a moment's delay, and put the conflict to the hazard of an instant issue; but such a course would have been in opposition to all the received

practices and opinions of his countrymen. He was, therefore, fain to adopt a caution that in the present temper of his mind he execrated, and to listen to advice at which his fiery spirit chafed, under the vivid recollection of Cora's danger and Magua's insolence.

After an unsatisfactory conference of many minutes, a solitary individual was seen advancing from the side of the enemy, with such apparent haste, as to induce the belief he might be a messenger charged with pacific overtures. When within a hundred yards, however, of the cover behind which the Delaware council had assembled, the stranger hesitated, appeared uncertain what course to take, and finally halted. All eyes were now turned on Uncas, as if seeking directions how to proceed.

"Hawk-eye," said the young chief, in a low voice, "he must never speak to the Hurons again."

"His time has come," said the laconic scout, thrusting the long barrel of his rifle through the leaves, and taking his deliberate and fatal aim. But, instead of pulling the trigger, he lowered the muzzle again, and indulged himself in a fit of his peculiar mirth. "I took the imp for a Mingo, as I'm a miserable sinner!" he said; "but when my eye ranged along his ribs for a place to get the bullet in—would you think it, Uncas—I saw the musicianer's blower! and so, after all, it is the man they call Gamut, whose death can profit no one, and whose life, if his tongue can do anything but sing, may be made serviceable to our own ends. If sounds have not lost their virtue, I'll soon have a discourse with the honest fellow, and that in a voice he'll find more agreeable than the speech of 'Kill-deer.'"

So saying, Hawk-eye laid aside his rifle; and crawling through the bushes until within hearing of David, he attempted to repeat the musical effort, which had conducted himself with so much safety and éclat through the Huron encampment. The exquisite organs of Gamut could not readily be deceived (and to say the truth, it would have been difficult for any other than Hawk-eye to produce a similar noise), and consequently, having once before heard the sounds, he now knew whence they proceeded. The poor fellow appeared relieved from a state of embarrassment; for pursuing the direction of the voice—a task that to him was not much less arduous than it would have been to have gone up in the face of a battery—he soon discovered the hidden songster

"I wonder what the Hurons will think of that!" said the scout, laughing, as he took his companion by the arm, and urged him towards the rear. "If the knaves lie within ear-shot, they will say there are two non-composers instead of one! But here we are safe," he added, pointing to Uncas and his associates. "Now give us the history of the Mingo inventions in natural English, and without any ups and downs of voice."

David gazed about him, at the fierce and wild-looking chiefs, in mute wonder; but assured by the presence of faces that he knew, he soon rallied his faculties so far as to make an intelligent reply.

"The heathen are abroad in goodly numbers," said David; "and, I fear, with evil intent. There has been much howling and ungodly revelry, together with such sounds as it is profanity to utter, in their habitations within the past hour; so much so, in truth, that I have fled to the Delawares in search of peace."

"Your ears might not have profited much by the exchange, had you been quicker of foot," returned the scout a little drily. "But let that be as it may; where are the Hurons?"

"They lie hid in the forest, between this spot and their village, in such force, that prudence would teach you instantly to return."

Uncas cast a glance along the range of trees which concealed his own band and mentioned the name of,—

"Magua?"

"Is among them. He brought in the maiden that had sojourned with the Delawares, and leaving her in the cave, has put himself, like a raging wolf, at the head of his savages. I know not what has troubled his spirit so greatly!"

"He has left her, you say, in the cave!" interrupted Heyward; "tis well that we know its situation! May not something be done for her instant relief?"

Uncas looked earnestly at the scout, before he asked,—

"What says Hawk-eye?"

"Give me my twenty rifles, and I will turn to the right, along the stream; and passing by the huts of the beaver, will join the Sagamore and the colonel. You shall then hear the whoop from that quarter; with this wind one may easily send it a mile. Then, Uncas, do you drive in their front; when they come within range of our pieces, we will give them a blow that, I pledge the good name of an old frontiersman, shall make their line bend like an ashen bow. After which,

we will carry their village, and take the women from the cave; when the affair may be finished with the tribe, according to a white man's battle, by a blow and a victory; or in the Indian fashion, with dodge and cover. There may be no great learning, major, in this plan, but with courage and patience it can all be done."

"I like it much," cried Duncan, who saw that the release of Cora was the primary object in the mind of the scout; "I like it much. Let it be instantly attempted."

After a short conference, the plan was matured, and rendered more intelligible to the several parties; the different signals were appointed, and the chiefs separated, each to his allotted station.

CHAPTER XXXII.

But plagues shall spread, and funeral fires increase,
Till the great king, without a ransom paid,
To her own Chrysa send the black-eyed maid.

POPE.

DURING the time Uncas was making this disposition of his forces, the woods were as still, and, with the exception of those who had met in council, apparently as much untenanted, as when they came fresh from the hands of their Almighty Creator. The eye could range, in every direction, through the long and shadowed vistas of the trees; but nowhere was any object to be seen that did not properly belong to the peaceful and slumbering scenery. Here and there a bird was heard fluttering among the branches of the beeches, and occasionally a squirrel dropped a nut, drawing the startled looks of the party, for a moment, to the place; but the instant the casual interruption ceased, the passing air was heard murmuring above their heads, along that verdant and undulating surface of forest, which spread itself unbroken, unless by stream or lake, over such a vast region of country. Across the track of wilderness, which lay between the Delawares and the village of their enemies, it seemed as if the foot of man had never trodden, so breathing and deep was the silence in which it lay. But Hawk-eye, whose duty led him foremost in the adventure, knew the character of those with

whom he was about to contend too well to trust the treacherous quiet.

When he saw his little band collected, the scout threw "Kill-deer" into the hollow of his arm, and making a silent signal that he would be followed, he led them many rods towards the rear, into the bed of a little brook which they had crossed in advancing. Here he halted, and after waiting for the whole of his grave and attentive warriors to close about him, he spoke in Delaware, demanding,—

"Do any of my young men know whither this run will lead us?"

A Delaware stretched forth a hand, with the two fingers separated, and indicating the manner in which they were joined at the root, he answered,—

"Before the sun could go his own length, the little water will be in the big." Then he added, pointing in the direction of the place he mentioned, "the two make enough for the beavers."

"I thought as much," returned the scout, glancing his eye upwards at the opening in the tree-tops, "from the course it takes, and the bearings of the mountains. Men, we will keep within the cover of its banks till we scent the Hurons."

His companions gave the usual brief exclamation of assent, but perceiving that their leader was about to lead the way in person, one or two made signs that all was not as it should be. Hawk-eye, who comprehended their meaning glances, turned, and perceived that his party had been followed thus far by the singing-master.

"Do you know, friend," asked the scout gravely, and perhaps with a little of the pride of conscious deserving in his manner, "that this is a band of rangers chosen for the most desperate service, and put under the command of one who, though another might say it with a better face, will not be apt to leave them idle. It may not be five, it cannot be thirty minutes before we tread on the body of a Huron, living or dead."

"Though not admonished of your intentions in words," returned David, whose face was a little flushed, and whose ordinarily quiet and unmeaning eyes glimmered with an expression of unusual fire, "your men have reminded me of the children of Jacob going out to battle against the Shechemites, for wickedly aspiring to wedlock with a woman of a race that was favored of the Lord. Now, I have journeyed far, and sojourned much in good and evil with the maiden ye seek.

and though not a man of war, with my loins girded and my sword sharpened, yet would I gladly strike a blow in her behalf."

The scout hesitated, as if weighing the chances of such a strange enlistment in his mind before he answered,—

"You know not the use of any we'pon. You carry no rifle ; and believe me, what the Mingoes take they will freely give again."

"Though not a vaunting and bloodily-disposed Goliath," returned David, drawing a sling from beneath his parti-colored and uncouth attire, "I have not forgotten the example of the Jewish boy. With this ancient instrument of war have I practised much in my youth, and peradventure the skill has not entirely departed from me."

"Ay!" said Hawk-eye, considering the deer-skin thong and apron with a cold and discouraging eye ; "the thing might do its work among arrows, or even knives ; but these Mengwe have been furnished by the Frenchers with a good grooved barrel a man. However, it seems to be your gift to go unharmed amid fire ; and as you have hitherto been favored—major, you have left your rifle at a cock ; a single shot before the time would be just twenty scalps lost to no purpose—singer, you can follow ; we may find use for you in the shoutings."

"I thank you, friend," returned David, supplying himself like his royal namesake, from among the pebbles of the brook ; "though not given to the desire to kill, had you sent me away my spirit would have been troubled."

"Remember," added the scout, tapping his own head significantly on that spot where Gamut was yet sore, "we come to fight, and not to musikate. Until the general whoop is given, nothing speaks but the rifle."

David nodded, as much as to signify his acquiescence with the terms ; and then Hawk-eye, casting another observant glance over his followers, made the signal to proceed.

Their route lay, for the distance of a mile, along the bed of the water-course. Though protected from any great danger of observation by the precipitous banks, and the thick shrubbery which skirted the stream, no precaution known to an Indian attack was neglected. A warrior rather crawled than walked on each flank, so as to catch occasional glimpses into the forest ; and every few minutes the band came to a halt, and listened for hostile sounds, with an acuteness of organs that would be scarcely conceivable to a man in a less natural

state. Their march was, however, unmolested, and they reached the point where the lesser stream was lost in the greater, without the smallest evidence that their progress had been noted. Here the scout again halted, to consult the signs of the forest.

"We are likely to have a good day for a fight," he said in English, addressing Heyward, and glancing his eye upwards at the clouds, which began to move in broad sheets across the firmament; "a bright sun and a glittering barrel are no friends to true sight. Everything is favorable; they have the wind, which will bring down their noises and their smoke too, no little matter in itself; whereas, with us it will be first a shot, and then a clear view. But here is an end of our cover; the beavers have had the range of this stream for hundreds of years, and what atween their food and their dams, there is, as you see, many a girdled stub, but few living trees."

Hawk-eye had, in truth, in these few words, given no bad description of the prospect that now lay in their front. The brook was irregular in its width, sometimes shooting through narrow fissures in the rocks, and at others spreading over acres of bottom land, forming little areas that might be termed ponds. Everywhere along its banks were the mouldering relics of dead trees, in all the stages of decay, from those that groaned on their tottering trunks to such as had recently been robbed of those rugged coats that so mysteriously contain their principle of life. A few long, low, and moss-covered piles were scattered among them, like the memorials of a former and long-departed generation.

All these minute particulars were noted by the scout, with a gravity and interest that they probably had never before attracted. He knew that the Huron encampment lay a short half mile up the brook; and, with the characteristic anxiety of one who dreaded a hidden danger, he was greatly troubled at not finding the smallest trace of the presence of his enemy. Once or twice he felt induced to give the order for a rush, and to attempt the village by surprise; but his experience quickly admonished him of the danger of so useless an experiment. Then he listened intently, and with painful uncertainty, for the sounds of hostility in the quarter where Uncas was left; but nothing was audible except the sighing of the wind, that began to sweep over the bosom of the forest in gusts which threatened a tempest. At length, yielding rather to his unusual impatience than taking counsel from his knowledge,

he determined to bring matters to an issue, by unmasking his force, and proceeding cautiously, but steadily up the stream.

The scout had stood, while making his observations, sheltered by a brake, and his companions still lay in the bed of the ravine, through which the smaller stream debouched; but on hearing his low, though intelligible signal, the whole party stole up the bank, like so many dark spectres, and silently arranged themselves around him. Pointing in the direction he wished to proceed, Hawk-eye advanced, the band breaking off in single files, and following so accurately in his footsteps, as to leave it, if we except Heyward and David, the trail of but a single man.

The party was, however, scarcely uncovered before a volley from a dozen rifles was heard in their rear; and a Delaware, leaping high into the air, like a wounded deer, fell at his whole length, perfectly dead.

"Ah! I feared some devilry like this!" exclaimed the scout, in English; adding with the quickness of thought, in his adopted tongue, "To cover, men, and charge!"

The band dispersed at the word, and before Heyward had well recovered from his surprise, he found himself standing alone with David. Luckily, the Hurons had already fallen back, and he was safe from their fire. But this state of things was evidently to be of short continuance; for the scout set the example of pressing on their retreat, by discharging his rifle, and darting from tree to tree, as his enemy slowly yielded ground.

It would seem that the assault had been made by a very small party of the Hurons, which, however, continued to increase in numbers, as it retired on its friends, until the return fire was very nearly, if not quite, equal to that maintained by the advancing Delawares. Heyward threw himself among the combatants, and imitating the necessary caution of his companions, he made quick discharges with his own rifle. The contest now grew warm and stationary. Few were injured, as both parties kept their bodies as much protected as possible by the trees; never, indeed, exposing any part of their persons except in the act of taking aim. But the chances were gradually growing unfavorable to Hawk-eye and his band. The quick-sighted scout perceived his danger, without knowing how to remedy it. He saw it was more dangerous to retreat than to maintain his ground; while he found his enemy throwing out men on his flank, which rendered the task of keeping themselves covered so very difficult to the Delawares, as nearly

to silence their fire. At this embarrassing moment, when they began to think the whole of the hostile tribe was gradually encircling them, they heard the yell of combatants, and the rattling of arms, echoing under the arches of the wood, at the place where Uncas was posted ; a bottom which, in a manner, lay beneath the ground on which Hawk-eye and his party were contending.

The effects of this attack were instantaneous, and to the scout and his friends greatly relieving. It would seem that, while his own surprise had been anticipated, and had consequently failed, the enemy, in their turn, having been deceived in its object and in his numbers, had left too small a force to resist the impetuous onset of the young Mohican. This fact was doubly apparent, by the rapid manner in which the battle in the forest rolled upwards towards the village, and by an instant falling off in the number of their assailants, who rushed to assist in maintaining the front, and, as it now proved to be, the principal point of defence.

Animating his followers by his voice, and his own example, Hawk-eye then gave the word to bear down upon their foes. The charge, in that rude species of warfare, consisted merely in pushing from cover to cover, nigher to the enemy ; and in this manœuvre he was instantly and successfully obeyed. The Hurons were compelled to withdraw, and the scene of the contest rapidly changed from the more open ground on which it had commenced, to the spot where the assailed found a thicket to rest upon. Here the struggle was protracted, arduous, and, seemingly, of doubtful issue ; the Delawares, though none of them fell, beginning to bleed freely, in consequence of the disadvantage at which they were held.

In this crisis, Hawk-eye found means to get behind the same tree as that which served for a cover to Heyward ; most of his own combatants being within call, a little on his right, where they maintained rapid, though fruitless discharges on their sheltered enemies.

“ You are a young man, major,” said the scout, dropping the butt of “ Kill-deer ” to the earth, and leaning on the barrel, a little fatigued with his previous industry ; “ and it may be your gift to lead armies, at some future day, ag’in these imps, the Mingoes. You may here see the philosophy of an Indian fight. It consists, mainly, in a ready hand, a quick eye, and a good cover. Now, if you had a company of the Royal Americans here, in what manner would you set them to work in this business ? ”

"The bayonet would make a road."

"Ay, there is white reason in what you say; but a man must ask himself, in this wilderness, how many lives he can spare. No—horse,"* continued the scout, shaking his head, like one who mused; "horse, I am ashamed to say, must, sooner or later, decide these skirmishes. The brutes are better than men, and to horse must we come at last. Put a shodden hoof on the moccasin of red-skin; and if his rifle be once emptied, he will never stop to load it again."

"This is a subject that might better be discussed another time," returned Heyward; "shall we charge?"

"I see no contradiction to the gifts of any man, in passing his breathing spells in useful reflections," the scout replied. "As to a rush I little relish such a measure; for a scalp or two must be thrown away in the attempt. And yet," he added, bending his head aside, to catch the sounds of the distant combat, "if we are to be of use to Uncas, these knaves in our front must be got rid of!"

Then turning, with a prompt and decided air, he called aloud to his Indians, in their own language. His words were answered by a shout; and, at a given signal, each warrior made a swift movement around his particular tree. The sight of so many dark bodies glancing before their eyes at the same instant, drew a hasty, and consequently an ineffectual, fire from the Hurons. Without stopping to breathe, the Delawares leaped, in long bounds, towards the woods, like so many panthers springing upon their prey. Hawk-eye was in front, brandishing his terrible rifle, and animating his followers by his example. A few of the older and more cunning Hurons, who had not been deceived by the artifice which had been practised to draw their fire, now made a close and deadly discharge of their pieces, and justified the apprehensions of the scout, by felling three of his foremost warriors. But the shock was insufficient to repel the impetus of the charge. The Delawares broke into the cover with the ferocity of their natures, and swept away every trace of resistance by the fury of the onset.

* The American forest admits of the passage of horse, there being little underbrush, and few tangled brakes. The plan of Hawk-eye is the one which has always proved the most successful in the battles between the whites and the Indians. Wayne, in his celebrated campaign on the Miami, received the fire of his enemies in line; and then causing his dragoons to wheel round his flanks, the Indians were driven from their covers before they had time to load. One of the most conspicuous of the chiefs who fought in the battle of Miami, assured the writer that the red men could not fight the warriors with "long knives and leather-stockings;" meaning the dragoons with their sabres and boots.

The combat endured only for an instant, hand to hand, and then the assailed yielded ground rapidly, until they reached the opposite margin of the thicket, where they clung to the cover, with the sort of obstinacy that is so often witnessed in hunted brutes. At this critical moment, when the success of the struggle was again becoming doubtful, the crack of a rifle was heard behind the Hurons, and a bullet came whizzing from among some beaver lodges, which were situated in the clearing, in their rear, and was followed by the fierce and appalling yell of the war-whoop.

"There speaks the Sagamore!" shouted Hawk-eye, answering the cry with his own stentorian voice; "we have them now in face and back!"

The effect on the Hurons was instantaneous. Discouraged by an assault from a quarter that left them no opportunity for cover, their warriors uttered a common yell of disappointment, and breaking off in a body, they spread themselves across the opening, heedless of every consideration but flight. Many fell, in making the experiment, under the bullets and blows of the pursuing Delawares.

We shall not pause to detail the meeting between the scout and Chingachgook, or the more touching interview that Duncan held with Munro. A few brief and hurried words served to explain the state of things to both parties; and then Hawk-eye pointing out the Sagamore to his band, resigned the chief authority into the hands of the Mohican chief. Chingachgook assumed the station to which his birth and experience gave him so distinguished a claim, with the grave dignity that always gives force to the mandates of a native warrior. Following the footsteps of the scout, he led the party back through the thicket, his men scalping the fallen Hurons, and secreting the bodies of their own dead as they proceeded, until they gained a point where the former was content to make a halt.

The warriors, who had breathed themselves freely in the preceding struggle, were now posted on a bit of level ground, sprinkled with trees in sufficient numbers to conceal them. The land fell away rather precipitately in front, and beneath their eyes stretched, for several miles, a narrow, dark, and wooded vale. It was through this dense and dark forest that Uncas was still contending with the main body of the Hurons.

The Mohican and his friends advanced to the brow of the hill, and listened, with practised ears, to the sounds of the

combat. A few birds hovered over the leafy bosom of the valley, frightened from their secluded nests; and here and there a light vapory cloud, which seemed already blending with the atmosphere, arose above the trees, and indicated some spot where the struggle had been fierce and stationary.

"The fight is coming up the ascent," said Duncan, pointing in the direction of a new explosion of fire-arms; "we are too much in the centre of their line to be effective."

"They will incline into the hollow, where the cover is thicker," said the scout, "and that will leave us well on their flank. Go, Sagamore; you will hardly be in time to give the whoop, and lead on the young men. I will fight the skirmish with warriors of my own color. You know me, Mohican; not a Huron of them all shall cross the swell, into your rear, without the notice of 'Kill-deer.'"

The Indian chief paused another moment to consider the signs of the contest, which was now rolling rapidly up the ascent, a certain evidence that the Delawares triumphed; nor did he actually quit the place until admonished of the proximity of his friends, as well as enemies, by the bullets of the former, which began to patter among the dried leaves on the ground, like the bits of falling hail which precede the bursting of the tempest. Hawk-eye and his three companions withdrew a pace to a shelter, and awaited the issue with calmness, that nothing but great practice could impart in such a scene.

It was not long before the reports of the rifles began to lose the echoes of the woods, and to sound like weapons discharged in the open air. Then a warrior appeared, here and there, driven to the skirts of the forest, and rallying as he entered the clearing, as at the place where the final stand was to be made. These were soon joined by others, until a long line of swarthy figures was to be seen clinging to the cover with the obstinacy of desperation. Heyward began to grow impatient, and turned his eyes anxiously in the direction of Chingachgook. The chief was seated on a rock, with nothing visible but his calm visage, considering the spectacle with an eye as deliberate as if he were posted there merely to view the struggle.

"The time is come for the Delaware to strike!" said Duncan.

"Not so, not so," returned the scout; "when he scents his friends, he will let them know that he is here. See, see; the knaves are getting in that clump of pines, like bees set-

ting after their flight. By the Lord, a squaw might put a bullet into the centre of such a knot of dark skins !”

At that instant the whoop was given, and a dozen Hurons fell by a discharge from Chingachgook and his band. The shout that followed was answered by a single war-cry from the forest, and a yell passed through the air that sounded as if a thousand throats were united in a common effort. The Hurons staggered, deserted the centre of their line, and Uncas issued from the forest through the opening they left, at the head of a hundred warriors.

Waving his hands right and left, the young chief pointed out the enemy to his followers, who separated in pursuit. The war now divided, both wings of the broken Hurons seeking protection in the woods again, hotly pressed by the victorious warriors of the Lenape. A minute might have passed, but the sounds were already receding in different directions, and gradually losing their distinctness beneath the echoing arches of the woods. One little knot of Hurons, however, had disdained to seek a cover, and were retiring, like lions at bay, slowly and sullenly up the acclivity, which Chingachgook and his band had just deserted to mingle more closely in the fray. Magua was conspicuous in this party, both by his fierce and savage mien, and by the air of haughty authority he yet maintained.

In his eagerness to expedite the pursuit, Uncas had left himself nearly alone ; but the moment his eye caught the figure of *Le Subtil*, every other consideration was forgotten. Raising his cry of battle, which recalled some six or seven warriors, and reckless of the disparity of their numbers, he rushed upon his enemy. *Le Renard*, who watched the movement, paused to receive him with secret joy. But at the moment when he thought the rashness of his impetuous young assailant had left him at his mercy, another shout was given, and *La longue Carabine* was seen rushing to the rescue, attended by all his white associates. The Huron instantly turned, and commenced a rapid retreat up the ascent.

There was no time for greetings or congratulations ; for Uncas, though unconscious of the presence of his friends, continued the pursuit with the velocity of the wind. In vain *Hawk-eye* called to him to respect the covers ; the young Mohican braved the dangerous fire of his enemies, and soon compelled them to a flight as swift as his own headlong speed. It was fortunate that the race was of short continuance, and that the white men were much favored by their position. or

the Delaware would soon have outstripped all his companions, and fallen a victim to his own temerity. But ere such a calamity could happen, the pursuers and pursued entered the Wyandot village, within striking distance of each other.

Excited by the presence of their dwellings, and tired of the chase, the Hurons now made a stand, and fought around their council lodge with the fury of despair. The onset and the issue were like the passage and destruction of a whirlwind. The tomahawk of Uncas, the blows of Hawk-eye, and even the still nervous arm of Munro, were all busy for that passing moment, and the ground was quickly strewn with their enemies. Still Magua, though daring and much exposed, escaped from every effort against his life, with that sort of fabled protection that was made to overlook the fortunes of favored heroes in the legends of ancient poetry. Raising a yell that spoke volumes of anger and disappointment, the subtle chief, when he saw his comrades fallen, darted away from the place, attended by his two only surviving friends, leaving the Delawares engaged in stripping the dead of the bloody trophies of their victory.

But Uncas, who had vainly sought him in the *mêlée*, bounded forward in pursuit; Hawk-eye, Heyward, and David still pressing on his footsteps. The utmost that the scout could effect was to keep the muzzle of his rifle a little in advance of his friend, to whom, however, it answered every purpose of a charmed shield. Once Magua appeared disposed to make another and a final effort to revenge his losses; but, abandoning his intention as soon as demonstrated, he leaped into a thicket of bushes, through which he was followed by his enemies, and suddenly entered the mouth of the cave already known to the reader. Hawk-eye, who had only forbore to fire in tenderness to Uncas, raised a shout of success, and proclaimed aloud, that now they were certain of their game. The pursuers dashed into the long and narrow entrance, in time to catch a glimpse of the retreating forms of the Hurons. Their passage through the natural galleries and subterranean apartments of the cavern was preceded by the shrieks and cries of hundreds of women and children. The place, seen by its dim and uncertain light, appeared like the shades of the infernal regions, across which unhappy ghosts and savage demons were flitting in multitudes.

Still Uncas kept his eye on Magua, as if life to him possessed but a single object. Heyward and the scout still pressed on his rear, actuated, though possibly in a less degree,

by a common feeling. But their way was becoming intricate, in those dark and gloomy passages, and the glimpses of the retiring warriors less distinct and frequent ; and for a moment the trace was believed to be lost, when a white robe was seen fluttering in the further extremity of a passage that seemed to lead up the mountain.

" 'Tis Cora ! " exclaimed Heyward, in a voice in which horror and delight were wildly mingled.

" Cora ! Cora ! " echoed Uncas, bounding forward like a deer.

" 'Tis the maiden ! " shouted the scout. " Courage, lady ; we come !—we come ! "

The chase was renewed with a diligence rendered tenfold encouraging by this glimpse of the captive. But the way was rugged, broken, and in spots nearly impassable. Uncas abandoned his rifle and leaped forward with headlong precipitation. Heyward rashly imitated his example, though both were, a moment afterwards, admonished of its madness, by hearing the bellowing of a piece, that the Hurons found time to discharge down the passage in the rocks, the bullets from which even gave the young Mohican a slight wound.

" We must close ! " said the scout, passing his friends by a desperate leap ; " the knaves will pick us all off at this distance ; and see, they hold the maiden so as to shield themselves ! "

Though his words were unheeded, or rather unheard, his example was followed by his companions, who, by incredible exertions, got near enough to the fugitives to perceive that Cora was borne along between the two warriors while Magua prescribed the direction and manner of their flight. At this moment the forms of all four were strongly drawn against an opening in the sky, and they disappeared. Nearly frantic with disappointment, Uncas and Heyward increased efforts that already seemed superhuman, and they issued from the cavern on the side of the mountain, in time to note the route of the pursued. The course lay up the ascent, and still continued hazardous and laborious.

Encumbered by his rifle, and, perhaps, not sustained by so deep an interest in the captive as his companions, the scout suffered the latter to precede him a little, Uncas, in his turn, taking the lead of Heyward. In this manner, rocks, precipices, and difficulties were surmounted in an incredibly short space, that at another time, and under other circumstances, would have been deemed almost insuperable. But the impetuous

young men were rewarded, by finding that, encumbered with Cora, the Hurons were losing ground in the race.

"Stay, dog of the Wyandots!" exclaimed Uncas, shaking his bright tomahawk at Magua; "a Delaware girl calls stay!"

"I will go no further," cried Cora, stopping unexpectedly on a ledge of rocks, that overhung a deep precipice, at no great distance from the summit of the mountain. "Kill me if thou wilt, detestable Huron; I will go no further."

The supporters of the maiden raised their ready tomahawks with the impious joy that fiends are thought to take in mischief, but Magua stayed the uplifted arms. The Huron chief, after casting the weapons he had wrested from his companions over the rock, drew his knife, and turned to his captive, with a look in which conflicting passions fiercely contended.

"Woman," he said, "choose; the wigwam or the knife of *Le Subtil*!"

Cora regarded him not, but dropping on her knees, she raised her eyes and stretched her arms towards heaven, saying in a meek and yet confiding voice,—

"I am thine! do with me as thou seest best!"

"Woman," repeated Magua, hoarsely, and endeavoring in vain to catch a glance from her serene and beaming eye, "choose!"

But Cora neither heard nor heeded his demand. The form of the Huron trembled in every fibre, and he raised his arm on high, but dropped it again with a bewildered air, like one who doubted. Once more he struggled with himself and lifted the keen weapon again—but just then a piercing cry was heard above them, and Uncas appeared, leaping frantically, from a fearful height, upon the ledge. Magua recoiled a step; and one of his assistants, profiting by the chance, sheathed his own knife in the bosom of Cora.

The Huron sprang like a tiger on his offending and already retreating countryman, but the falling form of Uncas separated the unnatural combatants. Diverted from his object by this interruption, and maddened by the murder he had just witnessed, Magua buried his weapon in the back of the prostrate Delaware, uttering an unearthly shout as he committed the dastardly deed. But Uncas arose from the blow, as the wounded panther turns upon his foe, and struck the murderer of Cora to his feet, by an effort in which the last of his failing strength was expended. Then, with a stern and steady look, he turned to *Le Subtil*, and indicated, by the expression of his eye, all that he would do, had not the power

deserted him. The latter seized the nerveless arm of the unresisting Delaware, and passed his knife into his bosom three several times, before his victim, still keeping his gaze riveted on his enemy with a look of inextinguishable scorn, fell dead at his feet.

"Mercy! mercy! Huron," cried Heyward, from above, in tones nearly choked by horror; "give mercy, and thou shalt receive it!"

Whirling the bloody knife up at the imploring youth, the victorious Magua uttered a cry so fierce, so wild, and yet so joyous, that it conveyed the sounds of savage triumph to the ears of those who fought in the valley, a thousand feet below. He was answered by a burst from the lips of the scout, whose tall person was just then seen moving swiftly towards him, along those dangerous crags, with steps as bold and reckless as if he possessed the power to move in air. But when the hunter reached the scene of the ruthless massacre, the ledge was tenanted only by the dead.

His keen eye took a single look at the victims, and then shot its glances over the difficulties of the ascent in his front. A form stood at the brow of the mountain, on the very edge of the giddy height, with uplifted arms, in an awful attitude of menace. Without stopping to consider his person, the rifle of Hawk-eye was raised; but a rock, which fell on the head of one of the fugitives below, exposed the indignant and glowing countenance of the honest Gamut. Then Magua issued from a crevice, and stepping with calm indifference over the body of the last of his associates, he leaped a wide fissure, and ascended the rocks at a point where the arm of David could not reach him. A single bound would carry him to the brow of the precipice, and assure his safety. Before taking the leap, however, the Huron paused, and shaking his hand at the scout, he shouted,—

"The pale-faces are dogs! the Delawares women! Magua leaves them on the rocks, for the crows!"

Laughing hoarsely, he made a desperate leap, and fell short of his mark; though his hands grasped a shrub on the verge of the height. The form of Hawk-eye had crouched like a beast about to take its spring, and his frame trembled so violently with eagerness, that the muzzle of the half-raised rifle played like a leaf fluttering in the wind. Without exhausting himself with fruitless efforts, the cunning Magua suffered his body to drop to the length of his arms, and found a fragment for his feet to rest on. Then summoning all his

powers, he renewed the attempt, and so far succeeded, as to draw his knees on the edge of the mountain. It was now, when the body of his enemy was most collected together, that the agitated weapon of the scout was drawn to his shoulder. The surrounding rocks themselves were not steadier than the piece became, for the single instant that it poured out its contents. The arms of the Huron relaxed, and his body fell back a little, while his knees still kept their position. Turning a relentless look on his enemy, he shook a hand in grim defiance. But his hold loosened, and his dark person was seen cutting the air with his head downwards, for a fleeting instant, until it glided past the fringe of shrubbery which clung to the mountains, in its rapid flight to destruction.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

They fought—like brave men, long and well,
 They piled that ground with Moslem slain.
 They conquered—but Bozzaris fell
 Bleeding at every vein.
 His few surviving comrades saw
 His smile when rang their proud hurrah,
 And the red field was won ;
 Then saw in death his eyelids close
 Calmly, as to a night's repose,
 Like flowers at set of sun.

HALLECK.

THE sun found the Lenape, on the succeeding day, a nation of mourners. The sounds of the battle were over, and they had fed fat their ancient grudge, and had avenged their recent quarrel with the Mengwe, by the destruction of a whole community. The black and murky atmosphere that floated around the spot where the Hurons had encamped, sufficiently announced, of itself, the fate of that wandering tribe ; while hundreds of ravens, that struggled above the bleak summits of the mountains, or swept, in noisy flocks, across the wide ranges of the woods, furnished a frightful direction to the scene of the combat. In short, any eye, at all practised in the signs of a frontier warfare, might easily have traced all those unerring evidences of the ruthless results which attend Indian vengeance.

Still, the sun rose on the Lenape a nation of mourners.

No shouts of success, no songs of triumph, were heard, in rejoicings for their victory. The latest straggler had returned from his fell employment, only to strip himself of his bloody calling and to join in the lamentations of his countrymen, as a stricken people. Pride and exultation were supplanted by humility, and the fiercest of human passions was already succeeded by the most profound and unequivocal demonstrations of grief.

The lodges were deserted ; but a broad belt of earnest faces encircled a spot in their vicinity, whither everything possessing life had repaired, and where all were now collected, in deep and awful silence. Though beings of every rank and age, of both sexes, and of all pursuits, had united to form this breathing wall of bodies, they were influenced by a single emotion. Each eye was riveted on the centre of that ring, which contained the objects of so much, and of so common, an interest.

Six Delaware girls, with their long, dark, flowing tresses falling loosely across their bosoms, stood apart, and only gave proofs of their existence as they occasionally strewed sweet-scented herbs and forest flowers on a litter of fragrant plants that, under a pall of Indian robes, supported all that now remained of the ardent, high-souled, and generous Cora. Her form was concealed in many wrappers of the same simple manufacture, and her face was shut forever from the gaze of men. At her feet was seated the desolate Munro. His aged head was bowed nearly to the earth, in compelled submission to the stroke of Providence ; but a hidden anguish struggled about his furrowed brow, that was only partially concealed by the careless locks of gray that had fallen, neglected, on his temples. Gamut stood at his side, his meek head bared to the rays of the sun, while his eyes, wandering and concerned, seemed to be equally divided between that little volume, which contained so many quaint but holy maxims, and the being in whose behalf his soul yearned to administer consolation. Heyward was also nigh, supporting himself against a tree, and endeavoring to keep down those sudden risings of sorrow that it required his utmost manhood to subdue.

But sad and melancholy as this group may easily be imagined, it was far less touching than another, that occupied the opposite space of the same area. Seated, as in life, with his form and limbs arranged in grave and decent composure, Uncas appeared, arrayed in the most gorgeous ornaments that the tribe could furnish. Rich plumes nodded above his

head ; wampum, gorgets, bracelets, and medals adorned his person in profusion ; though his dull eye and vacant lineaments too strongly contradicted the idle tale of pride they would convey.

Directly in front of the corpse Chingachgook was placed, without arms, paint, or adornment of any sort, except the bright blue blazonry of his race, that was indelibly impressed on his naked bosom. During the long period that the tribe had been thus collected, the Mohican warrior had kept a steady, anxious look on the cold and senseless countenance of his son. So riveted and intense had been that gaze, and so changeless his attitude, that a stranger might not have told the living from the dead, but for the occasional gleamings of a troubled spirit, that shot athwart the dark visage of one, and the death calm that had forever settled on the lineaments of the other.

The scout was hard by, leaning in a pensive posture on his own fatal and avenging weapon ; while Tamemund, supported by the elders of his nation, occupied a high place at hand, whence he might look down on the mute and sorrowful assemblage of his people.

Just within the inner edge of the circle stood a soldier, in the military attire of a strange nation ; and without it was his war-horse, in the centre of a collection of mounted domestics, seemingly in readiness to undertake some distant journey. The vestments of the stranger announced him to be one who held a responsible situation near the person of the Captain of the Canadas ; and who, as it would now seem, finding his errand of peace frustrated by the fierce impetuosity of his allies, was content to become a silent and sad spectator of the fruits of a contest that he had arrived too late to anticipate.

The day was drawing to the close of its first quarter, and yet had the multitude maintained its breathing stillness since its dawn. No sound louder than a stifled sob had been heard among them, nor had even a limb been moved throughout that long and painful period, except to perform the simple and touching offerings that were made, from time to time, in commemoration of the dead. The patience and forbearance of Indian fortitude could alone support such an appearance of abstraction as seemed now to have turned each dark and motionless figure into stone.

At length, the sage of the Delawares stretched forth an arm, and leaning on the shoulders of his attendants, he arose with an air as feeble as if another age had already intervened

between the man who had met his nation the preceding day, and him who now tottered on his elevated stand.

“Men of the Lenape!” he said, in hollow tones, that sounded like a voice charged with some prophetic mission; “the face of the Manitto is behind a cloud! his eye is turned from you; his ears are shut; his tongue gives no answer. You see him not; yet his judgments are before you. Let your hearts be open, and your spirits tell no lie. Men of the Lenape! the face of the Manitto is behind a cloud.”

As this simple and yet terrible annunciation stole on the ears of the multitude, a stillness as deep and awful succeeded, as if the venerated spirit they worshipped had uttered the words without the aid of human organs; and even the inanimate Uncas appeared a being of life, compared with the dumbed and submissive throng by whom he was surrounded. As the immediate effect, however, gradually passed away, a low murmur of voices commenced a sort of chant in honor of the dead. The sounds were those of females, and were thrillingly soft and wailing. The words were connected by no regular continuation, but as one ceased another took up the eulogy, or lamentation, whichever it might be called, and gave vent to her emotions in such language as was suggested by her feelings and the occasion. At intervals the speaker was interrupted by general and loud bursts of sorrow, during which the girls around the bier of Cora plucked the plants and flowers blindly from her body, as if bewildered with grief. But, in the milder moments of their plaint, these emblems of purity and sweetness were cast back to their places, with every sign of tenderness and regret. Though rendered less connected by many and general interruptions and out-breakings, a translation of their language would have contained a regular descant, which, in substance, might have proved to possess a train of consecutive ideas.

A girl, selected for the task by her rank and qualifications, commenced by modest allusions to the qualities of the deceased warrior, embellishing her expressions with those oriental images that the Indians have probably brought with them from the extremes of the other continent, and which form of themselves a link to connect the ancient histories of the two worlds. She called him the “panther of his tribe;” and described him as one whose moccasin left no trail on the dews; whose bound was like the leap of the young fawn; whose eye was brighter than a star in the dark night; and whose voice, in battle, was loud as the thunder of the Manitto.

She reminded him of the mother who bore him, and dwelt forcibly on the happiness she must feel in possessing such a son. She bade him tell her, when they met in the world of spirits, that the Delaware girls had shed tears above the grave of her child, and had called her blessed.

Then, they who succeeded, changing their tones to a milder and still more tender strain, alluded, with the delicacy and sensitiveness of women, to the stranger maiden, who had left the upper earth at a time so near his own departure, as to render the will of the Great Spirit too manifest to be disregarded. They admonished him to be kind to her, and to have consideration for her ignorance of those arts which were so necessary to the comfort of a warrior like himself. They dwelt upon her matchless beauty, and on her noble resolution, without the taint of envy, and as angels may be thought to delight in a superior excellence; adding, that these endowments should prove more than equivalent for any little imperfections in her education.

After which, others again, in due succession, spoke to the maiden herself, in the low, soft language of tenderness and love. They exhorted her to be of cheerful mind, and to fear nothing for her future welfare. A hunter would be her companion, who knew how to provide for her smallest wants; and a warrior was at her side who was able to protect her against every danger. They promised that her path should be pleasant, and her burden light. They cautioned her against unavailing regrets for the friends of her youth, and the scenes where her fathers had dwelt; assuring her that the "blessed hunting-grounds of the Lenape" contained vales as pleasant, streams as pure, and flowers as sweet, as the "Heaven of the pale-faces." They advised her to be attentive to the wants of her companion, and never to forget the distinction which the Manitto had so wisely established between them. Then, in a wild burst of their chant, they sang with united voices the temper of the Mohican's mind. They pronounced him noble, manly, and generous; all that became a warrior, and all that a maid might love. Clothing their ideas in the most remote and subtle images, they betrayed, that, in the short period of their intercourse, they had discovered, with the intuitive perception of their sex, the truant disposition of his inclinations. The Delaware girls had found no favor in his eyes. He was of a race that had once been lords on the shores of the salt lake, and his wishes had led him back to a people who dwelt about the graves of his fathers. Why

should not such a predilection be encouraged? That she was of a blood purer and richer than the rest of her nation, any eye might have seen; that she was equal to the dangers and daring of a life in the woods, her conduct had proved; and now, they added, the "wise one of the earth" had transplanted her to a place where she would find congenial spirits, and might be forever happy.

Then, with another transition in voice and subject, allusions were made to the virgin who wept in the adjacent lodge. They compared her to flakes of snow; as pure, as white, as brilliant, and as liable to melt in the fierce heats of summer, or congeal in the frosts of winter. They doubted not that she was lovely in the eyes of the young chief, whose skin and whose sorrow seemed so like her own; but, though far from expressing such a preference, it was evident they deem'd her less excellent than the maid they mourned. Still they denied her no need her rare charms might properly claim. Her ringlets were compared to the exuberant tendrils of the vine, her eye to the blue vault of the heavens, and the most spotless cloud, with its glowing flash of the sun, was admitted to be less attractive than her bloom.

During these and similar songs nothing was audible but the murmurs of the music; relieved, as it was, or rather rendered terrible, by those occasional bursts of grief which might be called its choruses. The Delawares themselves listened like charmed men; and it was very apparent, by the variations of their speaking countenances, how deep and true was their sympathy. Even David was not reluctant to lend his ears to the tones of voices so sweet; and long ere the chant was ended, his gaze announced that his soul was enthralled.

The scout, to whom alone, of all the white men, the words were intelligible, suffered himself to be aroused from his meditative posture, and bent his face aside, to catch their meaning, as the girls proceeded. But when they spoke of the future prospects of Cora and Uncas, he shook his head, like one who knew the error of their simple creed, and resuming his reclining attitude, he maintained it until the ceremony—if that might be called a ceremony, in which feeling was so deeply imbued—was finished. Happily for the self-command of both Heyward and Munro, they knew not the meaning of the wild sounds they heard.

Chingachgook was a solitary exception to the interest manifested by the native part of the audience. His look never changed throughout the whole of the scene, nor did a

muscle move in his rigid countenance, even at the wildest of the most pathetic parts of the lamentation. The cold and senseless remains of his son was all to him, and every other sense but that of sight seemed frozen, in order that his eyes might take their final gaze at those lineaments he had so long loved, and which were now about to be closed forever from his view.

In this stage of the funeral obsequies, a warrior much renowned for deeds in arms, and more especially for services in the recent combat, a man of stern and grave demeanor, advanced slowly from the crowd, and placed himself nigh the person of the dead.

“Why hast thou left us, pride of the Wapanachki?” he said, addressing himself to the dull ears of Uncas, as if the empty clay retained the faculties of the animated man; “thy time has been like that of the sun when in the trees; thy glory brighter than his light at noon-day. Thou art gone, youthful warrior, but a hundred Wyandots are clearing the briars from thy path to the world of spirits. Who that saw thee in battle could believe that thou couldst die? Who before thee has ever shown Uttawa the way into the fight? Thy feet were like the wings of eagles; thine arm heavier than fallen branches from the pine; and thy voice like the Manitto when he speaks in the clouds. The tongue of Uttawa is weak,” he added, looking about him with a melancholy gaze, “and his heart exceeding heavy. Pride of the Wapanachki, why hast thou left us?”

He was succeeded by others, in due order, until most of the high and gifted men of the nation had sung or spoken their tribute of praise over the manes of the deceased chief. When each had ended, another deep and breathing silence reigned in all the place.

Then a low, deep sound was heard, like the suppressed accompaniment of distant music, rising just high enough on the air to be audible, and yet so indistinctly, as to leave its character, and the place whence it proceeded, alike matters of conjecture. It was, however, succeeded by another and another strain, each in a higher key, until they grew on the ear, first in long drawn and often repeated interjections, and finally in words. The lips of Chingachgook had so far parted, as to announce that it was the monody of the father. Though not an eye was turned towards him, nor the smallest sign of impatience exhibited, it was apparent, by the manner in which the multitude elevated their heads to listen, that they drank

in the sounds with an intensesness of attention, that none but Tamenund himself had ever before commanded. But they listened in vain. The strains rose just so loud as to become intelligible, and then grew fainter and more trembling, until they finally sank on the ear, as if borne away by a passing breath of wind. The lips of the Sagamore closed, and he remained silent in his seat, looking, with his riveted eye and motionless form, like some creature that had been turned from the Almighty hand with the form but without the spirit of a man. The Delawares, who knew by these symptoms that the mind of their friend was not prepared for so mighty an effort of fortitude, relaxed in their attention; and, with an innate delicacy, seemed to bestow all their thoughts on the obsequies of the stranger maiden.

A signal was given, by one of the elder chiefs, to the women, who crowded that part of the circle near which the body of Cora lay. Obedient to the sign, the girls raised the bier to the elevation of their heads, and advanced with slow and regulated steps, chanting, as they proceeded, another wailing song in praise of the deceased. Gamut, who had been a close observer of rites he deemed so heathenish, now bent his head over the shoulder of the unconscious father, whispering,—

“They move with the remains of thy child; shall we not follow, and see them interred with Christian burial?”

Munro started, as if the last trumpet had sounded in his ear, and bestowing one anxious and hurried glance around him, he arose and followed in the simple train, with the mien of a soldier, but bearing the full burden of a parent's suffering. His friends pressed around him with a sorrow that was too strong to be termed sympathy—even the young Frenchman joining in the procession, with the air of a man who was sensibly touched at the early and melancholy fate of one so lovely. But when the last and humblest female of the tribe had joined in the wild, and yet ordered array, the men of the Lenape contracted their circle, and formed again, around the person of Uncas, as silent, as grave, and as motionless as before.

The place which had been chosen for the grave of Cora was a little knoll, where a cluster of young and healthful pines had taken root, forming of themselves a melancholy and appropriate shade over the spot. On reaching it the girls deposited their burden, and continued for many minutes waiting, with characteristic patience, and native timidity, for some

evidence that they whose feelings were most concerned were content with the arrangement. At length the scout, who alone understood their habits, said, in their own language,—

“My daughters have done well ; the white men thank them.”

Satisfied with this testimony in their favor, the girls proceeded to deposit the body in a shell, ingeniously, and not inelegantly fabricated of the bark of the birch ; after which they lowered it into its dark and final abode. The ceremony of covering the remains, and concealing the marks of the fresh earth, by leaves and other natural and customary objects, was conducted with the same simple and silent forms. But when the labors of the kind beings who had performed these sad and friendly offices were so far completed, they hesitated, in a way to show that they knew not how much further they might proceed. It was in this stage of the rites that the scout again addressed them.

“My young women have done enough,” he said ; “the spirit of a pale-face has no need of food or raiment—their gifts being according to the heaven of their color. I see,” he added, glancing an eye at David, who was preparing his book in a manner that indicated an intention to lead the way in sacred song, “that one who better knows the Christian fashions is about to speak.”

The females stood modestly aside, and, from having been the principal actors in the scene, they now became the meek and attentive observers of that which followed. During the time David was occupied in pouring out the pious feelings of his spirit in this manner, not a sign of surprise, nor a look of impatience, escaped them. They listened like those who knew the meaning of the strange words, and appeared as if they felt the mingled emotions of sorrow, hope and resignation, they were intended to convey.

Excited by the scene he had just witnessed, and perhaps influenced by his own secret emotions, the master of song exceeded his usual efforts. His full, rich voice was not found to suffer by a comparison with the soft tones of the girls ; and his more modulated strains possessed, at least for the ears of those to whom they were peculiarly addressed, the additional power of intelligence. He ended the anthem, as he had commenced, it in the midst of a grave and solemn stillness.

When, however, the closing cadence had fallen on the ears of his auditors, the secret, timorous glances of the eyes, and the general, and yet subdued movement of the assem-

blage, betrayed that something was expected from the father of the deceased. Munro seemed sensible that the time was come for him to exert what is, perhaps, the greatest effort of which human nature is capable. He bared his gray locks, and looked around the timid and quiet throng by which he was encircled with a firm and collected countenance. Then motioning with his hand for the scout to listen, he said,—

“Say to these kind and gentle females, that a heart-broken and failing man returns them his thanks. Tell them, that the Being we all worship, under different names, will be mindful of their charity; and that the time shall not be distant when we may assemble around his throne without distinction of sex, or rank, or color.”

The scout listened to the tremulous voice in which the veteran delivered these words, and shook his head slowly when they were ended, as one who doubted their efficacy.

“To tell them this,” he said, “would be to tell them that the snows come not in winter, or that the sun shines fiercest when the trees are stripped of their leaves.”

Then turning to the women, he made such a communication of the other's gratitude as he deemed most suited to the capacities of his listeners. The head of Munro had already sunk upon his chest, and he was again fast relapsing into melancholy, when the young Frenchman before named ventured to touch him lightly on the elbow. As soon as he had gained the attention of the mourning old man he pointed towards a group of young Indians, who approached with a light but closely covered litter and then pointed upwards towards the sun.

“I understand you, sir,” returned Munro, with a voice of forced firmness; “I understand you. It is the will of Heaven, and I submit. Cora, my child! if the prayers of a heart-broken father could avail thee now, how blessed shouldst thou be! Come, gentlemen,” he added, looking about him with an air of lofty composure, though the anguish that quivered in his faded countenance was far too powerful to be concealed, “our duty here is ended; let us depart.”

Heyward gladly obeyed a summons that took them from a spot where, each instant, he felt his self-control was about to desert him. While his companions were mounting, however, he found time to press the hand of the scout, and to repeat the terms of an engagement they had made, to meet again within the post of the British army. Then gladly throwing himself into the saddle, he spurred his charge to the side of the litter,

whence low and stifled sobs alone announced the presence of Alice. In this manner, the head of Munro again dropping on his bosom, with Heyward and David following in sorrowing silence, and attended by the aide of Montcalm with his guard, all the white men, with the exception of Hawk-eye, passed before the eyes of the Delawares, and were soon buried in the vast forests of that region.

But the tie which, through their common calamity, had united the feelings of these simple dwellers in the woods with the strangers who had thus transiently visited them, was not so easily broken. Years passed away before the traditionary tale of the white maiden, and of the young warrior of the Mohicans, ceased to beguile the long nights and tedious marches, or to animate their youthful and brave with a desire for vengeance. Neither were the secondary actors in these momentous incidents forgotten. Through the medium of the scout, who served for years afterwards as a link between them and civilized life, they learned, in answer to their inquiries, that the "Gray-head" was speedily gathered to his fathers—borne down, as was erroneously believed, by his military misfortunes; and that the "Open Hand" had conveyed his surviving daughter far into the settlements of the "pale-faces," where her tears had at last ceased to flow, and had been succeeded by the bright smiles which were better suited to her joyous nature.

But these were events of a time later than that which concerns our tale. Deserted by all of his color, Hawk-eye returned to the spot where his own sympathies led him, with a force that no ideal bond of union could bestow. He was just in time to catch a parting look of the features of Uncas, whom the Delawares were already inclosing in his last vestments of skins. They paused to permit the longing and lingering gaze of the sturdy woodsman, and when it was ended the body was enveloped, never to be unclosed again. Then came a procession like the other, and the whole nation was collected about the temporary grave of the chief—temporary, because it was proper, that at some future day, his bones should rest among those of his own people.

The movement, like the feeling, had been simultaneous and general. The same grave expression of grief, the same rigid silence, and the same deference to the principal mourner, were observed around the place of interment as have been already described. The body was deposited in an attitude of repose, facing the rising sun, with the implements of war and

of the chase at hand, in readiness for the final journey. An opening was left in the shell, by which it was protected from the soil, for the spirit to communicate with its earthly tenement, when necessary; and the whole was concealed from the instinct, and protected from the ravages of the beasts of prey, with an ingenuity peculiar to the natives. The manual rites then ceased, and all present reverted to the more spiritual part of the ceremonies.

Chingachgook became once more the object of the common attention. He had not yet spoken, and something consolatory and instructive was expected from so renowned a chief on an occasion of such interest. Conscious of the wishes of the people, the stern and self-restrained warrior raised his face, which latterly had been buried in his robe, and looked about him with a steady eye. His firmly compressed and expressive lips then severed, and for the first time during the long ceremonies his voice was distinctly audible.

“Why do my brothers mourn?” he said, regarding the dark race of dejected warriors by whom he was environed; “why do my daughters weep? that a young man has gone to the happy hunting-grounds, that a chief has filled his time with honor? He was good, he was dutiful, he was brave. Who can deny it? The Manitto had need of such a warrior, and he has called him away. As for me, the son and the father of Uncas, I am a blazed pine, in a clearing of the pale-faces. My race has gone from the shores of the salt lake, and the hills of the Delawares. But who can say that the serpent of his tribe has forgotten his wisdom? I am alone—”

“No, no,” cried Hawk-eye, who had been gazing with a yearning look at the rigid features of his friend, with something like his own self-command, but whose philosophy could endure no longer; “no, Sagamore, not alone. The gifts of our colors may be different, but God has so placed us as to journey in the same path. I have no kin, and I may also say, like you, no people. He was your son and a red-skin by nature; and it may be that your blood was nearer—but if ever I forget the lad who has so often fou’t at my side in war, and slept at my side in peace, may He who made us all, whatever may be our color or our gifts, forget me. The boy has left us for a time; but, Sagamore, you are not alone.”

Chingachgook grasped the hand that, in the warmth of feeling, the scout had stretched across the fresh earth, and in that attitude of friendship these two sturdy and intrepid woodsmen bowed their heads together, while scalding tears

fell to their feet, watering the grave of Uncas like drops of falling rain.

In the midst of the awful stillness with which such a burst of feeling, coming, as it did, from the two most renowned warriors of that region, was received, Tamenund lifted his voice to disperse the multitude.

“It is enough,” he said. “Go, children of the Lenape, the anger of the Manitto is not done. Why should Tamenund stay? The pale-faces are masters of the earth, and the time of the red-men has not yet come again. My day has been too long. In the morning I saw the sons of Unamis happy and strong; and yet, before the night has come, have I lived to see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans.”



“Up and away, Chingachgook! will ye stay here to burn like a Mingo at the stake?”—*The Pioneers*, page 385.

THE PIONEERS

OR THE

SOURCES OF THE SUSQUEHANNA

A DESCRIPTIVE TALE

BY

J. FENIMORE COOPER

"Extremes of habits, manners, time, and space,
Brought close together, here stood face to face,
And gave at once a contrast to the view,
That other lands and ages never knew."—PAULDING

INTRODUCTION.

As this work professes, in its title-page, to be a descriptive tale, they who will take the trouble to read it may be glad to know how much of its contents is literal fact, and how much is intended to represent a general picture. The author is very sensible that, had he confined himself to the latter, always the most effective, as it is the most valuable, mode of conveying knowledge of this nature, he would have made a far better book. But in commencing to describe scenes, and perhaps he may add characters, that were so familiar to his own youth, there was a constant temptation to delineate that which he had known, rather than that which he might have imagined. This rigid adhesion to truth, an indispensable requisite in history and travels, destroys the charm of fiction; for all that is necessary to be conveyed to the mind by the latter had better be done by delineations of principles, and of characters in their classes, than by a too fastidious attention to originals.

New York having but one county of Otsego, and the Susquehanna but one proper source, there can be no mistake as to the site of the tale. The history of this district of country, so far as it is connected with civilized men, is soon told.

Otsego, in common with most of the interior of the province of New York, was included in the county of Albany previously to the war of the separation. It then became, in a subsequent division of territory, a part of Montgomery; and finally, having obtained a sufficient population of its own, it was set apart as a county by itself shortly after the peace of 1783. It lies among those low spurs of the Alleghanies which cover the midland counties of New York, and it is a little east of a meridional line drawn through the centre of the State. As the waters of New York flow either southerly into the Atlantic or north-

erly into Ontario and its outlet, Otsego Lake, being the source of the Susquehanna, is, of necessity, among its highest lands. The face of the country, the climate as it was found by the whites, and the manners of the settlers, are described with a minuteness for which the author has no other apology than the force of his own recollections.

Otsego is said to be a word compounded of Ot, a place of meeting, and Sego, or Sago, the ordinary term of salutation used by the Indians of this region. There is a tradition which says that the neighboring tribes were accustomed to meet on the banks of the lake to make their treaties, and otherwise to strengthen their alliances, and which refers the name to this practice. As the Indian agent of New York had a log dwelling at the foot of the lake, however, it is not impossible that the appellation grew out of the meetings that were held at his council fires; the war drove off the agent, in common with the other officers of the crown; and his rude dwelling was soon abandoned. The author remembers it, a few years later, reduced to the humble office of a smoke-house.

In 1779 an expedition was sent against the hostile Indians, who dwelt about a hundred miles west of Otsego, on the banks of the Cayuga. The whole country was then a wilderness, and it was necessary to transport the baggage of the troops by means of the rivers—a devious but practicable route. One brigade ascended the Mohawk until it reached the point nearest to the sources of the Susquehanna, whence it cut a lane through the forest to the head of the Otsego. The boats and baggage were carried over this “portage,” and the troops proceeded to the other extremity of the lake, where they disembarked and encamped. The Susquehanna, a narrow though rapid stream at its source, was much filled with “flood wood,” or fallen trees; and the troops adopted a novel expedient to facilitate their passage. The Otsego is about nine miles in length, varying in breadth from half a mile to a mile and a half. The water is of great depth, limpid, and supplied from a thousand springs. At its foot the banks are rather less than thirty feet high; the remainder of its margin being in mountains, intervals, and points. The outlet, or the Susquehanna, flows through a gorge, in the low banks just mentioned, which may have a width of two hundred feet. This gorge was dammed and the waters of the lake col-

lected : the Susquehanna was converted into a rill. When all was ready the troops embarked, the dam was knocked away, the Otsego poured out its torrent, and the boats went merrily down with the current.

General James Clinton, the brother of George Clinton, then Governor of New York, and the father of De Witt Clinton, who died governor of the same State in 1827, commanded the brigade employed on this duty. During the stay of the troops at the foot of the Otsego a soldier was shot for desertion. The grave of this unfortunate man was the first place of human interment that the author ever beheld, as the smoke-house was the first ruin ! The swivel alluded to in this work was buried and abandoned by the troops on this occasion, and it was subsequently found in digging the cellars of the author's paternal residence.

Soon after the close of the war, Washington, accompanied by many distinguished men, visited the scene of this tale, it is said with a view to examine the facilities for opening a communication by water with other points of the country. He stayed but a few hours.

In 1785 the author's father, who had an interest in extensive tracts of land in this wilderness, arrived with a party of surveyors. The manner in which the scene met his eye is described by Judge Temple. At the commencement of the following year the settlement began ; and from that time to this the country has continued to flourish. It is a singular feature in American life, that at the beginning of this century, when the proprietor of the estate had occasion for settlers on a new settlement, and in a remote county, he was enabled to draw them from among the increase of the former colony.

Although the settlement of this part of Otsego a little preceded the birth of the author, it was not sufficiently advanced to render it desirable that an event so important to himself should take place in the wilderness. Perhaps his mother had a reasonable distrust of the practice of Dr. Todd, who must then have been in the novitiate of his experimental acquirements. Be that as it may, the author was brought an infant into this valley, and all his first impressions were here obtained. He has inhabited it ever since, at intervals ; and he thinks he can answer for the faithfulness of the picture he has drawn.

Otsego has now become one of the most populous dis-



THE PIONEERS.

CHAPTER I.

“See, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train ;
Vapors, and clouds, and storms.”—THOMSON.

NEAR the centre of the State of New York lies an extensive district of country whose surface is a succession of hills and dales, or, to speak with greater deference to geographical definitions, of mountains and valleys. It is among these hills that the Delaware takes its rise ; and, flowing from the limpid lakes and thousand springs of this region, the numerous sources of the Susquehanna meander through the valleys, until, uniting their streams, they form one of the proudest rivers of the United States. The mountains are generally arable to the tops, although instances are not wanting where the sides are jugged with rocks, that aid greatly in giving to the country that romantic and picturesque character which it so eminently possesses. The vales are narrow, rich, and cultivated, with a stream uniformly winding through each. Beautiful and thriving villages are found interspersed along the margins of the small lakes, or situated at those points of the streams which are favorable for manufacturing ; and neat and comfortable farms, with every indication of wealth about them, are scattered profusely through the vales, and even to the mountain tops. Roads diverge in every direction from the even and graceful bottoms of the valleys to the most rugged and intricate passes of the hills. Academies and minor edifices of learning meet the eye of the stranger at every few miles as he winds his way through this uneven territory, and places for the worship of God abound with that frequency which characterizes a moral and reflecting people, and with that variety of exterior and canonical gov-

ernment which flows from unfettered liberty of conscience. In short, the whole district is hourly exhibiting how much can be done, in even a rugged country and with a severe climate, under the dominion of mild laws, and where every man feels a direct interest in the prosperity of a commonwealth of which he knows himself to form a part. The expedients of the pioneers who first broke ground in the settlement of this country are succeeded by the permanent improvements of the yeoman who intends to leave his remains to molder under the sod which he tills, or, perhaps, of the son, who, born in the land, piously wishes to linger around the grave of his father. Only forty years* have passed since this territory was a wilderness.

Very soon after the establishment of the independence of the States by the peace of 1783, the enterprise of their citizens was directed to a development of the natural advantages of their widely extended dominions. Before the war of the Revolution, the inhabited parts of the colony of New York were limited to less than a tenth of its possessions. A narrow belt of country, extending for a short distance on either side of the Hudson, with a similar occupation of fifty miles on the banks of the Mohawk, together with the islands of Nassau and Staten, and a few insulated settlements on chosen land along the margins of streams, composed the country, which was then inhabited by less than two hundred thousand souls. Within the short period we have mentioned, the population has spread itself over five degrees of latitude and seven of longitude, and has swelled to a million and a half of inhabitants,† who are maintained in abundance, and can look forward to ages before the evil day must arrive when their possessions shall become unequal to their wants.

Our tale begins in 1793, about seven years after the commencement of one of the earliest of those settlements which have conduced to effect that magical change in the power and condition of the State to which we have alluded.

It was near the setting of the sun, on a clear, cold day in December, when a sleigh was moving slowly up one of the mountains, in the district we have described. The day had been fine for the season, and but two or three large clouds, whose color seemed brightened by the light reflected from the mass of snow that covered the earth,

* The book was written in 1823.

† The population of New York is now (1831) quite 2,000,000.

floated in a sky of the purest blue. The road wound along the brow of a precipice, and on one side was upheld by a foundation of logs, piled one upon the other, while a narrow excavation in the mountain in the opposite direction had made a passage of sufficient width for the ordinary travelling of that day. But logs, excavation, and everything that did not reach several feet above the earth lay alike buried beneath the snow. A single track, barely wide enough to receive the sleigh,* denoted the route of the highway, and this was sunk nearly two feet below the surrounding surface. In the vale, which lay at a distance of several hundred feet lower, there was what, in the language of the country, was called a *clearing*, and all the usual improvements of a new settlement; these even extended up the hill to the point where the road turned short and ran across the level land, which lay on the summit of the mountain; but the summit itself remained in the forest. There was glittering in the atmosphere, as if it was filled with innumerable shining particles; and the noble bay horses that drew the sleigh were covered, in many parts, with a coat of hoar-frost. The vapor from their nostrils was seen to issue like smoke; and every object in the view, as well as every arrangement of the travellers, denoted the depth of a winter in the mountains. The harness, which was of a deep, dull black, differing from the glossy varnishing of the present day, was ornamented with enormous plates and buckles of brass, that shone like gold in those transient beams of the sun, which found their way obliquely through the tops of the trees. Huge saddles, studded with nails and fitted with cloth that served as blankets to the shoulders of the cattle, supported four high, square-topped turrets, through which the stout reins led from the mouths of the horses to the hands of the driver, who was a negro, of apparently twenty years of

* Sleigh is the word used in every part of the United States to denote a traineau. It is of local use in the west of England, whence it is most probably derived by the Americans. The latter draw a distinction between a sled, or sledge, and a sleigh, the sleigh being shod with metal. Sleighs are also sub-divided into two-horse and one-horse sleighs. Of the latter, there are the cutter, with thills so arranged as to permit the horse to travel in the side track; the "pung," or "tow-pung," which is driven with a pole; and the "gumper," a rude construction used for temporary purposes in the new countries. Many of the American sleighs are elegant, though the use of this mode of conveyance is much lessened with the melioration of the climate consequent on the clearing of the forests.

age. His face, which Nature had colored with a glistening black, was now mottled with the cold, and his large shining eyes filled with tears ; a tribute to its power, that the keen frosts of those regions always extracted from one of his African origin. Still, there was a smiling expression of good-humor in his happy countenance, that was created by the thoughts of home, and a Christmas fireside, with its Christmas frolics. The sleigh was one of those large, comfortable, old-fashioned conveyances, which would admit a whole family within its bosom, but which now contained only two passengers besides the driver. The color of its outside was a modest green, and that of its inside a fiery red. The latter was intended to convey the idea of heat in that cold climate. Large buffalo-skins, trimmed around the edges with red cloth, cut into festoons, covered the back of the sleigh, and were spread over its bottom, and drawn up around the feet of the travellers—one of whom was a man of middle age, and the other a female, just entering upon womanhood. The former was of a large stature ; but the precautions he had taken to guard against the cold left but little of his person exposed to view. A great coat, that was abundantly ornamented by a profusion of furs, enveloped the whole of his figure, excepting the head, which was covered with a cap of marten-skins, lined with morocco, the sides of which were made to fall, if necessary, and were now drawn close over the ears, and fastened beneath his chin with a black ribbon. The top of the cap was surmounted with the tail of the animal whose skin had furnished the rest of the materials, which fell back, not ungracefully, a few inches behind the head. From beneath this mask were to be seen part of a fine, manly face, and particularly a pair of expressive, large blue eyes, that promised extraordinary intellect, covert humor, and great benevolence. The form of his companion was literally hid beneath the garments she wore. There were furs and silks peeping from under a large camlet cloak, with a thick flannel lining, that, by its cut and size, was evidently intended for a masculine wearer. A huge hood of black silk, that was quilted with down, concealed the whole of her head, except at a small opening in front for breath, through which occasionally sparkled a pair of animated jet-black eyes.

Both the father and daughter (for such was the connection between the two travellers) were too much occupied

with their reflections to break a stillness, that derived little or no interruption from the easy gliding of the sleigh, by the sound of their voices. The former was thinking of the wife that had held this their only child to her bosom, when, four years before, she had reluctantly consented to relinquish the society of her daughter, in order that the latter might enjoy the advantages of an education which the city of New York could only offer at that period. A few months afterward death had deprived him of the remaining companion of his solitude; but still he had enough real regard for his child, not to bring her into the comparative wilderness in which he dwelt, until the full period had expired to which he had limited her juvenile labors. The reflections of the daughter were less melancholy, and mingled with a pleased astonishment at the novel scenery she met at every turn in the road.

The mountain on which they were journeying was covered with pines that rose without a branch some seventy or eighty feet, and which frequently doubled that height, by the addition of the tops. Through the innumerable vistas that opened beneath the lofty trees, the eye could penetrate, until it was met by a distant inequality in the ground, or was stopped by a view of the summit of the mountain which lay on the opposite side of the valley to which they were hastening. The dark trunks of the trees rose from the pure white of the snow, in regularly formed shafts, until, at a great height, their branches shot forth horizontal limbs, that were covered with the meagre foliage of an evergreen, affording a melancholy contrast to the torpor of nature below. To the travellers, there seemed to be no wind; but these pines waved majestically at their topmost boughs, sending forth a dull, plaintive sound that was quite in consonance with the rest of the melancholy scene.

The sleigh had glided for some distance along the even surface, and the gaze of the female was bent in inquisitive, and, perhaps, timid glances, into the recesses of the forest, when a loud and continued howling was heard, pealing under the long arches of the woods, like the cry of a numerous pack of hounds. The instant the sounds reached the ears of the gentleman he cried aloud to the black:

“Hold up, Aggy; there is old Hector; I should know his bay among ten thousand! The Leather-Stocking has put his hounds into the hills, this clear day, and they have

started their game. There is a deer-track a few rods ahead; and now, Bess, if thou canst muster courage enough to stand fire, I will give thee a saddle for thy Christmas dinner."

The black drew up, with a cheerful grin upon his chilled features, and began thrashing his arms together, in order to restore the circulation of his fingers, while the speaker stood erect, and, throwing aside his outer covering, stepped from the sleigh upon a bank of snow, which sustained his weight without yielding.

In a few moments the speaker succeeded in extricating a double-barrelled fowling-piece from among a multitude of trunks and bandboxes. After throwing aside the thick mittens which had encased his hands, there now appeared a pair of leather gloves tipped with fur, he examined his priming, and was about to move forward, when the light bounding noise of an animal plunging through the woods was heard, and a fine buck darted into the path, a short distance ahead of him. The appearance of the animal was sudden, and his flight inconceivably rapid; but the traveller appeared to be too keen a sportsman to be disconcerted by either. As it came first into view he raised the fowling-piece to his shoulder, and, with a practised eye and steady hand, drew a trigger. The deer dashed forward undaunted, and apparently unhurt. Without lowering his piece, the traveller turned its muzzle toward his victim, and fired again. Neither discharge, however, seemed to have taken effect.

The whole scene had passed with a rapidity that confused the female, who was unconsciously rejoicing in the escape of the buck, as he rather darted like a meteor, than ran across the road, when a sharp, quick sound struck her ear, quite different from the full, round reports of her father's gun, but still sufficiently distinct to be known as the concussion produced by fire-arms. At the same instant that she heard this unexpected report, the buck sprang from the snow to a great height in the air, and directly a second discharge, similar in sound to the first, followed, when the animal came to the earth, falling headlong, and rolling over on the crust with its own velocity. A loud shout was given by the unseen marksman, and a couple of men instantly appeared from behind the trunks of two of the pines, where they had evidently placed themselves in expectation of the passage of the deer.

“Ha! Natty, had I known you were in ambush, I should not have fired,” cried the traveller, moving toward the spot where the deer lay—near to which he was followed by the delighted black, with his sleigh; “but the sound of old Hector was too exhilarating to be quiet; though I hardly think I struck him, either.”

“No—no—Judge,” returned the hunter, with an inward chuckle, and with that look of exultation that indicates a consciousness of superior skill, “you burnt your powder only to warm your nose this cold evening. Did ye think to stop a full-grown buck, with Hector and the slut open upon him within sound, with that pop-gun in your hand? There’s plenty of pheasants among the swamps; and the snow-birds are flying round your own door, where you may feed them with crumbs, and shoot them at pleasure, any day; but if you’re for a buck, or a little bear’s meat, Judge, you’ll have to take the long rifle, with a greased wadding, or you’ll waste more powder than you’ll fill stomachs, I’m thinking.”

As the speaker concluded he drew his bare hand across the bottom of his nose, and again opened his enormous mouth, with a kind of inward laugh.

“The gun scatters well, Natty, and it has killed a deer before now,” said the traveller, smiling good-humoredly. “One barrel was charged with buck-shot, but the other was loaded for birds only. Here are two hurts; one through the neck, and the other directly through the heart. It is by no means certain, Natty, but I gave him one of the two.”

“Let who will kill him,” said the hunter, rather surlily, “I suppose the creature is to be eaten.” So saying, he drew a large knife from a leathern sheath, which was stuck through his girdle, or sash, and cut the throat of the animal. “If there are two balls through the deer, I would ask if there wer’n’t two rifles fired—besides, who ever saw such a ragged hole from a smooth-bore as this through the neck? And you will own yourself, Judge, that the buck fell at the last shot, which was sent from a truer and a younger hand than your’n or mine either; but, for my part, although I am a poor man I can live without the venison, but I don’t love to give up my lawful dues in a free country. Though, for the matter of that, might often makes right here, as well as in the old country, for what I can see.”

An air of sullen dissatisfaction pervaded the manner of the hunter during the whole of his speech ; yet he thought it prudent to utter the close of the sentence in such an undertone as to leave nothing audible but the grumbling sounds of his voice.

“Nay, Natty,” rejoined the traveller, with undisturbed good-humor, “it is for the honor that I contend. A few dollars will pay for the venison ; but what will requite me for the lost honor of a buck’s tail in my cap ? Think, Natty, how I should triumph over that quizzing dog, Dick Jones, who has failed seven times already this season, and has only brought in one wood-chuck and a few gray squirrels.”

“Ah ! the game is becoming hard to find, indeed, Judge, with your clearings and betterments,” said the old hunter, with a kind of compelled resignation. “The time has been when I have shot thirteen deer, without counting the fa’ns, standing in the door of my own hut ; and for bear’s meat, if one wanted a ham or so, he had only to watch a-nights, and he could shoot one by moonlight, through the cracks of the logs ; no fear of his oversleeping himself neither, for the howling of the wolves was sartin to keep his eyes open. There’s old Hector”—patting with affection a tall hound of black and yellow spots, with white belly and legs, that just then came in on the scent, accompanied by the slut he had mentioned ; “see where the wolves bit his throat, the night I druv them from the venison that was smoking on the chimney top—that dog is more to be trusted than many a Christian man ; for he never forgets a friend, and loves the hand that gives him bread.”

There was a peculiarity in the manner of the hunter that attracted the notice of the young female, who had been a close and interested observer of his appearance and equipments, from the moment he came into view. He was tall, and so meagre as to make him seem above even the six feet that he actually stood in his stockings. On his head, which was thinly covered with lank, sandy hair, he wore a cap made of fox-skin, resembling in shape the one we have already described, although much inferior in finish and ornaments. His face was skinny and thin almost to emaciation ; but yet it bore no signs of disease—on the contrary, it had every indication of the most robust and enduring health. The cold and exposure had, together, given

it a color of uniform red. His gray eyes were glancing under a pair of shaggy brows, that overhung them in long hairs of gray mingled with their natural hue ; his scraggy neck was bare, and burnt to the same tint with his face ; though a small part of a shirt collar, made of the country check was to be seen above the overdress he wore. A kind of coat, made of dressed deerskin, with the hair on, was belted close to his lank body, by a girdle of colored worsted. On his feet were deerskin moccasins, ornamented with porcupines' quills, after the manner of the Indians, and his limbs were guarded with long leggings of the same material as the moccasins, which, gartering over the knees of his tarnished buckskin breeches, had obtained for him, among the settlers the nickname of Leather-Stocking. Over his left shoulder was slung a belt of deerskin, from which depended an enormous ox horn, so thinly scraped as to discover the powder it contained. The larger end was fitted ingeniously and securely with a wooden bottom, and the other was stopped tight by a little plug. A leathern pouch hung before him, from which, as he concluded his last speech, he took a small measure, and, filling it accurately with powder, he commenced reloading the rifle, which, as its butt rested on the snow before him, reached nearly to the top of his foxskin cap.

The traveller had been closely examining the wounds during these movements, and now, without heeding the ill-humor of the hunter's manner, he exclaimed :

"I would fain establish a right, Natty, to the honor of this death ; and surely if the hit in the neck be mine it is enough ; for the shot in the heart was unnecessary—what we call an act of supererogation, Leather-Stocking."

"You may call it by what larned name you please, Judge," said the hunter, throwing his rifle across his left arm, and knocking up a brass lid in the breech, from which he took a small piece of greased leather and, wrapping a ball in it, forced them down by main strength on the powder, where he continued to pound them while speaking. "It's far easier to call names than to shoot a buck on the spring ; but the creatur came by his end from a younger hand than either your'n or mine, as I said before."

"What say you, my friend," cried the traveller, turning pleasantly to Natty's companion ; "shall we toss up this dollar for the honor, and you keep the silver if you lose what say you, friend ?"

"That I killed the deer," answered the young man, with a little haughtiness, as he leaned on another long rifle, similar to that of Natty.

"Here are two to one, indeed," replied the Judge, with a smile; "I am outvoted—overruled, as we say on the bench. There is Aggy, he can't vote, being a slave; and Bess is a minor—so I must even make the best of it. But you'll send me the venison; and the deuce is in it, but I make a good story about its death."

"The meat is none of mine to sell," said Leather-Stocking, adopting a little of his companion's *hauteur*; "for my part, I have known animals travel days with shots in the neck, and I'm none of them who'll rob a man of his rightful dues?"

"You are tenacious of your rights, this cold evening, Natty," returned the Judge, with unconquerable good nature; "but what say you, young man; will three dollars pay you for the buck?"

"First let us determine the question of right to the satisfaction of us both," said the youth, firmly but respectfully, and with a pronunciation and language vastly superior to his appearance; "with how many shot did you load your gun?"

"With five, sir," said the Judge, a little struck with the other's manner; "are they not enough to slay a buck like this?"

"One would do it; but," moving to the tree from behind which he had appeared, "you know, sir, you fired in this direction—here are four of the bullets in the tree."

The Judge examined the fresh marks in the bark of the pine, and, shaking his head, said with a laugh:

"You are making out the case against yourself, my young advocate; where is the fifth?"

"Here," said the youth, throwing aside the rough overcoat that he wore, and exhibiting a hole in his undergarment, though which large drops of blood were oozing.

"Good God!" exclaimed the Judge, with horror; "have I been trifling here about an empty distinction, and a fellow-creature suffering from my hands without a murmur? But hasten—quick—get into my sleigh—it is but a mile to the village, where surgical aid can be obtained—all shall be done at my expense, and thou shalt live with me until thy wound is healed, ay, and forever afterward."

“I thank you for your good intention, but I must decline your offer. I have a friend who would be uneasy were he to hear that I am hurt and away from him. The injury is but slight, and the bullet has missed the bones; but I believe, sir, you will now admit my title to the venison.”

“Admit it!” repeated the agitated Judge; “I here give thee a right to shoot deer, or bears, or anything thou pleasest in my woods, forever. Leather-Stocking is the only other man that I have granted the same privilege to; and the time is coming when it will be of value. But I buy your deer—here, this bill will pay thee, both for thy shot and my own.”

The old hunter gathered his tall person up into an air of pride during this dialogue, but he waited until the other had done speaking.

“There’s them living who say that Nathaniel Bumpo’s right to shoot on these hills is of older date than Marmaduke Temple’s right to forbid him,” he said. “But if there’s a law about it at all, though who ever heard of a law that a man shouldn’t kill deer where he pleased!—but if there is a law at all, it should be to keep people from the use of smooth-bores. A body never knows where his lead will fly, when he pulls the trigger of one of them uncertain fire-arms.”

Without attending to the soliloquy of Natty, the youth bowed his head silently to the offer of the banknote, and replied:

“Excuse me: I have need of the venison.”

“But this will buy you many deer,” said the Judge; “take it, I entreat you;” and, lowering his voice to a whisper, he added—“it is for a hundred dollars.”

For an instant only the youth seemed to hesitate, and then, blushing even through the high color that the cold had given to his cheeks, as if with inward shame at his own weakness, he again declined the offer.

During this scene the female arose, and regardless of the cold air, she threw back the hood which concealed her features, and now spoke, with great earnestness.

“Surely, surely—young man—sir—you would not pain my father so much as to have him think that he leaves a fellow-creature in this wilderness, whom his own hand has injured. I entreat you will go with us, and receive medical aid.”

Whether his wound became more painful, or there was something irresistible in the voice and manner of the fair pleader for her father's feelings, we know not; but the distance of the young man's manner was sensibly softened by this appeal, and he stood in apparent doubt, as if reluctant to comply with, and yet unwilling to refuse her request. The Judge, for such being his office, must in future be his title, watched with no little interest the display of this singular contention in the feelings of the youth; and, advancing, kindly took his hand, and, as he pulled him gently toward the sleigh, urged him to enter it.

"These is no human aid nearer than Templeton," he said, "and the hut of Natty is full three miles from this—come—come, my young friend, go with us, and let the new doctor look to this shoulder of thine. Here is Natty will take the tidings of thy welfare to thy friend; and shouldst thou require it, thou shalt return home in the morning."

The young man succeeded in extricating his hand from the warm grasp of the Judge, but he continued to gaze on the face of the female who, regardless of the cold, was still standing with her fine features exposed, which expressed feeling that eloquently seconded the request of her father. Leather-Stocking stood, in the meantime, leaning upon his long rifle, with his head turned a little to one side, as if engaged in sagacious musing; when, having apparently satisfied his doubts, by revolving the subject in his mind, he broke silence.

"It may be best to go, lad, after all; for, if the shot hangs under the skin, my hand is getting too old to be cutting into human flesh, as I once used to. Though some thirty years ago, in the old war, when I was out under Sir William, I travelled seventy miles alone in the howling wilderness, with a rifle bullet in my thigh, and then cut it out with my own jackknife. Old Indian John knows the time well. I met him with a party of the Delawares, on the trail of the Iroquois, who had been down and taken five scalps on the Schoharie. But I made a mark on the red-skin that I'll warrant he'll carry to his grave! I took him on the posteerum, saving the lady's presence, as he got up from the ambushment, and rattled three buck-shot into his naked hide, so close that you might have laid a broad joe upon them all"—here Natty stretched out his long neck, and straightened his body, as he opened his mouth, which exposed a single tusk of yellow bone, while

his eyes, his face, even his whole frame seemed to laugh, although no sound was emitted, except a kind of thick hissing, as he inhaled his breath in quavers. "I had lost my bullet mould in crossing the Oneida outlet, and had to make shift with the buck-shot ; but the rifle was true, and didn't scatter like your two-legged thing there, Judge, which don't do, I find, to hunt in company with."

Natty's apology to the delicacy of the young lady was unnecessary, for, while he was speaking, she was too much employed in helping her father to remove certain articles of baggage to hear him. Unable to resist the kind urgency of the travellers any longer, the youth, though still with an unaccountable reluctance, suffered himself to be persuaded to enter the sleigh. The black, with the aid of his master, threw the buck across the baggage, and, entering the vehicle themselves, the Judge invited the hunter to do so likewise.

"No, no," said the old man, shaking his head ; "I have work to do at home this Christmas eve—drive on with the boy, and let your doctor look to the shoulder ; though if he will only cut out the shot, I have yarbs that will heal the wound quicker than all his foreign 'intments." He turned, and was about to move off, when, suddenly recollecting himself, he again faced the party, and added—"If you see anything of Indian John, about the foot of the lake, you had better take him with you, and let him lend the doctor a hand ; for, old as he is, he is curious at cuts and bruises, and it's likelier than not he'll be in with brooms to sweep your Christmas ha'arths."

"Stop, stop," cried the youth, catching the arm of the black as he prepared to urge his horses forward ; "Natty—you need say nothing of the shot, nor of where I am going—remember, Natty, as you love me."

"Trust old Leather-Stocking," returned the hunter, significantly ; "he hasn't lived fifty years in the wilderness, and not larnt from the savages how to hold his tongue—trust to me, lad ; and remember old Indian John."

"And, Natty," said the youth, eagerly, still holding the black by the arm. "I will just get the shot extracted, and bring you up to-night a quarter of the buck for the Christmas dinner."

He was interrupted by the hunter, who held up his finger with an expressive gesture for silence. He then moved softly along the margin of the road, keeping his

eyes steadfastly fixed on the branches of a pine. When he had obtained such a position as he wished, he stopped, and, cocking his rifle, threw one leg far behind him, and stretching his left arm to its utmost extent along the barrel of his piece, he began slowly to raise its muzzle in a line with the straight trunk of the tree. The eyes of the group in the sleigh naturally preceded the movement of the rifle, and they soon discovered the object of Natty's aim. On a small dead branch of the pine, which, at the distance of seventy feet from the ground, shot out horizontally, immediately beneath the living members of the tree a bird, that in the vulgar language of the country was indiscriminately called a pheasant or a partridge. In size, it was but little smaller than a common barn-yard fowl. The baying of the dogs, and the conversation that had passed near the root of the tree on which it was perched, had alarmed the bird, which was now drawn up near the body of the pine, with a head and neck so erect, as to form nearly a straight line with its legs. As soon as the rifle bore on the victim, Natty drew his trigger, and the partridge fell from its height with a force that buried it in the snow.

"Lie down, you old villain," exclaimed Leather-Stocking, shaking his ramrod at Hector as he bounded toward the foot of the tree, "lie down, I say." The dog obeyed, and Natty proceeded with great rapidity, though with the nicest accuracy, to reload his piece. When this was ended, he took up his game, and, showing it to the party without a head, he cried—"Here is a titbit for an old man's Christmas—never mind the venison, boy, and remember Indian John; his yarbs are better than all the foreign 'intments. Here, Judge," holding up the bird again, "do you think a smooth-bore would pick game off their roost, and not ruffle a feather?" The old man gave another of his remarkable laughs, which partook so largely of exultation, mirth, and irony, and, shaking his head, he turned, with his rifle at a trail, and moved into the forest with steps that were between a walk and a trot. At each movement he made his body lowered several inches, his knees yielding with an inclination inward; but, as the sleigh turned at a bend in the road, the youth cast his eyes in quest of his old companion, and he saw that he was already nearly concealed by the trunks of the trees, while his dogs were following quietly in his footsteps, occasionally scenting the deer

track, that they seemed to know instinctively was now of no further use to them. Another jerk was given to the sleigh, and Leather-Stocking was hid from view.

CHAPTER II.

“All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens :
Think not the king did banish thee ;
But thou the king.”—RICHARD II.

AN ancestor of Marmaduke Temple had, about one hundred and twenty years before the commencement of our tale, come to the colony of Pennsylvania, a friend and co-religionist of its great patron. Old Marmaduke, for this formidable prenomem was a kind of appellative to the race, brought with him, to that asylum of the persecuted, an abundance of the good things of this life. He became the master of many thousands of acres of uninhabited territory, and the supporter of many a score of dependents. He lived greatly respected for his piety, and not a little distinguished as a sectary ; was intrusted by his associates with many important political stations ; and died just in time to escape the knowledge of his own poverty. It was his lot to share the fortune of most of those who brought wealth with them into the new settlements of the middle colonies.

The consequence of an emigrant into these provinces was generally to be ascertained by the number of his white servants or dependents, and the nature of the public situations that he held. Taking this rule as a guide, the ancestor of our Judge must have been a man of no little note.

It is, however, a subject of curious inquiry at the present day, to look into the brief records of that early period, and observe how regular, and with few exceptions how inevitable, were the gradations, on the one hand, of the masters to poverty, and on the other, of their servants to wealth. Accustomed to ease, and unequal to the struggles incident to an infant society, the affluent emigrant was barely enabled to maintain his own rank, by the weight of his personal superiority and acquirements ; but, the moment that his head was laid in the grave, his indolent and comparatively uneducated offspring were compelled to yield pre-

cedency to the more active energies of a class whose exertions had been stimulated by necessity. This is a very common course of things, even in the present state of the Union ; but it was peculiarly the fortunes of the two extremes of society, in the peaceful and unenterprising colonies of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The posterity of Marmaduke did not escape the common lot of those who depend rather on their hereditary possessions than on their own powers ; and in the third generation they had descended to a point below which, in this happy country, it is barely possible for honesty, intellect, and sobriety to fall. The same pride of family that had, by its self-satisfied indolence, conduced to aid their fall, now became a principle to stimulate them to endeavor to rise again. The feeling, from being morbid, was changed to a healthful and active desire to emulate the character, the condition, and, peradventure, the wealth of their ancestors also. It was the father of our new acquaintance, the Judge, who first began to reascend in the scale of society ; and in this undertaking he was not a little assisted by a marriage, which aided in furnishing the means of educating his only son in a rather better manner than the low state of the common schools of Pennsylvania could promise ; or than had been the practice in the family, for the two or three preceding generations.

At the school where the reviving prosperity of his father was enabled to maintain him, young Marmaduke formed an intimacy with a youth whose years were about equal to his own. This was a fortunate connection for our Judge, and paved the way to most of his future elevation in life.

There was not only great wealth, but high court interest, among the connections of Edward Effingham. They were one of the few families then resident in the colonies, who thought it a degradation to its members to descend to the pursuits of commerce ; and who never emerged from the privacy of domestic life, unless to preside in the councils of the colony, or to bear arms in her defence. The latter had, from youth, been the only employment of Edward's father. Military rank under the crown of Great Britain, was attained with much longer probation, and by much more toilsome services, sixty years ago, than at the present time. Years were passed without murmuring, in the subordinate grades of the service ; and those soldiers who were

stationed in the colonies felt, when they obtained the command of a company, that they were entitled to receive the greatest deference from the peaceful occupants of the soil. Any one of our readers who has occasion to cross the Niagara, may easily observe not only the self-importance, but the real estimation enjoyed by the humblest representative of the crown, even in that polar region of royal sunshine. Such, and at no very distant period, was the respect paid to the military in these States, where now, happily, no symbol of war is ever seen, unless at the free and fearless voice of their people. When, therefore, the father of Marmaduke's friend, after forty years' service, retired with the rank of major, maintaining in his domestic establishment a comparative splendor, he became a man of the first consideration in his native colony—which was that of New York. He had served with fidelity and courage, and having been, according to the custom of the provinces, intrusted with commands much superior to those to which he was entitled by rank, with reputation also. When Major Effingham yielded to the claims of age, he retired with dignity, refusing his half-pay or any other compensation for services that he felt he could no longer perform.

The ministry proffered various civil offices, which yielded not only honor but profit; but he declined them all, with the chivalrous independence and loyalty that had marked his character through life. The veteran soon caused this act of patriotic disinterestedness to be followed by another of private munificence, that, however little it accorded with prudence, was in perfect conformity with the simple integrity of his own views.

The friend of Marmaduke was his only child; and to this son, on his marriage with a lady to whom the father was particularly partial, the Major gave a complete conveyance of his whole estate, consisting of money in the funds, a town and country residence, sundry valuable farms in the old parts of the colony, and large tracts of wild land in the new—in this manner throwing himself upon the filial piety of his child for his own future maintenance. Major Effingham, in declining the liberal offers of the British ministry, had subjected himself to the suspicion of having attained his dotage, by all those who throng the avenues to court patronage, even in the remotest corners of that vast empire; but, when he thus voluntarily stripped himself of his great personal wealth, the remainder of the

community seemed instinctively to adopt the conclusion also, that he had reached a second childhood. This may explain the fact of his importance rapidly declining; and, if privacy was his object, the veteran had soon a free indulgence of his wishes. Whatever views the world might entertain of this act of the Major, to himself and to his child it seemed no more than a natural gift by a father, of those immunities which he could no longer enjoy or improve, to a son, who was formed, both by nature and education, to do both. The younger Effingham did not object to the amount of the donation; for he felt that while his parent reserved a moral control over his actions, he was relieving himself of a fatiguing burden: such, indeed, was the confidence existing between them, that to neither did it seem anything more than removing money from one pocket to another.

One of the first acts of the young man, on coming into possession of his wealth, was to seek his early friend, with a view to offer any assistance that it was now in his power to bestow.

The death of Marmaduke's father, and the consequent division of his small estate, rendered such an offer extremely acceptable to the young Pennsylvanian; he felt his own powers, and saw, not only the excellencies, but the foibles in the character of his friend. Effingham was by nature indolent, confiding, and at times impetuous and indiscreet; but Marmaduke was uniformly equable, penetrating, and full of activity and enterprise. To the latter, therefore, the assistance, or rather connection that was proffered to him, seemed to produce a mutual advantage. It was cheerfully accepted, and the arrangement of its conditions was easily completed. A mercantile house was established in the metropolis of Pennsylvania, with the avails of Mr. Effingham's personal property; all, or nearly all, of which was put into the possession of Temple, who was the only ostensible proprietor in the concern, while, in secret, the other was entitled to an equal participation in the profits. This connection was thus kept private for two reasons, one of which, in the freedom of their intercourse, was frankly avowed to Marmaduke, while the other continued profoundly hid in the bosom of his friend. The last was nothing more than pride. To the descendant of a line of soldiers, commerce, even in that indirect manner, seemed a degrading pursuit; but an in-

superable obstacle to the disclosure existed in the prejudices of his father.

We have already said that Major Effingham had served as a soldier with reputation. On one occasion, while in command on the western frontier of Pennsylvania, against a league of the French and Indians, not only his glory, but the safety of himself and his troops were jeopardized by the peaceful policy of that colony. To the soldier, this was an unpardonable offence. He was fighting in their defence—he knew that the mild principles of this little nation of practical Christians would be disregarded by their subtle and malignant enemies; and he felt the injury the more deeply because he saw that the avowed object of the colonists, in withholding their succors, would only have a tendency to expose his command, without preserving the peace. The soldier succeeded, after a desperate conflict, in extricating himself, with a handful of his men, from their murderous enemy; but he never forgave the people who had exposed him to a danger which they left him to combat alone. It was in vain to tell him that they had no agency in his being placed on their frontier at all; it was evidently for their benefit that he had been so placed, and it was their “religious duty,” so the Major always expressed it, “it was their religious duty to have supported him.”

At no time was the old soldier an admirer of the peaceful disciples of Fox. Their disciplined habits, both of mind and body, had endowed them with great physical perfection; and the eye of the veteran was apt to scan the fair proportions and athletic frames of the colonists with a look that seemed to utter volumes of contempt for their moral imbecility. He was also a little addicted to the expression of a belief, that, where there was so great an observance of the externals of religion, there could not be much of the substance. It is not our task to explain what is, or what ought to be the substance of Christianity, but merely to record in this place the opinions of Major Effingham.

Knowing the sentiments of the father in relation to this people, it was no wonder that the son hesitated to avow his connection with, nay, even his dependence on the integrity of, a Quaker.

It has been said that Marmaduke deduced his origin from the contemporaries and friends of Penn. His father

had married without the pale of the church to which he belonged, and had, in this manner, forfeited some of the privileges of his offspring. Still, as young Marmaduke was educated in a colony and society, where even the ordinary intercourse between friends was tinctured with the aspect of this mild religion, his habits and language were somewhat marked by its peculiarities. His own marriage at a future day with a lady without not only the pale, but the influence, of this sect of religionists, had a tendency, it is true, to weaken his early impressions; still he retained them in some degree to the hour of his death, and was observed uniformly, when much interested or agitated, to speak in the language of his youth. But this is anticipating our tale.

When Marmaduke first became the partner of young Effingham, he was quite the Quaker in externals; and it was too dangerous an experiment for the son to think of encountering the prejudices of the father on this subject. The connection, therefore, remained a profound secret to all but those who were interested in it.

For a few years Marmaduke directed the commercial operations of his house with a prudence and sagacity that afforded rich returns. He married the lady we have mentioned, who was the mother of Elizabeth, and the visits of his friend were becoming more frequent. There was a speedy prospect of removing the veil from their intercourse, as its advantages became each hour more apparent to Mr. Effingham, when the troubles that preceded the war of the Revolution extended themselves to an alarming degree.

Educated in the most dependent loyalty, Mr. Effingham had, from the commencement of the disputes between the colonists and the crown, warmly maintained what he believed to be the just prerogatives of his prince; while, on the other hand, the clear head and independent mind of Temple had induced him to espouse the cause of the people. Both might have been influenced by early impressions; for, if the son of the loyal and gallant soldier bowed in implicit obedience to the will of his sovereign, the descendant of the persecuted followers of Penn looked back with a little bitterness to the unmerited wrongs that had been heaped upon his ancestors.

This difference in opinion had long been a subject of amicable dispute between them; but, latterly, the contest

was getting to be too important to admit of trivial discussions on the part of Marmaduke, whose acute discernment was already catching faint glimmerings of the important events that were in embryo. The sparks of dissension soon kindled into a blaze ; and the colonies, or rather, as they quickly declared themselves, THE STATES, became a scene of strife and bloodshed for years.

A short time before the battle of Lexington, Mr. Effingham, already a widower, transmitted to Marmaduke, for safe-keeping, all his valuable effects and papers ; and left the colony without his father. The war had, however, scarcely commenced in earnest, when he reappeared in New York, wearing the livery of his king ; and, in a short time, he took the field at the head of a provincial corps. In the meantime, Marmaduke had completely committed himself in the cause, as it was then called, of the rebellion. Of course, all intercourse between the friends ceased—on the part of Colonel Effingham it was unsought, and on that of Marmaduke there was a cautious reserve. It soon became necessary for the latter to abandon the capital of Philadelphia ; but he had taken the precaution to remove the whole of his effects beyond the reach of the royal forces, including the papers of his friend also. There he continued serving his country during the struggle, in various civil capacities, and always with dignity and usefulness. While, however, he discharged his functions with credit and fidelity, Marmaduke never seemed to lose sight of his own interests ; for, when the estates of the adherents of the crown fell under the hammer, by the acts of confiscation, he appeared in New York, and became the purchaser of extensive possessions at comparatively low prices.

It is true that Marmaduke, by thus purchasing estates that had been wrested by violence from others, rendered himself obnoxious to the censures of that sect which, at the same time that it discards its children from a full participation in the family union, seems ever unwilling to abandon them entirely to the world. But either his success, or the frequency of the transgression in others, soon wiped off this slight stain from his character ; and, although there were a few who, dissatisfied with their own fortunes, or conscious of their own demerits, would make dark hints concerning the sudden prosperity of the unportioned Quaker, yet his services, and possibly his wealth, soon drove the recollection of these vague conjectures from men's minds.

When the war ended, and the independence of the States was acknowledged, Mr. Temple turned his attention from the pursuit of commerce, which was then fluctuating and uncertain, to the settlement of those tracts of land which he had purchased. Aided by a good deal of money, and directed by the suggestions of a strong and practical reason, his enterprise throve to a degree that the climate and rugged face of the country which he selected would seem to forbid. His property increased in a tenfold ratio, and he was already ranked among the most wealthy and important of his countrymen. To inherit this wealth he had but one child—the daughter whom we have introduced to the reader, and whom he was now conveying from school to preside over a household that had too long wanted a mistress.

When the district in which his estates lay had become sufficiently populous to be set off as a county, Mr. Temple had, according to the custom of the new settlements, been selected to fill its highest judicial station. This might make a Templar smile; but, in addition to the apology of necessity, there is ever a dignity in talents and experience that is commonly sufficient, in any station, for the protection of its possessor; and Marmaduke, more fortunate in his native clearness of mind than the judge of King Charles, not only decided right, but was generally able to give a very good reason for it. At all events, such was the universal practice of the country and the times; and Judge Temple, so far from ranking among the lowest of his judicial contemporaries in the courts of the new counties, felt himself, and was unanimously acknowledged to be, among the first.

We shall here close this brief explanation of the history and character of some of our personages, leaving them in future to speak and act for themselves.

CHAPTER III.

“ All that thou see'st in Nature's handiwork ;
Those rocks that upward throw their mossy brows
Like castled pinnacles of elder times ;
These venerable stems, that slowly rock
Their towering branches in the wintry gale ;
That field of frost, which glitters in the sun,
Mocking the whiteness of a marble breast !
Yet man can mar such works with his rude taste,
Like some sad spoiler of a virgin's fame.”—DUO.

SOME little while elapsed ere Marmaduke Temple was sufficiently recovered from his agitation to scan the person of his new companion. He now observed that he was a youth of some two or three-and-twenty years of age, and rather above the middle height. Further observation was prevented by the rough overcoat which was belted close to his form by a worsted sash, much like the one worn by the old hunter. The eyes of the Judge, after resting a moment on the figure of the stranger, were raised to a scrutiny of his countenance. There had been a look of care visible in the features of the youth, when he first entered the sleigh, that had not only attracted the notice of Elizabeth, but which she had been much puzzled to interpret. His anxiety seemed the strongest when he was enjoining his old companion to secrecy ; and even when he had decided, and was rather passively suffering himself to be conveyed to the village, the expression of his eyes by no means indicated any great degree of self-satisfaction at the step. But the lines of an uncommonly prepossessing countenance were gradually becoming composed ; and he now sat silent, and apparently musing. The Judge gazed at him for some time with earnestness, and then smiling, as if at his own forgetfulness, he said :

“ I believe, my young friend, that terror has driven you from my recollection ; your face is very familiar, and yet for the honor of a score of bucks' tails in my cap, I could not tell your name.”

“ I came into the country but three weeks since,” returned the youth, coldly, “ and I understand you have been absent twice that time.”

“ It will be five to-morrow. Yet your face is one that I

have seen ; though it would not be strange, such has been my affright, should I see thee in thy winding-sheet walking by my bedside to-night. What say'st thou, Bess ? Am I *compos mentis* or not ? Fit to charge a grand jury, or, what is just now of more pressing necessity, able to do the honors of Christmas eve in the hall of Templeton ?”

“More able to do either, my dear father,” said a playful voice from under the ample enclosures of the hood, “than to kill deer with a smooth-bore.” A short pause followed, and the same voice, but in a different accent, continued : “We shall have good reasons for our thanksgiving to-night, on more accounts than one.”

The horses soon reached a point where they seemed to know by instinct that the journey was nearly ended, and, bearing on the bits as they tossed their heads, they rapidly drew the sleigh over the level land which lay on the top of the mountain, and soon came to the point where the road descended suddenly, but circuitously, into the valley.

The Judge was roused from his reflections, when he saw the four columns of smoke which floated above his own chimneys. As house, village, and valley burst on his sight, he exclaimed cheerfully to his daughter :

“See, Bess, there is thy resting place for life ! And thine, too, young man, if thou wilt consent to dwell with us.”

The eyes of his auditors involuntarily met ; and, if the color that gathered over the face of Elizabeth was contradicted by the cold expression of her eye, the ambiguous smile that again played about the lips of the stranger, seemed equally to deny the probability of his consenting to form one of this family group. The scene was one, however, which might easily warm a heart less given to philanthropy than that of Marmaduke Temple.

The side of the mountain on which our travellers were journeying, though not absolutely perpendicular, was so steep as to render great care necessary in descending the rude and narrow path which, in that early day, wound along the precipices. The negro reined in his impatient steeds, and time was given Elizabeth to dwell on a scene which was so rapidly altering under the hands of man, that it only resembled in its outlines the picture she had so often studied with delight in childhood. Immediately beneath them lay a seeming plain, glittering without inequality, and buried in mountains. The latter were pre-

cipitous, especially on the side of the plain, and chiefly in forest. Here and there the hills fell away in long, low points, and broke the sameness of the outline; or setting to the long and wide field of snow, which, without house, tree, fence, or any other fixture, resembled so much spotless cloud settled to the earth. A few dark and moving spots were, however, visible on the even surface, which the eye of Elizabeth knew to be so many sleighs going their several ways, to or from the village. On the western border of the plain, the mountains, though equally high, were less precipitous, and as they receded, opened into irregular valleys and glens, or were formed into terraces and hollows that admitted of cultivation. Although the evergreens still held dominion over many of the hills that rose on this side of the valley, yet the undulating outlines of the distant mountains, covered with forests of beech and maple, gave a relief to the eye, and the promise of a kinder soil. Occasionally spots of white were discoverable amidst the forests of the opposite hills, which announced, by the smoke that curled over the tops of the trees, the habitations of man, and the commencement of agriculture. These spots were sometimes, by the aid of united labor, enlarged into what were called settlements, but more frequently were small and insulated; though so rapid were the changes, and so persevering the labors of those who had cast their fortunes on the success of the enterprise, that it was not difficult for the imagination of Elizabeth to conceive they were enlarging under her eye, while she was gazing, in mute wonder, at the alterations that a few short years had made in the aspect of the country. The points on the western side of this remarkable plain, on which no plant had taken root, were both larger and more numerous than those on its eastern, and one in particular thrust itself forward in such a manner as to form beautifully curved bays of snow on either side. On its extreme end an oak stretched forward, as if to overshadow, with its branches, a spot which its roots were forbidden to enter. It had released itself from the thralldom that a growth of centuries had imposed on the branches of the surrounding forest trees, and threw its gnarled and fantastic arms abroad, in the wildness of liberty. A dark spot of a few acres in extent at the southern extremity of this beautiful flat, and immediately under the feet of our travellers, alone showed by its rippling surface, and the vapors which exhaled from

it, that what at first might seem a plain, was one of the mountain lakes, locked in the frosts of winter. A narrow current rushed impetuously from its bosom at the open place we have mentioned, and was to be traced, for miles, as it wound its way toward the south through the real valley, by its borders of hemlock and pine, and by the vapor which arose from its warmer surface into the chill atmosphere of the hills. The banks of this lovely basin, at its outlet, or southern end, were steep, but not high; and in that direction the land continued, far as the eye could reach, a narrow but graceful valley, along which the settlers had scattered their humble habitations, with a profusion that bespoke the quality of the soil, and the comparative facilities of intercourse.

Immediately on the bank of the lake and at its foot, stood the village of Templeton. It consisted of some fifty buildings, including those of every description, chiefly built of wood, and which, in their architecture, bore no great marks of taste, but which also, by the unfinished appearance of most of the dwellings, indicated the hasty manner of their construction. To the eye, they presented a variety of colors. A few were white in both front and rear, but more bore that expensive color on their fronts only, while their economical but ambitious owners had covered the remaining sides of the edifices with a dingy red. One or two were slowly assuming the russet of age; while the uncovered beams that were to be seen through the broken windows of their second stories, showed that either the taste or the vanity of their proprietors had led them to undertake a task which they were unable to accomplish. The whole were grouped in a manner that aped the streets of a city, and were evidently so arranged by the directions of one who looked to the wants of posterity rather than to the convenience of the present incumbents. Some three or four of the better sort of buildings, in addition to the uniformity of their color, were fitted with green blinds, which, at that season at least, were rather strangely contrasted to the chill aspect of the lake, the mountains, the forests, and the wide fields of snow. Before the doors of these pretending dwellings were placed a few saplings, either without branches, or possessing only the feeble shoots of one or two summers' growth, that looked not unlike tall grenadiers on post near the threshold of princes. In truth, the occupants of these favored habitations were

the nobles of Templeton, as Marmaduke was its king. They were the dwellings of two young men who were cunning in the law ; an equal number of that class who chaffered to the wants of the community under the title of storekeepers ; and a disciple of Æsculapius, who, for a novelty, brought more subjects into the world than he sent out of it. In the midst of this incongruous group of dwellings rose the mansion of the Judge, towering above all its neighbors. It stood in the centre of an enclosure of several acres, which was covered with fruit-trees. Some of the latter had been left by the Indians, and began already to assume the moss and inclination of age, therein forming a very marked contrast to the infant plantations that peered over most of the picketed fences of the village. In addition to this show of cultivation were two rows of young Lombardy poplars, a tree but lately introduced into America, formally lining either side of a pathway which led from a gate that opened on the principal street to the front door of the building. The house itself had been built entirely under the superintendence of a certain Mr. Richard Jones, whom we have already mentioned, and who, from his cleverness in small matters, and an entire willingness to exert his talents, added to the circumstance of their being sister's children, ordinarily superintended all the minor concerns of Marmaduke Temple. Richard was fond of saying that this child of invention consisted of nothing more nor less than what should form the groundwork of every clergyman's discourse : viz., a firstly, and a lastly. He had commenced his labors, in the first year of their residence, by erecting a tall, gaunt edifice of wood, with its gable toward the highway. In this shelter, for it was little more, the family resided three years. By the end of that period, Richard had completed his design. He had availed himself, in this heavy undertaking, of the experience of a certain wandering eastern mechanic, who, by exhibiting a few soiled plates of English architecture, and talking learnedly of friezes, entablatures, and particularly of the composite order, had obtained a very undue influence over Richard's taste, in everything that pertained to that branch of the fine arts. Not that Mr. Jones did not affect to consider Hiram Doolittle a perfect empiric in his profession, being in the constant habit of listening to his treatises on architecture with a kind of indulgent smile ; yet, either from an inability to oppose them by anything plausible

from his own stores of learning, or from secret admiration, Richard generally submitted to the arguments of his coadjutor. Together, they had not only erected a dwelling for Marmaduke, but they had given a fashion to the architecture of the whole county. The composite order, Mr. Doolittle would contend, was an order composed of many others, and was intended to be the most useful of all, for it admitted into its construction such alterations as convenience or circumstances might require. To this proposition Richard usually assented; and when rival geniuses, who monopolize not only all the reputation, but most of the money of a neighborhood, are of a mind, it is not uncommon to see them lead the fashion, even in graver matters. In the present instance, as we have already hinted, the castle, as Judge Templeton's dwelling was termed in common parlance, came to be the model, in some one or other of its numerous excellences, for every aspiring edifice within twenty miles of it.

The house itself, or the "lastly," was of stone: large, square, and far from uncomfortable. These were four requisites, on which Marmaduke had insisted with a little more than his ordinary pertinacity. But everything else was peaceably assigned to Richard and his associate. These worthies found the material a little too solid for the tools of their workmen, which, in general, were employed on a substance no harder than the white pine of the adjacent mountains, a wood so proverbially soft, that it is commonly chosen by the hunters for pillows. But for this awkward dilemma, it is probable that the ambitious tastes of our two architects would have left as much more to do in the way of description. Driven from the faces of the house by the obduracy of the material, they took refuge in the porch and on the roof. The former, it was decided, should be severely classical, and the latter a rare specimen of the merits of the composite order.

A roof, Richard contended, was a part of the edifice that the ancients always endeavored to conceal, it being an excrescence in architecture that was only to be tolerated on account of its usefulness. Besides, as he wittily added, a chief merit in a dwelling was to present a front, on whichever side it might happen to be seen; for, as it was exposed to all eyes in all weathers, there should be no weak flank for envy or unneighborly criticism to assail. It was therefore decided that the roof should be flat, and with

four faces. To this arrangement, Marmaduke objected the heavy snows that lay for months, frequently covering the earth to a depth of three or four feet. Happily, the facilities of the composite order presented themselves to effect a compromise, and the rafters were lengthened, so as to give a descent that should carry off the frozen element. But, unluckily, some mistake was made in the admeasurement of these material parts of the fabric; and, as one of the greatest recommendations of Hiram was his ability to work by the "square rule," no opportunity was found of discovering the effect until the massive timbers were raised, on the four walls of the building. Then, indeed, it was soon seen that, in defiance of all rule, the roof was by far the most conspicuous part of the whole edifice. Richard and his associate consoled themselves with the belief that the covering would aid in concealing this unnatural elevation; but every shingle that was laid only multiplied objects to look at. Richard essayed to remedy the evil with paint, and four different colors were laid on by his own hands. The first was a sky-blue, in the vain expectation that the eye might be cheated into the belief it was the heavens themselves that hung so imposingly over Marmaduke's dwelling; the second was what he called a "cloud-color," being nothing more nor less than an imitation of smoke; the third was what Richard termed an invisible green, an experiment that did not succeed against a background of sky. Abandoning the attempt to conceal, our architects drew upon their invention for means to ornament the offensive shingles. After much deliberation and two or three essays by moonlight, Richard ended the affair by boldly covering the whole beneath a color that he christened "sunshine," a cheap way, as he assured his cousin, the Judge, of always keeping fair weather over his head. The platform, as well as the eaves of the house, were surmounted by gaudily painted railings, and the genius of Hiram was exerted in the fabrication of divers urns and mouldings, that were scattered profusely around this part of their labors. Richard had originally a cunning expedient, by which the chimneys were intended to be so low, and so situated, as to resemble ornaments on the balustrades; but comfort required that the chimneys should rise with the roof, in order that the smoke might be carried off, and they thus became four extremely conspicuous objects in the view.

As this roof was much the most important architectural undertaking in which Mr. Jones was ever engaged, his failure produced a correspondent degree of mortification. At first, he whispered among his acquaintances that it proceeded from ignorance of the square rule on the part of Hiram ; but, as his eye became gradually accustomed to the object, he grew better satisfied with his labors, and, instead of apologizing for the defects, he commenced praising the beauties of the mansion-house ; he soon found hearers, and, as wealth and comfort are at all times attractive, it was, as has been said, made a model for imitation on a small scale. In less than two years from its erection, he had the pleasure of standing on the elevated platform, and of looking down on three humble imitators of its beauty. Thus it is ever with fashion, which even renders the faults of the great subjects of admiration.

Marmaduke bore this deformity in his dwelling with great good nature, and soon contrived, by his own improvements, to give an air of respectability and comfort to his place of residence. Still, there was much of incongruity, even immediately about the mansion-house. Although poplars had been brought from Europe to ornament the grounds, and willows and other trees were gradually springing up nigh the dwelling, yet many a pile of snow betrayed the presence of the stump of a pine ; and even, in one or two instances, unsightly remnants of trees that had been partly destroyed by fire were seen rearing their black, glistening columns twenty or thirty feet above the pure white of the snow. These, which in the language of the country are termed stubs, abounded in the open fields adjacent to the village, and were accompanied, occasionally, by the ruin of a pine or a hemlock that had been stripped of its bark, and which waved in melancholy grandeur its naked limbs to the blast, a skeleton of its former glory. But these and many other unpleasant additions to the view were unseen by the delighted Elizabeth, who, as the horses moved down the side of the mountain, saw only in gross the cluster of houses that lay like a map at her feet ; the fifty smokes that were curling from the valley to the clouds ; the frozen lake as it lay embedded in mountains of evergreen, with the long shadows of the pines on its white surface, lengthening in the setting sun ; the dark ribbon of water, that gushed from the outlet and was winding its way toward the distant Chesapeake—

the altered, though still remembered, scenes of her childhood.

Five years had wrought greater changes than a century would produce in countries where time and labor have given permanency to the works of man. To our young hunter and the Judge the scene had less novelty; though none ever emerge from the dark forests of that mountain, and witness the glorious scenery of that beautiful valley, as it bursts unexpectedly upon them, without a feeling of delight. The former cast one admiring glance from north to south, and sank his face again beneath the folds of his coat; while the latter contemplated, with philanthropic pleasure, the prospect of affluence and comfort that was expanding around him; the result of his own enterprise, and much of it the fruits of his own industry.

The cheerful sound of sleigh-bells, however, attracted the attention of the whole party, as they came jingling up the sides of the mountain, at a rate that announced a powerful team and a hard driver. The bushes which lined the highway interrupted the view, and the two sleighs were close upon each other before either was seen.

CHAPTER IV.

“How now? whose mare’s dead? what’s the matter?”—FALSTAFF.

A LARGE lumber sleigh, drawn by four horses, was soon seen dashing through the leafless bushes which fringed the road. The leaders were of gray, and the pole-horses of a jet-black. Bells innumerable were suspended from every part of the harness where one of the tinkling balls could be placed, while the rapid movement of the equipage, in defiance of the steep ascent, announced the desire of the driver to ring them to the utmost. The first glance at this singular arrangement acquainted the Judge with the character of those in the sleigh. It contained four male figures. On one of those stools that are used at writing-desks, lashed firmly to the sides of the vehicle, was seated a little man, enveloped in a great-coat fringed with fur, in such a manner that no part of him was visible except a face of an unvarying red color. There was an habitual upward look about the head of this gentleman, as if dissatisfied with its

natural proximity to the earth ; and the expression of his countenance was that of busy care. He was the charioteer, and he guided the mettled animals along the precipice with a fearless eye and a steady hand. Immediately behind him, with his face toward the other two, was a tall figure, to whose appearance not even the duplicate overcoats which he wore, aided by the corner of a horse-blanket, could give the appearance of strength. His face was protruding from beneath a woollen night-cap ; and, when he turned to the vehicle of Marmaduke as the sleighs approached each other, it seemed formed by nature to cut the atmosphere with the least possible resistance. The eyes alone appeared to create any obstacle, for from either side of his forehead their light-blue, glassy balls projected. The sallowness of his countenance was too permanent to be affected even by the intense cold of the evening. Opposite to this personage sat a solid, short, and square figure. No part of his form was to be discovered through his overdress, but a face that was illuminated by a pair of black eyes that gave the lie to every demure feature in his countenance. A fair, jolly wig furnished a neat and rounded outline to his visage, and he, as well as the other two, wore marten-skin caps. The fourth was a meek-looking, long-visaged man, without any other protection from the cold than that which was furnished by a black surtout, made with some little formality, but which was rather threadbare and rusty. He wore a hat of extremely decent proportions, though frequent brushing had quite destroyed its nap. His face was pale, and withal a little melancholy, or what might be termed of a studious complexion. The air had given it, just now, a slight and somewhat feverish flush. The character of his whole appearance, especially contrasted to the air of humor in his next companion, was that of habitual mental care. No sooner had the two sleighs approached within speaking distance, than the driver of this fantastic equipage shouted aloud :

“ Draw up in the quarry—draw up, thou king of the Greeks ; draw into the quarry, Agamemnon, or I shall never be able to pass you. Welcome home, cousin 'duke—welcome, welcome, black-eyed Bess. Thou seest, Marmaduke, that I have taken the field with an assorted cargo, to do thee honor. Monsieur Le Quoi has come out with only one cap ; Old Fritz would not stay to finish the bottle ; and Mr. Grant has got to put the 'lastly' to his

sermon, yet. Even all the horses would come—by-the-by, Judge, I must sell the blacks for you immediately ; they interfere, and the nigh one is a bad goer in double harness. I can get rid of them to——”

“Sell what thou wilt, Dickon,” interrupted the cheerful voice of the Judge, “so that thou leavest me my daughter and my lands. Ah! Fritz, my old friend, this is a kind compliment, indeed, for seventy to pay to five-and-forty. Monsieur Le Quoi, I am your servant. Mr. Grant,” lifting his cap, “I feel indebted to your attention. Gentlemen, I make you acquainted with my child. Yours are names with which she is very familiar.”

“Velcome, velcome, Tchooge,” said the elder of the party, with a strong German accent. “Miss Petsy vill owe me a kiss.”

“And cheerfully will I pay it, my good sir,” cried the soft voice of Elizabeth ; which sounded, in the clear air of the hills, like tones of silver, amid the loud cries of Richard. “I have always a kiss for my old friend, Major Hartmann.”

By this time the gentleman in the front seat, who had been addressed as Monsieur Le Quoi, had arisen with some difficulty, owing to the impediment of his overcoats, and steadying himself by placing one hand on the stool of the charioteer, with the other he removed his cap, and bowing politely to the Judge, and profoundly to Elizabeth, he paid his compliments.

“Cover thy poll, Gaul, cover thy poll,” cried the driver, who was Mr. Richard Jones ; “cover thy poll, or the frost will pluck out the remnant of thy locks. Had the hairs on the head of Absalom been as scarce as thine, he might have been living to this day.” The jokes of Richard never failed of exciting risibility, for he uniformly did honor to his own wit ; and he enjoyed a hearty laugh on the present occasion, while Mr. Le Quoi resumed his seat with a polite reciprocation in his mirth. The clergyman, for such was the office of Mr. Grant, modestly, though quite affectionately, exchanged his greetings with the travellers also, when Richard prepared to turn the heads of his horses homeward.

It was in the quarry alone that he could effect this object, without ascending to the summit of the mountain. A very considerable excavation had been made in the side of the hill, at the point where Richard had succeeded in

stopping the sleighs, from which the stones used for building in the village were ordinarily quarried, and in which he now attempted to turn his team. Passing itself was a task of difficulty, and frequently of danger, in that narrow road; but Richard had to meet the additional risk of turning his four-in-hand. The black civilly volunteered his services to take off the leaders, and the Judge very earnestly seconded the measure with his advice. Richard treated both proposals with great disdain.

"Why, and wherefore, cousin 'duke?" he exclaimed, a little angrily; "the horses are gentle as lambs. You know that I broke the leaders myself, and the pole-horses are too near my whip to be restive. Here is Mr. Le Quoi, now, who must know something about driving, because he has rode out so often with me; I will leave it to Mr. Le Quoi whether there is any danger."

It was not in the nature of the Frenchman to disappoint expectations so confidently formed; although he sat looking down the precipice which fronted him, as Richard turned his leaders into the quarry, with a pair of eyes that stood out like those of lobsters. The German's muscles were unmoved, but his quick sight scanned each movement. Mr. Grant placed his hands on the side of the sleigh, in preparation for a spring, but moral timidity deterred him from taking the leap that bodily apprehension strongly urged him to attempt.

Richard, by a sudden application of the whip, succeeded in forcing the leaders into the snow-bank that covered the quarry; but the instant that the impatient animals suffered by the crust, through which they broke at each step, they positively refused to move an inch farther in that direction. On the contrary, finding that the cries and blows of their driver were redoubled at this juncture, the leaders backed upon the pole-horses, who in their turn backed the sleigh. Only a single log lay above the pile which upheld the road, on the side toward the valley, and this was now buried in the snow. The sleigh was easily forced across so slight an impediment, and before Richard became conscious of his danger one-half of the vehicle was projected over a precipice, which fell perpendicularly more than a hundred feet. The Frenchman, who by his position had a full view of their threatened flight, instinctively threw his body as far forward as possible, and cried "Ah! Mon cher Monsieur Deeck! mon Dieu! que faites-vous!"

"Donner and blitzen, Richart!" exclaimed the veteran German, looking over the side of the sleigh with unusual emotion, "put you will preak ter sleigh and kilt ter horses!"

"Good Mr. Jones," said the clergyman, "be prudent, good sir—be careful."

"Get up, obstinate devils!" cried Richard, catching a bird's-eye view of his situation, and in his eagerness to move forward kicking the stool on which he sat—"get up, I say—cousin 'duke, I shall have to sell the grays too; they are the worst broken horses—Mr. Le Quaw!" Richard was too much agitated to regard his pronunciation, of which he was commonly a little vain: "Monsieur Le Quaw, pray get off my leg; you hold my leg so tight that it's no wonder the horses back."

"Merciful Providence!" exclaimed the Judge; "they will be all killed!"

Elizabeth gave a piercing shriek, and the black of Agamemnon's face changed to a muddy white.

At this critical moment, the young hunter, who, during the salutations of the parties, had sat in rather sullen silence, sprang from the sleigh of Marmaduke to the heads of the refractory leaders. The horses, which were yet suffering under the injudicious and somewhat random blows of Richard, were dancing up and down with that ominous movement that threatens a sudden and uncontrollable start, still pressing backward. The youth gave the leaders a powerful jerk, and they plunged aside, and reëntered the road in the position in which they were first halted. The sleigh was whirled from its dangerous position, and upset, with the runners outward. The German and the divine were thrown, rather unceremoniously, into the highway, but without danger to their bones. Richard appeared in the air, describing the segment of a circle, of which the reins were the radii, and landed, at the distance of some fifteen feet, in that snow-bank which the horses had dreaded, right end uppermost. Here, as he instinctively grasped the reins, as drowning men seize at straws, he admirably served the purpose of an anchor. The Frenchman, who was on his legs, in the act of springing from the sleigh, took an aërial flight also, much in the attitude which boys assume when they play leap-frog, and, flying off in a tangent to the curvature of his course, came into the snow-bank head foremost, where he remained, exhibiting two

lathy legs on high, like scarecrows waving in a corn-field. Major Hartmann, whose self-possession had been admirably preserved during the whole evolution, was the first of the party that gained his feet and his voice.

“Ter deyvel, Richart!” he exclaimed, in a voice half-serious, half-comical, “put you unload your sleigh very hantily!”

It may be doubtful whether the attitude in which Mr. Grant continued for an instant after his overthrow was the one into which he had been thrown, or was assumed, in humbling himself before the Power that he revered, in thanksgiving at his escape. When he rose from his knees, he began to gaze about him, with anxious looks, after the welfare of his companions, while every joint in his body trembled with nervous agitation. There was some confusion in the faculties of Mr. Jones also; but as the mist gradually cleared from before his eyes, he saw that all was safe, and, with an air of great self-satisfaction, he cried, “Well—that was neatly saved, anyhow!—it was a lucky thought in me to hold on to the reins, or the fiery devils would have been over the mountain by this time. How well I recovered myself, ’duke! Another moment would have been too late; but I knew just the spot where to touch the off-leader; that blow under his right flank, and the sudden jerk I gave the rein, brought them round quite in rule, I must own myself.”*

“Thou jerk! thou recover thyself, Dickon!” he said. “but for that brave lad yonder, thou and thy horses, or rather mine, would have been dashed to pieces—but where is Monsieur Le Quoi?”

“Oh! mon cher Juge! mon ami!” cried a smothered voice, “praise be God, I live; vill you, Mister Agamemnon, be pleas come down ici, and help me on my leg?”

The divine and the negro seized the incarcerated Gaul by his legs and extricated him from a snow-bank of three feet in depth, whence his voice had sounded as from the tombs. The thoughts of Mr. Le Quoi, immediately on his liberation, were not extremely collected; and, when he reached the light, he threw his eyes upward, in order to examine the distance he had fallen. His good-humor returned, however, with a knowledge of his safety, though it

* The spectators, from immemorial usage, have a right to laugh at the casualties of a sleigh ride; and the Judge was no sooner certain that no harm was done than he made full use of the privilege.

was some little time before he clearly comprehended the case.

"What, monsieur," said Richard, who was busily assisting the black in taking off the leaders; "are you there? I thought I saw you flying toward the top of the mountain just now."

"Praise be God, I no fly down into the lake," returned the Frenchman, with a visage that was divided between pain, occasioned by a few large scratches that he had received in forcing his head through the crust, and the look of complaisance that seemed natural to his pliable features. "Ah! mon cher Mister Deeck, vat you do next?—dere be noting you no try."

"The next thing I trust, will be to learn to drive," said the Judge, who had busied himself in throwing the buck, together with several other articles of baggage, from his own sleigh into the snow; "here are seats for you all, gentlemen; the evening grows piercingly cold, and the hour approaches for the service of Mr. Grant; we will leave friend Jones to repair the damages, with the assistance of Agamemnon, and hasten to a warm fire. Here, Dickon, are a few articles of Bess's trumpery, that you can throw into your sleigh when ready; and there is also a deer of my taking, that I will thank you to bring. Aggy! remember that there will be a visit from Santa-claus * to-night."

The black grinned, conscious of the bribe that was offered him for silence on the subject of the deer, while Richard, without in the least waiting for the termination of his cousin's speech began his reply:

"Learn to drive, sayest thou, cousin 'duke? Is there a man in the county who knows more of horse-flesh than myself? Who broke in the filly, that no one else dare mount, though your coachman did pretend that he had tamed her before I took her in hand; but anybody could see that he lied—he was a great liar, that John—what's that, a buck?"—Richard abandoned the horses, and ran to spot where Marmaduke had thrown the deer; "It is a buck! I am amazed! Yes, here are two holes in him, he has fired both barrels, and hit him each time. Ecod!

* The periodical visits of St. Nicholas, or Santaclaus, as he is termed, were never forgotten among the inhabitants of New York, until the emigration from New England brought in the opinions and usages of the puritans. Like the "bon homme de Noël," he arrives at each Christmas.

how Marmaduke will brag! he is a prodigious bragger about any small matter like this now; well, to think that 'duke has killed a buck before Christmas! There will be no such thing as living with him—they are both bad shots though, mere chance—mere chance—now, I never fired twice at a cloven foot in my life—it is hit or miss with me—dead or run away—had it been a bear, or a wild cat, a man might have wanted both barrels. Here! you Aggy! how far off was the Judge when this buck was shot?"

"Eh! massa Richard, maybe a ten rod," cried the black, bending under one of the horses, with the pretence of fastening a buckle, but in reality to conceal the grin that opened a mouth from ear to ear.

"Ten rod!" echoed the other; "why, Aggy, the deer I killed last winter was at twenty—yes! if anything it was nearer thirty than twenty. I wouldn't shoot at a deer at ten rod: besides, you may remember, Aggy, I only fired once."

"Yes, massa Richard, I 'member 'em! Natty Bumpo fire 'toder gun. You know, sir, all 'e folks say Natty kill him."

"The folks lie, you black devil!" exclaimed Richard in great heat. "I have not shot even a gray squirrel these four years, to which that old rascal has not laid claim, or some one else for him. This is a damned envious world that we live in—people are always for dividing the credit of a thing, in order to bring down merit to their own level. Now they have a story about the Patent,* that Hiram Doolittle helped to plan the steeple to St. Paul's; when Hiram knows that it is entirely mine; a little taken from a print of his namesake in London, I own; but essentially, as to all points of genius, my own."

"I don't know where he come from," said the black, losing every mark of humor in an expression of admiration, "but eb'ry body say, he wonnerful handsome."

"And well they may say so, Aggy," cried Richard, leaving the buck and walking up to the negro with the air of a man who has new interest awakened within him. "I

* The grants of land, made either by the crown or the state, were by letters patent under the great seal, and the term "patent" is usually applied to any district of extent thus conceded; though under the crown, manorial rights being often granted with the soil, in the older counties, the word "manor" is frequently used. There are many manors in New York, though all political and judicial rights have ceased.

think I may say, without bragging, that it is the handsomest and the most scientific country church in America. I know that the Connecticut settlers talk about their Westherfield meeting-house ; but I never believe more than half what they say, they are such unconscionable braggers. Just as you have got a thing done, if they see it likely to be successful, they are always for interfering ; and then it's ten to one but they lay claim to half, or even all of the credit. You may remember, Aggy, when I painted the sign of the bold dragoon for Captain Hollister, there was that fellow, who was about town laying brick-dust on the houses, came one day and offered to mix what I call the streaky black, for the tail and mane ; and then, because it looks like horse-hair, he tells everybody, that the sign was painted by himself and Squire Jones. "If Marmaduke don't send that fellow off the Patent, he may ornament his village with his own hands for me." Here Richard paused a moment, and cleared his throat by a loud hem, while the negro, who was all this time busily engaged in preparing the sleigh, proceeded with his work in respectful silence. Owing to the religious scruples of the Judge, Aggy was the servant of Richard, who had his services for a *time*,* and who, of course, commanded a legal claim to the respect of the young negro. But when any dispute between his lawful and his real master occurred, the black felt too much deference for both to express any opinion. In the meanwhile, Richard continued watching the negro as he fastened buckle after buckle, until, stealing a look of consciousness toward the other, he continued : "Now, if that young man who was in your sleigh is a real Connecticut settler, he will be telling everybody how he saved my horses, when, if he had let them alone for half a minute longer, I would have brought them in much better, without upsetting, with the whip and rein—it spoils a horse to

* The manumission of the slaves in New York has been gradual. When public opinion became strong in their favor, then grew up a custom of buying the services of a slave, for six or eight years, with a condition to liberate him at the end of the period. Then the law provided that all born after a certain day should be free, the males at twenty-eight and the females at twenty-five. After this the owner was obliged to cause his servants to be taught to read and write before they reached the age of eighteen, and, finally, the few that remained were all unconditionally liberated in 1826, or after the publication of this tale. It was quite usual for men more or less connected with the Quakers, who never held slaves, to adopt the first expedient.

give him his head. I should not wonder if I had to sell the whole team, just for that one jerk he gave them." Richard paused and hemmed; for his conscience smote him a little for censuring a man who had just saved his life. "Who is the lad, Aggy—I don't remember to have seen him before?"

The black recollected the hint about Santaclaus; and, while he briefly explained how they had taken up the person in question on the top of the mountain, he forbore to add anything concerning the accident of the wound, only saying that he believed the youth was a stranger. It was so usual for men of the first rank to take into their sleighs any one they found toiling through the snow, that Richard was perfectly satisfied with this explanation. He heard Aggy with great attention, and then remarked, "Well, if the lad has not been spoiled by the people in Templeton he may be a modest young man, and, as he certainly meant well, I shall take some notice of him—perhaps he is land-hunting—I say, Aggy, maybe he is out hunting?"

"Eh! yes, massa Richard," said the black, a little confused; for, as Richard did all the flogging, he stood in great terror of his master, in the main—"Yes, sir, I b'lieve he be."

"Had he a pack and an axe?"

"No, sir, only he rifle."

"Rifle!" exclaimed Richard, observing the confusion of the negro, which now amounted to terror. "By Jove, he killed the deer! I knew that Marmaduke couldn't kill a buck on the jump—how was it, Aggy? tell me all about it, and I'll roast 'duke quicker than he can roast his saddle—how was it, Aggy? the lad shot the buck, and the Judge bought it, ha! and he is taking the youth down to get the pay?"

The pleasure of this discovery had put Richard in such a good humor, that the negro's fears in some measure vanished, and he remembered the stocking of Santaclaus. After a gulp or two, he made out to reply:

"You forgit a two shot, sir?"

"Don't lie, you black rascal!" cried Richard, stepping on the snow bank to measure the distance from his lash to the negro's back; "speak truth, or I trounce you." While speaking, the stock was slowly rising in Richard's right hand, and the lash drawing through his left, in the scientific manner with which drummers apply the cat; and Aga-

memnon, after turning each side of himself toward his master, and finding both equally unwilling to remain there, fairly gave in. In a very few words he made his master acquainted with the truth, at the same time earnestly conjuring Richard to protect him from the displeasure of the Judge.

"I'll do it, boy, I'll do it," cried the other, rubbing his hands with delight; "say nothing, but leave me to manage 'duke. I have a great mind to leave the deer on the hill, and to make the fellow send for his own carcass; but no, I will let Marmaduke tell a few bounces about it before I come out upon him. Come, hurry in, Aggy, I must help to dress the lad's wound; this Yankee * doctor knows nothing of surgery—I had to hold out Milligan's leg for him, while he cut it off."—Richard was now seated on the stool again, and, the black taking the hind seat, the steeds were put in motion toward home. As they dashed down the hill, on a fast trot, the driver occasionally turned his face to Aggy, and continued speaking; for, notwithstanding their recent rupture, the most perfect cordiality was again existing between them. "This goes to prove that I turned the horses with the reins, for no man who is shot in the right shoulder can have strength enough to bring round such obstinate devils. I knew I did it from the first; but I did not want to multiply words with Marmaduke about it.—Will you bite, you villain?—hip, boys, hip! Old Natty, too, that is the best of it!—Well, well—'duke will say no more about my deer—and the Judge fired both barrels, and hit nothing but a poor lad, who was behind a pine-tree. I must help that quack to take out the buck-shot for the poor fellow." In this manner Richard descended the mountain; the bells ringing, and his tongue going, until they entered the village, when the whole attention of the driver was devoted to a display of his horsemanship, to the admiration of all the gaping women and children who thronged the windows to witness the arrival of their landlord and his daughter.

* In America the term Yankee is of local meaning. It is thought to be derived from the manner in which the Indians of New England pronounced the word "English," or "Yengeese." New York being originally a Dutch province, the term of course was not known there, and farther south different dialects among the natives themselves probably produced a different pronunciation. Marmaduke and his cousin, being Pennsylvanians by birth, were not Yankees in the American sense of the word.

CHAPTER V.

“Nathaniel’s coat, sir, was not fully made,
 And Gabriel’s pumps were all unpink’d i’ th’ heel ;
 There was no link to color Peter’s hat,
 And Walter’s dagger was not come from sheathing ;
 There were none fine, but Adam, Ralph, and Gregory.”

—SHAKESPEARE.

AFTER winding along the side of the mountain, the road, on reaching the gentle declivity which lay at the base of the hill, turned at a right angle to its former course, and shot down an inclined plane, directly into the village of Templeton. The rapid little stream that we have already mentioned, was crossed by a bridge of hewn timber, which manifested, by its rude construction and the unnecessary size of its frame-work, both the value of labor and the abundance of materials. This little torrent, whose dark waters gushed over the limestones that lined its bottom, was nothing less than one of the many sources of the Susquehanna ; a river to which the Atlantic herself has extended an arm in welcome. It was at this point that the powerful team of Mr. Jones brought him up to the more sober steeds of our travellers. A small hill was risen, and Elizabeth found herself at once amidst the incongruous dwellings of the village. The street was of the ordinary width, notwithstanding the eye might embrace, in one view, thousands and tens of thousands of acres, that were yet tenanted only by the beasts of the forest. But such had been the will of her father, and such had also met the wishes of his followers. To them the road that made the most rapid approaches to the condition of the old, or, as they expressed it, the *down* countries, was the most pleasant ; and surely nothing could look more like civilization than a city, even if it lay in a wilderness ! The width of the street, for so it was called, might have been one hundred feet ; but the track for the sleighs was much more limited. On either side of the highway were piled huge heaps of logs, that were daily increasing rather than diminishing in size, notwithstanding the enormous fires that might be seen through every window.

The last object at which Elizabeth gazed when they renewed their journey, after the rencontre with Richard,

was the sun, as it expanded in the refraction of the horizon, and over whose disk the dark umbrage of a pine was stealing, while it slowly sank behind the western hills. But his setting rays darted along the openings of the mountain she was on, and lighted the shining covering of the birches, until their smooth and glossy coats nearly rivalled the mountain sides in color. The outline of each dark pine was delineated far in the depths of the forest, and the rocks, too smooth and too perpendicular to retain the snow that had fallen, brightened, as if smiling at the leave-taking of the luminary. But at each step as they descended, Elizabeth observed that they were leaving the day behind them. Even the heartless but bright rays of a December sun were missed as they glided into the cold gloom of the valley. Along the summits of the mountains in the eastern range, it is true, the light still lingered, receding step by step from the earth into the clouds that were gathering with the evening mist, about the limited horizon, but the frozen lake lay without a shadow on its bosom; the dwellings were becoming already gloomy and indistinct, and the wood-cutters were shouldering their axes and preparing to enjoy, throughout the long evening before them, the comforts of those exhilarating fires that their labor had been supplying with fuel. They paused only to gaze at the passing sleighs, to lift their caps to Marmaduke, to exchange familiar nods with Richard, and each disappeared in his dwelling. The paper curtains dropped behind our travellers in every window, shutting from the air even the firelight of the cheerful apartments, and when the horses of her father turned with a rapid whirl into the open gate of the mansion-house, and nothing stood before her but the cold dreary stone walls of the building, as she approached them through an avenue of young and leafless poplars, Elizabeth felt as if all the loveliness of the mountain-view had vanished like the fancies of a dream. Marmaduke retained so much of his early habits as to reject the use of bells, but the equipage of Mr. Jones came dashing through the gate after them, sending its jingling sounds through every cranny of the building, and in a moment the dwelling was in an uproar.

On a stone platform, of rather small proportions, considering the size of the building, Richard and Hiram had, conjointly, reared four little columns of wood, which in their turn supported the shingled roofs of the portico—

this was the name that Mr. Jones had thought proper to give to a very plain, covered entrance. The ascent to the platform was by five or six stone steps, somewhat hastily laid together, and which the frost had already begun to move from their symmetrical positions. But the evils of a cold climate, and a superficial construction, did not end here. As the steps lowered, the platform necessarily fell also, and the foundations actually left the superstructure suspended in the air, leaving an open space of a foot between the base of the pillars and the stones on which they had originally been placed. It was lucky for the whole fabric that the carpenter, who did the manual part of the labor, had fastened the canopy of this classic entrance so firmly to the side of the house, that, when the base deserted the superstructure in the manner we have described, and the pillars, for the want of a foundation, were no longer of service to support the roof, the roof was able to uphold the pillars. Here was, indeed, an unfortunate gap left in the ornamental part of Richard's column; but, like the window in Aladdin's palace, it seemed only left in order to prove the fertility of its master's resources. The composite order again offered its advantages, and a second edition of the base was given, as the booksellers say, with additions and improvements. It was necessarily larger, and it was properly ornamented with mouldings; still the steps continued to yield, and, at the moment when Elizabeth returned to her father's door, a few rough wedges were driven under the pillars to keep them steady, and to prevent their weight from separating them from the pediment which they ought to have supported.

From the great door which opened into the porch emerged two or three female domestics, and one male. The latter was bareheaded, but evidently more dressed than usual, and on the whole was of so singular a formation and attire as to deserve a more minute description. He was about five feet in height, of a square and athletic frame, with a pair of shoulders that would have fitted a grenadier. His low stature was rendered the more striking by a bend forward that he was in the habit of assuming, for no apparent reason, unless it might be to give greater freedom to his arms, in a particularly sweeping swing, that they constantly practised when their master was in motion. His face was long, of a fair complexion, burnt to a fiery red; with a snub nose, cocked into an

inveterate pug ; a mouth of enormous dimensions, filled with fine teeth ; and a pair of blue eyes, that seemed to look about them on surrounding objects with habitual contempt. His head composed full one-fourth of his whole length, and the cue that depended from its rear occupied another. He wore a coat of very light drab cloth, with buttons as large as dollars, bearing the impression of a "foul anchor." The skirts were extremely long, reaching quite to the calf, and were broad in proportion. Beneath, there were a vest and breeches of red plush, somewhat worn and soiled. He had shoes with large buckles, and stockings of blue and white stripes.

This odd-looking figure reported himself to be a native of the county of Cornwall, in the island of Great Britain. His boyhood had passed in the neighborhood of the tin mines, and his youth as the cabin-boy of a smuggler, between Falmouth and Guernsey. From this trade he had been impressed into the service of his king, and, for the want of a better, had been taken into the cabin, first as a servant, and finally as steward to the captain. Here he acquired the art of making chowder, lobscouse, and one or two other sea-dishes, and, as he was fond of saying, had an opportunity of seeing the world. With the exception of one or two outports in France, and an occasional visit to Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Deal, he had in reality seen no more of mankind, however, than if he had been riding a donkey in one of his native mines. But, being discharged from the navy at the peace of '83, he declared that, as he had seen all the civilized parts of the earth, he was inclined to make a trip to the wilds of America. We will not trace him in his brief wanderings, under the influence of that spirit of emigration that sometimes induces a dapper Cockney to quit his home, and lands him, before the sound of Bow-bells is out of his ears, within the roar of the cataract of Niagara ; but shall only add, that, at a very early day, even before Elizabeth had been sent to school, he had found his way into the family of Marmaduke Temple, where, owing to a combination of qualities that will be developed in the course of the tale, he held, under Mr. Jones, the office of major-domo. The name of this worthy was Benjamin Penguillan, according to his own pronunciation ; but, owing to a marvellous tale that he was in the habit of relating, concerning the length of time he had to labor to keep his ship from sinking after Rodney's

victory, he had universally acquired the nickname of Ben Pump.

By the side of Benjamin, and pressing forward as if a little jealous of her station, stood a middle-aged woman, dressed in calico, rather violently contrasted in color with a tall, meagre, shapeless figure, sharp features, and a somewhat acute expression of her physiognomy. Her teeth were mostly gone, and what did remain were of a light yellow. The skin of her nose was drawn tightly over the member, to hang in large wrinkles in her cheeks and about her mouth. She took snuff in such quantities as to create the impression that she owed the saffron of her lips and the adjacent parts to this circumstance; but it was the unvarying color of her whole face. She presided over the female part of the domestic arrangements, in the capacity of housekeeper; was a spinster, and bore the name of Remarkable Pettibone. To Elizabeth she was an entire stranger, having been introduced into the family since the death of her mother.

In addition to these, were three or four subordinate menials, mostly black, some appearing at the principal door, and some running from the end of the building, where stood the entrance to the cellar-kitchen.

Besides these, there was a general rush from Richard's kennel, accompanied with every canine tone, from the howl of the wolf-dog to the petulant bark of the terrier. The master received their boisterous salutations with a variety of imitations from his own throat, when the dogs, probably from shame of being outdone, ceased their outcry. One stately, powerful mastiff, who wore round his neck a brass collar, with "M. T." engraved in large letters on the rim, alone was silent. He walked majestically, amid the confusion, to the side of the Judge, where, receiving a kind pat or two, he turned to Elizabeth, who even stooped to kiss him, as she called him kindly by the name of "Old Brave." The animal seemed to know her, as she ascended the steps, supported by Monsieur Le Quoi and her father, in order to protect her from falling on the ice with which they were covered. He looked wistfully after her figure, and when the door closed on the whole party, he laid himself in a kennel that was placed nigh by, as if conscious that the house contained something of additional value to guard.

Elizabeth followed her father, who paused a moment to

whisper a message to one of his domestics, into a large hall, that was dimly lighted by two candles, placed in high, old-fashioned, brass candlesticks. The door closed, and the party were at once removed from an atmosphere that was nearly at zero, to one of sixty degrees above. In the centre of the hall stood an enormous stove, the sides of which appeared to be quivering with heat; from which a large, straight pipe, leading through the ceiling above, carried off the smoke. An iron basin, containing water, was placed on this furnace, for such only it could be called, in order to preserve a proper humidity in the apartment. The room was carpeted, and furnished with convenient, substantial furniture, some of which was brought from the city, the remainder having been manufactured by the mechanics of Templeton. There was a sideboard of mahogany, inlaid with ivory, and bearing enormous handles of glittering brass, and groaning under the piles of silver plate. Near it stood a set of prodigious tables, made of the wild cherry, to imitate the imported wood of the sideboard, but plain, and without ornament of any kind. Opposite to these stood a smaller table, formed from a lighter-colored wood, through the grains of which the wavy lines of the curled maple of the mountains were beautifully undulating. Near to this, in a corner, stood a heavy, old-fashioned, brass-faced clock, encased in a high box, of the dark hue of the black walnut from the seashore. An enormous settee, or sofa, covered with light chintz, stretched along the walls for near twenty feet on one side of the hall; and chairs of wood, painted a light yellow, with black lines that were drawn by no very steady hand, were ranged opposite, and in the intervals between the other pieces of furniture. A Fahrenheit's thermometer, in a mahogany case, and with a barometer annexed, was hung against the wall, at some little distance from the stove, which Benjamin consulted, every half hour, with prodigious exactitude. Two small glass chandeliers were suspended at equal distances between the stove and outer doors, one of which opened at each end of the hall, and gilt lustres were affixed to the framework of the numerous side-doors that led from the apartment. Some little display in architecture had been made in constructing these frames and casings, which were surmounted with pediments, that bore each a little pedestal in its centre; on these pedestals were small busts in blacked plaster-of-Paris. The style of the pedestals as

well as the selection of the busts, were all due to the taste of Mr. Jones. On one stood Homer, a most striking likeness, Richard affirmed, "as any one might see, for it was blind." Another bore the image of a smooth-visaged gentleman with a pointed beard, whom he called Shakespeare. A third ornament was an urn, which, from its shape, Richard was accustomed to say, intended to represent itself as holding the ashes of Dido. A fourth was certainly old Franklin, in his cap and spectacles. A fifth as surely bore the dignified composure of the face of Washington. A sixth was a nondescript, representing "a man with a shirt-collar open," to use the language of Richard, "with a laurel on his head—it was Julius Cæsar or Dr. Faustus; there were good reasons for believing either."

The walls were hung with a dark, lead-colored English paper that represented Britannia weeping over the tomb of Wolfe. The hero himself stood at a little distance from the mourning goddess, and at the edge of the paper. Each width contained the figure, with the slight exception of one arm of the general, which ran over on the next piece, so that when Richard essayed, with his own hands, to put together this delicate outline, some difficulties occurred that prevented a nice conjunction; and Britannia had reason to lament, in addition to the loss of her favorite's life, numberless cruel amputations of his right arm.

The luckless cause of these unnatural divisions now announced his presence in the hall by a loud crack of his whip.

"Why, Benjamin! you Ben Pump! is this the manner in which you receive the heiress?" he cried. "Excuse him, Cousin Elizabeth. The arrangements were too intricate to be trusted to every one; but now I am here, things will go on better.—Come, light up, Mr. Penguillan, light up, light up, and let us see one another's faces. Well, 'duke, I have brought home your deer; what is to be done with it, ha?"

"By the Lord, squire," commenced Benjamin, in reply, first giving his mouth a wipe with the back of his hand, "if this here thing had been ordered sum'at earlier in the day, it might have been got up, d'ye see, to your liking. I had mustered all hands and was exercising candles, when you hove in sight; but when the women heard your bells they started an end, as if they were riding the boatswain's colt; and, if-so-be there is that man in the house who can

bring up a parcel of women when they have got headway on them, until they've run out the end of their rope, his name is not Benjamin Pump. But Miss Betsey here must have altered more than a privateer in disguise, since she has got on her woman's duds, if she will take offence with an old fellow for the small matter of lighting a few candles."

Elizabeth and her father continued silent, for both experienced the same sensation on entering the hall. The former had resided one year in the building before she left home for school, and the figure of its lamented mistress was missed by both husband and child.

But candles had been placed in the chandeliers and lustres, and the attendants were so far recovered from surprise as to recollect their use; the oversight was immediately remedied, and in a minute the apartment was in a blaze of light.

The slight melancholy of our heroine and her father was banished by this brilliant interruption; and the whole party began to lay aside the numberless garments they had worn in the air.

During this operation Richard kept up a desultory dialogue with the different domestics, occasionally throwing out a remark to the Judge concerning the deer; but as his conversation at such moments was much like an accompaniment on a piano, a thing that is heard without being attended to, we will not undertake the task of recording his diffuse discourse.

The instant that Remarkable Pettibone had executed her portion of the labor in illuminating, she returned to a position near Elizabeth, with the apparent motive of receiving the clothes that the other threw aside, but in reality to examine, with an air of curiosity—not unmixed with jealousy—the appearance of the lady who was to supplant her in the administration of their domestic economy. The housekeeper felt a little appalled, when, after clocks, coats, shawls, and socks had been taken off in succession, the large black hood was removed, and the dark ringlets, shining like the raven's wing, fell from her head, and left the sweet but commanding features of the young lady exposed to view. Nothing could be fairer and more spotless than the forehead of Elizabeth, and preserve the appearance of life and health. Her nose would have been called Grecian, but for a softly rounded swell, that gave in character to

the feature what it lost in beauty. Her mouth, at first sight, seemed only made for love ; but, the instant that its muscles moved, every expression that womanly dignity could utter played around it with the flexibility of female grace. It spoke not only to the ear, but to the eye. So much, added to a form of exquisite proportions, rather full and rounded for her years, and of the tallest medium height, she inherited from her mother. Even the color of her eye, the arched brows, and the long silken lashes, came from the same source ; but its expression was her father's. Inert and composed, it was soft, benevolent, and attractive ; but it could be roused, and that without much difficulty. At such moments it was still beautiful, though it was a little severe. As the last shawl fell aside, and she stood dressed in a rich, blue, riding-habit, that fitted her form with the nicest exactness ; her cheeks burning with roses, that bloomed the richer for the heat of the hall, and her eyes slightly suffused with moisture that rendered their ordinary beauty more dazzling, and with every feature of her speaking countenance illuminated by the lights that flared around her, Remarkable felt that her own power had ended.

The business of unrobing had been simultaneous. Marmaduke appeared in a suit of plain, neat black ; Monsieur Le Quoi, in a coat of snuff color, covering a vest of embroidery, with breeches, and silk stockings, and buckles—that were commonly thought to be of paste. Major Hartmann wore a coat of sky-blue, with large brass buttons, a club wig, and boots ; and Mr. Richard Jones had set off his dapper little form in a frock of bottle-green, with bullet-buttons, by one of which the sides were united over his well rounded-waist, opening above, so as to show a jacket of red cloth, with an under-vest of flannel, faced with green velvet, and below, so as to exhibit a pair of buckskin breeches, with long, soiled, white top-boots, and spurs ; one of the latter a little bent, from its recent attacks on the stool.

When the young lady had extricated herself from her garments, she was at liberty to gaze about her, and to examine not only the household over which she was to preside, but also the air and manner in which the domestic arrangements were conducted. Although there was much incongruity in the furniture and appearance of the hall, there was nothing mean. The floor was carpeted, even in its remotest corners. The brass candlesticks, the gilt lustres,

and the glass chandeliers, whatever might be their *keeping* as to propriety and taste, were admirably kept as to all the purposes of use and comfort. They were clean and glittering in the strong light of the apartment. Compared with the chill aspect of the December night without, the warmth and brilliancy of the apartment produced an effect that was not unlike enchantment. Her eye had not time to detect, in detail, the little errors, which, in truth existed, but was glancing around her in delight, when an object arrested her view, that was in strong contrast to the smiling faces and neatly attired personages who had thus assembled to do honor to the heiress of Templeton.

In a corner of the hall near the grand entrance, stood the young hunter, unnoticed, and for the moment apparently forgotten. But even the forgetfulness of the Judge, which, under the influence of strong emotion, had banished the recollection of the wound of this stranger, seemed surpassed by the absence of mind in the youth himself. On entering the apartment, he had mechanically lifted his cap, and exposed a head covered with hair that rivalled, in color and gloss, the locks of Elizabeth. Nothing could have wrought a greater transformation than the single act of removing the rough foxskin cap. If there was much that was prepossessing in the countenance of the young hunter, there was something even noble in the rounded outlines of his head and brow. The very air and manner with which the member haughtily maintained itself over the coarse and even wild attire in which the rest of his frame was clad, bespoke not only familiarity with a splendor that in those new settlements was thought to be unequalled, but something very like contempt also.

The hand that held the cap rested lightly on the little ivory-mounted piano of Elizabeth, with neither rustic restraint nor obtrusive vulgarity. A single finger touched the instrument, as if accustomed to dwell on such places. His other arm was extended to its utmost length, and the hand grasped the barrel of his long rifle with something like convulsive energy. The act and the attitude were both involuntary, and evidently proceeded from a feeling much deeper than that of vulgar surprise. His appearance, connected as it was with the rough exterior of his dress, rendered him entirely distinct from the busy group that were moving across the other end of the long hall, occupied in receiving the travellers and exchanging their

welcomes; and Elizabeth continued to gaze at him in wonder. The contraction of the stranger's brows increased as his eyes moved slowly from one object to another. For moments the expression of his countenance was fierce, and then again it seemed to pass away in some painful emotion. The arm that was extended bent, and brought the hand nigh to his face, when his head dropped upon it, and concealed the wonderfully speaking lineaments.

"We forget, dear sir, the strange gentleman" (for her life, Elizabeth could not call him otherwise), "whom we have brought here for assistance, and to whom we owe every attention."

All eyes were instantly turned in the direction of those of the speaker, and the youth rather proudly elevated his head again, while he answered :

"My wound is trifling, and I believe that Judge Temple sent for a physician the moment we arrived."

"Certainly," said Marmaduke; "I have not forgotten the object of thy visit, young man, nor the nature of my debt."

"Oh!" exclaimed Richard, with something of a waggish leer, "thou owest the lad for the venison, I suppose, that thou killed, cousin 'duke! Marmaduke! Marmaduke! That was a marvellous tale of thine about the buck! Here, young man, are two dollars for the deer, and Judge Temple can do no less than pay the doctor. I shall charge you nothing for my services, but you shall not fare the worst for that. Come, come, 'duke don't be down-hearted about it; if you missed the buck, you contrived to shoot this poor fellow through a pine-tree. Now I own that you have beat me: I never did such a thing in all my life."

"And I hope never will," returned the Judge, "if you are to experience the uneasiness that I have suffered; but be of good cheer, my young friend, the injury must be small, as thou movest thy arm with apparent freedom."

"Don't make the matter worse, 'duke, by pretending to talk about surgery," interrupted Mr. Jones, with a contemptuous wave of the hand; "it is a science that can only be learned by practice. You know that my grandfather was a doctor, but you haven't got a drop of medical blood in your veins. These kind of things run in families. All my family by my father's side had a knack at physic. There was my uncle that was killed at Brandywine—he died as easy again as any other man in the regiment, just

from knowing how to hold his breath naturally. Few men know how to breathe naturally."

"I doubt not, Dickon," returned the Judge, meeting the bright smile which, in spite of himself, stole over the stranger's features, "that thy family thoroughly understood the art of letting life slip through their fingers."

Richard heard him quite coolly, and putting a hand in either pocket of his surtout, so as to press forward the skirts, began to whistle a tune; but the desire to reply, overcame his philosophy, and with great heat he exclaimed:

"You may affect to smile, Judge Temple, at hereditary virtues, if you please; but there is not a man on your Patent who don't know better. Here, even this young man, who has never seen anything but bears, and deer, and woodchucks, knows better than to believe virtues are not transmitted in families. Don't you, friend?"

"I believe that vice is not," said the stranger abruptly—his eye glancing from the father to the daughter.

"The squire is right, Judge," observed Benjamin, with a knowing nod of his head toward Richard, that bespoke the cordiality between them. "Now, in the old country, the king's majesty touches for the evil, and that is a disorder that the greatest doctor in the fleet, or for the matter of that, admiral either, can't cure; only the king's majesty or a man that's been hanged. Yes, the squire is right; for if-so-be that he wasn't, how is it that the seventh son always is a doctor, whether he ships for the cockpit or not? Now when we fell in with the mounsheers, under De Grasse, d'ye see, we had aboard of us a doctor——"

"Very well, Benjamin," interrupted Elizabeth glancing her eyes from the hunter to Monsieur Le Quoi, who was most politely attending to what fell from each individual in succession, "you shall tell me of that, and all your entertaining adventures together; just now, a room must be prepared, in which the arm of this gentleman can be dressed."

"I will attend to that myself, Cousin Elizabeth," observed Richard, somewhat haughtily. "The young man will not suffer because Marmaduke chooses to be a little obstinate. Follow me, my friend, and I will examine the hurt myself."

"It will be well to wait for the physician," said the hunter, coldly; "he cannot be distant."

Richard paused and looked at the speaker, a little aston-

ished at the language, and a good deal appalled at the refusal. He construed the latter into an act of hostility, and, placing his hands in the pockets again, he walked up to Mr. Grant, and, putting his face close to the countenance of the divine, said in an undertone :

“Now, mark my words—there will be a story among the settlers, that all our necks would have been broken but for that fellow—as if I did not know how to drive. Why, you might have turned the horses yourself, sir ; nothing was easier ; it was only pulling hard on the nigh rein, and touching the off flank of the leader. I hope, my dear sir, you are not at all hurt by the upset the lad gave us ?”

The reply was interrupted by the entrance of the village physician.

CHAPTER VI.

—“And about his shelves,
A beggarly account of empty boxes,
Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,
Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses,
Were thinly scattered to make up a show.”—SHAKESPEARE.

DOCTOR ELNATHAN TODD, for such was the name of the man of physic, was commonly thought to be, among the settlers, a gentleman of great mental endowments, and he was assuredly of rare personal proportions. In height he measured, without his shoes, exactly six feet and four inches. His hands, feet, and knees, corresponded in every respect with this formidable stature ; but every other part of his frame appeared to have been intended for a man several sizes smaller, if we except the length of the limbs. His shoulders were square, in one sense at least, being in a right line from one side to the other ; but they were so narrow, that the long dangling arms they supported seemed to issue out of his back. His neck possessed, in an eminent degree, the property of length to which we have alluded, and it was topped by a small bullet-head that exhibited, on one side a bush of bristling brown hair, and on the other a short, twinkling visage, that appeared to maintain a constant struggle with itself in order to look wise. He was the youngest son of a farmer in the western part of Massachusetts, who, being in somewhat easy circumstances, had allowed this boy to shoot up to the height we

have mentioned, without the ordinary interruptions of field-labor, wood-chopping, and such other toils as were imposed on his brothers. Elnathan was indebted for this exemption from labor in some measure to his extraordinary growth, which, leaving him pale, inanimate, and listless, induced his tender mother to pronounce him "a sickly boy, and one that was not equal to work, but who might earn a living comfortably enough, by taking to pleading law, or turning minister, or doctoring, or some such like easy calling." Still, there was great uncertainty which of these vocations the youth was best endowed to fill; but, having no other employment, the stripling was constantly lounging about the "homestead," munching green apples, and hunting for sorrel; when the same sagacious eye that had brought to light his latent talents, seized upon this circumstance, as a clue to his future path through the turmoils of the world. "Elnathan was cut out for a doctor, she knew, for he was forever digging for herbs, and tasting all kinds of things that grow'd about the lots. Then again he had a natural love for doctor-stuff, for when she had left the bilious pills out for her man, all nicely covered with maple sugar, just ready to take, Nathan had come in and swallowed them for all the world as if they were nothing, while Ichabod (her husband) could never get one down without making such desperate faces, that it was awful to look on."

This discovery decided the matter. Elnathan, then about fifteen, was, much like a wild colt, caught and trimmed by clipping his bushy locks; dressed in a suit of homespun, dyed in the butternut bark; furnished with a "New Testament," and a "Webster's Spelling Book," and sent to school. As the boy was by nature quite shrewd enough, and had previously, at odd times, laid the foundations of reading, writing, and arithmetic, he was soon conspicuous in the school for his learning. The delighted mother had the gratification of hearing, from the lips of the master, that her son was a "prodigious boy, and far above all his class." He also thought that "the youth had a natural love for doctoring, as he had known him frequently advise the smaller children against eating too much; and, once or twice, when the ignorant little things had persevered in opposition to Elnathan's advice, he had known her son empty the school-baskets with his own mouth, to prevent the consequences."

Soon after this comfortable declaration from his school-master, the lad was removed to the house of the village doctor, a gentleman whose early career had not been unlike that of our hero, where he was to be seen sometimes watering a horse, at others wafering medicines, blue, yellow, and red ; then again he might be noticed lolling under an apple-tree, with Ruddiman's Latin Grammar in his hand, and a corner of Denman's Midwifery sticking out of a pocket ; for his instructor held it absurd to teach his pupil how to despatch a patient regularly from this world, before he knew how to bring him into it.

This kind of life continued for a twelvemonth, when he suddenly appeared at a meeting in a long coat (and well did it deserve the name !) of black homespun, with little bootees, bound with an uncolored calf-skin, for the want of red morocco.

Soon after he was seen shaving with a dull razor. Three or four months had scarce elapsed before several elderly ladies were observed hastening toward the house of a poor woman in the village, while others were running to and fro in great apparent distress. One or two boys were mounted, bareback, on horses, and sent off at speed in various directions. Several indirect questions were put concerning the place where the physician was last seen ; but all would not do ; and at length Elnathan was seen issuing from his door with a very grave air, preceded by a little white-headed boy, out of breath, trotting before him. The following day the youth appeared in the street, as the highway was called, and the neighborhood was much edified by the additional gravity of his air. The same week he bought a new razor ; and the succeeding Sunday he entered the meeting-house with a red silk handkerchief in his hand, and with an extremely demure countenance. In the evening he called upon a young woman of his own class in life, for there were no others to be found, and, when he was left alone with the fair, he was called, for the first time in his life, Dr. Todd, by her prudent mother. The ice once broken in this manner, Elnathan was greeted from every mouth with his official appellation.

Another year passed under the superintendence of the same master, during which the young physician had the credit of "riding with the old doctor," although they were generally observed to travel different roads. At the end of that period, Dr. Todd attained his legal majority. He

then took a jaunt to Boston to purchase medicines, and, as some intimated, to walk the hospital; we know not how the latter might have been, but, if true, he soon walked through it, for he returned within a fortnight, bringing with him a suspicious-looking box, that smelled powerfully of brimstone.

The next Sunday he was married, and the following morning he entered a one-horse sleigh with his bride, having before him the box we have mentioned, with another filled with home-made household linen, a paper-covered trunk, with a red umbrella lashed to it, a pair of quite new saddle-bags, and a bandbox. The next intelligence that his friends received of the bride and bridegroom was, that the latter was "settled in the new countries, and well to do as a doctor in Templeton, in York State!"

If a Templar would smile at the qualifications of Marmaduke to fill the judicial seat he occupied, we are certain that a graduate of Leyden or Edinburgh would be extremely amused with this true narration of the servitude of Elnathan in the temple of Æsculapius. But the same consolation was afforded to both the jurist and the leech; for Dr. Todd was quite as much on a level with his compeers of the profession in that country, as was Marmaduke with his brethren on the bench.

Time and practice did wonders for the physician. He was naturally humane, but possessed of no small share of moral courage; or, in other words, he was chary of the lives of his patients, and never tried uncertain experiments on such members of society as were considered useful; but, once or twice, when a luckless vagrant had come under his care, he was a little addicted to trying the effects of every phial in his saddle-bags on the stranger's constitution. Happily their number was small, and in most cases their natures innocent. By these means Elnathan had acquired a certain degree of knowledge in fevers and agues, and could talk with judgment concerning intermittents, remittents, tertians, quotidians, etc. In certain cutaneous disorders very prevalent in new settlements, he was considered to be infallible; and there was no woman on the Patent but would as soon think of becoming a mother without a husband as without the assistance of Dr. Todd. In short, he was rearing, on this foundation of sand, a superstructure cemented by practice, though com-

posed of somewhat brittle materials. He, however, occasionally renewed his elementary studies, and, with the observation of a shrewd mind, was comfortably applying his practice to his theory.

In surgery, having the least experience, and it being a business that spoke directly to the senses, he was most apt to distrust his own powers ; but he had applied oils to several burns, cut round the roots of sundry defective teeth, and sewed up the wounds of numberless wood-choppers, with considerable *éclat*, when an unfortunate jobber* suffered a fracture of his leg by the tree that he had been felling. It was on this occasion that our hero encountered the greatest trial his nerves and moral feeling had ever sustained. In the hour of need, however, he was not found wanting. Most of the amputations in the new settlements, and they were quite frequent, were performed by some one practitioner who, possessing originally a reputation, was enabled by this circumstance to acquire an experience that rendered him deserving of it ; and Elnathan had been present at one or two of these operations. But on the present occasion the man of practice was not to be obtained, and the duty fell, as a matter of course, to the share of Mr. Todd. He went to work with a kind of blind desperation, observing, at the same time, all the externals of decent gravity and great skill. The sufferer's name was Milligan, and it was to this event that Richard alluded, when he spoke of assisting the doctor at an amputation—by holding the leg ! The limb was certainly cut off, and the patient survived the operation. It was, however, two years before poor Milligan ceased to complain, that they had buried the leg in so narrow a box that it was straitened for room ; he could feel the pain shooting up from the inhumed fragment into the living members. Marmaduke suggested that the fault might lie in the arteries and nerves ; but Richard, considering the amputation as part of his own handiwork, strongly repelled the insinuation, at the same time declaring that he had often heard of men who could tell when it was about to rain, by the toes of amputated limbs. After two or three years, notwithstanding, Milligan's complaints gradually diminished, the leg was dug up, and a larger box furnished, and from that hour no one had heard the sufferer utter another complaint on the subject. This gave the

* People who clear land by the acre or job are thus called.

public great confidence in Dr. Todd, whose reputation was hourly increasing, and luckily for his patients, his information also.

Notwithstanding Dr. Todd's practice, and his success with the leg, he was not a little appalled on entering the hall of the mansion-house. It was glaring with the light of day; it looked so imposing, compared with the hastily built and scantily furnished apartments which he frequented in his ordinary practice, and contained so many well-dressed persons and anxious faces, that his usually firm nerves were a good deal discomposed. He had heard from the messenger who summoned him, that it was a gunshot wound, and had come from his own home, wading through the snow, with his saddle-bags thrown over his arm, while separated arteries, penetrated lungs, and injured vitals were whirling through his brain, as if he were stalking over a field of battle, instead of Judge Temple's peaceable enclosure.

The first object that met his eye, as he moved into the room, was Elizabeth in her riding-habit, richly laced with gold cord, her fine form bending toward him, and her face expressing deep anxiety in every one of its beautiful features. The enormous bony knees of the physician struck each other with a noise that was audible; for, in the absent state of his mind, he mistook her for a general officer, perforated with bullets, hastening from the field of battle to implore assistance. The delusion, however, was but momentary, and his eye glanced rapidly from the daughter to the earnest dignity of the father's countenance; thence to the busy strut of Richard, who was cooling his impatience at the hunter's indifference to his assistance, by pacing the hall and cracking his whip; from him to the Frenchman, who had stood for several minutes unheeded with a chair for the lady; thence to Major Hartmann, who was very coolly lighting a pipe three feet long by a candle in one of the chandeliers; thence to Mr. Grant, who was turning over a manuscript with much earnestness at one of the lustres; thence to Remarkable, who stood, with her arms demurely folded before her, surveying, with a look of admiration and envy, the dress and beauty of the young lady; and from her to Benjamin, who, with his feet standing wide apart, and his arms a-kimbo, was balancing his square little body with the indifference of one who is accustomed to wounds and bloodshed. All of these seemed

to be unhurt, and the operator began to breathe more freely ; but, before he had time to take a second look, the Judge, advancing, shook him kindly by the hand, and spoke.

“Thou art welcome, my good sir, quite welcome, indeed ; here is a youth whom I have unfortunately wounded in shooting a deer this evening, and who requires some of thy assistance.”

“Shooting at a deer, 'duke,” interrupted Richard—“shooting at a deer. Who do you think can prescribe, unless he knows the truth of the case ? It is always so with some people ; they think a doctor can be deceived with the same impunity as another man.”

“Shooting at a deer, truly,” returned the Judge, smiling, “although it is by no means certain that I did not aid in destroying the buck ; but the youth is injured by my hand, be that as it may ; and it is thy skill that must cure him, and my pocket shall amply reward thee for it.”

“Two ver good tings to depend on,” observed Monsieur Le Quoi, bowing politely, with a sweep of his head, to the Judge and to the practitioner.

“I thank you, monsieur,” returned the Judge ; “but we keep the young man in pain. Remarkable, thou wilt please to provide linen for lint and bandages.”

This remark caused a cessation of the compliments, and induced the physician to turn an inquiring eye in the direction of his patient. During the dialogue the young hunter had thrown aside his overcoat, and now stood clad in a plain suit of the common, light-colored homespun of the country, that was evidently but recently made. His hand was on the lapels of his coat, in the attitude of removing the garment, when he suddenly suspended the movement, and looked toward the commiserating Elizabeth, who was standing in an unchanged posture, too much absorbed with her anxious feelings to heed his actions. A slight color appeared on the brow of the youth.

“Possibly the sight of blood may alarm the lady ; I will retire to another room while the wound is dressing.”

“By no means,” said Dr. Todd, who, having discovered that his patient was far from being a man of importance, felt much emboldened to perform the duty. “The strong light of these candles is favorable to the operation, and it is seldom that we hard students enjoy good eyesight.”

While speaking, Elnathan placed a pair of large iron-

rimmed spectacles on his face, where they dropped, as it were by long practice, to the extremity of his slim pug nose; and, if they were of no service as assistants to his eyes, neither were they any impediment to his vision; for his little gray organs were twinkling above them, like two stars emerging from the envious cover of a cloud. The action was unheeded by all but Remarkable, who observed to Benjamin:

“Dr. Todd is a comely man to look on, and despu’t pretty. How well he seems in spectacles! I declare, they give a grand look to a body’s face. I have quite a great mind to try them myself.”

The speech of the stranger recalled the recollection of Miss Temple, who started, as if from deep abstraction, and, coloring excessively, she motioned to a young woman who served in the capacity of maid, and retired with an air of womanly reserve.

The field was now left to the physician and his patient, while the different personages who remained gathered around the latter, with faces expressing the various degrees of interest that each one felt in his condition. Major Hartmann alone retained his seat, where he continued to throw out vast quantities of smoke, now rolling his eyes up to the ceiling, as if musing on the uncertainty of life, and now bending them on the wounded man, with an expression that bespoke some consciousness of his situation.

In the meantime Elnathan, to whom the sight of a gunshot wound was a perfect novelty, commenced his preparations with a solemnity and care that were worthy of the occasion. An old shirt was procured by Benjamin, and placed in the hand of the other, who tore divers bandages from it, with an exactitude that marked both his own skill and the importance of the operation.

When this preparatory measure was taken, Dr. Todd selected a piece of the shirt with great care, and handing it to Mr. Jones, without moving a muscle, said:

“Here, Squire Jones, you are well acquainted with these things; will you please to scrape the lint? It should be fine and soft, you know, my dear sir; and be cautious that no cotton gets in, or it may p’izen the wound. The shirt has been made with cotton thread, but you can easily pick it out.”

Richard assumed the office, with a nod at his cousin, that said quite plainly—“You see this fellow can’t get

along without me ;” and began to scrape the linen on his knee with great diligence.

A table was now spread with phials, boxes of salve, and divers surgical instruments. As the latter appeared in succession, from a case of red morocco, their owner held up each implement to the strong light of the chandelier, near to which he stood, and examined it with the nicest care. A red silk handkerchief was frequently applied to the glittering steel, as if to remove from the polished surfaces the least impediment which might exist to the most delicate operation. After the rather scantily furnished pocket-case which contained these instruments was exhausted, the physician turned to his saddle-bags, and produced various phials, filled with liquids of the most radiant colors. These were arranged in due order, by the side of the murderous saws, knives, and scissors, when Elnathan stretched his long body to its utmost elevation, placing his hand on the small of his back, as if for support, and looked about him to discover what effect this display of professional skill was likely to produce on the spectators.

“Upon my wort, toctor,” observed Major Hartmann, with a roguish roll of his little black eyes, but with every other feature of his face in a state of perfect rest, “put you have a very pretty pocket-book of tools tere, and your toctor-stuff glitters as if it was petter for ter eyes as for ter pelly.”

Elnathan gave a hem—one that might have been equally taken for that kind of noise which cowards are said to make in order to awaken their dormant courage, or for a natural effort to clear the throat ; if for the latter it was successful ; for, turning his face to the veteran German, he said :

“Very true, Major Hartmann, very true, sir ; a prudent man will always strive to make his remedies agreeable to the eyes, though they may not altogether suit the stomach. It is no small part of our art, sir,” and he now spoke with the confidence of a man who understood his subject, “to reconcile the patient to what is for his own good, though at the same time it may be unpalatable.”

“Sartain ! Dr. Todd is right,” said Remarkable, “and has Scripiter for what he says. The Bible tells us how things may be sweet to the mouth, and bitter to the inwards.”

“True, true,” interrupted the Judge, a little impatiently ; “but here is a youth who needs no deception to lure him

to his own benefit. I see, by his eye, that he fears nothing more than delay."

The stranger had, without assistance, bared his own shoulder, when the slight perforation produced by the passage of the buck-shot was plainly visible. The intense cold of the evening had stopped the bleeding, and Dr. Todd, casting a furtive glance at the wound, thought it by no means so formidable an affair as he had anticipated. Thus encouraged, he approached his patient, and made some indication of an intention to trace the route that had been taken by the lead.

Remarkable often found occasions, in after days, to recount the minutiae of that celebrated operation; and when she arrived at this point she commonly proceeded as follows: "And then the doctor tuck out of the pocket-book a long thing, like a knitting-needle, with a button fastened to the end on't; and then he pushed it into the wovnd; and then the young man looked awful; and then I thought I should have swaned away—I felt in sitch a dispu't taking; and then the doctor had run it right through his shoulder, and shoved the bullet out on t'other side; and so Dr. Todd cured the young man—of a ball that the Judge had shot into him—for all the world as easy as I could pick out a splinter with my darning-needle."

Such were the impressions of Remarkable on the subject; and such doubtless were the opinions of most of those who felt it necessary to entertain a species of religious veneration for the skill of Elnathan; but such was far from the truth.

When the physician attempted to introduce the instrument described by Remarkable, he was repulsed by the stranger, with a good deal of decision, and some little contempt, in his manner.

"I believe, sir," he said, "that a probe is not necessary; the shot has missed the bone, and has passed directly through the arm to the opposite side, where it remains but skin deep, and whence, I should think, it might be easily extracted."

"The gentleman knows best," said Dr. Todd, laying down the probe with the air of a man who had assumed it merely in compliance with forms; and, turning to Richard, he fingered the lint with the appearance of great care and foresight. "Admirably well scraped, Squire Jones! it is about the best lint I have ever seen. I want your assist-

ance, my good sir, to hold the patient's arm while I make an incision for the ball. Now, I rather guess there is not another gentleman present who could scrape the lint so well as Squire Jones!"

"Such things run in families," observed Richard, rising with alacrity to render the desired assistance. "My father, and my grandfather before him, were both celebrated for their knowledge of surgery; they were not, like Marmaduke here, puffed up with an accidental thing, such as the time when he drew in the hip-joint of the man who was thrown from his horse; that was the fall before you came into the settlement, doctor; but they were men who were taught the thing regularly, spending half their lives in learning those little niceties; though, for the matter of that, my grandfather was a college-bred physician, and the best in the colony, too—that is, in his neighborhood."

"So it goes with the world, squire," cried Benjamin, "if so be that a man wants to walk the quarter-deck with credit, d'ye see, and with regular built swabs on his shoulders, he mustn't think to do it by getting in at the cabin windows. There are two ways to get into a top, besides the lubber-holes. The true way to walk aft is to begin forrard; tho'f it be only in a humble way, like myself, d'ye see, which was, from being only a hander of top-gallant sails, and a stower of the flying-jib, to keeping the key of the captain's locker."

"Benjamin speaks quite to the purpose," continued Richard. "I dare say that he has often seen shot extracted in the different ships in which he has served; suppose we get him to hold the basin; he must be used to the sight of blood."

"That he is, squire, that he is," interrupted the ci-devant steward; "many's the good shot, round, double-headed, and grape, that I've seen the doctors at work on. For the matter of that, I was in a boat, alongside the ship, when they cut out the twelve-pound shot from the thigh of the captain of the Foodyrong, one of Mounsheer Ler Quaw's countrymen!"*

"A twelve-pound ball from the thigh of a human being?" exclaimed Mr. Grant, with great simplicity, dropping the

* It is possible that the reader may start at this declaration of Benjamin, but those who have lived in the new settlements of America are too much accustomed to hear of these European exploits to doubt it.

sermon he was again reading, and raising his spectacles to the top of his forehead.

"A twelve-pounder!" echoed Benjamin, staring around him with much confidence; "a twelve-pounder! ay! a twenty-four pound shot can easily be taken from a man's body, if so be a doctor only knows how. There's Squire Jones, now, ask him, sir; he reads all the books; ask him if he never fell in with a page that keeps the reckoning of such things."

"Certainly, more important operations than that have been performed," observed Richard; "the encyclopædia mentions much more incredible circumstances than that, as, I dare say, you know, Dr. Todd."

"Certainly, there are incredible tales told in the encyclopædias," returned Elnathan, "though I cannot say that I have ever seen, myself, anything larger than a musket ball extracted."

During this discourse an incision had been made through the skin of the young hunter's shoulder, and the lead was laid bare. Elnathan took a pair of glittering forceps, and was in the act of applying them to the wound, when a sudden motion of the patient caused the shot to fall out of itself. The long arm and broad hand of the operator were now of singular service; for the latter expanded itself, and caught the lead, while at the same time an extremely ambiguous motion was made by its brother, so as to leave it doubtful to the spectators how great was its agency in releasing the shot. Richard, however, put the matter at rest by exclaiming:

"Very neatly done, doctor! I have never seen a shot more neatly extracted; and, I dare say, Benjamin will say the same."

"Why, considering," returned Benjamin, "I must say that it was ship-shape and Brister-fashion. Now all that the doctor has to do, is to clap a couple of plugs in the holes, and the lad will float in any gale that blows in these here hills."

"I thank you, sir, for what you have done," said the youth, with a little distance; "but here is a man who will take me under his care, and spare you all, gentlemen, any further trouble on my account."

The whole group turned their heads in surprise, and beheld, standing at one of the distant doors of the hall, the person of Indian John.

CHAPTER VII.

“From Susquehanna’s utmost springs,
Where savage tribes pursue their game,
His blanket tied with yellow strings,
The shepherd of the forest came.”—FRENEAU.

BEFORE the Europeans, or, to use a more significant term, the Christians, dispossessed the original owners of the soil, all that section of country which contains the New England States, and those of the Middle which lie east of the mountains, was occupied by two great nations of Indians, from whom had descended numberless tribes. But, as the original distinctions between these nations were marked by a difference in language, as well as by repeated and bloody wars, they were never known to amalgamate, until after the power and inroads of the whites had reduced some of the tribes to a state of dependence, that rendered not only their political, but, considering the wants and habits of a savage, their animal existence also, extremely precarious.

These two great divisions consisted on the one side, of the Five, or, as they were afterward called, the Six Nations, and their allies; and, on the other, of the Lenni Lenape, or Delawares, with the numerous and powerful tribes that owned that nation as their grandfather. The former were generally called, by the Anglo-Americans, Iroquois, or the Six Nations, and sometimes Mingoës. Their appellation, among their rivals, seems generally to have been the Mengwe, or Maqua. They consisted of the tribes, or, as their allies were fond of asserting, in order to raise their consequence, of the several nations of the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas; who ranked, in the confederation, in the order in which they are named. The Tuscaroras were admitted to this union, near a century after its formation, and thus completed the number of six.

Of the Lenni Lenape, or as they were called by the whites, from the circumstances of their holding their great council-fire on the banks of that river, the Delaware nation, the principal tribes, besides that which bore the generic name, were the Mahicanni, Mohicans, or Mohegans, and the Nanticokes, or Nentigoës. Of these the latter

held the country along the waters of the Chesapeake and the sea-shore ; while the Mohegans occupied the district between the Hudson and the ocean, including much of New England. Of course these two tribes were the first who were dispossessed of their lands by the Europeans.

The wars of a portion of the latter are celebrated among us, as the wars of King Philip ; but the peaceful policy of William Penn, or Miquon, as he was termed by the natives, effected its object with less difficulty, though not with less certainty. As the natives gradually disappeared from the country of the Mohegans, some scattering families sought a refuge around the council-fire of the mother tribe, or the Delawares.

This people had been induced to suffer themselves to be called *women*, by their old enemies, the Mingoes, or Iroquois, after the latter, having in vain tried the effects of hostility, had recourse to artifice, in order to prevail over their rivals. According to this declaration, the Delawares were to cultivate the arts of peace, and to intrust their defence entirely to the *men*, or warlike tribes of the Six Nations.

This state of things continued until the war of the Revolution, when the Lenni Lenape formally asserted their independence, and fearlessly declared that they were again men. But, in a government so peculiarly republican as the Indian polity, it was not at all times an easy task to restrain its members within the rules of the nation. Several fierce and renowned warriors of the Mohegans, finding the conflict with the whites to be in vain, sought a refuge with their grandfather, and brought with them the feelings and principles that had so long distinguished them in their own tribe. These chieftains kept alive, in some measure, the martial spirit of the Delawares ; and would, at times, lead small parties against their ancient enemies, or such other foes as incurred their resentment.

Among these warriors was one race particularly famous for their prowess, and for those qualities that render an Indian hero celebrated. But war, time, disease, and want had conspired to thin their number ; and the sole representative of this once renowned family now stood in the hall of Marmaduke Temple. He had for a long time been an associate of the white men, particularly in their wars, and having been, at the season when his services were of importance, much noticed and flattered, he had turned Chris-

tian, and was baptized by the name of John. He had suffered severely in his family during the recent war, having had every soul to whom he was allied cut off by an inroad of the enemy; and when the last lingering remnant of his nation extinguished their fires, among the hills of the Delaware, he alone had remained, with a determination of laying his bones in that country where his fathers had so long lived and governed.

It was only, however, within a few months, that he had appeared among the mountains that surrounded Templeton. To the hut of the old hunter he seemed peculiarly welcome; and, as the habits of the Leather-Stocking were so nearly assimilated to those of the savages, the conjunction of their interests excited no surprise. They resided in the same cabin, ate of the same food, and were chiefly occupied in the same pursuits.

We have already mentioned the baptismal name of this ancient chief; but in his conversation with Natty, held in the language of the Delawares, he was heard uniformly to call himself Chingachgook, which, interpreted, means the "Great Snake." This name he had acquired in his youth, by his skill and prowess in war; but when his brows began to wrinkle with time, and he stood alone, the last of his family, and his particular tribe, the few Delawares, who yet continued about the head-waters of their river, gave him the mournful appellation of Mohegan. Perhaps there was something of deep feeling excited in the bosom of this inhabitant of the forest by the sound of a name that recalled the idea of his nation in ruins, for he seldom used it himself—never, indeed, excepting on the most solemn occasions; but the settlers had united, according to the Christian custom, his baptismal with his national name, and to them he was generally known as John Mohegan, or, more familiarly, as Indian John.

From his long association with the white men, the habits of Mohegan were a mixture of the civilized and savage states, though there was certainly a strong preponderance in favor of the latter. In common with all his people, who dwelt within the influence of the Anglo-Americans, he had acquired new wants, and his dress was a mixture of his native and European fashions. Notwithstanding the intense cold without, his head was uncovered; but a profusion of long, black, coarse hair concealed his forehead, his crown, and even hung about his cheeks, so as to convey

the idea, to one who knew his present and former conditions, that he encouraged its abundance, as a willing veil, to hide the shame of a noble soul, mourning for glory once known. His forehead, when it could be seen, appeared lofty, broad, and noble. His nose was high, and of the kind called Roman, with nostrils that expanded, in his seventieth year, with the freedom that had distinguished them in youth. His mouth was large, but compressed, and possessing a great share of expression and character; and, when opened, it discovered a perfect set of short, strong, and regular teeth. His chin was full, though not prominent; and his face bore the infallible mark of his people, in its square, high cheek-bones. The eyes were not large, but their black orbs glittered in the rays of the candles, as he gazed intently down the hall, like two balls of fire.

The instant that Mohegan observed himself to be noticed by the group around the young stranger, he dropped the blanket which covered the upper part of his frame, from his shoulders, suffering it to fall over his leggins of untanned deer-skin, where it was retained by a belt of bark that confined it to his waist.

As he walked slowly down the long hall, the dignified and deliberate tread of the Indian surprised the spectators. His shoulders, and body to his waist, were entirely bare, with the exception of a silver medallion of Washington, that was suspended from his neck by a thong of buckskin, and rested on his high chest, amid many scars. His shoulders were rather broad and full; but the arms, though straight and graceful, wanted the muscular appearance that labor gives to a race of men. The medallion was the only ornament he wore, although enormous slits in the rim of either ear, which suffered the cartilages to fall two inches below the members, had evidently been used for the purposes of decoration in other days. In his hand he held a small basket of the ash-wood slips, colored in divers fantastical conceits, with red and black paints mingled with the white of the wood.

As this child of the forest approached them, the whole party stood aside, and allowed him to confront the object of his visit. He did not speak, however, but stood fixing his glowing eyes on the shoulder of the young hunter, and then turning them intently on the countenance of the Judge. The latter was a good deal astonished at this un-

usual departure from the ordinarily subdued and quiet manner of the Indian ; but he extended his hand, and said :

“Thou art welcome, John. This youth entertains a high opinion of thy skill, it seems, for he prefers thee to dress his wound even to our good friend, Dr. Todd.”

Mohegan now spoke, in tolerable English, but in a low, monotonous, guttural tone :

“The children of Miquon do not love the sight of blood ; and yet the Young Eagle has been struck by the hand that should do no evil !”

“Mohegan ! old John !” exclaimed the Judge, “think-est thou that my hand has ever drawn human blood willingly ? For shame ! for shame, old John ! thy religion should have taught thee better.”

“The evil spirit sometimes lives in the best heart,” returned John, “but my brother speaks the truth ; his hand has never taken life, when awake ; no ! not even when the children of the great English Father were making the waters red with the blood of his people.”

“Surely, John,” said Mr. Grant, with much earnestness, “you remember the divine command of our Saviour, ‘Judge not, lest ye be judged.’ What motive could Judge Temple have for injuring a youth like this ; one to whom he is unknown, and from whom he can receive neither injury nor favor ?”

John listened respectfully to the divine, and, when he had concluded, he stretched out his arm, and said with energy :

“He is innocent—My brother has not done this.”

Marmaduke received the offered hand of the other with a smile, that showed, however he might be astonished at his suspicion, he had ceased to resent it ; while the wounded youth stood, gazing from his red friend to his host, with interest powerfully delineated in his countenance. No sooner was this act of pacification exchanged, than John proceeded to discharge the duty on which he had come. Dr. Todd was far from manifesting any displeasure at this invasion of his rights, but made way for the new leech, with an air that expressed a willingness to gratify the humors of his patient, now that the all-important part of the business was so successfully performed, and nothing remained to be done but what any child might effect. Indeed, he whispered as much to Monsieur Le Quoi, when he said :

“It was fortunate that the ball was extracted before this Indian came in ; but any old woman can dress the wound. The young man, I hear, lives with John and Natty Bumpo, and it’s always best to humor a patient, when it can be done discreetly—I say, discreetly, monsieur.”

“Certainment,” returned the Frenchman ; “you seem ver happy, Mister Todd, in your pratique. I tink the elder lady might ver well finish vat you so skeelfully begin.”

But Richard had, at the bottom, a great deal of veneration for the knowledge of Mohegan, especially in external wounds ; and, retaining all his desire for a participation in glory, he advanced nigh the Indian, and said :

“Sago, sago, Mohegan ! sago, my good fellow ! I am glad you have come ; give me a regular physician, like Dr. Todd to cut into flesh, and a native to heal the wound. Do you remember, John, the time when I and you set the bone of Natty Bumpo’s little finger, after he broke it by falling from the rock, when he was trying to get the partridge that fell on the cliffs. I never could tell yet, whether it was I or Natty who killed that bird : he fired first, and the bird stooped, and then it was rising again as I pulled trigger. I should have claimed it for a certainty, but Natty said the hole was too big for shot, and he fired a single ball from his rifle ; but the piece I carried then didn’t scatter, and I have known it to bore a hole through a board, when I’ve been shooting at a mark, very much like rifle bullets. Shall I help you, John ? You know I have a knack at these things.”

Mohegan heard this disquisition quite patiently, and, when Richard concluded, he held out the basket which contained his specifics, indicating, by a gesture, that he might hold it. Mr. Jones was quite satisfied with this commission ; and, ever after, in speaking of the event, was used to say, that “Dr. Todd and I cut out the bullet, and I and Indian John dressed the wound.”

The patient was much more deserving of that epithet while under the hands of Mohegan, than while suffering under the practice of the physician. Indeed, the Indian gave him but little opportunity for the exercise of a forbearing temper, as he had come prepared for the occasion. His dressings were soon applied, and consisted only of some pounded bark, moistened with a fluid that he had expressed from some of the simples of the woods.

Among the native tribes of the forest there were always two kinds of leeches to be met with. The one placed its whole dependence on the exercise of a supernatural power, and was held in greater veneration than their practice could at all justify ; but the other was really endowed with great skill in the ordinary complaints of the human body, and was more particularly, as Natty had intimated, "curous in cuts and bruises."

While John and Richard were placing the dressings on the wound, Elnathan was acutely eyeing the contents of Mohegan's basket, which Mr. Jones, in his physical ardor, had transferred to the doctor, in order to hold himself one end of the bandages. Here he was soon enabled to detect sundry fragments of wood and bark, of which he, quite coolly, took possession, very possibly without any intention of speaking at all upon the subject ; but, when he beheld the full blue eye of Marmaduke watching his movements, he whispered to the Judge :

"It is not to be denied, Judge Temple, but what the savages are knowing in small matters of physic. They hand these things down in their traditions. Now in cancers and hydrophoby they are quite ingenious. I will just take this bark home and analyze it ; for, though it can't be worth sixpence to the young man's shoulder, it may be good for the toothache, or rheumatism, or some of them complaints. A man should never be above learning, even if it be from an Indian."

It was fortunate for Dr. Todd that his principles were so liberal, as, coupled with his practice, they were the means by which he acquired all his knowledge, and by which he was gradually qualifying himself for the duties of his profession. The process to which he subjected the specific, differed, however, greatly from the ordinary rules of chemistry ; for instead of separating, he afterward united the component parts of Mohegan's remedy, and was thus able to discover the tree whence the Indian had taken it.

Some ten years after this event, when civilization and its refinements had crept, or rather rushed, into the settlements among these wild hills, an affair of honor occurred, and Elnathan was seen to apply a salve to the wound received by one of the parties, which had the flavor that was peculiar to the tree, or root, that Mohegan had used. Ten years later still, when England and the United States were again engaged in war, and the hordes of the western parts

of the State of New York were rushing to the field, Elnathan, presuming on the reputation obtained by these two operations, followed in the rear of a brigade of militia as its surgeon!

When Mohegan had applied the bark, he freely relinquished to Richard the needle and thread that were used in sewing the bandages, for these were implements of which the native but little understood the use; and, stepping back with decent gravity, awaited the completion of the business by the other.

"Reach me the scissors," said Mr. Jones, when he had finished, and finished for the second time, after tying the linen in every shape and form that it could be placed; "reach me the scissors, for here is a thread that must be cut off, or it might get under the dressings, and inflame the wound. See, John, I have put the lint I scraped between two layers of the linen; for though the bark is certainly best for the flesh, yet the lint will serve to keep the cold air from the wound. If any lint will do it good, it is this lint; I scraped it myself, and I will not turn my back at scraping lint to any man on the Patent. I ought to know how, if anybody ought, for my grandfather was a doctor, and my father had a natural turn that way."

"Here, squire, is the scissors," said Remarkable, producing from beneath her petticoat of green moreen a pair of dull-looking shears; "well, upon my say-so, you *have* sewed on the rags as well as a woman."

"As well as a woman!" echoed Richard, with indignation; "what do women know of such matters? and you are proof of the truth of what I say. Who ever saw such a pair of shears used about a wound? Dr. Todd, I will thank you for the scissors from the case. Now, young man, I think you'll do. The shot has been neatly taken out, although, perhaps, seeing I had a hand in it, I ought not to say so; and the wound is admirably dressed. You will soon be well again; though the jerk you gave my leaders must have a tendency to inflame the shoulder, yet you will do, you will do. You were rather flurried, I suppose, and not used to horses; but I forgive the accident for the motive; no doubt you had the best of motives; yes, now you will do."

"Then, gentlemen," said the wounded stranger, rising, and resuming his clothes, "it will be unnecessary for me to trespass longer on your time and patience. There re-

mains but one thing more to be settled, and that is, our respective rights to the deer, Judge Temple."

"I acknowledge it to be thine," said Marmaduke; "and much more deeply am I indebted to thee than for this piece of venison. But in the morning thou wilt call here, and we can adjust this, as well as more important matters.—Elizabeth"—for the young lady, being apprised that the wound was dressed, had re-entered the hall—"thou wilt order a repast for this youth before we proceed to the church; and Aggy will have a sleigh prepared to convey him to his friend."

"But, Sir, I cannot go without a part of the deer," returned the youth, seemingly struggling with his own feelings; "I have already told you that I needed the venison for myself."

"Oh, we will not be particular," exclaimed Richard; "the Judge will pay you in the morning for the whole deer; and, Remarkable, give the lad all the animal excepting the saddle; so, on the whole, I think you may consider yourself as a very lucky young man—you have been shot without being disabled; have had the wound dressed in the best possible manner here in the woods, as well as it would have been done in the Philadelphia hospital, if not better; have sold your deer at a high price, and yet can keep most of the carcass, with the skin in the bargain. 'Marky, tell Tom to give him the skin too, and in the morning bring the skin to me and I will give you half a dollar for it, or at least three-and-sixpence. I want just such a skin to cover the pillion that I am making for Cousin Bess."

"I thank you, sir, for your liberality, and, I trust, am also thankful for my escape," returned the stranger; "but you reserve the very part of the animal that I wished for my own use. I must have the saddle myself."

"Must!" echoed Richard; "must is harder to be swallowed than the horns of the buck."

"Yes, must," repeated the youth; when, turning his head proudly around him, as if to see who would dare to controvert his rights, he met the astonished gaze of Elizabeth, and proceeded more mildly—"that is, if a man is allowed the possession of that which his hand hath killed, and the law will protect him in the enjoyment of his own."

"The law will do so," said Judge Temple, with an air of mortification mingled with surprise. "Benjamin, see

that the whole deer is placed in the sleigh ; and have this youth conveyed to the hut of Leather-Stocking. But, young man thou hast a name, and I shall see you again, in order to compensate thee for the wrong I have done thee ?”

“I am called Edwards,” returned the hunter ; “Oliver Edwards. I am easily to be seen, sir, for I live nigh by, and am not afraid to show my face, having never injured any man.”

“It is we who have injured you, sir,” said Elizabeth ; “and the knowledge that you decline our assistance would give my father great pain. He would gladly see you in the morning.”

The young hunter gazed at the fair speaker until his earnest look brought the blood to her temples ; when, recollecting himself, he bent his head, dropping his eyes to the carpet, and replied :

“In the morning then, will I return, and see Judge Temple ; and I will accept his offer of the sleigh in token of amity.”

“Amity !” repeated Marmaduke ; “there was no malice in the act that injured thee, young man ; there should be none in the feelings which it may engender.”

“Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” observed Mr. Grant, “is the language used by our Divine Master himself, and it should be the golden rule with us, his humble followers.”

The stranger stood a moment, lost in thought, and then, glancing his dark eyes rather wildly around the hall, he bowed low to the divine, and moved from the apartment with an air that would not admit of detention.

“’Tis strange that one so young should harbor such feelings of resentment,” said Marmaduke, when the door closed behind the stranger ; “but while the pain is recent, and the sense of the injury so fresh, he must feel more strongly than in cooler moments. I doubt not we shall see him in the morning more tractable.”

Elizabeth, to whom this speech was addressed, did not reply, but moved slowly up the hall, by herself, fixing her eyes on the little figure of the English ingrain carpet that covered the floor ; while, on the other hand, Richard gave a loud crack with his whip, as the stranger disappeared, and cried :

“Well, ’duke, you are your own master, but I would

have tried law for the saddle before I would have given it to the fellow. Do you not own the mountains as well as the valleys? are not the woods your own? what right has this chap, or the Leather-Stocking, to shoot in your woods without your permission? Now, I have known a farmer in Pennsylvania order a sportsman off his farm with as little ceremony as I would order Benjamin to put a log in the stove.—By the by, Benjamin, see how the thermometer stands.—Now, if a man has a right to do this on a farm of a hundred acres, what power must a landlord have who owns sixty thousand—ay, for the matter of that, including the late purchases, a hundred thousand? There is Mohegan, to be sure, he may have some right, being a native; but it's little the poor fellow can do now with his rifle. How is this managed in France, Monsieur Le Quoi? Do you let everybody run over your land in that country helter-skelter, as they do here, shooting the game, so that a gentleman has but little or no chance with his gun?"

"Bah! diable, no, Meester Deeck," replied the Frenchman; "we give, in France, no liberty except to the lady."

"Yes, yes, to the women, I know," said Richard, "that is your Salic law. I read, sir, all kinds of books; of France, as well as England; of Greece, as well as Rome. But if I were in 'duke's place, I would stick up advertisements to-morrow morning, forbidding all persons to shoot, or trespass in any manner, on my woods. I could write such an advertisement myself, in an hour, as would put a stop to the thing at once."

"Richart," said Major Hartmann, very coolly knocking the ashes from his pipe into the spitting-box by his side, "now listen; I have livet seventy-five years on ter Mohawk, and in ter woots. You had better mettle as mit ter deyvel, as mit ter hunters. Tey live mit ter gun, and a rifle is better as ter law."

"A'nt Marmaduke a judge?" said Richard, indignantly. "Where is the use of being a judge, or having a judge, if there is no law? Damn the fellow! I have a great mind to sue him in the morning myself, before Squire Doolittle, for meddling with my leaders. I am not afraid of his rifle. I can shoot, too. I have hit a dollar many a time at fifty rods."

"Thou hast missed more dollars than ever thou hast hit, Dickon," exclaimed the cheerful voice of the Judge. "But we will now take our evening's repast, which, I per-

ceive by Remarkable's physiognomy, is ready. Monsieur Le Quoi, Miss Temple has a hand at your service. Will you lead the way, my child?"

"Ah! ma chère mam'selle, comme je suis enchanté!" said the Frenchman. "Il ne manque que les dames de faire un paradis de Templeton."

Mr. Grant and Mohegan continued in the hall, while the remainder of the party withdrew to an eating-parlor, if we except Benjamin, who civilly remained, to close the rear after the clergyman, and to open the front door for the exit of the Indian.

"John," said the divine, when the figure of Judge Temple disappeared, the last of the group, "to-morrow is the festival of the nativity of our blessed Redeemer, when the church has appointed prayers and thanksgivings to be offered up by her children, and when all are invited to partake of the mystical elements. As you have taken up the cross, and become a follower of good and an eschewer of evil, I trust I shall see you before the altar, with a contrite heart and a meek spirit."

"John will come," said the Indian, betraying no surprise; though he did not understand all the terms used by the other.

"Yes," continued Mr. Grant, laying his hand gently on the tawny shoulder of the aged chief, "but it is not enough to be there in the body; you must come in the spirit and in truth. The Redeemer died for all, for the poor Indian as well as for the white man. Heaven knows no difference in color; nor must earth witness a separation of the church. It is good and profitable, John, to freshen the understanding, and support the wavering, by the observance of our holy festivals; but all form is but stench in the nostrils of the Holy One, unless it be accompanied by a devout and humble spirit."

The Indian stepped back a little, and, raising his body to its utmost powers of erection, he stretched his right arm on high, and dropped his forefinger downward, as if pointing from the heavens, then, striking his other hand on his naked breast, he said, with energy:

"The eye of the Great Spirit can see from the clouds—the bosom of Mohegan is bare!"

"It is well, John, and I hope you will receive profit and consolation from the performance of this duty. The Great Spirit overlooks none of his children; and the man

of the woods is as much an object of his care as he who dwells in a palace. I wish you a good-night, and pray God to bless you."

The Indian bent his head, and they separated—the one to seek his hut, and the other to join his party at the supper-table. While Benjamin was opening the door for the passage of the chief, he cried, in a tone that was meant to be encouraging :

"The parson says the word that is true, John. If so be that they took count of the color of the skin in heaven, why they might refuse to muster on their books a Christian-born, like myself, just for the matter of a little tan, from cruising in warm latitudes ; though, for the matter of that, this damned norwester is enough to whiten the skin of a blackamore. Let the reef out of your blanket, man, or your red hide will hardly weather the night, without a touch from the frost."

CHAPTER VIII.

"For here the exile met from every clime,
And spoke, in friendship, every distant tongue."—CAMPBELL.

WE have made our readers acquainted with some variety in character and nations, in introducing the most important personages of this legend to their notice ; but, in order to establish the fidelity of our narrative, we shall briefly attempt to explain the reason why we have been obliged to present so motley a *dramatis personæ*.

Europe, at the period of our tale, was in the commencement of that commotion which afterward shook her political institutions to the centre. Louis the Sixteenth had been beheaded, and a nation once esteemed the most refined among the civilized people of the world, was changing its character, and substituting cruelty for mercy, and subtlety and ferocity for magnanimity and courage. Thousands of Frenchmen were compelled to seek protection in distant lands. Among the crowds who fled from France and her islands, to the United States of America, was the gentleman whom we have already mentioned as Monsieur Le Quoi. He had been recommended to the favor of Judge Temple by the head of an eminent mercantile house in

New York, with whom Marmaduke was in habits of intimacy, and accustomed to exchange good offices. At his first interview with the Frenchman, our Judge had discovered him to be a man of breeding, and one who had seen much more prosperous days in his own country. From certain hints that had escaped him, Monsieur Le Quoi was suspected of having been a West-India planter, great numbers of whom had fled from St. Domingo and the other islands, and were now living in the Union, in a state of comparative poverty, and some in absolute want. The latter was not, however, the lot of Monsieur Le Quoi. He had but little, he acknowledged; but that little was enough to furnish, in the language of the country, an assortment for a store.

The knowledge of Marmaduke was eminently practical, and there was no part of a *settler's* life with which he was not familiar. Under his direction, Monsieur Le Quoi made some purchases, consisting of a few cloths; some groceries, with a good deal of gunpowder and tobacco; a quantity of iron ware, among which was a large proportion of Barlow's jack-knives, potash-kettles, and spiders; a very formidable collection of crockery, of the coarsest quality and most uncouth forms; together with every other common article that the art of man has devised for his wants, not forgetting the luxuries of looking-glasses and Jew's-harps. With this collection of valuables, Monsieur Le Quoi had stepped behind a counter, and, with a wonderful pliability of temperament, had dropped into his assumed character as gracefully as he had ever moved in any other. The gentleness and suavity of his manners rendered him extremely popular; besides this, the women soon discovered that he had taste. His calicoes were the finest, or, in other words, the most showy, of any that were brought into the country; and it was impossible to look at the prices asked for his goods by "so pretty a spoken man." Through these conjoint means, the affairs of Monsieur Le Quoi were again in a prosperous condition, and he was looked up to by the settlers as the second best man on the "Patent."

The term "Patent," which we have already used, and for which we may have further occasion, meant the district of country that had been originally granted to old Major Effingham by the "king's letters patent," and which had now become, by purchase under the act of confiscation,

the property of Marmaduke Temple. It was a term in common use throughout the *new* parts of the State ; and was usually annexed to the landlord's name, as " Temple's or Effingham's Patent."

Major Hartmann was a descendant of a man who, in company with a number of his countrymen had emigrated with their families, from the banks of the Rhine to those of the Mohawk. This migration had occurred as far back as the reign of Queen Anne ; and their descendants were now living, in great peace and plenty, on the fertile borders of that beautiful stream.

The Germans, or " High Dutchers," as they were called, to distinguish them from the original or Low Dutch colonists, were a very peculiar people. They possessed all the gravity of the latter, without any of their phlegm ; and like them, the " High Dutchers " were industrious, honest, and economical.

Fritz, or Frederick Hartmann, was an epitome of all the vices and virtues, foibles and excellences, of his race. He was passionate, though silent, obstinate, and a good deal suspicious of strangers ; of immovable courage, inflexible honesty, and undeviating in his friendships. Indeed there was no change about him, unless it were from grave to gay. He was serious by months, and jolly by weeks. He had, early in their acquaintance, formed an attachment for Marmaduke Temple, who was the only man that could not speak High Dutch that ever gained his entire confidence. Four times in each year, at periods equidistant, he left his low stone dwelling on the banks of the Mohawk, and travelled thirty miles, through the hills, to the door of the mansion-house in Templeton. Here he generally stayed a week ; and was reputed to spend much of that time in riotous living, greatly countenanced by Mr. Richard Jones. But every one loved him, even to Remarkable Pettibone, to whom he occasioned some additional trouble, he was so frank, so sincere, and, at times, so mirthful. He was now on his regular Christmas visit, and had not been in the village an hour when Richard summoned him to fill a seat in the sleigh, to meet the landlord and his daughter.

Before explaining the character and situation of Mr. Grant, it will be necessary to recur to times far back in the brief history of the settlement.

There seems to be a tendency in human nature to endeavor to provide for the wants of this world, before out

attention is turned to the business of the other. Religion was a quality but little cultivated amid the stumps of Temple's Patent for the first few years of its settlement ; but, as most of its inhabitants were from the moral States of Connecticut and Massachusetts, when the wants of nature were satisfied, they began seriously to turn their attention to the introduction of those customs and observances which had been the principal care of their forefathers. There was certainly a great variety of opinions on the subject of grace and free-will among the tenantry of Marmaduke ; and, when we take into consideration the variety of the religious instruction which they received, it can easily be seen that it could not well be otherwise.

Soon after the village had been formally laid out into the streets and *blocks* that resembled a city, a meeting of its inhabitants had been convened, to take into consideration the propriety of establishing an academy. This measure originated with Richard, who, in truth, was much disposed to have the institution designated a university, or at least a college. Meeting after meeting was held, for this purpose, year after year. The *resolutions* of these assemblages appeared in the most conspicuous columns of a little blue-looking newspaper, that was already issued weekly from the garret of a dwelling-house in the village, and which the traveller might as often see stuck into the fissure of a stake, erected at the point where the footpath from the log-cabin of some settler entered the highway, as a post-office for an individual. Sometimes the stake supported a small box, and a whole neighborhood received a weekly supply for their literary wants, at this point, where the man who "rides post" regularly deposited a bundle of the precious commodity. To these flourishing resolutions, which briefly recounted the general utility of education, the political and geographical rights of the village of Templeton to a participation in the favors of the regents of the university, the salubrity of the air, and wholesomeness of the water, together with the cheapness of food and the superior state of morals in the neighborhood, were uniformly annexed, in large Roman capitals, the names of Marmaduke Temple as chairman, and Richard Jones as secretary.

Happily for the success of this undertaking, the regents were not accustomed to resist these appeals to their generosity, whenever there was the smallest prospect of a donation to second the request. Eventually Judge Temple

concluded to bestow the necessary land, and to erect the required edifice at his own expense. The skill of Mr., or, as he was now called, from the circumstance of having received the commission of a justice of the peace, Squire Doolittle, was again put in requisition ; and the science of Mr. Jones was once more resorted to.

We shall not recount the different devices of the architects on the occasion ; nor would it be decorous so to do, seeing that there was a convocation of the society of the ancient and honorable fraternity "of the Free and Accepted Masons," at the head of whom was Richard, in the capacity of master, doubtless to approve or reject such of the plans as, in their wisdom, they deemed to be for the best. The knotty point was, however, soon decided ; and, on the appointed day, the brotherhood marched in great state, displaying sundry banners and mysterious symbols, each man with a little mimic apron before him, from a most cunningly contrived apartment in the garret of the "Bold Dragoon," an inn kept by one Captain Hollister, to the site of the intended edifice. Here Richard laid the corner-stone, with suitable gravity, amidst an assemblage of more than half the men, and all the women, within ten miles of Templeton.

In the course of the succeeding week there was another meeting of the people, not omitting swarms of the gentler sex, when the abilities of Hiram at the "square rule," were put to the test of experiment. The frame fitted well ; and the skeleton of the fabric was reared without a single accident, if we except a few falls from horses while the laborers were returning home in the evening. From this time the work advanced with great rapidity, and in the course of the season the labor was completed ; the edifice standing, in all its beauty and proportions, the boast of the village, the study of young aspirants for architectural fame, and the admiration of every settler on the Patent.

It was a long, narrow house of wood, painted white, and more than half windows ; and, when the observer stood at the western side of the building, the edifice offered but a small obstacle to a full view of the rising sun. It was, in truth, but a very comfortless open place, through which the daylight shone with natural facility. On its front were divers ornaments in wood, designed by Richard, and executed by Hiram ; but a window in the centre of the second story, immediately over the door or grand entrance, and

the "steeple," were the pride of the building. The former was, we believe, of the composite order ; for it included in its composition a multitude of ornaments, and a great variety of proportions. It consisted of an arched compartment in the centre, with a square and small division on either side, the whole encased in heavy frames, deeply and laboriously molded in pine-wood, and lighted with a vast number of blurred and green-looking glass of those dimensions which are commonly called "eight by ten." Blinds, that were intended to be painted green, kept the window in a state of preservation ; and probably might have contributed to the effect of the whole, had not the failure in the public funds, which seems always to be incidental to any undertaking of this kind, left them in the sombre coat of lead-color with which they had been originally clothed. The "steeple" was a little cupola, reared on the very centre of the roof, on four tall pillars of pine, that were fluted with a gouge, and loaded with mouldings. On the tops of the columns was reared a dome or cupola, resembling in shape an inverted tea-cup, without its bottom, from the centre of which projected a spire, or shaft of wood, trans-fixed with two iron rods, that bore on their ends the letters N. S. E. and W. in the same metal. The whole was surmounted by an imitation of one of the finny tribe, carved in wood by the hands of Richard, and painted what he called a "scale-color." This animal Mr. Jones affirmed to be an admirable resemblance of a great favorite of the epicures in that country, which bore the title of "lake-fish ;" and doubtless the assertion was true ; for, although intended to answer the purposes of a weathercock, the fish was observed invariably to look, with a longing eye, in the direction of the beautiful sheet of water that lay imbedded in the mountains of Templeton.

For a short time after the charter of the regents was received, the trustees of this institution employed a graduate of one of the Eastern colleges, to instruct such youth as aspired to knowledge within the walls of the edifice which we have described. The upper part of the building was in one apartment, and was intended for gala-days and exhibitions ; and the lower contained two rooms that were intended for the great divisions of education, viz., the Latin and the English scholars. The former were never very numerous ; though the sounds of "nominative, *pennaa*—genitive, *penny*," were soon heard to issue from the windows

of the room, to the great delight and manifest edification of the passenger.

Only one laborer in this temple of Minerva, however, was known to get so far as to attempt a translation of Virgil. He, indeed, appeared at the annual exhibition, to the prodigious exultation of all his relatives, a farmer's family in the vicinity, and repeated the whole of the first eclogue from memory, observing the intonations of the dialogue with much judgment and effect. The sounds, as they proceeded from his mouth, of

“Titty-ree too patty-lee ree-coo-bans sub teg-mi-nee faa-gy
Syl-ves-trem ten-oo-i moo-sam, med-i-taa-ris, aa-ve-ny,”

were the last that had been heard in that building, as probably they were the first that had ever been heard, in the same language, there or anywhere else. By this time the trustees discovered that they had anticipated the age, and the *instructor*, or *principal*, was superseded by a *master*, who went on to teach the more humble lesson of “the more haste the worst speed,” in good plain English.

From this time, until the date of our incidents, the academy was a common country school, and the great room of the building was sometimes used as a court-room, on extraordinary trials; sometimes for conferences of the religious and the morally disposed, in the evening; at others for a ball in the afternoon, given under the auspices of Richard; and on Sundays, invariably, as a place of public worship.

When an itinerant priest of the persuasion of the Methodists, Baptists, Universalists, or of the more numerous sect of the Presbyterians, was accidentally in the neighborhood, he was ordinarily invited to officiate, and was commonly rewarded for his services by a collection in a hat, before the congregation separated. When no such regular minister offered, a kind of colloquial prayer or two was made by some of the more gifted members, and a sermon was usually read, from Sterne, by Mr. Richard Jones.

The consequence of this desultory kind of priesthood was, as we have already intimated, a great diversity of opinion on the more abstruse points of faith. Each sect had its adherents, though neither was regularly organized and disciplined. Of the religious education of Marmaduke we have already written, nor was the doubtful character of his

faith completely removed by his marriage. The mother of Elizabeth was an Episcopalian, as indeed, was the mother of the judge himself; and the good taste of Marmaduke revolted at the familiar colloquies which the leaders of the conferences held with the Deity, in their nightly meetings. In form, he was certainly an Episcopalian, though not a sectary of that denomination. On the other hand, Richard was as rigid in the observance of the canons of his church as he was inflexible in his opinions. Indeed, he had once or twice essayed to introduce the Episcopal form of service, on the Sundays that the pulpit was vacant; but Richard was a good deal addicted to carrying things to an excess, and then there was something so papal in his air, that the greater part of his hearers deserted him on the second Sabbath—on the third his only auditor was Ben Pump, who had all the obstinate and enlightened orthodoxy of a high churchman.

Before the war of the Revolution, the English Church was supported, in the colonies, with much interest, by some of its adherents in the mother country, and a few of the congregations were very amply endowed. But, for the season, after the independence of the States was established, this sect of Christians languished, for the want of the highest order of its priesthood. Pious and suitable divines were at length selected, and sent to the mother country, to receive that authority, which, it is understood, can only be transmitted directly from one to the other, and thus obtain, in order to reserve, that unity in their churches which properly belonged to a people of the same nation. But unexpected difficulties presented themselves, in the oaths with which the policy of England had fettered their establishment; and much time was spent before a conscientious sense of duty would permit the prelates of Britain to delegate the authority so earnestly sought. Time, patience, and zeal, however, removed every impediment, and the venerable men, who had been set apart by the American churches, at length returned to their expecting dioceses, endowed with the most elevated functions of their earthly church. Priests and deacons were ordained, and missionaries provided, to keep alive the expiring flame of devotion in such members as were deprived of the ordinary administrations, by dwelling in new and unorganized districts.

Of this number was Mr. Grant. He had been sent into

the county of which Templeton was the capital, and had been kindly invited by Marmaduke, and officiously pressed by Richard, to take up his abode in the village. A small and humble dwelling was prepared for his family, and the divine had made his appearance in the place but a few days previously to the time of his introduction to the reader. As his forms were entirely new to most of the inhabitants, and a clergyman of another denomination had previously occupied the field, by engaging the academy, the first Sunday after his arrival was allowed to pass in silence ; but now that his rival had passed on, like a meteor, filling the air with the light of his wisdom, Richard was empowered to give notice that "Public worship, after the forms of the Protestant Episcopal Church, would be held on the night before Christmas, in the long room of the academy in Templeton, by the Rev. Mr. Grant."

This annunciation excited great commotion among the different sectaries. Some wondered as to the nature of the exhibition ; others sneered ; but a far greater part, recollecting the essays of Richard in that way, and mindful of the liberality, or rather laxity, of Marmaduke's notions on the subject of sectarianism, thought it most prudent to be silent.

The expected evening was, however, the wonder of the hour ; nor was the curiosity at all diminished when Richard and Benjamin, on the morning of the eventful day, were seen to issue from the woods in the neighborhood of the village, each bearing on his shoulders a large bunch of evergreens. This worthy pair was observed to enter the academy, and carefully to fasten the door, after which their proceedings remained a profound secret to the rest of the village ; Mr. Jones, before he commenced this mysterious business, having informed the schoolmaster, to the great delight of the white-headed flock he governed, that there could be no school that day. Marmaduke was apprised of all these preparations by letter, and it was especially arranged that he and Elizabeth should arrive in season to participate in the solemnities of the evening.

After this digression, we shall return to our narrative.

CHAPTER IX.

“Now all admire, in each high-flavored dish,
The capabilities of flesh—fowl—fish ;
In order due each guest assumes his station,
Thrubs high his breast with fond anticipation,
And prelibates the joys of mastication.”—HELIOGABALIAD.

THE apartment to which Monsieur Le Quoi handed Elizabeth communicated with the hall, through the door that led under the urn which was supposed to contain the ashes of Dido. The room was spacious, and of very just proportions ; but, in its ornaments and furniture, the same diversity of taste and imperfection of execution were to be observed as existed in the hall. Of furniture, there were a dozen green, wooden arm-chairs, with cushions of moreen, taken from the same piece as the petticoat of Remarkable. The tables were spread, and their materials and workmanship could not be seen ; but they were heavy and of great size. An enormous mirror, in a gilt frame, hung against the wall, and a cheerful fire, of the hard or sugar maple, was burning on the hearth. The latter was the first object that struck the attention of the Judge, who on beholding it, exclaimed, rather angrily, to Richard :

“How often have I forbidden the use of the sugar maple in my dwelling! The sight of that sap, as it exudes with the heat, is painful to me, Richard. Really, it behooves the owner of woods so-extensive as mine, to be cautious what example he sets his people, who are already felling the forests, as if no end could be found to their treasures, nor any limits to their extent. If we go on in this way, twenty years hence we shall want fuel.”

“Fuel in these hills, Cousin 'duke !” exclaimed Richard, in derision—“fuel! why, you might as well predict that the fish will die, for the want of water in the lake, because I intend, when the frost gets out of the ground, to lead one or two of the springs, through logs, into the village. But you are always a little wild on such subjects, Marmaduke.”

“Is it wildness,” returned the Judge, earnestly, “to condemn a practice which devotes these jewels of the forest, these precious gifts of nature, these mines of comfort and wealth, to the common uses of a fireplace? But

I must, and will, the instant the snow is off the earth, send out a party into the mountains to explore for coal."

"Coal!" echoed Richard. "Who the devil do you think will dig for coal when, in hunting for a bushel, he would have to rip up more roots of trees than would keep him in fuel for a twelvemonth? Poh! poh! Marmaduke; you should leave the management of these things to me, who have a natural turn that way. It was I that ordered this fire, and a noble one it is, to warm the blood of my pretty Cousin Bess."

"The motive, then, must be your apology, Dickon," said the Judge.—"But, gentlemen, we are waiting.—Elizabeth, my child, take the head of the table; Richard, I see, means to spare me the trouble of carving, by sitting opposite to you."

"To be sure I do," cried Richard. "Here is a turkey to carve; and I flatter myself that I understand carving a turkey, or, for that matter, a goose, as well as any man alive.—Mr. Grant! Where's Mr. Grant? Will you please to say grace, sir? Everything is getting cold. Take a thing from the fire, this cold weather, and it will freeze in five minutes. Mr. Grant, we want you to say grace. 'For what we are about to receive; the Lord make us thankful.' Come, sit down, sit down. Do you eat wing or breast, Cousin Bess?"

But Elizabeth had not taken her seat, nor was she in readiness to receive either the wing or breast. Her laughing eyes were glancing at the arrangements of the table, and the quality and selection of the food. The eyes of the father soon met the wondering looks of his daughter, and he said, with a smile:

"You perceive, my child, how much we are indebted to Remarkable for her skill in housewifery. She has, indeed, provided a noble repast—such as well might stop the cravings of hunger."

"Law!" said Remarkable, "I'm glad if the Judge is pleased; but I'm notional that you'll find the sa'ce overdone. I thought, as Elizabeth was coming home, that a body could do no less than make things agreeable."

"My daughter has now grown to woman's estate, and is from this moment mistress of my house," said the Judge; "it is proper that all who live with me address her as Miss Temple."

"Do tell!" exclaimed Remarkable, a little aghast;

“well, who ever heerd of a young woman’s being called Miss? If the Judge had a wife now, I shouldn’t think of calling her anything but Miss Temple; but——”

“Having nothing but a daughter you will observe that style to her, if you please, in future,” interrupted Marmaduke.

As the Judge looked seriously displeased, and, at such moments, carried a particularly commanding air with him, the wary housekeeper made no reply; and, Mr. Grant entering the room, the whole party were soon seated at the table. As the arrangements of this repast were much in the prevailing taste of that period and country, we shall endeavor to give a short description of the appearance of the banquet.

The table-linen was of the most beautiful damask, and the plates and dishes of real china, an article of great luxury at this early period of American commerce. The knives and forks were of exquisitely polished steel, and were set in unclouded ivory. So much, being furnished by the wealth of Marmaduke, was not only comfortable, but even elegant. The contents of the several dishes, and their positions, however, were the result of the sole judgment of Remarkable. Before Elizabeth was placed an enormous roasted turkey, and before Richard, one boiled. In the centre of the table stood a pair of heavy silver casters, surrounded by four dishes; one a fricasee, that consisted of gray squirrels; another of fish fried; a third of fish boiled; the last was a venison steak. Between these dishes and the turkeys, stood, on the one side, a prodigious chine of roasted bear’s meat, and on the other a boiled leg of delicious mutton. Interspersed among this load of meats was every species of vegetables that the season and country afforded. The four corners were garnished with plates of cake. On one was piled certain curiously twisted and complicated figures, called “nut-cakes.” On another were heaps of a black-looking substance, which, receiving its hue from molasses, was properly termed “sweet-cake;” a wonderful favorite in the *coterie* of Remarkable. A third was filled, to use the language of the housekeeper, with “cards of gingerbread;” and the last held a “plum-cake,” so called from the number of large raisins that were showing their black heads in a substance of suspiciously similar color. At each corner of the table stood saucers, filled with a thick fluid of somewhat equivocal color and con-

sistence, variegated with small dark lumps of a substance that resembled nothing but itself, which Remarkable termed her "sweetmeats." At the side of each plate, which was placed bottom upward, with its knife and fork most accurately crossed above it, stood another, of smaller size, containing a motley-looking pie, composed of triangular slices of apple, mince, pumpkin, cranberry, and *custard*, so arranged as to form an entire whole. Decanters of brandy, rum, gin, and wine, with sundry pitchers of cider, beer, and one hissing vessel of "flip," were put wherever an opening would admit of their introduction. Notwithstanding the size of the tables, there was scarcely a spot where the rich damask could be seen, so crowded were the dishes, with their associated bottles, plates, and saucers. The object seemed to be profusion, and it was obtained entirely at the expense of order and elegance.

All the guests, as well as the Judge himself, seemed perfectly familiar with this description of fare, for each one commenced eating, with an appetite that promised to do great honor to Remarkable's taste and skill. What rendered this attention to the repast a little surprising, was the fact that both the German and Richard had been summoned from another table to meet the Judge; but Major Hartmann both ate and drank without any rule, when on his excursions; and Mr. Jones invariably made it a point to participate in the business in hand, let it be what it would. The host seemed to think some apology necessary for the warmth he had betrayed on the subject of the fire-wood, and when the party were comfortably seated, and engaged with their knives and forks, he observed:

"The wastefulness of the settlers, with the noble trees of this country, is shocking, Monsieur Le Quoi, as doubtless you have noticed. I have seen a man fell a pine, when he has been in want of fencing-stuff, and roll his first cuts into the gap, where he left it to rot, though its top would have made rails enough to answer his purpose, and its butt would have sold in the Philadelphia market for twenty dollars."

"And how the devil—I beg your pardon, Mr. Grant," interrupted Richard; "but how is the poor devil to get his logs to the Philadelphia market, pray? put them in his pocket, ha! as you would a handful of chestnuts, or a bunch of chicker-berries? I should like to see you walking up High Street, with a pine log in each pocket!—Poh!

poh ! cousin 'duke, there are trees enough for us all, and some to spare. Why, I can hardly tell which way the wind blows, when I'm out in the clearings, they are so thick and so tall—I couldn't at all, if it wasn't for the clouds, and I happen to know all the points of the compass, as it were, by heart."

"Ay ! ay ! squire," cried Benjamin, who had now entered, and taken his place behind the Judge's chair, a little aside withal, in order to be ready for any observation like the present ; "look aloft, sir, look aloft. The old seamen say, 'that the devil wouldn't make a sailor, unless he looked aloft.' As for the compass, why, there is no such thing as steering without one. I'm sure I never lose sight of the main-top, as I call the squire's lookout on the roof, but I set my compass, d'ye see, and take the bearings and distance of things, in order to work out my course, if so be that it should cloud up, or the tops of the trees should shut out the light of heaven. The steeple of St. Paul's, now that we have got it on end, is a great help to the navigation of the woods, for, by the Lord Harry, as I was——"

"It is well, Benjamin," interrupted Marmaduke, observing that his daughter manifested displeasure at the major-domo's familiarity ; "but you forget there is a lady in company, and the women love to do most of the talking themselves."

"The Judge says the true word," cried Benjamin, with one of his discordant laughs. "Now here is Mistress Remarkable Pettibones ; just take the stopper off her tongue, and you'll hear a gabbling worse like than if you should happen to fall to leeward in crossing a French privateer, or some such thing, mayhap, as a dozen monkeys stowed in one bag."

It were impossible to say how perfect an illustration of the truth of Benjamin's assertion the housekeeper would have furnished, if she had dared ; but the Judge looked sternly at her, and unwilling to incur his resentment, yet unable to contain her anger, she threw herself out of the room, with a toss of the body that nearly separated her frail form in the centre.

"Richard," said Marmaduke, observing that his displeasure had produced the desired effect, "can you inform me of anything concerning the youth whom I so unfortunately wounded ? I found him on the mountain hunting in company with the Leather-Stocking, as if they were of

the same family ; but there is a manifest difference in their manners. The youth delivers himself in chosen language ; such as is seldom heard in these hills, and such as occasions great surprise to me, how one so meanly clad, and following so lowly a pursuit, could attain. Mohegan also knew him. Doubtless he is a tenant of Natty's hut. Did you remark the language of the lad, Monsieur Le Quoi ?”

“Certainement, Monsieur Templ’,” returned the Frenchman, “he deed conovairse in de excellent Anglaise.”

“The boy is no miracle,” exclaimed Richard ; “I’ve known children that were sent to school early, talk much better before they were twelve years old. There was Zared Coe, old Nehemiah’s son, who first settled on the beaver-dam meadow, he could write almost as good a hand as myself, when he was fourteen ; though it’s true, I helped to teach him a little in the evenings. But this shooting gentleman ought to be put in the stocks, if he ever takes a rein in his hand again. He is the most awkward fellow about a horse I ever met with. I dare say he never drove anything but oxen in his life.”

“There, I think, Dickon, you do the lad injustice,” said the Judge ; “he uses much discretion in critical moments. Dost thou not think so, Bess ?”

There was nothing in this question particularly to excite blushes, but Elizabeth started from the reverie into which she had fallen, and colored to her forehead, as she answered :

“To me, dear sir, he appeared extremely skilful, and prompt, and courageous ; but perhaps Cousin Richard will say I am as ignorant as the gentleman himself.”

“Gentleman !” echoed Richard ; “do you call such chaps gentlemen, at school, Elizabeth ?”

“Every man is a gentleman that knows how to treat a woman with respect and consideration,” returned the young lady, promptly, and a little smartly.

“So much for hesitating to appear before the heiress in his shirt-sleeves,” cried Richard, winking at Monsieur Le Quoi, who returned the wink with one eye, while he rolled the other, with an expression of sympathy, toward the young lady. “Well, well, to me he seemed anything but a gentleman. I must say, however, for the lad, that he draws a good trigger, and has a true aim. He’s good at shooting a buck, ha ! Marmaduke ?”

“Richart,” said Major Hartmann, turning his grave

countenance toward the gentleman he addressed, with much earnestness, "ter poy is goot. He savet your life, and my life, and ter life of Tominie Grant, and ter life of ter Frenchman ; and, Richard, he shall never vant a pet to sleep in vile olt Fritz Hartmann has a shingle to cover his het mit."

"Well, well, as you please, old gentleman," returned Mr. Jones, endeavoring to look indifferent ; "put him into your own stone house, if you will, major. I dare say the lad never slept in anything better than a bark shanty in his life, unless it was some such hut as the cabin of Leather-Stocking. I prophesy you will soon spoil him ; any one could see how proud he grew, in a short time, just because he stood by my horses' heads, while I turned them into the highway."

"No, no, my old friend," cried Marmaduke, "it shall be my task to provide in some manner for the youth ; I owe him a debt of my own, besides the service he has done me, through my friends. And yet I anticipate some little trouble, in inducing him to accept of my services. He showed a marked dislike, I thought, Bess, to my offer of a residence within these walls for life."

"Really, dear sir," said Elizabeth, projecting her beautiful under-lip, "I have not studied the gentleman so closely as to read his feelings in his countenance. I thought he might very naturally feel pain from his wound, and therefore pitied him ; but"—and as she spoke she glanced her eye, with suppressed curiosity, toward the major-domo—"I dare say, sir, that Benjamin can tell you something about him. He cannot have been in the village, and Benjamin not have seen him often."

"Ay ! I have seen the boy before," said Benjamin, who wanted little encouragement to speak ; "he has been backing and filling in the wake of Natty Bumppo, through the mountains ; after deer, like a Dutch long-boat in tow of an Albany sloop. He carries a good rifle, too. The Leather-Stocking said, in my hearing, before Betty Hollister's bar-room fire, no later than the Tuesday night, that the younger was certain death to the wild beasts. If so be he can kill the wild-cat that has been heard moaning on the lake-side since the hard frosts and deep snows have driven the deer to herd, he will be doing the thing that is good. Your wild-cat is a bad shipmate, and should be made to cruise out of the track of Christian men."

“Lives he in the hut of Bumpo?” asked Marmaduke, with some interest.

“Cheek by jowl; the Wednesday will be three weeks since he first hove in sight, in company with Leather-Stocking. They had captured a wolf between them, and had brought in his scalp for the bounty. That Mister Bump-ho has a handy turn with him in taking off a scalp; and there’s them, in this here village, who say he larnt the trade by working on Christian men. If so be that there is truth in the saying, and I commanded along shore here, as your honor does, why, d’ye see, I’d bring him to the gangway for it, yet. There’s a very pretty post rigged alongside of the stocks; and for the matter of a cat, I can fit one with my own hands; ay! and use it too, for the want of a better.”

“You are not to credit the idle tales you hear of Natty; he has a kind of natural right to gain a livelihood in these mountains; and if the idlers in the village take it into their heads to annoy him, as they sometimes do reputed rogues, they shall find him protected by the strong arm of the law.”

“Ter rifle is petter as ter law,” said the major, sentimentously.

“That for his rifle!” exclaimed Richard, snapping his fingers; “Ben is right, and I——” He was stopped by the sound of a common ship-bell, that had been elevated to the belfry of the academy, which now announced, by its incessant ringing, that the hour for the appointed service had arrived. “‘For this and every other instance of his goodness——’ I beg pardon, Mr. Grant, will you please to return thanks, sir? it is time we should be moving, as we are the only Episcopalians in the neighborhood; that is I and Benjamin, and Elizabeth; for I count half-breeds, like Marmaduke, as bad as heretics.”

The divine arose, and performed the office, meekly and fervently, and the whole party instantly prepared themselves for the church—or rather academy.

CHAPTER X.

“And calling sinful man to pray,
Loud, long, and deep the bell had tolled.”—SCOTT'S BURGER.

WHILE Richard and Monsieur Le Quoi, attended by Benjamin, proceeded to the academy by a foot-path through the snow, the Judge, his daughter, the divine, and the major, took a more circuitous route to the same place by the streets of the village.

The moon had risen, and its orb was shedding a flood of light over the dark outline of pines which crowned the eastern mountain. In many climates the sky would have been thought clear and lucid for a noontide. The stars twinkled in the heavens, like the last glimmerings of distant fire, so much were they obscured by the overwhelming radiance of the atmosphere; the rays from the moon striking upon the smooth, white surfaces of the lake and fields, reflecting upward a light that was brightened by the spotless color of the immense bodies of snow which covered the earth.

Elizabeth employed herself with reading the signs, one of which appeared over almost every door; while the sleigh moved steadily, and at an easy gait, along the principal street. Not only new occupations, but names that were strangers to her ears, met her gaze at every step they proceeded. The very houses seemed changed. This had been altered by an addition; that had been painted; another had been erected on the site of an old acquaintance, which had been banished from the earth almost as soon as it made its appearance on it. All were, however, pouring forth their inmates, who uniformly held their way toward the point where the expected exhibition of the conjoint taste of Richard and Benjamin was to be made.

After viewing the buildings, which really appeared to some advantage under the bright but mellow light of the moon, our heroine turned her eyes to a scrutiny of the different figures that they passed, in search of any form that she knew. But all seemed alike, as muffled in cloaks, hoods, coats, or tippets, they glided along the narrow passages in the snow which led under the houses, half hid by

the bank that had been thrown up in excavating the deep path in which they trod. Once or twice she thought there was a stature or a gait that she recollected ; but the person who owned it instantly disappeared behind one of those enormous piles of wood that lay before most of the doors. It was only as they turned from the main street into another that intersected it at right angles, and which led directly to the place of meeting, that she recognized a face and building that she knew.

The house stood at one of the principal corners in the village ; and, by its well-trodden door-way, as well as the sign that was swinging with a kind of doleful sound in the blasts that occasionally swept down the lake, was clearly one of the most frequented inns in the place. The building was only of one story ; but the dormer-windows in the roof, the paint, the window-shutters, and the cheerful fire that shone through the open door, gave it an air of comfort that was not possessed by many of its neighbors. The sign was suspended from a common ale-house post, and represented the figure of a horseman, armed with sabre and pistols, and surmounted by a bear-skin cap, with a fiery animal that he bestrode "rampant." All these particulars were easily to be seen by the aid of the moon, together with a row of somewhat illegible writing in black paint, but in which Elizabeth, to whom the whole was familiar, read with facility, "The Bold Dragoon."

A man and a woman were issuing from the door of this habitation as the sleigh was passing. The former moved with a stiff, military step, that was a good deal heightened by a limp in one leg ; but the woman advanced with a measure and an air that seemed not particularly regardful of what she might encounter. The light of the moon fell directly upon her full, broad, and red visage, exhibiting her masculine countenance, under the mockery of a ruffled cap that was intended to soften the lineaments of features that were by no means squeamish. A small bonnet of black silk, and of a slightly formal cut, was placed on the back of her head, but so as not to shade her visage in the least. The face, as it encountered the rays of the moon from the east, seemed not unlike sunrising in the west. She advanced with masculine strides to intercept the sleigh ; and the Judge, directing the namesake of the Grecian king, who held the lines, to check his horses, the parties were soon near to each other.

“Good luck to ye, and a wilcome home, Jooge,” cried the female, with a strong Irish accent; “and I’m sure it’s to me that ye’r always wilcome. Sure! and there’s Miss ‘Lizzy, and a fine young woman she is grown. What a heart-ache would she be giving the young men now, if there was sich a thing as a rigiment in the town! Och! but it’s idle to talk of sich vanities, while the bell is calling us to mateing jist as we shall be call’d away unexpictedly some day, when we are the laist calkilating. Good-even, major; will I make the bowl of gin toddy the night, or it’s likely ye’ll stay at the big house the Christmas eve, and the very night of ye’r getting there?”

“I am glad to see you, Mrs. Hollister,” returned Elizabeth. “I have been trying to find a face that I knew since we left the door of the mansion-house; but none have I seen except your own. Your house, too, is unaltered, while all the others are so changed that, but for the places where they stand, they would be utter strangers. I observe you also keep the dear sign that I saw Cousin Richard paint; and even the name at the bottom, about which, you may remember, you had the disagreement.”

“It is the bould dragoon, ye mane? And what name would he have, who niver was known by any other, as my husband here, the captain, can testify. He was a pleasure to wait upon, and was ever the foremost in need. Och! but he had a sudden end! but it’s to be hoped that he was justified by the cause. And it’s not Parson Grant there who’ll gainsay that same. Yes, yes; the squire would paint, and so I thought that we might have *his* face up there, who had so often shared good and evil wid us. The eyes is no so large nor so fiery as the captain’s own; but the whiskers and the cap is as two paes. Well, well, I’ll not keep ye in the cowl, talking, but will drop in the morrow after sarvice, and ask ye how ye do. It’s our bounden duty to make the most of this present, and to go to the house which is open to all; so God bless ye, and keep ye from evil! Will I make the gin-twist the night, or no, major?”

To this question the German replied, very sententiously, in the affirmative; and, after a few words had passed between the husband of the fiery-faced hostess and the Judge, the sleigh moved on. It soon reached the door of the academy, where the party alighted and entered the building.

In the meantime, Mr. Jones and his two companions, having a much shorter distance to journey, had arrived be-

fore the appointed place some minutes sooner than the party in the sleigh. Instead of hastening into the room, in order to enjoy the astonishment of the settlers, Richard placed a hand in either pocket of his surtout, and affected to walk about, in front of the academy, like one to whom the ceremonies were familiar.

The villagers proceeded uniformly into the building, with a decorum and gravity that nothing could move, on such occasions ; but with a haste that was probably a little heightened by curiosity. Those who came in from the adjacent country spent some little time in placing certain blue and white blankets over their horses before they proceeded to indulge their desire to view the interior of the house. Most of these men Richard approached, and inquired after the health and condition of their families. The readiness with which he mentioned the names of even the children, showed how very familiarly acquainted he was with their circumstances ; and the nature of the answers he received proved that he was a general favorite.

At length one of the pedestrians from the village stopped also, and fixed an earnest gaze at a new brick edifice that was throwing a long shadow across the fields of snow, as it rose, with a beautiful gradation of light and shade, under the rays of a full moon. In front of the academy was a vacant piece of ground, that was intended for a public square. On the side opposite to Mr. Jones, the new and as yet unfinished church of St. Paul's was erected. This edifice had been reared during the preceding summer, by the aid of what was called a subscription ; though all, or nearly all, of the money came from the pockets of the landlord. It had been built under a strong conviction of the necessity of a more seemly place of worship than "the long room of the academy," and under an implied agreement that, after its completion, the question should be fairly put to the people, that they might decide to what denomination it should belong. Of course, this expectation kept alive a strong excitement in some few of the secretaries who were interested in its decision ; though but little was said openly on the subject. Had Judge Temple espoused the cause of any particular sect, the question would have been immediately put at rest, for his influence was too powerful to be opposed ; but he declined interference in the matter, positively refusing to lend even the weight of his name on the side of Richard, who had secretly given

an assurance to his diocesan, that both the building and the congregation would cheerfully come within the pale of the Protestant Episcopal Church. But, when the neutrality of the Judge was clearly ascertained, Mr. Jones discovered that he had to contend with a stiff-necked people. His first measure was to go among them, and commence a course of reasoning, in order to bring them round to his own way of thinking. They all heard him patiently, and not a man uttered a word in reply, in the way of argument; and Richard thought, by the time that he had gone through the settlement, the point was conclusively decided in his favor. Willing to strike while the iron was hot, he called a meeting, through the newspaper, with a view to decide the question by a vote at once. Not a soul attended; and one of the most anxious afternoons that he had ever known was spent by Richard in a vain discussion with Mrs. Hollister, who strongly contended that the Methodist (her own) church was the best entitled to, and most deserving of, the possession of the new tabernacle. Richard now perceived that he had been too sanguine, and had fallen into the error of all those who ignorantly deal with that wary and sagacious people. He assumed a disguise himself—that is, as well as he knew how, and proceeded step by step to advance his purpose.

The task of erecting the building had been unanimously transferred to Mr. Jones and Hiram Doolittle. Together they had built the mansion-house, the academy, and the jail; and they alone knew how to plan and rear such a structure as was now required. Early in the day, these architects had made an equitable division of their duties. To the former was assigned the duty of making all the plans, and to the latter the labor of superintending the execution.

Availing himself of this advantage, Richard silently determined that the windows should have the Roman arch: the first positive step in effecting his wishes. As the building was made of bricks, he was enabled to conceal his design, until the moment arrived for placing the frames; then, indeed, it became necessary to act. He communicated his wishes to Hiram with great caution; and, without in the least adverting to the spiritual part of his project, he pressed the point a little warmly on the score of architectural beauty. Hiram heard him patiently, and without contradiction, but still Richard was unable to discover the

views of his coadjutor on this interesting subject. As the right to plan was duly delegated to Mr. Jones, no direct objection was made in words, but numberless unexpected difficulties arose in the execution. At first there was a scarcity in the right kind of material necessary to form the frames; but this objection was instantly silenced, by Richard running his pencil through two feet of their length at one stroke. Then the expense was mentioned; but Richard reminded Hiram that his cousin paid, and that *he* was his treasurer. This last intimation had great weight, and after a silent and protracted, but fruitless opposition, the work was suffered to proceed on the original plan.

The next difficulty occurred in the steeple, which Richard had modelled after one of the smaller of those spires that adorn the great London cathedral. The imitation was somewhat lame, it was true, the proportions being but indifferently observed; but, after much difficulty, Mr. Jones had the satisfaction of seeing an object reared that bore, in its outlines, a striking resemblance to a vinegar-cruet. There was less opposition to this model than to the windows; for the settlers were fond of novelty, and their steeple was without a precedent.

Here the labor ceased for the season, and the difficult question of the interior remained for further deliberation. Richard well knew that, when he came to propose a reading-desk and a chancel, he must unmask; for these were arrangements known to no church in the country but his own. Presuming, however, on the advantages he had already obtained, he boldly styled the building St. Paul's, and Hiram prudently acquiesced in this appellation, making however, the slight addition calling it "*New St. Paul's*," feeling less aversion to a name taken from the English cathedral than from the saint.

The pedestrian whom we have already mentioned, as pausing to contemplate this edifice, was no other than the gentleman so frequently named as Mr. or Squire Doolittle. He was of a tall, gaunt formation, with rather sharp-features, and a face that expressed formal propriety, mingled with low cunning. Richard approached him, followed by Monsieur Le Quoi and the major-domo.

"Good-evening, squire," said Richard, bobbing his head, but without moving his hands from his pockets.

"Good-evening, squire," echoed Hiram, turning his body, in order to turn his head also.

"A cold night, Mr. Doolittle, a cold night, sir."

"Coolish ; a tedious spell on't."

"What, looking at our church, ha ! it looks well, by moonlight ; how the tin of the cupola glistens ! I warrant you the dome of the other St. Paul's never shines so in the smoke of London."

"It is a pretty meeting-house to look on," returned Hiram, "and I believe that Monshure Ler Quow and Mr. Penguilliam will allow it."

"Sairtainlee !" exclaimed the complaisant Frenchman, "it ees ver fine."

"I thought the monshure would say so. The last molasses that we had was excellent good. It isn't likely that you have any more of it on hand ?"

"Ah ! oui ; ees, sair," returned Monsieur Le Quoi, with a slight shrug of his shoulder, and a trifling grimace, "dere is more. I feel ver happi dat you love eet. I hope dat Madame Doleet' is in good 'ealth."

"Why, so as to be stirring," said Hiram. "The squire hasn't finished the plans for the inside of the meeting-house yet ?"

"No—no—no," returned Richard, speaking quickly, but making a significant pause between each negative—"it requires reflection. There is a great deal of room to fill up, and I am afraid we shall not know how to dispose of it to advantage. There will be a large vacant spot around the pulpit, which I do not mean to place against the wall, like a sentry-box stuck up on the side of a fort."

"It is rûlable to put the deacon's box under the pulpit," said Hiram ; and then, as if he had ventured too much, he added, "but there's different fashions in different countries."

"That there is," cried Benjamin ; "now, in running down the coast of Spain and Portingall, you may see a nunnery stuck out on every head-land, with more steeples and outriggers, such as dog-vanes and weathercocks, than you'll find aboard of a three-masted schooner. If so be that a well-built church is wanting, old England, after all, is the country to go to after your models and fashion pieces. As to Paul's, thof I've never seen it, being that it's a long way up town from Radcliffe Highway and the docks, yet everybody knows that it's the grandest place in the world. Now, I've no opinion but this here church over there is as like one end of it as a grampus is to a whale ; and that's

only a small difference in bulk. Mounsheer Ler Quaw, here, has been in foreign parts; and thof that is not the same as having been at home, yet he must have seen churches in France too, and can form a small idee of what a church should be; now, I ask the mounsheer to his face, if it is not a clever little thing, taking it by and large."

"It ees ver apropos of saircumstance," said the Frenchman—"ver judgment—but it is in the catholique country dat dey build de—vat you call—ah a ah—ha—la grande cathédrale—de big church. St. Paul, Londre, is ver fine; ver belle; ver grand—vat you call beeg; but, Monsieur Ben, pardonnez-moi, it is no vort so much as Notre-Dame."

"Ha! mounsheer, what is that you say?" cried Benjamin; "St. Paul's church is not worth so much as a damn! Mayhap you may be thinking too that the Royal Billy isn't so good a ship as the Billy de Paris; but she would have licked two of her any day, and in all weathers."

As Benjamin had assumed a very threatening kind of attitude, flourishing an arm with a bunch at the end of it that was half as big as Monsieur Le Quoi's head, Richard thought it time to interpose his authority.

"Hush, Benjamin, hush," he said; "you both misunderstand Monsieur Le Quoi, and forget yourself. But here comes Mr. Grant, and the service will commence. Let us go in."

The Frenchman, who received Benjamin's reply with a well-bred good humor, that would not admit of any feeling but pity for the other's ignorance, bowed in acquiescence, and followed his companion.

Hiram and the major-domo brought up the rear, the latter grumbling as he entered the building:

"If so be that the king of France had so much as a house to live in, that would lay alongside of Paul's, one might put up with their jaw. It's more than flesh and blood can bear, to hear a Frenchman run down an English church in this manner. Why, Squire Doolittle, I've been at the whipping of two of them in one day—clean built, snug frigates, with standing royals, and them new-fashioned cannonades on their quarters—such as, if they had only Englishmen aboard of them, would have fout the devil."

With this ominous word in his mouth, Benjamin entered the church.

CHAPTER XI.

“And fools who came to scoff, remained to pray.”—GOLDSMITH.

NOTWITHSTANDING the united labors of Richard and Benjamin, the “long-room” was but an extremely inartificial temple. Benches, made in the coarsest manner, and entirely with a view to usefulness, were arranged in rows for the reception of the congregation; while a rough, unpainted box was placed against the wall, in the centre of the length of the apartment, as an apology for a pulpit. Something like a reading-desk was in front of this rostrum; and a small mahogany table from the mansion-house, covered with a spotless damask cloth, stood a little on one side, by the way of an altar. Branches of pines and hemlocks were stuck in each of the fissures that offered, in the unseasoned and hastily completed wood-work, of both the building and its furniture; while festoons and hieroglyphics met the eye in vast profusion along the brown sides of the scratch-coated walls. As the room was only lighted by some ten or fifteen miserable candles, and the windows were without shutters, it would have been but a dreary, cheerless place for the solemnities of a Christmas eve, had not the large fire that was crackling at each end of the apartment, given an air of cheerfulness to the scene, by throwing an occasional glare of light through the vistas of bushes and faces.

The two sexes were separated by an area in the centre of the room immediately before the pulpit; and a few benches lined this space, that were occupied by the principal personages of the village and its vicinity. This distinction was rather a gratuitous concession, made by the poorer and less polished part of the population than a right claimed by the favored few. One bench was occupied by the party of Judge Temple, including his daughter; and, with the exception of Dr. Todd, no one else appeared willing to incur the imputation of pride, by taking a seat in what was, literally, the high place of the tabernacle.

Richard filled the chair that was placed behind another table, in the capacity of clerk; while Benjamin, after heaping sundry logs on the fire, posted himself nigh by, in reserve for any movement that might require co-operation.

It would greatly exceed our limits to attempt a description of the congregation, for the dresses were as various as the individuals. Some one article, of more than usual finery, and perhaps the relic of other days, was to be seen about most of the females, in connection with the coarse attire of the woods. This wore a faded silk, that had gone through at least three generations, over coarse, woollen black stockings; that, a shawl, whose dyes were as numerous as those of the rainbow, over an awkwardly fitting gown of rough brown "woman's wear." In short, each one exhibited some favorite article, and all appeared in their best, both men and women; while the ground-works in dress, in either sex, were the coarse fabrics manufactured within their own dwellings. One man appeared in the dress of a volunteer company of artillery, of which he had been a member in the "down countries," precisely for no other reason than because it was the best suit he had. Several, particularly of the younger men, displayed pantaloons of blue, edged with red cloth down the seams, part of the equipments of the "Templeton Light Infantry," from a little vanity to be seen in "boughten clothes." There was also one man in a "rifle frock," with its fringes and folds of spotless white, striking a chill to the heart with the idea of its coolness, although the thick coat of brown "home-made" that was concealed beneath preserved a proper degree of warmth.

There was a marked uniformity of expression in countenance, especially in that half of the congregation who did not enjoy the advantages of the polish of the village. A sallow skin, that indicated nothing but exposure, was common to all, as was an air of great decency and attention, mingled, generally, with an expression of shrewdness, and in the present instance, of active curiosity. Now and then a face and dress were to be seen among the congregation, that differed entirely from this description. If pock-marked and florid, with gaitered legs, and a coat that snugly fitted the person of the wearer, it was surely an English emigrant, who had bent his steps to this retired quarter of the globe. If hard-featured, and without color, with high cheek bones, it was a native of Scotland, in similar circumstances.

The short, black-eyed man, with a cast of the swarthy Spaniard in his face, who rose repeatedly to make room for the belles of the village as they entered, was a son of

Erin, who had lately left off his pack, and become a stationary trader in Templeton. In short, half the nations in the north of Europe had their representatives in this assembly, though all had closely assimilated themselves to the Americans in dress and appearance, except the Englishman. He, indeed, not only adhered to his native customs in attire and living, but usually drove his plough, among the stumps, in the same manner as he had before done on the plains of Norfolk, until dear-bought experience taught him the useful lesson, that a sagacious people knew what was suited to their circumstances better than a casual observer; or a sojourner, who was, perhaps, too much prejudiced to compare, and, peradventure, too conceited to learn.

Elizabeth soon discovered that she divided the attention of the congregation with Mr. Grant. Timidity, therefore, confined her observation of the appearances which we have described to stolen glances; but, as the stamping of feet was now becoming less frequent, and even the coughing, and other little preliminaries of a congregation settling themselves down into reverential attention, were ceasing, she felt emboldened to look around her. Gradually all noises diminished, until the suppressed cough denoted that it was necessary to avoid singularity, and the most profound stillness pervaded the apartment. The snapping of the fires, as they threw a powerful heat into the room, was alone heard, and each face, and every eye were turned on the divine.

At this moment, a heavy stamping of feet was heard in the passage below, as if a new-comer was releasing his limbs from the snow that was necessarily clinging to the legs of a pedestrian. It was succeeded by no audible tread; but directly Mohegan, followed by the Leather-Stocking and the young hunter, made his appearance. Their footsteps would not have been heard, as they trod the apartment in their moccasins, but for the silence which prevailed.

The Indian moved with great gravity across the floor, and, observing a vacant seat next to the Judge, he took it, in a manner that manifested his sense of his own dignity. Here, drawing his blanket closely around him, so as partly to conceal his countenance, he remained, during the service, immovable, but deeply attentive. Natty passed the place that was so freely taken by his red

companion, and seated himself on one end of a log that was lying near the fire, where he continued, with his rifle standing between his legs, absorbed in reflections, seemingly of no very pleasing nature. The youth found a seat among the congregation, and another silence prevailed.

Mr. Grant now arose and commenced his service with the sublime declaration of the Hebrew prophet: "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." The example of Mr. Jones was unnecessary to teach the congregation to rise; the solemnity of the divine effected this as by magic. After a short pause, Mr. Grant proceeded with the solemn and winning exhortation of his service. Nothing was heard but the deep though affectionate tones of the reader, as he went slowly through this exordium; until, something unfortunately striking the mind of Richard as incomplete, he left his place and walked on tiptoe from the room.

When the clergyman bent his knees in prayer and confession, the congregation so far imitated his example as to resume their seats; whence no succeeding effort of the divine, during the evening, was able to remove them in a body. Some rose at times; but by far the larger part continued unbending; observant, it is true, but it was the kind of observation that regarded the ceremony as a spectacle rather than a worship in which they were to participate. Thus deserted by his clerk, Mr. Grant continued to read; but no response was audible. The short and solemn pause that succeeded each petition was made; still no voice repeated the eloquent language of the prayer.

The lips of Elizabeth moved, but they moved in vain; and, accustomed as she was to the service of the churches of the metropolis, she was beginning to feel the awkwardness of the circumstance most painfully, when a soft, low female voice repeated after the priest, "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done." Startled at finding one of her own sex in that place who could rise superior to natural timidity, Miss Temple turned her eyes in the direction of the penitent. She observed a young female on her knees, but a short distance from her, with her meek face humbly bent over her book.

The appearance of this stranger, for such she was, entirely, to Elizabeth, was light and fragile. Her dress was neat and becoming; and her countenance, though pale and slightly agitated, excited deep interest by its sweet and

melancholy expression. A second and third response was made by this juvenile assistant, when the manly sounds of a male voice proceeded from the opposite part of the room. Miss Temple knew the tones of the young hunter instantly, and struggling to overcome her own diffidence, she added her low voice to the number.

All this time Benjamin stood thumbing the leaves of a prayer-book with great industry; but some unexpected difficulties prevented his finding the place. Before the divine reached the close of the confession, however, Richard reappeared at the door, and, as he moved lightly across the room, he took up the response, in a voice that betrayed no other concern than that of not being heard. In his hand he carried a small open box, with the figures "8 by 10" written in black paint on one of its sides; which, having placed in the pulpit, apparently as a footstool for the divine, he returned to his station in time to say, sonorously, "Amen." The eyes of the congregation, very naturally, were turned to the windows, as Mr. Jones entered with his singular load; and then, as if accustomed to his "general agency," were again bent on the priest, in close and curious attention.

The long experience of Mr. Grant admirably qualified him to perform his present duty. He well understood the character of his listeners, who were mostly a primitive people in their habits; and who, being a good deal addicted to subtleties and nice distinctions in their religious opinions, viewed the introduction of any such temporal assistance as form into their spiritual worship, not only with jealousy, but frequently with disgust. He had acquired much of his knowledge from studying the great book of human nature as it lay open in the world; and, knowing how dangerous it was to contend with ignorance, uniformly endeavored to avoid dictating where his better reason taught him it was the most prudent to attempt to lead. His orthodoxy had no dependence on his cassock; he could pray with fervor and with faith, if circumstances required it, without the assistance of his clerk; and he had even been known to preach a most evangelical sermon, in the winning manner of native eloquence, without the aid of a cambric handkerchief.

In the present instance he yielded, in many places, to the prejudices of his congregation; and when he had ended, there was not one of his new hearers who did not think the

ceremonies less papal and offensive, and more conformant to his or her own notions of devout worship, than they had been led to expect from a service of forms. Richard found in the divine, during the evening, a most powerful co-operator in his religious schemes. In preaching, Mr. Grant endeavored to steer a middle course between the mystical doctrines of those sublimated creeds which daily involve their professors in the most absurd contradictions, and those fluent rules of moral government which would reduce the Saviour to a level with the teacher of a school of ethics. Doctrine it was necessary to preach, for nothing less would have satisfied the disputatious people who were his listeners, and who would have interpreted silence on his part into a tacit acknowledgment of the superficial nature of his creed. We have already said that, among the endless variety of religious instructors, the settlers were accustomed to hear every denomination urge its own distinctive precepts, and to have found one indifferent to this interesting subject would have been destructive to his influence. But Mr. Grant so happily blended the universally received opinions of the Christian faith with the dogmas of his own Church that, although none were entirely exempt from the influence of his reasons, very few took any alarm at the innovation.

“When we consider the great diversity of the human character, influenced as it is by education, by opportunity, and by the physical and moral conditions of the creature, my dear hearers,” he earnestly concluded, “it can excite no surprise that creeds so very different in their tendencies should grow out of a religion revealed, it is true, but whose revelations are obscured by the lapse of ages, and whose doctrines were, after the fashion of the countries in which they were first promulgated, frequently delivered in parables, and in a language abounding in metaphors and loaded with figures. On points where the learned have, in purity of heart, been compelled to differ, the unlettered will necessarily be at variance. But, happily for us, my brethren, the fountain of divine love flows from a source too pure to admit of pollution in its course; it extends, to those who drink of its vivifying waters, the peace of the righteous, and life everlasting; it endures through all time, and it pervades creation. If there be mystery in its workings, it is the mystery of a Divinity. With a clear knowledge of the nature, the might, and majesty of God, there

might be conviction, but there could be no faith. If we are required to believe in doctrines that seem not in conformity with the deductions of human wisdom, let us never forget that such is the mandate of a wisdom that is infinite. It is sufficient for us that enough is developed to point our path aright, and to direct our wandering steps to that portal which shall open on the light of an eternal day. Then, indeed, it may be humbly hoped that the film which has been spread by the subtleties of earthly arguments will be dissipated by the spiritual light of Heaven; and that our hour of probation, by the aid of divine grace, being once passed in triumph, will be followed by an eternity of intelligence and endless ages of fruition. All that is now obscure shall become plain to our expanded faculties; and what to our present senses may seem irreconcilable to our limited notions of mercy, of justice, and of love, shall stand irradiated by the light of truth, confessedly the suggestions of Omniscience, and the acts of an All-powerful Benevolence.

“What a lesson of humility, my brethren, might not each of us obtain from a review of his infant hours, and the recollection of his juvenile passions! How differently do the same acts of parental rigor appear, in the eyes of the suffering child, and of the chastened man! When the sophist would supplant, with the wild theories of his worldly wisdom, the positive mandates of inspiration, let him remember the expansion of his own feeble intellects, and pause—let him feel the wisdom of God in what is partially concealed, as well as that which is revealed; in short, let him substitute humility for pride of reason—let him have faith, and live!

“The consideration of this subject is full of consolation, my hearers, and does not fail to bring with it lessons of humility and of profit, that, duly improved, would both chasten the heart and strengthen the feeble-minded man in his course. It is a blessed consolation to be able to lay the misdoubtings of our arrogant nature at the threshold of the dwelling-place of the Deity, from whence they shall be swept away, at the great opening of the portal, like the mists of the morning before the rising sun. It teaches us a lesson of humility, by impressing us with the imperfection of human powers, and by warning us of the many weak points where we are open to the attack of the great enemy of our race; it proves to us that we are in danger

of being weak, when our vanity would fain soothe us into the belief that we are most strong; it forcibly points out to us the vainglory of intellect, and shows us the vast difference between a saving faith and the corollaries of a philosophical theology; and it teaches us to reduce our self-examination to the test of good works. By good works must be understood the fruits of repentance, the chiefest of which is charity. Not that charity only which causes us to help the needy and comfort the suffering, but that feeling of universal philanthropy which, by teaching us to love, causes us to judge with lenity all men; striking at the root of self-righteousness, and warning us to be sparing of our condemnation of others, while our own salvation is not yet secure.

“The lesson of expediency, my brethren, which I would gather from the consideration of this subject, is most strongly inculcated by humility. On the leading and essential points of our faith, there is but little difference among those classes of Christians who acknowledge the attributes of the Saviour, and depend on his mediation. But heresies have polluted every church, and schisms are the fruit of disputation. In order to arrest these dangers, and to insure the union of his followers, it would seem that Christ had established his visible church, and delegated the ministry. Wise and holy men, the fathers of our religion, have expended their labors in clearing what was revealed from the obscurities of language, and the results of their experience and researches have been embodied in the form of evangelical discipline. That this discipline must be salutary, is evident from the view of the weakness of human nature that we have already taken; and that it may be profitable to us, and all who listen to its precepts and its liturgy, may God, in his infinite wisdom, grant!—And now to,” etc.

With this ingenious reference to his own forms and ministry, Mr. Grant concluded his discourse. The most profound attention had been paid to the sermon during the whole of its delivery, although the prayers had not been received with so perfect demonstration of respect. This was by no means an intended slight of that liturgy to which the divine alluded, but was the habit of a people who owed their very existence, as a distinct nation, to the doctrinal character of their ancestors. Sundry looks of private dissatisfaction were exchanged between Hiram and one of

two of the leading members of the *conference*, but the feeling went no further at that time; and the congregation, after receiving the blessing of Mr. Grant, dispersed in silence, and with great decorum.

CHAPTER XII.

“Your creeds and dogmas of a learned church
 May build a fabric, fair with moral beauty;
 But it would seem that the strong hand of God
 Can, only, 'rase the devil from the heart.”—DUO.

WHILE the congregation was separating, Mr. Grant approached the place where Elizabeth and her father were seated, leading the youthful female whom we have mentioned in the preceding chapter, and presented her as his daughter. Her reception was as cordial and frank as the manners of the country, and the value of good society, could render it; the two young women feeling, instantly, that they were necessary to the comfort of each other. The Judge, to whom the clergyman's daughter was also a stranger, was pleased to find one who, from habits, sex, and years, could probably contribute largely to the pleasures of his own child, during her first privations, on her removal from the associations of a city to the solitude of Templeton; while Elizabeth, who had been forcibly struck with the sweetness and devotion of the youthful suppliant, removed the slight embarrassment of the timid stranger, by the ease of her own manners. They were at once acquainted; and, during the ten minutes that the “academy” was clearing, engagements were made between the young people, not only for the succeeding day, but they would probably have embraced in their arrangements half of the winter, had not the divine interrupted them, by saying:

“Gently, gently, my dear Miss Temple, or you will make my girl too dissipated. You forget that she is my house-keeper, and that my domestic affairs must remain unattended to, should Louisa accept of half the kind offers you are so good as to make her.”

“And why should they not be neglected entirely, sir?” interrupted Elizabeth. “There are but two of you; and certain I am that my father's house will not only contain you both, but will open its doors spontaneously to receive

such guests. Society is a good, not to be rejected on account of cold forms, in this wilderness, sir ; and I have often heard my father say, that hospitality is not a virtue in a new country, the favor being conferred by the guest."

"The manner in which Judge Temple exercises its rites would confirm this opinion ; but we must not trespass too freely. Doubt not that you will see us often, my child particularly, during the frequent visits that I shall be compelled to make to the distant parts of the country. But to obtain an influence with such a people," he continued, glancing his eyes toward the few who were still lingering, curious observers of the interview, "a clergyman must not awaken envy or distrust, by dwelling under so splendid a roof as that of Judge Temple."

"You like the roof, then, Mr. Grant," cried Richard, who had been directing the extinguishment of the fires, and other little necessary duties, and who approached in time to hear the close of the divine's speech—"I am glad to find one man of taste at last. Here's 'duke, now, pretends to call it by every abusive name he can invent ; but though 'duke is a tolerable judge, he is a very poor carpenter, let me tell him. Well, sir, well, I think we may say, without boasting, that the service was as well performed this evening as you often see ; I think, quite as well as I ever knew it to be done in old Trinity—that is, if we except the organ. But there is the schoolmaster leads the psalm with a very good air. I used to lead myself, but latterly I have sung nothing but bass. There is a good deal of science to be shown in the bass, and it affords a fine opportunity to show off a full, deep voice. Benjamin, too, sings a good bass, though he is often out in the words. Did you ever hear Benjamin sing the 'Bay of Biscay, O ?'"

"I believe he gave us part of it this evening," said Marmaduke, laughing. "There was, now and then, a fearful quaver in his voice, and it seems that Mr. Penguillian is like most others who do one thing particularly well ; he knows nothing else. He has, certainly, a wonderful partiality to one tune, and he has a prodigious self-confidence in that one, for he delivers himself like a northwester sweeping across the lake. But come, gentlemen, our way is clear, and the sleigh waits. Good-evening, Mr. Grant. Good-night, young lady—remember you dine beneath the Corinthian roof, to-morrow, with Elizabeth."

The parties separated, Richard holding a close dissertation with Mr. Le Quoi, as they descended the stairs, on the subject of psalmody, which he closed by a violent eulogium on the air of the "Bay of Biscay, O," as particularly connected with his friend Benjamin's execution.

During the preceding dialogue, Mohegan retained his seat, with his head shrouded in his blanket, as seemingly inattentive to surrounding objects as the departing congregation was itself to the presence of the aged chief. Natty, also, continued on the log where he had first placed himself, with his head resting on one of his hands, while the other held the rifle, which was thrown carelessly across his lap. His countenance expressed uneasiness, and the occasional unquiet glances that he had thrown around him during the service, plainly indicated some unusual causes for unhappiness. His continuing seated was, however, out of respect to the Indian chief, to whom he paid the utmost deference on all occasions, although it was mingled with the rough manner of a hunter.

The young companion of these two ancient inhabitants of the forest remained also standing before the extinguished brands, probably from an unwillingness to depart without his comrades. The room was now deserted by all but this group, the divine, and his daughter. As the party from the mansion-house disappeared, John arose, and, dropping the blanket from his head, he shook back the mass of black hair from his face, and, approaching Mr. Grant, he extended his hand, and said solemnly :

"Father, I thank you. The words that have been said, since the rising moon, have gone upward, and the Great Spirit is glad. What you have told your children, they will remember, and be good." He paused a moment, and then, elevating himself with the grandeur of an Indian chief, he added : "If Chingachgook lives to travel toward the setting sun, after his tribe, and the Great Spirit carries him over the lakes and mountains with the breath of his body, he will tell his people the good talk he has heard ; and they will believe him ; for who can say that Mohegan has ever lied ?"

"Let him place his dependence on the goodness of Divine mercy," said Mr. Grant, to whom the proud consciousness of the Indian sounded a little heterodox, "and it never will desert him. When the heart is filled with

love to God, there is no room for sin. But, young man, to you I owe not only an obligation, in common with those you saved this evening on the mountain, but my thanks for your respectful and pious manner in assisting in the service at a most embarrassing moment. I should be happy to see you sometimes at my dwelling, when, perhaps, my conversation may strengthen you in the path which you appear to have chosen. It is so unusual to find one of your age and appearance, in these woods, at all acquainted with our holy liturgy, that it lessens at once the distance between us, and I feel that we are no longer strangers. You seem quite at home in the service; I did not perceive that you had even a book, although good Mr. Jones had laid several in different parts of the room."

"It would be strange if I were ignorant of the service of our church, sir," returned the youth, modestly; "for I was baptized in its communion and I have never yet attended public worship elsewhere. For me to use the forms of any other denomination would be as singular as our own have proved to the people here this evening."

"You give me great pleasure, my dear sir," cried the divine, seizing the other by the hand, and shaking it cordially. "You will go home with me now—indeed you must—my child has yet to thank you for saving my life. I will listen to no apologies. This worthy Indian, and your friend, there, will accompany us. Bless me! to think that he has arrived at manhood in this country, without entering a dissenting* meeting-house!"

"No, no," interrupted the Leather-Stocking, "I must away to the wigwam; there's work there that mustn't be forgotten for all your churchings and merry-makings. Let the lad go with you in welcome; he is used to keeping company with ministers, and talking of such matters; so is old John, who was christianized by the Moravians about the time of the old war. But I am a plain unlearned man, that has sarved both the king and his country, in his day, ag'in the French and savages, but never so much as looked into a book, or larnt a letter of scholarship, in my born days. I've never seen the use of much in-door work, though I have lived to be partly bald, and in my time have killed two hundred beaver in a season, and that without

* The divines of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States commonly call other denominations *Dissenters*, though there never was an established church in their own country!

counting the other game. If you mistrust what I am telling you, you can ask Chingachgook there, for I did it in the heart of the Delaware country, and the old man is knowing to the truth of every word I say."

"I doubt not, my friend, that you have been both a valiant soldier and skilful hunter in your day," said the divine; "but more is wanting to prepare you for that end which approaches. You may have heard the maxim, that 'young men *may* die, but that old men *must*.'"

"I'm sure I never was so great a fool as to expect to live forever," said Natty, giving one of his silent laughs; "no man need do that, who trails the savages through the woods, as I have done, and lives, for the hot months, on the lake streams. I've a strong constitution, I must say that for myself, as is plain to be seen; for I've drunk the Onondaga water a hundred times, while I've been watching the deer-licks, when the fever-an-agy seeds was to be seen in it as plain and as plenty as you can see the rattlesnakes on old Crumhorn. But then, I never expected to hold out forever; though there's them living who have seen the German flats a wilderness; ay! and them that's larned, and acquainted with religion, too; though you might look a week, now, and not find even the stump of a pine on them; and that's a wood that lasts in the ground the better part of a hundred years after the tree is dead."

"This is but time, my good friend," returned Mr. Grant, who began to take an interest in the welfare of his new acquaintance, "but I would have you prepare for eternity. It is incumbent on you to attend places of public worship, as I am pleased to see that you have done this evening. Would it not be heedless in you to start on a day's toil of hard hunting, and leave your ramrod and flint behind?"

"It must be a young hand in the woods," interrupted Natty, with another laugh, "that didn't know how to dress a rod out of an ash sapling or find a fire-stone in the mountains. No, no, I never expected to live forever; but I see times be altering in these mountains from what they was thirty years ago, or, for that matter, ten years. But might makes right, and the law is stronger than an old man, whether he is one that has much larning, or only like me, that is better now at standing at the passes than in following the hounds, as I once used to could. Heigh-ho! I never know'd preaching come into a settlement but it made game scarce, and raised the price of gunpowder;

and that's a thing that's not as easily made as a ramrod or an Indian flint."

The divine, perceiving that he had given his opponent an argument by his own unfortunate selection of a comparison, very prudently relinquished the controversy; although he was fully determined to resume it at a more happy moment. Repeating his request to the young hunter, with great earnestness, the youth and Indian consented to accompany him and his daughter to the dwelling that the care of Mr. Jones had provided for their temporary residence. Leather-Stocking persevered in his intention of returning to the hut, and at the door of the building they separated.

After following the course of one of the streets of the village a short distance, Mr. Grant, who led the way, turned into a field, through a pair of open bars, and entered a footpath, of but sufficient width to admit one person to walk in at a time. The moon had gained a height that enabled her to throw her rays perpendicularly on the valley; and the distinct shadows of the party flitted along on the banks of the silver snow, like the presence of aerial figures, gliding to their appointed place of meeting. The night still continued intensely cold, although not a breath of wind was felt. The path was beaten so hard, that the gentle female, who made one of the party, moved with ease along its windings; though the frost emitted a low creaking at the impression of even her light footsteps.

The clergyman in his dark dress of broadcloth, with his mild, benevolent countenance occasionally turned toward his companions, expressing that look of subdued care which was its characteristic, presented the first object in this singular group. Next to him moved the Indian, his hair falling about his face, his head uncovered, and the rest of his form concealed beneath his blanket. As his swarthy visage, with its muscles fixed in rigid composure, was seen under the light of the moon, which struck his face obliquely, he seemed a picture of resigned old age, on whom the storms of winter had beaten in vain for the greater part of a century; but when, in turning his head, the rays fell directly on his dark, fiery eyes, they told a tale of passions unrestrained, and of thoughts free as air. The slight person of Miss Grant, which followed next, and which was but too thinly clad for the severity of the season, formed a marked contrast to the wild attire and uneasy glances of

the Delaware chief ; and more than once during their walk, the young hunter, himself no insignificant figure in the group, was led to consider the difference in the human form, as the face of Mohegan, and the gentle countenance of Miss Grant, with eyes that rivalled the soft hue of the sky, met his view at the instant that each turned to throw a glance at the splendid orb which lighted their path. Their way, which led through fields that lay at some distance in the rear of the houses, was cheered by a conversation that flagged or became animated with the subject. The first to speak was the divine.

"Really," he said, "it is so singular a circumstance to meet with one of your age, that has not been induced by idle curiosity to visit any other church than the one in which he has been educated, that I feel a strong curiosity to know the history of a life so fortunately regulated. Your education must have been excellent ; as indeed is evident from your manners and language. Of which of the States are you a native, Mr. Edwards? for such, I believe, was the name that you gave Judge Temple."

"Of this."

"Of this! I was at a loss to conjecture, from your dialect, which does not partake, particularly, of the peculiarities of any country with which I am acquainted. You have, then, resided much in the cities, for no other part of this country is so fortunate as to possess the constant enjoyment of our excellent liturgy."

The young hunter smiled, as he listened to the divine while he so clearly betrayed from what part of the country he had come himself ; but, for reasons probably connected with his present situation, he made no answer.

"I am delighted to meet with you, my young friend, for I think an ingenuous mind, such as I doubt not yours must be, will exhibit all the advantages of a settled doctrine and devout liturgy. You perceive how I was compelled to bend to the humors of my hearers this evening. Good Mr. Jones wished me to read the communion, and, in fact, all the morning service ; but, happily, the canons do not require this of an evening. It would have wearied a new congregation ; but to-morrow I purpose administering the sacrament. Do you commune, my young friend?"

"I believe not, sir," returned the youth, with a little embarrassment, that was not at all diminished by Miss Grant's pausing involuntarily, and turning her eyes on him in sur-

prise—"I fear that I am not qualified ; I have never yet approached the altar ; neither would I wish to do it while I find so much of the world clinging to my heart."

"Each must judge for himself," said Mr. Grant ; "though I should think that a youth who had never been blown about by the wind of false doctrines, and who has enjoyed the advantages of our liturgy for so many years in its purity, might safely come. Yet, sir, it is a solemn festival, which none should celebrate until there is reason to hope it is not mockery. I observed this evening, in your manner to Judge Temple, a resentment that bordered on one of the worst of human passions. We will cross this brook on the ice ; it must bear us all, I think, in safety. Be careful not to slip, my child." While speaking, he descended a little bank by the path, and crossed one of the small streams that poured their waters into the lake ; and, turning to see his daughter pass, observed that the youth had advanced, and was kindly directing her footsteps. When all were safely over, he moved up the opposite bank, and continued his discourse. "It was wrong, my dear sir, very wrong, to suffer such feelings to rise, under any circumstances, and especially in the present, where the evil was not intended."

"There is good in the talk of my father," said Mohegan, stopping short, and causing those who were behind him to pause also ; "it is the talk of Miquon. The white man may do as his fathers have told him ; but the 'Young Eagle' has the blood of a Delaware chief in his veins ; it is red, and the stain it makes can only be washed out with the blood of a Mingo."

Mr. Grant was surprised by the interruption of the Indian, and, stopping, faced the speaker. His mild features were confronted to the fierce and determined looks of the chief, and expressed the horror he felt at hearing such sentiments from one who professed the religion of his Saviour. Raising his hands to a level with his head, he exclaimed :

"John, John ! is this the religion that you have learned from the Moravians ? But no—I will not be so uncharitable as to suppose it. They are a pious, a gentle, and a mild people, and could never tolerate these passions. Listen to the language of the Redeemer : ' But I say unto you, love your enemies ; bless them that curse you ; do good to them that hate you ; pray for them that spitefully use

you and persecute you.' This is the command of God, John, and, without striving to cultivate such feelings, no man can see Him."

The Indian heard the divine with attention ; the unusual fire of his eye gradually softened, and his muscles relaxed into their ordinary composure ; but, slightly shaking his head, he motioned with dignity for Mr. Grant to resume his walk, and followed himself in silence. The agitation of the divine caused him to move with unusual rapidity along the deep path, and the Indian, without any apparent exertion, kept an equal pace ; but the young hunter observed the female to linger in her steps, until a trifling distance intervened between the two former and the latter. Struck by the circumstance, and not perceiving any new impediment to retard her footsteps, the youth made a tender of his assistance.

"You are fatigued, Miss Grant," he said ; "the snow yields to the foot, and you are unequal to the strides of us men. Step on the crust, I entreat you, and take the help of my arm. Yonder light is, I believe, the house of your father ; but it seems yet at some distance."

"I am quite equal to the walk," returned a low, tremulous voice ; "but I am startled by the manner of that Indian. Oh ! his eye was horrid, as he turned to the moon, in speaking to my father. But I forget, sir ; he is your friend, and by his language may be your relative ; and yet of you I do not feel afraid."

The young man stepped on the bank of snow, which firmly sustained his weight, and by a gentle effort induced his companion to follow. Drawing her arm through his own, he lifted his cap from his head, allowing the dark locks to flow in rich curls over his open brow, and walked by her side with an air of conscious pride, as if inviting an examination of his utmost thoughts. Louisa took but a furtive glance at his person, and moved quietly along, at a rate that was greatly quickened by the aid of his arm.

"You are but little acquainted with this peculiar people, Miss Grant," he said, "or you would know that revenge is a virtue with an Indian. They are taught, from infancy upward, to believe it a duty never to allow an injury to pass unrevenged ; and nothing but the stronger claims of hospitality can guard one against their resentments where they have power."

"Surely, sir," said Miss Grant, involuntarily withdraw-

ing her arm from his, "you have not been educated with such unholy sentiments?"

"It might be a sufficient answer to your excellent father to say that I was educated in the church," he returned; "but to you I will add that I have been taught deep and practical lessons of forgiveness. I believe that, on this subject, I have but little cause to reproach myself; it shall be my endeavor that there yet be less."

While speaking he stopped, and stood with his arm again proffered to her assistance. As he ended, she quietly accepted his offer, and they resumed their walk.

Mr. Grant and Mohegan had reached the door of the former's residence, and stood waiting near its threshold for the arrival of their young companions. The former was earnestly occupied in endeavoring to correct, by his precepts, the evil propensities that he had discovered in the Indian during their conversation; to which the latter listened in profound but respectful attention. On the arrival of the young hunter and the lady, they entered the building. The house stood at some distance from the village, in the centre of a field, surrounded by stumps that were peering above the snow, bearing caps of pure white, nearly two feet in thickness. Not a tree nor a shrub was nigh it; but the house, externally, exhibited that cheerless, unfurnished aspect which is so common to the hastily erected dwellings of a new country. The uninviting character of its outside was, however, happily relieved by the exquisite neatness and comfortable warmth within.

They entered an apartment that was fitted as a parlor, though the large fireplace, with its culinary arrangements, betrayed the domestic uses to which it was occasionally applied. The bright blaze from the hearth rendered the light that proceeded from the candle Louisa produced, unnecessary; for the scanty furniture of the room was easily seen and examined by the former. The floor was covered in the centre by a carpet made of rags, a species of manufacture that was then, and yet continues to be, much in use in the interior; while its edges, that were exposed to view, were of unspotted cleanliness. There was a trifling air of better life in a tea-table and work-stand, as well as in an old-fashioned mahogany bookcase; but the chairs, the dining-table, and the rest of the furniture, were of the plainest and cheapest construction. Against the walls were hung a few specimens of needle-work and

drawing, the former executed with great neatness, though of somewhat equivocal merit in their designs, while the latter were strikingly deficient in both.

One of the former represented a tomb, with a youthful female weeping over it, exhibiting a church with arched windows in the background. On the tomb were the names, with the dates of the births and deaths, of several individuals, all of whom bore the name of Grant. An extremely cursory glance at this record was sufficient to discover to the young hunter the domestic state of the divine. He there read that he was a widower; and that the innocent and timid maiden, who had been his companion, was the only survivor of six children. The knowledge of the dependence which each of these meek Christians had on the other, for happiness, threw an additional charm around the gentle, but kind attentions which the daughter paid to the father.

These observations occurred while the party were seating themselves before the cheerful fire, during which time there was a suspension of discourse. But, when each was comfortably arranged, and Louisa, after laying aside a thin coat of faded silk, and a gipsy hat, that was more becoming to her modest, ingenuous countenance than appropriate to the season, had taken a chair between her father and the youth, the former resumed the conversation.

"I trust, my young friend," he said, "that the education you have received has eradicated most of those revengeful principles which you may have inherited by descent, for I understand from the expressions of John, that you have some of the blood of the Delaware tribe. Do not mistake me, I beg, for it is not color, nor lineage, that constitutes merit; and I know not that he who claims affinity to the proper owners of this soil has not the best right to tread these hills with the lightest conscience."

Mohegan turned solemnly to the speaker, and, with the peculiarly significant gestures of an Indian, he spoke:

"Father, you are not yet past the summer of life; your limbs are young. Go to the highest hill, and look around you. All that you see, from the rising to the setting sun, from the head-waters of the great spring to where the 'crooked river'* is hid by the hills, is his. He has Dela-

* The Susquehannah means crooked river; "hannah," or "hannock," meant river in many of the native dialects. Thus we find Rappahannock as far south as Virginia.

ware blood, and his right is strong. But the brother of Miquon is just, he will cut the country in two parts, as the river cuts the lowlands, and will say to the 'Young Eagle,' Child of the Delawares! take it—keep it—and be a chief in the land of your fathers."

"Never!" exclaimed the young hunter, with a vehemence that destroyed the rapt attention with which the divine and his daughter were listening to the Indian. "The wolf of the forest is not more rapacious for his prey than that man is greedy of gold; and yet his glidings into wealth are subtle as the movements of a serpent."

"Forbear, forbear, my son, forbear," interrupted Mr. Grant. "These angry passions must be subdued. The accidental injury you have received from Judge Temple has heightened the sense of your hereditary wrongs. But remember that the one was unintentional, and that the other is the effect of political changes, which have, in their course, greatly lowered the pride of kings, and swept mighty nations from the face of the earth. Where now are the Philistines, who so often held the children of Israel in bondage? or that city of Babylon, which rioted in luxury and vice, and who styled herself the Queen of Nations in the drunkenness of her pride? Remember the prayer of our holy litany, where we implore the Divine Power—'that it may please thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts.' The sin of the wrongs which have been done to the natives is shared by Judge Temple only in common with a whole people, and your arm will speedily be restored to its strength."

"This arm!" repeated the youth, pacing the floor in violent agitation. "Think you, sir, that I believe the man a murderer?—Oh, no! he is too wily, too cowardly, for such a crime. But let him and his daughter riot in their wealth—a day of retribution will come. No, no, no," he continued, as he trod the floor more calmly—"it is for Mohegan to suspect him of an intent to injure me; but the trifle is not worth a second thought."

He seated himself, and hid his face between his hands, as they rested on his knees.

"It is the hereditary violence of a native's passion, my child," said Mr. Grant in a low tone to his affrighted daughter, who was clinging in terror to his arm. "He is mixed with the blood of the Indians, you have heard; and neither

the refinements of education, nor the advantages of our excellent liturgy, have been able entirely to eradicate the evil. But care and time will do much for him yet."

Although the divine spoke in a low tone, yet what he uttered was heard by the youth, who raised his head, with a smile of indefinite expression, and spoke more calmly.

"Be not alarmed, Miss Grant, at either the wildness of my manner or that of my dress. I have been carried away by passions that I should struggle to repress. I must attribute it, with your father, to the blood in my veins, although I would not impeach my lineage willingly; for it is all that is left me to boast of. Yes! I am proud of my descent from a Delaware chief, who was a warrior that ennobled human nature. Old Mohegan was his friend, and will vouch for his virtues."

Mr. Grant here took up the discourse, and, finding the young man more calm, and the aged chief attentive, he entered into a full and theological discussion of the duty of forgiveness. The conversation lasted for more than an hour, when the visitors arose, and, after exchanging good wishes with their entertainers, they departed. At the door they separated, Mohegan taking the direct route to the village, while the youth moved toward the lake. The divine stood at the entrance of his dwelling, regarding the figure of the aged chief as it glided, at an astonishing gait for his years, along the deep path; his black, straight hair just visible over the bundle formed by his blanket, which was sometimes blended with the snow, under the silvery light of the moon. From the rear of the house was a window that overlooked the lake; and here Louisa was found by her father, when he entered, gazing intently on some object in the direction of the eastern mountain. He approached the spot, and saw the figure of the young hunter, at the distance of half a mile, walking with prodigious steps across the wide fields of frozen snow that covered the ice, toward the point where he knew the hut inhabited by the Leather-Stocking was situated on the margin of the lake, under a rock that was crowned by pines and hemlocks. At the next instant, the wildly-looking form entered the shadow cast from the overhanging trees, and was lost to view.

"It is marvellous how long the propensities of the savage continue in that remarkable race," said the good divine; "but if he perseveres as he has commenced, his tri-

umph shall yet be complete. Put me in mind, Louisa, to lend him the homily 'against peril of idolatry,' at his next visit."

"Surely, father, you do not think him in danger of relapsing into the worship of his ancestors?"

"No, my child," returned the clergyman, laying his hand affectionately on her flaxen locks, and smiling; "his white blood would prevent it; but there is such a thing as the idolatry of our passions."

CHAPTER XIII.

"And I'll drink out of the quart pot—
Here's a health to the barley mow."—DRINKING SONG.

ON one of the corners, where the two principal streets of Templeton intersected each other, stood, as we have already mentioned, the inn called the "Bold Dragoon." In the original plan it was ordained that the village should stretch along the little stream that rushed down the valley; and the street which led from the lake to the academy was intended to be its western boundary. But convenience frequently frustrates the best regulated plans. The house of Mr., or as, in consequence of commanding the militia of that vicinity, he was called, Captain Hollister, had, at an early day, been erected directly facing the main street, and ostensibly interposed a barrier to its further progress. Horsemen, and subsequently teamsters, however, availed themselves of an opening, at the end of the building, to shorten their passage westward, until, in time, the regular highway was laid out along this course, and houses were gradually built on either side, so as effectually to prevent any subsequent correction of the evil.

Two material consequences followed this change in the regular plans of Marmaduke. The main street, after running about half its length, was suddenly reduced to precisely that difference in its width; and the "Bold Dragoon" became, next to the mansion-house, by far the most conspicuous edifice in the place.

This conspicuousness, aided by the characters of the host and hostess, gave the tavern an advantage over all its future competitors that no circumstances could conquer. An effort was, however, made to do so; and at the corner

diagonally opposite, stood a new building that was intended, by its occupants, to look down all opposition. It was a house of wood, ornamented in the prevailing style of architecture, and about the roof and balustrades was one of the three imitators of the mansion-house. The upper windows were filled with rough boards secured by nails, to keep out the cold air—for the edifice was far from finished, although glass was to be seen in the lower apartments, and the light of the powerful fires within denoted that it was already inhabited. The exterior was painted white on the front, and on the end which was exposed to the street ; but in the rear, and on the side which was intended to join the neighboring house, it was coarsely smeared with Spanish brown. Before the door stood two lofty posts, connected at the top by a beam, from which was suspended an enormous sign, ornamented around its edges with certain curious carvings in pine boards, and on its faces loaded with masonic emblems. Over these mysterious figures was written, in large letters, "The Templeton Coffee-house, and Traveller's Hotel," and beneath them, "By Habakkuk Foote and Joshua Knapp." This was a fearful rival to the "Bold Dragoon," as our readers will the more readily perceive when we add that the same sonorous names were to be seen over a newly erected store in the village, a hatter's shop, and the gates of a tan-yard. But, either because too much was attempted to be executed well, or that the "Bold Dragoon" had established a reputation which could not be easily shaken, not only Judge Temple and his friends, but most of the villagers also, who were not in debt to the powerful firm we have named, frequented the inn of Captain Hollister, on all occasions where such a house was necessary.

On the present evening the limping veteran and his consort were hardly housed after their return from the academy, when the sounds of stamping feet at their threshold announced the approach of visitors, who were probably assembling with a view to compare opinions on the subject of the ceremonies they had witnessed.

The public, or as it was called, the "bar-room," of the "Bold Dragoon," was a spacious apartment, lined on three sides with benches, and on the fourth by fireplaces. Of the latter there were two of such size as to occupy, with their enormous jambs, the whole of that side of the apartment where they were placed, excepting room enough for

a door or two, and a little apartment in one corner, which was protected by miniature palisadoes, and profusely garished with bottles and glasses. In the entrance to this sanctuary Mrs. Hollister was seated, with great gravity in her air, while her husband occupied himself with stirring the fires, moving the logs with a large stake burnt to a point at one end.

“There, sargeant, dear,” said the landlady, after she thought the veteran had got the logs arranged in the most judicious manner, “give over poking, for it’s no good ye’ll be doing, now that they burn so convaniently. There’s the glasses on the table there, and the mug that the doctor was taking his cider and ginger in, before the fire here—just put them in the bar, will ye? for we’ll be having the jooge, and the major, and Mr. Jones down the night, without reckoning Benjamin Poomp, and the lawyers; so ye’ll be fixing the room tidy; and put both flip irons in the coals; and tell Jude, the lazy black baste, that if she’s no be claneing up the kitchen I’ll turn her out of the house, and she may live wid the jontlemen that kape the ‘Coffee-house,’ good luck to ’em. Och! sargeant, surc it’s a great privilege to go to a mateing where a body can sit asy, without joomping up and down so often, as this Mr. Grant is doing that same.”

“It’s a privilege at all times, Mrs. Hollister, whether we stand or be seated; or, as good Mr. Whitefield used to do after he had made a wearisome day’s march, get on our knees and pray, like Moses of old, with a flanker to the right and left, to lift his hands to Heaven,” returned her husband, who composedly performed what she had directed to be done. “It was a very pretty fight, Betty, that the Israelites had on that day with the Amalekites. It seems that they fout on a plain, for Moses is mentioned as having gone on the heights to overlook the battle, and wrestle in prayer; and if I should judge, with my little larning, the Israelites depended mainly on their horse, for it was written that Joshua cut up the enemy with the edge of the sword; from which I infer, not only that they were horse, but well disciplyn’d troops. Indeed, it says as much as that they were chosen men; quite likely volunteers; for raw dragoons seldom strike with the *edge* of their swords, particularly if the weapon be any way crooked.”

“Pshaw! why do ye bother yourself wid texts, man, about so small a matter,” interrupted the landlady; “sure,

It was the Lord who was with 'em ; for he always sided with the Jews, before they fell away ; and it's but little matter what kind of men Joshua commanded, so that he was doing the right bidding. Aven them cursed millaishy, the Lord forgive me for swearing, that was the death of him, wid their cowardice, would have carried the day in old times. There's no rason to be thinking that the soldiers were used to the drill."

"I must say, Mrs. Hollister, that I have not often seen raw troops fight better than the left flank of the militia, at the time you mention. They rallied handsomely, and that without beat of drum, which is no easy thing to do under fire, and were very steady till he fell. But the Scriptures contain no unnecessary words ; and I will maintain that horse, who know how to strike with the *edge* of the sword, must be well disciplyn'd. Many a good sarmon has been preached about smaller matters than that one word ! If the text was not meant to be particular, why wasn't it written with the sword, and not with the edge ! Now, a back-handed stroke, on the edge, takes long practice. Goodness ! what an argument would Mr. Whitefield make of that word edge ! As to the captain, if he had only called up the guard of dragoons when he rallied the foot, they would have shown the inimy what the edge of a sword was ; for, although there was no commissioned officer with them, yet I think I must say," the veteran continued, stiffening his cravat about his throat, and raising himself up, with the air of a drill-sergeant, "they were led by a man who know'd how to bring them on, in spite of the ravine."

"Is it lade on ye would," cried the landlady, "when ye know yourself, Mr. Hollister, that the baste he rode was but little able to joomp from one rock to another, and the animal was as spry as a squirrel ? Och ! but it's useless to talk, for he's gone this many a year. I would that he had lived to see the true light ; but there's mercy for a brave sowl, that died in the saddle, fighting for the liberty. It is a poor tombstone they have given him, anyway, and many a good one that died like himself ; but the sign is very like, and I will be kapeing it up, while the blacksmith can make a hook for it to swing on, for all the 'coffee-houses' betwane this and Albany."

There is no saying where this desultory conversation would have led the worthy couple, had not the men, who

were stamping the snow off their feet, on the little platform before the door, suddenly ceased their occupation, and entered the bar-room.

For ten or fifteen minutes the different individuals, who intended either to bestow or receive edification, before the fires of the "Bold Dragoon," on that evening, were collecting, until the benches were nearly filled with men of different occupations. Dr. Todd and a slovenly-looking, shabby-genteel young man, who took tobacco profusely, wore a coat of imported cloth, cut with something like a fashionable air, frequently exhibited a large French silver watch, with a chain of woven hair and a silver key, and who, altogether, seemed as much above the artisans around him as he was himself inferior to the real gentleman, occupied a high-back wooden settee, in the most comfortable corner in the apartment.

Sundry brown mugs, containing cider or beer, were placed between the heavy andirons, and little groups were found among the guests, as subjects arose, or the liquor was passed from one to the other. No man was seen to drink by himself, nor in any instance was more than one vessel considered necessary for the same beverage; but the glass or the mug, was passed from hand to hand, until a chasm in the line, or a regard to the rights of ownership, would regularly restore the drégs of the potation to him who defrayed the cost.

Toasts were uniformly drunk; and, occasionally, some one, who conceived himself peculiarly endowed by Nature to shine in the way of wit, would attempt some such sentiment as "hoping that he" who treated, "might make a better man than his father;" or, "live till all his friends wished him dead;" while the more humble pot-companion contented himself by saying, with a most composing gravity in his air, "come, here's luck," or by expressing some other equally comprehensive desire. In every instance, the veteran landlord was requested to imitate the custom of the cupbearers to kings, and taste the liquor he presented, by the invitation of "after you is manners," with which request he ordinarily complied, by wetting his lips, first expressing the wish of "here's hoping," leaving it to the imagination of the hearers to fill the vacuum by whatever good each thought most desirable. During these movements the landlady was busily occupied with mixing the various compounds required by her customers, with

her own hands, and occasionally exchanging greetings and inquiries concerning the conditions of their respective families, with such of the villagers as approached the bar.

At length the common thirst being in some measure assuaged, conversation of a more general nature became the order of the hour. The physician, and his companion, who was one of the two lawyers of the village, being considered the best qualified to maintain a public discourse with credit, were the principal speakers, though a remark was hazarded, now and then, by Mr. Doolittle, who was thought to be their inferior only in the enviable point of education. A general silence was produced on all but the two speakers, by the following observation from the practitioner of the law :

“So, Dr. Todd, I understand that you have been performing an important operation this evening by cutting a charge of buckshot from the shoulder of the son of Leather-Stocking ?”

“Yes, sir,” returned the other, elevating his little head with an air of importance. “I had a small job up at the Judge’s in that way ; it was, however, but a trifle to what it might have been, had it gone through the body. The shoulder is not a very vital part ; and I think the young man will soon be well. But I did not know that the patient was a son of Leather-Stocking ; it is news to me to hear that Natty had a wife.”

“It is by no means a necessary consequence,” returned the other, winking, with a shrewd look around the bar-room ; “there is such a thing, I suppose you know, in law as a *filius nullius*.”

“Spake it out, man,” exclaimed the landlady ; “spake it out in king’s English ; what for should ye be talking Indian in a room full of Christian folks, though it is about a poor hunter, who is but little better in his ways than the wild savages themselves ? Och ! it’s to be hoped that the missionaries will, in his own time, make a conversion of the poor devils ; and then it will matter little of what color is the skin, or wedder there be wool or hair on the head.”

“Oh ! it is Latin, not Indian, Miss Hollister !” returned the lawyer, repeating his winks and shrewd looks ; “and Dr. Todd understands Latin, or how would he read the labels on his gallipots and drawers ? No, no, Miss Hollister, the doctor understands me ; don’t you, doctor ?”

“Hem—why, I guess I am not far out of the way,” re-

turned Elnathan, endeavoring to imitate the expression of the other's countenance, by looking jocular. "Latin is a queer language, gentlemen; now I rather guess there is no one in the room, except Squire Lippet, who can believe that 'Far. Av.' means oatmeal, in English."

The lawyer in his turn was a good deal embarrassed by this display of learning; for, although he actually had taken his first degree at one of the eastern universities, he was somewhat puzzled with the terms used by his companion. It was dangerous, however, to appear to be outdone in learning in a public bar-room, and before so many of his clients; he therefore put the best face on the matter, and laughed knowingly as if there were a good joke concealed under it, that was understood only by the physician and himself. All this was attentively observed by the listeners, who exchanged looks of approbation; and the expressions of "tonguey man," and "I guess Squire Lippet knows if anybody does," were heard in different parts of the room, as vouchers for the admiration of his auditors. Thus encouraged, the lawyer rose from his chair, and turning his back to the fire, and facing the company, he continued:

"The son of Natty, or the son of nobody, I hope the young man is not going to let the matter drop. This is a country of laws; and I should like to see it fairly tried, whether a man who owns, or says he owns, a hundred thousand acres of land, has any more right to shoot a body than another. What do you think of it, Dr. Todd?"

"Oh! sir, I am of opinion that the gentleman will soon be well, as I said before; the wound isn't in a vital part; and as the ball was extracted so soon, and the shoulder was what I call well attended to, I do not think there is as much danger as there might have been."

"I say, Squire Doolittle," continued the attorney, raising his voice, "you are a magistrate, and know what is law, and what is not law. I ask you, sir, if shooting a man is a thing that is to be settled so very easily? Suppose, sir, that the young man had a wife and family; and suppose that he was a mechanic like yourself, sir; and suppose that his family depended on him for bread; and suppose that the ball, instead of merely going through the flesh, had broken the shoulder-blade, and crippled him forever; I ask you all, gentlemen, supposing this to be the case, whether a jury wouldn't give what I call handsome damages?"

As the close of this supposititious case was addressed to the company generally, Hiram did not at first consider himself called on for a reply ; but finding the eyes of the listeners bent on him in expectation, he remembered his character for judicial discrimination, and spoke, observing a due degree of deliberation and dignity.

“Why, if a man should shoot another,” he said, “and if he should do it on purpose, and if the law took notice on’t, and if a jury should find him guilty, it would be likely to turn out a state-prison matter.”

“It would so, sir,” returned the attorney. “The law, gentlemen, is no respecter of persons in a free country. It is one of the great blessings that has been handed down to us from our ancestors, that all men are equal in the eye of the laws, as they are by nater. Though some may get property, no one knows how, yet they are not privileged to transgress the laws any more than the poorest citizen in the State. This is my notion, gentlemen ; and I think that if a man had a mind to bring this matter up, something might be made out of it that would help pay for the salve—ha ! doctor !”

“Why, sir,” returned the physician, who appeared a little uneasy at the turn the conversation was taking, “I have the promise of Judge Temple before men—not but what I would take his word as soon as his note of hand—but it was before men. Let me see—there was Mounshier Ler Quow, and Squire Jones, and Major Hartmann, and Miss Pettibone, and one or two of the blacks by, when he said that his pocket would amply reward me for what I did.”

“Was the promise made before or after the service was performed ?” asked the attorney.

“It might have been both,” returned the discreet physician ; “though I’m certain he said so before I undertook the dressing.”

“But it seems that he said his pocket should reward you, doctor,” observed Hiram. “Now I don’t know that the law will hold a man to such a promise ; he might give you his pocket with sixpence in’t, and tell you to take your pay out on’t.”

“That would not be a reward in the eye of the law,” interrupted the attorney—“not what is called a ‘quid pro quo ;’ nor is the pocket to be considered as an agent, but as a part of a man’s own person, that is, in this particular. I am of opinion that an action would lie on that promise

and I will undertake to bear him out, free of costs, if he don't recover."

To this proposition the physician made no reply ; but he was observed to cast his eyes around him, as if to enumerate the witnesses, in order to substantiate this promise also, at a future day, should it prove necessary. A subject so momentous as that of suing Judge Temple was not very palatable to the present company in so public a place ; and a short silence ensued, that was only interrupted by the opening of the door, and the entrance of Natty himself.

The old hunter carried in his hand his never-failing companion, the rifle ; and although all of the company were uncovered excepting the lawyer, who wore his hat on one side, with a certain dam'me air, Natty moved to the front of one of the fires, without in the least altering any part of his dress or appearance. Several questions were addressed to him, on the subject of the game he had killed, which he answered readily, and with some little interest ; and the landlord, between whom and Natty there existed much cordiality, on account of their both having been soldiers in youth, offered him a glass of a liquid, which if we might judge from its reception, was no unwelcome guest. When the forester had got his potation also, he quietly took his seat on the end of one of the logs that lay nigh the fires, and the slight interruption produced by his entrance seemed to be forgotten.

"The testimony of the blacks could not be taken, sir," continued the lawyer, "for they are all the property of Mr. Jones, who owns their time. But there is a way by which Judge Temple, or any other man, might be made to pay for shooting another, and for the cure in the bargain. There is a way, I say, and that without going into the 'court of errors,' too."

"And a mighty big error ye would make of it, Mister Todd," cried the landlady, "should ye be putting the matter into the law at all, with Joodge Temple, who has a purse as long as one of them pines on the hill, and who is an asy man to dale wid, if yees but mind the humor of him. He's a good man is Joodge Temple, and a kind one, and one who will be no the likelier to do the pratty thing, because ye would wish to tariffy him wid the law. I know of but one objection to the same, which is an over-carelessness about his sowl. It's neither a Methodie, nor a Papish, nor Prاسبetyrian, that he is, but just nothing at all ; and it's

hard to think that he, 'who will not fight the good fight, under the banners of a rig'lar church, in this world, will be mustered among the chosen in heaven,' as my husband, the captain there, as ye call him, says—though there is but one captain that I know, who deserves the name. I hopes, Lather-Stocking, ye'll no be foolish, and putting the boy up to try the law in the matter ; for 'twill be an evil day to ye both, when ye first turn the skin of so panceable an animal as a sheep into a bone of contention. The lad is wilcome to his drink for nothing, until his shoulther will bear the rifle ag'in."

"Well that's gin'rous," was heard from several mouths at once, for this was a company in which a liberal offer was not thrown away ; while the hunter, instead of expressing any of that indignation which he might be supposed to feel, at hearing the hurt of his young companion alluded to, opened his mouth, with the silent laugh for which he was so remarkable ; and after he had indulged his humor, made this reply :

"I know'd the Judge would do nothing with his smooth-bore when he got out of his sleigh. I never saw but one smooth-bore that would carry at all, and that was a French ducking-piece, upon the big lakes ; it had a barrel half as long ag'in as my rifle, and would throw fine shot into a goose at one hundred yards ; but it made dreadful work with the game, and you wanted a boat to carry it about in. When I went with Sir William ag'in the French, at Fort Niagara, all the rangers used the rifle ; and a dreadful weapon it is, in the hands of one who knows how to charge it, and keep a steady aim. The captain knows, for he says he was a soldier in Shirley's ; and, though they were nothing but baggonet-men, he must know how we cut up the French and Iroquois in the skrimmages in that war. Chin-gachgook, which means 'Big Serpent' in English, old John Mohegan, who lives up at the hut with me, was a great warrior then, and was out with us ; he can tell all about it, too ; though he was overhand for the tomahawk, never firing more than once or twice, before he was running in for the scalps. Ah ! times is dreadfully altered since then. Why, doctor, there was nothing but a foot-path, or at the most a track for pack-horses, along the Mohawk, from the Jarman Flats up to the forts. Now, they say, they talk of running one of them wide roads with gates on it along the river ; first making a road, and ther

fencing it up! I hunted one season back of the Kaatskills, nigh-hand to the settlements, and the dogs often lost the scent, when they came to them highways, there was so much travel on them; though I can't say that the brutes was of a very good breed. Old Hector will wind a deer, in the fall of the year, across the broadest place in the Otsego, and that is a mile and a half, for I paced it myself on the ice, when the tract was first surveyed, under the Indian grant,"

"It sames to me, Natty, but a sorry compliment, to call your comrad after the evil one," said the landlady; "and it's no much like a snake that old John is looking now. Nimrod would be a more besameing name for the lad, and a more Christian, too, seeing that it comes from the Bible. The sargeant read me the chapter about him, the night before my christening, and a mighty asement, it was, to listen to anything from the book."

"Old John and Chingachgook were very different men to look on," returned the hunter, shaking his head at his melancholy recollections. "In the 'fifty eighth war' he was in the middle of manhood, and taller than now by three inches. If you had seen him, as I did, the morning we beat Dieskau, from behind our log walls, you would have called him as comely a red-skin as ye ever set eyes on. He was naked all to his breech-cloth and leggins; and you never seed a creater so handsomely painted. One side of his face was red, and the other black. His head was shaved clean, all to a few hairs on the crown, where he wore a tuft of eagle's feathers, as bright as if they had come from a peacock's tail. He had colored his sides so that they looked like an atomy, ribs and all; for Chingachgook had a great taste in such things; so that, what with his bold, fiery countenance, his knife, and his tomahawk, I have never seen a fiercer warrior on the ground. He played his part, too, like a man; for I saw him, next day, with thirteen scalps on his pole. And I will say this for the 'Big Snake,' that he always dealt fair, and never scalped any that he didn't kill with his own hands."

"Well, well," cried the landlady; "fighting is fighting anyway, and there is different fashions in the thing; though I can't say that I relish mangling a body after the breath is out of it; neither do I think it can be uphild by doctrine. I hope, sargeant, ye niver was helping in sich evil worrek."

"It was my duty to keep my ranks, and to stand or fall"

by the baggonet or lead," returned the veteran. "I was then in the fort, and seldom leaving my place, saw but little of the savages, who kept on the flanks or in front, skrimmaging. I remember, howsomever, to have heard mention made of the 'Great Snake,' as he was called, for he was a chief of renown; but little did I ever expect to see him enlisted in the cause of Christianity, and civilized like old John."

"Oh! he was Christianized by the Moravians, who were always over-intimate with the Delawares," said Leather-Stocking. "It's my opinion that, had they been left to themselves, there would be no such doings now, about the head-waters of the two rivers, and that these hills mought have been kept as good hunting-ground by their right owner, who is not too old to carry a rifle, and whose sight is as true as a fish-hawk hovering——"

He was interrupted by more stamping at the door, and presently the party from the mansion-house entered, followed by the Indian himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

"There's quart-pot, pint-pot, half-pint,
 Gill-pot, half-gill, nipperkin,
 And the brown bowl—
 Here's a health to the barley mow,
 My brave boys,
 Here's a health to the barley mow."—DRINKING SONG.

SOME little commotion was produced by the appearance of the new guests, during which the lawyer slunk from the room. Most of the men approached Marmaduke, and shook his offered hand, hoping "that the Judge was well;" while Major Hartmann, having laid aside his hat and wig, and substituted for the latter a warm, peaked, woollen nightcap, took his seat very quietly on one end of the settee, which was relinquished by its former occupant. His tobacco-box was next produced, and a clean pipe was handed him by the landlord. When he had succeeded in raising a smoke, the major gave a long whiff, and, turning his head toward the bar, he said:

"Petty, pring in ter toddy."

In the meantime the Judge had exchanged his saluta-

tions with most of the company, and taken a place by the side of the major, and Richard had hustled himself into the most comfortable seat in the room. Mr. Le Quoi was the last seated, nor did he venture to place his chair finally, until by frequent removals he had ascertained that he could not possibly intercept a ray of heat from any individual present. Mohegan found a place on an end of one of the benches, and somewhat approximated to the bar. When these movements had subsided, the Judge remarked pleasantly :

“Well, Betty, I find you retain your popularity through all weathers, against all rivals, and among all religions. How liked you the sermon?”

“Is it the sarmon?” exclaimed the landlady. “I can’t say but it was rasonable; but the prayers is mighty unasy. It’s no small a matter for a body in their fifty-nint’ year to be moving so much in church. Mr. Grant sames a godly man, any way, and his garrel a hommble one, and a devout. Here, John, is a mug of cider, laced with whiskey. An Indian will drink cider, though he niver be athirst.”

“I must say,” observed Hiram, with due deliberation, “that it was a tonguey thing; and I rather guess that it gave considerable satisfaction. There was one part, though, which might have been left out, or something else put in; but then I s’pose that, as it was a written discourse, it is not so easily altered as where a minister preaches without notes.”

“Ay! there’s the rub Joodge,” cried the landlady. “How can a man stand up and be preaching his word, when all that he is saying is written down, and he is as much tied to it as iver a thaving dragoon was to the pickets?”

“Well, well,” cried Marmaduke, waving his hand for silence, “there is enough said; as Mr. Grant told us, there are different sentiments on such subjects, and in my opinion he spoke most sensibly. So, Jotham, I am told you have sold your betterments to a new settler, and have moved into the village and opened a school. Was it cash or dicker?”

The man who was thus addressed occupied a seat immediately behind Marmaduke, and one who was ignorant of the extent of the Judge’s observation might have thought he would have escaped notice. He was of a thin, shapeless figure, with a discontented expression of countenance and

with something extremely shiftless in his whole air. Thus spoken to, after turning and twisting a little, by way of preparation, he made a reply.

"Why, part cash and part dicker. I sold out to a Pumfretman who was so'thin forehanded. He was to give me ten dollars an acre for the clearin', and one dollar an acre over the first cost on the woodland, and we agreed to leave the buildin's to men. So I tuck Asa Montagu, and he tuck Absalom Bement, and they two tuck old Squire Naphthali Green. And so they had a meetin', and made out a vardict of eighty dollars for the buildin's. There was twelve acres of clearin' at ten dollars, and eighty-eight at one, and the whull came to two hundred and eighty-six dollars and a half, after paying the men."

"Hum," said Marmaduke, "what did you give for the place?"

"Why, besides what's comin' to the Judge, I gi'n my brother Tim a hundred dollars for his bargain; but then there's a new house on't, that cost me sixty more, and I paid Moses a hundred dollars for choppin', and loggin', and sowin', so that the whole stood to me in about two hundred and sixty dollars. But then I had a great crop off on't, and as I got twenty-six dollars and a half more than it cost, I conclude I made a pretty good trade on't."

"Yes, but you forgot that the crop was yours without the trade, and you have turned yourself out of doors for twenty-six dollars."

"Oh! the Judge is clean out," said the man with a look of sagacious calculation; "he turned out a span of horses, that is wuth a hundred and fifty dollars of any man's money, with a bran new wagon; fifty dollars in cash, and a good note for eighty more; and a side-saddle that was valued at seven and a half—so there was jist twelve shillings betwixt us. I wanted him to turn out a set of harness, and take the cow and the sap troughs. He wouldn't—but I saw through it; he thought I should have to buy the tacklin' afore I could use the wagon and horses; but I know'd a thing or two myself; I should like to know of what use is the tacklin' to him! I offered him to trade back ag'in for one hundred and fifty-five. But my woman said she wanted to churn, so I tuck a churn for the change."

"And what do you mean to do with your time this winter? you must remember that time is money."

"Why, as master has gone down country, to see his

mother, who, they say, is going to make a die on't, I agreed to take the school in hand till he comes back. It times doesn't get worse in the spring, I've some notion of going into trade, or maybe I may move off to the Genesee; they say they are carryin' on a great stroke of business that-a-way. If the wust comes to the wust, I can but work at my trade, for I was brought up in a shoe manufactory."

It would seem that Marmaduke did not think his society of sufficient value to attempt inducing him to remain where he was; for he addressed no further discourse to the man, but turned his attention to other subjects. After a short pause, Hiram ventured a question:

"What news does the Judge bring us from the Legislature? it's not likely that Congress has done much this session; or maybe the French haven't fit any more battles lately?"

"The French, since they have beheaded their king, have done nothing but fight," returned the Judge. "The character of the nation seems changed. I knew many French gentlemen, during our war, and they all appeared to me to be men of great humanity and goodness of heart; but these Jacobins are as bloodthirsty as bull-dogs."

"There was one Roshambow wid us, down at Yorrek-town," cried the landlady; "a mighty pratty man he was, too; and their horse was the very same. It was there that the sargeant got the hurt in the leg, from the English batteries, bad luck to 'em."

"Ah! mon pauvre roi!" muttered Monsieur Le Quoi.

"The Legislature have been passing laws," continued Marmaduke, "that the country much required. Among others, there is an act prohibiting the drawing of seines, at any other than proper seasons, in certain of our streams and small lakes; and another, to prohibit the killing of deer in the teeming months. These are laws that were loudly called for, by judicious men; nor do I despair of getting an act to make the unlawful felling of timber a criminal offence."

The hunter listened to this detail with breathless attention, and, when the Judge had ended, he laughed in open derision.

"You may make your laws, Judge," he cried, "but who will you find to watch the mountains through the long summer days, or the lakes at night? Game is game, and he who finds may kill; that has been the law in these moun-

tains for forty years to my sartain knowledge ; and I think one old law is worth two new ones. None but a green one would wish to kill a doe with a fa'n by its side, unless his moccasins were getting old, or his leggins ragged, for the flesh is lean and coarse. But a rifle rings among the rocks along the lake shore, sometimes, as if fifty pieces were fired at once—it would be hard to tell where the man stood who pulled the trigger."

"Armed with the dignity of the law, Mr. Bumpo," returned the Judge, gravely, "a vigilant magistrate can prevent much of the evil that has hitherto prevailed, and which is already rendering the game scarce. I hope to live to see the day when a man's rights in his game shall be as much respected as his title to his farm."

"Your titles and your farms are all new together," cried Natty ; "but laws should be equal, and not more for one than another. I shot a deer, last Wednesday was a fortnight, and it floundered through the snowbanks till it got over a brush fence ; I catch'd the lock of my rifle in the twigs in following, and was kept back, until finally the creature got off. Now I want to know who is to pay me for that deer ; and a fine buck it was. If there hadn't been a fence I should have gotten another shot into it ; and I never draw'd upon anything that hadn't wings three times running, in my born days. No, no, Judge, it's the farmers that makes the game scarce, and not the hunters."

"Ter ter is not so plenty as in ter old war, Pumpo," said the major, who had been an attentive listener, amid clouds of smoke ; "put ter lant is not mate as for ter ter to live on, put for Christians."

"Why, major, I believe you're a friend to justice and the right, though you go so often to the grand house ; but it's a hard case to a man to have his honest calling for a livelihood stopped by laws, and that, too, when, if right was done, he mought hunt or fish on any day in the week, or on the best flat in the Patent, if he was so minded."

"I unterstant you, Letter-Stockint," returned the major, fixing his black eyes, with a look of peculiar meaning, on the hunter ; "put you didn't use to be so prutent as to look aheth mit so much care."

"Maybe there wasn't so much occasion," said the hunter, a little sulkily ; when he sunk into a silence from which he was not roused for some time.

"The Judge was saying so'thin about the French," Hiram

observed when the pause in the conversation had continued a decent time.

"Yes, sir," returned Marmaduke, "the Jacobins of France seem rushing from one act of licentiousness to another. They continue those murders which are dignified by the name of executions. You have heard that they have added the death of their Queen to the long list of their crimes."

"Les monstres!" again murmured Monsieur Le Quoi, turning himself suddenly in his chair, with a convulsive start.

"The province of La Vendée is laid waste by the troops of the republic, and hundreds of its inhabitants, who are royalists in their sentiments, are shot at a time. La Vendée is a district in the southwest of France, that continues yet much attached to the family of the Bourbons; doubtless Monsieur Le Quoi is acquainted with it, and can describe it more faithfully."

"Non, non, non, mon cher ami," returned the Frenchman in a suppressed voice, but speaking rapidly, and gesticulating with his right hand, as if for mercy, while with his left he concealed his eyes.

"There have been many battles fought lately," continued Marmaduke, "and the infuriated republicans are too often victorious. I cannot say, however, that I am sorry that they have captured Toulon from the English, for it is a place to which they have a just right."

"Ah—ha!" exclaimed Monsieur Le Quoi, springing on his feet, and flourishing both arms with great animation; "ces Anglais!"

The Frenchman continued to move about the room with great alacrity for a few minutes, repeating his exclamations to himself; when overcome by the contrary nature of his emotions, he suddenly burst out of the house, and was seen wading through the snow toward his little shop, waving his arms on high, as if to pluck down honor from the moon. His departure excited but little surprise, for the villagers were used to his manner; but Major Hartmann laughed outright, for the first during his visit, as he lifted the mug, and observed:

"Ter Frenchman is mat—put he is goot as for noting to trink: he is trunk mit joy."

"The French are good soldiers," said Captain Hollister, "they stood us in hand a good turn at Yorktown; nor do I think, although I am an ignorant man about the great

movements of the army, that his excellency would have been able to march against Cornwallis, without their reinforcements."

"Ye spake the trut', sargent," interrupted his wife, "and I would iver have ye be doing the same. It's varry pratty men is the French; and jist when I stopt the cart, the time when ye was pushing on in front it was, to kape the rig'lers in, a rigiment of the jontlemen marched by, and so I dealt them out to their liking. Was it pay I got? sure did I, and in good solid crowns; the divil a bit of continental could they muster among them all, for love nor money. Och! the Lord forgive me for swearing and spakeing of such vanities: but this I will say for the French, that they paid in good silver; and one glass would go a great way wid 'em, for they gin'rally handed it back wid a drop in the cup; and that's a brisk trade, Joodge, where the pay is good, and the men not over-partic'lar."

"A thriving trade, Mrs. Hollister," said Marmaduke. "But what has become of Richard? he jumped up as soon as seated, and has been absent so long that I am really fearful he has frozen."

"No fear of that, cousin 'duke," cried the gentleman himself; "business will sometimes keep a man warm the coldest night that ever snapt in the mountains. Betty, your husband told me, as we came out of church, that your hogs were getting mangy, and so I have been out to take a look at them, and found it true. I stepped across, doctor, and got your boy to weigh me out a pound of salts, and have been mixing it with their swill. I'll bet a saddle of venison against a gray squirrel, that they are better in a week. And now, Mrs. Hollister, I'm ready for a hissing mug of flip."

"Sure I know'd yee'd be wanting that same," said the landlady; "it's mixt and ready to the boiling. Sargeant, dear, be handing up the iron, will ye?—no, the one on the far fire, it's black, ye will see. Ah! you've the thing now; look if it's not as red as a cherry."

The beverage was heated, and Richard took that kind of draught which men are apt to indulge in, who think that they have just executed a clever thing, especially when they like the liquor.

"Oh! you have a hand, Betty, that was formed to mix flip," cried Richard, when he paused for breath. "The very iron has a flavor in it. Here, John, drink, man, drink

I and you and Dr. Todd, have done a good thing with the shoulder of that lad this very night. 'Duke, I made a song while you were gone—one day when I had nothing to do; so I'll sing you a verse or two, though I haven't really determined on the tune yet.

'What is life but a scene of care,
Where each one must toil in his way?
Then let us be jolly, and prove that we are
A set of good fellows, who seem very rare,
And can laugh and sing all the day.
Then let us be jolly,
And cast away folly,
For grief turns a black head to gray.'

—There, 'duke, what do think of that? There is another verse of it, all but the last line. I haven't got a rhyme for the last line yet. Well, old John, what do you think of the music? as good as one of your war-songs, ha?"

"Good!" said Mohegan, who had been sharing deeply in the potations of the landlady, besides paying a proper respect to the passing mugs of the major and Marmaduke.

"Pravo! pravo! Richart," cried the major, whose black eyes were beginning to swim in moisture; "pravisimo! It is a goot song; put Natty Pumpppo has a petter. Letter-Stockint, vilt sing? say, olt poy, vilt sing ter song as apout ter woots?"

"No, no, major," returned the hunter, with a melancholy shake of the head, "I have lived to see what I thought eyes could never behold in these hills, and I have no heart left for singing. If he, that has a right to be master and ruler here, is forced to squinch his thirst, when a-dry, with snow-water, it ill becomes them that have lived by his bounty to be making merry, as if there was nothing in the world but sunshine and summer."

When he had spoken, Leather-Stocking again dropped his head on his knees, and concealed his hard and wrinkled features with his hands. The change from the excessive cold without to the heat of the bar-room, coupled with the depth and frequency of Richard's draughts, had already levelled whatever inequality there might have existed between him and the other guests, on the score of spirits; and he now held out a pair of swimming mugs of foaming flip toward the hunter, as he cried:

"Merry! ay! merry Christmas to you, old boy! Sun-

shine and summer ! no ! you are blind, Leather-Stocking, 'tis moonshine and winter—take these spectacles, and open your eyes—

‘So let us be jolly,
And cast away folly,
For grief turns a black head to gray.’

—Hear how old John turns his quavers. What damned dull music an Indian song is, after all, major ! I wonder if they ever sing by note.”

While Richard was singing and talking, Mohegan was uttering dull, monotonous tones, keeping time by a gentle motion of his head and body. He made use of but few words, and such as he did utter were in his native language, and consequently only understood by himself and Natty. Without heeding Richard, he continued to sing a kind of wild, melancholy air, that rose, at times, in sudden and quite elevated notes, and then fell again into the low quavering sounds that seemed to compose the character of his music.

The attention of the company was now much divided, the men in the rear having formed themselves into little groups, where they were discussing various matters ; among the principal of which were, the treatment of mangy hogs, and Parson Grant's preaching ; while Dr. Todd was endeavoring to explain to Marmaduke the nature of the hurt received by the young hunter. Mohegan continued to sing, while his countenance was becoming vacant, though, coupled with his thick, bushy hair, it was assuming an expression very much like brutal ferocity. His notes were gradually growing louder, and soon rose to a height that caused a general cessation in the discourse. The hunter now raised his head again, and addressed the old warrior, warmly, in the Delaware language, which, for the benefit of our readers, we shall render freely into English.

“Why do you sing of your battles, Chingachgook, and of the warriors you have slain, when the worst enemy of all is near you, and keeps the Young Eagle from his rights ? I have fought in as many battles as any warrior in your tribe, but cannot boast of my deeds at such a time as this.”

“Hawk-eye,” said the Indian, tottering with a doubtful step from his place, “I am the Great Snake of the Delawares ; I can track the Mingoes like an adder that is stealing on the whip-poor-will's eggs, and strike them like the

rattlesnake, dead at a blow. The white man made the tomahawk of Chingachgook bright as the waters of Otsego, when the last sun is shining; but it is red with the blood of the Maquâs."

"And why have you slain the Mingo warriors? Was it not to keep these hunting-grounds and lakes to your father's children? and were they not given in solemn council to the Fire-eater? and does not the blood of a warrior run in the veins of a young chief, who should speak aloud, where his voice is now too low to be heard?"

The appeal of the hunter seemed in some measure to recall the confused faculties of the Indian, who turned his face toward the listeners and gazed intently on the Judge. He shook his head, throwing his hair back from his countenance, and exposed eyes that were glaring with an expression of wild resentment. But the man was not himself. His hand seemed to make a fruitless effort to release his tomahawk, which was confined by its handle to his belt, while his eyes gradually became vacant. Richard at that instant thrusting a mug before him, his features changed to the grin of idiocy, and seizing the vessel with both hands, he sank backward on the bench and drank until satiated, when he made an effort to lay aside the mug with the helplessness of total inebriety.

"Shed not blood!" exclaimed the hunter, as he watched the countenance of the Indian in its moment of ferocity; "but he is drunk and can do no harm. This is the way with all the savages; give them liquor, and they make dogs of themselves. Well, well—the day will come when right will be done; and we must have patience."

Natty still spoke in the Delaware language, and of course was not understood. He had hardly concluded before Richard cried:

"Well, old John is soon sewed up. Give him a berth, captain, in the barn, and I will pay for it. I am rich to-night, ten times richer than 'duke, with all his lands, and military lots, and funded debts, and bonds, and mortgages

'Come, let us be jolly,
And cast away folly,
For grief——'

Drink, King Hiram—drink, Mr. Doo-nothing—drink, sir, I say. This is a Christmas eve, which comes, you know but once a year."

"He! he! he! the squire is quite moosical to-night," said Hiram, whose visage began to give marvellous signs of relaxation. "I rather guess we shall make a church on't yet, squire?"

"A church, Mr. Doolittle! we will make a cathedral of it! bishops, priests, deacons, wardens, vestry, and choir-organ, organist, and bellows! By the Lord Harry, as Benjamin says, we will clap a steeple on the other end of it, and make two churches of it. What say you, 'duke, will you pay? ha! my cousin Judge, wilt pay?"

"Thou makest such a noise, Dickon," returned Marmaduke, "it is impossible that I can hear what Dr. Todd is saying. I think thou observedst, it is probable the wound will fester, so as to occasion danger to the limb in this cold weather?"

"Out of nater, sir, quite out of nater," said Elnathan, attempting to expectorate, but succeeding only in throwing a light, frothy substance, like a flake of snow, into the fire—"quite out of nater that a wound so well dressed, and with the ball in my pocket, should fester. I s'pose, as the Judge talks of taking the young man into his house, it will be most convenient if I make but one charge on't."

"I should think one would do," returned Marmaduke, with that arch smile that so often beamed on his face; leaving the beholder in doubt whether he most enjoyed the character of his companion or his own covert humor. The landlord had succeeded in placing the Indian on some straw in one of his out-buildings, where, covered with his own blanket, John continued for the remainder of the night.

In the meantime, Major Hartmann began to grow noisy and jocular; glass succeeded glass, and mug after mug was introduced, until the carousal had run deep into the night, or rather morning; when the veteran German expressed an inclination to return to the mansion-house. Most of the party had already retired, but Marmaduke knew the habits of his friend too well to suggest an earlier adjournment. So soon, however, as the proposal was made, the Judge eagerly availed himself of it, and the trio prepared to depart. Mrs. Hollister attended them to the door in person, cautioning her guests as to the safest manner of leaving her premises.

"Lane on Mister Jones, major," said she; "he's young, and will be a support to ye. Well, it's a charming sight

to see ye, anyway, at the Bould Dragoon ; and sure it's no harm to be kaping a Christmas eve wid a light heart, for it's no telling when we may have sorrow come upon us. So good-night, Joodge, and a merry Christmas to ye all, to-morrow-morning."

The gentlemen made their adieus as well as they could, and, taking the middle of the road, which was a fine, wide, and well-beaten path, they did tolerably well until they reached the gate of the mansion-house : but, on entering the Judge's domains, they encountered some slight difficulties. We shall not stop to relate them, but will just mention that, in the morning, sundry diverging paths were to be seen in the snow ; and that once, during their progress to the door, Marmaduke, missing his companions, was enabled to trace them, by one of these paths, to a spot where he discovered them with nothing visible but their heads, Richard singing in a most vivacious strain :

" Come, let us be jolly,
And cast away folly,
For grief turns a black head to gray."

CHAPTER XV.

" As she lay, on that day, in the Bay of Biscay, O ! "

PREVIOUSLY to the occurrence of the scene at the " Bold Dragoon," Elizabeth had been safely reconducted to the mansion-house, where she was left as its mistress, either to amuse or employ herself during the evening, as best suited her own inclinations. Most of the lights were extinguished ; but as Benjamin adjusted with great care and regularity four large candles, in as many massive candlesticks of brass, in a row on the sideboard, the hall possessed a peculiar air of comfort and warmth, contrasted with the cheerless aspect of the room she had left in the academy.

Remarkable had been one of the listeners to Mr. Grant, and returned with her resentment, which had been not a little excited by the language of the Judge, somewhat softened by reflection and the worship. She recollected the youth of Elizabeth, and thought it no difficult task, under present appearances, to exercise that power indirect-

ly which hitherto she had enjoyed undisputed. The idea of being governed, or of being compelled to pay the deference of servitude, was absolutely intolerable; and she had already determined within herself, some half dozen times, to make an effort that should at once bring to an issue the delicate point of her domestic condition. But as often as she met the dark, proud eye of Elizabeth, who was walking up and down the apartment, musing on the scenes of her youth and the change in her condition, and perhaps the events of the day, the housekeeper experienced an awe that she would not own to herself could be excited by anything mortal. It, however, checked her advances, and for some time held her tongue-tied. At length she determined to commence the discourse by entering on a subject that was apt to level all human distinctions, and in which she might display her own abilities.

"It was quite a wordy sarmon that Parson Grant gave us to-night," said Remarkable. "The church ministers be commonly smart sarmonizers; but they write down their idees, which is a great privilege. I don't think that, by nater, they are as tonguey speakers, for an off-hand discourse, as the standing-order ministers."

"And what denomination do you distinguish as the standing-order?" inquired Miss Temple, with some surprise.

"Why, the Presbyte'rans and Congregationals, and Baptists, too, for-ti-'now; and all sitch as don't go on their knees to prayer."

"By that rule, then, you would call those who belong to the persuasion of my father, the sitting order," observed Elizabeth.

"I'm sure I've never heard 'em spoken of by any other name than Quakers, so called," returned Remarkable, betraying a slight uneasiness; "I should be the last to call them otherwise, for I never in my life used a disparaging tarm of the Judge, or any of his family. I've always set store by the Quakers, they are so pretty-spoken, clever people, and it's a wonderment to me how your father come to marry into a church family; for they are as contrary in religion as can be. One sits still, and, for the most part, says nothing, while the church folks practyse all kinds of ways, so that I sometimes think it quite moosical to see them; for I went to a church-meeting once before, down country."

"You have found an excellence in the church liturgy that has hitherto escaped me. I will thank you to inquire whether the fire in my room burns; I feel fatigued with my journey, and will retire."

Remarkable felt a wonderful inclination to tell the young mistress of the mansion that by opening a door she might see for herself; but prudence got the better of resentment, and after pausing some little time, as a salve to her dignity, she did as desired. The report was favorable, and the young lady, wishing Benjamin, who was filling the stove with wood, and the housekeeper, each a good-night, withdrew.

The instant the door closed on Miss Temple, Remarkable commenced a sort of mysterious, ambiguous discourse, that was neither abusive nor commendatory of the qualities of the absent personage, but which seemed to be drawing nigh, by regular degrees, to a most dissatisfied description. The major-domo made no reply, but continued his occupation with great industry, which being happily completed, he took a look at the thermometer, and then, opening a drawer of the sideboard, he produced a supply of stimulants that would have served to keep the warmth in his system without the aid of the enormous fire he had been building. A small stand was drawn up near the stove, and the bottles and the glasses necessary for convenience were quietly arranged. Two chairs were placed by the side of this comfortable situation, when Benjamin, for the first time, appeared to observe his companion.

"Come," he cried, "come, Mistress Remarkable, bring yourself to an anchor on this chair. It's a peeler without, I can tell you, good woman; but what cares I? blow high or blow low, d'ye see, it's all the same thing to Ben. The niggers are snug stowed below before a fire that would roast an ox whole. The thermometer stands now at fifty-five, but if there's any vartue in good maple wood, I'll weather upon it, before one glass, as much as ten points more, so that the squire, when he comes home from Betty Hollister's warm room, will feel as hot as a hand that has given the rigging a lick with bad tar. Come, mistress, bring up in this here chair, and tell me how you like our new heiress."

"Why, to my notion, Mr. Penguillum——"

"Pump, Pump," interrupted Benjamin; "it's Christmas

eve, Mistress Remarkable, and so, d'ye see, you had better call me Pump. It's a shorter name, and as I mean to pump this here decanter till it sucks, why, you may as well call me Pump."

"Did you ever!" cried Remarkable, with a laugh that seemed to unhinge every joint in her body. "You're a moosical creature, Benjamin, when the notion takes you. But, as I was saying, I rather guess that times will be altered now in this house."

"Altered!" exclaimed the major-domo, eyeing the bottle, that was assuming the clear aspect of cut glass with astonishing rapidity; "it don't matter much, Mistress Remarkable, so long as I keep the keys of the lockers in my pocket."

"I can't say," continued the housekeeper, "but there's good eatables and drinkables enough in the house for a body's content—a little more sugar, Benjamin, in the glass—for Squire Jones is an excellent provider. But new lords, new laws; and I shouldn't wonder if you and I had an unsartain time on't in footer."

"Life is as unsartain as the wind that blows," said Benjamin, with a moralizing air; "and nothing is more vari'ble than the wind, Mistress Remarkable, unless you happen to fall in with the trades, d'ye see, and then you may run for the matter of a month at a time, with studding-sails on both sides, alow and aloft, and with the cabin-boy at the wheel."

"I know that life is disp'ut unsartain," said Remarkable, compressing her features to the humor of her companion; "but I expect there will be great changes made in the house to rights; and that you will find a young man put over your head, as there is one that wants to be over mine; and after having been settled as long as you have, Benjamin, I should judge that to be hard."

"Promotion should go according to length of sarvice," said the major-domo; "and if-so-be that they ship a hand for my berth, or place a new steward aft, I shall throw up my commission in less time than you can put a pilot-boat in stays. Thof Squire Dickens"—this was a common misnomer with Benjamin—"is a nice gentleman, and as good a man to sail with as heart could wish, yet I shall tell the squire, d'ye see, in plain English, and that's my native tongue, that if-so-be he is thinking of putting any Johnny Raw over my head, why, I shall resign. I began, forrard,

Mistress Prettybones, and worked my way aft, like a man. I was six months aboard a Garnsey lugger, hauling in the slack of the lee-sheet and coiling up rigging. From that I went a few trips in a fore-and-after, in the same trade, which, after all, was but a blind kind of sailing in the dark, where a man larns but little, excepting how to steer by the stars. Well, then, d'ye see, I larnt how a top-mast should be slushed, and how a top-gallant-sail was to be becketted ; and then I did small jobs in the cabin, such as mixing the skipper's grog. 'Twas there I got my taste, which, you must have often seen, is excellent. Well, here's better acquaintance to us."

Remarkable nodded a return to the compliment, and took a sip of the beverage before her ; for, provided it was well sweetened, she had no objection to a small potation now and then. After this observance of courtesy between the worthy couple, the dialogue proceeded.

"You have had great experiences in life, Benjamin ; for, as the Scriptor says, 'They that go down to the sea in ships see the works of the Lord.'"

"Ay ! for that matter, they in brigs and schooners, too ; and it mought say, the works of the devil. The sea, Mistress Remarkable, is a great advantage to a man, in the way of knowledge, for he sees the fashions of nations and the shape of a country. Now, I suppose, for myself here, who is but an unlearned man to some that follows the seas, I suppose that, taking the coast from Cape Ler Hogue as low down as Cape Finish-there, there isn't so much as a headland, or an island, that I don't know either the name of it or something more or less about it. Take enough, woman, to color the water. Here's sugar. It's a sweet tooth, that fellow that you hold on upon yet, Mistress Prettybones. But, as I was saying, take the whole coast along, I know it as well as the way from here to the Bold Dragoon ; and a devil of acquaintance is that Bay of Biscay. Whew ! I wish you could but hear the wind blow there. It sometimes takes two to hold one man's hair on his head. Scudding through the bay is pretty much the same thing as travelling the roads in this country, up one side of a mountain and down the other."

"Do tell !" exclaimed Remarkable ; "and does the sea run as high as mountains, Benjamin ?"

"Well, I will tell ; but first let's taste the grog. Hem ! it's the right kind of stuff, I must say, that you keep in this

country ; but then you're so close aboard the West Indies, you make but a small run of it. By the Lord Harry, woman, if Garnsey only lay somewhere between Cape Hatteras and the bite of Logann, but you'd see rum cheap ! As to the seas, they runs more in uppers in the Bay of Biscay, unless it may be in a sow-wester, when they tumble about quite handsomely ; thof it's not in the narrow sea that you are to look for a swell ; just go off the Western Islands, in a westerly blow, keeping the land on your larboard hand, with the ship's head to the south'ard, and bring to, under a close-reef'd topsail ; or, mayhap, a reef'd foresail, with a fore-topmast-staysail, and mizzen-staysail, to keep her up to the sea, if she will bear it ; and lay there for the matter of two watches, if you want to see mountains. Why, good woman, I've been off there in the Boadishey frigate, when you could see nothing but some such matter as a piece of sky, mayhap, as big as the mainsail ; and then again, there was a hole under your lee-quarter big enough to hold the whole British navy."

"Oh ! for massy's sake ! and wan't you afeard, Benjamin ? and how did you get off ?"

"Afeard ! who the devil do you think was to be frightened at a little salt water tumbling about his head ? As for getting off, when we had enough of it, and had washed our decks down pretty well, we called all hands, for, d'ye see, the watch below was in their hammocks, all the same as if they were in one of your best bedrooms ; and so we watched for a smooth time, clapt her helm hard a weather, let fall the foresail, and got the tack aboard ; and so, when we got her afore it, I ask you, Mistress Prettybones, if she didn't walk ? didn't she ? I'm no liar, good woman, when I say that I saw that ship jump from the top of one sea to another, just like one of these squirrels that can fly jumps from tree to tree."

"What ! clean out of the water ?" exclaimed Remarkable, lifting her two lank arms, with their bony hands spread in astonishment.

"It was no such easy matter to get out of the water, good woman ; for the spray flew so that you couldn't tell which was sea or which was cloud. So there we kept her afore it for the matter of two glasses. The first lieutenant he cun'd the ship himself, and there was four quarter-masters at the wheel, besides the master with six fore-castle men in the gun-room, at the relieving tackles. But then

she behaved herself so well! Oh! she was a sweet ship, mistress! That one frigate was well worth more, to live in, than the best house in the island. If I was king of England I'd have her hauled up above Lon'on bridge, and fit her up for a palace; because why? if anybody can afford to live comfortably, his majesty can."

"Well! but, Benjamin," cried the listener, who was in an ecstasy of astonishment at this relation of the steward's dangers, "what *did* you do?"

"Do! why, we did our duty like hearty fellows. Now if the countrymen of Mounsheer Ler Quaw had been aboard of her, they would have just struck her ashore on some of them small islands; but we run along the land until we found her dead to leeward off the mountains of Pico, and dam'me if I know to this day how we got there—whether we jumped over the island or hauléd round it; but there we was, and there we lay, under easy sail, fore-reaching first upon one tack and then upon t'other, so as to poke her nose out now and then and take a look to wind'ard, till the gale blow'd its pipe out."

"I wonder, now!" exclaimed Remarkable, to whom most of the terms used by Benjamin were perfectly unintelligible, but who had got a confused idea of a raging tempest. "It must be an awful life, that going to sea! and I don't feel astonishment that you are so affronted with the thoughts of being forced to quit a comfortable home like this. Not that a body cares much for't, as there's more houses than one to live in. Why, when the Judge agreed with me to come and live with him, I'd no more notion of stopping any time than anything. I happened in just to see how the family did, about a week after Mrs. Temple died, thinking to be back home ag'in night; but the family was in such a distressed way that I couldn't but stop awhile and help 'em on. I thought the situation a good one, seeing that I was an unmarried body, and they were so much in want of help; so I tarried."

"And a long time you've left your anchors down in the same place, mistress. I think you must find that the ship rides easy."

"How you talk, Benjamin! there's no believing a word you say. I must say that the Judge and Squire Jones have both acted quite clever, so long; but I see that now we shall have a specimen to the contrary. I heern say that the Judge was gone a great 'broad, and that he meant

to bring his darter hum, but I didn't calculate on sich carrins on. To my notion, Benjamin, she's likely to turn out a desp'ut ugly gal."

"Ugly!" echoed the major-domo, opening eyes, that were beginning to close in a very suspicious sleepiness, in wide amazement. "By the Lord Harry, woman, I should as soon think of calling the Boadishey a clumsy frigate. What the devil would you have? arn't her eyes as bright as the morning and evening stars? and isn't her hair as black and glistening as rigging that has just had a lick of tar? doesn't she move as stately as a first-rate in smooth water, on a bowline? Why, woman, the figure-head of the Boadishey was a fool to her, and that, as I've often heard the captain say, was an image of a great queen; and arn't queens always comely, woman? for who do you think would be a king, and not choose a handsome bedfellow?"

"Talk decent, Benjamin," said the housekeeper, "or I won't keep your company. I don't gainsay her being comely to look on, but I will maintain that she's likely to show poor conduct. She seems to think herself too good to talk to a body. From what Squire Jones had tell'd me, I some expected to be quite captivated by her company. Now, to my reckoning, Lowizy Grant is much more pritty behaved than Betsey Temple. She wouldn't so much as hold discourse with me when I wanted to ask her how she felt on coming home and missing her mammy."

"Perhaps she didn't understand you, woman; you are none of the best linguister; and then Miss Lizzy has been exercising the king's English under a great Lon'on lady, and, for that matter, can talk the language almost as well as myself, or any native-born British subject. You've forgot your schooling, and the young mistress is a great scoldard."

"Mistress!" cried Remarkable; "don't make one out to be a nigger, Benjamin. She's no mistress of mine, and never will be. And as to speech, I hold myself as second to nobody out of New England. I was born and raised in Essex County; and I've always heern say that the Bay State was provarbally for pronounsation!"

"I've often heard of that Bay of State," said Benjamin, "but can't say that I've ever been in it, nor do I know exactly whereaway it is that it lays; but I suppose there is good anchorage in it, and that it's no bad place for the taking of ling; but for size it can't be so much as a yawl

to a sloop of war compared with the Bay of Biscay, or, mayhap, Torbay. And as for language, if you want to hear the dictionary overhauled, like a log-line in a blow, you must go to Wapping and listen to the Lon'oners as they deal out their lingo. Howsomever, I see no such mighty matter that Miss Lizzy has been doing to you, good woman; so take another drop of your brew, and forgive and forget, like an honest soul."

"No, indeed! and I shan't do sitch a thing, Benjamin. This treatment is a newity to me, and what I won't put up with. I have a hundred and fifty dollars at use, besides a bed and twenty sheep, to good; and I don't crave to live in a house where a body mustn't call a young woman by her given name to her face. I *will* call her Betsey as much as I please; it's a free country, and no one can stop me. I did intend to stop while summer, but I shall quit to-morrow morning; and I will talk just as I please."

"For that matter, Mistress Remarkable," said Benjamin, "there's none here who will contradict you; for I'm of opinion that it would be as easy to stop a hurricane with a Barcelony handkerchy as to bring up your tongue when the stopper is off. I say, good woman, do they grow many monkeys along the shores of that Bay of State?"

"You're a monkey yourself, Mr. Penguillum," cried the enraged housekeeper, "or a bear—a black, beastly bear! and ain't fit for a decent woman to stay with. I'll never keep your company ag'in, sir, if I should live thirty years with the Judge. Sitch talk is more befitting the kitchen than the keeping-room of a house of one who is well-to-do in the world."

"Look you, Mistress Pitty—Patty—Prettybones, mayhap I'm some such matter as a bear, as they will find who come to grapple with me; but dam'me if I'm a monkey—a thing that chatters without knowing a word of what it says—a parrot; that will hold a dialogue, for what an honest man knows, in a dozen languages; mayhap in the Bay of State lingo; mayhap in Greek or High Dutch. But dost it know what it means itself? canst answer me that, good woman? Your midshipman can sing out, and pass the word, when the captain gives the order, but just send him adrift by himself, and let him work the ship of his own head, and stop my grog if you don't find all the Johnny Raws laughing at him."

"Stop your grog, indeed!" said Remarkable, rising with

great indignation, and seizing a candle; "you're groggy now, Benjamin, and I'll quit the room before I hear any misbecoming words from you."

The housekeeper retired, with a manner but little less dignified, as she thought, than the air of the heiress, muttering as she drew the door after her, with a noise like the report of a musket, the opprobrious terms of "drunkard," "sot," and "beast."

"Who's that you say is drunk?" cried Benjamin, fiercely, rising and making a movement toward Remarkable. "You talk of mustering yourself with a lady! you're just fit to grumble and find fault. Where the devil should you learn behavior and dictionary? in your damned Bay of State, ha?"

Benjamin here fell back in his chair, and soon gave vent to certain ominous sounds, which resembled not a little the growling of his favorite animal, the bear itself. Before, however, he was quite locked—to use the language that would suit the Della-cruscan humor of certain refined minds of the present day—"in the arms of Morpheus," he spoke aloud, observing due pauses between his epithets, the impressive terms of "monkey," "parrot," "picnic," "tar-pot," and "linguisters."

We shall not attempt to explain his meaning nor connect his sentences; and our readers must be satisfied with our informing them that they were expressed with all that coolness of contempt that a man might well be supposed to feel for a monkey.

Nearly two hours passed in this sleep before the major-domo was awakened by the noisy entrance of Richard, Major Hartmann, and the master of the mansion. Benjamin so far rallied his confused faculties as to shape the course of the two former to their respective apartments, when he disappeared himself, leaving the task of securing the house to him who was most interested in its safety. Locks and bars were but little attended to in the early days of that settlement, and so soon as Marmaduke had given an eye to the enormous fires of his dwelling, he retired. With this act of prudence closes the first night of our tale.

CHAPTER XVI.

"*Watch (aside).* Some treason, masters—
Yet stand close."—MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

It was fortunate for more than one of the bacchanalians who left the "Bold Dragoon" late in the evening that the severe cold of the season was becoming rapidly less dangerous, as they threaded the different mazes through the snow-banks that led to their respective dwellings. Then driving clouds began toward morning to flit across the heavens, and the moon set behind a volume of vapor that was impelled furiously toward the north, carrying with it the softer atmosphere from the distant ocean. The rising sun was obscured by denser and increasing columns of clouds, while the southerly wind that rushed up the valley brought the never-failing symptoms of a thaw.

It was quite late in the morning before Elizabeth, observing the faint glow which appeared on the eastern mountain long after the light of the sun had struck the opposite hills, ventured from the house, with a view to gratify her curiosity with a glance by daylight at the surrounding objects before the tardy revellers of the Christmas eve should make their appearance at the breakfast-table. While she was drawing the folds of her pelisse more closely around her form, to guard against a cold that was yet great, though rapidly yielding, in the small inclosure that opened in the rear of the house on a little thicket of low pines that were springing up where trees of a mightier growth had lately stood, she was surprised at the voice of Mr. Jones.

"Merry Christmas, merry Christmas to you, Cousin Bess," he shouted. "Ah, ha! an early riser, I see; but I knew I should steal a march on you. I never was in a house yet where I didn't get the first Christmas greeting on every soul in it, man, woman, and child—great and small—black, white, and yellow. But stop a minute till I can just slip on my coat. You are about to look at the improvements, I see, which no one can explain so well as I, who planned them all. It will be an hour before 'duke and the major can sleep off Mrs. Hollister's confounded distillations, and so I'll come down and go with you."

Elizabeth turned and observed her cousin in his night-cap, with his head out of his bedroom window, where his zeal for pre-eminence in defiance of the weather, had impelled him to thrust it. She laughed, and promising to wait for his company, re-entered the house, making her appearance again, holding in her hand a packet that was secured by several large and important seals, just in time to meet the gentleman.

"Come, Bessy come," he cried, drawing one of her arms through his own; "the snow begins to give, but it will bear us yet. Don't you snuff old Pennsylvania in the very air? This is a vile climate, girl; now at sunset, last evening, it was cold enough to freeze a man's zeal, and that, I can tell you, takes a thermometer near zero for me; then about nine or ten it began to moderate; at twelve it was quite mild, and here all the rest of the night I have been so hot as not to bear a blanket on the bed.—Holla! Aggy—merry Christmas, Aggy—I say, do you hear me, you black dog! there's a dollar for you; and if the gentlemen get up before I come back, do you come out and let me know. I wouldn't have 'duke get the start of me for the worth of your head."

The black caught the money from the snow, and promising a due degree of watchfulness, he gave the dollar a whirl of twenty feet in the air, and catching it as it fell, in the palm of his hand, he withdrew to the kitchen, to exhibit his present, with a heart as light as his face was happy in its expression.

"Oh, rest easy, my dear coz," said the young lady; "I took a look in at my father, who is likely to sleep an hour; and by using due vigilance you will secure all the honors of the season."

"Why, 'duke is your father, Elizabeth; but 'duke is a man who likes to be foremost, even in trifles. Now, as for myself, I care for no such things, except in the way of competition; for a thing which is of no moment in itself may be made of importance in the way of competition. So it is with your father—he loves to be first; but I only struggle with him as a competitor."

"It's all very clear, sir," said Elizabeth; "you would not care a fig for distinction if there were no one in the world but yourself; but as there happens to be a great many others, why, you must struggle with them all—in the way of competition."

“Exactly so ; I see you are a clever girl, Bess, and one who does credit to her masters. It was my plan to send you to that school ; for when your father first mentioned the thing, I wrote a private letter for advice to a judicious friend in the city, who recommended the very school you went to. 'Duke was a little obstinate at first, as usual, but when he heard the truth he was obliged to send you.”

“Well, a truce to 'duke's foibles, sir ; he is my father, and if you knew what he has been doing for you while we were in Albany, you would deal more tenderly with his character.”

“For me !” cried Richard, pausing a moment in his walk to reflect. “Oh ! he got the plans of the new Dutch meeting-house for me, I suppose ; but I care very little about it, for a man of a certain kind of talent is seldom aided by any foreign suggestions ; his own brain is the best architect.”

“No such thing,” said Elizabeth, looking provokingly knowing.

“No ! let me see—perhaps he had my name put in the bill for the new turnpike, as a director.”

“He might possibly ; but it is not so such an appointment that I allude.”

“Such an appointment !” repeated Mr. Jones, who began to fidget with curiosity ; “then it is an appointment. If it is in the militia, I won't take it.”

“No, no, it is not in the militia,” cried Elizabeth, showing the packet in her hand, and then drawing it back with a coquettish air ; “it is an office of both honor and emolument.”

“Honor and emolument !” echoed Richard, in painful suspense ; “show me the paper, girl. Say, is it an office where there is anything to *do* ?”

“You have hit it, Cousin Dickon ; it is the executive office of the county ; at least so said my father when he gave me this packet to offer you as a Christmas-box. ‘Surely if anything will please Dickon,’ he said, ‘it will be to fill the executive chair of the county.’”

“Executive chair ! what nonsense !” cried the impatient gentleman, snatching the packet from her hand ; “there is no such office in the county. Eh ! what ! it is, I declare, a commission, appointing Richard Jones, Esquire, sheriff of the county. Well, this is kind in 'duke, positively. I must say 'duke has a warm heart, and never forgets his

friends. Sheriff! High Sheriff of——! It sounds well, Bess, but it shall execute better. 'Duke is a judicious man after all, and knows human nature thoroughly. I'm much obliged to him," continued Richard, using the skirt of his coat unconsciously to wipe his eyes; "though I would do as much for him any day, as he shall see, if I have an opportunity to perform any of the duties of my office on him. It shall be done, Cousin Bess—it shall be done, I say. How this cursed south wind makes one's eyes water!"

"Now, Richard," said the laughing maiden, "now I think you will find something to do. I have often heard you complain of old that there was nothing to do in this new country, while to my eyes it seemed as if everything remained to be done."

"Do!" echoed Richard, who blew his nose, raised his little form to its greatest elevation, and looked serious. "Everything depends on system, girl. I shall sit down this afternoon and systematize the county. I must have deputies, you know. I will divide the county into districts, over which I will place my deputies; and I will have one for the village, which I will call my home department. Let me see—ho! Benjamin! yes, Benjamin will make a good deputy; he has been naturalized, and would answer admirably if he could only ride on horseback."

"Yes, Mr. Sheriff," said his companion; "and as he understands ropes so well, he would be very expert, should occasion happen for his services, in another way."

"No," interrupted the other; "I flatter myself that no man could hang a man better than—that is—ha!—oh! yes, Benjamin would do extremely well in such an unfortunate dilemma, if he could be persuaded to attempt it. But I should despair of the thing. I never could induce him to hang, or teach him to ride on horseback. I must seek another deputy."

"Well, sir, as you have abundant leisure for all these important affairs, I beg that you will forget that you are high sheriff, and devote some little of your time to gallantry. Where are the beauties and improvements which you were to show me?"

"Where? why, everywhere! Here I have laid out some new streets; and when they are opened, and the trees felled, and they are all built up, will they not make a fine town? Well, 'duke is a liberal-hearted fellow, with all

his stubbornness. Yes, yes; I must have at least four deputies, besides a jailer."

"I see no streets in the direction of our walk," said Elizabeth, "unless you call the short avenues through these pine bushes by that name. Surely you do not contemplate building houses, very soon, in that forest before us, and in those swamps."

"We must run our streets by the compass, coz, and disregard trees, hills, ponds, stumps, or, in fact, anything but posterity. Such is the will of your father, and your father, you know——"

"Had you made sheriff, Mr. Jones," interrupted the lady, with a tone that said very plainly to the gentleman that he was touching a forbidden subject.

"I know it, I know it," cried Richard; "and if it were in my power, I'd make 'duke a king. He is a noble-hearted fellow, and would make an excellent king; that is, if he had a good prime minister. But who have we here? voices in the bushes—a combination about mischief, I'll wager my commission. Let us draw near and examine a little into the matter."

During this dialogue, as the parties had kept in motion, Richard and his cousin advanced some distance from the house into the open space in the rear of the village, where, as may be gathered from the conversation, streets were planned and future dwellings contemplated; but where, in truth, the only mark of improvement that was to be seen was a neglected clearing along the skirt of a dark forest of mighty pines, over which the bushes or sprouts of the same tree had sprung up to a height that interspersed the fields of snow with little thickets of evergreen. The rushing of the wind, as it whistled through the tops of these mimic trees, prevented the footsteps of the pair from being heard, while the branches concealed their persons. Thus aided, the listeners drew nigh to a spot where the young hunter, Leather-Stocking, and the Indian chief were collected in an earnest consultation. The former was urgent in his manner, and seemed to think the subject of deep importance, while Natty appeared to listen with more than his usual attention to what the other was saying. Mohegan stood a little on one side, with his head sunken on his chest, his hair falling forward so as to conceal most of his features, and his whole attitude expressive of deep dejection, if not of shame.

"Let us withdraw," whispered Elizabeth; "we are intruders, and can have no right to listen to the secrets of these men."

"No right!" returned Richard, a little impatiently, in the same tone, and drawing her arm so forcibly through his own as to prevent her retreat; "you forget, cousin, that it is my duty to preserve the peace of the county and see the laws executed. These wanderers frequently commit depredations; though I do not think John would do anything secretly. Poor fellow! he was quite boozy last night, and hardly seems to be over it yet. Let us draw nigher and hear what they say."

Notwithstanding the lady's reluctance, Richard, stimulated doubtless by his sense of duty, prevailed; and they were soon so near as distinctly to hear sounds.

"The bird must be had," said Natty, "by fair means or foul. Heigho! I've known the time, lad, when the wild turkeys wasn't over-scarce in the country: though you must go into the Virginia gaps if you want them now. To be sure, there is a different taste to a partridge and a well-fatted turkey; though, to my eating, beaver's tail and bear's ham make the best of food. But then every one has his own appetite. I gave the last farthing, all to that shilling, to the French trader, this very morning, as I came through the town, for powder; so, as you have nothing, we can have but one shot for it. I know that Billy Kirby is out, and means to have a pull of the trigger at that very turkey. John has a true eye for a single fire, and, somehow, my hand shakes so whenever I have to do anything extrawinary, that I often lose my aim. Now, when I killed the she-bear this fall, with her cubs, though they were so mighty ravenous, I knocked them over one at a shot, and loaded while I dodged the trees in the bargain; but this is a very different thing, Mr. Oliver."

"This," cried the young man, with an accent that sounded as if he took a bitter pleasure in his poverty, while he held a shilling up before his eyes, "this is all the treasure that I possess—this and my rifle! Now, indeed, I have become a man of the woods, and must place my sole dependence on the chase. Come, Natty, let us stake the last penny for the bird; with your aim, it cannot fail to be successful."

"I would rather it should be, John, lad; my heart jumps into my mouth, because you set your mind so much on't: and I'm sartain that I shall miss the bird. Them Indians can

shoot one time as well as another ; nothing ever troubles them. I say, John, here's a shilling ; take my rifle, and get a shot at the big turkey they've put up at the stump. Mr. Oliver is over-anxious for the creatur', and I'm sure to do nothing when I have over-anxiety about it."

The Indian turned his head gloomily, and after looking keenly for a moment, in profound silence, at his companions, he replied :

"When John was young, eyesight was not straighter than his bullet. The Mingo squaws cried out at the sound of his rifle. The Mingo warriors were made squaws. When did he ever shoot twice ? The eagle went above the clouds when he passed the wigwam of Chingachgook ; his feathers were plenty with the women. But see," he said, raising his voice from the low, mournful tones in which he had spoken to a pitch of keen excitement, and stretching forth both hands, "they shake like a deer at the wolf's howl. Is John old ? When was a Mohican a squaw with seventy winters ? No ! the white man brings old age with him—rum is his tomahawk !"

"Why, then, do you use it, old man ?" exclaimed the young hunter ; "why will one, so noble by nature, aid the devices of the devil by making himself a beast ?"

"Beast ! is John a beast ?" replied the Indian, slowly ; "yes ; you say no lie, child of the Fire-eater ! John is a beast. The smokes were once few in these hills. The deer would lick the hand of a white man and the birds rest on his head. They were strangers to him. My fathers came from the shores of the salt lake. They fled before rum. They came to their grandfather, and they lived in peace ; or, when they did raise the hatchet, it was to strike it into the brain of a Mingo. They gathered around the council-fire, and what they said was done. Then John was a man. But warriors and traders with light eyes followed them. One brought the long knife and one brought rum. They were more than the pines on the mountains ; and they broke up the councils and took the lands. The evil spirit was in their jugs, and they let him loose. Yes, yes—you say no lie, Young Eagle ; John is a Christian beast."

"Forgive me, old warrior," cried the youth, grasping his hand ; "I should be the last to reproach you. The curses of Heaven light on the cupidity that has destroyed such a race. Remember, John, that I am of your family, and it is now my greatest pride."

The muscles of Mohegan relaxed a little, and he said, more mildly :

“You are a Delaware, my son ; your words are not heard—John cannot shoot.”

“I thought that lad had Indian blood in him,” whispered Richard, “by the awkward way he handled my horses last night. You see, coz, they never use harness. But the poor fellow shall have two shots at the turkey, if he wants it, for I’ll give him another shilling myself ; though, perhaps, I had better offer to shoot for him. They have got up their Christmas sports, I find, in the bushes yonder, where you hear the laughter—though it is a queer taste this chap has for turkey ; not but what it is good eating, too.”

“Hold, Cousin Richard,” exclaimed Elizabeth, clinging to his arm ; “would it be delicate to offer a shilling to that gentleman ?”

“Gentleman, again ! do you think a half-breed, like him, will refuse money ? No, no, girl, he will take the shilling ; ay ! and even rum too, notwithstanding he moralizes so much about it. But I’ll give the lad a chance for his turkey ; for that Billy Kirby is one of the best marksmen in the country ; that is, if we except the—the gentleman.”

“Then,” said Elizabeth, who found her strength unequal to her will, “then, sir, I will speak.” She advanced, with an air of determination, in front of her cousin, and entered the little circle of bushes that surrounded the trio of hunters. Her appearance startled the youth, who at first made an unequivocal motion toward retiring, but, recollecting himself, bowed, by lifting his cap, and resumed his attitude of leaning on his rifle. Neither Natty nor Mohegan betrayed any emotion, though the appearance of Elizabeth was so entirely unexpected.

“I find,” she said, “that the old Christmas sport of shooting the turkey is yet in use among you. I feel inclined to try my chance for a bird. Which of you will take this money, and after paying my fee, give me the aid of his rifle ?”

“Is this a sport for a lady ?” exclaimed the young hunter, with an emphasis that could not well be mistaken, and with a rapidity that showed he spoke without consulting anything but feeling.

“Why not, sir ? If it be inhuman, the sin is not confined to one sex only. But I have my humor as well as others.

I ask not your assistance, but"—turning to Natty, and dropping a dollar in his hand—"this old veteran of the forest will not be so ungallant as to refuse one fire for a lady."

Leather-Stocking dropped the money into his pouch, and throwing up the end of his rifle, he freshened his priming; and first laughing in his usual manner, he threw the piece over his shoulder, and said:

"If Billy Kirby don't get the bird before me, and the Frenchman's powder don't hang fire this damp morning, you'll see as fine a turkey dead, in a few minutes, as ever was eaten in the Judge's shanty. I have know'd the Dutch women, on the Mohawk and Schoharie, count greatly on coming to the merry-makings; and so, lad, you shouldn't be short with the lady. Come, let us go forward, for if we wait the finest bird will be gone."

"But I have a right before you, Natty, and shall try on my own luck first. You will excuse me, Miss Temple; I have much reason to wish that bird, and may seem ungallant, but I must claim my privileges."

"Claim anything that is justly your own sir," returned the lady; "we are both adventurers; and this is my knight. I trust my fortune to his hand and eye. Lead on, Sir Leather-Stocking, and we will follow."

Natty, who seemed pleased with the frank address of the young and beauteous Elizabeth, who had so singularly intrusted him with such a commission, returned the bright smile with which she had addressed him, by his own peculiar mark of mirth, and moved across the snow, toward the spot whence the sounds of boisterous mirth proceeded, with the long strides of a hunter. His companions followed in silence, the youth casting frequent and uneasy glances toward Elizabeth, who was detained by a motion from Richard.

"I should think, Miss Temple," he said, so soon as the others were out of hearing, "that if you really wished a turkey, you would not have taken a stranger for the office, and such a one as Leather-Stocking. But I can hardly believe that you are serious, for I have fifty, at this moment, shut up in the coops, in every stage of fat, so that you might choose any quality you pleased. There are six that I am trying an experiment on, by giving them brickbats with——"

"Enough, Cousin Dickon," interrupted the lady; "I do

wish the bird, and it is because I so wish, that I commissioned this Mr. Leather-Stocking."

"Did you ever hear of the great shot that I made at the wolf, Cousin Elizabeth, who was carrying off your father's sheep?" said Richard, drawing himself up into an air of displeasure. "He had the sheep on his back; and, had the head of the wolf been on the other side, I should have killed him dead; as it was——"

"You killed the sheep—I know it all, dear coz. But would it have been decorous for the High Sheriff of —— to mingle in such sports as these?"

"Surely you did not think that I intended actually to fire with my own hands?" said Mr. Jones. "But let us follow, and see the shooting. There is no fear of anything unpleasant occurring to a female in this new country, especially to your father's daughter, and in my presence."

"My father's daughter fears nothing, sir, more especially when escorted by the highest executive officer in the county."

She took his arm, and he led her through the mazes of the bushes to the spot where most of the young men of the village were collected for the sports of shooting a Christmas match, and whither Natty and his companions had already preceded them.

CHAPTER XVII.

"I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day."—SCOTT.

THE ancient amusement of shooting the Christmas turkey is one of the few sports that the settlers of a new country seldom or never neglect to observe. It was connected with the daily practices of a people who often laid aside the axe or the scythe to seize the rifle, as the deer glided through the forests they were felling, or the bear entered their rough meadows to scent the air of a clearing, and to scan, with a look of sagacity, the progress of the invader.

On the present occasion, the usual amusement of the day had been a little hastened, in order to allow a fair opportunity to Mr. Grant, whose exhibition was not less a treat to the young sportsmen than the one which engaged

their present attention. The owner of the birds was a free black, who had prepared for the occasion a collection of game that was admirably qualified to inflame the appetite of an epicure, and was well adapted to the means and skill of the different competitors, who were of all ages. He had offered to the younger and more humble marksmen divers birds of an inferior quality, and some shooting had already taken place, much to the pecuniary advantage of the sable owner of the game. The order of the sports was extremely simple, and well understood. The bird was fastened by a string to the stump of a large pine, the side of which, toward the point where the marksmen were placed, had been flattened with an axe, in order that it might serve the purpose of a target, by which the merit of each individual might be ascertained. The distance between the stump and shooting-stand was one hundred measured yards: a foot more or a foot less being thought an invasion of the right of one of the parties. The negro affixed his own price to every bird, and the terms of the chance; but, when these were once established, he was obliged, by the strict principles of public justice that prevailed in the country, to admit any adventurer who might offer.

The throng consisted of some twenty or thirty young men, most of whom had rifles, and a collection of all the boys in the village. The little urchins, clad in coarse but warm garments, stood gathered around the more distinguished marksmen, with their hands stuck under their waistbands, listening eagerly to the boastful stories of skill that had been exhibited on former occasions, and were already emulating in their hearts these wonderful deeds in gunnery.

The chief speaker was the man who had been mentioned by Natty as Billy Kirby. This fellow, whose occupation, when he did labor, was that of clearing lands, or chopping jobs, was of great stature, and carried, in his very air, the index of his character. He was a noisy, boisterous, reckless lad, whose good-natured eye contradicted the bluntness and bullying tenor of his speech. For weeks he would lounge around the taverns of the county, in a state of perfect idleness, or doing small jobs for his liquor and his meals, and cavilling with applicants about the prices of his labor, frequently preferring idleness to an abatement of a little of his independence, or a cent in his wages. But, when

these embarrassing points were satisfactorily arranged, he would shoulder his axe and his rifle, slip his arms through the straps of his pack, and enter the woods with the tread of a Hercules. His first object was to learn his limits, round which he would pace, occasionally freshening, with a blow of his axe, the marks on the boundary trees; and then he would proceed, with an air of great deliberation, to the centre of his premises, and, throwing aside his superfluous garments, measure, with a knowing eye, one or two of the nearest trees that were towering apparently into the very clouds as he gazed upward. Commonly selecting one of the most noble for the first trial of his power, he would approach it with a listless air, whistling a low tune; and wielding his axe with a certain flourish, not unlike the salutes of a fencing-master, he would strike a light blow into the bark, and measure his distance. The pause that followed was ominous of the fall of the forest which had flourished there for centuries. The heavy and brisk blows that he struck were soon succeeded by the thundering report of the tree, as it came, first cracking and threatening, with the separation of its own last ligaments, then threshing and tearing with its branches the tops of its surrounding brethren, and finally meeting the ground with a shock but little inferior to an earthquake. From that moment the sounds of the axe were ceaseless, while the falling of the trees was like a distant cannonading; and the daylight broke into the depths of the woods with the suddenness of a winter morning.

For days, weeks, nay months, Bill Kirby would toil with an ardor that evinced his native spirit, and with an effect that seemed magical, until, his chopping being ended, his stentorian lungs could be heard emitting sounds, as he called to his patient oxen, which rang through the hills like the cries of an alarm. He had been often heard, on a mild summer's evening, a long mile across the vale of Templeton; when the echoes from the mountains would take up his cries, until they died away in the feeble sounds from the distant rocks that overhung the lake. His piles, or to use the language of the country, his logging, ended, with a despatch that could only accompany his dexterity and herculean strength, the jobber would collect together his implements of labor, light the heaps of timber, and march away under the blaze of the prostrate forest, like the conqueror of some city, who, having first prevailed over

his adversary, applies the torch as the finishing blow to his conquest. For a long time Billy Kirby would then be seen sauntering around the taverns, the rider of scrub-races, the bully of cock-fights, and not unfrequently the hero of such sports as the one in hand.

Between him and the Leather-Stocking there had long existed a jealous rivalry on the point of skill with the rifle. Notwithstanding the long practice of Natty, it was commonly supposed that the steady nerves and the quick eye of the wood-chopper rendered him his equal. The competition had, however, been confined hitherto to boasting, and comparisons made from their success in various hunting excursions; but this was the first time they had ever come in open collision. A good deal of higgling about the price of the choicest bird had taken place between Billy Kirby and its owner before Natty and his companions rejoined the sportsmen. It had, however, been settled at one shilling* a shot, which was the highest sum ever exacted, the black taking care to protect himself from losses, as much as possible, by the conditions of the sport. The turkey was already fastened at the "mark," but its body was entirely hid by the surrounding snow, nothing being visible but its red swelling head and its long neck. If the bird was injured by any bullet that struck below the snow, it was to continue the property of its present owner; but, if a feather was touched in a visible part, the animal became the prize of the successful adventurer.

These terms were loudly proclaimed by the negro, who was seated in the snow, in a somewhat hazardous vicinity to his favorite bird, when Elizabeth and her cousin approached the noisy sportsmen. The sounds of mirth and contention sensibly lowered at this unexpected visit; but, after a moment's pause, the curious interest exhibited in the face of the young lady, together with her smiling air, restored the freedom of the morning; though it was somewhat chastened, both in language and vehemence, by the presence of such a spectator.

"Stand out of the way there, boys!" cried the wood-chopper, who was placing himself at the shooting-point

* Before the Revolution, each province had its own money of account, though neither coined any but copper pieces. In New York the Spanish dollar was divided into eight shillings, each of the value of a fraction more than sixpence sterling. At present the Union has provided a decimal system, with coins to represent it.

—“stand out of the way, you little rascals, or I will shoot through you. Now, Brom, take leave of your turkey.”

“Stop!” cried the young hunter; “I am a candidate for a chance. Here is my shilling, Brom; I wish a shot too.”

“You may wish it in welcome,” cried Kirby, “but if I ruffle the gobbler’s feathers, how are you to get it? Is money so plenty in your deer-skin pocket, that you pay for a chance that you may never have?”

“How know you, sir, how plenty money is in my pocket?” said the youth, fiercely. “Here is my shilling, Brom, and I claim a right to shoot.”

“Don’t be crabbed, my boy,” said the other, who was very coolly fixing his flint. “They say you have a hole in your left shoulder, yourself, so I think Brom may give you a fire for half-price. It will take a keen one to hit that bird, I can tell you, my lad, even if I give you a chance, which is what I have no mind to do.”

“Don’t be boasting, Billy Kirby,” said Natty, throwing the breech of his rifle into the snow, and leaning on its barrel; “you’ll get but one shot at the creater, for if the lad misses his aim, which wouldn’t be a wonder if he did, with his arm so stiff and sore, you’ll find a good piece and an old eye coming a’ter you. Maybe it’s true that I can’t shoot as I used to could, but a hundred yards is a short distance for a long rifle.”

“What, old Leather-Stocking, are you out this morning?” cried his reckless opponent. “Well, fair play’s a jewel. I’ve the lead of you, old fellow; so here goes for a dry throat or a good dinner.”

The countenance of the negro evinced not only all the interest which his pecuniary adventure might occasion, but also the keen excitement that the sport produced in the others, though with a very different wish as to the result. While the wood-chopper was slowly and steadily raising his rifle, he bawled:

“Fair play, Billy Kirby—stand back—make ’em stand back, boys—gib a nigger fair play—poss-up, gobbler; shake a head, fool; don’t you see ’em taking aim?”

These cries, which were intended as much to distract the attention of the marksman as for anything else, were fruitless.

The nerves of the wood-chopper were not so easily shaken, and he took his aim with the utmost delibera-

tion. Stillness prevailed for a moment, and he fired. The head of the turkey was seen to dash on one side, and its wings were spread in momentary fluttering; but it settled itself down calmly into its bed of snow, and glanced its eyes uneasily around. For a time long enough to draw a deep breath, not a sound was heard. The silence was then broken by the noise of the negro, who laughed, and shook his body with all kinds of antics, rolling over in the snow in the excess of delight.

"Well done, a gobbler," he cried, jumping up and affecting to embrace his bird; "I tell 'em to poss-up, and you see 'em dodge. Gib anoder shillin', Billy, and hab anoder shot."

"No—the shot is mine," said the young hunter; "you have my money already. Leave the mark, and let me try my luck."

"Ah! it's but money thrown away, lad," said Leather-Stocking. "A turkey's head and neck is but a small mark for a new hand and a lame shoulder. You'd best let me take the fire, and may be we can make some settlement with the lady about the bird."

"The chance is mine," said the young hunter. "Clear the ground, that I may take it."

The discussions and disputes concerning the last shot were now abating, it having been determined that if the turkey's head had been anywhere but just where it was at that moment, the bird must certainly have been killed. There was not much excitement produced by the preparations of the youth, who proceeded in a hurried manner to take his aim, and was in the act of pulling the trigger, when he was stopped by Natty.

"Your hand shakes, lad," he said, "and you seem over-eager. Bullet wounds are apt to weaken flesh, and to my judgment you'll not shoot so well as in common. If you will fire, you should shoot quick, before there is time to shake off the aim."

"Fair play," again shouted the negro; "fair play—gib a nigger fair play. What right a Nat Bumpo advise a young man? Let 'em shoot—clear a ground."

The youth fired with great rapidity, but no motion was made by the turkey; and, when the examiners for the ball returned from the "mark," they declared that he had missed the stump.

Elizabeth observed the change in his countenance, and

could not help feeling surprise, that one so evidently superior to his companions should feel a trifling loss so sensibly. But her own champion was now preparing to enter the lists.

The mirth of Brom, which had been again excited, though in a much smaller degree than before, by the failure of the second adventurer, vanished the instant Natty took his stand. His skin became mottled with large brown spots, that fearfully sullied the lustre of his native ebony, while his enormous lips gradually compressed around two rows of ivory that had hitherto been shining in his visage like pearls set in jet. His nostrils, at all times the most conspicuous feature of his face, dilated, until they covered the greater part of the diameter of his countenance ; while his brown and bony hands unconsciously grasped the snow-crust near him, the excitement of the moment completely overcoming his native dread of cold.

While these indications of apprehension were exhibited in the sable owner of the turkey the man who gave rise to this extraordinary emotion was as calm and collected as if there was not to be a single spectator of his skill.

“ I was down in the Dutch settlements on the Schoharie,” said Natty, carefully removing the leather guard from the lock of his rifle, “ just before the breaking out of the last war, and there was a shooting-match among the boys ; so I took a hand. I think I opened a good many Dutch eyes that day ; for I won the powder-horn, three bars of lead, and a pound of as good powder as ever flashed in pan. Lord ! how they did swear in Jarman ! They did tell me of one drunken Dutchman who said he'd have the life of me before I got back to the lake ag'in. But if he had put his rifle to his shoulder with evil intent God would have punished him for it ; and even if the Lord didn't, and he had missed his aim, I know one that would have given him as good as he sent, and better too, if good shooting could come into the 'count.”

By this time the old hunter was ready for his business, and throwing his right leg far behind him, and stretching his left arm along the barrel of his piece, he raised it toward the bird. Every eye glanced rapidly from the marksman to the mark ; but at the moment when each ear was expecting the report of the rifle, they were disappointed by the ticking sound of the flint.

“ A snap, a snap ! ” shouted the negro, springing from

his crouching posture like a madman, before his bird. "A snap good as fire—Natty Bumppo gun he snap—Natty Bumppo miss a turkey!"

"Natty Bumppo hit a nigger," said the indignant old hunter, "if you don't get out of the way, Brom. It's contrary to the reason of the thing, boy, that a snap should count for a fire, when one is nothing more than a fire-stone striking a steel pan, and the other is sudden death; so get out of my way, boy, and let me show Billy Kirby how to shoot a Christmas turkey."

"Gib a nigger fair play!" cried the black, who continued resolutely to maintain his post, and making that appeal to the justice of his auditors, which the degraded condition of his caste so naturally suggested. "Eberybody know dat snap as good as fire. Leab it to Massa Jone—leab it to lady."

"Sartain," said the wood-chopper; "it's the law of the game in this part of the country, Leather-Stocking. If you fire ag'in you must pay up the other shilling. I b'lieve I'll try luck once more myself; so, Brom, here's my money, and I take the next fire."

"It's likely you know the laws of the woods better than I do, Billy Kirby," returned Natty. "You come in with the settlers, with an ox-goad in your hand, and I come in with moccasins on my feet, and with a good rifle on my shoulders, so long back as afore the old war. Which is likely to know the best? I say no man need tell me that snapping is as good as firing when I pull the trigger."

"Leab it to Massa Jone," said the alarmed negro; "he know eberyting."

This appeal to the knowledge of Richard was too flattering to be unheeded. He therefore advanced a little from the spot whither the delicacy of Elizabeth had induced her to withdraw, and gave the following opinion, with the gravity that the subject and his own rank demanded:

"There seems to be a difference in opinion," he said, "on the subject of Nathaniel Bumppo's right to shoot at Abraham Freeborn's turkey without the said Nathaniel paying one shilling for the privilege." The fact was too evident to be denied, and after pausing a moment, that the audience might digest his premises, Richard proceeded. "It seems proper that I should decide this question, as I am bound to preserve the peace of the county; and men with deadly weapons in their hands should not be heed-

lessly left to contention, and their own malignant passions. It appears that there was no agreement, either in writing or in words, on the disputed point ; therefore we must reason from analogy, which is, as it were, comparing one thing with another. Now, in duels, where both parties shoot, it is generally the rule that a snap is a fire ; and if such is the rule where the party has a right to fire back again, it seems to me unreasonable to say that a man may stand snapping at a defenceless turkey all day. I therefore am of the opinion that Nathaniel Bumpo has lost his chance, and must pay another shilling before he renews his right."

As this opinion came from so high a quarter, and was delivered with effect, it silenced all murmurs—for the whole of the spectators had begun to take sides with great warmth—except from the Leather-Stocking himself.

"I think Miss Elizabeth's thoughts should be taken," said Natty. "I've known the squaws give very good counsel when the Indians had been dumbfounded. If she says that I ought to lose, I agree to give it up."

"Then I adjudge you to be a loser for this time," said Miss Temple ; "but pay your money and renew your chance ; unless Brom will sell me the bird for a dollar. I will give him the money, and save the life of the poor victim."

This proposition was evidently but little relished by any of the listeners, even the negro feeling the evil excitement of the chances. In the meanwhile, as Billy Kirby was preparing himself for another shot, Natty left the stand, with an extremely dissatisfied manner, muttering :

"There hasn't been such a thing as a good flint sold at the foot of the lake since the Indian traders used to come into the country ; and, if a body should go into the flats along the streams in the hills to hunt for such a thing, it's ten to one but they will be all covered up with the plough. Heigho ! it seems to me that just as the game grows scarce, and a body wants the best ammunition to get a livelihood, everything that's bad falls on him like a judgment. But I'll change the stone, for Billy Kirby hasn't the eye for such a mark, I know."

The wood-chopper seemed now entirely sensible that his reputation depended on his care ; nor did he neglect any means to insure success. He drew up his rifle, and renewed his aim again and again, still appearing reluctan:

to fire. No sound was heard from even Brom, during these portentous movements, until Kirby discharged his piece, with the same want of success as before. Then, indeed, the shouts of the negro rang through the bushes, and sounded among the trees of the neighboring forest like the outcries of a tribe of Indians. He laughed, rolling his head first on one side, then on the other, until nature seemed exhausted with mirth. He danced until his legs were wearied with motion in the snow; and, in short, he exhibited all that violence of joy that characterizes the mirth of a thoughtless negro.

The wood-chopper had exerted all his art, and felt a proportionate degree of disappointment at the failure. He first examined the bird with the utmost attention, and more than once suggested that he had touched its feathers; but the voice of the multitude was against him, for it felt disposed to listen to the often-repeated cries of the black to "gib a nigger fair play."

Finding it impossible to make out a title to the bird, Kirby turned fiercely to the black and said:

"Shut your oven, you crow! Where is the man that can hit a turkey's head at a hundred yards? I was a fool for trying. You needn't make an uproar, like a falling pine-tree, about it. Show me the man who can do it."

"Look this a-way, Billy Kirby," said Leather-Stocking, "and let them clear the mark, and I'll show you a man who's made better shots afore now, and that when he's been hard pressed by the savages and wild beasts."

"Perhaps there is one whose rights come before ours, Leather-Stocking," said Miss Temple; "if so, we will waive our privilege."

"If it be me that you have reference to," said the young hunter, "I shall decline another chance. My shoulder is yet weak, I find."

Elizabeth regarded his manner, and thought that she could discern a tinge on his cheek that spoke the shame of conscious poverty. She said no more, but suffered her own champion to make a trial. Although Natty Bumppo had certainly made hundreds of more momentous shots at his enemies or his game, yet he never exerted himself more to excel. He raised his piece three several times: once to get his range; once to calculate his distance; and once because the bird, alarmed by the death-like stillness, turned its head quickly to examine its foes. But the fourth time he

fired. The smoke, the report, and the momentary shock, prevented most of the spectators from instantly knowing the result; but Elizabeth, when she saw her champion drop the end of his rifle in the snow and open his mouth in one of its silent laughs, and then proceed very coolly to recharge his piece, knew that he had been successful. The boys rushed to the mark, and lifted the turkey on high, lifeless, and with nothing but the remnant of a head.

"Bring in the creater," said Leather-Stocking, "and put it at the feet of the lady. I was her deputy in the matter, and the bird is her property."

"And a good deputy you have proved yourself," returned Elizabeth—"so good, Cousin Richard, that I would advise you to remember his qualities." She paused, and the gayety that beamed on her face gave place to a more serious earnestness. She even blushed a little as she turned to the young hunter, and with the charm of a woman's manner, added: "But it was only to see an exhibition of the far-famed skill of Leather-Stocking, that I tried my fortunes. Will you, sir, accept the bird as a small peace-offering for the hurt that prevented your own success?"

The expression with which the youth received this present was indescribable. He appeared to yield to the blandishment of her air, in opposition to a strong inward impulse to the contrary. He bowed, and raised the victim silently from her feet, but continued silent.

Elizabeth handed the black a piece of silver as a remuneration for his loss, which had some effect in again unbending his muscles, and then expressed to her companion her readiness to return homeward.

"Wait a minute, Cousin Bess," cried Richard; "there is an uncertainty about the rules of this sport that it is proper I should remove. If you will appoint a committee, gentlemen, to wait on me this morning, I will draw up in writing a set of regulations——" He stopped, with some indignation, for at that instant a hand was laid familiarly on the shoulder of the High Sheriff of ——.

"A merry Christmas to you, Cousin Dickon," said Judge Temple, who had approached the party unperceived: "I must have a vigilant eye to my daughter, sir, if you are to be seized daily with these gallant fits. I admire the taste which would introduce a lady to such scenes!"

"It is her own perversity, 'duke,'" cried the disappointed sheriff, who felt the loss of the first salutation as grievously

as many a man would a much greater misfortune ; “and I must say that she comes honestly by it. I led her out to show her the improvements, but away she scampered, through the snow, at the first sound of fire-arms, the same as if she had been brought up in a camp, instead of a first-rate boarding-school. I do think, Judge Temple, that such dangerous amusements should be suppressed, by statute ; nay, I doubt whether they are not already indictable at common law.”

“Well, sir, as you are sheriff of the county, it becomes your duty to examine into the matter,” returned the smiling Marmaduke. “I perceive that Bess has executed her commission, and I hope it met with a favorable reception.” Richard glanced his eye at the packet which he held in his hand, and the slight anger produced by disappointment vanished instantly.

“Ah ! ’duke, my dear cousin,” he said, “step a little on one side ; I have something I would say to you.” Marmaduke complied, and the sheriff led him to a little distance in the bushes, and continued—“First, ’duke, let me thank you for your friendly interest with the Council and the Governor, without which I am confident that the greatest merit would avail but little. But we are sisters’ children—we are sisters’ children ; and you may use me like one of your horses ; ride me or drive me, ’duke, I am wholly yours. But in my humble opinion, this young companion of Leather-Stocking requires looking after. He has a very dangerous propensity for turkey.”

“Leave him to my management, Dickon,” said the Judge, “and I will cure his appetite by indulgence. It is with him that I would speak. Let us rejoin the sportsmen.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Poor wretch ! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face, and sunburnt hair,
She had not known her child.”—SCOTT.

It diminished, in no degree, the effect produced by the conversation which passed between Judge Temple and the young hunter, that the former took the arm of his daugh-

ter and drew it through his own, when he advanced from the spot whither Richard had led him to that where the youth was standing, leaning on his rifle, and contemplating the dead bird at his feet. The presence of Marmaduke did not interrupt the sports, which were resumed by loud and clamorous disputes concerning the conditions of a chance that involved the life of a bird of much inferior quality to the last. Leather-Stocking and Mohegan had alone drawn aside to their youthful companion ; and, although in the immediate vicinity of such a throng, the following conversation was heard only by those who were interested in it :

“I have greatly injured you, Mr. Edwards,” said the Judge ; but the sudden and inexplicable start with which the person spoken to received this unexpected address, caused him to pause a moment. As no answer was given, and the strong emotion exhibited in the countenance of the youth gradually passed away, he continued : “But fortunately it is in some measure in my power to compensate you for what I have done. My kinsman, Richard Jones, has received an appointment that will, in future, deprive me of his assistance, and leave me, just now, destitute of one who might greatly aid me with his pen. Your manner, notwithstanding appearances, is a sufficient proof of your education, nor will thy shoulder suffer thee to labor, for some time to come.” (Marmaduke insensibly relapsed into the language of the Friends as he grew warm.) “My doors are open to thee, my young friend, for in this infant country we harbor no suspicions ; little offering to tempt the cupidity of the evil disposed. Become my assistant, for at least a season, and receive such compensation as thy services will deserve.”

There was nothing in the manner or the offer of the Judge to justify the reluctance, amounting nearly to loathing, with which the youth listened to his speech ; but, after a powerful effort for self-command, he replied :

“I would serve you, sir, or any other man, for an honest support, for I do not affect to conceal that my necessities are very great, even beyond what appearances would indicate ; but I am fearful that such new duties would interfere too much with more important business ; so that I must decline your offer, and depend on my rifle, as before, for subsistence.”

Richard here took occasion to whisper to the young

lady, who had shrunk a little from the foreground of the picture :

"This, you see, Cousin Bess, is the natural reluctance of a half-breed to leave the savage state. Their attachment to a wandering life is, I verily believe, unconquerable."

"It is a precarious life," observed Marmaduke, without hearing the sheriff's observation, "and one that brings more evils with it than present suffering. Trust me, young friend, my experience is greater than thine, when I tell thee, that the unsettled life of these hunters is of vast disadvantage for temporal purposes, and it totally removes one from the influence of more sacred things."

"No, no, Judge," interrupted the Leather-Stocking, who was hitherto unseen, or disregarded; "take him into your shanty in welcome, but tell him truth. I have lived in the woods for forty long years, and have spent five at a time without seeing the light of a clearing bigger than a window in the trees; and I should like to know where you'll find a man, in his sixty-eighth year, who can get an easier living, for all your betterments and your deer-laws; and, as for honesty, or doing what's right between man and man, I'll not turn my back to the longest-winded deacon on your Patent."

"Thou art an exception, Leather-Stocking," returned the Judge, nodding good-naturedly at the hunter; "for thou hast a temperance unusual in thy class, and a hardihood exceeding thy years. But this youth is made of materials too precious to be wasted in the forest.—I entreat thee to join my family, if it be but till thy arm is healed. My daughter here, who is mistress of my dwelling, will tell thee that thou art welcome."

"Certainly," said Elizabeth, whose earnestness was a little checked by female reserve. "The unfortunate would be welcome at any time, but doubly so when we feel that we have occasioned the evil ourselves."

"Yes," said Richard, "and if you relish turkey, young man, there are plenty in the coops, and of the best kind, I can assure you."

Finding himself thus ably seconded, Marmaduke pushed his advantage to the utmost. He entered into a detail of the duties that would attend the situation, and circumstantially mentioned the reward, and all those points which are deemed of importance among men of business. The youth listened in extreme agitation. There was an

evident contest in his feelings ; at times he appeared to wish eagerly for the change, and then again the incomprehensible expression of disgust would cross his features, like a dark cloud obscuring a noonday sun.

The Indian, in whose manner the depression of self-abasement was most powerfully exhibited, listened to the offers of the Judge with an interest that increased with each syllable. Gradually he drew nigher to the group ; and when, with his keen glance, he detected the most marked evidence of yielding in the countenance of his young companion, he changed at once from his attitude and look of shame to the front of an Indian warrior, and moving, with great dignity, closer to the parties, he spoke :

“Listen to your father,” he said ; “his words are old. Let the Young Eagle and the Great Land Chief eat together ; let them sleep, without fear, near each other. The children of Miquon love not blood : they are just, and will do right. The sun must rise and set often, before men can make one family ; it is not the work of a day, but of many winters. The Mingoës and the Delawares are born enemies ; their blood can never mix in the wigwam ; it never will run in the same stream in the battle. What makes the brother of Miquon and the Young Eagle foes ? They are of the same tribe ; their fathers and mothers are one. Learn to wait, my son ; you are a Delaware, and an Indian warrior knows how to be patient.”

This figurative address seemed to have great weight with the young man, who gradually yielded to the representations of Marmaduke, and eventually consented to his proposal. It was, however, to be an experiment only ; and, if either of the parties thought fit to rescind the engagement, it was left at his option so to do. The remarkable and ill-concealed reluctance of the youth to accept of an offer, which most men in his situation would consider as an unhopèd-for elevation, occasioned no little surprise in those to whom he was a stranger ; and it left a slight impression to his disadvantage. When the parties separated, they very naturally made the subject the topic of a conversation, which we shall relate ; first commencing with the Judge, his daughter, and Richard, who were slowly pursuing the way back to the mansion-house.

“I have surely endeavored to remember the holy mandates of our Redeemer, when he bids us ‘love them who despitefully use you,’ in my intercourse with this incom-

prehensible boy," said Marmaduke. "I know not what there is in my dwelling to frighten a lad of his years, unless it may be thy presence and visage, Bess."

"No, no," said Richard, with great simplicity, "it is not Cousin Bess. But when did you ever know a half-breed, 'duke, who could bear civilization? For that matter, they are worse than the savages themselves! Did you notice how knock-kneed he stood, Elizabeth, and what a wild look he had in his eyes?"

"I heeded not his eyes, nor his knees, which would be all the better for a little humbling. Really, my dear sir, I think you did exercise the Christian virtue of patience to the utmost. I was disgusted with his airs, long before he consented to make one of our family. Truly we are much honored by the association! In what apartment is he to be placed, sir; and at what table is he to receive his nectar and ambrosia?"

"With Benjamin and Remarkable," interrupted Mr. Jones; "you surely would not make the youth eat with the blacks! He is part Indian, it is true; but the natives hold the negroes in great contempt. No, no; he would starve before he would break a crust with the negroes."

"I am but too happy, Dickon, to tempt him to eat with ourselves," said Marmaduke, "to think of offering even the indignity you propose."

"Then, sir," said Elizabeth, with an air that was slightly affected, as if submitting to her father's orders in opposition to her own will, "it is your pleasure that he be a gentleman."

"Certainly; he is to fill the station of one. Let him receive the treatment that is due to his place, until we find him unworthy of it."

"Well, well, 'duke," cried the sheriff, "you will find it no easy matter to make a gentleman of him. The old proverb says that 'it takes three generations to make a gentleman.' There was my father whom everybody knew; my grandfather was an M.D., and his father a D.D.; and his father came from England, I never could come at the truth of his origin; but he was either a great merchant in London, or a great country lawyer, or the youngest son of a bishop."

"Here is a true American genealogy for you," said Marmaduke, laughing. "It does very well till you get across the water, where, as everything is obscure, it is cer-

tain to deal in the superlative. You are sure that your English progenitor was great, Dickon, whatever his profession might have been?"

"To be sure I am," returned the other. "I have heard my old aunt talk of him by the month. We are of a good family, Judge Temple, and have never filled any but honorable stations in life."

"I marvel that you should be satisfied with so scanty a provision of gentility in the olden time, Dickon. Most of the American genealogists commence their traditions, like the stories for children, with three brothers, taking especial care that one of the triumvirate shall be the progenitor of any of the same name who may happen to be better furnished with worldly gear than themselves. But, here, all are equal who know how to conduct themselves with propriety; and Oliver Edwards comes into my family on a footing with both the high sheriff and the judge."

"Well, 'duke, I call this democracy, not republicanism; but I say nothing; only let him keep within the law, or I shall show him that the freedom of even this country is under wholesome restraint."

"Surely, Dickon, you will not execute till I condemn! But what says Bess to the new inmate? We must pay a deference to the ladies in this matter, after all."

"Oh, sir!" returned Elizabeth, "I believe I am much like a certain Judge Temple in this particular—not easily to be turned from my opinion. But, to be serious, although I must think the introduction of a demi-savage into the family a somewhat startling event, whomsoever you think proper to countenance may be sure of my respect."

The Judge drew her arm more closely in his own and smiled, while Richard led the way through the gate of the little court-yard in the rear of the dwelling, dealing out his ambiguous warnings with his accustomed loquacity.

On the other hand, the foresters—for the three hunters, notwithstanding their difference in character, well deserved this common name—pursued their course along the skirts of the village in silence. It was not until they had reached the lake, and were moving over its frozen surface toward the foot of the mountain, where the hut stood, that the youth exclaimed:

"Who could have foreseen this a month since! I have consented to serve Marmaduke Temple—to be an inmate in the dwelling of the greatest enemy of my race; yet

what better could I do? The servitude cannot be long; and, when the motive for submitting to it ceases to exist, I will shake it off, like the dust from my feet."

"Is he a Mingo, that you will call him enemy?" said Mohegan. "The Delaware warrior sits still, and waits the time of the Great Spirit. He is no woman, to cry out like a child."

"Well, I'm mistrustful, John," said Leather-Stocking, in whose air there had been, during the whole business, a strong expression of doubt and uncertainty. "They say that there's new laws in the land, and I'm sartin that there's new ways in the mountains. One hardly knows the lakes and streams, they've altered the country so much. I must say I'm mistrustful of such smooth speakers; for I've known the whites talk fair when they wanted the Indian lands most. This I will say, though I'm a white myself, and was born nigh York, and of honest parents, too."

"I will submit," said the youth; "I will forget who I am. Cease to remember, old Mohegan, that I am the descendant of a Delaware chief, who once was master of these noble hills, these beautiful vales, and of this water, over which we tread. Yes, yes; I will become his bondsman—his slave. Is it not an honorable servitude, old man?"

"Old man!" repeated the Indian, solemnly, and pausing in his walk, as usual, when much excited; "yes, John is old. Son of my brother! if Mohegan was young, when would his rifle be still? Where would the deer hide, and he not find him? But John is old; his hand is the hand of a squaw; his tomahawk is a hatchet; brooms and baskets are his enemies—he strikes no other. Hunger and old age come together. See Hawk-eye! when young, he would go days and eat nothing; but should he not put the brush on the fire now, the blaze would go out. Take the son of Miquon by the hand, and he will help you."

"I'm not the man I was, I'll own, Chingachgook," returned the Leather-Stocking; "but I can go without a meal now, on occasion. When we tracked the Iroquois through the 'Beech-woods,' they drove the game afore them, for I hadn't a morsel to eat from Monday morning come Wednesday sundown; and then I shot as fat a buck, on the Pennsylvania line, as ever mortal laid eyes on. It would have done your heart good to have seen the Delaware eat; for I was out scouting and skrimmaging with

their tribe at the time. Lord! the Indians, lad, lay still, and just waited till Providence should send them their game; but I foraged about, and put a deer up, and put him down too, afore he had made a dozen jumps. I was too weak and too ravenous to stop for his flesh; so I took a good drink of his blood, and the Indians ate of his meat raw. John was there, and John knows. But then starvation would be apt to be too much for me now, I will own, though I'm no great eater at any time."

"Enough is said, my friend," cried the youth. "I feel that everywhere the sacrifice is required at my hands, and it shall be made; but say no more, I entreat you; I cannot bear this subject now."

His companions were silent; and they soon reached the hut, which they entered, after removing certain complicated and ingenious fastenings, that were put there apparently to guard a property of but very little value. Immense piles of snow lay against the log walls of this secluded habitation, on one side; while fragments of small trees, and branches of oak and chestnut, that had been torn from their parent stems by the winds, were thrown into a pile on the other. A small column of smoke rose through a chimney of sticks, cemented with clay, along the side of the rock, and had marked the snow above with its dark tinges, in a wavy line, from the point of emission to another, where the hill receded from the brow of a precipice, and held a soil that nourished trees of a gigantic growth, that overhung the little bottom beneath.

The remainder of the day passed off as such days are commonly spent in a new country. The settlers thronged to the academy again, to witness the second effort of Mr. Grant; and Mohegan was one of his hearers. But, notwithstanding the divine fixed his eyes intently on the Indian when he invited his congregation to advance to the table, the shame of last night's abasement was yet too keen in the old chief to suffer him to move.

When the people were dispersing, the clouds that had been gathering all the morning were dense and dirty, and before half of the curious congregation had reached their different cabins, that were placed in every glen and hollow of the mountains, or perched on the summits of the hills themselves, the rain was falling in torrents. The dark edges of the stumps began to exhibit themselves, as the snow settled rapidly; the fences of logs and brush, which

before had been only traced by long lines of white mounds, that ran across the valley and up the mountains, peeped out from their covering, and the black stubs were momentarily becoming more distinct, as large masses of snow and ice fell from their sides, under the influence of the thaw.

Sheltered in the warm hall of her father's comfortable mansion, Elizabeth, accompanied by Louisa Grant, looked abroad with admiration at the ever-varying face of things without. Even the village, which had just before been glittering with the color of the frozen element, reluctantly dropped its mask, and the houses exposed their dark roofs and smoked chimneys. The pines shook off the covering of snow, and everything seemed to be assuming its proper hue, with a transition that bordered on the supernatural.

CHAPTER XIX.

“And yet, poor Edwin was no vulgar boy.”—BEATTIE.

THE close of Christmas-day, A. D. 1793, was tempestuous, but comparatively warm. When darkness had again hid the objects in the village from the gaze of Elizabeth, she turned from the window, where she had remained while the least vestige of light lingered over the tops of the dark pines, with a curiosity that was rather excited than appeased by the passing glimpses of woodland scenery that she had caught during the day.

With her arm locked in that of Miss Grant, the young mistress of the mansion walked slowly up and down the hall, musing on scenes that were rapidly recurring to her memory, and possibly dwelling, at times, in the sanctuary of her thoughts, on the strange occurrences that had led to the introduction to her father's family of one whose manners so singularly contradicted the inferences to be drawn from his situation. The expiring heat of the apartment—for its great size required a day to reduce its temperature—had given to her cheeks a bloom that exceeded their natural color, while the mild and melancholy features of Louisa were brightened with a faint tinge, that, like the hectic of disease, gave a painful interest to her beauty.

The eyes of the gentlemen, who were yet seated around the rich wines of Judge Temple, frequently wandered from

the table, that was placed at one end of the hall, to the forms that were silently moving over its length. Much mirth, and that, at times, of a boisterous kind, proceeded from the mouth of Richard ; but Major Hartmann was not yet excited to his pitch of merriment, and Marmaduke respected the presence of his clerical guest too much to indulge in even the innocent humor that formed no small ingredient in his character.

Such were, and such continued to be, the pursuits of the party, for half an hour after the shutters were closed, and candles were placed in various parts of the hall, as substitutes for departing daylight. The appearance of Benjamin, staggering under the burden of an armful of wood, was the first interruption to the scene.

“How now, Master Pump !” roared the newly appointed sheriff ; “is there not warmth enough in 'duke's best Madeira to keep up the animal heat through this thaw ? Remember, old boy, that the Judge is particular with his beech and maple, beginning to dread already a scarcity of the precious articles. Ha ! ha ! ha ! 'duke, you are a good, warm-hearted relation, I will own, as in duty bound, but you have some queer notions about you, after all. ‘Come, let us be jolly, and cast away folly.’”

The notes gradually sank into a hum, while the majordomo threw down his load, and, turning to his interrogator with an air of earnestness, replied :

“Why, look you, Squire Dickon, mayhap there's a warm latitude round about the table there, thof it's not the stuff to raise the heat in my body, nether ; the raal Jamaiky being the only thing to do that, besides good wood, or some such matter as Newcastle coal. But, if I know anything of the weather, d'ye see, it's time to be getting all snug, and for putting the ports in and stirring the fires a bit. Mayhap I've not followed the seas twenty-seven years, and lived another seven in these here woods, for nothing, gemmen.”

“Why, does it bid fair for a change in the weather, Benjamin ?” inquired the master of the house.

“There's a shift of wind, your honor,” returned the steward ; “and when there's a shift of wind, you may look for a change in this here climate. I was aboard of one of Rodney's fleet, dy'e see, about the time we licked De Grasse, Mounsheer Lor Quaw's countryman, there ; and the wind was here at the south'ard and east'ard ; and I was

below, mixing a toothful of hot stuff for the captain of marines, who dined, d'ye see, in the cabin, that there very same day ; and I suppose he wanted to put out the captain's fire with a gunroom ingyne ; and so, just as I got it to my own liking, after tasting pretty often, for the soldier was difficult to please, slap came the foresail ag'in the mast, whiz went the ship round on her heel, like a whirligig. And a lucky thing was it that our helm was down ; for as she gathered starnway she paid off, which was more than every ship in the fleet did, or could do. But she strained herself in the trough of the sea, and she shipped a deal of water over her quarter.* I never swallowed so much clear water at a time in my life as I did then, for I was locking up the after-hatch at the instant."

"I wonder, Benjamin, that you did not die with a dropsy!" said Marmaduke.

"I mought, Judge," said the old tar, with a broad grin ; "but there was no need of the med'cine chest for a cure ; for, as I thought the brew was spoilt for the marine's taste, and there was no telling when another sea might come and spoil it for mine, I finished the mug on the spot. So then all hands was called to the pumps, and there we began to ply the pumps——"

"Well, but the weather?" interrupted Marmaduke ; "what of the weather without doors?"

"Why, here the wind has been all day at the south, and now there's a lull, as if the last blast was out of the bellows ; and there's a streak along the mountains, to the north'ard, that, just now, wasn't wider than the bigness of your hand ; and then the clouds drive afore it as you'd brail a mainsail, and the stars are heaving in sight, like so many lights and beacons, put there to warn us to pile on the wood ; and, if so be that I'm a judge of weather, it's getting to be time to build on a fire ; or you'll have half of them there porter bottles, and them dimmy-johns of wine, in the locker here, breaking with the frost, afore the morning watch is called."

"Thou art a prudent sentinel," said the Judge. "Act thy pleasure with the forests, for this night at least."

Benjamin did as he was ordered ; nor had two hours elapsed, before the prudence of his precautions became very visible. The south wind had, indeed, blown itself out, and it was succeeded by the calmness that usually gave warning of a serious change in the weather. Long

before the family retired to rest, the cold had become cuttingly severe ; and when Monsieur Le Quoi sallied forth under a bright moon, to seek his own abode, he was compelled to beg a blanket, in which he might envelop his form, in addition to the numerous garments that his sagacity had provided for the occasion. The divine and his daughter remained as inmates of the mansion-house during the night, and the excess of last night's merriment induced the gentlemen to make an early retreat to their several apartments. Long before midnight, the whole family were invisible.

Elizabeth and her friend had not yet lost their senses in sleep, and the howlings of the northwest wind were heard around the buildings, and brought with them that exquisite sense of comfort that is ever excited under such circumstances, in an apartment where the fire has not yet ceased to glimmer, and curtains, and shutters, and feathers, unite to preserve the desired temperature. Once, just as her eyes had opened, apparently in the last stage of drowsiness, the roaring winds brought with them a long and plaintive howl, that seemed too wild for a dog, and yet resembled the cries of that faithful animal, when night awakens his vigilance, and gives sweetness and solemnity to its charms. The form of Louisa Grant instinctively pressed nearer to that of the young heiress, who, finding her companion was yet awake, said, in a low tone, as if afraid to break a charm with her voice :

"Those distant cries are plaintive, and even beautiful. Can they be the hounds from the hut of Leather-Stocking?"

"They are wolves, who have ventured from the mountain, on the lake," whispered Louisa, "and who are only kept from the village by the lights. One night, since we have been here, hunger drove them to our very door. Oh, what a dreadful night it was! But the riches of Judge Temple have given him too many safeguards, to leave room for fear in this house."

"The enterprise of Judge Temple is taming the very forests!" exclaimed Elizabeth, throwing off the covering, and partly rising in the bed. "How rapidly is civilization treading on the foot of Nature!" she continued, as her eye glanced over, not only the comforts, but the luxuries of her apartment, and her ear again listened to the distant, but often repeated howls from the lake. Finding, how-

ever, that the timidity of her companion rendered the sounds painful to her, Elizabeth resumed her place, and soon forgot the changes in the country, with those in her own condition, in a deep sleep.

The following morning, the noise of the female servant, who entered the apartment to light the fire, awoke the females. They arose, and finished the slight preparations of their toilets in a clear, cold atmosphere, that penetrated through all the defences of even Miss Temple's warm room. When Elizabeth was attired, she approached a window and drew its curtain, and throwing open its shutters, she endeavored to look abroad on the village and the lake. But a thick covering of frost on the glass, while it admitted the light, shut out the view. She raised the sash, and then, indeed, a glorious scene met her delighted eye.

The lake had exchanged its covering of unspotted snow for a face of dark ice, that reflected the rays of the rising sun like a polished mirror. The houses were clothed in a dress of the same description, but which, owing to its position, shone like bright steel; while the enormous icicles that were pendent from every roof, caught the brilliant light, apparently throwing it from one to the other, as each glittered, on the side next the luminary, with a golden lustre that melted away, on its opposite, into the dusky shades of a background. But it was the appearance of the boundless forests that covered the hills as they rose, in the distance, one over the other, that most attracted the gaze of Miss Temple. The huge branches of the pines and hemlocks bent with the weight of the ice they supported, while their summits rose above the swelling tops of the oaks, beeches, and maples, like spires of burnished silver issuing from domes of the same material. The limits of the view, in the west, were marked by an undulating outline of bright light, as if, reversing the order of nature, numberless suns might momentarily be expected to heave above the horizon. In the foreground of the picture, along the shores of the lake, and near to the village, each tree seemed studded with diamonds. Even the sides of the mountains where the rays of the sun could not yet fall, were decorated with a glassy coat, that presented every gradation of brilliancy, from the first touch of the luminary to the dark foliage of the hemlock, glistening through its coat of crystal. In short, the whole view was one scene of quivering radiancy, as lake, mountains,

village, and woods, each emitted a portion of light, tinged with its peculiar hue, and varied by its position and its magnitude.

"See!" cried Elizabeth—"see, Louisa; hasten to the window, and observe the miraculous change!"

Miss Grant complied; and, after bending for a moment in silence from the opening, she observed, in a low tone, as if afraid to trust the sound of her voice:

"The change is indeed wonderful! I am surprised that he should be able to effect it so soon."

Elizabeth turned in amazement, to hear so skeptical a sentiment from one educated like her companion; but was surprised to find that, instead of looking at the view, the mild blue eyes of Miss Grant were dwelling on the form of a well-dressed young man, who was standing before the door of the building, in earnest conversation with her father. A second look was necessary before she was able to recognize the person of the young hunter, in a plain, but assuredly the ordinary, garb of a gentleman.

"Everything in this magical country seems to border on the marvellous," said Elizabeth; "and, among all the changes, this is certainly not the least wonderful. The actors are as unique as the scenery."

Miss Grant colored and drew in her head.

"I am a simple country girl, Miss Temple, and I am afraid you will find me but a poor companion," she said. "I—I am not sure that I understand all you say. But I really thought that you wished me to notice the alteration in Mr. Edwards. Is it not more wonderful when we recollect his origin? They say he is part Indian."

"He is a genteel savage; but let us go down, and give the sachem his tea; for I suppose he is a descendant of King Philip, if not a grandson of Pocahontas."

The ladies were met in the hall by Judge Temple, who took his daughter aside to apprise her of that alteration in the appearance of their new inmate, with which she was already acquainted.

"He appears reluctant to converse on his former situation," continued Marmaduke; "but I gathered from his discourse, as is apparent from his manner, that he has seen better days; and I am really inclining to the opinion of Richard, as to his origin; for it was no unusual thing for the Indian agents to rear their children in a laudable manner, and——"

"Very well, my dear sir," interrupted his daughter, laughing and averting her eyes; "it is all well enough, I dare say; but, as I do not understand a word of the Mohawk language, he must be content to speak English; and as for his behavior, I trust to your discernment to control it."

"Ay! but, Bess," cried the judge, detaining her gently by the hand, "nothing must be said to him of his past life. This he has begged particularly of me, as a favor. He is, perhaps, a little soured, just now, with his wounded arm; the injury seems very light, and another time he may be more communicative."

"Oh! I am not much troubled, sir, with that laudable thirst after knowledge that is called curiosity. I shall believe him to be the child of Corn-stalk, or Corn-planter, or some other renowned chieftain; possibly of the Big Snake himself; and shall treat him as such until he sees fit to shave his good-looking head, borrow some half-dozen pair of my best earrings, shoulder his rifle again, and disappear as suddenly as he made his entrance. So come, my dear sir, and let us not forget the rites of hospitality, for the short time he is to remain with us."

Judge Temple smiled at the playfulness of his child, and taking her arm they entered the breakfast parlor, where the young hunter was seated, with an air that showed his determination to domesticate himself in the family with as little parade as possible.

Such were the incidents that led to this extraordinary increase in the family of Judge Temple, where, having once established the youth, the subject of our tale requires us to leave him for a time, to pursue with diligence and intelligence the employments that were assigned him by Marmaduke.

Major Hartmann made his customary visit, and took his leave of the party for the next three months. Mr. Grant was compelled to be absent most of his time, in remote parts of the country, and his daughter became almost a constant visitor at the mansion-house. Richard entered, with his constitutional eagerness, on the duties of his new office; and, as Marmaduke was much employed with the constant applications of adventures for farms, the winter passed swiftly away. The lake was the principal scene for the amusements of the young people; where the ladies, in their one-horse cutter, driven by Richard, and attended,

when the snow would admit of it, by young Edwards, on his skates, spent many hours, taking the benefit of exercise in the clear air of the hills. The reserve of the youth gradually gave way to time and his situation, though it was still evident, to a close observer, that he had frequent moments of bitter and intense feeling.

Elizabeth saw many large openings appear in the sides of the mountains during the three succeeding months, where different settlers had, in the language of the country, "made their pitch;" while the numberless sleighs that passed through the village, loaded with wheat and barrels of potashes, afforded a clear demonstration that all these labors were not undertaken in vain. In short, the whole country was exhibiting the bustle of a thriving settlement, where the highways were thronged with sleighs, bearing piles of rough household furniture; studded, here and there, with the smiling faces of women and children, happy in the excitement of novelty; or, with loads of produce, hastening to the common market at Albany, that served as so many snares to induce the emigrants to enter into those wild mountains in search of competence and happiness.

The village was alive with business, the artisans increasing in wealth with the prosperity of the country, and each day witnessing some nearer approach to the manners and usages of an old-settled town. The man who carried the mail or "the post," as he was called, talked much of running a stage, and, once or twice during the winter, he was seen taking a single passenger, in his cutter, through the snow-banks, toward the Mohawk, along which a regular vehicle glided, semi-weekly, with the velocity of lightning, and under the direction of a knowing whip from the "down countries." Toward spring, divers families, who had been into the "old States" to see their relatives, returned in time to save the snow, frequently bringing with them whole neighborhoods, who were tempted by their representations to leave the farms of Connecticut and Massachusetts, to make a trial of fortune in the woods.

During all this time, Oliver Edwards, whose sudden elevation excited no surprise in that changeful country, was earnestly engaged in the service of Marmaduke, during the days; but his nights were often spent in the hut of Leather-Stocking. The intercourse between the three hunters was maintained with a certain air of mystery, it is true, but with much zeal and apparent interest to all the

parties. Even Mohegan seldom came to the mansion-house, and Natty, never ; but Edwards sought every leisure moment to visit his former abode, from which he would often return in the gloomy hours of night, through the snow, or, if detained beyond the time at which the family retired to rest, with the morning sun. These visits certainly excited much speculation in those to whom they were known, but no comments were made, excepting occasionally, in whispers from Richard, who would say :

“It is not at all remarkable ; a half-breed can never be weaned from the savage ways—and, for one of his lineage, the boy is much nearer civilization than could, in reason, be expected.”

CHAPTER XX.

“Away ! nor let me loiter in my song,
For we have many a mountain-path to tread.”—BYRON.

As the spring gradually approached, the immense piles of snow that, by alternate thaws and frosts, and repeated storms, had obtained a firmness which threatened a tiresome durability, began to yield to the influence of milder breezes and a warmer sun. The gates of heaven at times seemed to open, and a bland air diffused itself over the earth, when animate and inanimate nature would awaken, and, for a few hours, the gayety of spring shone in every eye, and smiled on every field. But the shivering blasts from the north would carry their chill influence over the scene again, and the dark and gloomy clouds that intercepted the rays of the sun were not more cold and dreary than the reaction. These struggles between the seasons became daily more frequent, while the earth, like a victim to contention, slowly lost the animated brilliancy of winter, without obtaining the aspect of spring.

Several weeks were consumed in this cheerless manner, during which the inhabitants of the country gradually changed their pursuits from the social and bustling movements of the time of snow, to the laborious and domestic engagements of the coming season. The village was no longer thronged with visitors ; the trade that had enlivened the shops for several months, began to disappear ; the

highways lost their shining coats of beaten snow in impassable sloughs, and were deserted by the gay and noisy travellers who, in sleighs, had, during the winter, glided along their windings; and, in short, everything seemed indicative of a mighty change, not only in the earth, but in those who derived their sources of comfort and happiness from its bosom.

The younger members of the family in the mansion-house, of which Louisa Grant was now habitually one, were by no means indifferent observers of these fluctuating and tardy changes. While the snow rendered the roads passable, they had partaken largely in the amusements of the winter, which included not only daily rides over the mountains, and through every valley within twenty miles of them, but divers ingenious and varied sources of pleasure, on the bosom of their frozen lake. There had been excursions in the equipage of Richard, when with his four horses he had outstripped the winds, as it flew over the glassy ice which invariably succeeded a thaw. Then the exciting and dangerous "whirligig" would be suffered to possess its moment of notice. Cutters, drawn by a single horse, and handsleds, impelled by the gentlemen on skates, would each in turn be used; and, in short, every source of relief against the tediousness of a winter in the mountains was resorted to by the family. Elizabeth was compelled to acknowledge to her father, that the season, with the aid of his library, was much less irksome than she had anticipated.

As exercise in the open air was in some degree necessary to the habits of the family, when the constant recurrence of frosts and thaws rendered the roads, which were dangerous at the most favorable times, utterly impassable for wheels, saddle-horses were used as substitutes for other conveyances. Mounted on small and sure-footed beasts, the ladies would again attempt the passages of the mountains, and penetrate into every retired glen, where the enterprise of a settler had induced him to establish himself. In these excursions they were attended by some one or all of the gentlemen of the family, as their different pursuits admitted. Young Edwards was hourly becoming more familiarized to his situation, and not unfrequently mingled in the parties with an unconcern and gayety that for a short time would expel all unpleasant recollections from his mind. Habit, and the buoyancy of youth, seemed

to be getting the ascendancy over the secret causes of his uneasiness ; though there were moments when the same remarkable expression of disgust would cross his intercourse with Marmaduke, that had distinguished their conversations in the first days of their acquaintance.

It was at the close of the month of March, that the sheriff succeeded in persuading his cousin and her young friend to accompany him in a ride to a hill that was said to overhang the lake in a manner peculiar to itself.

"Besides, Cousin Bess," continued the indefatigable Richard, "we will stop and see the 'sugar bush' of Billy Kirby ; he is on the east end of the Ransom lot, making sugar for Jared Ransom. There is not a better hand over a kettle in the county than that same Kirby. You remember, 'duke, that I had him his first season in our camp ; and it is not a wonder that he knows something of his trade."

"He's a good chopper, is Billy," observed Benjamin, who held the bridle of the horse while the sheriff mounted ; "and he handles an axe much the same as a forecastleman does his marling-spike, or a tailor his goose. They say he'll lift a potash kettle off the arch alone, tho' I can't say that I've ever seen him do it with my own eyes ; but that is the say. And I've seen sugar of his making, which, maybe, wasn't as white as an old top-gallant sail, but which my friend, Mistress Pettibones, within there, said had the true molasses smack to it ; and you are not the one, Squire Dickens, to be told that Mistress Remarkable has a remarkable tooth for sweet things in her nut-grinder."

The loud laugh that succeeded the wit of Benjamin, and in which he participated with no very harmonious sounds, himself, very fully illustrated the congenial temper which existed between the pair. Most of its point was, however, lost on the rest of the party, who were either mounting their horses or assisting the ladies at the moment. When all were safely in their saddles, they moved through the village in great order. They paused for a moment before the door of Monsieur Le Quoi, until he could bestride his steed, and then, issuing from the little cluster of houses, they took one of the principal of those highways that centred in the village.

As each night brought with it a severe frost, which the heat of the succeeding day served to dissipate, the eques-

trians were compelled to proceed singly along the margin of the road, where the turf, and firmness of the ground, gave the horses a secure footing. Very trifling indications of vegetation were to be seen, the surface of the earth presenting a cold, wet, and cheerless aspect that chilled the blood. The snow yet lay scattered over most of those distant clearings that were visible in different parts of the mountains; though here and there an opening might be seen, where as the white covering yielded to the season, the bright and lively green of the wheat served to enkindle the hopes of the husbandman. Nothing could be more marked than the contrast between the earth and the heavens; for, while the former presented the dreary view that we have described, a warm and invigorating sun was dispensing his heats from a sky that contained but a solitary cloud, and through an atmosphere that softened the colors of the sensible horizon until it shone like a sea of blue.

Richard led the way on this, as on all other occasions that did not require the exercise of unusual abilities; and, as he moved along, he essayed to enliven the party with the sounds of his experienced voice.

"This is your true sugar weather, 'duke," he cried; "a frosty night and a sunshiny day. I warrant me that the sap runs like a mill-tail up the maples this warm morning. It is a pity, Judge, that you do not introduce a little more science into the manufactory of sugar among your tenants. It might be done, sir, without knowing as much as Dr. Franklin—it might be done, Judge Temple."

"The first object of my solicitude, friend Jones," returned Marmaduke, "is to protect the sources of this great mine of comfort and wealth from the extravagance of the people themselves. When this important point shall be achieved, it will be in season to turn our attention to an improvement in the manufacture of the article. But thou knowest, Richard, that I have already subjected our sugar to the process of the refiner, and that the result has produced loaves as white as the snow on yon fields, and possessing the saccharine quality in its utmost purity."

"Saccharine, or turpentine, or any other 'ine, Judge Temple, you have never made a loaf larger than a good-sized sugar-plum," returned the sheriff. "Now, sir, I assert that no experiment is fairly tried, until it be reduced to practical purposes. If, sir, I owned a hundred, or, for that

matter, two hundred thousand acres of land, as you do, I would build a sugar-house in the village ; I would invite learned men to an investigation of the subject—and such are easily to be found, sir ; yes, sir, they are not difficult to find—men who unite theory with practice ; and I would select a wood of young and thrifty trees ; and, instead of making loaves of the size of a lump of candy, dam'me, 'duke, but I'd have them as big as a haystack."

"And purchase the cargo of one of those ships that they say are going to China," cried Elizabeth ; "turn your pot-ash-kettles into teacups, the scows on the lake into saucers, bake your cake in yonder lime-kiln, and invite the county to a tea-party. How wonderful are the projects of genius ! Really, sir, the world is of opinion that Judge Temple has tried the experiment fairly, though he did not cause his loaves to be cast in moulds of the magnitude that would suit your magnificent conceptions."

"You may laugh, Cousin Elizabeth—you may laugh, madam," retorted Richard, turning himself so much in his saddle as to face the party, and making dignified gestures with his whip ; "but I appeal to common sense, good sense, or, what is of more importance than either, to the sense of taste, which is one of the five natural senses, whether a big loaf of sugar is not likely to contain a better illustration of a proposition than such a lump as one of your Dutch women puts under her tongue when she drinks her tea. There are two ways of doing everything, the right way and the wrong way. You make sugar now, I will admit, and you may, possibly, make loaf-sugar ; but I take the question to be, whether you make the best possible sugar, and in the best possible loaves."

"Thou art very right, Richard," observed Marmaduke, with a gravity in his air that proved how much he was interested in the subject. "It is very true that we manufacture sugar, and the inquiry is quite useful, how much ? and in what manner ? I hope to live to see the day when farms and plantations shall be devoted to this branch of business. Little is known concerning the properties of the tree itself, the source of all this wealth ; how much it may be improved by cultivation, by the use of the hoe and plough."

"Hoe and plough !" roared the sheriff ; "would you set a man hoeing round the root of a maple like this ?" pointing to one of the noble trees that occur so frequently

in that part of the country. "Hoing trees! are you mad, 'duke? This is next to hunting for coal! Poh! poh! my dear cousin, hear reason, and leave the management of the sugar-bush to me. Here is Mr. Le Quoi—he has been in the West Indies, and has seen sugar made. Let him give an account of how it is made there, and you will hear the philosophy of the thing. Well, monsieur, how is it that you make sugar in the West Indies; anything in Judge Temple's fashion?"

The gentleman to whom this query was put was mounted on a small horse, of no very fiery temperament, and was riding with his stirrups so short as to bring his knees, while the animal rose a small ascent in the wood-path they were now travelling, into a somewhat hazardous vicinity to his chin. There was no room for gesticulation or grace in the delivery of his reply, for the mountain was steep and slippery; and, although the Frenchman had an eye of uncommon magnitude on either side of his face, they did not seem to be half competent to forewarn him of the impediments of bushes, twigs, and fallen trees, that were momentarily crossing his path. With one hand employed in averting these dangers, and the other grasping his bridle, to check an untoward speed that his horse was assuming, the native of France responded as follows:

"Sucre! dey do make sucre in Martinique; mais—mais ce n'est pas one tree—ah—ah—vat you call—je voudrois que ces chemins fussent au diable—vat you call—steeck pour la promenade?"

"Cane," said Elizabeth, smiling at the imprecation which the wary Frenchman supposed was understood only by himself.

"Oui, mam'selle, cane."

"Yes, yes," cried Richard, "cane is the vulgar name for it, but the real term is *saccharum officinarum*; and what we call the sugar, or hard maple, is *acer saccharinum*. These are the learned names, monsieur, and are such as, doubtless, you well understand."

"Is this Greek or Latin, Mr. Edwards?" whispered Elizabeth to the youth, who was opening a passage for herself and her companions through the bushes, "or perhaps it is a still more learned language, for an interpretation of which we must look to you."

The dark eye of the young man glanced toward the speaker, but its resentful expression changed in a moment.

"I shall remember your doubts, Miss Temple, when next I visit my old friend Mohegan, and either his skill, or that of Leather-Stocking, shall solve them."

"And are you, then, really ignorant of their language?"

"Not absolutely; but the deep learning of Mr. Jones is more familiar to me, or even the polite masquerade of Monsieur Le Quoi."

"Do you speak French?" said the lady, with quickness.

"It is a common language with the Iroquois, and through the Canadas," he answered, smiling.

"Ah! but they are Mingoos, and your enemies."

"It will be well for me if I have no worse," said the youth, dashing ahead with his horse, and putting an end to the evasive dialogue.

The discourse, however, was maintained with great vigor by Richard, until they reached an open wood on the summit of the mountain, where the hemlocks and pines totally disappeared, and a grove of the very trees that formed the subject of debate covered the earth with their tall, straight trunks and spreading branches, in stately pride. The underwood had been entirely removed from this grove, or bush, as, in conjunction with the simple arrangements for boiling, it was called, and a wide space of many acres was cleared, which might be likened to the dome of a mighty temple, to which the maples formed the columns, their tops composing the capitals, and the heavens the arch. A deep and careless incision had been made into each tree, near its root, into which little sprouts, formed of the bark of the alder, or of the sumach, were fastened; and a trough, roughly dug out of the linden, or basswood, was lying at the root of each tree, to catch the sap that flowed from this extremely wasteful and inartificial arrangement.

The party paused a moment, on gaining the flat, to breathe their horses, and, as the scene was entirely new to several of their number, to view the manner of collecting the fluid. A fine, powerful voice aroused them from their momentary silence, as it rang under the branches of the trees, singing the following words of that inimitable doggerel, whose verses, if extended, would reach from the waters of the Connecticut to the shores of Ontario. The tune was, of course, that familiar air which, although it is said to have been first applied to his nation in derision, circumstances have since rendered so glorious that no

American ever hears its jingling cadence without feeling a thrill at his heart :

“ The Eastern States be full of men,
 The Western full of woods, sir,
 The hill be like a cattle-pen,
 The roads be full of goods, sir !
 Then flow away, my sweet sap,
 And I will make you boily ;
 Nor catch a woodman’s hasty nap,
 For fear you should get roily.

“ The maple-tree’s a precious one,
 ’Tis fuel, food, and timber ;
 And when your stiff day’s work is done,
 Its juice will make you limber.
 Then flow away, etc.

“ And what’s a man without his glass,
 His wife without her tea, sir ?
 But neither cup nor mug will pass,
 Without his honey-bee, sir !
 Then flow away,” etc.

During the execution of this sonorous doggerel, Richard kept time with his whip on the mane of his charger, accompanying the gestures with a corresponding movement of his head and body. Toward the close of the song, he was overheard humming the chorus, and, at its last repetition, to strike in at “sweet sap,” and carry a second through, with a prodigious addition to the “effect” of the noise, if not to that of the harmony.

“Well done us !” roared the sheriff, on the same key with the tune ; “a very good song, Billy Kirby, and very well sung. Where got you the words, lad ? is there more of it, and can you furnish me with a copy ?”

The sugar-boiler, who was busy in his “camp,” at a short distance from the equestrians, turned his head with great indifference, and surveyed the party, as they approached, with admirable coolness. To each individual, as he or she rode close by him, he gave a nod that was extremely good-natured and affable, but which partook largely of the virtue of equality, for not even to the ladies did he in the least vary his mode of salutation, by touching the apology for a hat that he wore, or by any other motion than the one we have mentioned.

"How goes it, how goes it, sheriff?" said the wood-chopper; "what's the good word in the village?"

"Why, much as usual, Billy," returned Richard. "But how is this? where are your four kettles, and your troughs, and your iron coolers? Do you make sugar in this slovenly way? I thought you were one of the best sugar-boilers in the county."

"I'm all that, Squire Jones," said Kirby, who continued his occupation; "I'll turn my back to no man in the Otsego hills for chopping and logging, for boiling down the maple sap, for tending brick-kiln, splitting out rails, making potash, and parling too, or hoeing corn; though I keep myself pretty much to the first business, seeing that the axe comes most natural to me."

"You be von Jack All-trade, Mister Beel," said Monsieur Le Quoi.

"How?" said Kirby, looking up, with a simplicity which, coupled with his gigantic frame and manly face, was a little ridiculous, "if you be for trade, mounsher, here is some as good sugar as you'll find the season through. It's as clear from dirt as the Jarman Flats is free from stumps, and it has the raal maple flavor. Such stuff would sell in York for candy."

The Frenchman approached the place where Kirby had deposited his cakes of sugar, under the cover of a bark roof, and commenced the examination of the article with the eye of one who well understood its value. Marmaduke had dismounted, and was viewing the works and the trees very closely, and not without frequent expressions of dissatisfaction at the careless manner in which the manufacture was conducted.

"You have much experience in these things, Kirby," he said; "what course do you pursue in making your sugar? I see you have but two kettles."

"Two is as good as two thousand, Judge. I'm none of your polite sugar-makers, that boils for the great folks; but if the raal sweet maple is wanted, I can answer your turn. First, I choose, and then I tap my trees; say along about the last of February, or in these mountains may be not afore the middle of March; but any way, just as the sap begins to cleverly run——"

"Well, in this choice," interrupted Marmaduke, "are you governed by any outward signs that prove the quality of the tree?"

“Why, there’s judgment in all things,” said Kirby, stirring the liquor in his kettles briskly. “There’s something in knowing when and how to stir the pot. It’s a thing that must be larnt. Rome wasn’t built in a day, nor for that matter Templeton either, though it may be said to be a quick-growing place. I never put my axe into a stunty tree, or one that hasn’t a good, fresh-looking bark; for trees have disorders, like creaters; and where’s the policy of taking a tree that’s sickly, any more than you’d choose a foundered horse to ride post, or an over-heated ox to do your logging?”

“All that is true. But what are the signs of illness? how do you distinguish a tree that is well from one that is diseased?”

“How does the doctor tell who has fever and who colds?” interrupted Richard. “By examining the skin, and feeling the pulse, to be sure.”

“Sartain,” continued Billy; “the squire an’t far out of the way. It’s by the look of the thing, sure enough. Well, when the sap begins to get a free run, I hang over the kettles, and set up the bush. My first boiling I push pretty smartly, till I get the virtue of the sap; but when it begins to grow of a molasses nater, likes this in the kettle, one mustn’t drive the fires too hard, or you’ll burn the sugar; and burny sugar is bad to the taste, let it be never so sweet. So you ladle out from one kettle into the other till it gets so, when you put the stirring-stick into it, that it will draw into a thread—when it takes a kerful hand to manage it. There is a way to drain it off, after it has grained, by putting clay into the pans; but it isn’t always practised; some doos and some doosn’t. Well, mounsher, be we likely to make a trade?”

“I will give you, Mister Beel, for von pound, dix sous.”

“No, I expect cash for’t; I never dicker my sugar. But, seeing that it’s you, mounsher,” said Billy, with a coaxing smile, “I’ll agree to receive a gallon of rum, and cloth enough for two shirts, if you’ll take the molasses in the bargain. It’s raal good. I wouldn’t deceive you or any man; and to my drinking it’s about the best molasses that come out of a sugar-bush.”

“Mr. Le Quoi has offered you ten pence,” said young Edwards.

The manufacturer stared at the speaker with an air of great freedom, but made no reply.

"Oui," said the Frenchman, "ten penny. Je vous remercie, monsieur : ah ! mon Anglois ! je l'oublie toujours."

The wood-chopper looked from one to the other with some displeasure ; and evidently imbibed the opinion that they were amusing themselves at his expense. He seized the enormous ladle, which was lying on one of his kettles, and began to stir the boiling liquid with great diligence. After a moment passed in dipping the ladle full, and then raising it on high, as the thick rich fluid fell back into the kettle, he suddenly gave it a whirl, as if to cool what yet remained, and offered the bowl to Mr. Le Quoi, saying :

"Taste that, mounsher, and you will say it is worth more than you offer. The molasses itself would fetch the money."

The complaisant Frenchman, after several timid efforts to trust his lips in contact with the bowl of the ladle, got a good swallow of the scalding liquid. He clapped his hands on his breast, and looked most piteously at the ladies, for a single instant ; and then, to use the language of Billy, when he afterward recounted the tale, "no drumsticks ever went faster on the skin of a sheep than the Frenchman's legs, for a round or two ; and then such swearing and spitting in French you never saw. But it's a knowing one, from the old countries, that thinks to get his jokes smoothly over a wood-chopper."

The air of innocence with which Kirby resumed the occupation of stirring the contents of his kettles would have completely deceived the spectators as to his agency in the temporary sufferings of Mr. Le Quoi, had not the reckless fellow thrust his tongue into his cheek, and cast his eyes over the party, with a simplicity of expression that was too exquisite to be natural. Mr. Le Quoi soon recovered his presence of mind and his decorum ; and he briefly apologized to the ladies for one or two very intemperate expressions that had escaped him in a moment of extraordinary excitement, and, remounting his horse, he continued in the background during the remainder of the visit, the wit of Kirby putting a violent termination, at once, to all negotiations on the subject of trade. During all this time, Marmaduke had been wandering about the grove, making observations on his favorite trees, and the wasteful manner in which the wood-choppers conducted his manufacture.

"It grieves me to witness the extravagance that pervades

this country," said the Judge, "where the settlers trifle with the blessings they might enjoy, with the prodigality of successful adventurers. You are not exempt from the censure yourself, Kirby, for you make dreadful wounds in these trees where a small incision would effect the same object. I earnestly beg you will remember that they are the growth of centuries, and when once gone none living will see their loss remedied."

"Why, I don't know, Judge," returned the man he addressed; "it seems to me, if there's plenty of anything in this mountaynious country, it's the trees. If there's any sin in chopping them, I've a pretty heavy account to settle; for I've chopped over the best half of a thousand acres, with my own hands, counting both Vermont and York States; and I hope to live to finish the whull, before I lay up my axe. Chopping comes quite natural to me, and I wish no other employment; but Jared Ranson said that he thought the sugar was likely to be scurce this season, seeing that so many folks was coming into the settlement, and so I concluded to take the 'bush' on sheares for this one spring. What's the best news, Judge, consarning ashes? do pots hold so that a man can live by them still? I s'pose they will, if they keep on fighting across the water."

"Thou reasonest with judgment, William," returned Marmaduke. "So long as the old world is to be convulsed with wars, so long will the harvest of America continue."

"Well, it's an ill wind, Judge, that blows nobody any good. I'm sure the country is in a thriving way; and though I know you calkilate greatly on the trees, setting as much store by them as some men would by their children, yet to my eyes they are a sore sight any time, unless I'm privileged to work my will on them; in which case I can't say but they are more to my liking. I have heard the settlers from the old countries say that their rich men keep great oaks and elms, that would make a barrel of pots to the tree, standing round their doors and humsteds, and scattered over their farms, just to look at. Now, I call no country much improved that is pretty well covered with trees. Stumps are a different thing, for they don't shade the land; and, besides, you dig them—they make a fence that will turn anything bigger than a hog, being grand for breachy cattle."

“Opinions on such subjects vary much in different countries,” said Marmaduke ; “but it is not as ornaments that I value the noble trees of this country ; it is for their usefulness. We are stripping the forests, as if a single year would replace what we destroy. But the hour approaches when the laws will take notice of not only the woods, but the game they contain also.”

With this consoling reflection, Marmaduke remounted, and the equestrians passed the sugar-camp, on their way to the promised landscape of Richard. The wood-chopper was left alone, in the bosom of the forest, to pursue his labors. Elizabeth turned her head, when they reached the point where they were to descend the mountain, and thought that the slow fires that were glimmering under his enormous kettles, his little brush shelter, covered with pieces of hemlock bark, his gigantic size, as he wielded his ladle with a steady and knowing air, aided by the background of stately trees, with their spouts and troughs, formed, altogether, no unreal picture of human life in its first stages of civilization. Perhaps whatever the scene possessed of a romantic character was not injured by the powerful tones of Kirby’s voice ringing through the woods, as he again awoke his strains to another tune, which was but little more scientific than the former. All that she understood of the words were :

“ And when the proud forest is falling,
 To my oxen cheerfully calling,
 From morn until night I am bawling,
 Whoa, back there, and haw and gee ;
 Till our labor is mutually ended,
 By my strength and cattle befriended,
 And against the mosquitoes defended
 By the bark of the walnut-tree.

“ Away ! then, you lads who would buy land ;
 Choose the oak that grows on the high land,
 Or the silvery pine on the dry land,
 It matters but little to me.”

CHAPTER XXI.

“Speed! Malise, speed! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced.”—SCOTT.

THE roads of Otsego, if we except the principal highways, were, at the early day of our tale, but little better than wood-paths. The high trees that were growing on the very verge of the wheel-tracks excluded the sun's rays, unless at meridian; and the slowness of the evaporation, united with the rich mold of vegetable decomposition that covered the whole country to the depth of several inches, occasioned but an indifferent foundation for the footing of travellers. Added to these were the inequalities of a natural surface, and the constant recurrence of enormous and slippery roots that were laid bare by the removal of the light soil, together with stumps of trees, to make a passage not only difficult but dangerous. Yet the riders among these numerous obstructions, which were such as would terrify an unpractised eye, gave no demonstrations of uneasiness as their horses toiled through the sloughs or trotted with uncertain paces along the dark route. In many places the marks on the trees were the only indications of a road, with perhaps an occasional remnant of a pine that, by being cut close to the earth, so as to leave nothing visible but its base of roots, spreading for twenty feet in every directiyn, was apparently placed there as a beacon to warn the traveller that it was the centre of a highway.

Into one of these roads the active sheriff led the way, first striking out of the foot-path, by which they had descended from the sugar-bush, across a little bridge, formed of round logs laid loosely on sleepers of pine, in which large openings of a formidable width were frequent. The nag of Richard, when it reached one of these gaps, laid its nose along the logs and stepped across the difficult passage with the sagacity of a man; but the blooded filly which Miss Temple rode disdained so humble a movement. She made a step or two with an unusual caution, and then, on reaching the broadest opening, obedient to the curb and whip of her fearless mistress, she bounded across the dangerous pass with the activity of a squirrel.

"Gently, gently, my child," said Marmaduke, who was following in the manner of Richard; "this is not a country for equestrian feats. Much prudence is requisite to journey through our rough paths with safety. Thou mayst practise thy skill in horsemanship on the plains of New Jersey with safety; but in the hills of Otsego they may be suspended for a time."

"I may as well then relinquish my saddle at once, dear sir," returned his daughter; "for if it is to be laid aside until this wild country be improved, old age will overtake me, and put an end to what you term my equestrian feats."

"Say not so, my child," returned her father; "but if thou venturkest again, as in crossing this bridge, old age will never overtake thee, but I shall be left to mourn thee, cut off in thy pride, my Elizabeth. If thou hadst seen this district of country, as I did, when it lay in the sleep of nature, and had witnessed its rapid changes as it awoke to supply the wants of man, thou wouldst curb thy impatience for a little time, though thou shouldst not check thy steed."

"I recollect hearing you speak of your first visit to these woods, but the impression is faint, and blended with the confused images of childhood. Wild and unsettled as it may yet seem, it must have been a thousand times more dreary then. Will you repeat, dear sir, what you then thought of your enterprise, and what you felt?"

During this speech of Elizabeth, which was uttered with the fervor of affection, young Edwards rode more closely to the side of the Judge, and bent his dark eyes on his countenance with an expression that seemed to read his thoughts.

"Thou wast then young, my child, but must remember when I left thee and thy mother, to take my first survey of these uninhabited mountains," said Marmaduke. "But thou dost not feel all the secret motives that can urge a man to endure privations in order to accumulate wealth. In my case they have not been trifling, and God has been pleased to smile on my efforts. If I have encountered pain, famine, and disease in accomplishing the settlement of this rough territory, I have not the misery of failure to add to the grievances."

"Famine!" echoed Elizabeth; "I thought this was the land of abundance! had you famine to contend with?"

"Even so, my child," said her father. "Those who

look around them now, and see the loads of produce that issue out of every wild path in these mountains during the season of travelling, will hardly credit that no more than five years have elapsed since the tenants of these woods were compelled to eat the scanty fruits of the forest to sustain life, and, with their unpractised skill, to hunt the beasts as food for their starving families."

"Ay!" cried Richard, who happened to overhear the last of this speech between the notes of the wood-chopper's song, which he was endeavoring to breathe aloud; "that was the starving time,* Cousin Bess. I grew as lank as a weasel that fall, and my face was as pale as one of your fever-and-ague visages. Monsieur Le Quoi, there, fell away like a pumpkin in drying; nor do I think you have got fairly over it yet, monsieur. Benjamin, I thought, bore it with a worse grace than any of the family; for he swore it was harder to endure than a short allowance in the calm latitudes. Benjamin is a sad fellow to swear if you starve him ever so little. I had half a mind to quit you then, 'duke, and to go into Pennsylvania to fatten; but, damn it, thinks I, we are sisters' children, and I will live or die with him, after all."

"I do not forget thy kindness," said Marmaduke, "nor that we are of one blood."

"But, my dear father," cried the wondering Elizabeth, "was there actual suffering? Where were the beautiful and fertile vales of the Mohawk? could they not furnish food for your wants?"

"It was a season of scarcity; the necessities of life commanded a high price in Europe, and were greedily sought after by the speculators. The emigrants from the East to the West invariably passed along the valley of the Mohawk, and swept away the means of subsistence like a

* The author has no better apology for interrupting the interest of a work of fiction by these desultory dialogues than that they have reference to facts. In reviewing his work, after so many years, he is compelled to confess it is injured by too many allusions to incidents that are not at all suited to satisfy the just expectations of the general reader. One of these events is slightly touched on in the commencement of this chapter.

More than thirty years since a very near and dear relative of the writer, an elder sister and a second mother, was killed by a fall from a horse in a ride among the very mountains mentioned in this tale. Few of her sex and years were more extensively known or more universally beloved than the admirable woman who thus fell a victim to the chances of the wilderness.

swarm of locusts. Nor were the people on the Flats in a much better condition. They were in want themselves, but they spared the little excess of provisions that Nature did not absolutely require, with the justice of the German character. There was no grinding of the poor. The word speculator was then unknown to them. I have seen many a stout man, bending under the load of the bag of meal which he was carrying from the mills of the Mohawk, through the rugged passes of these mountains, to feed his half-famished children, with a heart so light, as he approached his hut, that the thirty miles he had passed seemed nothing. Remember, my child, it was in our very infancy ; we had neither mills, nor grain, nor roads, nor often clearings ; we had nothing of increase but the mouths that were to be fed ; for even at that inauspicious moment the restless spirit of emigration was not idle ; nay, the general scarcity which extended to the East tended to increase the number of adventurers."

"And how, dearest father, didst thou encounter this dreadful evil ?" said Elizabeth, unconsciously adopting the dialect of her parent in the warmth of her sympathy. "Upon thee must have fallen the responsibility, if not the suffering."

"It did, Elizabeth," returned the Judge, pausing for a single moment, as if musing on his former feelings. "I had hundreds at that dreadful time daily looking up to me for bread. The sufferings of their families and the gloomy prospect before them had paralyzed the enterprise and efforts of my settlers ; hunger drove them to the woods for food, but despair sent them at night, enfeebled and wan, to a sleepless pillow. It was not a moment for inaction. I purchased cargoes of wheat from the granaries of Pennsylvania ; they were landed at Albany and brought up the Mohawk in boats ; from thence it was transported on pack-horses into the wilderness and distributed among my people. Seines were made, and the lakes and rivers were dragged for fish. Something like a miracle was wrought in our favor, for enormous shoals of herrings were discovered to have wandered five hundred miles through the windings of the impetuous Susquehanna, and the lake was alive with their numbers. These were at length caught and dealt out to the people, with proper portions of salt, and from that moment we again began to prosper."*

* All this was literally true.

"Yes," cried Richard, "and I was the man who served out the fish and salt. When the poor devils came to receive their rations, Benjamin, who was my deputy, was obliged to keep them off by stretching ropes around me, for they smelt so of garlic, from eating nothing but the wild onion, that the fumes put me out often in my measurement. You were a child then, Bess, and knew nothing of the matter, for great care was observed to keep both you and your mother from suffering. That year put me back dreadfully, both in the breed of my hogs and of my turkeys."

"No, Bess," cried the Judge, in a more cheerful tone, disregarding the interruption of his cousin, "he who hears of the settlement of a country knows but little of the toil and suffering by which it is accomplished. Unimproved and wild as this district now seems to your eyes, what was it when I first entered the hills! I left my party, the morning of my arrival, near the farms of the Cherry Valley, and, following a deer-path, rode to the summit of the mountain that I have since called Mount Vision; for the sight that there met my eyes seemed to me as the deceptions of a dream. The fire had run over the pinnacle, and in a great measure laid open the view. The leaves were fallen, and I mounted a tree and sat for an hour looking on the silent wilderness. Not an opening was to be seen in the boundless forest except where the lake lay, like a mirror of glass. The water was covered by myriads of the wild-fowl that migrate with the changes in the season; and while in my situation on the branch of the beech, I saw a bear, with her cubs, descend to the shore to drink. I had met many deer, gliding through the woods, in my journey; but not the vestige of a man could I trace during my progress, nor from my elevated observatory. No clearing, no hut, none of the winding roads that are now to be seen, were there; nothing but mountains rising behind mountains; and the valley, with its surface of branches, enlivened here and there with the faded foliage of some tree that parted from its leaves with more than ordinary reluctance. Even the Susquehanna was then hid by the height and density of the forest."

"And were you alone?" asked Elizabeth; "passed you the night in that solitary state?"

"Not so, my child," returned the father. "After musing on the scene for an hour, with a mingled feeling of pleasure and desolation, I left my perch and descended

the mountain. My horse was left to browse on the twigs that grew within his reach, while I explored the shores of the lake and the spot where Templeton stands. A pine of more than ordinary growth stood where my dwelling is now placed! a windrow had been opened through the trees from thence to the lake, and my view was but little impeded. Under the branches of that tree I made my solitary dinner. I had just finished my repast as I saw smoke curling from under the mountain, near the eastern bank of the lake. It was the only indication of the vicinity of man that I had then seen. After much toil I made my way to the spot, and found a rough cabin of logs, built against the foot of a rock, and bearing the marks of a tenant, though I found no one within it——”

“It was the hut of Leather-Stocking,” said Edwards, quickly.

“It was ; though I at first supposed it to be a habitation of the Indians. But while I was lingering around the spot Natty made his appearance, staggering under the carcass of a buck that he had slain. Our acquaintance commenced at that time ; before, I had never heard that such a being tenanted the woods. He launched his bark canoe and set me across the foot of the lake to the place where I had fastened my horse, and pointed out a spot where he might get a scanty browsing until the morning ; when I returned and passed the night in the cabin of the hunter.”

Miss Temple was so much struck by the deep attention of young Edwards during this speech that she forgot to resume her interrogatories ; but the youth himself continued the discourse by asking,

“And how did the Leather-Stocking discharge the duties of a host, sir ?”

“Why, simply but kindly, until late in the evening, when he discovered my name and object, and the cordiality of his manner very sensibly diminished, or, I might better say, disappeared. He considered the introduction of the settlers as an innovation on his rights, I believe ; for he expressed much dissatisfaction at the measure, though it was in his confused and ambiguous manner. I hardly understood his objections myself, but supposed they referred chiefly to an interruption of the hunting.”

“Had you then purchased the estate, or were you ex-

aming it with an intent to buy?" asked Edwards, a little abruptly.

"It had been mine for several years. It was with a view to people the land that I visited the lake. Natty treated me hospitably, but coldly, I thought, after he learned the nature of my journey. I slept on his own bear-skin, however, and in the morning joined my surveyors again."

"Said he nothing of the Indian rights, sir? The Leather-Stocking is much given to impeach the justice of the tenure by which the whites hold the country."

"I remember that he spoke of them, but I did not clearly comprehend him, and may have forgotten what he said; for the Indian title was extinguished so far back as the close of the old war, and if it had not been at all, I hold under the patents of the Royal Governors, confirmed by an act of our own State Legislature, and no court in the country can affect my title."

"Doubtless, sir, your title is both legal and equitable," returned the youth, coldly, reining his horse back and remaining silent till the subject was changed.

It was seldom Mr. Jones suffered any conversation to continue for a great length of time without his participation. It seems that he was of the party that Judge Temple had designated as his surveyors; and he embraced the opportunity of the pause that succeeded the retreat of young Edwards to take up the discourse, and with a narration of their further proceedings, after his own manner. As it wanted, however, the interest that had accompanied the description of the Judge, we must decline the task of committing his sentences to paper.

They soon reached the point where the promised view was to be seen. It was one of those picturesque and peculiar scenes that belong to the Otsego, but which required the absence of the ice and the softness of a summer's landscape to be enjoyed in all its beauty. Marmaduke had early forewarned his daughter of the season, and of its effect on the prospect; and after casting a cursory glance at its capabilities, the party returned homeward, perfectly satisfied that its beauties would repay them for the toil of a second ride at a more propitious season.

"The spring is the gloomy time of the American year," said the Judge; "and it is more peculiarly the case in these mountains. The winter seems to retreat to the fast-

nesses of the hills, as to the citadel of its dominion, and is only expelled after a tedious siege, in which either party, at times, would seem to be gaining the victory."

"A very just and apposite figure, Judge Temple," observed the sheriff; "and the garrison under the command of Jack Frost make formidable sorties—you understand what I mean by sorties, monsieur; sallies, in English—and sometimes drive General Spring and his troops back again into the low countries."

"Yes, *sair*," returned the Frenchman, whose prominent eyes were watching the precarious footsteps of the beast he rode, as it picked its dangerous way among the roots of trees, holes, log bridges, and sloughs that formed the aggregate of the highway. "*Je vous entends; de low countrie is freeze up for half de year.*"

The error of Mr. Le Quoi was not noticed by the sheriff; and the rest of the party were yielding to the influence of the changeful season, which was already teaching the equestrians that a continuance of its mildness was not to be expected for any length of time. Silence and thoughtfulness succeeded the gayety and conversation that had prevailed during the commencement of the ride, as clouds began to gather about the heavens, apparently collecting from every quarter, in quick motion, without the agency of a breath of air.

While riding over one of the cleared eminences that occurred in their route, the watchful eye of Judge Temple pointed out to his daughter the approach of a tempest. Flurries of snow already obscured the mountain that formed the northern boundary of the lake, and the genial sensation which had quickened the blood through their veins was already succeeded by the deadening influence of an approaching northwester.

All of the party were now busily engaged in making the best of their way to the village, though the badness of the roads frequently compelled them to check the impatience of their animals, which often carried them over places that would not admit of any gait faster than a walk.

Richard continued in advance, followed by Mr. Le Quoi; next to whom rode Elizabeth, who seemed to have imbibed the distance which pervaded the manner of young Edwards since the termination of the discourse between the latter and her father. Marmaduke followed his daughter, giving her frequent and tender warnings as to the manage-

ment of her horse. It was, possibly, the evident dependence that Louisa Grant placed on his assistance which induced the youth to continue by her side, as they pursued their way through a dreary and dark wood, where the rays of the sun could but rarely penetrate, and where even the daylight was obscured and rendered gloomy by the deep forests that surrounded them. No wind had yet reached the spot where the equestrians were in motion, but that dead silence that often precedes a storm contributed to render their situation more irksome than if they were already subject to the fury of the tempest. Suddenly the voice of young Edwards was heard shouting in those appalling tones that carry alarm to the very soul, and which curdle the blood of those that hear them :

“A tree! a tree! whip—spur for your lives! a tree! a tree!”

“A tree! a tree!” echoed Richard, giving his horse a blow that caused the alarmed beast to jump nearly a rod, throwing the mud and water into the air like a hurricane.

“Von tree! von tree!” shouted the Frenchman, bending his body on the neck of his charger, shutting his eyes, and playing on the ribs of his beast with his heels at a rate that caused him to be conveyed on the crupper of the sheriff with a marvellous speed.

Elizabeth checked her filly and looked up, with an unconscious but alarmed air, at the very cause of their danger, while she listened to the crackling sounds that awoke the stillness of the forest; but the next instant her bridle was seized by her father, who cried: “God protect my child!” and she felt herself hurried onward, impelled by the vigor of his nervous arm.

Each one of the party bowed to his saddle-bows as the tearing of branches was succeeded by a sound like the rushing of the winds, which was followed by a thundering report, and a shock that caused the very earth to tremble as one of the noblest ruins of the forest fell directly across their path.

One glance was enough to assure Judge Temple that his daughter and those in front of him were safe, and he turned his eyes, in dreadful anxiety, to learn the fate of the others. Young Edwards was on the opposite side of the tree, his form thrown back in his saddle to its utmost distance, his left hand drawing up his bridle with its greatest force, while the right grasped that of Miss Grant so as to

draw the head of her horse under its body. Both the animals stood shaking in every joint with terror, and snorting fearfully. Louisa herself had relinquished her reins, and, with her hands pressed on her face, sat bending forward in her saddle, in an attitude of despair, mingled strangely with resignation.

"Are you safe?" cried the Judge, first breaking the awful silence of the moment.

"By God's blessing," returned the youth; "but if there had been branches to the tree we must have been lost——"

He was interrupted by the figure of Louisa slowly yielding in her saddle, and but for his arm she would have sunk to the earth. Terror, however, was the only injury that the clergyman's daughter had sustained, and, with the aid of Elizabeth, she was soon restored to her senses. After some little time was lost in recovering her strength, the young lady was replaced in her saddle, and, supported on either side by Judge Temple and Mr. Edwards, she was enabled to follow the party in their slow progress.

"The sudden fallings of the trees," said Marmaduke, "are the most dangerous accidents in the forest, for they are not to be foreseen, being impelled by no winds, nor any extraneous or visible cause against which we can guard."

"The reason of their falling, Judge Temple, is very obvious," said the sheriff. "The tree is old and decayed, and it is gradually weakened by the frosts, until a line drawn from the centre of gravity falls without its base, and then the tree comes of a certainty; and I should like to know what greater compulsion there can be for anything than a mathematical certainty. I studied math——"

"Very true, Richard," interrupted Marmaduke; "thy reasoning is true, and, if my memory be not over-treachorous, was furnished by myself on a former occasion. But how is one to guard against the danger? Canst thou go through the forests measuring the bases and calculating the centres of the oaks? Answer me that, friend Jones, and I will say thou wilt do the country a service."

"Answer thee that, friend Temple!" returned Richard; "a well-educated man can answer thee anything, sir. Do any trees fall in this manner but such as are decayed? Take care not to approach the roots of a rotten tree, and you will be safe enough."

"That would be excluding us entirely from the forests,"

said Marmaduke. "But, happily, the winds usually force down most of these dangerous ruins as their currents are admitted into the woods by the surrounding clearings, and such a fall as this has been is very rare."

Louisa by this time had recovered so much strength as to allow the party to proceed at a quicker pace, but long before they were safely housed they were overtaken by the storm; and when they dismounted at the door of the mansion-house, the black plumes of Miss Temple's hat were drooping with the weight of a load of damp snow, and the coats of the gentlemen were powdered with the same material.

While Edwards was assisting Louisa from her horse, the warm-hearted girl caught his hand with fervor and whispered:

"Now, Mr. Edwards, both father and daughter owe their lives to you."

A driving northwesterly storm succeeded, and before the sun was set every vestige of spring had vanished; the lake, the mountains, the village, and the fields being again hidden under one dazzling coat of snow.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Men, boys, and girls
Desert th' unpeopled village; and wild crowds
Spread o'er the plain, by the sweet phrensy driven."

—SOMERVILLE.

FROM this time to the close of April the weather continued to be a succession of great and rapid changes. One day the soft airs of spring seemed to be stealing along the valley, and, in unison with an invigorating sun, attempting covertly to rouse the dormant powers of the vegetable world; while, on the next, the surly blasts from the north would sweep across the lake and erase every impression left by their gentle adversaries. The snow, however, finally disappeared, and the green wheat fields were seen in every direction, spotted with the dark and charred stumps that had, the preceding season, supported some of the proudest trees of the forest. Ploughs were in motion, wherever those useful implements could be used, and the smokes of the sugar-camps were no longer seen issuing from the

woods of maple. The lake had lost the beauty of a field of ice, but still a dark and gloomy covering concealed its waters, for the absence of currents left them yet hidden under a porous crust, which, saturated with the fluid, barely retained enough strength to preserve the continuity of its parts. Large flocks of wild geese were seen passing over the country which hovered, for a time, around the hidder, sheet of water, apparently searching for a resting-place; and then, on finding themselves excluded by the chill covering, would soar away to the north, filling the air with discordant screams, as if venting their complaints at the tardy operations of Nature.

For a week, the dark covering of the Otsego was left to the undisturbed possession of two eagles, who alighted on the centre of its field, and sat eyeing their undisputed territory. During the presence of these monarchs of the air, the flocks of migrating birds avoided crossing the plain of ice by turning into the hills, apparently seeking the protection of the forests, while the white and bald heads of the tenants of the lake were turned upward, with a look of contempt. But the time had come when even these kings of birds were to be dispossessed. An opening had been gradually increasing at the lower extremity of the lake, and around the dark spot where the current of the river prevented the formation of ice during even the coldest weather: and the fresh southerly winds, that now breathed freely upon the valley, made an impression on the waters. Mimic waves began to curl over the margin of the frozen field, which exhibited an outline of crystallizations that slowly receded toward the north. At each step the power of the winds and the waves increased, until, after a struggle of a few hours, the turbulent little billows succeeded in setting the whole field in motion, when it was driven beyond the reach of the eye, with a rapidity that was as magical as the change produced in the scene by this expulsion of the lingering remnant of winter. Just as the last sheet of agitated ice was disappearing in the distance, the eagles rose, and soared with a wide sweep above the clouds, while the waves tossed their little caps of snow in the air, as if rioting in their release from a thralldom of five minutes' duration.

The following morning Elizabeth was awakened by the exhilarating sounds of the martens, who were quarrelling and chattering around the little boxes suspended above

her windows, and the cries of Richard, who was calling in tones animating as signs of the season itself :

“Awake ! awake ! my fair lady ! the gulls are hovering over the lake already, and the heavens are alive with pigeons. You may look an hour before you can find a hole through which to get a peep at the sun. Awake ! awake ! lazy ones ! Benjamin is overhauling the ammunition, and we only wait for our breakfasts, and away for the mountains and pigeon-shooting.”

There was no resisting this animated appeal, and in a few minutes Miss Temple and her friend descended to the parlor. The doors of the hall were thrown open, and the mild, balmy air of a clear spring morning was ventilating the apartment, where the vigilance of the ex-steward had been so long maintaining an artificial heat with such unremitted diligence. The gentlemen were impatiently waiting for their morning's repast, each equipped in the garb of a sportsman. Mr. Jones made many visits to the southern door, and would cry :

“See, Cousin Bess ! see, 'duke, the pigeon-roosts of the south have broken up ! They are growing more thick every instant. Here is a flock that the eye cannot see the end of. There is food enough in it to keep the army of Xerxes for a month, and feathers enough to make beds for the whole country. Xerxes, Mr. Edwards, was a Grecian king, who—no, he was a Turk, or a Persian, who wanted to conquer Greece, just the same as these rascals will overrun our wheat fields, when they come back in the fall. Away ! away ! Bess ; I long to pepper them.”

In this wish both Marmaduke and young Edwards seemed equally to participate, for the sight was exhilarating to a sportsman ; and the ladies soon dismissed the party after a hasty breakfast.

If the heavens were alive with pigeons, the whole village seemed equally in motion with men, women, and children. Every species of fire-arms, from the French ducking-gun, with a barrel near six feet in length, to the common horseman's pistol, was to be seen in the hands of the men and boys ; while bows and arrows, some made of the simple stick of walnut sapling, and others in a rude imitation of the ancient cross-bows, were carried by many of the latter.

The houses and the signs of life apparent in the village drove the alarmed birds, from the direct line of their flight,

toward the mountains, along the sides and near the bases of which they were glancing in dense masses, equally wonderful by the rapidity of their motion, and their incredible numbers.

We have already said that, across the inclined plane which fell from the steep ascent of the mountain to the banks of the Susquehanna, ran the highway, on either side of which a clearing of many acres had been made at a very early day. Over those clearings, and up the eastern mountain, and along the dangerous path that was cut into its side, the different individuals posted themselves, and in a few moments the attack commenced.

Among the sportsmen was the tall, gaunt form of Leather-Stocking, walking over the field, with his rifle hanging on his arm, his dogs at his heels; the latter now scenting the dead or wounded birds that were beginning to tumble from the flocks, and then crouching under the legs of their master, as if they participated in his feelings at this wasteful and unsportsmanlike execution.

The reports of the fire-arms became rapid, whole volleys rising from the plain, as flocks of more than ordinary numbers darted over the opening, shadowing the field like a cloud; and then the light smoke of a single piece would issue from among the leafless bushes on the mountain, as death was hurled on the retreat of the affrighted birds, who were rising from a volley, in a vain effort to escape. Arrows and missiles of every kind were in the midst of the flocks; and so numerous were the birds, and so low did they take their flight, that even long poles in the hands of those on the sides of the mountain were used to strike them to the earth.

During all this time Mr. Jones, who disdained the humble and ordinary means of destruction used by his companions, was busily occupied, aided by Benjamin, in making arrangements for an assault of more than ordinarily fatal character. Among the relics of the old military excursions, that occasionally are discovered throughout the different districts of the western part of New York, there had been found in Templeton, at its settlement, a small swivel, which would carry a ball of a pound weight. It was thought to have been deserted by a war party of the whites in one of their inroads into the Indian settlements, when, perhaps, convenience or their necessity induced them to leave such an incumbrance behind them in the woods. This miniature

cannon had been released from the rust, and being mounted on little wheels, was now in a state for actual service. For several years it was the sole organ for extraordinary rejoicings used in those mountains. On the mornings of the Fourth of July it would be heard ringing among the hills; and even Captain Hollister, who was the highest authority in that part of the country on all such occasions, affirmed that, considering its dimensions, it was no despicable gun for a salute. It was somewhat the worse for the service it had performed, it is true, there being but a trifling difference in size between the touch-hole and the muzzle. Still, the grand conceptions of Richard had suggested the importance of such an instrument in hurling death at his nimble enemies. The swivel was dragged by a horse into a part of the open space that the sheriff thought most eligible for planting a battery of the kind, and Mr. Pump proceeded to load it. Several handfuls of duck-shot were placed on top of the powder, and the major-domo announced that his piece was ready for service.

The sight of such an implement collected all the idle spectators to the spot, who, being mostly boys, filled the air with cries of exultation and delight. The gun was pointed high, and Richard, holding a coal of fire in a pair of tongs, patiently took his seat on a stump, awaiting the appearance of a flock worthy of his notice.

So prodigious was the number of the birds that the scattering fire of the guns, with the hurling of missiles and the cries of the boys, had no other effect than to break off small flocks from the immense masses that continued to dart along the valley, as if the whole of the feathered tribe were pouring through that one pass. None pretended to collect the game, which lay scattered over the fields in such profusion as to cover the very ground with fluttering victims.

Leather-Stocking was a silent but uneasy spectator of all these proceedings, but was able to keep his sentiments to himself until he saw the introduction of the swivel into the sports.

"This comes of settling a country!" he said. "Here have I known the pigeon to fly for forty long years, and, till you made your clearings, there was nobody to skear or to hurt them. I loved to see them come into the woods, for they were company to a body, hurting nothing—being, as it was, as harmless as a garter-snake. But now it gives

me sore thoughts when I hear the frighty things whizzing through the air, for I know it's only a motion to bring out all the brats of the village. Well, the Lord won't see the waste of his creatures for nothing, and right will be done to the pigeons, as well as others, by and by. There's Mr. Oliver, as bad as the rest of them, firing into the flocks as if he was shooting down nothing but Mingo warriors."

Among the sportsmen was Billy Kirby, who, armed with an old musket, was loading, and, without even looking into the air, was firing and shouting as his victims fell even on his own person. He heard the speech of Natty, and took upon himself to reply :

"What! old Leather-Stocking," he cried, "grumbling at the loss of a few pigeons! If you had to sow your wheat twice, and three times, as I have done, you wouldn't be so massyfully feeling toward the divils. Hurrah, boys! scatter the feathers! This is better than shooting at a turkey's head and neck, old fellow."

"It's better for you, maybe, Billy Kirby," replied the indignant old hunter, "and all them that don't know how to put a ball down a rifle barrel, or how to bring it up again with a true aim; but it's wicked to be shooting into flocks in this wasty manner, and none to do it who know how to knock over a single bird. If a body has a craving for pigeon's flesh, why, it's made the same as all other creatures, for man's eating; but not to kill twenty and eat one. When I want such a thing I go into the woods till I find one to my liking, and then I shoot him off the branches, without touching the feather of another, though there might be a hundred on the same tree. You couldn't do such a thing, Billy Kirby—you couldn't do it if you tried."

"What's that, old corn-stalk! you sapless stub!" cried the wood-chopper. "You have grown wordy, since the affair of the turkey; but if you are for a single shot, here goes at that bird which comes on by himself."

The fire from the distant part of the field had driven a single pigeon below the flock to which it belonged, and, frightened with the constant reports of the muskets, it was approaching the spot where the disputants stood, darting first from one side and then to the other, cutting the air with the swiftness of lightning, and making a noise with its wings not unlike the rushing of a bullet. Unfortunately for the wood-chopper, notwithstanding his vaunt,

he did not see this bird until it was too late to fire as it approached, and he pulled the trigger at the unlucky moment when it was darting immediately over his head. The bird continued its course with the usual velocity.

Natty lowered his rifle from his arm when the challenge was made, and waiting a moment, until the terrified victim had got in a line with his eye, and had dropped near the bank of the lake, he raised it again with uncommon rapidity, and fired. It might have been chance, or it might have been skill, that produced the result; it was probably a union of both; but the pigeon whirled over in the air, and fell into the lake with a broken wing. At the sound of his rifle, both his dogs started from his feet, and in a few minutes, the "slut" brought out the bird, still alive.

The wonderful exploit of Leather-Stocking was noised through the field with great rapidity, and the sportsmen gathered in, to learn the truth of the report.

"What!" said young Edwards, "have you really killed a pigeon on the wing, Natty, with a single ball?"

"Haven't I killed loons before now, lad, that dive at the flash?" returned the hunter. "It's much better to kill only such as you want, without wasting your powder and lead, than to be firing into God's creatures in this wicked manner. But I came out for a bird, and you know the reason why I like small game, Mr. Oliver, and now I have got one I will go home, for I don't relish to see these wasty ways that you are all practysing, as if the least thing wasn't made for use, and not to destroy."

"Thou sayest well, Leather-Stocking," cried Marmaduke, "and I begin to think it time to put an end to this work of destruction."

"Put an ind, Judge, to your clearings. An't the woods His work as well as the pigeons? Use, but don't waste. Wasn't the woods made for the beasts and birds to harbor in? and when man wanted their flesh, their skins, or their feathers, there's the place to seek them. But I'll go to the hut with my own game, for I wouldn't touch one of the harmless things that cover the ground here, looking up with their eyes on me, as if they only wanted tongues to say their thoughts."

With this sentiment in his mouth, Leather-Stocking threw his rifle over his arm, and, followed by his dogs, stepped across the clearing with great caution, taking care not to tread on one of the wounded birds in his path. He

soon entered the bushes on the margin of the lake and was hid from view.

Whatever impression the morality of Natty made on the Judge, it was utterly lost on Richard. He availed himself of the gathering of the sportsmen, to lay a plan for one "fell swoop" of destruction. The musket men were drawn up in battle array, in a line extending on each side of his artillery, with orders to await the signal of firing from himself.

"Stand by, my lads," said Benjamin, who acted as an aid-de-camp on this occasion, "stand by, my hearties, and when Squire Dickens heaves out the signal to begin firing, d'ye see, you may open upon them in a broadside. Take care and fire low, boys, and you'll be sure to hull the flock."

"Fire low!" shouted Kirby: "hear the old fool! If we fire low, we may hit the stumps, but not ruffle a pigeon."

"How should you know, you lubber?" cried Benjamin, with a very unbecoming heat for an officer on the eve of battle—"how should you know, you grampus? Haven't I sailed aboard of the Boadishy for five years? and wasn't it a standing order to fire low, and to hull your enemy? Keep silence at your guns, boys, and mind the order that is passed."

The loud laughs of the musket men were silenced by the more authoritative voice of Richard, who called for attention and obedience to his signals.

Some millions of pigeons were supposed to have already passed, that morning, over the valley of Templeton; but nothing like the flock that was now approaching had been seen before. It extended from mountain to mountain in one solid blue mass, and the eye looked in vain, over the southern hills, to find its termination. The front of this living column was distinctly marked by a line but very slightly indented, so regular and even was the flight. Even Marmaduke forgot the morality of Leather-Stocking as it approached, and, in common with the rest, brought his musket to a poise.

"Fire!" cried the sheriff, clapping a coal to the priming of the cannon. As half of Benjamin's charge escaped through the touch-hole, the whole volley of the musketry preceded the report of the swivel. On receiving this united discharge of small-arms, the front of the flock darted upward, while, at the same instant, myriads of those in the rear rushed with amazing rapidity into their places, so that, when the column of white smoke gushed from the mouth of the little cannon, an accumulated mass of objects was

gliding over its point of direction. The roar of the gun echoed along the mountains, and died away to the north, like distant thunder, while the whole flock of alarmed birds seemed, for a moment, thrown into one disorderly and agitated mass. The air was filled with their irregular flight, layer rising above layer, far above the tops of the highest pines, none daring to advance beyond the dangerous pass; when, suddenly, some of the leaders of the feathered tribe shot across the valley, taking their flight directly over the village, and hundreds of thousands in their rear followed the example, deserting the eastern side of the plain to their persecutors and the slain.

"Victory!" shouted Richard, "victory! we have driven the enemy from the field."

"Not so, Dickon," said Marmaduke; "the field is covered with them; and, like the Leather-Stocking, I see nothing but eyes, in every direction, as the innocent sufferers turn their heads in terror. Full one-half of those that have fallen are yet alive; and I think it is time to end the sport, if sport it be."

"Sport!" cried the sheriff; "it is princely sport! There are some thousands of the blue-coated boys on the ground, so that every old woman in the village may have a pot-pie for the asking."

"Well, we have happily frightened the birds from this side of the valley," said Marmaduke, "and the carnage must of necessity end, for the present. Boys, I will give you sixpence a hundred for the pigeons' heads only; so go to work, and bring them into the village."

This expedient produced the desired effect, for every urchin on the ground went industriously to work to wring the necks of the wounded birds. Judge Temple retired toward his dwelling with that kind of feeling that many a man has experienced before him, who discovers, after the excitement of the moment has passed, that he has purchased pleasure at the price of misery to others. Horses were loaded with the dead; and, after this first burst of sporting, the shooting of pigeons became a business, with a few idlers, for the remainder of the season. Richard, however, boasted for many a year of his shot with the "cricket;" and Benjamin gravely asserted that he thought they had killed nearly as many pigeons on that day as there were Frenchmen destroyed on the memorable occasion of Rodney's victory.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“Help, masters, help ; here’s a fish hangs in the net, like a poor man’s right in the law.”—PERICLES OF TYRE.

THE advance of the season now became as rapid as its first approach had been tedious and lingering. The days were uniformly mild, while the nights, though cool, were no longer chilled by frosts. The whip-poor-will was heard whistling his melancholy notes along the margin of the lake, and the ponds and meadows were sending forth the music of their thousand tenants. The leaf of the native poplar was seen quivering in the woods ; the sides of the mountains began to lose their hue of brown, as the lively green of the different members of the forest blended their shades with the permanent colors of the pine and hemlock ; and even the buds of the tardy oak were swelling with the promise of the coming summer. The gay and fluttering blue-bird, the social robin, and the industrious little wren, were all to be seen enlivening the fields with their presence and their songs ; while the soaring fish-hawk was already hovering over the waters of the Otsego, watching with native voracity for the appearance of his prey.

The tenants of the lake were far-famed for both their quantities and their quality, and the ice had hardly disappeared, before numberless little boats were launched from the shores, and the lines of the fishermen were dropped into the inmost recesses of its deepest caverns, tempting the unwary animals with every variety of bait that the ingenuity or the art of man had invented. But the slow though certain adventures with hook and line were ill suited to the profusion and impatience of the settlers. More destructive means were resorted to ; and, as the season had now arrived when the bass-fisheries were allowed by the provisions of the law that Judge Temple had procured, the sheriff declared his intention, by availing himself of the first dark night, to enjoy the sport in person.

“And you shall be present, Cousin Bess,” he added, when he announced this design, “and Miss Grant, and Mr. Edwards ; and I will show you what I call fishing—not nibble, nibble, nibble, as ’duke does when he goes after the salmon-trout. There he will sit for hours, in a broiling sun,

or, perhaps, over a hole in the ice, in the coldest days in winter, under the lee of a few bushes, and not a fish will he catch, after all this mortification of the flesh. No, no—give me a good seine that's fifty or sixty fathoms in length, with a jolly parcel of boatmen to crack their jokes the while, with Benjamin to steer, and let us haul them in by thousands ; I call that fishing."

"Ah ! Dickon," cried Marmaduke, "thou knowest but little of the pleasure there is in playing with the hook and line, or thou wouldst be more saving of the game. I have known thee to leave fragments enough behind thee, when thou hast headed a night-party on the lake, to feed a dozen famishing families."

"I shall not dispute the matter, Judge Temple ; this night will I go : and I invite the company to attend, and then let them decide between us."

Richard was busy during most of the afternoon, making his preparations for the important occasion. Just as the light of the setting sun had disappeared, and a new moon had begun to throw its shadows on the earth, the fishermen took their departure in a boat, for a point that was situated on the western shore of the lake, at the distance of rather more than half a mile from the village. The ground had become settled, and the walking was good and dry. Marmaduke, with his daughter, her friend, and young Edwards, continued on the high grassy banks at the outlet of the placid sheet of water, watching the dark object that was moving across the lake, until it entered the shade of the western hills, and was lost to the eye. The distance round by land to the point of destination was a mile, and he observed :

"It is time for us to be moving ; the moon will be down ere we reach the point, and then the miraculous hauls of Dickon will commence."

The evening was warm, and, after the long and dreary winter from which they had just escaped, delightfully invigorating. Inspired by the scene and their anticipated amusement, the youthful companions of the Judge followed his steps, as he led them along the shores of the Otsego, and through the skirts of the village.

"See !" said young Edwards, "they are building their fire already ; it glimmers for a moment, and dies again like the light of a fire-fly."

"Now it blazes," cried Elizabeth ; "you can perceive

figures moving around the light. Oh! I would bet my jewels against the gold beads of Remarkable, that my impatient Cousin Dickon had an agency in raising that bright flame: and see; it fades again, like most of his brilliant schemes."

"Thou hast guessed the truth, Bess," said her father; "he has thrown an armful of brush on the pile, which has burnt out as soon as lighted. But it has enabled them to find a better fuel, for their fire begins to blaze with a more steady flame. It is the true fisherman's beacon now; observe how beautifully it throws its little circle of light on the water!"

The appearance of the fire urged the pedestrians on, for even the ladies had become eager to witness the miraculous draught. By the time they reached the bank, which rose above the low point where the fishermen had landed, the moon had sunk behind the tops of the western pines, and, as most of the stars were obscured by clouds, there was but little other light than that which proceeded from the fire. At the suggestion of Marmaduke, his companions paused to listen to the conversation of those below them, and examine the party for a moment before they descended to the shore.

The whole group were seated around the fire, with the exception of Richard and Benjamin; the former of whom occupied the root of a decayed stump, that had been drawn to the spot as part of their fuel, and the latter was standing, with his arms a-kimbo, so near to the flame, that the smoke occasionally obscured his solemn visage, as it waved around the pile, in obedience to the night airs that swept gently over the water.

"Why, look you, squire," said the major-domo, "you may call a lake-fish that will weigh twenty or thirty pounds a serious matter; but to a man who has hauled in a shovel-nosed shirk, d'ye see, it's but a poor kind of fishing after all."

"I don't know, Benjamin," returned the sheriff; "a haul of one thousand Otsego bass, without counting pike, pickerel, perch, bull-pouts, salmon-trouts, and suckers, is no bad fishing, let me tell you. There may be sport in sticking a shark, but what is he good for after you have got him? Now, any one of the fish that I have named is fit to set before a king."

"Well, squire," returned Benjamin, "just listen to the

philosophy of the thing. Would it stand to reason, that such fish should live and be caught in this here little pond of water, where it's hardly deep enough to drown a man, as you'll find in the wide ocean, where, as everybody knows, that is, everybody that has followed the seas, whales and grampuses are to be seen, that are as long as one of the pine-trees on yonder mountain?"

"Softly, softly, Benjamin," said the sheriff, as if he wished to save the credit of his favorite; "why, some of the pines will measure two hundred feet, and even more."

"Two hundred or two thousand, it's all the same thing," cried Benjamin, with an air which manifested that he was not easily to be bullied out of his opinion, on a subject like the present. "Haven't I been there, and haven't I seen? I have said that you fall in with whales as long as one of them there pines; and what I have once said I'll stand to!"

During this dialogue, which was evidently but the close of much longer discussion, the huge frame of Billy Kirby was seen extended on one side of the fire, where he was picking his teeth with splinters of the chips near him, and occasionally shaking his head with distrust of Benjamin's assertions.

"I've a notion," said the wood-chopper, "that there's water in this lake to swim the biggest whale that ever was invented; and, as to the pines, I think I ought to know so'thing consarning them; I have chopped many a one that was sixty times the length of my helve, without counting the eye: and I believe, Benny, that if the old pine that stands in the hollow of the Vision Mountain, just over the village—you may see the tree itself by looking up, for the moon is on its top yet—well, now I believe, if that same tree was planted out in the deepest part of the lake, there would be water enough for the biggest ship that ever was built to float over it, without touching its upper branches, I do."

"Did'ee ever see a ship, Master Kirby?" roared the steward, "did'ee ever see a ship, man? or any craft bigger than a lime-scow, or a wood-boat, on this here small bit of fresh water?"

"Yes, I have," said the wood-chopper, stoutly; "I can say that I have, and tell no lie."

"Did'ee ever see a British ship, Master Kirby? an English line-of-battle ship, where did'ee ever fall in

with a regular-built vessel, with starn-post and cut-water, garboard-streak and blank-shear, gangways, and hatchways, and waterways, quarter-deck, and forecastle, ay, and flush-deck?—tell me that, man, if you can; where away did'ee ever fall in with a full-rigged, regular-built, decked vessel?"

The whole company were a good deal astounded with this overwhelming question, and even Richard afterward remarked that it "was a thousand pities that Benjamin could not read, or he must have made a valuable officer to the British marine. It is no wonder that they overcame the French so easily on the water, when even the lowest sailor so well understood the different parts of a vessel." But Billy Kirby was a fearless wight, and had great jealousy of foreign dictation; he had risen on his feet, and turned his back to the fire, during the voluble delivery of this interrogatory; and when the steward ended, contrary to all expectation, he gave the following spirited reply:

"Where! why, on the North River, and maybe on Champlain. There's sloops on the river, boy, that would give a hard time on't to the stoutest vessel King George owns. They carry masts of ninety feet in the clear of good solid pine, for I've been at the chopping of many a one in Vermont State. I wish I was captain in one of them, and you was in that Board-dish that you talk so much about; and we'd soon see what good Yankee stuff is made on, and whether a Varmounter's hide an't as thick as an Englishman's."

The echoes from the opposite hills, which were more than half a mile from the fishing point, sent back the discordant laugh that Benjamin gave forth at this challenge; and the woods that covered their sides seemed, by the noise that issued from their shades, to be full of mocking demons.

"Let us descend to the shore," whispered Marmaduke, "or there will soon be ill-blood between them. Benjamin is a fearless boaster: and Kirby, though good-natured, is a careless son of the forest, who thinks one American more than a match for six Englishmen. I marvel that Dickon is silent, where there is such a trial of skill in the superlative!"

The appearance of Judge Temple and the ladies produced, if not a pacification, at least a cessation of hostilities. Obedient to the directions of Mr. Jones, the fisher-

men prepared to launch their boat, which had been seen in the background of the view, with the net carefully disposed on a little platform in its stern, ready for service. Richard gave vent to his reproaches at the tardiness of the pedestrians, when all the turbulent passions of the party were succeeded by a calm, as mild and as placid as that which prevailed over the beautiful sheet of water that they were about to rifle of its best treasures.

The night had now become so dark as to render objects, without the reach of the light of the fire, not only indistinct, but in most cases invisible. For a little distance the water was discernible, glistening, as the glare from the fire danced over its surface, touching it here and there with red quivering streaks; but, at a hundred feet from the shore, there lay a boundary of impenetrable gloom. One or two stars were shining through the openings of the clouds, and the lights were seen in the village, glimmering faintly, as if at an immeasurable distance. At times, as the fire lowered, or as the horizon cleared, the outline of the mountain, on the other side of the lake, might be traced by its undulations; but its shadow was cast, wide and dense, on the bosom of the water, rendering the darkness in that direction trebly deep.

Benjamin Pump was invariably the coxswain and net-caster of Richard's boat, unless the sheriff saw fit to preside in person; and, on the present occasion, Billy Kirby, and a youth of about half his strength, were assigned to the oars. The remainder of the assistants were stationed at the drag-ropes. The arrangements were speedily made, and Richard gave the signal to "shove off."

Elizabeth watched the motion of the batteau as it pulled from the shore, letting loose its rope as it went, but it soon disappeared in the darkness, when the ear was her only guide to its evolutions. There was great affectation of stillness during all these manœuvres, in order, as Richard assured them, "not to frighten the bass, who were running into the shoal waters, and who would approach the light if not disturbed by the sounds from the fishermen."

The hoarse voice of Benjamin was alone heard issuing out of the gloom, as he uttered, in authoritative tones, "Pull larboard oar," "Pull starboard," "Give way together, boys," and such other dictative mandates as were necessary for the right disposition of his seine. A long time was passed in this necessary part of the process, for Benjamin prided

himself greatly on his skill in throwing the net, and, in fact, most of the success of the sport depended on its being done with judgment. At length a loud splash in the water, as he threw away the "staff," or "stretcher," with a hoarse call from the steward of "clear," announced that the boat was returning; when Richard seized a brand from the fire, and ran to a point, as far above the centre of the fishing-ground, as the one from which the batteau had started was below it.

"Stick her in dead for the squire, boys," said the steward, "and we'll have a look at what grows in this here pond."

In place of the falling net were now to be heard the quick strokes of the oars, and the noise of the rope running out of the boat. Presently the batteau shot into the circle of light, and in an instant she was pulled to the shore. Several eager hands were extended to receive the line, and, both ropes being equally well manned, the fisherman commenced hauling in with slow, and steady drags, Richard standing to the centre, giving orders, first to one party, and then to the other, to increase or slacken their efforts, as occasion required. The visitors were posted near him, and enjoyed a fair view of the whole operation, which was slowly advancing to an end.

Opinions as to the result of their adventure were now freely hazarded by all the men, some declaring that the net came in as light as a feather, and others affirming that it seemed to be full of logs. As the ropes were many hundred feet in length, these opposing sentiments were thought to be of little moment by the sheriff, who would go first to one line, and then to the other, giving each a small pull, in order to enable him to form an opinion for himself.

"Why, Benjamin," he cried, as he made his first effort in this way, "you did not throw the net clear. I can move it with my little finger. The rope slackens in my hand."

"Did you ever see a whale, squire?" responded the steward: "I say that, if that there net is foul, the devil is in the lake in the shape of a fish, for I cast it as far as ever rigging was rove over the quarter-deck of a flag-ship."

But Richard discovered his mistake, when he saw Billy Kirby before him, standing with his feet in the water, at an angle of forty-five degrees, inclining southward, and

expending his gigantic strength in sustaining himself in that posture. He ceased his remonstrances, and proceeded to the party at the other line.

"I see the 'staffs,'" shouted Mr. Jones—"gather in, boys, and away with it; to shore with her!—to shore with her!"

At this cheerful sound, Elizabeth strained her eyes and saw the ends of the two sticks on the seine emerging from the darkness, while the men closed near to each other, and formed a deep bag of their net. The exertions of the fishermen sensibly increased, and the voice of Richard was heard encouraging them to make their greatest efforts at the present moment.

"Now's the time, my lads," he cried; "let us get the ends to land, and all we have will be our own—away with her!"

"Away with her, it is," echoed Benjamin!—"hurrah! ho-a-hoy, ho-a-hoy, ho-a!"

"In with her," shouted Kirby, exerting himself in a manner that left nothing for those in his rear to do, but to gather up the slack of the rope which passed through his hands.

"Staff, ho!" shouted the steward.

"Staff, ho!" echoed Kirby, from the other rope.

The men rushed to the water's edge, some seizing the upper rope, and some the lower, or lead rope, and began to haul with great activity and zeal. A deep semicircular sweep of the little balls that supported the seine in its perpendicular position, was plainly visible to the spectators, and, as it rapidly lessened in size, the bag of the net appeared, while an occasional flutter on the water announced the uneasiness of the prisoners it contained.

"Haul in, my lads," shouted Richard—"I can see the dogs kicking to get free. Haul in, and here's a cast that will pay for the labor."

Fishes of various sorts were now to be seen, entangled in the meshes of the net, as it was passed through the hands of the laborers; and the water, at a little distance from the shore, was alive with the movements of the alarmed victims. Hundreds of white sides were glancing up to the surface of the water, and glistening in the firelight, when, frightened at the uproar and the change, the fish would again dart to the bottom, in fruitless efforts for freedom.

"Hurrah!" shouted Richard: "one or two more heavy drags, boys, and we are safe."

"Cheerily, boys, cheerily!" cried Benjamin; "I see a salmon-trout that is big enough for a chowder."

"Away with you, you varmint!" said Billy Kirby, plucking a bull-pout from the meshes, and casting the animal back into the lake with contempt. "Pull, boys, pull; here's all kinds, and the Lord condemn me for a liar, if there an't a thousand bass!"

Inflamed beyond the bounds of discretion at the sight, and forgetful of the season, the wood-chopper rushed to his middle into the water, and began to drive the reluctant animals before him from their native element.

"Pull heartily, boys," cried Marmaduke, yielding to the excitement of the moment, and laying his hands to the net, with no trifling addition to the force. Edwards had preceded him; for the sight of the immense piles of fish, that were slowly rolling over on the gravelly beach had impelled him also to leave the ladies and join the fishermen.

Great care was observed in bringing the net to land, and, after much toil, the whole shoal of victims was safely deposited in a hollow of the bank, where they were left to flutter away their brief existence in the new and fatal element.

Even Elizabeth and Louisa were greatly excited and highly gratified by seeing two thousand captives thus drawn from the bosom of the lake, and laid prisoners at their feet. But when the feelings of the moment were passing away, Marmaduke took in his hands a bass, that might have weighed two pounds, and after viewing it a moment, in melancholy musing, he turned to his daughter, and observed:

"This is a fearful expenditure of the choicest gifts of Providence. These fish, Bess, which thou seest lying in such piles before thee, and which by to-morrow evening will be rejected food on the meanest table in Templeton, are of a quality and flavor that, in other countries, would make them esteemed a luxury on the tables of princes or epicures. The world has no better fish than the bass of Otsego; it unites the richness of the shad* to the firmness of the salmon."

* Of all the fish the writer has ever tasted, he thinks the one in question the best.

“But surely, dear sir,” cried Elizabeth, “they must prove a great blessing to the country, and a powerful friend to the poor.”

“The poor are always prodigal, my child, where there is plenty, and seldom think of a provision against the morrow. But, if there can be any excuse for destroying animals in this manner, it is in taking the bass. During the winter, you know, they are entirely protected from our assaults by the ice, for they refuse the hook; and during the hot months they are not seen. It is supposed they retreat to the deep and cool waters of the lake, at that season; and it is only in the spring and autumn that, for a few days, they are to be found around the points where they are within the reach of a seine. But, like all the other treasures of the wilderness, they already begin to disappear before the wasteful extravagance of man.”

“Disappear, 'duke! disappear!” exclaimed the sheriff; “if you don't call this appearing, I know not what you will. Here are a good thousand of the shiners, some hundreds of suckers, and a powerful quantity of other fry. But this is always the way with you, Marmaduke; first it's the trees, then it's the deer; after that it's the maple sugar, and so on to the end of the chapter. One day you talk of canals through a country where there's a river or a lake every half-mile, just because the water won't run the way you wish it to go; and, the next, you say something about mines of coal, though any man who has good eyes like myself—I say with good eyes—can see more wood than would keep the city of London in fuel for fifty years; wouldn't it, Benjamin?”

“Why, for that, squire,” said the steward, “Lon'on is no small place. If it was stretched an end, all the same as a town on one side of the river, it would cover some such matter as this here lake. Tho'f I dar'st to say, that the wood in sight might sarve them a good turn, seeing that the Lon'oners mainly burn coal.”

“Now we are on the subject of coal, Judge Temple,” interrupted the sheriff, “I have a thing of much importance to communicate to you; but I will defer it until to-morrow. I know that you intend riding into the eastern part of the Patent, and I will accompany you, and conduct you to a spot where some of your projects may be realized. We will say no more now, for there are listeners; but a secret has this evening been revealed to me, 'duke, that

is of more consequence to your welfare than all your estate united."

Marmaduke laughed at the important intelligence, to which in a variety of shapes he was accustomed, and the sheriff, with an air of great dignity, as if pitying his want of faith, proceeded in the business more immediately before them. As the labor of drawing the net had been very great, he directed one party of his men to commence throwing the fish into piles, preparatory to the usual division, while another, under the superintendence of Benjamin, prepared the seine for a second haul.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"While from its margin, terrible to tell!
Three sailors with their gallant boatswain fell."—FALCONER.

WHILE the fishermen were employed in making the preparations for an equitable division of the spoil, Elizabeth and her friend strolled a short distance from the group, along the shore of the lake. After reaching a point, to which even the brightest of the occasional gleams of the fire did not extend, they turned, and paused a moment, in contemplation of the busy and lively party they had left, and of the obscurity, which, like the gloom of oblivion, seemed to envelop the rest of the creation.

"This is indeed a subject for the pencil!" exclaimed Elizabeth. "Observe the countenance of that wood-chopper, while he exults in presenting a larger fish than common to my cousin sheriff; and see, Louisa, how handsome and considerate my dear father looks, by the light of that fire, where he stands viewing the havoc of the game. He seems melancholy, as if he actually thought that a day of retribution was to follow this hour of abundance and prodigality! Would they not make a picture, Louisa?"

"You know that I am ignorant of all such accomplishments, Miss Temple."

"Call me by my Christian name," interrupted Elizabeth; "this is not a place, neither is this a scene, for forms."

"Well, then, if I may venture an opinion," said Louisa, timidly, "I should think it might indeed make a picture. The selfish earnestness of that Kirby over his fish would contrast finely with the—the—expression of Mr. Edwards's

face. I hardly know what to call it ; but it is—a—is—you know what I would say, dear Elizabeth."

"You do me too much credit, Miss Grant," said the heiress ; "I am no diviner of thoughts, or interpreter of expressions."

There was certainly nothing harsh, or even cold in the manner of the speaker, but still it repressed the conversation, and they continued to stroll still farther from the party, retaining each other's arm, but observing a profound silence. Elizabeth, perhaps, conscious of the improper phraseology of her last speech, or perhaps excited by the new object that met her gaze, was the first to break the awkward cessation in the discourse, by exclaiming :

"Look, Louisa ! we are not alone ; there are fishermen lighting a fire on the other side of the lake, immediately opposite to us ; it must be in front of the cabin of Leather-Stocking !"

Through the obscurity, which prevailed most immediately under the eastern mountain, a small and uncertain light was plainly to be seen, though, as it was occasionally lost to the eye, it seemed struggling for existence. They observed it to move, and sensibly to lower, as if carried down the descent of the bank to the shore. Here, in a very short time, its flame gradually expanded, and grew brighter, until it became of the size of a man's head, when it continued to shine a steady ball of fire. Such an object, lighted as it were by magic, under the brow of the mountain, and in that retired and unfrequented place, gave double interest to the beauty and singularity of its appearance. It did not at all resemble the large and unsteady light of their own fire, being much more clear and bright, and retaining its size and shape with perfect uniformity.

There are moments when the best-regulated minds are more or less subjected to the injurious impressions which few have escaped in infancy ; and Elizabeth smiled at her own weakness, while she remembered the idle tales which were circulated through the village, at the expense of the Leather-Stocking. The same ideas seized her companion, and at the same instant, for Louisa pressed nearer to her friend, as she said in a low voice, stealing a timid glance toward the bushes and trees that overhung the bank near them :

"Did you ever hear the singular ways of this Natty spoken of, Miss Temple ? They say that, in his youth, he

was an Indian warrior ; or, what is the same thing, a white man leagued with the savages ; and it is thought he has been concerned in many of their inroads, in the old wars."

"The thing is not at all improbable," returned Elizabeth ; "he is not alone in that particular."

"No, surely ; but is it not strange that he is so cautious with his hut ? He never leaves it, without fastening it in a remarkable manner ; and in several instances, when the children, or even the men of the village, have wished to seek a shelter there from the storms, he has been known to drive them from his door with rudeness and threats. That surely is singular in this country !"

"It is certainly not very hospitable ; but we must remember his aversion to the customs of civilized life. You heard my father say, a few days since, how kindly he was treated by him on his first visit to his place." Elizabeth paused, and smiled, with an expression of peculiar archness, though the darkness hid its meaning from her companion, as she continued : "Besides, he certainly admits the visits of Mr. Edwards, whom we both know to be far from a savage."

To this speech Louisa made no reply, but continued gazing on the object which had elicited her remarks. In addition to the bright and circular flame, was now to be seen a fainter, though a vivid light, of an equal diameter to the other at the upper end, but which, after extending downward for many feet, gradually tapered to a point at its lower extremity. A dark space was plainly visible between the two, and the new illumination was placed beneath the other ; the whole forming an appearance not unlike an inverted note of admiration. It was soon evident that the latter was nothing but the reflection, from the water, of the former, and that the object, whatever it might be, was advancing across, or rather over the lake, for it seemed to be several feet above its surface, in a direct line with themselves. Its motion was amazingly rapid, the ladies having hardly discovered that it was moving at all, before the waving light of a flame was discerned, losing its regular shape, while it increased in size, as it approached.

"It appears to be supernatural !" whispered Louisa, beginning to retrace her steps toward the party.

"It is beautiful !" exclaimed Elizabeth.

A brilliant though waving flame was now plainly visible,

gracefully gliding over the lake, and throwing its light on the water in such a manner as to tinge it slightly ; though in the air, so strong was the contrast, the darkness seemed to have the distinctness of material substances, as if the fire were imbedded in a setting of ebony. This appearance, however, gradually wore off, and the rays from the torch struck out, and enlightened the atmosphere in front of it, leaving the background in a darkness that was more impenetrable than ever.

“Ho! Natty, is that you?” shouted the sheriff. “Paddle in, old boy, and I’ll give you a mess of fish that is fit to place before the governor.”

The light suddenly changed its direction, and a long and slightly built boat hove up out of the gloom, while the red glare fell on the weather-beaten features of the Leather-Stocking, whose tall person was seen erect in the frail vessel, wielding, with the grace of an experienced boatman, a long fishing-spear, which he held by its centre, first dropping one end and then the other into the water, to aid in propelling the little canoe of bark, we will not say through, but over, the water. At the farther end of the vessel a form was faintly seen, guiding its motions, and using a paddle with the ease of one who felt there was no necessity for exertion. The Leather-Stocking struck his spear lightly against the short staff which upheld, on a rude grating framed of old hoops of iron, the knots of pine that composed the fuel, and the light, which glared high, for an instant fell on the swarthy features, and dark, glancing eyes of Mohegan.

The boat glided along the shore until it arrived opposite the fishing-ground, when it again changed its direction, and moved on to the land, with a motion so graceful, and yet so rapid, that it seemed to possess the power of regulating its own progress. The water in front of the canoe was hardly ruffled by its passage, and no sound betrayed the collision, when the light fabric shot on the gravelly beach for nearly half its length, Natty receding a step or two from its bow, in order to facilitate the landing.

“Approach, Mohegan,” said Marmaduke ; “approach, Leather-Stocking, and load your canoe with bass. It would be a shame to assail the animals with the spear, when such multitudes of victims lie here, that will be lost as food for the want of mouths to consume them.”

“No, no, Judge,” returned Natty, his tall figure stalking

over the narrow beach, and ascending to the little grassy bottom where the fish were laid in piles ; " I eat of no man's wasty ways. I strike my spear into the eels or the trout, when I crave the creators ; but I wouldn't be helping to such a sinful kind of fishing for the best rifle that was ever brought out from the old countries. If they had fur, like the beaver, or you could tan their hides, like a buck, something might be said in favor of taking them by the thousand with your nets ; but as God made them for man's food, and for no other disarnable reason, I call it sinful and wasty to catch more than can be eat."

" Your reasoning is mine ; for once, old hunter, we agree in opinion ; and I heartily wish we could make a convert of the sheriff. A net of half the size of this would supply the whole village with fish for a week at one haul."

The Leather-Stocking did not relish this alliance in sentiment ; and he shook his head doubtfully as he answered :

" No, no ; we are not much of one mind, Judge, or you'd never turn good hunting-grounds into stumpy pastures. And you fish and hunt out of rule ; but, to me, the flesh is sweeter where the creator has some chance for its life ; for that reason, I always use a single ball, even if it be at a bird or a squirrel. Besides, it saves lead ; for, when a body knows how to shoot, one piece of lead is enough for all, except hard-lived animals."

The sheriff heard these opinions with great indignation ; and, when he completed the last arrangement for the division, by carrying with his own hands a trout of a large size, and placing it on four different piles in succession, as his vacillating ideas of justice required, gave vent to his spleen.

" A very pretty confederacy, indeed ! Judge Temple, the landlord and owner of a township, with Nathaniel Bumppo, a lawless squatter, and professed deer-killer, in order to preserve the game of the county ! But, 'duke, when I fish I fish ; so, away boys for another haul, and we'll send out wagons and carts in the morning to bring in our prizes."

Marmaduke appeared to understand that all opposition to the will of the sheriff would be useless, and he strolled from the fire to the place where the canoe of the hunters lay, whither the ladies and Oliver Edwards had already preceded him.

Curiosity induced the females to approach this spot ;

but it was a different motive that led the youth thither. Elizabeth examined the light ashen timbers and thin bark covering of the canoe, in admiration of its neat but simple execution, and with wonder that any human being could be so daring as to trust his life in so frail a vessel. But the youth explained to her the buoyant properties of the boat, and its perfect safety when under proper management ; adding, in such glowing terms, a description of the manner in which the fish were struck with the spear, that she changed suddenly, from an apprehension of the danger of the excursion, to a desire to participate in its pleasures. She even ventured a proposition to that effect to her father, laughing at the same time at her own wish, and accusing herself of acting under a woman's caprice.

"Say not so, Bess," returned the Judge ; "I would have you above the idle fears of a silly girl. These canoes are the safest kind of boats to those who have skill and steady nerves. I have crossed the broadest part of the Oneida in one much smaller than this."

"And I the Ontario," interrupted the Leather-Stocking ; "and that with squaws in the canoe, too. But the Delaware women are used to the paddle, and are good hands in a boat of this nater. If the young lady would like to see an old man strike a trout for his breakfast, she is welcome to a seat. John will say the same, seeing that he built the canoe, which was only launched yesterday ; for I'm not over-curious at such small work as brooms, and basket-making, and other like Indian trades."

Natty gave Elizabeth one of his significant laughs, with a kind nod of the head, when he concluded his invitation ; but Mohegan, with the native grace of an Indian, approached, and taking her soft white hand into his own swarthy and wrinkled palm, said :

"Come, grand-daughter of Miquon, and John will be glad. Trust the Indian ; his head is old, though his hand is not steady. The young Eagle will go, and see that no harm hurts his sister."

"Mr. Edwards," said Elizabeth, blushing slightly, "your friend Mohegan has given a promise for you. Do you redeem the pledge?"

"With my life, if necessary, Miss Temple," cried the youth, with fervor. "The sight is worth some little apprehension ; for of real danger there is none. I will go with you and Miss Grant, however, to save appearances."

“With me!” exclaimed Louisa. “No, not with me, Mr. Edwards; nor, surely, do you mean to trust yourself in that slight canoe.”

“But I shall; for I have no apprehensions any longer,” said Elizabeth, stepping into the boat, and taking a seat where the Indian directed. “Mr. Edwards, you may remain, as three do seem to be enough for such an egg-shell.”

“It shall hold a fourth,” cried the young man, springing to her side, with a violence that nearly shook the weak fabric of the vessel asunder. “Pardon me, Miss Temple, that I do not permit these venerable Charons to take you to the shades unattended by your genius.”

“Is it a good or evil spirit?” asked Elizabeth.

“Good to you.”

“And mine,” added the maiden, with an air that strangely blended pique with satisfaction. But the motion of the canoe gave rise to new ideas, and fortunately afforded a good excuse to the young man to change the discourse.

“It appeared to Elizabeth that they glided over the water by magic, so easy and graceful was the manner in which Mohegan guided his little bark. A slight gesture with his spear indicated the way in which Leather-Stocking wished to go, and a profound silence was preserved by the whole party, as the precaution necessary to the success of their fishery. At that point of the lake the water shoaled regularly, differing in this particular altogether from those parts where the mountains rose, nearly in perpendicular precipices from the beach. There the largest vessels could have lain, with their yards interlocked with the pines; while here a scanty growth of rushes lifted their tops above the lake, gently curling the waters, as their bending heads waved with the passing breath of the night air. It was at the shallow points only that the bass could be found, or the net cast with success.

Elizabeth saw thousands of these fish swimming in shoals along the shallow and warm waters of the shore; for the flaring light of their torch laid bare the mysteries of the lake, as plainly as if the limpid sheet of the Otsego was but another atmosphere. Every instant she expected to see the impending spear of Leather-Stocking darting into the thronging hosts that were rushing beneath her, where it would seem that a blow could not go amiss; and where, as her father had already said, the prize that would be obtained was worthy any epicure. But Natty had his peculiar

habits, and, it would seem, his peculiar tastes also. His tall stature, and his erect posture, enabled him to see much farther than those who were seated in the bottom of the canoe ; and he turned his head warily in every direction, frequently bending his body forward, and straining his vision, as if desirous of penetrating the water that surrounded their boundary of light. At length his anxious scrutiny was rewarded with success, and, waving his spear from the shore, he said in a cautious tone :

“Send her outside the bass, John ; I see a laker there, that has run out of the school. It’s seldom one finds such a creater in shallow water, where a spear can touch it.”

Mohegan gave a wave of assent with his hand, and in the next instant the canoe was without the “run of the bass,” and in water nearly twenty feet in depth. A few additional knots were laid on the grating, and the light penetrated to the bottom. Elizabeth then saw a fish of unusual size floating above small pieces of logs and sticks. The animal was only distinguishable, at that distance, by a slight but almost imperceptible motion of its fins and tail. The curiosity excited by this unusual exposure of the secrets of the lake seemed to be mutual between the heir-ess of the land and the lord of these waters, for the “salmon-trout” soon announced his interest by raising his head and body for a few degrees above a horizontal line, and then dropping them again into a horizontal position.

“Whist ! whist !” said Natty, in a low voice, on hearing a slight sound made by Elizabeth in bending over the side of the canoe in curiosity ; “’tis a skeary animal, and it’s a far stroke for a spear. My handle is but fourteen foot, and the creater lies a good eighteen from the top of the water ; but I’ll try him, for he’s a ten-pounder.”

While speaking, the Leather-Stocking was poising and directing his weapon. Elizabeth saw the bright, polished tines, as they slowly and silently entered the water, where the refraction pointed them many degrees from the true direction of the fish ; and she thought that the intended victim saw them also, as he seemed to increase the play of his tail and fins, though without moving his station. At the next instant the tall body of Natty bent to the water’s edge, and the handle of his spear disappeared in the lake. The long, dark streak of the gliding weapon, and the little bubbling vortex which followed its rapid flight, were easily to be seen ; but it was not until the handle shot again into

the air by its own reaction, and its master catching it in his hand, threw its tines uppermost, that Elizabeth was acquainted with the success of the blow. A fish of great size was transfixed by the barbed steel, and was very soon shaken from its impaled situation into the bottom of the canoe.

"That will do, John," said Natty, raising his prize by one of his fingers, and exhibiting it before the torch; "I shall not strike another blow to-night."

The Indian again waved his hand, and replied with the simple and energetic monosyllable of:

"Good."

Elizabeth was awakened from the trance created by this scene, and by gazing in that unusual manner at the bottom of the lake, by the hoarse sounds of Benjamin's voice, and the dashing of oars, as the heavier boat of the seine-drawers approached the spot where the canoe lay, dragging after it the folds of the net.

"Haul off, haul off, Master Bumpo," cried Benjamin: "your top-light frightens the fish, who see the net and sheer off soundings. A fish knows as much as a horse, or, for that matter, more, seeing that it's brought up on the water. Haul off, Master Bumpo, haul off, I say, and give a wide berth to the seine."

Mohegan guided their little canoe to a point where the movements of the fishermen could be observed, without interruption to the business, and then suffered it to lie quietly on the water, looking like an imaginary vessel floating in air. There appeared to be much ill-humor among the party in the batteau, for the directions of Benjamin were not only frequent, but issued in a voice that partook largely of dissatisfaction.

"Pull larboard oar, will ye, Master Kirby?" cried the old seaman; "pull larboard best. It would puzzle the oldest admiral in the British fleet to cast this here net fair, with a wake like a corkscrew. Pull starboard, boy, pull starboard oar, with a will."

"Harkee, Mister Pump," said Kirby, ceasing to row, and speaking with some spirit; "I'm a man that likes civil language and decent treatment, such as is right 'twixt man and man. If you want us to go hoy, say so, and hoy I'll go, for the benefit of the company; but I'm not used to being ordered about like dumb cattle."

"Who's dumb cattle?" echoed Benjamin, fiercely, turn

ing his forbidding face to the glare of light from the canoe, and exhibiting every feature teeming with the expression of disgust. "If you want to come aft and cun the boat round, come, and be damned, and pretty steerage you'll make of it. There's but another heave of the net in the stern-sheets, and we're clear of the thing. Give way, will ye? and shoot her ahead for a fathom or two, and if you catch me afloat again with such a horse-marine as yourself, why, rate me a ship's jackass, that's all."

Probably encouraged by the prospect of a speedy termination to his labor, the wood-chopper resumed his oar, and, under strong excitement, gave a stroke, that not only cleared the boat of the net but of the steward, at the same instant. Benjamin had stood on the little platform that held the seine, in the stern of the boat, and the violent whirl occasioned by the vigor of the wood-chopper's arm completely destroyed his balance. The position of the lights rendered objects in the batteau distinguishable, both from the canoe and the shore; and the heavy fall on the water drew all eyes to the steward, as he lay struggling, for a moment, in sight.

A loud burst of merriment, to which the lungs of Kirby contributed no small part, broke out like a chorus of laughter, and ran along the eastern mountain, in echoes, until it died away in distant, mocking mirth, among the rocks and woods. The body of the steward was seen slowly to disappear, as was expected; but when the light waves, which had been raised by his fall, began to sink in calmness, and the water finally closed over his head, unbroken and still, a very different feeling pervaded the spectators.

"How fare you, Benjamin?" shouted Richard from the shore.

"The dumb devil can't swim a stroke!" exclaimed Kirby, rising, and beginning to throw aside his clothes.

"Paddle up, Mohegan," cried young Edwards, "the light will show us where he lies, and I will dive for the body."

"Oh! save him! for God's sake, save him!" exclaimed Elizabeth, bowing her head on the side of the canoe in horror.

A powerful and dexterous sweep of Mohegan's paddle sent the canoe directly over the spot where the steward had fallen, and a loud shout from the Leather-Stocking announced that he saw the body.

"Steady the boat while I dive," again cried Edwards.

"Gently, lad, gently," said Natty; "I'll spear the creature up in half the time, and no risk to anybody."

The form of Benjamin was lying about half way to the bottom, grasping with both hands some broken rushes. The blood of Elizabeth curdled to her heart, as she saw the figure of a fellow-creature thus extended under an immense sheet of water, apparently in motion, by the undulations of the dying waves, with its face and hands, viewed by that light, and through the medium of the fluid, already colored with hues like death.

At the same instant, she saw the shining tines of Natty's spear approaching the head of the sufferer, and entwining themselves, rapidly and dexterously, in the hairs of his cue and the cape of his coat. The body was now raised slowly, looking ghastly and grim, as its features turned upward to the light, and approached the surface. The arrival of the nostrils of Benjamin into their own atmosphere was announced by a breathing that would have done credit to a porpoise. For a moment, Natty held the steward suspended, with his head just above the water, while his eyes slowly opened, and stared about him, as if he thought that he had reached a new and unexplored country.

As all the parties acted and spoke together, much less time was consumed in the occurrence of these events, than in their narration. To bring the batteau to the end of the spear, and to raise the form of Benjamin into the boat, and for the whole party to regain the shore, required but a minute. Kirby, aided by Richard, whose anxiety induced him to run into the water to meet his favorite assistant, carried the motionless steward up the bank, and seated him before the fire, while the sheriff, proceeded to order the most approved measures then in use, for the resuscitation of the drowned.

"Run, Billy," he cried, "to the village, and bring up the rum-hogshead that lies before the door, in which I am making vinegar, and be quick, boy, don't stay to empty the vinegar, and stop at Mr. Le Quoi's, and buy a paper of tobacco and half-a-dozen pipes; and ask Remarkable for some salt, and one of her flannel petticoats; and ask Dr. Todd to send his lancet, and to come himself; and—ha! 'duke, what are you about? would you strangle a man who is full of water, by giving him rum? Help me to open his hand, that I may pat it."

All this time Benjamin sat, with his muscles fixed, his mouth shut, and his hands clinching the rushes, which he had seized in the confusion of the moment, and which, as he held fast, like a true seaman, had been the means of preventing his body from rising again to the surface. His eyes, however, were open, and stared wildly on the group about the fire, while his lungs were playing like a blacksmith's bellows, as if to compensate themselves for the minute of inaction to which they had been subjected. As he kept his lips compressed, with a most inveterate determination, the air was compelled to pass through his nostrils, and he rather snorted than breathed, and in such a manner, that nothing but the excessive agitation of the sheriff could at all justify his precipitous orders.

The bottle, applied to the steward's lips by Marmaduke, acted like a charm. His mouth opened instinctively; his hands dropped the rushes, and seized the glass; his eyes raised from their horizontal stare to the heavens; and the whole man was lost, for a moment, in a new sensation. Unhappily for the propensity of the steward, breath was as necessary after one of these draughts as after his submersion, and the time at length arrived when he was compelled to let go the bottle.

"Why, Benjamin!" roared the sheriff; "you amaze me! for a man of your experience in drownings to act so foolishly! just now, you were half full of water, and now you are——"

"Full of grog," interrupted the steward, his features settling down, with amazing flexibility, into their natural economy. "But, d'ye see, squire, I kept my hatches close, and it's but little water that ever gets into my scuttle-butt. Harkee, Master Kirby! I've followed the salt-water for the better part of a man's life, and have seen some navigation on the fresh; but this here matter I will say in your favor, and that is, that you're the awk'ardest green'un that ever straddled a boat's thwart. Them that likes you for a shipmate, may sail with you and no thanks; but dam'me if I even walk on the lake shore in your company. For why? you'd as lief drown a man as one of them there fish; not to throw a Christian creature so much as a rope's end when he was adrift, and no life-buoy in sight! Naty Bumpo, give us your fist. There's them that says you're an Indian, and a scalper, but you've served me a good turn, and you may set me down for a friend; tho'f it

would have been more shipshape like to lower the bight of a rope, or running bowline below me, than to seize an old seaman by his head-lanyard; but I suppose you are used to taking men by the hair, and seeing you did me good instead of harm thereby, why, it's the same thing, d'ye see?"

Marmaduke prevented any reply, and assuming the direction of matters with a dignity and discretion that at once silenced all opposition from his cousin, Benjamin was despatched to the village by land, and the net was hauled to shore in such a manner that the fish for once escaped its meshes with impunity.

The division of the spoils was made in the ordinary manner, by placing one of the party with his back to the game, who named the owner of each pile. Bill Kirby stretched his large frame on the grass by the side of the fire, as sentinel until morning, over net and fish; and the remainder of the party embarked in the batteau, to return to the village.

The wood-chopper was seen broiling his supper on the coals as they lost sight of the fire, and, when the boat approached the shore, the torch of Mohegan's canoe was shining again under the gloom of the eastern mountain. Its motion ceased suddenly; a scattering of brands was in the air, and then all remained dark as the conjunction of night, forest, and mountain could render the scene.

The thoughts of Elizabeth wandered from the youth, who was holding a canopy of shawls over herself and Louisa, to the hunter and the Indian warrior; and she felt an awakening curiosity to visit a hut where men of such different habits and temperament were drawn together as by common impulse.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Cease all this parlance about hills and dales:
None listen to thy scenes of boyish frolic,
Fond dotard! with such tickled ears as thou dost:
Come! to thy tale."—DUO.

MR. JONES arose on the following morning with the sun, and, ordering his own and Marmaduke's steeds to be saddled, he proceeded, with a countenance big with some business of unusual moment, to the apartment of the

Judge. The door was unfastened, and Richard entered, with the freedom that characterized not only the intercourse between the cousins, but the ordinary manners of the sheriff.

"Well, 'duke, to horse," he cried, "and I will explain to you my meaning in the allusions I made last night. David says, in the Psalms—no, it was Solomon, but it was all in the family—Solomon said there was a time for all things; and, in my humble opinion, a fishing-party is not the moment for discussing important subjects. Ha! why, what the devil ails you, Marmaduke? an't you well? let me feel your pulse; my grandfather, you know——"

"Quite well in the body, Richard," interrupted the Judge, repulsing his cousin, who was about to assume the functions that rightly belonged to Dr. Todd; "but ill at heart. I received letters by the post last night, after we returned from the point, and this among the number."

The sheriff took the letter, but without turning his eyes on the writing, for he was examining the appearance of the other with astonishment. From the face of his cousin the gaze of Richard wandered to the table, which was covered with letters, packets, and newspapers; then to the apartment and all it contained. On the bed there was the impression that had been made by a human form, but the coverings were unmoved, and everything indicated that the occupant of the room had passed a sleepless night. The candles had burned to the sockets, and had evidently extinguished themselves in their own fragments. Marmaduke had drawn his curtains, and opened both the shutters and the sashes, to admit the balmy air of a spring morning; but his pale cheek, his quivering lip, and his sunken eye, presented altogether so very different an appearance from the usual calm, manly, and cheerful aspect of the Judge, that the sheriff grew each moment more and more bewildered with astonishment. At length Richard found time to cast his eyes on the direction of the letter, which he still held unopened, crumpling it in his hand.

"What! a ship-letter!" he exclaimed; "and from England! ha! 'duke, there must be news of importance indeed!"

"Read it," said Marmaduke, pacing the floor in excessive agitation.

Richard, who commonly thought aloud, was unable to read a letter without suffering part of its contents to escape

him in audible sounds. So much of the epistle as was divulged in that manner, we shall lay before the reader, accompanied by the passing remarks of the sheriff :

“ ‘London, February 12, 1793.’ What a devil of a passage she had ! but the wind has been northwest for six weeks, until within the last fortnight.

“ ‘Sir, your favors of August 10th, September 23d, and of December 1st, were received in due season, and the first answered by return of packet. Since the receipt of the last, I ’”—here a long passage was rendered indistinct by a kind of humming noise by the sheriff—“ ‘I grieve to say that,’—hum, hum, bad enough to be sure—‘but trust that a merciful Providence has seen fit’—hum, hum, hum ; seems to be a good pious sort of a man, ’duke ; belongs to the established church, I dare say ; hum, hum—‘vessel sailed from Falmouth on or about the 1st September of last year, and’—hum, hum, hum. ‘If anything should transpire on this afflicting subject shall not fail’—hum, hum ; really a good-hearted man, for a lawyer—‘but can communicate nothing further at present’—hum, hum. ‘The national convention’—hum, hum—‘unfortunate Louis’—hum, hum—‘example of your Washington’—a very sensible man, I declare, and none of your crazy democrats. Hum, hum—‘our gallant navy’—hum, hum—‘under our most excellent monarch’—ay, a good man enough, that King George, but bad advisers ; hum, hum—‘I beg to conclude with assurances of my perfect respect’—hum, hum—‘ANDREW HOLT.’—Andrew Holt, a very sensible, feeling man, this Mr. Andrew Holt—but the writer of evil tidings. What will you do next, Cousin Marmaduke ?”

“What can I do, Richard, but trust to time, and the will of Heaven ? Here is another letter from Connecticut, but it only repeats the substance of the last. There is but one consoling reflection to be gathered from the English news, which is, that my last letter was received by him before the ship sailed.”

“This is bad enough, indeed ! ’duke, bad enough, indeed ! and away go all my plans, of putting wings to the house, to the devil. I had made arrangements for a ride to introduce you to something of a very important nature. You know how much you think of mines——”

“Talk not of mines,” interrupted the Judge ; “there is a sacred duty to be performed, and that without delay. I

must devote this day to writing ; and thou must be my assistant, Richard ; it will not do to employ Oliver in a matter of such secrecy and interest."

"No, no, 'duke," cried the sheriff, squeezing his hand ; "I am your man, just now ; we are sisters' children, and blood, after all, is the best cement to make friendship stick together. Well, well, there is no hurry about the silver mine, just now ; another time will do as well. We shall want Dirky Van, I suppose ?"

Marmaduke assented to this indirect question, and the sheriff relinquished all his intentions on the subject of the ride, and, repairing to the breakfast parlor, he despatched a messenger to require the immediate presence of Dirck Van der School.

The village of Templeton at that time supported but two lawyers, one of whom was introduced to our readers in the bar-room of the "Bold Dragoon," and the other was the gentleman of whom Richard spoke by the friendly yet familiar appellation of Dirck, or Dirky Van. Great good-nature, a very tolerable share of skill in his profession, and, considering the circumstances, no contemptible degree of honesty, were the principal ingredients in the character of this man, who was known to the settlers as Squire Van der School, and sometimes by the flattering though anomalous title of the "Dutch" or "honest lawyer." We would not wish to mislead our readers in their conceptions of any of our characters, and we therefore feel it necessary to add that the adjective, in the preceding agnomen of Mr. Van der School, was used in direct reference to its substantive. Our orthodox friends need not be told that all the merit in this world is comparative ; and, once for all, we desire to say that, where anything which involves qualities or character is asserted, we must be understood to mean, "under the circumstances."

During the remainder of the day, the Judge was closeted with his cousin and his lawyer ; and no one else was admitted to his apartment, excepting his daughter. The deep distress that so evidently affected Marmaduke was in some measure communicated to Elizabeth also ; for a look of dejection shaded her intelligent features, and the buoyancy of her animated spirits was sensibly softened. Once on that day, young Edwards, who was a wondering and observant spectator of the sudden alteration produced in the heads of the family, detected a tear stealing over the

cheek of Elizabeth, and suffusing her bright eyes with a softness that did not always belong to their expression.

"Have any evil tidings been received, Miss Temple?" he inquired, with an interest and voice that caused Louisa Grant to raise her head from her needlework, with a quickness at which she instantly blushed herself. "I would offer my services to your father, if, as I suspect, he needs an agent in some distant place, and I thought it would give you relief."

"We have certainly heard bad news," returned Elizabeth, "and it may be necessary that my father should leave home for a short period; unless I can persuade him to trust my cousin Richard with the business, whose absence from the country, just at this time, too, might be inexpedient."

The youth paused a moment, and the blood gathered slowly to his temples as he continued:

"If it be of a nature that I could execute——"

"It is such as can only be confided to one we know—one of ourselves."

"Surely, you know me, Miss Temple!" he added, with a warmth that he seldom exhibited, but which did sometimes escape him in the moments of their frank communications. "Have I lived five months under your roof to be a stranger?"

Elizabeth was engaged with her needle also, and she bent her head to one side, affecting to arrange her muslin; but her hand shook, her color heightened, and her eyes lost their moisture in an expression of ungovernable interest, as she said:

"How much do we know of you, Mr. Edwards?"

"How much!" echoed the youth, gazing from the speaker to the mild countenance of Louisa, that was also illuminated with curiosity; "how much! have I been so long an inmate with you and not known?"

The head of Elizabeth turned slowly from its affected position, and the look of confusion that had blended so strongly with an expression of interest changed to a smile.

"We know you, sir, indeed; you are called Mr. Oliver Edwards. I understand that you have informed my friend Miss Grant that you are a native——"

"Elizabeth!" exclaimed Louisa, blushing to the eyes, and trembling like an aspen; "you misunderstood me, dear Miss Temple; I—I—it was only a conjecture. Besides, if Mr. Edwards is related to the natives, why should

we reproach him? In what are we better? at least I, who am the child of a poor and unsettled clergyman?"

Elizabeth shook her head doubtingly, and even laughed, but made no reply, until, observing the melancholy which pervaded the countenance of her companion, who was thinking of the poverty and labors of her father, she continued:

"Nay, Louisa, humility carries you too far. The daughter of a minister of the church can have no superiors. Neither I nor Mr. Edwards is quite your equal, unless," she added, again smiling, "he is in secret a king."

"A faithful servant of the King of kings, Miss Temple, is inferior to none on earth," said Louisa; "but his honors are his own; I am only the child of a poor and friendless man, and can claim no other distinction. Why, then, should I feel myself elevated above Mr. Edwards, because—because—perhaps he is only very, very distantly related to John Mohegan?"

Glances of a very comprehensive meaning were exchanged between the heiress and the young man, as Louisa betrayed, while vindicating his lineage, the reluctance with which she admitted his alliance with the old warrior; but not even a smile at the simplicity of their companion was indulged by either.

"On reflection, I must acknowledge that my situation here is somewhat equivocal," said Edwards, "though I may be said to have purchased it with my blood."

"The blood, too, of one of the native lords of the soil!" cried Elizabeth, who evidently put little faith in his aboriginal descent.

"Do I bear the marks of my lineage so very plainly impressed on my appearance? I am dark, but not very red—not more so than common?"

"Rather more so, just now."

"I am sure, Miss Temple," cried Louisa, "you cannot have taken much notice of Mr. Edwards. His eyes are not so black as Mohegan's, or even your own, nor is his hair!"

"Very possibly, then, I can lay claim to the same descent. It would be a great relief to my mind to think so, for I own that I grieve when I see old Mohegan walking about these lands like the ghost of one of their ancient possessors, and feel how small is my own right to possess them."

"Do you?" cried the youth, with a vehemence that startled the ladies.

"I do, indeed," returned Elizabeth, after suffering a moment to pass in surprise; "but what can I do—what can my father do? Should we offer the old man a home and a maintenance, his habits would compel him to refuse us. Neither were we so silly as to wish such a thing, could we convert these clearings and farms again into hunting-grounds, as the Leather-Stocking would wish to see them."

"You speak the truth, Miss Temple," said Edwards. "What can you do indeed? But there is one thing that I am certain you can and will do, when you become the mistress of these beautiful valleys—use your wealth with indulgence to the poor, and charity to the needy; indeed, you can do no more."

"And that will be doing a good deal," said Louisa, smiling in her turn. "But there will, doubtless, be one to take the direction of such things from her hands."

"I am not about to disclaim matrimony, like a silly girl, who dreams of nothing else from morn till night; but I am a nun here, without the vow of celibacy. Where shall I find a husband in these forests?"

"There is none, Miss Temple," said Edwards, quickly; "there is none who has a right to aspire to you, and I know that you will wait to be sought by your equal; or die, as you live, loved, respected, and admired by all who know you."

The young man seemed to think that he had said all that was required by gallantry, for he arose, and, taking his hat, hurried from the apartment. Perhaps Louisa thought that he had said more than was necessary, for she sighed, with an aspiration so low that it was scarcely audible to herself, and bent her head over her work again. And it is possible that Miss Temple wished to hear more, for her eyes continued fixed for a minute on the door through which the young man had passed, then glanced quickly toward her companion, when the long silence that succeeded manifested how much zest may be given to the conversation of two maidens under eighteen, by the presence of a youth of three-and-twenty.

The first person encountered by Mr. Edwards, as he rather rushed than walked from the house, was the little square-built lawyer, with a large bundle of papers under his arm, a pair of green spectacles on his nose, with glasses at the sides, as if to multiply his power of detecting frauds by additional organs of vision.

Mr. Van der School was a well-educated man, but of slow comprehension, who had imbibed a wariness in his speeches and actions, from having suffered by his collisions with his more mercurial and apt brethren who had laid the foundations of their practice in the Eastern courts, and who had sucked in shrewdness with their mother's milk. The caution of this gentleman was exhibited in his actions, by the utmost method and punctuality, tinged with a good deal of timidity ; and in his speeches, by a parenthetical style, that frequently left to his auditors a long search after his meaning.

"A good-morning to you, Mr. Van der School," said Edwards ; "it seems to be a busy day with us at the mansion-house."

"Good-morning, Mr. Edwards (if that is your name (for, being a stranger, we have no other evidence of the fact than your own testimony), as I understand you have given it to Judge Temple), good-morning, sir. It is, apparently a busy day (but a man of your discretion need not be told (having, doubtless, discovered it of your own accord), that appearances are often deceitful) up at the mansion-house."

"Have you papers of consequence that will require copying? can I be of assistance in any way?"

"There are papers (as doubtless you see (for your eyes are young) by the outsides) that require copying."

"Well, then, I will accompany you to your office, and receive such as are most needed, and by night I shall have them done if there be much haste."

"I shall always be glad to see you, sir, at my office (as in duty bound (not that it is obligatory to receive any man within your dwelling (unless so inclined), which is a castle), according to the forms of politeness), or at any other place ; but the papers are most strictly confidential (and, as such, cannot be read by any one), unless so directed (by Judge Temple's solemn injunctions), and are invisible to all eyes ; excepting those whose duties (I mean assumed duties) require it of them."

"Well, sir, as I perceive that I can be of no service, I wish you another good-morning ; but beg you will remember that I am quite idle just now, and I wish you would intimate as much to Judge Temple, and make him a tender of my services in any part of the world, unless—unless—it be far from Tempieton."

"I will make the communication, sir, in your name"

(with your own qualifications), as your agent. Good-morning, sir. But stay proceedings, Mr. Edwards (so called), for a moment. Do you wish me to state the offer of travelling as a final contract (for which consideration has been received at former dates (by sums advanced), which would be binding), or as a tender of services for which compensation is to be paid (according to future agreement between the parties), on performance of the conditions?"

"Any way, any way," said Edwards, "he seems in distress, and I would assist him."

"The motive is good, sir (according to appearances (which are often deceitful) on first impressions), and does you honor. I will mention your wish, young gentleman (as you now seem), and will not fail to communicate the answer by five o'clock P.M. of this present day (God willing), if you give me an opportunity so to do."

The ambiguous nature of the situation and character of Mr. Edwards had rendered him an object of peculiar suspicion to the lawyer, and the youth was consequently too much accustomed to similar equivocal and guarded speeches to feel any unusual disgust at the present dialogue. He saw at once that it was the intention of the practitioner to conceal the nature of his business, even from the private secretary of Judge Temple; and he knew too well the difficulty of comprehending the meaning of Mr. Van der School, when the gentleman most wished to be luminous in his discourse, not to abandon all thoughts of a discovery, when he perceived that the attorney was endeavoring to avoid anything like an approach to a cross-examination. They parted at the gate, the lawyer walking, with an important and hurried air toward his office, keeping his right hand firmly clinched on the bundle of papers.

It must have been obvious to all our readers, that the youth entertained an unusual and deeply seated prejudice against the character of the Judge; but owing to some counteracting cause, his sensations were now those of powerful interest in the state of his patron's present feelings, and in the cause of his secret uneasiness.

He remained gazing after the lawyer until the door closed on both the bearer and the mysterious packet, when he returned slowly to the dwelling, and endeavored to forget his curiosity in the usual avocations of his office.

When the Judge made his reappearance in the circles of his family, his cheerfulness was tempered by a shade of

melancholy that lingered for many days around his manly brow ; but the magical progression of the season aroused him from his temporary apathy, and his smiles returned with the summer.

The heats of the days, and the frequent occurrence of balmy showers, had completed, in an incredibly short period, the growth of plants, which the lingering spring had so long retarded in the germ ; and the woods presented every shade of green that the American forests know. The stumps in the cleared fields were already hidden beneath the wheat that was waving with every breath of the summer air, shining and changing its hues like velvet.

During the continuance of his cousin's dejection, Mr. Jones forebore, with much consideration, to press on his attention a business that each hour was drawing nearer to the heart of the sheriff, and which, if any opinion could be formed by his frequent private conferences with the man who was introduced in these pages by the name of Jotham, at the bar-room of the Bold Dragoon, was becoming also of great importance.

At length the sheriff ventured to allude again to the subject ; and one evening, in the beginning of July, Marmaduke made him a promise of devoting the following day to the desired excursion.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“Speak on, my dearest father !
Thy words are like the breezes of the west.”—MILMAN.

It was a mild and soft morning, when Marmaduke and Richard mounted their horses and proceeded on the expedition that had so long been uppermost in the thoughts of the latter ; and Elizabeth and Louisa appeared at the same instant in the hall, attired for an excursion on foot.

The head of Miss Grant was covered by a neat little hat of green silk, and her modest eyes peered from under its shade, with the soft languor that characterized her whole appearance ; but Miss Temple trod her father's wide apartments with the step of their mistress, holding in her hands, dangling by one of its ribbons, the gipsy that was to conceal the glossy locks that curled around her polished forehead in rich profusion.

“What? are you for a walk, Bess?” cried the Judge, suspending his movements for a moment to smile, with a father’s fondness, at the display of womanly grace and beauty that his child presented. “Remember the heats of July, my daughter; nor venture further than thou canst retrace before the meridian. Where is thy parasol, girl? thou wilt lose the polish of that brow, under this sun and southern breeze, unless thou guard it with unusual care.”

“I shall then do more honor to my connections,” returned the smiling daughter. “Cousin Richard has a bloom that any lady might envy. At present the resemblance between us is so trifling that no stranger would know us to be ‘sisters’ children.”

“Grandchildren, you mean, Cousin Bess,” said the sheriff. “But on, Judge Temple; time and tide wait for no man; and if you take my counsel, sir, in twelve months from this day you may make an umbrella for your daughter of her camel’s hair shawl, and have its frame of solid silver. I ask nothing for myself, ‘duke; you have been a good friend to me already; besides, all that I have will go to Bess there, one of these melancholy days, so it’s as long as it’s short, whether I or you leave it. But we have a day’s ride before us, sir; so move forward, or dismount, and say you won’t go at once.”

“Patience, patience, Dickon,” returned the Judge, checking his horse and turning again to his daughter. “If thou art for the mountains, love, stray not too deep into the forest, I entreat thee; for, though it is done often with impunity, there is sometimes danger.”

“Not at this season, I believe, sir,” said Elizabeth; “for, I will confess, it is the intention of Louisa and myself to stroll among the hills.”

“Less at this season than in the winter, dear; but still there may be danger in venturing too far. But though thou art resolute, Elizabeth, thou art too much like thy mother not to be prudent.”

The eyes of the parent turned reluctantly from his child, and the Judge and sheriff rode slowly through the gateway, and disappeared among the buildings of the village.

During this short dialogue, young Edwards stood, an attentive listener, holding in his hand a fishing-rod, the day and the season having tempted him also to desert the house for the pleasure of exercise in the air. As the equestrians turned through the gate, he approached the young

females, who were already moving toward the street, and was about to address them, as Louisa paused, and said, quickly :

“Mr. Edwards would speak to us, Elizabeth.”

The other stopped also, and turned to the youth, politely but with a slight coldness in her air, that sensibly checked the freedom with which he had approached them.

“Your father is not pleased that you should walk unattended in the hills, Miss Temple. If I might offer myself as a protector——”

“Does my father select Mr. Oliver Edwards as the organ of his displeasure ?” interrupted the lady.

“Good Heaven ! you misunderstood my meaning ; I should have said uneasy for not pleased. I am his servant, madam, and in consequence yours. I repeat that, with your consent, I will change my rod for a fowling-piece, and keep nigh you on the mountain.”

“I thank you, Mr. Edwards ; but where there is no danger, no protection is required. We are not yet reduced to wandering among these free hills accompanied by a body-guard. If such a one is necessary there he is, however.—Here, Brave—Brave—my noble Brave !”

The huge mastiff, that has been already mentioned, appeared from his kennel, gaping and stretching himself with pampered laziness ; but as his mistress again called : “Come, dear Brave ; once you have served your master well ; let us see how you can do your duty by his daughter”—the dog wagged his tail, as if he understood her language, walked with a stately gait to her side, where he seated himself, and looked up at her face, with an intelligence but little inferior to that which beamed in her own lovely countenance.

She resumed her walk, but again paused, after a few steps, and added, in tones of conciliation :

“You can be serving us equally, and, I presume, more agreeably to yourself, Mr. Edwards, by bringing us a string of your favorite perch for the dinner-table.”

When they again began to walk Miss Temple did not look back to see how the youth bore this repulse ; but the head of Louisa was turned several times before they reached the gate on that considerate errand.

“I am afraid, Elizabeth,” she said, “that we have mortified Oliver. He is still standing where we left him, leaning on his rod. Perhaps he thinks us proud.”

“He thinks justly,” exclaimed Miss Temple, as if awaking from a deep musing; “he thinks justly, then. We are too proud to admit of such particular attentions from a young man in an equivocal situation. What! make him the companion of our most private walks! It is pride, Louisa, but it is the pride of a woman.”

It was several minutes before Oliver aroused himself from the abstracted position in which he was standing when Louisa last saw him; but when he did, he muttered something rapidly and incoherently, and, throwing his rod over his shoulder, he strode down the walk through the gate, and along one of the streets of the village, until he reached the lake-shore, with the air of an emperor. At this spot boats were kept for the use of Judge Temple and his family. The young man threw himself into a light skiff, and, seizing the oars, he sent it across the lake toward the hut of Leather-Stocking, with a pair of vigorous arms. By the time he had rowed a quarter of a mile, his reflections were less bitter; and when he saw the bushes that lined the shore in front of Natty’s habitation gliding by him, as if they possessed the motion which proceeded from his own efforts, he was quite cooled in mind, though somewhat heated in body. It is quite possible that the very same reason which guided the conduct of Miss Temple, suggested itself to a man of the breeding and education of the youth; and it is very certain that, if such were the case, Elizabeth rose instead of falling in the estimation of Mr. Edwards.

The oars were now raised from the water, and the boat shot close in to the land, where it lay gently agitated by waves of its own creating, while the young man, first casting a cautious and searching glance around him in every direction, put a small whistle to his mouth, and blew a long, shrill note that rang among the echoing rocks behind the hut. At this alarm, the hounds of Natty rushed out of their bark kennel, and commenced their long pitious howls, leaping about as if half frantic, though restrained by the leashes of buckskin by which they were fastened.

“Quiet, Hector, quiet,” said Oliver, again applying his whistle to his mouth, and drawing out notes still more shrill than before. No reply was made, the dogs having returned to their kennel at the sound of his voice.

Edwards pulled the bows of the boat on the shore, and

anding, ascended the beach and approached the door of the cabin. The fastenings were soon undone, and he entered, closing the door after him, when all was as silent, in that retired spot, as if the foot of man had never trod the wilderness. The sounds of the hammers, that were in incessant motion in the village, were faintly heard across the water; but the dogs had crouched into their lairs, satisfied that none but the privileged had approached the forbidden ground.

A quarter of an hour elapsed before the youth reappeared, when he fastened the door again, and spoke kindly to the hounds. The dogs came out at the well-known tones, and the slut jumped upon his person, whining and barking, as if entreating Oliver to release her from prison. But old Hector raised his nose to the light current of air, and opened a long howl, that might have been heard for a mile.

"Ha! what do you scent, old veteran of the woods?" cried Edwards. "If a beast, it is a bold one; and if a man, an impudent."

He sprang through the top of a pine that had fallen near the side of the hut, and ascended a small hillock that sheltered the cabin to the south, where he caught a glimpse of the formal figure of Hiram Doolittle, as it vanished, with unusual rapidity for the architect, amid the bushes.

"What can that fellow be wanting here?" muttered Oliver. "He has no business in this quarter, unless it be curiosity, which is an endemic in these woods. But against that I will effectually guard, though the dogs should take a liking to his ugly visage, and let him pass." The youth returned to the door, while giving vent to this soliloquy, and completed the fastenings by placing a small chain through a staple, and securing it there by a padlock. "He is a pettifogger, and surely must know that there is such a thing as feloniously breaking into a man's house."

Apparently well satisfied with this arrangement, the youth again spoke to the hounds; and, descending to the shore, he launched his boat, and taking up his oars, pulled off into the lake.

There were several places in the Otsego that were celebrated fishing-ground for perch. One was nearly opposite to the cabin, and another, still more famous, was near a point, at the distance of a mile and a half above it, under the brow of the mountain, and on the same side of the

lake with the hut. Oliver Edwards pulled his little skiff to the first, and sat, for a minute, undecided whether to continue there, with his eyes on the door of the cabin, or to change his ground, with a view to get superior game. While gazing about him, he saw the light-colored bark canoe of his old companions riding on the water, at the point we have mentioned, and containing two figures, that he at once knew to be Mohegan and the Leather-Stocking. This decided the matter, and the youth pulled, in a very few minutes, to the place where his friends were fishing, and fastened his boat to the light vessel of the Indian.

The old men received Oliver with welcoming nods, but neither drew his line from the water, nor in the least varied his occupation. When Edwards had secured his own boat, he baited his hook and threw it into the lake, without speaking.

"Did you stop at the wigwam, lad, as you rowed past?" asked Natty.

"Yes, and I found all safe; but that carpenter and justice of the peace, Mr., or as they call him, Squire, Doolittle, was prowling through the woods. I made sure of the door before I left the hut, and I think he is too great a coward to approach the hounds."

"There's little to be said in favor of that man," said Natty, while he drew in a perch and baited his hook. "He craves dreadfully to come into the cabin, and has as good as asked me as much to my face; but I put him off with unsartain answers, so that he is no wiser than Solomon. This comes of having so many laws that such a man may be called on to intarpret them."

"I fear he is more knave than fool," cried Edwards; "he makes a tool of that simple man, the sheriff; and I dread that his impertinent curiosity may yet give us much trouble."

"If he harbors too much about the cabin, lad, I'll shoot the creator," said the Leather-Stocking, quite simply.

"No, no, Natty, you must remember the law," said Edwards, "or we shall have you in trouble; and that, old man, would be an evil day and sore tidings to us all."

"Would it, boy?" exclaimed the hunter, raising his eyes with a look of friendly interest, toward the youth. "You have the true blood in your veins, Mr. Oliver; and I'll support it to the face of Judge Temple, or in any court in the country. How is it, John? Do I speak the true word? Is the lad stanch, and of the right blood?"

"He is a Delaware," said Mohegan, "and my brother. The young Eagle is brave, and he will be a chief. No harm can come."

"Well, well," cried the youth, impatiently, "say no more about it, my good friends; if I am not all that your partiality would make me, I am yours through life, in prosperity as in poverty. We will talk of other matters."

The old hunters yielded to his wish, which seemed to be their law. For a short time a profound silence prevailed, during which each man was very busy with his hook and line, but Edwards, probably feeling that it remained with him to renew the discourse, soon observed, with the air of one who knew not what he said:

"How beautifully tranquil and glassy the lake is! Saw you it ever more calm and even than at this moment, Natty?"

"I have known the Otsego water for five and forty years," said Leather-Stocking, "and I will say that for it, which is, that a cleaner spring or better fishing is not to be found in the land. Yes, yes; I had the place to myself once, and a cheerful time I had of it. The game was plenty as heart could wish; and there was none to meddle with the ground, unless there might have been a hunting party of the Delawares crossing the hills, or, maybe, a rifling scout of them thieves, the Iroquois. There was one or two Frenchmen that squatted in the flats further west, and married squaws; and some of the Scotch-Irishers, from the Cherry Valley, would come on to the lake, and borrow my canoe to take a mess of parch, or drop a line for salmon-trout; but, in the main, it was a cheerful place, and I had but little to disturb me in it. John would come, and John knows."

Mohegan turned his dark face at this appeal; and, moving his hand forward with graceful motion of assent, he spoke, using the Delaware language:

"The land was owned by my people; we gave it to my brother, in council—to the Fire-eater; and what the Delawares give lasts as long as the waters run. Hawk-eye smoked at that council, for we loved him."

"No, no, John," said Natty; "I was no chief, seeing that I know'd nothing of scholarship, and had a white skin. But it was a comfortable hunting-ground then, lad, and would have been so this day, but for the money of Marmaduke Temple, and the twisty ways of the law."

"It must have been a sight of melancholy pleasure indeed," said Edwards, while his eye roved along the shores and over the hills, where the clearings, groaning with the golden corn, were cheering the forest with the signs of life, "to have roamed over these mountains and along this sheet of beautiful water, without a living soul to speak to, or to thwart your humor."

"Haven't I said it was cheerful?" said Leather-Stocking. "Yes, yes, when the trees began to be covered with leaves, and the ice was out of the lake, it was a second paradise. I have travelled the woods for fifty-three years, and have made them my home for more than forty; and I can say that I have met but one place that was more to my liking; and that was only to eye-sight, and not for hunting or fishing."

"And where was that?" asked Edwards.

"Where! why up on the Catskills. I used often to go up into the mountains after wolves' skins and bears; once they paid me to get them a stuffed painter, and so I often went. There's a place in them hills that I used to climb to when I wanted to see the carryings on of the world, that would well pay any man for a barked shin or a torn mocasin. You know the Catskills, lad; for you must have seen them on your left, as you followed the river up from York, looking as blue as a piece of clear sky, and holding the clouds on their tops, as the smoke curls over the head of an Indian chief at the council fire. Well, there's the High-peak and the Round-top, which lay back like a father and mother among their children, seeing they are far above all the other hills. But the place I mean is next to the river, where one of the ridges juts out a little from the rest, and where the rocks fall, for the best part of a thousand feet, so much up and down, that a man standing on their edges is fool enough to think he can jump from top to bottom."

"What see you when you get there?" asked Edwards.

"Creation," said Natty, dropping the end of his rod into the water, and sweeping one hand around him in a circle; "all creation, lad. I was on that hill when Vaughan burned 'Sopus in the last war; and I saw the vessels come out of the Highlands as plain as I can see that lime-scow rowing into the Susquehanna, though one was twenty times farther from me than the other. The river was in sight for seventy miles, looking like a curled shaving under my feet,

though it was eight long miles to its banks. I saw the hills in the Hampshire grants, the highlands of the river, and all that God had done, or man could do, far as eye could reach—you know that the Indians named me for my sight, lad; and from the flat on the top of that mountain, I have often found the place where Albany stands. And as for 'Sopus, the day the royal troops burnt the town, the smoke seemed so nigh, that I thought I could hear the screeches of the women."

"It must have been worth the toil to meet with such a glorious view."

"If being the best part of a mile in the air, and having men's farms and houses at your feet, with rivers looking like ribbons, and mountains bigger than the 'Vision,' seeming to be hay-stacks of green grass under you, gives any satisfaction to a man, I can recommend the spot. When I first came into the woods to live, I used to have weak spells when I felt lonesome; and then I would go into the Catskills, and spend a few days on that hill to look at the ways of man; but it's now many a year since I felt any such longings, and I am getting too old for rugged rocks. But there's a place, a short two miles back of that very hill, that in late times I relished better than the mountains; for it was more covered with the trees, and nateral."

"And where was that?" inquired Edwards, whose curiosity was strongly excited by the simple description of the hunter.

"Why, there's a fall in the hills where the water of two little ponds, that lie near each other, breaks out of their bounds and runs over the rocks into the valley. The stream is, maybe, such a one as would turn a mill, if so useless a thing was wanted in the wilderness. But the hand that made that 'Leap' never made a mill. There the water comes crooking and winding among the rocks; first so slow that a trout could swim in it, and then starting and running like a crater that wanted to make a far spring, till it gets to where the mountain divides, like the cleft hoof of a deer, leaving a deep hollow for the brook to tumble into. The first pitch is nigh two hundred feet, and the water looks like flakes of driven snow afore it touches the bottom; and there the stream gathers itself together again for a new start, and maybe flutters over fifty feet of flat rock before it falls for another hundred,

when it jumps about from shelf to shelf, first turning this way and then turning that way, striving to get out of the hollow, till it finally comes to the plain."

"I have never heard of this spot before ; it is not mentioned in the books."

"I never read a book in my life," said Leather-Stocking ; "and how should a man who has lived in towns and schools know anything about the wonders of the woods ? No, no, lad ; there has that little stream of water been playing among the hills since He made the world, and not a dozen white men have ever laid eyes on it. The rock sweeps like mason-work, in a half round, on both sides of the fall, and shelves over the bottom for fifty feet ; so that when I've been sitting at the foot of the first pitch, and my hounds have run into the caverns behind the sheet of water, they've looked no bigger than so many rabbits. To my judgment, lad, it's the best piece of work that I've met with in the woods ; and none know how often the hand of God is seen in the wilderness, but them that rove it for a man's life."

"What becomes of the water ? In which direction does it run ? Is it a tributary of the Delaware ?"

"Anan !" said Natty.

"Does the water run into the Delaware ?"

"No, no ; it's a drop for the old Hudson, and a merry time it has till it gets down off the mountain. I've sat on the shelving rock many a long hour, boy, and watched the bubbles as they shot by me, and thought how long it would be before that very water, which seemed made for the wilderness, would be under the bottom of a vessel, and tossing in the salt sea. It is a spot to make a man solemnize. You go right down into the valley that lies to the east of the High Peak, where, in the fall of the year, thousands of acres of woods are before your eyes, in the deep hollow, and along the side of the mountain, painted like ten thousand rainbows, by no hand of man, though without the ordering of God's providence."

"You are eloquent, Leather-Stocking," exclaimed the youth.

"Anan !" repeated Natty.

"The recollection of the sight has warmed your blood, old man. How many years is it since you saw the place ?"

The hunter made no reply ; but, bending his ear near the water, he sat holding his breath, and listening atten-

tively as if to some distant sound. At length he raised his head, and said :

“If I hadn't fastened the hounds with my own hands, with a fresh leash of green buckskin, I'd take a Bible oath that I heard old Hector ringing his cry on the mountain.”

“It is impossible,” said Edwards ; “it is not an hour since I saw him in his kennel.”

By this time the attention of Mohegan was attracted to the sounds ; but, notwithstanding the youth was both silent and attentive, he could hear nothing but the lowing of some cattle from the western hills. He looked at the old men, Natty sitting with his hand to his ear, like a trumpet, and Mohegan bending forward, with an arm raised to a level with his face, holding the forefinger elevated as a signal for attention, and laughed aloud at what he deemed to be their imaginary sounds.

“Laugh if you will, boy,” said Leather-Stocking, “the hounds be out, and are hunting a deer. No man can deceive me in such a matter. I wouldn't have had the thing happen for a beaver's skin. Not that I care for the law ; but the venison is lean now, and the dumb things run the flesh off their own bones for no good. Now do you hear the hounds ?”

Edwards started, as a full cry broke on his ear, changing from the distant sounds that were caused by some intervening hill, to confused echoes that rang among the rocks that the dogs were passing, and then directly to a deep and hollow baying that pealed under the forest under the lake shore. These variations in the tones of the hounds passed with amazing rapidity ; and, while his eyes were glancing along the margin of the water, a tearing of the branches of the alder and dogwood caught his attention, at a spot near them, and at the next moment a noble buck sprang on the shore, and buried himself in the lake. A full-mouthed cry followed, when Hector and the slut shot through the opening in the bushes, and darted into the lake also, bearing their breasts gallantly against the water.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“Oft in the full descending flood he tries
To lose the scent, and lave his burning sides.”—THOMSON.

“I KNOW’D it—I know’d it!” cried Natty, when both deer and hounds were in full view; “the buck has gone by them with the wind, and it has been too much for the poor rogues; but I must break them of these tricks, or they’ll give me a deal of trouble. He-ere, he-ere—shore with you, rascals—shore with you—will ye?—Oh! off with you, old Hector, or I’ll hatchel your hide with my ramrod when I get ye.”

The dogs knew their master’s voice, and after swimming in a circle, as if reluctant to give over the chase, and yet afraid to persevere, they finally obeyed, and returned to the land, where they filled the air with their cries.

In the meantime the deer, urged by his fears, had swum over half the distance between the shore and the boats, before his terror permitted him to see the new danger. But at the sounds of Natty’s voice, he turned short in his course, and for a few moments seemed about to rush back again, and brave the dogs. His retreat in this direction was, however, effectually cut off, and, turning a second time, he urged his course obliquely for the centre of the lake, with an intention of landing on the western shore. As the buck swam by the fishermen, raising his nose high into the air, curling the water before his slim neck like the beak of a galley, the Leather-Stocking began to sit very uneasy in his canoe.

“’Tis a noble creater!” he exclaimed, “what a pair of horns! a man might hang up all his garments on the branches. Let me see—July is the last month, and the flesh must be getting good.” While he was talking, Natty had instinctively employed himself in fastening the inner end of the bark rope, that served him for a cable, to a paddle, and, rising suddenly on his legs, he cast this buoy away, and cried—“Strike out, John! let her go. The creater’s a fool to tempt a man in this way.”

Mohegan threw the fastening of the youth’s boat from the canoe, and with one stroke of his paddle sent the light bark over the water like a meteor.

"Hold!" exclaimed Edwards. "Remember the law, my old friends. You are in plain sight of the village, and I know that Judge Temple is determined to prosecute all, indiscriminately, who kill deer out of season."

The remonstrance came too late; the canoe was already far from the skiff, and the two hunters were too much engaged in the pursuit to listen to his voice.

The buck was now within fifty yards of his pursuers, cutting the water gallantly, and snorting at each breath with terror and his exertions, while the canoe seemed to dance over the waves as it rose and fell with the undulations made by its own motion. Leather-Stocking raised his rifle and freshened the priming, but stood in suspense whether to slay his victim or not.

"Shall I, John, or no?" he said. "It seems but a poor advantage to take of the dumb thing, too. I won't; it has taken to the water on its own nater, which is the reason that God has given to a deer, and I'll give it the lake play; so, John, lay out your arm, and mind the turn of the buck; it's easy to catch them, but they'll turn like a snake."

The Indian laughed at the conceit of his friend, but continued to send the canoe forward with a velocity that proceeded much more from his skill than his strength. Both of the old men now used the language of the Delawares when they spoke.

"Hugh!" exclaimed Mohegan; "the deer turns his head. Hawk-eye, lift your spear."

Natty never moved abroad without taking with him every implement that might, by possibility, be of service in his pursuits. From his rifle he never parted; and, although intending to fish with the line, the canoe was invariably furnished with all of its utensils, even to its grate. This precaution grew out of the habits of the hunter, who was often led, by his necessities or his sports, far beyond the limits of his original destination. A few years earlier than the date of our tale, the Leather-Stocking had left his hut on the shores of the Otsego, with his rifle and his hounds, for a few days' hunting in the hills; but before he returned he had seen the waters of Ontario. One, two, or even three hundred miles had once been nothing to his sinews, which were now a little stiffened by age. The hunter did as Mohegan advised, and prepared to strike a blow, with the barbed weapon, into the neck of the buck.

“Lay her more to the left, John,” he cried, “lay her more to the left; another stroke of the paddle and I have him.”

While speaking he raised the spear, and darted it from him like an arrow. At that instant the buck turned, the long pole glanced by him, the iron striking against his horn, and buried itself harmlessly, in the lake.

“Back water,” cried Natty, as the canoe glided over the place where the spear had fallen; “hold water, John.”

The pole soon reappeared, shooting up from the lake, and, as the hunter seized it in his hand, the Indian whirled the light canoe round, and renewed the chase. But this evolution gave the buck a great advantage; and it also allowed time for Edwards to approach the scene of action.

“Hold your hand, Natty!” cried the youth, “hold your hand; remember it is out of season.”

This remonstrance was made as the batteau arrived close to the place where the deer was struggling with the water, his back now rising to the surface, now sinking beneath it, as the waves curled from his neck, the animal still sustaining itself nobly against the odds.

“Hurrah!” shouted Edwards, inflamed beyond prudence at the sight; “mind him as he doubles—mind him as he doubles; sheer more to the right, Mohegan, more to the right, and I’ll have him by the horns; I’ll throw the rope over his antlers.”

The dark eye of the old warrior was dancing in his head with a wild animation, and the sluggish repose in which his aged frame had been resting in the canoe was now changed to all the rapid inflections of practised agility. The canoe whirled with each cunning evolution of the chase, like a bubble floating in a whirlpool; and when the direction of the pursuit admitted of a straight course the little bark skimmed the lake with a velocity that urged the deer to seek its safety in some new turn.

It was the frequency of these circuitous movements that, by confining the action to so small a compass, enabled the youth to keep near his companions. More than twenty times both the pursued and the pursuer glided by him, just without the reach of his oars, until he thought the best way to view the sport was to remain stationary, and, by watching a favorable opportunity, assist as much as he could in taking the victim.

He was not required to wait long, for no sooner had he

adopted this resolution, and risen in the boat, than he saw the deer coming bravely toward him, with an apparent intention of pushing for a point of land at some distance from the hounds, who were still barking and howling on the shore. Edwards caught the painter of his skiff, and, making a noose, cast it from him with all his force, and luckily succeeded in drawing its knot close around one of the antlers of the buck.

For one instant the skiff was drawn through the water, but in the next the canoe glided before it, and Natty, bending low, passed his knife across the throat of the animal, whose blood followed the wound, dyeing the waters. The short time that was passed in the last struggles of the animal was spent by the hunters in bringing their boats together and securing them in that position, when Leather-Stocking drew the deer from the water and laid its lifeless form in the bottom of the canoe. He placed his hands on the ribs, and on different parts of the body of his prize, and then, raising his head, he laughed in his peculiar manner.

"So much for Marmaduke Temple's law!" he said. "This warms a body's blood, old John; I haven't killed a buck in the lake afore this, sin' many a year. I call that good venison, lad; and I know them that will relish the creatur's steaks for all the betterments in the land."

The Indian had long been drooping with his years, and perhaps under the calamities of his race, but this invigorating and exciting sport caused a gleam of sunshine to cross his swarthy face that had long been absent from his features. It was evident the old man enjoyed the chase more as a memorial of his youthful sports and deeds than with any expectation of profiting by the success. He felt the deer, however, lightly, his hand already trembling with the reaction of his unusual exertions, and smiled with a nod of approbation, as he said, in the emphatic and sententious manner of his people:

"Good."

"I am afraid, Natty," said Edwards, when the heat of the moment had passed, and his blood began to cool, "that we have all been equally transgressors of the law. But keep your own counsel, and there are none here to betray us. Yet, how came those dogs at large? I left them securely fastened, I know, for I felt the thongs and examined the knots when I was at the hut."

"It has been too much for the poor things," said Natty,

"to have such a buck take the wind of them. See, lad the pieces of the buckskin are hanging from their necks yet. Let us paddle up, John, and I will call them in and look a little into the matter."

When the old hunter landed and examined the thongs that were yet fast to the hounds, his countenance sensibly changed, and he shook his head doubtingly.

"Here has been a knife at work," he said; "this skin was never torn, nor is this the mark of a hound's tooth. No, no—Hector is not in fault, as I feared."

"Has the leather been cut?" cried Edwards.

"No, no—I didn't say it had been cut, lad; but this is a mark that was never made by a jump or a bite."

"Could that rascally carpenter have dared!"

"Ay! he durst do anything when there is no danger," said Natty; "he is a curious body, and loves to be helping other people on with their consarns. But he had best not harbor so much near the wigwam!"

In the meantime, Mohegan had been examining, with an Indian's sagacity, the place where the leather thong had been separated. After scrutinizing it closely, he said, in Delaware:

"It was cut with a knife—a sharp blade and a long handle—the man was afraid of the dogs."

"How is this, Mohegan?" exclaimed Edwards; "you saw it not! how can you know these facts?"

"Listen, son," said the warrior. "The knife was sharp, for the cut was smooth; the handle was long, for a man's arm would not reach from this gash to the cut that did not go through the skin; he was a coward, or he would have cut the thongs around the necks of the hounds."

"On my life," cried Natty, "John is on the scent! It was the carpenter; and he has got on the rock back of the kennel and let the dogs loose by fastening his knife to a stick. It would be an easy matter to do it where a man is so minded."

"And why should he do so?" asked Edwards; "who has done him wrong, that he should trouble two old men like you?"

"It's a hard matter, lad, to know men's ways, I find, since the settlers have brought in their new fashions. But is there nothing to be found out in the place? and maybe he is troubled with his longings after other people's business, as he often is."

“Your suspicions are just. Give me the canoe ; I am young and strong, and will get down there yet, perhaps, in time to interrupt his plans. Heaven forbid that we should be at the mercy of such a man !”

His proposal was accepted, the deer being placed in the skiff in order to lighten the canoe, and in less than five minutes the little vessel of bark was gliding over the glassy lake, and was soon hid by the points of land as it shot close along the shore.

Mohegan followed slowly with the skiff, while Natty called his hounds to him, bade them keep close, and, shouldering his rifle, he ascended the mountain, with an intention of going to the hut by land.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“Ask me not what the maiden feels,
Left in that dreadful hour alone ;
Perchance, her reason stoops, or reels ;
Perchance, a courage not her own,
Braces her mind to desperate tone.”—SCOTT.

WHILE the chase was occurring on the lake, Miss Temple and her companion pursued their walk on the mountain. Male attendants on such excursions were thought to be altogether unnecessary, for none were ever known to offer insult to a female who respected herself. After the embarrassment created by the parting discourse with Edwards had dissipated, the girls maintained a conversation that was as innocent and cheerful as themselves.

The path they took led them but a short distance above the hut of Leather-Stocking, and there was a point in the road which commanded a bird's-eye view of the sequestered spot.

From a feeling that might have been natural, and must have been powerful, neither of the friends, in their frequent and confidential dialogues, had ever trusted herself to utter one syllable concerning the equivocal situation in which the young man who was now so intimately associated with them had been found. If Judge Temple had deemed it prudent to make any inquiries on the subject, he had also thought it proper to keep the answers to himself ; though it was so common an occurrence to find the

well-educated youth of the Eastern States in every stage of their career to wealth, that the simple circumstance of his intelligence, connected with his poverty, would not, at that day and in that country, have excited any very powerful curiosity. With his breeding, it might have been different; but the youth himself had so effectually guarded against surprise on this subject, by his cold and even, in some cases, rude deportment, that when his manners seemed to soften by time, the Judge, if he thought about it at all, would have been most likely to imagine that the improvement was the result of his late association. But women are always more alive to such subjects than men; and what the abstraction of the father had overlooked, the observation of the daughter had easily detected. In the thousand little courtesies of polished life she had early discovered that Edwards was not wanting, though his gentleness was so often crossed by marks of what she conceived to be fierce and uncontrollable passions. It may, perhaps, be unnecessary to tell the reader that Louisa Grant never reasoned so much after the fashions of the world. The gentle girl, however, had her own thoughts on the subject, and, like others, she drew her own conclusions.

"I would give all my other secrets, Louisa," exclaimed Miss Temple, laughing, and shaking back her dark locks, with a look of childish simplicity that her intelligent face seldom expressed, "to be mistress of all that those rude logs have heard and witnessed."

They were both looking at the secluded hut at the instant, and Miss Grant raised her mild eyes as she answered:

"I am sure they would tell nothing to the disadvantage of Mr. Edwards."

"Perhaps not; but they might, at least, tell who he is."

"Why, dear Miss Temple, we know all that already. I have heard it all very rationally explained by your cousin——"

"The executive chief! he can explain anything. His ingenuity will one day discover the philosopher's stone. But what did he say?"

"Say!" echoed Louisa, with a look of surprise; "why, everything that seemed to me to be satisfactory, and I have believed it to be true. He said that Natty Bumppo had lived most of his life in the woods and among the Indians, by which means he had formed an acquaintance with old John, the Delaware chief."

"Indeed! that was quite a matter-of-fact tale for cousin Dickon. What came next?"

"I believe he accounted for their close intimacy by some story about the Leather-Stocking saving the life of John in a battle."

"Nothing more likely," said Elizabeth, a little impatiently; "but what is all this to the purpose?"

"Nay, Elizabeth, you must bear with my ignorance, and I will repeat all that I remember to have overheard; for the dialogue was between my father and the sheriff, so lately as the last time they met. He then added that the kings of England used to keep gentlemen as agents among the different tribes of Indians, and sometimes officers in the army, who frequently passed half their lives on the edge of the wilderness."

"Told with wonderful historical accuracy! And did he end there?"

"Oh! no—then he said that these agents seldom married; and—and—they must have been wicked men, Elizabeth! but I assure you he said so."

"Never mind," said Miss Temple, blushing and smiling, though so slightly that both were unheeded by her companion; "skip all that."

"Well, then, he said that they often took great pride in the education of their children, whom they frequently sent to England, and even to the colleges; and this is the way that he accounts for the liberal manner in which Mr. Edwards has been taught; for he acknowledges that he knows almost as much as your father—or mine—or even himself."

"Quite a climax in learning! And so he made Mohegan the granduncle or grandfather of Oliver Edwards."

"You have heard him yourself, then?" said Louisa.

"Often; but not on this subject. Mr. Richard Jones, you know, dear, has a theory for everything; but has he one which will explain the reason why that hut is the only habitation within fifty miles of us whose door is not open to every person who may choose to lift its latch?"

"I have never heard him say anything on this subject," returned the clergyman's daughter; "but I suppose that, as they are poor, they very naturally are anxious to keep the little that they honestly own. It is sometimes dangerous to be rich, Miss Temple; but you cannot know how hard it is to be very, very poor."

“Nor you, I trust, Louisa; at least I should hope that, in this land of abundance, no minister of the church could be left in absolute suffering.”

“There cannot be actual misery,” returned the other, in a low and humble tone, “where there is a dependence on our Maker; but there may be such suffering as will cause the heart to ache.”

“But not you—not you”—said the impetuous Elizabeth—“not you, dear girl: you have never known the misery that is connected with poverty.”

“Ah! Miss Temple, you little understand the troubles of this life, I believe. My father has spent many years as a missionary in the new countries, where his people were poor, and frequently we have been without bread; unable to buy, and ashamed to beg, because we would not disgrace his sacred calling. But how often have I seen him leave his home, where the sick and the hungry felt, when he left them, that they had lost their only earthly friend, to ride on a duty which could not be neglected for domestic evils. Oh! how hard it must be to preach consolation to others when your own heart is bursting with anguish!”

“But it is all over now! your father’s income must now be equal to his wants—it must be—it shall be——”

“It is,” replied Louisa, dropping her head on her bosom, to conceal the tears which flowed in spite of her gentle Christianity—“for there are none left to be supplied but me.”

The turn the conversation had taken drove from the minds of the young maidens all other thoughts but those of holy charity; and Elizabeth folded her friend in her arms, when the latter gave vent to her momentary grief in audible sobs. When this burst of emotion had subsided, Louisa raised her mild countenance, and they continued their walk in silence.

By this time they had gained the summit of the mountain, where they left the highway, and pursued their course under the shade of the stately trees that crowned the eminence. The day was becoming warm, and the girls plunged more deeply into the forest, as they found its invigorating coolness agreeably contrasted to the excessive heat they had experienced in the ascent. The conversation, as if by mutual consent, was entirely changed to the little incidents and scenes of their walk, and every tall pine, and

every shrub or flower, called forth some simple expression of admiration.

In this manner they proceeded along the margin of the precipice, catching occasional glimpses of the placid Otsego, or pausing to listen to the rattling of wheels and the sounds of hammers that rose from the valley, to mingle the signs of men with the scenes of nature, when Elizabeth suddenly started, and exclaimed :

“Listen ! there are the cries of a child on this mountain ! Is there a clearing near us, or can some little one have strayed from its parents ?”

“Such things frequently happen,” returned Louisa. “Let us follow the sounds ; it may be a wanderer starving on the hill.”

Urged by this consideration, the females pursued the low, mournful sounds, that proceeded from the forest, with quick and impatient steps. More than once, the ardent Elizabeth was on the point of announcing that she saw the sufferer, when Louisa caught her by the arm, and pointing behind them, cried !

“Look at the dog !”

Brave had been their companion, from the time the voice of his young mistress lured him from his kennel, to the present moment. His advanced age had long before deprived him of his activity ; and when his companions stopped to view the scenery, or to add to their bouquets, the mastiff would lay his huge frame on the ground and await their movements, with his eyes closed, and a listlessness in his air that ill accorded with the character of a protector. But when, aroused by this cry from Louisa, Miss Temple turned, she saw the dog with his eyes keenly set on some distant object, his head bent near the ground, and his hair actually rising on his body, through fright or anger. It was most probably the latter, for he was growling in a low key, and occasionally showing his teeth, in a manner that would have terrified his mistress, had she not so well known his good qualities.

“Brave !” she said, “be quiet, Brave ! what do you see, fellow ?”

At the sounds of her voice, the rage of the mastiff, instead of being at all diminished, was very sensibly increased. He stalked in front of the ladies, and seated himself at the feet of his mistress, growling louder than before,

and occasionally giving vent to his ire by a short, surly barking.

“What does he see?” said Elizabeth; “there must be some animal in sight.”

Hearing no answer from her companion, Miss Temple turned her head, and beheld Louisa, standing with her face whitened to the color of death, and her finger pointing upward, with a sort of flickering, convulsed motion. The quick eye of Elizabeth glanced in the direction indicated by her friend, where she saw the fierce front and glaring eyes of a female panther, fixed on them in horrid malignity, and threatening to leap.

“Let us fly,” exclaimed Elizabeth, grasping the arm of Louisa, whose form yielded like melting snow.

There was not a single feeling in the temperament of Elizabeth Temple that could prompt her to desert a companion in such an extremity. She fell on her knees, by the side of the inanimate Louisa, tearing from the person of her friend, with instinctive readiness, such parts of her dress as might obstruct her respiration, and encouraging their only safeguard, the dog, at the same time, by the sounds of her voice.

“Courage, Brave!” she cried, her own tones beginning to tremble, “courage, courage, good Brave!”

A quarter-grown cub, that had hitherto been unseen, now appeared, dropping from the branches of a sapling that grew under the shade of the beech which held its dam. This ignorant, but vicious creature, approached the dog, imitating the actions and sounds of its parent, but exhibiting a strange mixture of the playfulness of a kitten with the ferocity of its race. Standing on its hind-legs, it would rend the bark of a tree with its fore-paws, and play the antics of a cat; and then, by lashing itself with its tail, growling, and scratching the earth, it would attempt the manifestations of anger that rendered its parent so terrific.

All this time Brave stood firm and undaunted, his short tail erect, his body drawn backward on its haunches, and his eyes following the movements of both dam and cub. At every gambol played by the latter, it approached nigher to the dog, the growling of the three becoming more horrid at each moment, until the younger beast, overleaping its intended bound, fell directly before the mastiff. There was a moment of fearful cries and struggles, but they

ended almost as soon as commenced, by the cub appearing in the air, hurled from the jaws of Brave, with a violence that sent it against a tree so forcibly as to render it completely senseless.

Elizabeth witnessed the short struggle, and her blood was warming with the triumph of the dog, when she saw the form of the old panther in the air, springing twenty feet from the branch of the beech to the back of the mastiff. No words of ours can describe the fury of the conflict that followed. It was a confused struggle on the dry leaves, accompanied by loud and terrific cries. Miss Temple continued on her knees, bending over the form of Louisa, her eyes fixed on the animals, with an interest so horrid, and yet so intense, that she almost forgot her own stake in the result. So rapid and vigorous were the bounds of the inhabitant of the forest, that its active frame seemed constantly in the air, while the dog nobly faced his foe at each successive leap. When the panther lighted on the shoulders of the mastiff, which was its constant aim, old Brave, though torn with her talons, and stained with his own blood, that already flowed from a dozen wounds, would shake off his furious foe like a feather, and rearing on his hind-legs, rush to the fray again, with jaws distended, and a dauntless eye. But age, and his pampered life, greatly disqualified the noble mastiff for such a struggle. In everything but courage, he was only the vestige of what he had once been. A higher bound than ever raised the wary and furious beast far beyond the reach of the dog, who was making a desperate but fruitless dash at her, from which she alighted in a favorable position, on the back of her aged foe. For a single moment only could the panther remain there, the great strength of the dog returning with a convulsive effort. But Elizabeth saw, as Brave fastened his teeth in the side of his enemy, that the collar of brass around his neck, which had been glittering throughout the fray, was of the color of blood, and directly, that his frame was sinking to the earth, where it soon lay prostrate and helpless. Several mighty efforts of the wild-cat to extricate herself from the jaws of the dog followed, but they were fruitless, until the mastiff turned on his back, his lips collapsed, and his teeth loosened, when the short convulsions and stillness that succeeded announced the death of poor Brave.

Elizabeth now lay wholly at the mercy of the beast.

There is said to be something in the front of the image of the Maker that daunts the hearts of the inferior beings of his creation ; and it would seem that some such power, in the present instance, suspended the threatened blow. The eyes of the monster and the kneeling maiden met for an instant, when the former stooped to examine her fallen foe ; next, to scent her luckless cub. From the latter examination it turned, however, with its eyes apparently emitting flashes of fire, its tail lashing its sides furiously, and its claws projecting inches from her broad feet.

Miss Temple did not or could not move. Her hands were clasped in the attitude of prayer, but her eyes were still drawn to her terrible enemy—her cheeks were blanched to the whiteness of marble, and her lips were slightly separated with horror.

The moment seemed now to have arrived for the fatal termination, and the beautiful figure of Elizabeth was bowing meekly to the stroke, when a rustling of leaves behind seemed rather to mock the organs than to meet her ears.

“Hist ! hist !” said a low voice, “stoop lower, gal ; your bonnet hides the creature’s head.”

It was rather the yielding of nature than a compliance with this unexpected order, that caused the head of our heroine to sink on her bosom ; when she heard the report of the rifle, the whizzing of the bullet, and the enraged cries of the beast, who was rolling over on the earth, biting its own flesh, and tearing the twigs and branches within its reach. At the next instant the form of the Leather-Stocking rushed by her, and he called aloud :

“Come in, Hector, come in, old fool ; ’tis a hard-lived animal, and may jump ag’in.”

Natty fearlessly maintained his position in front of the females, notwithstanding the violent bounds and threatening aspect of the wounded panther, which gave several indications of returning strength and ferocity, until his rifle was again loaded, when he stepped up to the enraged animal, and, placing the muzzle close to its head, every spark of life was extinguished by the discharge.

The death of her terrible enemy appeared to Elizabeth like a resurrection from her own grave. There was an elasticity in the mind of our heroine that rose to meet the pressure of instant danger, and the more direct it had been, the more her nature had struggled to overcome them.

But still she was a woman. Had she been left to herself in her late extremity, she would probably have used her faculties to the utmost, and with discretion, in protecting her person; but, encumbered with her inanimate friend, retreat was a thing not to be attempted. Notwithstanding the fearful aspect of her foe, the eye of Elizabeth had never shrunk from its gaze, and long after the event her thoughts would recur to her passing sensations, and the sweetness of her midnight sleep would be disturbed, as her active fancy conjured, in dreams, the most trifling movements of savage fury that the beast had exhibited in its moment of power.

We shall leave the reader to imagine the restoration of Louisa's senses, and the expressions of gratitude which fell from the young women. The former was effected by a little water, that was brought from one of the thousand springs of those mountains, in the cap of the Leather-Stocking; and the latter were uttered with the warmth that might be expected from the character of Elizabeth. Natty received her vehement protestations of gratitude with a simple expression of good-will, and with indulgence for her present excitement, but with a carelessness that showed how little he thought of the service he had rendered.

"Well, well," he said, "be it so, gal; let it be so, if you wish it—we'll talk the thing over another time. Come, come—let us get into the road, for you've had terror enough to make you wish yourself in your father's house ag'in."

This was uttered as they were proceeding, at a paece that was adapted to the weakness of Louisa, toward the highway; on reaching which the ladies separated from their guide, declaring themselves equal to the remainder of the walk without his assistance, and feeling encouraged by the sight of the village which lay beneath their feet like a picture, with its limpid lake in front, the winding stream along its margin, and its hundred chimneys of whitened bricks.

The reader need not be told the nature of the emotions which two youthful, ingenuous, and well-educated girls would experience at their escape from a death so horrid as the one which had impended over them, while they pursued their way in silence along the track on the side of the mountain; nor how deep were their mental thanks to that Power which had given them their exist-

ence, and which had not deserted them in their extremity, neither how often they pressed each other's arms, as the assurance of their present safety came, like a healing balm, athwart their troubled spirits, when their thoughts were recurring to the recent moments of horror.

Leather-Stocking remained on the hill, gazing after their retiring figures, until they were hidden by a bend in the road, when he whistled in his dogs, and shouldering his rifle, he returned into the forest.

"Well, it was a skeary thing to the young creators," said Natty, while he retrod the path toward the plain. "It might frighten an older woman, to see a she-painter so near her, with a dead cub by its side. I wonder if I had aimed at the varmint's eye; if I shouldn't have touched the life sooner than in the forehead; but they are hard-lived animals, and it was a good shot, consid'ring that I could see nothing but the head and the peak of its tail. Hah! who goes there?"

"How goes it, Natty?" said Mr. Doolittle, stepping out of the bushes, with a motion that was a good deal accelerated by the sight of the rifle, that was already lowered in his direction. "What! shooting this warm day! mind, old man, the law don't get hold on you."

"The law, squire! I have shook hands with the law these forty year," returned Natty; "for what has a man who lives in the wilderness to do with the ways of the law?"

"Not much, may be," said Hiram; "but you sometimes trade in venison. I s'pose you know, Leather-Stocking, that there is an act passed to lay a fine of five pounds currency, or twelve dollars and fifty cents, by decimals, on every man who kills a deer betwixt January and August. The Judge had a great hand in getting the law through."

"I can believe it, returned the old hunter; "I can believe that or anything, of a man who carries on as he does in the country."

"Yes, the law is quite positive, and the Judge is bent on putting it in force—five pounds penalty. I thought I heard your hounds out on the scent of so'thing this morning; I didn't know but they might get you in difficulty."

"They know their manners too well," said Natty, carelessly. "And how much goes to the State's evidence, squire?"

"How much?" repeated Hiram, quailing under the honest but sharp look of the hunter; "the informer gets

half, I—I believe—yes, I guess it's half. But there's blood on your sleeve, man—you haven't been shooting anything this morning?"

"I have, though," said the hunter, nodding his head significantly to the other, "and a good shot I made of it."

"H-e-m!" ejaculated the magistrate; "and where is the game? I s'pose it's of a good nater, for your dogs won't hunt anything that isn't choice."

"They'll hunt anything I tell them to, squire," cried Natty, favoring the other with his laugh. "They'll hunt you, if I say so. He-e-e-re, he-e-e-re, Hector—he-e-e-re, slut—come this a-way, pups—come this a-way—come hither."

"Oh! I have always heard a good character of the dogs," returned Mr. Doolittle, quickening his pace by raising each leg in rapid succession, as the hounds scented around his person. "And where is the game, Leather-Stocking?"

During this dialogue, the speakers had been walking at a very fast gait, and Natty swung the end of his rifle round, pointing through the bushes, and replied:

"There lies one. How do you like such meat?"

"This!" exclaimed Hiram; "why, this is Judge Temple's dog Brave. Take care, Leather-Stocking, and don't make an enemy of the Judge. I hope you haven't harmed the animal?"

"Look for yourself, Mr. Doolittle," said Natty, drawing his knife from his girdle, and wiping it in a knowing manner, once or twice across his garment of buck-skin; "does his throat look as if I had cut it with this knife?"

"It is dreadfully torn! it's an awful wound—no knife ever did this deed. Who could have done it?"

"The painters behind you, squire."

"Painters!" echoed Hiram, whirling on his heel with an agility that would have done credit to a dancing-master.

"Be easy, man," said Natty; "there's two of the venomous things; but the dog finished one, and I have fastened the other's jaws for her; so don't be frightened, squire; they won't hurt you."

"And where's the deer?" cried Hiram, staring about him with a bewildered air.

"Anan! deer!" repeated Natty.

"Sartain; an't the revenison here, or didn't you kill a buck?"

"What! when the law forbids the thing, squire!" said

the old hanter. "I hope theré's no law ag'in killing the painters."

"No! there's a bounty on the scalps—but—will your dogs hunt painters, Natty?"

"Anything; didn't I tell you they would hunt a man? He-e-re, he-e-re, pups——"

"Yes, yes, I remember. Well, they are strange dogs, I must say—I am quite in a wonderment."

Natty had seated himself on the ground, and having laid the grim head of his late ferocious enemy in his lap, was drawing his knife with a practised hand around the ears, which he tore from the head of the beast in such a manner as to preserve their connection, when he answered:

"What at, squire? did you never see a painter's scalp afore? Come, you are a magistrate, I wish you'd make me out an order for the bounty."

"The bounty!" repeated Hiram, holding the ears on the end of his finger for a moment, as if uncertain how to proceed. "Well, let us go down to your hut, where you can take the oath, and I will write out the order. I suppose you have a Bible? all the law wants is the four evangelists and the Lord's prayer."

"I keep no books," said Natty, a little coldly; "not such a Bible as the law needs."

"Oh! there's but one sort of Bible that's good in law," returned the magistrate, "and yourn will do as well as another's. Come, the carcasses are worth nothing, man; let us go down and take the oath."

"Softly, softly, squire," said the hunter, lifting his trophies very deliberately from the ground, and shouldering his rifle; "why do you want an oath at all, for a thing that your own eyes has seen? won't you believe yourself, that another man must swear to a fact that you know to be true? You have seen me scalp the creators, and if I must swear to it, it shall be before Judge Temple, who needs an oath."

"But we have no pen or paper here, Leather-Stocking; we must go to the hut for them, or how can I write the order?"

Natty turned his simple features on the cunning magistrate with another of his laughs, as he said:

"And what should I be doing with scholars' tools? I want no pens or paper, not knowing the use of either; and I keep none. No, no, I'll bring the scalps into the

village, squire, and you can make out the order on one of your law-books, and it will be all the better for it. The deuce take this leather on the neck of the dog, it will strangle the old fool. Can you lend me a knife, squire?"

Hiram, who seemed particularly anxious to be on good terms with his companion, unhesitatingly complied. Natty cut the thong from the neck of the hound, and, as he returned the knife to its owner, carelessly remarked:

"'Tis a good bit of steel, and has cut such leather as this very same, before now, I dare say."

"Do you mean to charge me with letting your hounds loose?" exclaimed Hiram, with a consciousness that disarmed his caution.

"Loose!" repeated the hunter—"I let them loose myself. I always let them loose before I leave the hut."

The ungovernable amazement with which Mr. Doolittle listened to this falsehood would have betrayed his agency in the liberation of the dogs, had Natty wanted any further confirmation; and the coolness and management of the old man now disappeared in open indignation.

"Look you here, Mr. Doolittle," he said, striking the breech of his rifle violently on the ground; "what there is in the wigwam of a poor man like me, that one like you can crave, I don't know; but this I tell you to your face, that you never shall put foot under the roof of my cabin with my consent; and that, if you harbor round the spot as you have done lately, you may meet with treatment that you will little relish."

"And let me tell you, Mr. Bumpo," said Hiram, retreating, however, with a quick step, "that I know you've broke the law, and that I'm a magistrate, and will make you feel it too, before you are a day older."

"That for you and your law, too," cried Natty, snapping his fingers at the justice of the peace; "away with you, you varmint, before the devil tempts me to give you your desarts. Take care, if I ever catch your prowling face in the woods ag'in, that I don't shoot it for an owl."

There is something at all times commanding in honest indignation, and Hiram did not stay to provoke the wrath of the old hunter to extremities. When the intruder was out of sight, Natty proceeded to the hut, where he found all quiet as the grave. He fastened his dogs, and tapping at the door, which was opened by Edwards, asked.

"Is all safe, lad?"

"Everything," returned the youth. "Some one attempted the lock, but it was too strong for him."

"I know the creater," said Natty, "but he'll not trust himself within the reach of my rifle very soon——" What more was uttered by the Leather-Stocking, in his vexation, was rendered inaudible by the closing of the door of the cabin.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"It is noised, he hath a mass of treasure."—TIMON OF ATHENS.

WHEN Marmaduke Temple and his cousin rode through the gate of the former, the heart of the father had been too recently touched with the best feelings of our nature, to leave inclination for immediate discourse. There was an importance in the air of Richard, which would not have admitted of the ordinary informal conversation of the sheriff, without violating all the rules of consistency; and the equestrians pursued their way with great diligence, for more than a mile, in profound silence. At length the soft expression of parental affection was slowly chased from the handsome features of the Judge, and was gradually supplanted by the cast of humor and benevolence that was usually seated on his brow.

"Well, Dickon," he said, "since I have yielded myself so far implicitly to your guidance, I think the moment has arrived when I am entitled to further confidence. Why and wherefore are we journeying together in this solemn gait?"

The sheriff gave a loud hem, that rang far in the forest, and keeping his eyes fixed on objects before him like a man who is looking deep into futurity:

"There has always been one point of difference between us, Judge Temple, I may say, since our nativity," he replied; "not that I would insinuate that you are at all answerable for the acts of Nature; for a man is no more to be condemned for the misfortunes of his birth, than he is to be commended for the natural advantages he may possess; but on one point we may be said to have differed from our births, and they, you know, occurred within two days of each other."

"I really marvel, Richard, what this one point can be;

for, to my eyes, we seem to differ so materially, and so often——”

“Mere consequences, sir,” interrupted the sheriff; “all our minor differences proceed from one cause, and that is, our opinions of the universal attainments of genius.”

“In what, Dickon?”

“I speak plain English, I believe, Judge Temple; at least I ought; for my father, who taught me, could speak——”

“Greek and Latin,” interrupted Marmaduke. “I well know the qualifications of your family in tongues, Dickon. But proceed to the point; why are we travelling over this mountain to-day?”

“To do justice to any subject, sir, the narrator must be suffered to proceed in his own way,” continued the sheriff. “You are of opinion, Judge Temple, that a man is to be qualified by nature and education to do only one thing well, whereas I know that genius will supply the place of learning, and that a certain sort of man can do anything and everything.”

“Like yourself, I suppose,” said Marmaduke, smiling.

“I scorn personalities, sir, I say nothing of myself; but there are three men on your Patent, of the kind that I should term talented by nature for her general purposes, though acting under the influence of different situations.”

“We are better off, then, than I had supposed. Who are these triumviri?”

“Why, sir, one is Hiram Doolittle; a carpenter by trade, as you know—and I need only point to the village to exhibit his merits. Then he is a magistrate, and might shame many a man, in his distribution of justice, who has had better opportunities.”

“Well, he is one,” said Marmaduke, with the air of a man that was determined not to dispute the point.

“Jotham Riddel is another.”

“Who?”

“Jotham Riddel.”

“What, that dissatisfied, shiftless, lazy, speculating fellow! he who changes his county every three years, his farm every six months, and his occupation every season! an agriculturist yesterday, a shoemaker to-day, and a school-master to-morrow! that epitome of all the unsteady and profitless propensities of the settlers without one of their

good qualities to counterbalance the evil! Nay, Richard, this is too bad for even—but the third?”

“As the third is not used to hearing such comments on his character, Judge Temple, I shall not name him.”

“The amount of all this, then, Dickon, is that the trio, of which you are one, and the principal, have made some important discovery.”

“I have not said that I am one, Judge Temple. As I told you before, I say nothing egotistical. But a discovery has been made, and you are deeply interested in it.”

“Proceed—I am all ears.”

“No, no, 'duke, you are bad enough, I own, but not so bad as that, either; your ears are not quite full grown.”

The sheriff laughed heartily at his own wit, and put himself in good humor thereby, when he gratified his patient cousin with the following explanation:

“You know, 'duke, there is a man living on your estate that goes by the name of Natty Bumppo. Here has this man lived, by what I can learn, for more than forty years—by himself, until lately; and now with strange companions.”

“Part very true, and all very probable,” said the Judge.

“All true, sir; all true. Well, within these last few months have appeared as his companions an old Indian chief, the last, or one of the last of his tribe that is to be found in this part of the country, and a young man, who is said to be the son of some Indian agent, by a squaw.”

“Who says that?” cried Marmaduke, with an interest that he had not manifested before.

“Who? why, common sense—common report—the hue and cry. But listen till you know all. This youth has very pretty talents—yes, what I call very pretty talents—and has been well educated, has seen very tolerable company, and knows how to behave himself when he has a mind to. Now, Judge Temple, can you tell me what has brought three such men as Indian John, Natty Bumppo, and Oliver Edwards together?”

Marmaduke turned his countenance, in evident surprise, to his cousin, and replied quickly:

“Thou hast unexpectedly hit on a subject, Richard, that has often occupied my mind. But knowest thou anything of this mystery, or are they only the crude conjectures of——”

“Crude nothing, 'duke, crude nothing; but facts, stubborn facts. You know there are mines in these moun-

tains ; I have often heard you say that you believed in their existence."

"Reasoning from analogy, Richard, but not with any certainty of the fact."

"You have heard them mentioned, and have seen specimens of the ore, sir ; you will not deny that ! and, reasoning from analogy, as you say, if there be mines in South America, ought there not to be mines in North America too ?"

"Nay, nay, I deny nothing, my cousin. I certainly have heard many rumors of the existence of mines in these hills ; and I do believe that I have seen specimens of the precious metals that have been found here. It would occasion me no surprise to learn that tin and silver, or what I consider of more consequence, good coal——"

"Damn your coal," cried the sheriff ; "who wants to find coal in these forests ? No, no—silver, 'duke ; silver is the one thing needful, and silver is to be found. But listen : you are not to be told that the natives have long known the use of gold and silver ; now who so likely to be acquainted where they are to be found as the ancient inhabitants of a country ? I have the best reasons for believing that both Mohegan and the Leather-Stocking have been privy to the existence of a mine in this very mountain for many years."

The sheriff had now touched his cousin in a sensitive spot ; and Marmaduke lent a more attentive ear to the speaker, who, after waiting a moment to see the effect of this extraordinary development, proceeded :

"Yes, sir, I have my reasons, and at a proper time you shall know them."

"No time is so good as the present."

"Well, well, be attentive," continued Richard, looking cautiously about him, to make certain that no eavesdropper was hid in the forest, though they were in constant motion. "I have seen Mohegan and the Leather-Stocking, with my own eyes—and my eyes are as good as anybody's eyes—I have seen them, I say, both going up the mountain and coming down it, with spades and picks ; and others have seen them carrying things into their huts, in a secret and mysterious manner, after dark. Do you call this a fact of importance ?"

The Judge did not reply, but his brow had contracted, with a thoughtfulness that he always wore when much in-

terested, and his eyes rested on his cousin in expectation of hearing more. Richard continued :

“It was ore. Now, sir, I ask if you can tell me who this Mr. Oliver Edwards is, that has made a part of your household since Christmas ?”

Marmaduke again raised his eyes, but continued silent, shaking his head in the negative.

“That he is a half-breed we know, for Mohegan does not scruple to call him openly his kinsman ; that he is well educated we know. But as to his business here—do you remember that about a month before this young man made his appearance among us, Natty was absent from home several days ? You do ; for you inquired for him, as you wanted some venison to take to your friends, when you went for Bess. Well, he was not to be found. Old John was left in the hut alone ; and when Natty did appear, although he came on in the night, he was seen drawing one of those jumpers that they carry their grain to mill in, and to take out something with great care, that he had covered up under his bear-skins. Now let me ask you, Judge Temple, what motive could induce a man like the Leather-Stocking to make a sled, and toil with a load over these mountains, if he had nothing but his rifle or his ammunition to carry ?”

“They frequently make these jumpers to convey their game home, and you say he had been absent many days.”

“How did he kill it ? His rifle was in the village, to be mended. No, no—that he was gone to some unusual place is certain ; that he brought back some secret utensils is more certain ; and that he has not allowed a soul to approach his hut since is most certain of all.”

“He was never fond of intruders——”

“I know it,” interrupted Richard ; “but did he drive them from his cabin morosely ? Within a fortnight of his return, this Mr. Edwards appears. They spend whole days in the mountains, pretending to be shooting, but in reality exploring ; the frosts prevent their digging at that time, and he avails himself of a lucky accident to get into good quarters. But even now, he is quite half of his time in that hut—many hours every night. They are smelting, ’duke, they are smelting, and as they grow rich, you grow poor.”

“How much of this is thine own, Richard, and how much comes from others ? I would sift the wheat from the chaff.”

“Part is my own, for I saw the jumper, though it was broken up and burnt in a day or two. I have told you that I saw the old man with his spades and picks. Hiram met Natty, as he was crossing the mountain, the night of his arrival with the sled, and very good-naturedly offered—Hiram *is* good-natured—to carry up part of his load, for the old man had a heavy pull up the back of the mountain, but he wouldn’t listen to the thing, and repulsed the offer in such a manner that the squire said he had half a mind to swear the peace against him. Since the snow has been off, more especially after the frosts got out of the ground, we have kept a watchful eye on the gentleman, in which we have found Jotham useful.”

Marmaduke did not much like the associates of Richard in this business; still he knew them to be cunning and ready in expedients; and as there was certainly something mysterious, not only in the connection between the old hunters and Edwards, but in what his cousin had just related, he began to revolve the subject in his own mind with more care. On reflection, he remembered various circumstances that tended to corroborate these suspicions, and, as the whole business favored one of his infirmities, he yielded the more readily to their impression. The mind of Judge Temple, at all times comprehensive, had received from his peculiar occupations, a bias to look far into futurity, in his speculations on the improvements that posterity were to make in his lands. To his eye, where others saw nothing but a wilderness, towns, manufactories, bridges, canals, mines, and all the other resources of an old country were constantly presenting themselves, though his good sense suppressed, in some degree, the exhibition of these expectations.

As the sheriff allowed his cousin full time to reflect on what he had heard, the probability of some pecuniary adventure being the connecting link in the chain that brought Oliver Edwards into the cabin of Leather-Stocking, appeared to him each moment to be stronger. But Marmaduke was too much in the habit of examining both sides of a subject not to perceive the objections, and he reasoned with himself aloud:

“It cannot be so, or the youth would not be driven so near the verge of poverty.”

“What so likely to make a man dig for money as being poor?” cried the sheriff.

"Besides, there is an elevation of character about Oliver that proceeds from education, which would forbid so clandestine a proceeding."

"Could an ignorant fellow smelt?" continued Richard.

"Bess hints that he was reduced even to his last shilling when we took him into our dwelling."

"He had been buying tools. And would he spend his last sixpence for a shot at a turkey had he not known where to get more?"

"Can I have possibly been so long a dupe! His manner has been rude to me at times, but I attributed it to his conceiving himself injured, and to his mistaking the forms of the world."

"Haven't you been a dupe all your life, 'duke? and an't what you call ignorance of forms deep cunning, to conceal his real character?"

"If he were bent on deception, he would have concealed his knowledge, and passed with us for an inferior man."

"He cannot. I could no more pass for a fool, myself, than I could fly. Knowledge is not to be concealed, like a candle under a bushel."

"Richard," said the Judge, turning to his cousin, "there are many reasons against the truth of thy conjectures, but thou hast awakened suspicions which must be satisfied. But why are we travelling here?"

"Jotham, who has been much in the mountain latterly, being kept there by me and Hiram, has made a discovery, which he will not explain, he says, for he is bound by an oath; but the amount is, that he knows where the ore lies, and he has this day begun to dig. I would not consent to the thing, 'duke, without your knowledge, for the land is yours; and now you know the reason of our ride. I call this a countermine, ha!"

"And where is the desirable spot?" asked the Judge, with an air half comical, half serious.

"At hand; and when we have visited that, I will show you one of the places that we have found within a week, where our hunters have been amusing themselves for six months past."

The gentlemen continued to discuss the matter, while their horses picked their way under the branches of the trees, and over the uneven ground of the mountain. They soon arrived at the end of their journey, where, in truth,

they found Jotham already buried to his neck in a hole that he had been digging.

Marmaduke questioned the miner very closely as to his reasons for believing in the existence of the precious metals near that particular spot ; but the fellow maintained an obstinate mystery in his answers. He asserted that he had the best of reasons for what he did, and inquired of the Judge what portion of the profits would fall to his own share, in the event of success, with an earnestness that proved his faith. After spending an hour near the place, examining the stones, and searching for the usual indications of the proximity of ore, the Judge remounted, and suffered his cousin to lead the way to the place where the mysterious trio had been making their excavation.

The spot chosen by Jotham was on the back of the mountain that overhung the hut of Leather-Stocking, and the place selected by Natty and his companions was on the other side of the same hill, but above the road, and, of course, in an opposite direction to the route taken by the ladies in their walk.

“We shall be safe in approaching the place now,” said Richard, while they dismounted and fastened their horses ; “for I took a look with the glass, and saw John and Leather-Stocking in their canoe fishing before we left home, and Oliver is in the same pursuit ; but these may be nothing but shams to blind our eyes, so we will be expeditious, for it would not be pleasant to be caught here by them.”

“Not on my own land ?” said Marmaduke, sternly. “If it be as you suspect, I will know their reasons for making this excavation.”

“Mum,” said Richard, laying a finger on his lip, and leading the way down a very difficult descent to a sort of natural cavern, which was found in the face of the rock, and was not unlike a fire-place in shape. In front of this place lay a pile of earth, which had evidently been taken from the recess, and part of which was yet fresh. An examination of the exterior of the cavern left the Judge in doubt whether it was one of Nature’s frolics that had thrown it into that shape, or whether it had been wrought by the hands of man, at some earlier period. But there could be no doubt that the whole of the interior was of recent formation, and the marks of the pick were still visible where the soft, lead-colored rock had opposed itself to the

progress of the miners. The whole formed an excavation of about twenty feet in width, and nearly twice that distance in depth. The height was much greater than was required for the ordinary purposes of experiment, but this was evidently the effect of chance, as the roof of the cavern was a natural stratum of rock that projected many feet beyond the base of the pile. Immediately in front of the recess, or cave, was a little terrace, partly formed by nature, and partly by the earth that had been carelessly thrown aside by the laborers. The mountain fell off precipitously in front of the terrace, and the approach by its sides, under the ridge of the rocks, was difficult and a little dangerous. The whole was wild, rude, and apparently incomplete; for, while looking among the bushes, the sheriff found the very implements that had been used in the work.

When the sheriff thought that his cousin had examined the spot sufficiently, he asked, solemnly:

“Judge Temple, are you satisfied?”

“Perfectly, that there is something mysterious and perplexing in this business. It is a secret spot, and cunningly devised, Richard; yet I see no symptoms of ore.”

“Do you expect, sir, to find gold and silver lying like pebbles on the surface of the earth?—dollars and dimes ready coined to your hands? No, no—the treasure must be sought after to be won. But let them mine; I shall countermine.”

The Judge took an accurate survey of the place, and noted in his memorandum-book such marks as were necessary to find it again in the event of Richard's absence; when the cousins returned to their horses.

On reaching the highway they separated, the sheriff to summon twenty-four “good men and true,” to attend as the inquest of the county, on the succeeding Monday, when Marmaduke held his stated court of “common pleas and general sessions of the peace,” and the Judge to return, musing deeply on what he had seen and heard in the course of the morning.

When the horse of the latter reached the spot where the highway fell toward the valley, the eye of Marmaduke rested, it is true, on the same scene that had, ten minutes before, been so soothing to the feelings of his daughter and her friend, as they emerged from the forest; but it rested in vacancy. He threw the reins to his sure-footed

beast, and suffered the animal to travel at his own gait, while he soliloquized as follows :

“There may be more in this than I at first supposed. I have suffered my feeling to blind my reason, in admitting an unknown youth in this manner to my dwelling; yet this is not the land of suspicion. I will have Leather-Stocking before me, and, by a few direct questions, extract the truth from the simple old man.”

At that instant the Judge caught a glimpse of the figures of Elizabeth and Louisa, who were slowly descending the mountain, a short distance before him. He put spurs to his horse, and riding up to them, dismounted, and drove his steed along the narrow path. While the agitated parent was listening to the vivid description that his daughter gave of her recent danger, and her unexpected escape, all thoughts of mines, vested rights, and examinations were absorbed in emotion; and when the image of Natty again crossed his recollection, it was not as a lawless and depre-
dator squatter, but as the preserver of his child.

CHAPTER XXX.

“The court awards it, and the law doth give it.”—MERCHANT OF VENICE.

REMARKABLE PETTIBONE, who had forgotten the wound received by her pride, in contemplation of the ease and comforts of her situation, and who still retained her station in the family of Judge Temple, was dispatched to the humble dwelling which Richard already styled “The Rectory,” in attendance on Louisa, who was soon consigned to the arms of her father.

In the meantime, Marmaduke and his daughter were closeted for more than an hour, nor shall we invade the sanctuary of parental love, by relating the conversation. When the curtain rises on the reader, the Judge is seen walking up and down the apartment, with a tender melancholy in his air, and his child reclining on a settee, with a flushed cheek, and her dark eyes seeming to float in crystals.

“It was a timely rescue! it was, indeed, a timely rescue, my child!” cried the Judge. “Then thou didst not desert thy friend, my noble Bess?”

"I believe I may as well take the credit of fortitude," said Elizabeth, "though I much doubt if flight would have availed me anything, had I even courage to execute such an intention. But I thought not of the expedient."

"Of what didst thou think, love? where did thy thoughts dwell most, at that fearful moment?"

"The beast! the beast!" cried Elizabeth, veiling her face with her hand. "Oh! I saw nothing, I thought of nothing but the beast. I tried to think of better things, but the horror was too glaring, the danger too much before my eyes."

"Well, well, thou art safe, and we will converse no more on the unpleasant subject. I did not think such an animal yet remained in our forests; but they will stray far from their haunts when pressed by hunger, and——"

A loud knocking at the door of the apartment interrupted what he was about to utter, and he bid the applicant enter. The door was opened by Benjamin, who came in with a discontented air, as if he felt that he had a communication to make that would be out of season.

"Here is Squire Doolittle below, sir," commenced the major-domo. "He has been standing off and on in the door-yard for the matter of a glass; and he has summat on his mind that he wants to heave up, d'ye see; but I tells him, says I, man, would you be coming aboard with your complaints, said I, when the Judge has gotten his own child, as it were, out of the jaws of a lion? But damn the bit of manners has the fellow, any more than if he was one of them Guineas down in the kitchen there; and so as he was sheering nearer, every stretch he made toward the house, I could do no better than to let your honor know that the chap was in the offing."

"He must have business of importance," said Marmaduke; "something in relation to his office, most probably, as the court sits so shortly."

"Ay, ay, you have it, sir," cried Benjamin; "it's summat about a complaint that he has to make of the old Leather-Stocking, who, to my judgment, is the better man of the two. It's a very good sort of a man is this Master Bumppo, and he has a way with a spear, all the same as if he was brought up at the bow-oar of the captain's barge, or was born with a boat-hook in his hand."

"Against the Leather-Stocking!" cried Elizabeth, rising from her reclining posture.

"Rest easy, my child; some trifle, I pledge you; I believe I am already acquitted with its import. Trust me, Bess, your champion shall be safe in my care. Show Mr. Doolittle in, Benjamin."

Miss Temple appeared satisfied with this assurance, but fastened her dark eyes on the person of the architect, who profited by the permission, and instantly made his appearance.

All the impatience of Hiram seemed to vanish the instant he entered the apartment. After saluting the Judge and his daughter, he took the chair to which Marmaduke pointed, and sat for a minute, composing his straight black hair, with a gravity of demeanor that was intended to do honor to his official station. At length he said:

"It's likely, from what I hear, that Miss Temple had a narrow chance with the painters, on the mountain."

Marmaduke made a gentle inclination of his head, by way of assent, but continued silent.

"I s'pose the law gives a bounty on the scalps," continued Hiram, "in which case the Leather-Stocking will make a good job on't."

"It shall be my care to see that he is rewarded," returned the Judge.

"Yes, yes, I rather guess that nobody hereabouts doubts the Judge's generosity. Does he know whether the sheriff has fairly made up his mind to have a reading-desk or a deacon's pew under the pulpit?"

"I have not heard my cousin speak on that subject, lately," replied Marmaduke.

"I think it's likely that we will have a pretty dull court on't, from what I can gather. I hear that Jotham Riddel and the man who bought his betterments, have agreed to leave their difference to men, and I don't think there'll be more than two civil cases in the calendar."

"I am glad of it," said the Judge; "nothing gives me more pain than to see my settlers wasting their time and substance in the unprofitable struggles of the law. I hope it may prove true, sir."

"I rather guess 'twill be left out to men," added Hiram, with an air equally balanced between doubt and assurance, but which Judge Temple understood to mean certainty; "I some think that I am appointed a referee in the case myself; Jotham as much as told me that he should take me. The defendant, I guess, means to take Captain Hol-

lister, and we two have partly agreed on Squire Jones for the third man."

"Are there any criminals to be tried?" asked Marmaduke.

"There's the counterfeiter," returned the magistrate; "as they were caught in the fact, I think it likely that they'll be indicted, in which case it's probable they'll be tried."

"Certainly, sir; I had forgotten those men. There are no more, I hope."

"Why, there is a threaten to come forrard with an assault that happened at the last independence day; but I'm not sartain that the law'll take hold on't. There was plaguey hard words passed, but whether they struck or not I haven't heard. There's some folks talk of a deer or two being killed out of season, over on the west side of the Patent, by some of the squatters on the 'Fræctions.'"

"Let a complaint be made, by all means," said the Judge; "I am determind to see the law executed to the letter, on all such depredators."

"Why, yes, I thought the Judge was of that mind; I came partly on such a business myself."

"You!" exclaimed Marmaduke, comprehending in an instant how completely he had been caught by the other's cunning; "and what have you to say, sir?"

"I some think that Natty Bumpo has the carcass of a deer in his hut at this moment, and a considerable part of my business was to get a search-warrant to examine."

"You think, sir! do you know* that the law exacts an oath, before I can issue such a precept? The habitation of a citizen is not to be idly invaded on light suspicion."

"I rather think I can swear to it myself," returned the immovable Hiram; "and Jotham is in the street, and as good as ready to come in and make oath to the same thing."

"Then issue the warrant thyself; thou art a magistrate, Mr. Doolittle; why trouble me with the matter?"

"Why, seeing it's the first complaint under the law, and knowing the Judge set his heart on the thing, I thought it best that the authority to search should come from himself. Besides, as I'm much in the woods, among the timber, I don't altogether like making an enemy of the Leather-Stocking. Now, the Judge has a weight in the county that puts him above fear."

Miss Temple turned her face to the callous architect, as she said :

“ And what has any honest person to dread from so kind a man as Bumppo ? ”

“ Why, it’s as easy, miss, to pull a rifle-trigger on a magistrate as on a painter. But if the Judge don’t conclude to issue the warrant, I must go home and make it out myself.”

“ I have not refused your application, sir,” said Marmaduke, perceiving at once that his reputation for impartiality was at stake ; “ go into my office, Mr. Doolittle, where I will join you, and sign the warrant.”

Judge Temple stopped the remonstrances which Elizabeth was about to utter, after Hiram had withdrawn, by laying his hand on her mouth, and saying :

“ It is more terrible in sound than frightful in reality, my child. I suppose that the Leather-Stocking has shot a deer, for the season is nearly over, and you say that he was hunting with his dogs when he came so timely to your assistance. But it will be only to examine his cabin, and find the animal, when you can pay the penalty out of your own pocket, Bess. Nothing short of the twelve dollars and a half will satisfy this harpy, I perceive ; and surely my reputation as Judge is worth that trifle.”

Elizabeth was a good deal pacified with this assurance, and suffered her father to leave her, to fulfil his promise to Hiram.

When Marmaduke left his office after executing his disagreeable duty, he met Oliver Edwards, walking up the gravelled walk in front of the mansion-house, with great strides, and with a face agitated by feeling. On seeing Judge Temple, the youth turned aside, and with a warmth in his manner that was not often exhibited to Marmaduke, he cried :

“ I congratulate you, sir ; from the bottom of my soul, I congratulate you, Judge Temple. Oh ! it would have been too horrid to have recollected for a moment ! I have just left the hut, where, after showing me his scalps, old Natty told me of the escape of the ladies, as the thing to be mentioned last. Indeed, indeed, sir, no words of mine can express half of what I have felt ”—the youth paused a moment, as if suddenly recollecting that he was overstepping prescribed limits, and concluded with a good deal of embarrassment—“ what I have felt at this danger to Miss—Grant, and—and your daughter, sir.”

But the heart of Marmaduke was too much softened to admit his cavilling at trifles, and, without regarding the confusion of the other, he replied :

“I thank thee, thank thee, Oliver ; as thou sayest, it is almost too horrid to be remembered. But come, let us hasten to Bess, for Louisa has already gone to the rectory.”

The young man sprang forward, and, throwing open a door, barely permitted the Judge to precede him, when he was in the presence of Elizabeth in a moment.

The cold distance that often crossed the demeanor of the heiress, in her intercourse with Edwards, was now entirely banished, and two hours were passed by the party, in the free, unembarrassed, and confiding manner of old and esteemed friends. Judge Temple had forgotten the suspicions engendered during his morning's ride, and the youth and maiden conversed, laughed, and were sad by turns, as impulse directed.

At length, Edwards, after repeating his intention to do so for the third time, left the mansion-house to go to the rectory on a similar errand of friendship.

During this short period, a scene was passing at the hut that completely frustrated the benevolent intentions of Judge Temple in favor of the Leather-Stocking, and at once destroyed the short-lived harmony between the youth and Marmaduke.

When Hiram Doolittle had obtained his search-warrant; his first business was to procure a proper officer to see it executed. The sheriff was absent, summoning in person the grand inquest for the county ; the deputy who resided in the village, was riding on the same errand, in a different part of the settlement ; and the regular constable of the township had been selected for his station from motives of charity, being lame of a leg. Hiram intended to accompany the officer as a spectator, but he felt no very strong desire to bear the brunt of the battle. It was, however, Saturday, and the sun was already turning the shadows of the pines toward the east ; on the morrow the conscientious magistrate could not engage in such an expedition at the peril of his soul ; and long before Monday, the venison, and all vestiges of the death of the deer, might be secreted or destroyed. Happily, the lounging form of Billy Kirby met his eye, and Hiram, at all times fruitful in similar expedients, saw his way clear at once. Jotham, who was associated in the whole business, and who had left the

mountain in consequence of a summons from his coadjutor, but who failed, equally with Hiram, in the unfortunate particular of nerve, was directed to summon the wood-chopper to the dwelling of the magistrate.

When Billy appeared, he was very kindly invited to take the chair in which he had already seated himself, and was treated in all respects as if he were an equal.

"Judge Temple has set his heart on putting the deer law in force," said Hiram, after the preliminary civilities were over, "and a complaint has been laid before him that a deer has been killed. He has issued a search-warrant, and sent for me to get somebody to execute it."

Kirby who had no idea of being excluded from the deliberative part of any affair in which he was engaged, drew up his bushy head in a reflecting attitude, and, after musing a moment, replied by asking a few questions.

"The sheriff has gone out of the way?"

"Not to be found."

"And his deputy too?"

"Both gone on the skirts of the Patent."

"But I saw the constable hobbling about town an hour ago."

"Yes, yes," said Hiram, with a coaxing smile and knowing nod, "but this business wants a man—not a cripple."

"Why," said Billy, laughing, "will the chap make fight?"

"He's a little quarrelsome at times, and thinks he's the best man in the country at rough and tumble."

"I heard him brag once," said Jotham, "that there wasn't a man 'twixt the Mohawk Flats and the Pennsylvania line that was his match at a close hug."

"Did you?" exclaimed Kirby, raising his huge frame in his seat, like a lion stretching in his lair, "I rather guess he never felt a Varmounter's knuckles on his backbone. But who is the chap?"

"Why," said Jotham, "it's——"

"It's ag'in law to tell," interrupted Hiram, "unless you'll qualify to sarve. You'd be the very man to take him, Bill and I'll make out a special deputation in a minute, when you will get the fees."

"What's the fees?" said Kirby, laying his large hand on the leaves of a statute-book that Hiram had opened in order to give dignity to his office, which he turned over in his rough manner, as if he were reflecting on a subject

about which he had, in truth, already decided ; " will they pay a man for a broken head ? "

" They'll be something handsome," said Hiram.

" Damn the fees," said Billy, again laughing—" does the fellow think he's the best wrestler in the county, though ? what's his inches ? "

" He's taller than you be," said Jotham, " and one of the biggest——"

Talkers, he was about to add, but the impatience of Kirby interrupted him. The wood-chopper had nothing fierce or even brutal in his appearance ; the character of his expression was that of good-natured vanity. It was evident he prided himself on the powers of the physical man, like all who have nothing better to boast of ; and, stretching out his broad hand, with the palm downward, he said, keeping his eyes fastened on his own bones and sinews :

" Come, give us a touch of the book. I'll swear, and you'll see that I'm a man to keep my oath."

Hiram did not give the wood-chopper time to change his mind, but the oath was administered without unnecessary delay. So soon as this preliminary was completed, the three worthies left the house, and proceeded by the nearest road toward the hut. They had reached the bank of the lake, and were diverging from the route of the highway, before Kirby recollected that he was now entitled to the privilege of the initiated, and repeated his question as to the name of the offender.

" Which way, which way, squire ? " exclaimed the hardy wood-chopper ; " I thought it was to search a house that you wanted me, not the woods. There is nobody lives on this side of the lake, for six miles, unless you count the Leather-Stocking and old John for settlers. Come, tell me the chap's name, and I warrant me that I lead you to his clearing by a straighter path than this, for I know every sapling that grows within two miles of Templeton."

" This is the way," said Hiram, pointing forward and quickening his step, as if apprehensive that Kirby would desert, " and Bumpo is the man."

Kirby stopped short, and looked from one of his companions to the other in astonishment. He then burst into a loud laugh, and cried :

" Who ? Leather-Stocking ! he may brag of his aim and

his rifle, for he has the best of both, as I will own myself, for sin' he shot the pigeon I knock under to him ; but for a wrestle ! why, I would take the creatur' between my finger and thumb, and tie him in a bow-knot around my neck for a Barcelony. The man is seventy, and was never anything particular for strength."

"He's a deceiving man," said Hiram, "like all the hunters ; he is stronger than he seems ; besides, he has his rifle."

"That for his rifle !" cried Billy ; "he'd no more hurt me with his rifle than he'd fly. He is a harmless creater, and I must say that I think he has as good right to kill deer as any man on the Patent. It's his main support, and this is a free country, where a man is privileged to follow any calling he likes."

"According to that doctrine," said Jotham, "anybody may shoot a deer."

"This is the man's calling, I tell you," returned Kirby, "and the law was never made for such as he."

"The law was made for all," observed Hiram, who began to think that the danger was likely to fall to his own share, notwithstanding his management ; "and the law is particular in noticing parjury."

"See here, Squire Doolittle," said the reckless wood-chopper ; "I don't care the valie of a beetlering for you and your parjury too. But as I have come so far, I'll go down and have a talk with the old man, and maybe we'll fry a steak of the deer together."

"Well, if you can get in peaceably, so much the better," said the magistrate. "To my notion, strife is very unpopular ; I prefer, at all times, clever conduct to an ugly temper."

As the whole party moved at a great pace, they soon reached the hut, where Hiram thought it prudent to halt on the outside of the top of the fallen pine, which formed a chevaux-de-frise, to defend the approach to the fortress, on the side next the village. The delay was little relished by Kirby, who clapped his hands to his mouth, and gave a loud halloo that brought the dogs out of their kennel, and almost at the same instant, the scantily-covered head of Natty from the door.

"Lie down, old fool," cried the hunter ; "do you think there's more painters about you?"

"Ha ! Leather-Stocking, I've an arrand with you," cried

Kirby ; "here's the good people of the State have been writing you a small letter, and they've hired me to ride post."

"What would you have with me, Billy Kirby?" said Natty, stepping across his threshold, and raising his hand over his eyes, to screen them from the rays of the setting sun, while he took a survey of his visitor. "I've no land to clear, and Heaven knows I would set out six trees afore I would cut down one.—Down, Hector, I say ; into your kennel with ye."

"Would you, old boy?" roared Billy ; "then so much the better for me. But I must do my arrand. Here's a letter for you, Leather-Stocking. If you can read it, it's all well, and if you can't, here's Squire Doolittle at hand, to let you know what it means. It seems you mistook the twentieth of July for the first of August, that's all."

By this time Natty had discovered the lank person of Hiram, drawn up under the cover of a high stump ; and all that was complacent in his manner instantly gave way to marked distrust and dissatisfaction. He placed his head within the door of his hut, and said a few words in an undertone, when he again appeared, and continued :

"I've nothing for ye ; so away, afore the Evil One tempts me to do you harm. I owe you no spite, Billy Kirby, and what for should you trouble an old man who has done you no harm?"

Kirby advanced through the top of the pine, to within a few feet of the hunter, where he seated himself on the end of a log, with great composure, and began to examine the nose of Hector, with whom he was familiar, from their frequently meeting in the woods, where he sometimes fed the dog from his own basket of provisions.

"You've outshot me, and I'm not ashamed to say it," said the wood-chopper ; "but I don't owe you a grudge for that, Natty ! though it seems that you've shot once too often, for the story goes that you've killed a buck."

"I've fired but twice to-day, and both times at the painters," returned the Leather-Stocking ; "see, here are the scalps ! I was just going in with them to the Judge's to ask the bounty."

While Natty was speaking, he tossed the ears to Kirby, who continued playing with them, with a careless air, holding them to the dogs, and laughing at their movements when they scented the unusual game.

But Hiram, emboldened by the advance of the deputed constable, now ventured to approach also, and took up the discourse with the air of authority that became his commission. His first measure was to read the warrant aloud, taking care to give due emphasis to the most material parts, and concluding with the name of the Judge in very audible and distinct tones.

"Did Marmaduke Temple put his name to that bit of paper?" said Natty, shaking his head; "well, well, that man loves the new ways, and his betterments, and his lands, afore his own flesh and blood. But I won't mistrust the gal; she has an eye like a full grown buck! poor thing, she didn't choose her father, and can't help it. I know but little of the law, Mr. Doolittle; what is to be done, now you've read your commission?"

"Oh! it's nothing but form, Natty," said Hiram, endeavoring to assume a friendly aspect. "Let's go in, and talk the thing over in reason; I dare to say that the money can be easily found, and I partly conclude, from what passed, that Judge Temple will pay it himself."

The old hunter had kept a keen eye on the movements of his three visitors, from the beginning, and had maintained his position, just without the threshold of the cabin, with a determined manner; that showed he was not to be easily driven from his post. When Hiram drew nigher, as if expecting his proposition would be accepted, Natty lifted his hand, and motioned for him to retreat.

"Haven't I told you more than once, not to tempt me?" he said. "I trouble no man; why can't the law leave me to myself? Go back—go back, and tell your Judge that he may keep his bounty; but I won't have his wasty ways brought into my hut."

This offer, however, instead of appeasing the curiosity of Hiram, seemed to inflame it the more; while Kirby cried:

"Well, that's fair, squire; he forgives the county his demand, and the county should forgive him the fine; it's what I call an even trade, and should be concluded on the spot. I like quick dealings, and what's fair 'twixt man and man."

"I demand entrance into this house," said Hiram, summoning all the dignity he could muster to his assistance, "in the name of the people; and by virtue of this warrant, and of my office, and with this peace officer."

"Stand back, stand back, squire, and don't tempt me," said the Leather-Stocking, motioning him to retire, with great earnestness.

"Stop us at your peril," continued Hiram. "Billy! Jotham! close up—I want testimony."

Hiram had mistaken the mild but determined air of Natty for submission, and had already put his foot on the threshold to enter, when he was seized unexpectedly by his shoulders, and hurled over the little bank toward the lake, to the distance of twenty feet. The suddenness of the movement, and the unexpected display of strength on the part of Natty, created a momentary astonishment in his invaders, that silenced all noises; but at the next instant Billy Kirby gave vent to his mirth in peals of laughter, that he seemed to heave up from his very soul.

"Well done, old stub?" he shouted; "the squire know'd you better than I did. Come, come, here's a green spot; take it out like men, while Jotham and I see fair play."

"William Kirby, I order you to do your duty," cried Hiram, from under the bank; "seize that man; I order you to seize him in the name of the people."

But the Leather-Stocking now assumed a more threatening attitude; his rifle was in his hand, and its muzzle was directed toward the wood-chopper.

"Stand off; I bid ye," said Natty; "you know my aim, Billy Kirby; I don't crave your blood, but mine and yours both shall turn this green grass red, afore you put foot into the hut."

While the affair appeared trifling, the wood-chopper seemed disposed to take sides with the weaker party; but, when the fire-arms were introduced, his manner very sensibly changed. He raised his large frame from the log, and, facing the hunter with an open front he replied:

"I didn't come here as your enemy, Leather-Stocking; but I don't value the hollow piece of iron in your hand so much as a broken axe-helve; so, squire, say the word, and keep within the law, and we'll soon see who's the best man of the two."

But no magistrate was to be seen! The instant the rifle was produced Hiram and Jotham vanished; and when the wood-chopper bent his eyes about him in surprise at receiving no answer, he discovered their retreating figures moving toward the village at a rate that sufficiently indi-

cated that they had not only calculated the velocity of a rifle-bullet, but also its probable range.

"You've scared the creators off," said Kirby, with great contempt expressed on his broad features; "but you are not going to scare me; so, Mr. Bumpo, down with your gun, or there'll be trouble 'twixt us."

Natty dropped his rifle, and replied:

"I wish you no harm, Billy Kirby; but I leave it to yourself, whether an old man's hut is to be run down by such varmint. I won't deny the buck to you, Billy, and you may take the skin in, if you please, and show it as testimony. The bounty will pay the fine, and that ought to satisfy any man."

"'Twill, old boy, 'twill," cried Kirby, every shade of displeasure vanishing from his open brow at the peace offering; "throw out the hide, and that shall satisfy the law."

Natty entered the hut, and soon reappeared, bringing with him the desired testimonial; and the wood-chopper departed, as thoroughly reconciled to the hunter as if nothing had happened. As he paced along the margin of the lake he would burst into frequent fits of laughter, while he recollected the summerset of Hiram; and, on the whole, he thought the affair a very capital joke.

Long before Billy reached the village, however, the news of his danger, and of Natty's disrespect of the law, and of Hiram's discomfiture, were in circulation. A good deal was said about sending for the sheriff; some hints were given about calling out the posse comitatus to avenge the insulted laws; and many of the citizens were collected, deliberating how to proceed. The arrival of Billy with the skin, by removing all grounds for a search, changed the complexion of things materially. Nothing now remained but to collect the fine, and assert the dignity of the people; all of which, it was unanimously agreed, could be done as well on the succeeding Monday as on Saturday night—a time kept sacred by a large portion of the settlers. Accordingly, all further proceedings were suspended for six-and-thirty hours.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“And dar’st thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?”—MARMION.

THE commotion was just subsiding, and the inhabitants of the village had begun to disperse from the little groups that had formed, each retiring to his own home, and closing his door after him, with the grave air of a man who consulted public feeling in his exterior deportment, when Oliver Edwards, on his return from the dwelling of Mr. Grant, encountered the young lawyer, who is known to the reader as Mr. Lippet. There was very little similarity in the manners or opinions of the two; but as they both belonged to the more intelligent class of a very small community, they were, of course, known to each other, and, as their meeting was at a point where silence would have been rudeness, the following conversation was the result of their interview:

“A fine evening, Mr. Edwards,” commenced the lawyer whose disinclination to the dialogue was, to say the least very doubtful; “we want rain sadly; that’s the worst of this climate of ours, it’s either a drought or a deluge. It’s likely you’ve been used to a more equal temperature?”

“I am a native of this State,” returned Edwards, coldly

“Well, I’ve often heard that point disputed; but it’s so easy to get a man naturalized, that it’s of little consequence where he was born. I wonder what course the Judge means to take in this business of Natty Bumpo!”

“Of Natty Bumpo!” echoed Edwards; “to what do you allude, sir?”

“Haven’t you heard!” exclaimed the other, with a look of surprise, so naturally assumed as completely to deceive his auditor; “it may turn out an ugly business. It seems that the old man has been out in the hills, and has shot a buck this morning, and that, you know, is a criminal matter in the eyes of Judge Temple.”

“Oh! he has, has he?” said Edwards, averting his face to conceal the color that collected in his sunburnt cheek. “Well, if that be all, he must even pay the fine.”

“It’s five pound currency,” said the lawyer; “could Natty muster so much money at once?”

"Could he!" cried the youth. "I am not rich, Mr. Lippet; far from it—I am poor, and I have been hoarding my salary for a purpose that lies near my heart; but, before that old man should lie one hour in a jail, I would spend the last cent to prevent it. Besides, he has killed two panthers, and the bounty will discharge the fine many times over."

"Yes, yes," said the lawyer, rubbing his hands together, with an expression of pleasure that had no artifice about it; "we shall make it out; I see plainly we shall make it out."

"Make what out, sir? I must beg an explanation."

"Why, killing the buck is but a small matter compared to what took place this afternoon," continued Mr. Lippet, with a confidential and friendly air, that won upon the youth, little as he liked the man. "It seems that a complaint was made of the fact, and a suspicion that there was venison in the hut was sworn to, all which is provided for in the statute, when Judge Temple granted the search-warrant——"

"A search-warrant!" echoed Edwards, in a voice of horror, and with a face that should have been again averted to conceal its paleness; "and how much did they discover? What did they see?"

"They saw old Bumppo's rifle; and that is a sight which will quiet most men's curiosity in the woods."

"Did they! did they!" shouted Edwards, bursting into a convulsive laugh; "so the old hero beat them back!—beat them back! did he?"

The lawyer fastened his eyes in astonishment on the youth, but, as his wonder gave way to the thoughts that were commonly uppermost in his mind, he replied:

"It's no laughing matter, let me tell you, sir; the forty dollars of bounty, and your six months of salary will be much reduced before you can get the matter fairly settled. Assaulting a magistrate in the execution of his duty, and menacing a constable with fire-arms at the same time, is a pretty serious affair, and is punishable with both fine and imprisonment."

"Imprisonment!" repeated Oliver; "imprison the Leather-Stocking! no, no, sir; it would bring the old man to his grave. They shall never imprison the Leather-Stocking."

"Well, Mr. Edwards," said Lippet, dropping all reserve

from his manner, "you are called a curious man ; but if you can tell me how a jury is to be prevented from finding a verdict of guilty, if this case comes fairly before them, and the proof is clear, I shall acknowledge that you know more law than I do, who have had a license in my pocket for three years."

By this time the reason of Edwards was getting the ascendancy of his feelings, and, as he began to see the real difficulties of the case, he listened more readily to the conversation of the lawyer. The ungovernable emotion that escaped the youth, in the first moments of his surprise, entirely passed away ; and, although it was still evident that he continued to be much agitated by what he had heard, he succeeded in yielding forced attention to the advice which the other uttered.

Notwithstanding the confused state of his mind, Oliver soon discovered that most of the expedients of the lawyer were grounded in cunning, and plans that required a time to execute them that neither suited his disposition nor his necessities. After, however, giving Mr. Lippet to understand that he retained him in the event of a trial, an assurance that at once satisfied the lawyer, they parted, one taking his course with a deliberate tread, in the direction of the little building that had a wooden sign over its door, with "Chester Lippet, Attorney-at-law," painted on it ; and the other pacing over the ground with enormous strides toward the mansion-house. We shall take leave of the attorney for the present, and direct the attention of the reader to the client.

When Edwards entered the hall, whose enormous doors were opened to the passage of the air of a mild evening, he found Benjamin engaged in some of his domestic avocations, and in a hurried voice inquired where Judge Temple, was to be found.

"Why, the Judge has stept into his office, with that master carpenter, Mister Doolittle ; but Miss Lizzy is in that there parlor. I say, Master Oliver, we'd like to have had a bad job of that panther, or painter's work—some calls it one, and some calls it t'other—but I know little of the beast, seeing that it is not of British growth. I said as much as that it was in the hills the last winter ; for I heard it moaning on the lake shore one evening in the fall, when I was pulling down from the fishing-point in the skiff. Had the animal come into open water, where a man could

see where and how to work his vessel, I would have engaged the thing myself ; but looking aloft among the trees is all the same to me as standing on the deck of one ship, and looking at another vessel's tops. I never can tell one rope from another——”

“Well, well,” interrupted Edwards ; “I must see Miss Temple.”

“And you shall see her, sir,” said the steward ; “she's in this here room. Lord, Master Edwards, what a loss she'd have been to the Judge ! Dam'me if I know where he would have gotten such another daughter ; that is, full grown, d'ye see. I say, sir, this Master Bumpo is a worthy man, and seems to have a handy way with him, with fire-arms and boat-hooks. I'm his friend, Master Oliver, and he and you may both set me down as the same.”

“We may want your friendship, my worthy fellow,” cried Edward, squeezing his hand convulsively ; “we may want your friendship, in which case you shall know it.”

Without waiting to hear the earnest reply that Benjamin meditated, the youth extricated himself from the vigorous grasp of the steward, and entered the parlor.

Elizabeth was alone, and still reclining on the sofa, where we last left her. A hand, which exceeded all that the ingenuity of art could model, in shape and color, veiled her eyes ; and the maiden was sitting as if in deep communion with herself. Struck by the attitude and loveliness of the form that met his eye, the young man checked his impatience, and approached her with respect and caution.

“Miss Temple—Miss Temple,” he said, “I hope I do not intrude ; but I am anxious for an interview, if it be only for a moment.”

Elizabeth raised her face, and exhibited her dark eyes swimming in moisture.

“Is it you, Edwards ?” she said, with a sweetness in her voice, and a softness in her air, that she often used to her father, but which, from its novelty to himself, thrilled on every nerve of the youth ; “how left you our poor Louisa ?”

“She is with her father, happy and grateful,” said Oliver. “I never witnessed more feeling than she manifested, when I ventured to express my pleasure at her escape. Miss Temple, when I first heard of your horrid situation, my feelings were too powerful for utterance ; and I did not properly find my tongue, until the walk to Mr. Grant's had given me time to collect myself. I believe—I do be-

lieve, I acquitted myself better there, for Miss Grant even wept at my silly speeches."

For a moment Elizabeth did not reply, but again veiled her eyes with her hand. The feeling that caused the action, however, soon passed away, and, raising her face again to his gaze, she continued, with a smile :

"Your friend, the Leather-Stocking, has now become my friend, Edwards ; I have been thinking how I can best serve him ; perhaps you, who know his habits and his wants so well, can tell me——"

"I can," cried the youth, with an impetuosity that startled his companion. "I can, and may Heaven reward you for the wish. Natty has been so imprudent as to forget the law, and has this day killed a deer. Nay, I believe I must share in the crime and the penalty, for I was an accomplice throughout. A complaint has been made to your father, and he has granted a search——"

"I know it all," interrupted Elizabeth ; "I know it all. The forms of the law must be complied with, however ; the search must be made, the deer found, and the penalty paid. But I must retort your own question. Have you lived so long in our family not to know us ? Look at me, Oliver Edwards. Do I appear like one who would permit the man that has just saved her life to linger in a jail for so small a sum as this fine ? No, no, sir ; my father is a judge, but he is a man and a Christian. It is all understood, and no harm shall follow."

"What a load of apprehension do your declarations remove !" exclaimed Edwards : "He shall not be disturbed again ! your father will protect him ! I have your assurance, Miss Temple, that he will, and I must believe it."

"You may have his own, Mr. Edwards," returned Elizabeth, "for here he comes to make it."

But the appearance of Marmaduke, who entered the apartment, contradicted the flattering anticipations of his daughter. His brow was contracted, and his manner disturbed. Neither Elizabeth nor the youth spoke ; but the Judge was allowed to pace once or twice across the room without interruption, when he cried :

"Our plans are defeated, girl : the obstinacy of the Leather-Stocking has brought down the indignation of the law on his head, and it is now out of my power to avert it."

"How ? in what manner ?" cried Elizabeth ; "the fine is nothing surely——"

"I did not—I could not anticipate that an old, a friendless man like him, would dare to oppose the officers of justice," interrupted the Judge; "I supposed that he would submit to the search when the fine could have been paid, and the law would have been appeased; but now he will have to meet its rigor."

"And what must the punishment be, sir?" asked Edwards, struggling to speak with firmness.

Marmaduke turned quickly to the spot where the youth had withdrawn, and exclaimed:

"You here! I did not observe you. I know not what it will be, sir; it is not usual for a judge to decide until he has heard the testimony, and the jury have convicted. Of one thing, however, you may be assured, Mr. Edwards; it shall be whatever the law demands, notwithstanding any momentary weakness I may have exhibited, because the luckless man has been of such eminent service to my daughter."

"No one, I believe, doubts the sense of justice which Judge Temple entertains!" returned Edwards, bitterly. "But let us converse calmly, sir. Will not the years, the habits, nay the ignorance of my old friend, avail him anything against this charge?"

"Ought they? They may extenuate, but can they acquit? Would any society be tolerable, young man, where the ministers of justice are to be opposed by men armed with rifles? Is it for this that I have tamed the wilderness?"

"Had you tamed the beasts that so lately threatened the life of Miss Temple, sir, your arguments would apply better."

"Edwards!" exclaimed Elizabeth.

"Peace, my child," interrupted the father; "the youth is unjust; but I have not given him cause. I overlook thy remark, Oliver, for I know thee to be the friend of Natty, and zeal in his behalf has overcome thy discretion."

"Yes, he is my friend," cried Edwards, "and I glory in the title. He is simple, unlettered, even ignorant; prejudiced, perhaps, though I feel that his opinion of the world is too true; but he has a heart, Judge Temple, that would atone for a thousand faults; he knows his friends, and never deserts them, even if it be his dog."

"This is a good character, Mr. Edwards," returned Marmaduke, mildly; "but I have never been so fortunate

as to secure his esteem, for to me he has been uniformly repulsive ; yet I have endured it, as an old man's whim. However, when he appears before me, as his judge, he shall find that his former conduct shall not aggravate, any more than his recent services shall extenuate, his crime."

"Crime!" echoed Edwards : "is it a crime to drive a prying miscreant from his door? Crime! Oh, no, sir ; if there be a criminal involved in this affair, it is not he."

"And who may it be, sir?" asked Judge Temple, facing the agitated youth, his features settled to their usual composure.

This appeal was more than the young man could bear. Hitherto he had been deeply agitated by his emotions ; but now the volcano burst its boundaries.

"Who! and this to me!" he cried ; "ask your own conscience, Judge Temple. Walk to that door, sir, and look out upon the valley, that placid lake, and those dusky mountains, and say to your own heart, if heart you have, whence came these riches, this vale, those hills, and why am I their owner? I should think, sir, that the appearance of Mohegan and the Leather-Stocking, stalking through the country, impoverished and forlorn, would wither your sight."

Marmaduke heard this burst of passion, at first, with deep amazement ; but when the youth had ended, he beckoned to his impatient daughter for silence, and replied :

"Oliver Edwards, thou forgettest in whose presence thou standest. I have heard, young man, that thou claimest descent from the native owners of the soil ; but surely thy education has been given thee to no effect, if it has not taught thee the validity of the claims that have transferred the title to the whites. These lands are mine by the very grants of thy ancestry, if thou art so descended ; and I appeal to Heaven for a testimony of the uses I have put them to. After this language, we must separate. I have too long sheltered thee in my dwelling ; but the time has arrived when thou must quit it. Come to my office, and I will discharge the debt I owe thee. Neither shall thy present intemperate language mar thy future fortunes, if thou wilt hearken to the advice of one who is by many years thy senior."

The ungovernable feeling that caused the violence of the youth had passed away, and he stood gazing after the retiring figure of Marmaduke, with a vacancy in his eye that

denoted the absence of his mind. At length he recollected himself, and, turning his head slowly around the apartment, he beheld Elizabeth, still seated on the sofa, but with her head dropped on her bosom, and her face again concealed by her hands.

"Miss Temple," he said—all violence had left his manner—"Miss Temple—I have forgotten myself—forgotten you. You have heard what your father has decreed, and this night I leave here. With you, at least, I would part in amity."

Elizabeth slowly raised her face, across which a momentary expression of sadness stole; but as she left her seat, her dark eyes lighted with their usual fire, her cheek flushed to burning, and her whole air seemed to belong to another nature.

"I forgive you, Edwards, and my father will forgive you," she said, when she reached the door. "You do not know us, but the time may come when your opinions shall change——"

"Of you! never!" interrupted the youth; "I——"

"I would speak, sir, and not listen. There is something in this affair that I do not comprehend; but tell the Leather-Stocking he has friends as well as judges in us. Do not let the old man experience unnecessary uneasiness at this rupture. It is impossible that you could increase his claims here; neither shall they be diminished by anything you have said. Mr. Edwards, I wish you happiness, and warmer friends."

The youth would have spoken, but she vanished from the door so rapidly, that when he reached the hall her form was nowhere to be seen. He paused a moment, in stupor, and then, rushing from the house, instead of following Marmaduke to his "office," he took his way directly for the cabin of the hunters.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Who measured earth, described the starry spheres,
And traced the long records of lunar years."—POPE.

RICHARD did not return from the exercise of his official duties until late in the evening of the following day. It had been one portion of his business to superintend the arrest of part of a gang of counterfeiters, that had, even at

that early period, buried themselves in the woods, to manufacture their base coin, which they afterward circulated from one end of the Union to the other. The expedition had been completely successful, and about midnight the sheriff entered the village, at the head of a posse of deputies and constables, in the centre of whom rode, pinioned, four of the malefactors. At the gate of the mansion-house they separated, Mr. Jones directing his assistants to proceed with their charge to the county jail, while he pursued his own way up the gravel walk, with the kind of self-satisfaction that a man of his organization would feel, who had really for once done a very clever thing.

“Holla! Aggy!” shouted the sheriff, when he reached the door; “where are you, you black dog? will you keep me here in the dark all night? Holla! Aggy! Brave! Brave! hoy, hoy—where have you got to Brave? Off his watch! Everybody is asleep but myself! poor I must keep my eyes open, that others may sleep in safety Brave! Brave! Well, I will say this for the dog, lazy as he’s grown, that it is the first time I ever knew him to let any one come to the door after dark, without having a smell to know whether it was an honest man or not. He could tell by his nose, almost as well as I could myself by looking at them. Holla! you Agamemnon! where are you? Oh! here comes the dog at last.”

By this time the sheriff had dismounted, and observed a form, which he supposed to be that of Brave, slowly creeping out of the kennel; when, to his astonishment, it reared itself on two legs instead of four, and he was able to distinguish, by the starlight, the curly head and dark visage of the negro.

“Ha! what the devil are you doing there, you black rascal?” he cried. “Is it not hot enough for your Guinea blood in the house this warm night, but you must drive out the poor dog, and sleep in his straw?”

By this time the boy was quite awake, and, with a blubbery whine, he attempted to reply to his master.

“Oh! masser Richard! masser Richard! such a ting! such a ting! I nebbber tink a could ’appen! neber tink he die! Oh, Lor-a-gor! ain’t bury—keep ’em till masser Richard get back—got a grabe dug——”

Here the feelings of the negro completely got the mastery, and, instead of making any intelligible explanation of the causes of his grief, he blubbered aloud.

“Eh! what! buried! grave! dead!” exclaimed Richard, with a tremor in his voice; “nothing serious? Nothing has happened to Benjamin, I hope? I know he has been bilious, but I gave him——”

“Oh, worsar 'an dat! worsar 'an dat!” sobbed the negro. “Oh! de Lor! Miss 'Lizzy an' Miss Grant—walk—mountain—poor Bravy!—kill a lady—painter—Oh, Lor, Lor!—Natty Bumpo—tare he troat open—come a see, masser Richard—here he be—here he be.”

As all this was perfectly inexplicable to the sheriff, he was very glad to wait patiently until the black brought a lantern from the kitchen, when he followed Aggy to the kennel, where he beheld poor Brave, indeed, lying in his blood, stiff and cold, but decently covered with the great-coat of the negro. He was on the point of demanding an explanation; but the grief of the black, who had fallen asleep on his voluntary watch, having burst out afresh on his waking, utterly disqualified the lad from giving one. Luckily, at this moment the principal door of the house opened, and the coarse features of Benjamin were thrust over the threshold, with a candle elevated above them, shedding its dim rays around in such a manner as to exhibit the lights and shadows of his countenance. Richard threw his bridle to the black, and, bidding him look to the horse, he entered the hall.

“What is the meaning of the dead dog?” he cried. “Where is Miss Temple?”

Benjamin made one of his square gestures, with the thumb of his left hand pointing over his right shoulder, as he answered:

“Turned in.”

“Judge Temple—where is he?”

“In his berth.”

“But explain; why is Brave dead? and what is the cause of Aggy's grief?”

“Why, it's all down, squire,” said Benjamin, pointing to a slate that lay on the table, by the side of a mug of toddy, a short pipe, in which the tobacco was yet burning, and a prayer-book.

Among the other pursuits of Richard, he had a passion to keep a register of all passing events; and his diary, which was written in the manner of a journal, or log-book, embraced not only such circumstances as affected himself, but observations on the weather, and all the occurrences

of the family, and frequently of the village. Since his appointment to the office of sheriff, and his consequent absences from home, he had employed Benjamin to make memoranda on a slate, of whatever might be thought worth remembering, which, on his return, were regularly transferred to the journal with proper notations of the time, manner, and other little particulars. There was, to be sure, one material objection to the clerkship of Benjamin, which the ingenuity of no one but Richard could have overcome. The steward read nothing but his prayer-book, and that only in particular parts, and by the aid of a good deal of spelling, and some misnomers; but he could not form a single letter with a pen. This would have been an insuperable bar to journalizing with most men; but Richard invented a kind of hieroglyphical character, which was intended to note all the ordinary occurrences of a day, such as how the wind blew, whether the sun shone, or whether it rained, the hours, etc.; and for the extraordinary, after giving certain elementary lectures on the subject, the sheriff was obliged to trust to the ingenuity of the major-domo. The reader will at once perceive, that it was to this chronicle that Benjamin pointed, instead of directly answering the sheriff's interrogatory.

When Mr. Jones had drunk a glass of toddy, he brought forth from its secret place his proper journal, and, seating himself by the table, he prepared to transfer the contents of the slate to the paper, at the same time that he appeased his curiosity. Benjamin laid one hand on the back of the sheriff's chair, in a familiar manner, while he kept the other at liberty to make use of a forefinger, that was bent like some of his own characters, as an index to point out his meaning.

The first thing referred to by the sheriff was the diagram of a compass, cut in one corner of the slate for permanent use. The cardinal points were plainly marked on it, and all the usual divisions were indicated in such a manner that no man who had ever steered a ship could mistake them.

"Oh!" said the sheriff, settling himself down comfortably in his chair, "you'd the wind southeast I see, all last night; I thought it would have blown up rain."

"Devil the drop, sir," said Benjamin; "I believe that the scuttle-butt up aloft is emptied, for there hasn't so much water fell in the country for the last three weeks as

would float Indian John's canoe, and that draws just one inch nothing, light."

"Well but didn't the wind change here this morning? there was a change where I was."

"To be sure it did, squire; and haven't I logged it as a shift of wind?"

"I don't see where, Benjamin——"

"Don't see!" interrupted the steward, a little crustily; "an't there a mark ag'in east and-by-nothe-half-nothe, with sum'mat like a rising sun at the end of it, to show 'twas in the morning watch?"

"Yes, yes, that is very legible; but where is the change noted?"

"Where! why doesn't it see this here tea-kettle, with a mark run from the spout straight, or mayhap a little crooked or so, into west-and-by-southe-half-southe? now I call this a shift of wind, squire. Well, do you see this here boar's head that you made for me, alongside of the compass——"

"Ay, ay—Boreas—I see. Why, you've drawn lines from its mouth, extending from one of your marks to the other."

"It's no fault of mine, Squire Dickens; 'tis your d——d climate. The wind has been at all them there marks this very day; and that's all round the compass, except a little matter of an Irishman's hurricane at meridium, which you'll find marked right up and down. Now, I've known a sow-wester blow for three weeks, in the channel, with a clean drizzle, in which you might wash your face and hands without the trouble of hauling in water from alongside."

"Very well, Benjamin," said the sheriff, writing in his journal; "I believe I have caught the idea. Oh! here's a cloud over the rising sun—so you had it hazy in the morning?"

"Ay, ay, sir," said Benjamin.

"Ah! it's Sunday, and here are the marks for the length of the sermon—one, two, three, four—what! did Mr. Grant preach forty minutes?"

"Ay, sum'mat like it; it was a good half-hour by my own glass, and then there was the time lost in turning it, and some little allowance for leeway in not being over-smart about it."

"Benjamin, this is as long as a Presbyterian; you never could have been ten minutes in turning the glass!"

“Why, do you see, Squire, the parson was very solemn, and I just closed my eyes in order to think the better with myself, just the same as you’d put in the dead-lights to make all snug, and when I opened them ag’in I found the congregation were getting under weigh for home, so I calculated the ten minutes would cover the leeway after the glass was out. It was only some such matter as a cat’s nap.”

“Oh, ho! master Benjamin, you were asleep, were you? but I’ll set down no such slander against an orthodox divine.” Richard wrote twenty nine minutes in his journal, and continued— “Why, what’s this you’ve got opposite ten o’clock A. M.? A full moon! had you a moon visible by day? I have heard of such portents before now, but—eh! what’s this alongside of it? an hour-glass?”

“That!” said Benjamin, looking coolly over the sheriff’s shoulder, and rolling the tobacco about in his mouth with a jocular air; “why, that’s a small matter of my own. It’s no moon, squire, but only Betty Hollister’s face; for, d’ye see, sir, hearing all the same as if she had got up a new cargo of Jamaiky from the river, I called in as I was going to the church this morning—ten A. M. was it?—just the time—and tried a glass; and so I logged it, to put me in mind of calling to pay her like an honest man.”

“That was it, was it?” said the sheriff, with some displeasure at this innovation on his memoranda; “and could you not make a better glass than this? it looks like a death’s-head and an hour-glass.”

“Why, as I liked the stuff, squire,” returned the steward, “I turned in, homeward bound, and took t’other glass, which I set down at the bottom of the first, and that gives the thing the shape it has. But as I was there again to-night, and paid for the three at once, your honor may as well run the sponge over the whole business.”

“I will buy you a slate for your own affairs, Benjamin,” said the sheriff; “I don’t like to have the journal marked over in this manner.”

“You needn’t—you needn’t, squire; for, seeing that I was likely to trade often with the woman while this barrel lasted, I’ve opened a fair account with Betty, and she keeps her marks on the back of her bar-door, and I keeps the tally on this here bit of a stick.”

As Benjamin concluded he produced a piece of wood, on which five very large, honest notches were apparent.

The sheriff cast his eyes on this new ledger for a moment, and continued :

“What have we here ! Saturday, two P. M.—Why here’s a whole family piéce ! two wineglasses upside-down !”

“That’s two women ; the one this a-way is Miss ’Lizzy, and t’other is the parson’s young ’un.”

“Cousin Bess and Miss Grant !” exclaimed the sheriff, in amazement ; “what have they to do with my journal ?”

“They’d enough to do to get out of the jaws of that there painter or panther,” said the immovable steward. “This here thingum’y, squire, that maybe looks sum’mat like a rat is the beast, d’ye see ; and this here t’other thing, keel uppermost, is poor old Brave, who died nobly, all the same, as an admiral fighting for his king and country ; and that there——”

“Scarecrow,” interrupted Richard.

“Ay, mayhap it do look a little wild or so,” continued the steward ; but to my judgment, squire, it’s the best image I’ve made, seeing it’s most like the man himself ; well, that’s Natty Bumppo, who shot this here painter, that killed that there dog, who would have eaten or done worse to them here young ladies.”

“And what the devil does all this mean ?” cried Richard, impatiently.

“Mean !” echoed Benjamin ; “it is as true as the Boadishy’s log book——”

He was interrupted by the sheriff, who put a few direct questions to him, that obtained more intelligible answers, by which means he became possessed of a tolerably-correct idea of the truth. When the wonder, and we must do Richard the justice to say, the feelings also, that were created by this narrative, had in some degree subsided, the sheriff turned his eyes again on his journal, where more inexplicable hieroglyphics met his view.

“What have we here ?” he cried ; “two men boxing ! has there been a breach of the peace ? ah, that’s the way, the moment my back is turned——”

“That’s the Judge and young Master Edwards,” interrupted the steward, very cavalierly.

“How ! ’duke fighting with Oliver ! what the devil has got into you all ? more things have happened within the last thirty-six hours than in the preceding six months.”

“Yes, it’s so indeed, squire,” returned the steward ; “I’ve known a smart chase, and a fight at the tail of it, where

less has been logged than I've got on that there slate. Howsomnever, they didn't come to facers, only passed a little jaw fore and aft."

"Explain! explain?" cried Richard; "it was about the mines, ha!—ay, ay, I see it, I see it; here is a man with a pick on his shoulder. So you heard it all, Benjamin?"

"Why, yes, it was about their minds, I believe, squire," returned the steward; "and, by what I can learn, they spoke them pretty plainly to one another. Indeed, I may say that I overheard a small matter of it myself, seeing that the windows was open, and I hard by. But this here is no pick, but an anchor on a man's shoulder; and here's the other fluke down his back, maybe a little too close, which signifies that the lad has got under weigh and left his moorings."

"Has Edwards left the house?"

"He has."

Richard pursued this advantage; and, after a long and close examination, he succeeded in getting out of Benjamin all that he knew, not only concerning the misunderstanding, but of the attempt to search the hut, and Hiram's discomfiture. The sheriff was no sooner possessed of these facts, which Benjamin related with all possible tenderness to the Leather-Stocking, than, snatching up his hat, and bidding the astonished steward secure the doors and go to his bed, he left the house.

For at least five minutes after Richard disappeared, Benjamin stood with his arms a-kimbo, and his eyes fastened on the door; when, having collected his astonished faculties, he prepared to execute the orders he had received.

It has been already said that the "court of common pleas and general sessions of the peace," or, as it is commonly called, the "county court," over which Judge Temple presided, held one of its stated sessions on the following morning. The attendants of Richard were officers who had come to the village, as much to discharge their usual duties at this court, as to escort the prisoners; and the sheriff knew their habits too well, not to feel confident that he should find most, if not all of them, in the public room of the jail, discussing the qualities of the keeper's liquors. Accordingly he held his way through the silent streets of the village, directly to the small and insecure building that contained all the unfortunate debtors, and some of the criminals of the county, and where justice was administered

to such unwary applicants as were so silly as to throw away two dollars in order to obtain one from their neighbors. The arrival of four malefactors in the custody of a dozen officers, was an event, at that day, in Templeton; and, when the sheriff reached the jail, he found every indication that his subordinates intended to make a night of it.

The nod of the sheriff brought two of his deputies to the door, who in their turn drew off six or seven of the constables. With this force Richard led the way through the village, toward the bank of the lake, undisturbed by any noise, except the barking of one or two curs, who were alarmed by the measured tread of the party, and by the low murmurs that ran through their own numbers, as a few cautious questions and answers were exchanged, relative to the object of their expedition. When they had crossed the little bridge of hewn logs that was thrown over the Susquehanna, they left the highway, and struck into that field which had been the scene of the victory over the pigeons. From this they followed their leader into the low bushes of pines and chestnuts which had sprung up along the shores of the lake, where the plough had not succeeded the fall of the trees, and soon entered the forest itself. Here Richard paused and collected his troop around him.

“I have required your assistance, my friends,” he cried, in a low voice, “in order to arrest Nathaniel Bumpo, commonly called the Leather-Stocking. He has assaulted a magistrate, and resisted the execution of a search-warrant, by threatening the life of a constable with his rifle. In short, my friends, he has set an example of rebellion to the laws, and has become a kind of outlaw. He is suspected of other misdemeanors and offences against private rights; and I have this night taken on myself, by the virtue of my office as sheriff, to arrest the said Bumpo, and bring him to the county jail, that he may be present and forthcoming to answer to these heavy charges before the court to-morrow morning. In executing this duty, friends and fellow-citizens; you are to use courage and discretion: courage, that you may not be daunted by any lawless attempts that this man may make with his rifle and his dogs to oppose you; and discretion, which here means caution and prudence, that he may not escape from this sudden attack—and for other good reasons that I need not mention. You will form yourselves in a complete circle around

his hut, and at the word 'advance,' called aloud by me, you will rush forward, and, without giving the criminal time for deliberation, enter his dwelling by force, and make him your prisoner. Spread yourselves for this purpose, while I shall descend to the shore with a deputy, to take charge of that point; and all communications must be made directly to me, under the bank in front of the hut, where I shall station myself and remain, in order to receive them."

This speech, which Richard had been studying during his walk, had the effect that all similar performances produce, of bringing the dangers of the expedition immediately before the eyes of his forces. The men divided, some plunging deeper into the forest, in order to gain their stations without giving an alarm, and others continuing to advance, at a gait that would allow the whole party to go in order; but all devising the best plan to repulse the attack of a dog, or to escape a rifle bullet. It was a moment of dread expectation and interest.

When the sheriff thought time enough had elapsed for the different divisions of his force to arrive at their stations, he raised his voice in the silence of the forest, and shouted the watchword. The sounds played among the arched branches of the trees in hollow cadences; but when the last sinking tone was lost on the ear, in place of the expected howls of the dogs, no other noises were returned but the crackling of torn branches and dried sticks, as they yielded before the advancing steps of the officers. Even this soon ceased, as if by a common consent, when the curiosity and impatience of the sheriff getting the complete ascendancy over discretion, he rushed up the bank, and in a moment stood on the little piece of cleared ground in front of the spot where Natty had so long lived. To his amazement, in place of the hut he saw only its smoldering ruins.

The party gradually drew together about the heap of ashes and the ends of smoking logs; while a dim flame in the centre of the ruin, which still found fuel to feed its lingering life, threw its pale light, flickering with the passing currents of the air, around the circle—now showing a face with eyes fixed in astonishment, and then glancing to another countenance, leaving the former shaded in the obscurity of night. Not a voice was raised in inquiry, nor an exclamation made in astonishment. The transition

from excitement to disappointment was too powerful for speech ; and even Richard lost the use of an organ that was seldom known to fail him.

The whole group were yet in the fulness of their surprise, when a tall form stalked from the gloom into the circle, treading down the hot ashes and dying embers with callous feet ; and, standing over the light, lifted his cap, and exposed the bare head and weather-beaten features of the Leather-Stocking. For a moment he gazed at the dusky figures who surrounded him, more in sorrow than in anger before he spoke.

“What would ye with an old and helpless man ?” he said. “You’ve driven God’s creators from the wilderness, where His providence had put them for His own pleasure ; and you’ve brought in the troubles and divilties of the law, where no man was ever known to disturb another. You have driven me, that have lived forty long years of my appointed time in this very spot, from my home and the shelter of my head, lest you should put your wicked feet and wasty ways in my cabin. You’ve driven me to burn these logs, under which I’ve eaten and drunk—the first of Heaven’s gifts, and the other of the pure springs—for the half of a hundred years ; and to mourn the ashes under my feet, as a man would weep and mourn for the children of his body. You’ve rankled the heart of an old man, that has never harmed you or your’n, with bitter feelings toward his kind, at a time when his thoughts should be on a better world ; and you’ve driven him to wish that the beasts of the forest, who never feast on the blood of their own families, was his kindred and race ; and now, when he has come to see the last brand of his hut, before it is melted into ashes, you follow him up, at midnight, like hungry hounds on the track of a worn-out and dying deer. What more would ye have ? for I am here—one too many. I come to mourn, not to fight ; and, if it is God’s pleasure, work your will on me.”

When the old man ended he stood, with the light glimmering around his thinly-covered head, looking earnestly at the group, which receded from the pile with an involuntary movement, without the reach of the quivering rays, leaving a free passage for his retreat into the bushes, where pursuit in the dark would have been fruitless. Natty seemed not to regard this advantage, but stood facing each individual in the circle in succession, as if to see

who would be the first to arrest him. After a pause of a few moments Richard began to rally his confused faculties, and, advancing apologized for his duty, and made him his prisoner. The party now collected, and, preceded by the sheriff, with Natty in their centre, they took their way toward the village.

During the walk, divers questions were put to the prisoner concerning his reasons for burning the hut, and whither Mohegan had retreated ; but to all of them he observed a profound silence, until, fatigued with their previous duties, and the lateness of the hour, the sheriff and his followers, reached the village, and dispersed to their several places of rest, after turning the key of a jail on the aged and apparently friendless Leather-Stocking.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“Fetch here the stocks, ho !
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend bragget,
We’ll teach you.”—LEAR.

THE long days and early sun of July allowed time for a gathering of the interested, before the little bell of the academy announced that the appointed hour had arrived for administering right to the wronged, and punishment to the guilty. Ever since the dawn of day, the highways and woodpaths that, issuing from the forests, and winding along the sides of the mountains, centred in Templeton, had been thronged with equestrians and footmen, bound to the haven of justice. There was to be seen a well-clad yeoman, mounted on a sleek, switch-tailed steed, rambling along the highway, with his red face elevated in a manner that said, “I have paid for my land, and fear no man ;” while his bosom was swelling with the pride of being one of the grand inquest for the county. At his side rode a companion, his equal in independence of feeling, perhaps, but his inferior in thrift, as in property and consideration. This was a professed dealer in law-suits—a man whose name appeared in every calendar—whose substance, gained in the multifarious expedients of a settler’s changeable habits, was wasted in feeding the harpies of the courts. He was endeavoring to impress the mind of the grand juror with the merits of a cause now at issue. Along with these was

a pedestrian, who, having thrown a rifle frock over his shirt, and placed his best wool hat above his sunburnt visage, had issued from his retreat in the woods by a foot-path, and was striving to keep company with the others, on his way to hear and to decide the disputes of his neighbors, as a petit juror. Fifty similar little knots of countrymen might have been seen, on that morning, journeying toward the shire-town on the same errand.

By ten o'clock the streets of the village were filled with busy faces ; some talking of their private concerns, some listening to a popular expounder of political creeds ; and others gaping in at the open stores, admiring the finery, or examining scythes, axes, and such other manufactures as attracted their curiosity or excited their admiration. A few women were in the crowd, most carrying infants, and followed, at a lounging, listless gait, by their rustic lords and masters. There was one young couple, in whom conjugal love was yet fresh, walking at a respectful distance from each other ; while the swain directed the timid steps of his bride, by a gallant offering of a thumb.

At the first stroke of the bell, Richard issued from the door of the " Bold Dragoon," flourishing a sheathed sword, that he was fond of saying his ancestors had carried in one of Cromwell's victories, and crying, in an authoritative tone, to "clear the way for the court." The order was obeyed promptly, though not servilely, the members of the crowd nodding familiarly to the members of the procession as it passed. A party of constables with their staves followed the sheriff, preceding Marmaduke, and four plain, grave-looking yeomen, who were his associates on the bench. There was nothing to distinguish these subordinate judges from the better part of the spectators, except gravity, which they affected a little more than common, and that one of their number was attired in an old-fashioned military coat, with skirts that reached no lower than the middle of his thighs, and bearing two little silver epaulets, not half so big as a modern pair of shoulder-knots. This gentleman was a colonel of the militia, in attendance on a court-martial, who found leisure to steal a moment from his military to attend to his civil jurisdiction ; but this incongruity excited neither notice nor comment. Three or four clean-shaved lawyers followed, as meek as if they were lambs going to the slaughter. One or two of their number had contrived to obtain an air of scholastic

gravity by wearing spectacles. The rear was brought up by another posse of constables, and the mob followed the whole into the room where the court held its sittings.

The edifice was composed of a basement of squared logs, perforated here and there with small grated windows, through which a few wistful faces were gazing at the crowd without. Among the captives were the guilty, downcast countenances of the counterfeiter, and the simple but honest features of the Leather-Stocking. The dungeons were to be distinguished, externally, from the debtor's apartments only by the size of the apertures, the thickness of the grates, and by the heads of the spikes that were driven into the logs as a protection against the illegal use of edge-tools. The upper story was of framework, regularly covered with boards, and contained one room decently fitted up for the purpose of justice. A bench, raised on a narrow platform to the height of a man above the floor, and protected in front by a light railing, ran along one of its sides. In the centre was a seat, furnished with rude arms, that was always filled by the presiding judge. In front, on a level with the floor of the room, was a large table covered with green baize, and surrounded by benches; and at either of its ends were rows of seats, rising one over the other, for jury-boxes. Each of these divisions was surrounded by a railing. The remainder of the room was an open square, appropriated to the spectators.

When the judges were seated, the lawyers had taken possession of the table, and the noise of moving feet had ceased in the area, the proclamations were made in the usual form, the jurors were sworn, the charge was given, and the court proceeded to hear the business before them.

We shall not detain the reader with a description of the captious discussions that occupied the court for the first two hours. Judge Temple had impressed on the jury, in his charge, the necessity for dispatch on their part, recommending to their notice, from motives of humanity, the prisoners in the jail as the first objects of their attention. Accordingly, after the period we have mentioned had elapsed, the cry of the officer to "clear the way for the grand jury," announced the entrance of that body. The usual forms were observed, when the foreman handed up to the bench two bills, on both of which the Judge observed, at the first glance of his eye, the name of Nathaniel

Bumppo. It was a leisure moment with the court ; some low whispering passed between the bench, and the sheriff, who gave a signal to his officers, and in a very few minutes the silence that prevailed was interrupted by a general movement in the outer crowd, when presently the Leather-Stocking made his appearance, ushered into the criminal's bar under the custody of two constables. The hum ceased, the people closed into the open space again, and the silence soon became so deep that the hard breathing of the prisoner was audible.

Natty was dressed in his buckskin garments, without his coat, in place of which he wore only a shirt of coarse linen-check, fastened at his throat by the sinew of a deer, leaving his red neck and weather-beaten face exposed and bare. It was the first time that he had ever crossed the threshold of a court of justice, and curiosity seemed to be strongly blended with his personal feelings. He raised his eyes to the bench, thence to the jury-boxes, the bar, and the crowd without, meeting everywhere looks fastened on himself. After surveying his own person, as searching the cause of this unusual attraction, he once more turned his face around the assemblage, and opened his mouth in one of his silent and remarkable laughs.

"Prisoner, remove your cap," said Judge Temple.

The order was either unheard or unheeded.

"Nathaniel Bumppo, be uncovered," repeated the Judge.

Natty started at the sound of his name, and, raising his face earnestly toward the bench, he said :

"Anan !"

Mr. Lippet arose from his seat at the table, and whispered in the ear of the prisoner ; when Natty gave him a nod of assent, and took the deer-skin covering from his head.

"Mr. District Attorney," said the Judge, "the prisoner is ready ; we wait for the indictment."

The duties of public prosecutor were discharged by Dirck Van der School, who adjusted his spectacles, cast a cautious look around him at his brethren of the bar, which he ended by throwing his head aside so as to catch one glance over the glasses, when he proceeded to read the bill aloud. It was the usual charge for an assault and battery on the person of Hiram Doolittle, and was couched in the ancient language of such instruments, especial care having been taken by the scribe not to omit the name of a single

offensive weapon known to the law. When he had done, Mr. Van der School removed his spectacles, which he closed and placed in his pocket, seemingly for the pleasure of again opening and replacing them on his nose. After this evolution was repeated once or twice, he handed the bill over to Mr. Lippet, with a cavalier air, that said as much as "Pick a hole in that if you can."

Natty listened to the charge with great attention, leaning forward toward the reader with an earnestness that denoted his interest; and, when it was ended, he raised his tall body to the utmost, and drew a long sigh. All eyes were turned to the prisoner, whose voice was vainly expected to break the stillness of the room.

"You have heard the presentment that the grand jury have made, Nathaniel Bumppo," said the Judge; "what do you plead to the charge?"

The old man dropped his head for a moment in a reflecting attitude, and then, raising it, he laughed before he answered:

"That I handled the man a little rough or so, is not to be denied; but that there was occasion to make use of all the things that the gentleman has spoken of, is downright untrue. I am not much of a wrestler, seeing that I'm getting old; but I was out among the Scotch-Irishers—let me see—it must have been as long ago as the first year of the old war——"

"Mr. Lippet, if you are retained for the prisoner," interrupted Judge Temple, "instruct your client how to plead; if not, the court will assign him counsel."

Aroused from studying the indictment by this appeal, the attorney got up, and after a short dialogue with the hunter in a low voice, he informed the court that they were ready to proceed.

"Do you plead guilty or not guilty?" said the Judge.

"I may say not guilty, with a clean conscience," returned Natty; "for there's no guilt in doing what's right; and I'd rather died on the spot, than had him put foot in the hut at that moment."

Richard started at this declaration, and bent his eyes significantly on Hiram, who returned the look with a slight movement of his eyebrows.

"Proceed to open the cause, Mr. District Attorney," continued the Judge. "Mr. Clerk, enter the plea of not guilty."

After a short opening address from Mr. Van der School, Hiram was summoned to the bar to give his testimony. It was delivered to the letter, perhaps, but with all that moral coloring which can be conveyed under such expressions as, "thinking no harm," "feeling it my bounden duty as a magistrate," and "seeing that the constable was back'ard in the business." When he had done, and the district attorney declined putting any further interrogatories, Mr. Lippet arose, with an air of keen investigation, and asked the following questions:

"Are you a constable of this county, sir?"

"No, sir," said Hiram, "I'm only a justice-peace."

"I ask you, Mr. Doolittle, in the face of this court, putting it to your conscience and your knowledge of the law, whether you had any right to enter that man's dwelling?"

"Hem!" said Hiram, undergoing a violent struggle between his desire for vengeance and his love of legal fame; "I do suppose—that in—that is—strict law—that supposing—maybe I hadn't a real—lawful right; but as the case was—and Billy was so back'ard—I thought I might come for'ard in the business."

"I ask you again, sir," continued the lawyer, following up his success, "whether this old, this friendless old man, did or did not repeatedly forbid your entrance?"

"Why, I must say," said Hiram, "that he was considerable cross-grained; not what I call clever, seeing that it was only one neighbor wanting to go into the house of another."

"Oh! then you own it was only meant for a neighborly visit on your part, and without the sanction of law. Remember, gentleman, the words of the witness, 'one neighbor wanting to enter the house of another.' Now, sir, I ask you if Nathaniel Bumppo did not again and again order you not to enter?"

"There was some words passed between us," said Hiram, "but I read the warrant to him aloud."

"I repeat my question; did he tell you not to enter his habitation?"

"There was a good deal passed betwixt us—but I've the warrant in my pocket; maybe the court would wish to see it?"

"Witness," said Judge Temple, "answer the question directly; did or did not the prisoner forbid your entering his hut?"

"Why, I some think——"

"Answer without equivocation," continued the Judge, sternly.

"He did."

"And did you attempt to enter after this order?"

"I did; but the warrant was in my hand."

"Proceed, Mr. Lippet, with your examination."

But the attorney saw that the impression was in favor of his client, and waving his hand with a supercilious manner, as if unwilling to insult the understanding of the jury with any further defence, he replied:

"No, sir; I leave it for your honor to charge; I rest my case here."

"Mr. District Attorney," said the Judge, "have you anything to say?"

Mr. Van der School removed his spectacles, folded them and, replacing them once more on his nose, eyed the other bill which he held in his hand, and then said, looking at the bar over the top of his glasses:

"I shall rest the prosecution here, if the court please."

Judge Temple arose and begun the charge.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he said, "you have heard the testimony, and I shall detain you but a moment. If an officer meet with resistance in the execution of a process, he has an undoubted right to call any citizen to his assistance; and the acts of such assistant come within the protection of the law. I shall leave you to judge, gentlemen, from the testimony, how far the witness in this prosecution can be so considered, feeling less reluctance to submit the case thus informally to your decision, because there is yet another indictment to be tried, which involves heavier charges against the unfortunate prisoner."

The tone of Marmaduke was mild and insinuating, and, as his sentiments were given with such apparent impartiality, they did not fail of carrying due weight with the jury. The grave-looking yeomen who composed this tribunal, laid their heads together for a few minutes, without leaving the box, when the foreman arose, and, after the forms of the court were duly observed, he pronounced the prisoner to be

"Not guilty."

"You are acquitted of this charge, Nathaniel Bumppe," said the Judge.

"Anan!" said Natty.

"You are found not guilty of striking and assaulting Mr. Doolittle."

"No, no, I'll not deny but that I took him a little roughly by the shoulders," said Natty, looking about him with great simplicity, "and that I——"

"You are acquitted," interrupted the Judge, "and there is nothing further to be said or done in the matter."

A look of joy lighted up the features of the old man, who now comprehended the case, and, placing his cap eagerly on his head again, he threw up the bar of his little prison, and said, feelingly :

"I must say this for you, Judge Temple, that the law has not been so hard on me as I dreaded. I hope God will bless you for the kind things you've done to me this day."

But the staff of the constable was opposed to his egress, and Mr. Lippet whispered a few words in his ear, when the aged hunter sank back into his place, and, removing his cap, stroked down the remnants of his gray and sandy locks, with an air of mortification mingled with submission.

"Mr. District Attorney," said Judge Temple, effecting to busy himself with his minutes, "proceed with the second indictment."

Mr. Van der School took great care that no part of the presentment, which he now read, should be lost on his auditors. It accused the prisoner of resisting the execution of a search-warrant, by force of arms, and particularized in the vague language of the law, among a variety of other weapons, the use of the rifle. This was indeed a more serious charge than an ordinary assault and battery, and a corresponding degree of interest was manifested by the spectators in its result. The prisoner was duly arraigned, and his plea again demanded. Mr. Lippet had anticipated the answers of Natty, and in a whisper advised him how to plead. But the feelings of the old hunter were awakened by some of the expressions in the indictment, and, forgetful of his caution, he exclaimed :

"'Tis a wicked untruth ; I crave no man's blood. Them thieves, the Iroquois, won't say it to my face that I ever thirsted after man's blood. I have fou't as soldier that feared his Maker and his officer, but I never pulled trigger on any but a warrior that was up and awake. No man can say that I ever struck even a Mingo in his blanket.

I believe there's some who thinks there's no God in a wilderness!"

"Attend to your plea, Bumpo," said the Judge; "you hear that you are accused of using your rifle against an officer of justice? are you guilty or not guilty?"

By this time the irritated feelings of Natty had found vent; and he rested on the bar for a moment, in a musing posture, when he lifted his face, with his silent laugh, and, pointing to where the wood-chopper stood, he said:

"Would Billy Kirby be standing there, d'ye think, if I had used the rifle?"

"Then you deny it," said Mr. Lippet: "you plead not guilty?"

"Sartain," said Natty; "Billy knows that I never fired at all. Billy, do you remember the turkey last winter? ah! me! that was better than common firing; but I can't shoot as I used to could."

"Enter the plea of not guilty," said Judge Temple, strongly affected by the simplicity of the prisoner.

Hiram was again sworn, and his testimony given on the second charge. He had discovered his former error, and proceeded more cautiously than before. He related very distinctly, and, for the man, with amazing terseness, the suspicion against the hunter, the complaint, the issuing of the warrant, and the swearing in of Kirby; all of which, he affirmed, were done in due form of law. He then added the manner in which the constable had been received; and stated, distinctly, that Natty had pointed the rifle at Kirby, and threatened his life if he attempted to execute his duty. All this was confirmed by Jotham, who was observed to adhere closely to the story of the magistrate. Mr. Lippet conducted an artful cross-examination of these two witnesses, but, after consuming much time, was compelled to relinquish the attempt to obtain any advantage, in despair.

At length the District Attorney called the wood-chopper to the bar. Billy gave an extremely confused account of the whole affair, although he evidently aimed at the truth, until Mr. Van der School aided him, by asking some direct questions:

"It appears from examining the papers, that you demanded admission into the hut legally; so you were put in bodily fear by his rifle and threats?"

"I didn't mind them that, man," said Billy, snapping

his fingers ; I should be a poor stick to mind old Leather-Stocking."

"But I understood you to say (referring to your previous words (as delivered here in court) in the commencement of your testimony) that you thought he meant to shoot you?"

"To be sure I did ; and so would you, too, squire, if you had seen a chap dropping a muzzle that never misses, and and cocking an eye that has a natural squint by long practice. I thought there would be a dust on't, and my back was up at once ; but Leather-Stocking gi'n up the skin, and so the matter ended."

"Ah! Billy," said Natty, shaking his head, "'twas a lucky thought in me to throw out the hide, or there might have been blood spilt ; and I'm sure, if it had been your'n, I should have mourned it sorely the little while I have to stay."

"Well, Leather-Stocking," returned Billy, facing the prisoner with a freedom and familiarity that utterly disregarded the presence of the court, "as you are on the subject, it may be that you've no——"

"Go on with your examination, Mr. District Attorney."

That gentleman eyed the familiarity between his witness and the prisoner with manifest disgust, and indicated to the court that he was done.

"Then you didn't feel frightened, Mr. Kirby?" said the counsel for the prisoner.

"Me! no," said Billy, casting his eyes over his own huge frame with evident self-satisfaction ; "I'm not to be skeared so easy."

"You look like a hardy man ; where were you born, sir?"

"Varmount State ; 'tis a mountaynious place, but there's a stiff soil, and it's pretty much wooded with beach and maple."

"I have always heard so," said Mr. Lippet, soothingly. "You have been used to the rifle yourself in that country."

"I pull the second best trigger in this county. I knock under to Natty Bumpo there, sin' he shot the pigeon."

Leather-Stocking raised his head, and laughed again, when he abruptly thrust out a wrinkled hand, and said :

"You're young yet, Billy, and haven't seen the matches that I have ; but here's my hand ; I bear no malice to you, I don't."

Mr. Lippet allowed this conciliatory offering to be ac-

cepted, and judiciously paused, while the spirit of peace was exercising its influence over the two ; but the Judge interposed his authority.

"This is an improper place for such dialogues," he said ; "proceed with your examination of this witness, Mr. Lippet, or I shall order the next."

The attorney started, as if unconscious of any impropriety, and continued :

"So you settled the matter with Natty amicably on the spot, did you ?"

"He gi'n me the skin, and I didn't want to quarrel with an old man ; for my part, I see no such mighty matter in shooting a buck !"

"And you parted friends ? and you would never have thought of bringing the business up before a court, hadn't you been subpoenaed ?"

"I don't think I should ; he gi'n the skin, and I didn't feel a hard thought, though Squire Doolittle got some affronted."

"I have done, sir," said Mr. Lippet, probably relying on the charge of the Judge, as he again seated himself, with the air of a man who felt that his success was certain.

When Mr. Van der School arose to address the jury, he commenced by saying :

"Gentlemen of the jury, I should have interrupted the leading questions put by the prisoner's counsel (by leading questions I mean telling him what to say), did I not feel confident that the law of the land was superior to any advantages (I mean legal advantages) which he might obtain by his art. The counsel for the prisoner, gentlemen, has endeavored to persuade you, in opposition to your own good sense, to believe that pointing a rifle at a constable (elected or deputed) is a very innocent affair ; and that society (I mean the commonwealth, gentlemen) shall not be endangered thereby. But let me claim your attention, while we look over the particulars of this heinous offence." Here Mr. Van der School favored the jury with an abridgment of the testimony, recounted in such a manner as utterly to confuse the faculties of his worthy listeners. After this exhibition he closed as follows : "And now, gentlemen, having thus made plain to your senses the crime of which this unfortunate man has been guilty (unfortunate both on account of his ignorance and his guilt), I shall leave you to your own consciences ; not in

the least doubting that you will see the importance (notwithstanding the prisoner's counsel (doubtless relying on your former verdict) wishes to appear so confident of success) of punishing the offender, and asserting the dignity of the laws."

It was now the duty of the Judge to deliver his charge. It consisted of a short, comprehensive summary of the testimony, laying bare the artifice of the prisoner's counsel, and placing the facts in so obvious a light that they could not well be misunderstood. "Living as we do, gentlemen," he concluded, "on the skirts of society, it becomes doubly necessary to protect the ministers of the law. If you believe the witnesses, in their construction of the acts of the prisoner, it is your duty to convict him ; but if you believe that the old man, who this day appears before you, meant not to harm the constable, but was acting more under the influence of habit than by the instigations of malice, it will be your duty to judge him, but to do it with lenity."

As before, the jury did not leave their box ; but, after a consultation of some little time, their foreman arose, and pronounced the prisoner :

"Guilty."

There was but little surprise manifested in the courtroom at this verdict, as the testimony, the greater part of which we have omitted, was too clear and direct to be passed over. The judges seemed to have anticipated this sentiment, for a consultation was passing among them also, during the deliberation of the jury, and the preparatory movements of the "bench" announced the coming sentence.

"Nathaniel Bumpo," commenced the judge, making the customary pause.

The old hunter, who had been musing again, with his head on the bar, raised himself, and cried, with a prompt, military tone :

"Here."

The Judge waved his hand for silence, and proceeded :

"In forming their sentence, the court have been governed as much by the consideration of your ignorance of the laws as by a strict sense of the importance of punishing such outrages as this of which you have been found guilty. They have therefore passed over the obvious punishment of whipping on the bare back, in mercy to your

years ; but, as the dignity of the law requires an open exhibition of the consequences of your crime, it is ordered, that you be conveyed from this room to the public stocks, where you are to be confined for one hour ; that you pay a fine to the State of one hundred dollars ; and that you be imprisoned in the jail of this county for one calendar month, and, furthermore, that your imprisonment do not cease until the said fine shall be paid. I feel it my duty, Nathaniel Bumpo——”

“And where should I get the money?” interrupted the Leather-Stocking, eagerly ; “where should I get the money ? you’ll take away the bounty on the painters, because I cut the throat of a deer ; and how is an old man to find so much gold or silver in the woods ? No, no, Judge ; think better of it, and don’t talk of shutting me up in a jail for the little time I have to stay.”

“If you have anything to urge against the passing of the sentence, the court will yet hear you,” said the Judge, mildly.

“I have enough to say ag’in it,” cried Natty, grasping the bar on which his fingers were working with a convulsed motion. “Where am I to get the money ? Let me out into the woods and hills, where I’ve been used to breathe the clear air, and though I’m threescore and ten, if you’ve left game enough in the country, I’ll travel night and day but I’ll make you up the sum afore the season is over. Yes, yes—you see the reason of the thing, and the wickedness of shutting up an old man that has spent his days, as one may say, where he could always look into the windows of heaven.”

“I must be governed by the law——”

“Talk not to me of law, Marmaduke Temple,” interrupted the hunter. “Did the beast of the forest mind your laws, when it was thirsty and hungering for the blood of your own child ? She was kneeling to her God for a greater favor than I ask, and he heard her ; and if you now say no to my prayers, do you think he will be deaf ?”

“My private feelings must not enter into——”

“Hear me, Marmaduke Temple,” interrupted the old man, with melancholy earnestness, “and hear reason. I’ve travelled these mountains when you was no judge, but an infant in your mother’s arms ; and I feel as if I had a right and a privilege to travel them ag’in afore I die. Have you forgot the time that you come on to the lake-shore,

when there wasn't even a jail to lodge in ; and didn't I give you my own bear-skin to sleep on, and the fat of a noble buck to satisfy the cravings of your hunger ? Yes, yes—you thought it no sin then to kill a deer ! And this I did, though I had no reason to love you, for you had never done anything but harm to them that loved and sheltered me. And now, will you shut me up in your dungeons to pay me for my kindness ? A hundred dollars ! Where should I get the money ? No, no—there's them that says hard things of you, Marmaduke Temple, but you ain't so bad as to wish to see an old man die in a prison, because he stood up for the right. Come, friend, let me pass ; it's long sin' I've been used to such crowds, and I crave to be in the woods ag'in. Don't fear me, Judge—I bid you not to fear me ; for if there's beaver enough left on the streams, or the buckskins will sell for a shilling apiece, you shall have the last penny of the fine. Where are ye, pups ? come away, dogs, come away ! we have a grievous toil to do for our years, but it shall be done—yes, yes, I've promised it, and it shall be done !”

It is unnecessary to say that the movement of the Leather-Stocking was again intercepted by the constable ; but, before he had time to speak, a bustling in the crowd, and a loud hem, drew all eyes to another part of the room.

Benjamin had succeeded in edging his way through the people, and was now seen balancing his short body, with one foot in a window and the other on a railing of the jury-box. To the amazement of the whole court, the steward was evidently preparing to speak. After a good deal of difficulty, he succeeded in drawing from his pocket a small bag, and then found utterance.

“ If-so-be,” he said, “ that your honor is agreeable to trust the poor fellow out on another cruise among the beasts, here's a small matter that will help to bring down the risk, seeing that there's just thirty-five of your Spaniards it it ; and I wish, from the bottom of my heart, that they was raal British guineas, for the sake of the old boy. But 'tis as it is ; and if Squire Dickens will just be so good as to overhaul this small bit of an account, and take enough from the bag to settle the same, he's welcome to hold on upon the rest, till such time as the Leather-Stocking can grapple with them said beaver, or, for that matter, forever, and no thanks asked.”

As Benjamin concluded, he thrust out the wooden regis-

ter of his arrears to the "Bold Dragoon" with one hand, while he offered his bag of dollars with the other. Astonishment at this singular interruption produced a profound stillness in the room, which was only interrupted by the sheriff, who struck his sword on the table, and cried :

"Silence !"

"There must be an end to this," said the Judge, struggling to overcome his feelings. "Constable, lead the prisoner to the stocks. Mr. Clerk, what stands next on the calendar ?"

Natty seemed to yield to his destiny, for he sank his head on his chest, and followed the officer from the courtroom in silence. The crowd moved back for the passage of the prisoner, and when his tall form was seen descending from the outer door, a rush of the people to the scene of his disgrace followed.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Ha ! ha ! look ! he wears cruel garters !"—LEAR.

THE punishments of the common law were still known, at the time of our tale, to the people of New York ; and the whipping-post, and its companion, the stocks, were not yet supplanted by the more merciful expedients of the public prison. Immediately in front of the jail those relics of the older times were situated, as a lesson of precautionary justice to the evil-doers of the settlement.

Natty followed the constables to this spot, bowing his head in submission to a power that he was unable to oppose, and surrounded by the crowd that formed a circle about his person, exhibiting in their countenances strong curiosity. A constable raised the upper part of the stocks, and pointed with his finger to the holes where the old man was to place his feet. Without making the least objection to the punishment, the Leather-Stocking quietly seated himself on the ground, and suffered his limbs to be laid in the openings, without even a murmur ; though he cast one glance about him, in quest of that sympathy that human nature always seems to require under suffering. If he met no direct manifestations of pity, neither did he see any unfeeling exultation, or hear a single reproachful epithet.

The character of the mob, if it could be called by such a name, was that of attentive subordination.

The constable was in the act of lowering the upper plank, when Benjamin, who had pressed close to the side of the prisoner, said, in his hoarse tone, as if seeking for some cause to create a quarrel :

“Where away, master constable, is the use of clapping a man in them here bilboes? It neither stops his grog nor hurts his back; what for is it that you do the thing?”

“’Tis the sentence of the court, Mr. Penguillium, and there’s law for it, I s’pose.”

“Ay, ay, I know that there’s law for the thing; but where away do you find the use I say? it does no harm. and it only keeps a man by the heels for the small matter of two glasses.”

“Is it no harm, Benny Pump,” said Natty, raising his eyes with a piteous look in the face of the steward—“is it no harm to show off a man in his seventy-first year, like a tame bear, for the settlers to look on? Is it no harm to put an old soldier, that has served through the war of ’fifty-six, and seen the inimy in the ’seventy-six business, into a place like this, where the boys can point at him and say, I have known the time when he was a spectacle for the county? Is it no harm to bring down the pride of an honest man to be the equal of the beasts of the forest?”

Benjamin stared about him fiercely, and could he have found a single face that expressed contumely, he would have been prompt to quarrel with its owner; but meeting everywhere with looks of sobriety, and occasionally of commiseration, he very deliberately seated himself by the side of the hunter, and, placing his legs in the two vacant holes of the stocks, he said :

“Now lower away, master constable, lower away, I tell ye! If-so-be there’s such a thing hereabouts, as a man that wants to see a bear, let him look and be d—d, and he shall find two of them, and mayhap one of the same that can bite as well as growl.”

“But I have no orders to put you in the stocks, Mr. Pump,” cried the constable; “you must get up and let me do my duty.”

“You’ve my orders, and what do you need better to meddle with my own feet? so lower away, will ye, and let me see the man that chooses to open his mouth with a grin on it.”

“There can't be any harm in locking up a creater that will enter the pound,” said the constable, laughing, and closing the stocks on them both.

It was fortunate that this act was executed with decision, for the whole of the spectators, when they saw Benjamin assume the position he took, felt an inclination for merriment, which few thought it worth while to suppress. The steward struggled violently for his liberty again, with an evident intention of making battle on those who stood nearest to him; but the key was already turned, and all his efforts were vain.

“Hark ye, master constable,” he cried, “just clear away your bilboes for the small matter of a log-glass, will ye, and let me show some of them there chaps who it is they are so merry about.”

“No, no, you would go in, and you can't come out,” returned the officer, “until the time has expired that the Judge directed for the keeping of the prisoner.”

Benjamin, finding that his threats and his struggles were useless, had good sense enough to learn patience from the resigned manner of his companion, and soon settled himself down by the side of Natty, with a contemptuousness expressed in his hard features, that showed he had substituted disgust for rage. When the violence of the steward's feelings had in some measure subsided, he turned to his fellow-sufferer, and, with a motive that might have vindicated a worse effusion, he attempted the charitable office of consolation.

“Taking it by and large, Master Bump-ho, 'tis but a small matter after all,” he said. “Now, I've known very good sort of men, aboard of the Boadishey, laid by the heels, for nothing, mayhap, but forgetting that they'd drunk their allowance already, when a glass of grog has come in their way. This is nothing more than riding with two anchors ahead, waiting for a turn in the tide, or a shift of wind, d'ye see, with a soft bottom and plenty of room for the sweep of your hawse. Now I've seen many a man, for over-shooting his reckoning, as I told ye, moored head and starn, where he couldn't so much as heave his broadside round, and mayhap a stopper clapt on his tongue too, in the shape of a pump-bolt lashed athwartship his jaws, all the same as an outrigger alongside of a taffrel-rail.”

The hunter appeared to appreciate the kind intentions of the other, though he could not understand his eloquence;

and, raising his humbled countenance, he attempted a smile, as he said——

“Anan !”

“’Tis nothing I say, but a small matter of a squall that will soon blow over,” continued Benjamin. “To you that has such a length of keel, it must be all the same as nothing ; tho’f, seeing that I am little short in my lower timbers, they’ve triced my heels up in such a way as to give me a bit of a cant. But what cares I, Master Bump-ho, if the ship strains a little at her anchor ; it’s only for a dog-watch, and dam’mé but she’ll sail with you then on that cruise after them said beaver. I’m not much used to small arms, seeing that I was stationed at the ammunition-boxes, being sum’mat too low-rigged to see over the hammock-cloths ; but I can carry the game, d’ye see, and mayhap make out to lend a hand with the traps ; and if-so-be you’re any way so handy with them as ye be with your boat-hook, ’twill be but a short cruise after all. I’ve squared the yards with Squire Dickens this morning, and I shall send him word that he needn’t bear my name on the books again till such time as the cruise is over.”

“You’re used to dwell with men, Benny,” said Leather-Stocking, mournfully, “and the ways of the woods would be hard on you, if——”

“Not a bit—not a bit,” cried the steward ; “I’m none of your fair-weather chaps, Master Bump-ho, as sails only in smooth water. When I find a friend, I sticks by him, d’ye see. Now, there’s no better man a-going than Squire Dickens, and I love him about the same as I loves Mistress Hollister’s new keg of Jamaiky.” The steward paused, and turning his uncouth visage on the hunter, he surveyed him with a roguish leer of his eye, and gradually suffered the muscles of his hard features to relax, until his face was illuminated by the display of his white teeth, when he dropped his voice, and added—“I say, Master Leather-Stocking, ’tis fresher and livelier than any Hollands you’ll get in Garnsey. But we’ll send a hand over and ask the woman for a taste, for I’m so jamb’d in these here bilboes, that I begin to want sum’mat to lighten my upper works.”

Natty sighed, and gazed about him on the crowd, that already began to disperse, and which had now diminished greatly, as its members scattered in their various pursuits. He looked wistfully at Benjamin, but did not reply ; a deeply-seated anxiety seeming to absorb every other sen-

sation, and to throw a melancholy gloom over his wrinkled features, which were working with the movements of his mind.

The steward was about to act on the old principle, that silence gives consent, when Hiram Doolittle, attended by Jotham, stalked out of the crowd, across the open space, and approached the stocks. The magistrate passed by the end where Benjamin was seated, and posted himself, at a safe distance from the steward, in front of the Leather-Stocking. Hiram stood, for a moment, cowering before the keen looks that Natty fastened on him, and suffering under an embarrassment that was quite new; when having in some degree recovered himself, he looked at the heavens, and then at the smoky atmosphere, as if it were only an ordinary meeting with a friend, and said in his formal, hesitating way:

“Quite a scurcity of rain, lately; I some think we shall have a long drought on’t.”

Benjamin was occupied in untying his bag of dollars, and did not observe the approach of the magistrate, while Natty turned his face, in which every muscle was working, away from him in disgust, without answering. Rather encouraged than daunted by this exhibition of dislike, Hiram, after a short pause, continued:

“The clouds look as if they’d no water in them, and the earth is dreadfully parched. To my judgment, there’ll be short crops this season, if the rain doesn’t fall quite speedily.”

The air with which Mr. Doolittle delivered this prophetic opinion was peculiar to his species. It was a jesuitical, cold, unfeeling, and selfish manner, that seemed to say, “I have kept within the law,” to the man he had so cruelly injured. It quite overcame the restraint that the old hunter had been laboring to impose on himself, and he burst out in a warm glow of indignation.

“Why should the rain fall from the clouds,” he cried, “when you force the tears from the eyes of the old, the sick, and the poor! Away with ye—away with ye! you may be formed in the image of the Maker, but Satan dwells in your heart. Away with ye, I say! I am mournful, and the sight of ye brings bitter thoughts.”

Benjamin ceased thumbing his money, and raised his head at the instant that Hiram, who was thrown off his guard by the invectives of the hunter, unluckily trusted

his person within reach of the steward, who grasped one of his legs, with a hand that had the grip of a vice, and whirled the magistrate from his feet, before he had either time to collect his senses or to exercise the strength he did really possess. Benjamin wanted neither proportions nor manhood in his head, shoulders, and arms, though all the rest of his frame appeared to be originally intended for a very different sort of a man. He exerted his physical powers on the present occasion, with much discretion; and, as he had taken his antagonist at a great disadvantage, the struggle resulted, very soon, in Benjamin getting the magistrate fixed in a posture somewhat similar to his own, and manfully placed face to face.

“You’re a ship’s cousin, I tell ye, Master Doo-but-little,” roared the steward; “some such matter as a ship’s cousin, sir. I know you, I do, with your fair-weather speeches to Squire Dickens, to his face, and then you go and sarve out your grumbling to all the old women in the town, do ye? An’t it enough for any Christian, let him harbor never so much malice, to get an honest old fellow laid by the heels in this fashion, without carrying sail so hard on the poor dog, as if you would run him down as he lay at his anchors? But I’ve logged many a hard thing against your name, master, and now the time’s come to foot up the day’s work, dy’e see; so square yourself, you lubber, square yourself, and we’ll soon know who’s the better man.”

“Jotham!” cried the frightened magistrate—“Jotham! call in the constables. Mr. Penguillium, I command the peace—I order you to keep the peace.”

“There’s been more peace than love atwixt us, master,” cried the steward, making some very unequivocal demonstrations toward hostility; “so mind yourself! square yourself, I say! do you smell this here bit of a sledge-hammer?”

“Lay hands on me if you dare!” exclaimed Hiram, as well as he could, under the grasp which the steward held on his throttle—“lay hands on me if you dare!”

“If you call this laying, master, you are welcome to the eggs,” roared the steward.

It becomes our disagreeable duty to record here, that the acts of Benjamin now become violent; for he darted his sledge-hammer violently on the anvil of Mr. Doolittle’s countenance, and the place became in an instant a scene of tumult and confusion. The crowd rushed in a dense circle around the spot, while some ran to the court-room

to give the alarm, and one or two of the more juvenile part of the multitude had a desperate trial of speed to see who should be the happy man to communicate the critical situation of the magistrate to his wife.

Benjamin worked away, with great industry and a good deal of skill, at his occupation, using one hand to raise up his antagonist, while he knocked him over with the other ; for he would have been disgraced in his own estimation, had he struck a blow on a fallen adversary. By this considerate arrangement he had found means to hammer the visage of Hiram out of all shape, by the time Richard succeeded in forcing his way through the throng to the point of combat. The sheriff afterward declared that, independently of his mortification as preserver of the peace of the county, at this interruption to its harmony, he was never so grieved in his life as when he saw this breach of unity between his favorites. Hiram had in some degree become necessary to his vanity, and Benjamin, strange as it may appear, he really loved. This attachment was exhibited in the first words that he uttered.

“Squire Doolittle ! Squire Doolittle ! I am ashamed to see a man of your character and office forget himself so much as to disturb the peace, insult the court, and beat poor Benjamin in this manner !”

At the sound of Mr. Jones’s voice, the steward ceased his employment, and Hiram had an opportunity of raising his discomfited visage toward the mediator. Emboldened by the sight of the sheriff, Mr. Doolittle again had recourse to his lungs.

“I’ll have law on you for this,” he cried desperately ; “I’ll have the law on you for this. I call on you, Mr. Sheriff, to seize this man, and I demand that you take his body into custody.”

By this time Richard was master of the true state of the case, and, turning to the steward, he said, reproachfully :

“Benjamin, how came you in the stocks ? I always thought you were mild and docile as a lamb. It was for your docility that I most esteemed you. Benjamin ! Benjamin ! you have not only disgraced yourself, but your friends, by this shameless conduct. Bless me ! bless me ! Mr. Doolittle, he seems to have knocked your face all of one side.”

Hiram by this time had got on his feet again, and without the reach of the steward, when he broke forth in violent

appeals for vengeance. The offence was too apparent to be passed over, and the sheriff, mindful of the impartiality exhibited by his cousin in the recent trial of the Leather-Stocking, came to the painful conclusion that it was necessary to commit his major-domo to prison. As the time of Natty's punishment was expired, and Benjamin found that they were to be confined, for that night at least, in the same apartment, he made no very strong objections to the measure, nor spoke of bail, though, as the sheriff preceded the party of constables that conducted them to the jail, he uttered the following remonstrance :

“As to being berthed with Master Bump-ho for a night or so, it's but little I think of it, Squire Dickens, seeing that I calls him an honest man, and one as has a handy way with boat-books and rifles ; but as for owning that a man deserves anything worse than a double allowance, for knocking that carpenter's face a-one-side, as you call it, I'll maintain it's ag'n reason and Christianity. If there's a bloodsucker in this 'ere county, it's that very chap. Ay ! I know him ! and if he hasn't got all the same as dead wood in his headworks, he knows sum'mat of me. Where's the mighty harm, squire, that you take it so much to heart ? It's all the same as any other battle, d'ye see, sir, being broadside to broadside, only that it was fout at anchor, which was what we did in Port Praya roads, when Suff'ring came in among us ; and a suff'ring time he had of it before he got out again.”

Richard thought it unworthy of him to make any reply to this speech, but when his prisoners were safely lodged in an outer dungeon, ordering the bolts to be drawn and the key turned, he withdrew.

Benjamin held frequent and friendly dialogues with different people, through the iron gratings, during the afternoon ; but his companion paced their narrow limits, in his moccasins, with quick, impatient treads, his face hanging on his breast in dejection, or when lifted, at moments, to the idlers at the window, lighted, perhaps, for an instant, with the childish aspect of aged forgetfulness, which would vanish directly in an expression of deep and obvious anxiety.

At the close of the day, Edward was seen at the window, in earnest dialogue with his friend ; and after he departed it was thought that he had communicated words of comfort to the hunter, who threw himself on his pallet and

was soon in a deep sleep. The curious spectators had exhausted the conversation of the steward, who had drunk good fellowship with half of his acquaintance, and, as Natty was no longer in motion, by eight o'clock, Billy Kirby, who was the last loungee at the window, retired into the "Templeton Coffee-house," when Natty rose and hung a blanket before the opening, and the prisoners apparently retired for the night.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"And to avoid the foe's pursuit,
With spurring put their cattle to't ;
And till all four were out of wind,
And danger too, ne'er looked behind."—HUDIBRAS.

As the shades of evening approached, the jurors, witnesses, and other attendants on the court, began to disperse, and before nine o'clock the village was quiet, and its streets nearly deserted. At that hour Judge Temple and his daughter, followed at a short distance by Louisa Grant, walked slowly down the avenue, under the slight shadows of the young poplars, holding the following discourse :

"You can best soothe his wounded spirit, my child," said Marmaduke ; "but it will be dangerous to touch on the nature of his offence ; the sanctity of the laws must be respected."

"Surely, sir," cried the impatient Elizabeth, "those laws that condemn a man like the Leather-Stocking to so severe a punishment, for an offence that even I must think very venial, cannot be perfect in themselves."

"Thou talkest of what thou dost not understand, Elizabeth," returned her father. "Society cannot exist without wholesome restraints. Those restraints cannot be inflicted without security and respect to the persons of those who administer them ; and it would sound ill indeed to report, that a judge had extended favor to a convicted criminal, because he had saved the life of his child."

"I see—I see the difficulty of your situation, dear sir," cried the daughter ; "but, in appreciating the offence of poor Natty, I cannot separate the minister of the law from the man."

“There thou talkest as a woman, child ; it is not for an assault on Hiram Doolittle, but for threatening the life of a constable, who was in the performance of——”

“It is immaterial whether it be one or the other,” interrupted Miss Temple, with a logic that contained more feeling than reason ; “I know Natty to be innocent, and thinking so I must think all wrong who oppress him.”

“His judge among the number ! thy father, Elizabeth ?”

“Nay, nay, nay ; do not put such questions to me ; give me my commission, father, and let me proceed to execute it.”

The Judge paused a moment, smiling fondly on his child, and then dropped his hand affectionately on her shoulder, as he answered :

“Thou hast reason, Bess, and much of it, too, but thy heart lies too near thy head. But listen ; in this pocket-book are two hundred dollars. Go to the prison—there are none in this place to harm thee—give this note to the jailer, and, when thou seest Bumpo, say what thou wilt to the poor old man ; give scope to the feelings of thy warm heart ; but try to remember, Elizabeth, that the laws alone remove us from the condition of the savages ; that he has been criminal, and that his judge was thy father.”

Miss Temple made no reply, but she pressed the hand that held the pocket-book to her bosom, and, taking her friend by the arm, they issued together from the enclosure into the principal street of the village.

As they pursued their walk in silence, under the row of houses, where the deeper gloom of the evening effectually concealed their persons, no sound reached them, excepting the slow tread of a yoke of oxen, with the rattling of a cart, that were moving along the street in the same direction with themselves. The figure of the teamster was just discernible by the dim light, lounging by the side of his cattle with a listless air, as if fatigued by the toil of the day. At the corner, where the jail stood, the progress of the ladies was impeded, for a moment, by the oxen, who were turned up to the side of the building, and given a lock of hay, which they had carried on their necks, as a reward for their patient labor. The whole of this was so natural, and so common, that Elizabeth saw nothing to induce a second glance at the team, until she heard the teamster speaking to his cattle in a low voice :

“Mind yourself, Brindle ; will you, sir ! will you !”

The language itself was so unusual to oxen, with which all who dwell in a new country are familiar ; but there was something in the voice also, that startled Miss Temple. On turning the corner, she necessarily approached the man, and her look was enabled to detect the person of Oliver Edwards, concealed under the coarse garb of a teamster. Their eyes met at the same instant, and, notwithstanding the gloom, and the enveloping cloak of Elizabeth, the recognition was mutual.

“Miss Temple !” “Mr. Edwards !” were exclaimed simultaneously, though a feeling that seemed common to both rendered the words nearly inaudible.

“Is it possible !” exclaimed Edwards, after the moment of doubt had passed ; “do I see you so nigh the jail ! but you are going to the rectory ; I beg pardon, Miss Grant, I believe ; I did not recognize you at first.”

The sigh which Louisa uttered was so faint, that it was only heard by Elizabeth, who replied quickly :

“We are going not only to the jail, Mr. Edwards, but into it. We wish to show the Leather-Stocking that we do not forget his services, and that at the same time we must be just, we are also grateful. I suppose you are on a similar errand ; but let me beg that you will give us leave to precede you ten minutes. Good-night, sir ; I—I—am quite sorry, Mr. Edwards, to see you reduced to such labor ; I am sure my father would——”

“I shall wait your pleasure, madam,” interrupted the youth coldly. “May I beg that you will not mention my being here ?”

“Certainly,” said Elizabeth, returning his bow by a slight inclination of her head, and urging the tardy Louisa forward. As they entered the jailer’s house, however, Miss Grant found leisure to whisper :

“Would it not be well to offer part of your money to Oliver ? half of it will pay the fine of Bumpo ; and he is so unused to hardships ! I am sure my father will subscribe much of his little pittance, to place him in a station that is more worthy of him.”

The involuntary smile that passed over the features of Elizabeth was blended with an expression of deep and heartfelt pity. She did not reply, however, and the appearance of the jailer soon recalled the thoughts of both to the object of their visit.

The rescue of the ladies, and their consequent interest in his prisoner, together with the informal manners that prevailed in the country, all united to prevent any surprise on the part of the jailer, at their request for admission to Bumpo. The note of Judge Temple, however, would have silenced all objections, if he had felt them, and he led the way without hesitation to the apartment that held the prisoners. The instant the key was put into the lock, the hoarse voice of Benjamin was heard, demanding :

“Yo! hoy! who comes there?”

“Some visitors that you’ll be glad to see,” returned the jailer. “What have you done to the lock, that it won’t turn?”

“Handsomely, handsomely, master,” cried the steward; “I have just drove a nail into a berth alongside of this here bolt, as a stopper, d’ye see, so that Master Doo-but-little can’t be running in and breezing up another fight atwixt us; for, to my account, there’ll be but a ban-yan with me soon, seeing that they’ll mulct me of my Spaniards, all the same as if I’d over-flogged the lubber. Throw your ship into the wind, and lay by for a small matter, will ye? and I’ll soon clear a passage.”

The sounds of hammering gave an assurance that the steward was in earnest, and in a short time the lock yielded, when the door was opened.

Benjamin had evidently been anticipating the seizure of his money, for he had made frequent demands on the favorite cask at the “Bold Dragoon,” during the afternoon and evening, and was now in that state which by marine imagery is called “half-seas-over.” It was no easy thing to destroy the balance of the old tar by the effects of liquor, for, as he expressed it himself, “he was too low-rigged not to carry sail in all weathers;” but he was precisely in that condition which is so expressively termed “muddy.” When he perceived who the visitors were, he retreated to the side of the room where his pallet lay, and, regardless of the presence of his young mistress, seated himself on it with an air of great sobriety, placing his back firmly against the wall.

“If you undertake to spoil my locks in this manner, Mr. Pump,” said the jailer, “I shall put a stopper, as you call it, on your legs, and tie you down to your bed.”

“What for should ye, master?” grumbled Benjamin; “I’ve rode out one squall to-day anchored by the heels

and I wants no more of them. Where's the harm of doing all the same as yourself? Leave that there door free out-board, and you'll find no locking inboard, I'll promise ye."

"I must shut up for the night at nine," said the jailer "and its now forty-two minutes past eight." He placed the little candle on a rough pine table, and withdrew.

"Leather-Stocking!" said Elizabeth, when the key of the door was turned on them again, "my good friend, Leather-Stocking! I have come on a message of gratitude. Had you submitted to the search, worthy old man, the death of the deer would have been a trifle, and all would have been well——"

"Submit to the sarch!" interrupted Natty, raising his face from resting on his knees, without rising from the corner where he had seated himself; "d'ye think gal, I would let such a varmint into my hut? No, no—I wouldn't have opened the door to your own sweet countenance then. But they are welcome to search among the coals and ashes now; they'll find only some such heap as is to be seen at every pot-ashery in the mountains."

The old man dropped his face again on one hand, and seemed to be lost in melancholy.

"The hut can be rebuilt, and made better than before," returned Miss Temple; "and it shall be my office to see it done, when your imprisonment is ended."

"Can ye raise the dead, child?" said Natty, in a sorrowful voice: "can ye go into the place where you've laid your fathers, and mothers, and children, and gathered together their ashes, and make the same men and women of them as afore? You do not know what 'tis to lay your head for more than forty years under the cover of the same logs, and to look at the same things for the better part of a man's life. You are young yet, child, but you are one of the most precious of God's creatures. I had hoped for ye that it might come to pass, but it's all over now; this, put to that, will drive the thing quite out of his mind forever."

Miss Temple must have understood the meaning of the old man better than the other listeners; for while Louisa stood innocently by her side, commiserating the griefs of the hunter, she bent her head aside, so as to conceal her features. The action and the feeling that caused it lasted but a moment.

"Other logs, and better, though, can be had, and shall

be found for you, my old defender," she continued. "Your confinement will soon be over, and, before that time arrives, I shall have a house prepared for you, where you may spend the close of your long and harmless life in ease and plenty."

"Ease and plenty! house!" repeated Natty, slowly. "You mean well, you mean well, and I quite mourn that it cannot be; but he has seen me a sight and a laughing-stock for——"

"Damn your stocks," said Benjamin, flourishing his bottle with one hand, from which he had been taking hasty and repeated draughts, while he made gestures of disdain with the other; "who cares for his bilboes? there's a leg that's been stuck up on end like a jibboom for an hour, d'ye see, and what's it the worst for't, ha? canst tell me, what's it the worser, ha?"

"I believe you forget, Mr. Pump, in whose presence you are," said Elizabeth.

"Forget you, Miss Lizzy," returned the steward; "if I do, dam'me; you are not to be forgot, like Goody Prettybones, up at the big house there. I say, old sharp shooter, she may have pretty bones, but I can't say so much for her flesh, d'ye see, for she looks somewhat like an atomy with another man's jacket on. Now for the skin of her face, it's all the same as a new top-sail with a taut bolt-rope, being snug at the leeches, but all in a bight, about the inner cloths."

"Peace—I command you to be silent, sir!" said Elizabeth.

"Ay, ay, ma'am," returned the steward. "You didn't say I shouldn't drink, though."

"We will not speak of what is to become of others," said Miss Temple, turning again to the hunter—"but of your own fortunes, Natty. It shall be my care to see that you pass the rest of your days in ease and plenty."

"Ease and plenty!" again repeated the Leather-Stocking; "what ease can there be to an old man, who must walk a mile across the open fields, before he can find a shade to hide him from a scorching sun! or what plenty is there where you hunt a day, and not start a buck, or see anything bigger than a mink, or maybe a stray fox! Ah! I shall have a hard time after them very beavers, for this fine. I must go low toward the Pennsylvania line in search of the creatures, maybe a hundred mile; for they are not to be got here-away. No, no—your betterments and clear

ings have druv the knowing things out of the country and instead of beaver-dams, which is the nater of the animal, and according to Providence, you turn back the waters over the low grounds with your mill-dams, as if 'twas in man to stay the drops from going where He wills them to go—Benny, unless you stop your hand from going so often to your mouth, you won't be ready to start when the time comes."

"Hark'ee, Master Bump-ho," said the steward; "don't you fear for Ben. When the watch is called, set me on my legs, and give me the bearings and the distance of where you want me to steer, and I'll carry sail with the best of you, I will."

"The time has come now," said the hunter, listening; "I hear the horns of the oxen rubbing ag'in the side of the jail."

"Well, say the word, and then heave ahead, shipmate," said Benjamin.

"You won't betray us, gal?" said Natty, looking simply into the face of Elizabeth—"you won't betray an old man, who craves to breathe the clear air of heaven? I mean no harm; and if the law says that I must pay the hundred dollars, I'll take the season through, but it shall be forthcoming; and this good man will help me."

"You catch them," said Benjamin, with a sweeping gesture of his arm, "and if they get away again, call me a slink; that's all."

"But what mean you?" cried the wondering Elizabeth. "Here you must stay for thirty days; but I have the money for your fine in this purse. Take it; pay it in the morning, and summon patience for your month. I will come often to see you, with my friend; we will make up your clothes with our own hands; indeed, indeed, you shall be comfortable."

"Would ye, children?" said Natty, advancing across the floor with an air of kindness, and taking the hand of Elizabeth, "would ye be so kearful of an old man, and just for shooting a beast which cost him nothing? Such things doesn't run in the blood, I believe, for you seem not to forget a favor. Your little fingers couldn't do muck on a buckskin, nor be you used to push such a thread as sinews. But if he hasn't got past hearing, he shall hear it and know it, that he may see, like me, there is some who know how to remember a kindness."

"Tell him nothing," cried Elizabeth, earnestly; "if you love me, if you regard my feelings, tell him nothing. It is of yourself only I would talk, and for yourself only I act. I grieve, Leather-Stocking, that the law requires that you should be detained here so long; but, after all, it will be only a short month, and——"

"A month?" exclaimed Natty, opening his mouth with his usual laugh, "not a day, nor a night, nor an hour, gal. Judge Temple may sintence, but he can't keep without a better dungeon than this. I was taken once by the French, and they put sixty-two of us in a block-house, nigh hand to old Frontinac; but 'twas easy to cut through a pine log to them that was used to timber." The hunter paused, and looked cautiously around the room, when, laughing again, he shoved the steward gently from his post, and removing the bedclothes, discovered a hole recently cut in the logs with a mallet and chisel. "It's only a kick, and the outside piece is off, and then——"

"Off! ay, off!" cried Benjamin, rising from his stupor; "well, here's off. Ay! ay! you catch 'em, and I'll hold on to them said beaver-hats."

"I fear this lad will trouble me much," said Natty; "'twill be a hard pull for the mountain, should they take the scent soon, and he is not in a state of mind to run."

"Run!" echoed the steward; "no, sheer alongside, and let's have a fight of it."

"Peace!" ordered Elizabeth.

"Ay, ay, ma'am."

"You will not leave us, surely, Leather-Stocking," continued Miss Temple; "I beseech you, reflect that you will be driven to the woods entirely, and that you are fast getting old. Be patient for a little time, when you can go abroad openly, and with honor."

"Is there beaver to be caught here, gal?"

"If not, here is money to discharge the fine, and in a month you are free. See, here it is in gold."

"Gold!" said Natty, with a kind of childish curiosity; "it's long sin' I've seen a gold-piece. We used to get the broad joes, in the old war, as plenty as the bears be now. I remember there was a man in Dieskau's army, that was killed, who had a dozen of the shining things sewed up in his shirt. I didn't handle them myself, but I seen them cut out with my own eyes; they was bigger and brighter than them be."

"These are English guineas, and are yours," said Elizabeth; "an earnest of what shall be done for you."

"Me! why should you give me this treasure!" said Natty, looking earnestly at the maiden.

"Why! have you not saved my life? did you not rescue me from the jaws of the beast?" exclaimed Elizabeth, veiling her eyes, as if to hide some hideous object from her view.

The hunter took the money, and continued turning it in his hand for some time, piece by piece, talking aloud during the operation.

"There's a rifle, they say, out on the Cherry Valley, that will carry a hundred rods and kill. I've seen good guns in my day, but none quite equal to that. A hundred rods with any sartainty is great shooting! Well, well—I'm old, and the gun I have will answer my time. Here, child, take back your gold. But the hour has come; I hear him talking to the cattle, and I must be going. You won't tell of us, gal—you won't tell of us, will ye?"

"Tell of you!" echoed Elizabeth. "But take the money, old man; take the money, even if you go into the mountains."

"No, no," said Natty, shaking his head kindly; "I would not rob you so for twenty rifles. But there's one thing you can do for me, if ye will, that no other is at hand to do."

"Name it—name it."

"Why, it's only to buy a canister of powder—'twill cost two silver dollars. Benny Pump has the money ready, but we daren't come into the town to get it. Nobody has it but the Frenchman. 'Tis of the best, and just suits a rifle. Will you get it for me, gal?—say, will you get it for me?"

"Will I? I will bring it to you, Leather-Stocking, though I toil a day in quest of you through the woods. But where shall I find you, and how?"

"Where?" said Natty, musing a moment—"to-morrow on the Vision; on the very top of the Vision, I'll meet you, child, just as the sun gets over our heads. See that it's the fine grain; you'll know it by the gloss and the price."

"I will do it," said Elizabeth, firmly.

Natty now seated himself, and placing his feet in the hole, with a slight effort he opened a passage through into the street. The ladies heard the rustling of hay, and well understood the reason why Edwards was in the capacity of a teamster.

"Come, Benny," said the hunter: "'twill be no darker to-night, for the moon will rise in an hour."

“Stay!” exclaimed Elizabeth; “it should not be said that you escaped in the presence of the daughter of Judge Temple. Return, Leather-Stocking, and let us retire, before you execute your plan.”

Natty was about to reply, when the approaching footsteps of the jailer announced the necessity of his immediate return. He had barely time to regain his feet, and to conceal the hole with the bedclothes, across which Benjamin very opportunely fell, before the key was turned, and the door of the apartment opened.

“Isn’t Miss Temple ready to go?” said the civil jailer; “it’s the usual hour for locking up.”

“I follow you, sir,” returned Elizabeth; “good-night, Leather-Stocking.”

“It’s a fine grain, gal, and I think ’twill carry lead further than common. I am getting old, and can’t follow up the game with the step I used to could.”

Miss Temple waved her hand for silence, and preceded Louisa and the keeper from the apartment. The man turned the key once, and observed that he would return and secure his prisoners, when he had lighted the ladies to the street. Accordingly, they parted at the door of the building, when the jailer retired to his dungeons, and the ladies walked, with throbbing hearts, toward the corner.

“Now the Leather-Stocking refuses the money,” whispered Louisa, “it can all be given to Mr. Edwards, and that added to——”

“Listen!” said Elizabeth; “I hear the rustling of the hay; they are escaping at this moment. Oh! they will be detected instantly!”

By this time they were at the corner, where Edwards and Natty were in the act of drawing the almost helpless body of Benjamin through the aperture. The oxen had started back from their hay, and were standing with their heads down the street, leaving room for the party to act in.

“Throw the hay into the cart,” said Edwards, “or they will suspect how it has been done. Quick, that they may not see it.”

Natty had just returned from executing this order, when the light of the keeper’s candle shone through the hole, and instantly his voice was heard in the jail, exclaiming for his prisoners.

"What is to be done now?" said Edwards—"this drunken fellow will cause our detection, and we have not a moment to spare."

"Who's drunk, ye lubber?" muttered the steward.

"A break-jail! a break-jail!" shouted five or six voices from within.

"We must leave him," said Edwards.

"'Twouldn't be kind, lad," returned Natty; "he took half the disgrace of the stocks on himself to-day, and the creater has feeling."

At this moment two or three men were heard issuing from the door of the "Bold Dragoon," and among them the voice of Billy Kirby.

"There's no moon yet," cried the wood-chopper; "but it's a clear night. Come, who's for home? Hark! what a rumpus they're kicking up in the jail—here's go and see what it's about."

"We shall be lost," said Edwards, "if we don't drop this man."

At that instant Elizabeth moved close to him, and said rapidly, in a low voice:

"Lay him in the cart, and start the oxen; no one will look there."

"There's a woman's quickness in the thought," said the youth.

The proposition was no sooner made than executed. The steward was seated on the hay, and enjoined to hold his peace and apply the goad that was placed in his hand, while the oxen were urged on. So soon as this arrangement was completed, Edwards and the hunter stole along the houses for a short distance, when they disappeared through an opening that led into the rear of the buildings. The oxen were in brisk motion, and presently the cries of pursuit were heard in the street. The ladies quickened their pace, with a wish to escape the crowd of constables and idlers that were approaching, some execrating, and some laughing at the exploit of the prisoners. In the confusion, the voice of Kirby was plainly distinguishable above all the others, shouting and swearing that he would have the fugitives, threatening to bring back Natty in one pocket, and Benjamin in the other.

"Spread yourselves, men," he cried, as he passed the ladies, his heavy feet sounding along the street like the tread of a dozen; "spread yourselves; to the mountains!"

they'll be in the mountains in a quarter of an hour, and then look out for a long rifle."

His cries were echoed from twenty mouths, for not only the jail, but the taverns had sent forth their numbers, some earnest in the pursuit, and others joining it as in sport.

As Elizabeth turned in at her father's gate she saw the wood-chopper stop at the cart, when she gave Benjamin up for lost. While they were hurrying up the walk, two figures, stealing cautiously but quickly under the shades of the trees, met the eyes of the ladies, and in a moment Edwards and the hunter crossed their path.

"Miss Temple, I may never see you again," exclaimed the youth; "let me thank you for all your kindness; you do not, cannot know my motives."

"Fly! fly!" cried Elizabeth; "the village is alarmed. Do not be found conversing with me at such a moment, and in these grounds."

"Nay, I must speak, though detection were certain."

"Your retreat to the bridge is already cut off; before you can gain the wood your pursuers will be there. If——"

"If what?" cried the youth. "Your advice has saved me once already; I will follow it to death."

"The street is now silent and vacant," said Elizabeth, after a pause; "cross it, and you will find my father's boat in the lake. It would be easy to land from it where you please in the hills."

"But Judge Temple might complain of the trespass."

"His daughter shall be accountable, sir."

The youth uttered something in a low voice, that was heard only by Elizabeth, and turned to execute what she had suggested. As they were separating, Natty approached the females, and said:

"You'll remember the canister of powder, children. Them beavers must be had, and I and the pups be getting old; we want the best of ammunition."

"Come, Natty," said Edwards, impatiently.

"Coming, lad, coming. God bless you, young ones, both of ye, for ye mean well and kindly to the old man."

The ladies paused until they had lost sight of the retreating figures, when they immediately entered the mansion-house.

While this scene was passing in the walk, Kirby had overtaken the cart, which was his own, and had been driven

by Edwards, without asking the owner, from the place where the patient oxen usually stood at evening, waiting the pleasure of their master.

"Woa—come hither, Golden," he cried; "why, how come you off the end of the bridge, where I left you, dummies?"

"Heave ahead," muttered Benjamin, giving a random blow with his lash, that alighted on the shoulder of the other.

"Who the devil be you?" cried Billy, turning round in surprise, but unable to distinguish, in the dark, the hard visage that was just peering over the cart-rails.

"Who be I? why I'm helmsman aboard of his here craft, d'ye see, and a straight wake I'm making of it. Ay, ay! I've got the bridge right ahead, and the bilboes dead aft; I calls that good steerage, boy. Heave ahead."

"Lay your lash in the right spot, Mr. Benny Pump," said the wood-chopper, "or I'll put you in the palm of my hand and box your ears. Where be you going with my team?"

"Team!"

"Ay, my cart and oxen."

"Why, you must know, Master Kirby, that the Leather-Stocking and I—that's Benny Pump—you knows Ben?—well, Benny and I—no, me and Benny; dam'me if I know how 'tis; but some of us are bound after a cargo of beaver-skins, d'ye see, so we've pressed the cart to ship them 'ome in. I say, Master Kirby, what a lubberly oar you pull—you handle an oar, boy, pretty much as a cow would a musket, or a lady would a marling-spike."

Billy had discovered the state of the steward's mind, and he walked for some time alongside of the cart, musing with himself, when he took the goad from Benjamin (who fell back on the hay and was soon asleep) and drove his cattle down the street, over the bridge, and up the mountain, toward a clearing in which he was to work the next day, without any other interruption than a few hasty questions from parties of the constables.

Elizabeth stood for an hour at the window of her room, and saw the torches of the pursuers gliding along the side of the mountain, and heard their shouts and alarms; but, at the end of that time, the last party returned, wearied and disappointed, and the village became as still as when she issued from the gate on her mission to the jail.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“And I could weep”—th’ Oneida chief
 His descant wildly thus begun—
 “But that I may not stain with grief
 The death-song of my father’s son.”

—GERTRUDE OF WYOMING.

IT was yet early on the following morning, when Elizabeth and Louisa met by appointment, and proceeded to the store of Monsieur Le Quoi, in order to redeem the pledge the former had given to the Leather-Stocking. The people were again assembling for the business of the day, but the hour was too soon for a crowd, and the ladies found the place in possession of its polite owner, Billy Kirby, one female customer, and the boy who did the duty of helper or clerk.

Monsieur Le Quoi was perusing a packet of letters with manifest delight, while the wood-chopper, with one hand thrust in his bosom, and the other in the folds of his jacket, holding an axe under his right arm, stood sympathizing in the Frenchman’s pleasure with good-natured interest. The freedom of manners that prevailed in the new settlements commonly levelled all difference in rank, and with it, frequently, all considerations of education and intelligence. At the time the ladies entered the store, they were unseen by the owner, who was saying to Kirby :

“Ah! ha! Monsieur Beel, dis lettair mak me de most happi of mans. Ah! ma chere France! I vill see you again.”

“I rejoice, monsieur, at anything that contributes to your happiness,” said Elizabeth, “but hope we are not going to lose you entirely.”

The complaisant shopkeeper changed the language to French, and recounted rapidly to Elizabeth his hopes of being permitted to return to his own country. Habit had, however, so far altered the manners of this pliable personage, that he continued to serve the wood-chopper, who was in quest of some tobacco, while he related to his more gentle visitor the happy change that had taken place in the dispositions of his own countrymen.

The amount of it all was, that Mr. Le Quoi, who had fled from his own country more through terror than because he

was offensive to the ruling powers in France, had succeeded at length in getting an assurance that his return to the West Indies would be unnoticed; and the Frenchman, who had sunk into the character of a country shopkeeper with so much grace, was about to emerge again from his obscurity into his proper level in society.

We need not repeat the civil things that passed between the parties on this occasion, nor recount the endless repetitions of sorrow that the delighted Frenchman expressed at being compelled to quit the society of Miss Temple. Elizabeth took an opportunity, during this expenditure of polite expressions, to purchase the powder privately of the boy, who bore the generic appellation of Jonathan. Before they parted, however, Mr. Le Quoi, who seemed to think that he had not said enough, solicited the honor of a private interview with the heiress, with a gravity in his air that announced the importance of the subject. After conceding the favor, and appointing a more favorable time for the meeting, Elizabeth succeeded in getting out of the store, into which the countrymen now began to enter, as usual, where they met with the same attention and *bienveillance* as formerly.

Elizabeth and Louisa pursued their walk as far as the bridge in profound silence; but when they reached that place the latter stopped, and appeared anxious to utter something that her diffidence suppressed.

"Are you ill, Louisa?" exclaimed Miss Temple; "had we not better return, and seek another opportunity to meet the old man?"

"Not ill, but terrified. Oh! I never, never can go on that hill again with you only. I am not equal to it, indeed I am not."

This was an unexpected declaration to Elizabeth, who, although she experienced no idle apprehension of a danger that no longer existed, felt most sensitively all the delicacy of maiden modesty. She stood for some time, deeply reflecting within herself; but, sensible it was a time for action instead of reflection, she struggled to shake off her hesitation, and replied, firmly:

"Well, then it must be done by me alone. There is no other than yourself to be trusted, or poor old Leather-Stocking will be discovered. Wait for me in the edge of these woods, that at least I may not be seen strolling in the hills by myself just now. One would not wish to create

remarks, Louisa—if—if—— You will wait for me, dear girl?"

"A year, in sight of the village, Miss Temple," returned the agitated Louisa, "but do not, do not ask me to go on that hill."

Elizabeth found that her companion was really unable to proceed, and they completed their arrangement by posting Louisa out of the observation of the people who occasionally passed, but nigh the road, and in plain view of the whole valley. Miss Temple then proceeded alone. She ascended the road which has been so often mentioned in our narrative, with an elastic and firm step, fearful that the delay in the store of Mr. Le Quoi, and the time necessary for reaching the summit, would prevent her being punctual to the appointment. Whenever she passed an opening in the bushes, she would pause for breath, or, perhaps, drawn from her pursuit by the picture at her feet, would linger a moment to gaze at the beauties of the valley. The long drought had, however, changed its coat of verdure to a hue of brown, and, though the same localities were there, the view wanted the lively and cheering aspect of early summer. Even the heavens seemed to share in the dried appearance of the earth, for the sun was concealed by a haziness in the atmosphere, which looked like a thin smoke without a particle of moisture, if such a thing were possible. The blue sky was scarcely to be seen, though now and then there was a faint lighting up in spots, through which masses of rolling vapor could be discerned gathering around the horizon, as if nature were struggling to collect her floods for the relief of man. The very atmosphere that Elizabeth inhaled was hot and dry, and by the time she reached the point where the course led her from the highway she experienced a sensation like suffocation. But, disregarding her feelings she hastened to execute her mission, dwelling on nothing but the disappointment, and even the helplessness, the hunter would experience without her aid.

On the summit of the mountain which Judge Temple had named the "Vision," a little spot had been cleared, in order that a better view might be obtained of the village and the valley. At this point Elizabeth understood the hunter she was to meet him; and thither she urged her way, as expeditiously as the difficulty of the ascent, and the impediment of a forest, in a state of nature, would admit. Numberless were the fragments of rocks, trunks of

fallen trees, and branches, with which she had to contend; but every difficulty vanished before her resolution, and by her own watch, she stood on the desired spot several minutes before the appointed hour.

After resting a moment on the end of a log, Miss Temple cast a glance about her in quest of her old friend, but he was evidently not in the clearing; she arose and walked around its skirts, examining every place where she thought it probable Natty might deem it prudent to conceal himself. Her search was fruitless; and, after exhausting not only herself, but her conjectures, in efforts to discover or imagine his situation, she ventured to trust her voice in that solitary place.

“Natty! Leather-Stocking! old man!” she called aloud, in every direction; but no answer was given, excepting the reverberations of her own clear tones, as they were echoed in the parched forest.

Elizabeth approached the brow of the mountain, where a faint cry, like the noise produced by striking the hand against the mouth, at the same time that the breath is strongly exhaled, was heard answering to her own voice. Not doubting in the least that it was the Leather-Stocking lying in wait for her, and who gave that signal to indicate the place where he was to be found, Elizabeth descended for near a hundred feet, until she gained a little natural terrace, thinly scattered with trees, that grew in the fissures of the rocks, which were covered by a scanty soil. She had advanced to the edge of this platform, and was gazing over the perpendicular precipice that formed its face, when a rustling among the dry leaves near her drew her eyes in another direction. Our heroine certainly was startled by the object that she then saw, but a moment restored her self-possession, and she advanced firmly, and with some interest in her manner, to the spot.

Mohegan was seated on the trunk of a fallen oak, with his tawny visage turned toward her, and his eyes fixed on her face with an expression of wildness and fire, that would have terrified a less resolute female. His blanket had fallen from his shoulders, and was lying in folds around him, leaving his breast, arms, and most of his body bare. The medallion of Washington reposed on his chest, a badge of distinction that Elizabeth well knew he only produced on great and solemn occasions. But the whole appearance of the aged chief was more studied than common, and in

some particulars it was terrific. The long black hair was plaited on his head, falling away, so as to expose his high forehead and piercing eyes. In the enormous incisions of his ears were entwined ornaments of silver, beads, and porcupine's quills, mingled in a rude taste, and after the Indian fashions. A large drop, composed of similar materials, was suspended from the cartilage of his nose, and, falling below his lips, rested on his chin. Streaks of red paint crossed his wrinkled brow, and were traced down his cheeks, with such variations in the lines as caprice or custom suggested. His body was also colored in the same manner; the whole exhibiting an Indian warrior prepared for some event of more than usual moment.

"John! how fare you, worthy John?" said Elizabeth, as she approached him; "you have long been a stranger in the village. You promised me a willow basket, and I have long had a shirt of calico in readiness for you."

The Indian looked steadily at her for some time without answering, and then, shaking his head, he replied, in his low, guttural tones:

"John's hand can make baskets no more—he wants no shirt."

"But if he should, he will know where to come for it," returned Miss Temple. "Indeed, old John, I feel as if you had a natural right to order what you will from us."

"Daughter," said the Indian, "listen: Six times ten hot summers have passed since John was young; tall like a pine; straight like the bullet of Hawk-eye; strong as a buffalo; spry as the cat of the mountain. He was strong, and a warrior like the Young Eagle. If his tribe wanted to track the Maquas for many suns, the eye of Chingachgook found the print of their moccasins. If the people feasted and were glad, as they counted the scalps of their enemies, it was on his pole they hung. If the squaws cried because there was no meat for their children, he was the first in the chase. His bullet was swifter than the deer. Daughter, then Chingachgook struck his tomahawk into the trees; it was to tell the lazy ones where to find him and the Mingoës—but he made no baskets."

"Those times have gone by, old warrior," returned Elizabeth; "since then your people have disappeared, and, in place of chasing your enemies, you have learned to fear God and to live at peace."

"Stand here, daughter, where you can see the great

spring, the wigwams of your father, and the land on the crooked river. John was young when his tribe gave away the country, in council, from where the blue mountain stands above the water, to where the Susquehanna is hid by the trees. All this, and all that grew in it, and all that walked over it, and all that fed there, they gave to the Fire-eater—for they loved him. He was strong, and they were women, and he helped them. No Delaware would kill a deer that ran in his woods, nor stop a bird that flew over his land; for it was his. Has John lived in peace? Daughter, since John was young, he has seen the white man from Frontinac come down on his white brothers at Albany and fight. Did they fear God? He has seen his English and his American fathers burying their tomahawks in each other's brains, for this very land. Did they fear God, and live in peace? He has seen the land pass away from the Fire-eater, and his children, and the child of his child, and a new chief set over the country. Did they live in peace who did this? did they fear God?"

"Such is the custom of the whites, John. Do not the Delawares fight, and exchange their lands for powder, and blankets, and merchandise?"

The Indian turned his dark eyes on his companion, and kept them there with a scrutiny that alarmed her a little.

"Where are the blankets and merchandise that bought the right of the Fire-eater?" he replied, in a more animated voice; "are they with him in his wigwam? Did they say to him, Brother, sell us your land, and take this gold, this silver, these blankets, these rifles, or even this rum? No; they tore it from him, as a scalp is torn from an enemy: and they that did it looked not behind them, to see whether he lived or died. Do such men live in peace and fear the Great Spirit?"

"But you hardly understand the circumstances," said Elizabeth, more embarrassed than she would own, even to herself. "If you knew our laws and customs better, you would judge differently of our acts. Do not believe evil of my father, old Mohegan, for he is just and good."

"The brother of Miquon is good, and he will do right. I have said it to Hawk-eye—I have said it to the Young Eagle that the brother of Miquon would do justice."

"Whom call you the Young Eagle?" said Elizabeth, averting her face from the gaze of the Indian, as she asked the question; "whence comes he, and what are his rights?"

“Has my daughter lived so long with him to ask this question?” returned the Indian, warily. “Old age freezes up the blood, as the frosts cover the great spring in winter; but youth keeps the streams of the blood open like a sun in the time of blossoms. The Young Eagle has eyes; had he no tongue?”

The loveliness to which the old warrior alluded was in no degree diminished by his allegorical speech; for the blushes of the maiden who listened covered her burning cheeks till her dark eyes seemed to glow with their reflection; but, after struggling a moment with shame, she laughed, as if unwilling to undersand him seriously, and replied in pleasantry:

“Not to make me the mistress of his secret. He is too much of a Delaware to tell his secret thoughts to a woman.”

“Daughter, the Great Spirit made your father with a white skin, and he made mine with a red; but he colored both their hearts with blood. When young, it is swift and warm; but when old, it is still and cold. Is there difference below the skin? No. Once John had a woman. She was the mother of so many sons”—he raised his hand with three fingers elevated—“and she had daughters that would have made the young Delawares happy. She was kind, daughter, and what I said she did. You have different fashions; but do you think John did not love the wife of his youth—the mother of his children?”

“And what has become of your family, John—your wife and your children?” asked Elizabeth, touched by the Indian’s manner.

“Where is the ice that covered the great spring? It is melted, and gone with the waters. John has lived till all his people have left him for the land of spirits; his time has come, and he is ready.”

Mohegan dropped his head in his blanket, and sat in silence. Miss Temple knew not what to say. She wished to draw the thoughts of the old warrior from his gloomy recollections, but there was a dignity in his sorrow, and in his fortitude, that repressed her efforts to speak. After a long pause, however, she renewed the discourse by asking:

“Where is the Leather-Stocking, John? I have brought this canister of powder at his request; but he is nowhere to be seen. Will you take charge of it, and see it delivered?”

The Indian raised his head slowly, and looked earnestly at the gift, which she put into his hand.

“This is the great enemy of my nation. Without this, when could the white man drive the Delawares? Daughter, the Great Spirit gave your fathers to know how to make guns and powder, that they might sweep the Indians from the land. There will soon be no red-skin in the country. When John has gone, the last will leave these hills, and his family will be dead.” The aged warrior stretched his body forward, leaning an elbow on his knee, and appeared to be taking a parting look at the objects of the vale, which were still visible through the misty atmosphere, though the air seemed to thicken at each moment around Miss Temple, who became conscious of an increased difficulty of respiration. The eye of Mohegan changed gradually from its sorrowful expression to a look of wildness that might be supposed to border on the inspiration of a prophet, as he continued—“But he will go on to the country where his fathers have met. The game shall be plenty as the fish in the lakes. No woman shall cry for meat; no Mingo can ever come. The chase shall be for children; and all just red men shall live together as brothers.”

“John! this is not the heaven of a Christian,” cried Miss Temple; “you deal now in the superstition of your forefathers.”

“Fathers! sons!” said Mohegan, with firmness—“all gone—all gone!—I have no son but the Young Eagle, and he has the blood of a white man.”

“Tell me, John,” said Elizabeth, willing to draw his thoughts to other subjects, and at the same time yielding to her own powerful interest in the youth; “who is this Mr. Edwards? why are you so fond of him, and whence does he come?”

The Indian started at the question, which evidently recalled his recollection to earth. Taking her hand, he drew Miss Temple to a seat beside him, and pointed to the country beneath them.

“See, daughter,” he said, directing her looks toward the north; “as far as your young eyes can see, it was the land of his——”

But immense volumes of smoke at that moment rolled over their heads, and, whirling in the eddies formed by the mountains, interposed a barrier to their sight, while he was speaking. Startled by this circumstance, Miss Temple sprang to her feet, and, turning her eyes toward the summit of the mountain, she beheld it covered by a similar

canopy, while a roaring sound was heard in the forest above her like the rushing of winds.

"What means it, John!" she exclaimed; "we are enveloped in smoke, and I feel a heat like the glow of a furnace."

Before the Indian could reply, a voice was heard crying in the woods:

"John! where are you, old Mohegan? the woods are on fire, and you have but a minute for escape."

The chief put his hand before his mouth, and, making it play on his lips, produced the kind of noise that had attracted Elizabeth to the place, when a quick and hurried step was heard dashing through the dried underbrush and bushes, and presently Edwards rushed to his side, with horror in every feature.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Love rules the court, the camp, the grove."

—LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

"It would have been sad, indeed, to lose you in such a manner, my old friend," said Oliver, catching his breath for utterance. "Up and away! even now we may be too late; the flames are circling round the point of the rock below, and, unless we can pass there, our only chance must be over the precipice. Away! away! shake off your apathy, John; now is the time of need."

Mohegan pointed toward Elizabeth, who, forgetting her danger, had sunk back to a projection of the rock as soon as she recognized the sounds of Edwards's voice, and said with something like awakened animation:

"Save her—leave John to die."

"Her! whom mean you?" cried the youth, turning quickly to the place the other indicated; but when he saw the figure of Elizabeth bending toward him in an attitude that powerfully spoke terror, blended with reluctance to meet him in such a place, the shock deprived him of speech.

"Miss Temple!" he cried, when he found words; "you here! is such a death reserved for you!"

"No, no, no—no death, I hope, for any of us, Mr. Edwards," she replied, endeavoring to speak calmly; "there

is smoke, but no fire to harm us. Let us endeavor to retire."

"Take my arm," said Edwards; "there must be an opening in some direction for your retreat. Are you equal to the effort?"

"Certainly. You surely magnify the danger, Mr. Edwards. Lead me out the way you came."

"I will—I will," cried the youth, with a kind of hysterical utterance. "No, no—there is no danger—I have alarmed you unnecessarily."

"But shall we leave the Indian—can we leave him, as he says, to die?"

An expression of painful emotion crossed the face of the young man; he stopped, and cast a longing look at Mohc-gan, but, dragging his companion after him, even against her will, he pursued his way with enormous strides toward the pass by which he had just entered the circle of flame.

"Do not regard him," he said, in those tones that denote a desperate calmness; "he is used to the woods, and such scenes; and he will escape up the mountain—over the rock—or he can remain where he is in safety."

"You thought not so this moment, Edwards! Do not leave him there to meet with such a death," cried Elizabeth, fixing a look on the countenance of her conductor that seemed to distrust his sanity.

"An Indian burn! who ever heard of an Indian dying by fire? an Indian cannot burn; the idea is ridiculous. Hasten, hasten, Miss Temple, or the smoke may incommode you."

"Edwards! your look, your eye, terrifies me! tell me the danger; is it greater than it seems? I am equal to any trial."

"If we reach the point of yon rock before that sheet of fire, we are safe, Miss Temple," exclaimed the young man in a voice that burst without the bounds of his forced composure. "Fly! the struggle is for life!"

The place of the interview between Miss Temple and the Indian has already been described as one of those platforms of rock, which form a sort of terrace in the mountains of that country, and the face of it, we have said, was both high and perpendicular. Its shape was nearly a natural arc, the ends of which blended with the mountain, at points where its sides were less abrupt in their descent. It was round one of these terminations of the sweep of the

rock that Edwards had ascended, and it was toward the same place that he urged Elizabeth to a desperate exertion of speed.

Immense clouds of white smoke had been pouring over the summit of the mountain, and had concealed the approach and ravages of the element ; but a crackling sound drew the eyes of Miss Temple, as she flew over the ground supported by the young man, toward the outline of smoke where she already perceived the waving flames shooting forward from the vapor, now flaring high in the air, and then bending to the earth, seeming to light into combustion every stick and shrub on which they breathed. The sight aroused them to redoubled efforts ; but, unfortunately, a collection of the tops of trees, old and dried, lay directly across their course ; and at the very moment when both had thought their safety insured, the warm current of the air swept a forked tongue of flame across the pile, which lighted at the touch ; and when they reached the spot, the flying pair were opposed by the surly roaring of a body of fire, as if a furnace were glowing in their path. They recoiled from the heat, and stood on a point of the rock, gazing in a stupor at the flames which were spreading rapidly down the mountain, whose side, too, became a sheet of living fire. It was dangerous for one clad in the light and airy dress of Elizabeth to approach even the vicinity of the raging element ; and those flowing robes, that gave such softness and grace to her form, seemed now to be formed for the instruments of her destruction.

The villagers were accustomed to resort to that hill, in quest of timber and fuel ; in procuring which, it was their usage to take only the bodies of the trees, leaving the tops and branches to decay under the operations of the weather. Much of the hill was, consequently, covered with such light fuel, which, having been scorched under the sun for the last two months, was ignited with a touch. Indeed, in some cases, there did not appear to be any contact between the fire and these piles, but the flames seemed to dart from heap to heap, as the fabulous fire of the temple is represented to reillumine its neglected lamp.

There was beauty as well as terror in the sight, and Edwards and Elizabeth stood viewing the progress of the desolation, with a strange mixture of horror and interest. The former, however, shortly roused himself to new exertions, and, drawing his companion after him, they skirted

the edge of the smoke, the young man penetrating frequently into its dense volumes in search of a passage, but in every instance without success. In this manner they proceeded in a semicircle around the upper part of the terrace, until arriving at the verge of the precipice opposite to the point where Edwards had ascended, the horrid conviction burst on both, at the same instant, that they were completely encircled by fire. So long as a single pass up or down the mountain was unexplored, there was hope; but when retreat seemed to be absolutely impracticable, the horror of their situation broke upon Elizabeth as powerfully as if she had hitherto considered the danger light.

"This mountain is doomed to be fatal to me!" she whispered; "we shall find our graves on it!"

"Say not so, Miss Temple; there is yet hope," returned the youth, in the same tone, while the vacant expression of his eye contradicted his words; "let us return to the point of the rock—there is—there must be—some place about it where we can descend."

"Lead me there," exclaimed Elizabeth; "let us leave no effort untried." She did not wait for his compliance, but turning, retraced her steps to the brow of the precipice, murmuring to herself, in suppressed, hysterical sobs, "My father! my poor, my distracted father!"

Edwards was by her side in an instant, and with aching eyes he examined every fissure in the crags in quest of some opening that might offer facilities for flight. But the smooth, even surface of the rocks afforded hardly a resting-place for a foot, much less those continued projections which would have been necessary for a descent of nearly a hundred feet. Edwards was not slow in feeling the conviction that this hope was also futile, and, with a kind of feverish despair that still urged him to action, he turned to some new expedient.

"There is nothing left, Miss Temple," he said, "but to lower you from this place to the rock beneath. If Natty were here, or even that Indian could be roused, their ingenuity and long practice would easily devise methods to do it; but I am a child at this moment in everything but daring. Where shall I find means? This dress of mine is so light, and there is so little of it—then the blanket of Mohegan; we must try—we must try—anything is better than to see you a victim to such a death!"

"And what will become of you?" said Elizabeth. "Indeed, indeed, neither you nor John must be sacrificed to my safety."

He heard her not, for he was already by the side of Mohegan, who yielded his blanket without a question, retaining his seat with Indian dignity and composure, though his own situation was even more critical than that of the others. The blanket was cut into shreds, and the fragments fastened together; the loose linen jacket of the youth and the light muslin shawl of Elizabeth were attached to them, and the whole thrown over the rocks with the rapidity of lightning; but the united pieces did not reach half-way to the bottom.

"It will not do—it will not do!" cried Elizabeth; "for me there is no hope! The fire comes slowly, but certainly. See, it destroys the very earth before it!"

Had the flames spread on that rock with half the quickness with which they leaped from bush to tree in other parts of the mountain, our painful task would have soon ended; for they would have consumed already the captives they inclosed. But the peculiarity of their situation afforded Elizabeth and her companion the respite of which they had availed themselves to make the efforts we have recorded.

The thin covering of earth on the rock supported but a scanty and faded herbage, and most of the trees that had found root in the fissures had already died, during the intense heats of preceding summers. Those which still retained the appearance of life bore a few dry and withered leaves, while the others were merely the wrecks of pines, oaks, and maples. No better materials to feed the fire could be found, had there been a communication with the flames; but the ground was destitute of the brush that led the destructive element, like a torrent, over the remainder of the hill. As auxiliary to this scarcity of fuel, one of the large springs which abound in that country gushed out of the side of the ascent above, and, after creeping sluggishly along the level land, saturating the mossy covering of the rock with moisture, it swept around the base of the little cone that formed the pinnacle of the mountain, and, entering the canopy of smoke near one of the terminations of the terrace, found its way to the lake, not by dashing from rock to rock, but by the secret channels of the earth. It would rise to the surface, here and there, in the

wet seasons, but in the droughts of summer it was to be traced only by the bogs and moss that announced the proximity of water. When the fire reached this barrier, it was compelled to pause, until a concentration of its heat could overcome the moisture, like an army awaiting the operations of a battering train, to open its way to desolation.

That fatal moment seemed now to have arrived, for the hissing steams of the spring appeared to be nearly exhausted, and the moss of the rocks was already curling under the intense heat, while fragments of bark, that yet clung to the dead trees, began to separate from their trunks, and fall to the ground in crumbling masses. The air seemed quivering with rays of heat, which might be seen playing along the parched stems of the trees. There were moments when dark clouds of smoke would sweep along the little terrace; and, as the eye lost its power, the other senses contributed to give effect to the fearful horror of the scene. At such moments, the roaring of the flames, the crackling of the furious element, with the tearing of falling branches, and occasionally the thundering echoes of some falling tree, united to alarm the victims. Of the three, however, the youth appeared much the most agitated. Elizabeth having relinquished entirely the idea of escape, was fast obtaining that resigned composure with which the most delicate of her sex are sometimes known to meet unavoidable evils; while Mohegan, who was much nearer to the danger, maintained his seat with the invincible resignation of an Indian warrior. Once or twice the eye of the aged chief, which was ordinarily fixed in the direction of the distant hills, turned toward the young pair, who seemed doomed to so early a death, with a slight indication of pity crossing his composed features, but it would immediately revert again to its former gaze, as if already looking into the womb of futurity. Much of the time he was chanting a kind of low dirge in the Delaware tongue, using the deep and remarkable guttural tones of his people.

“At such a moment, Mr. Edwards, all earthly distinctions end,” whispered Elizabeth; “persuade John to move nearer to us—let us die together.”

“I cannot—he will not stir,” returned the youth, in the same horridly still tones. “He considers this as the happiest moment of his life. He is past seventy, and has been decaying rapidly for some time; he received some

injury in chasing that unlucky deer, too, on the lake. Oh! Miss Temple, that was an unlucky chase, indeed! it has led, I fear, to this awful scene."

The smile of Elizabeth was celestial. "Why name such a trifle now?—at this moment the heart is dead to all earthly emotions!"

"If anything could reconcile a man to this death," cried the youth, "it would be to meet it in such company!"

"Talk not so, Edwards; talk not so," interrupted Miss Temple. "I am unworthy of it, and it is unjust to yourself. We must die; yes—yes—we must die—it is the will of God, and let us endeavor to submit like his own children."

"Die!" the youth rather shrieked than exclaimed, "no—no—no—there must yet be hope—you, at least, must not, shall not die."

"In what way can we escape?" asked Elizabeth, pointing with a look of heavenly composure toward the fire. "Observe! the flame is crossing the barrier of wet ground—it comes slowly, Edwards, but surely. Ah! see! the tree! the tree is already lighted!"

Her words were too true. The heat of the conflagration had at length overcome the resistance of the spring, and the fire was slowly stealing along the half-dried moss; while a dead pine kindled with the touch of a forked flame, that, for a moment, wreathed around the stem of the tree, as it whirled, in one of its evolutions, under the influence of the air. The effect was instantaneous. The flames danced along the parched trunk of the pine like lightning quivering on a chain, and immediately a column of living fire was raging on the terrace. It soon spread from tree to tree, and the scene was evidently drawing to a close. The log on which Mohegan was seated lighted at its further end, and the Indian appeared to be surrounded by fire. Still he was unmoved. As his body was unprotected, his sufferings must have been great; but his fortitude was superior to all. His voice could yet be heard even in the midst of these horrors. Elizabeth turned her head from the sight, and faced the valley. Furious eddies of wind were created by the heat, and, just at the moment, the canopy of fiery smoke that overhung the valley was cleared away, leaving a distinct view of the peaceful village beneath them.

"My father!—my father!" shrieked Elizabeth. "Oh! this—surely might have been spared me—but I submit."

The distance was not so great, but the figure of Judge Temple could be seen, standing in his own grounds, and apparently contemplating, in perfect unconsciousness of the danger of his child, the mountain in flames. This sight was still more painful than the approaching danger; and Elizabeth again faced the hill.

"My intemperate warmth has done this!" cried Edwards, in the accents of despair. "If I had possessed but a moiety of your heavenly resignation, Miss Temple, all might yet have been well."

"Name it not—name it not," she said. "It is now of no avail. We must die, Edwards, we must die—let us do so as Christians. But—no—you may yet escape, perhaps. Your dress is not so fatal as mine. Fly! Leave me. An opening may yet be found for you, possibly—certainly it is worth the effort. Fly! leave me—but stay! You will see my father! my poor, my bereaved father! Say to him, then, Edwards, say to him, all that can appease his anguish. Tell him that I died happy and collected; that I have gone to my beloved mother; that the hours of this life are nothing when balanced in the scales of eternity. Say how we shall meet again. And say," she continued, dropping her voice, that had risen with her feelings, as if conscious of her worldly weakness, "how dear, how very dear, was my love for him; that it was near, too near, to my love for God."

The youth listened to her touching accents, but moved not. In a moment he found utterance, and replied:

"And is it me that you command to leave you! to leave you on the edge of the grave? Oh! Miss Temple, how little have you known me!" he cried, dropping on his knees at her feet, and gathering her flowing robe in his arms as if to shield her from the flames. "I have been driven to the woods in despair, but your society has tamed the lion within me. If I have wasted my time in degradation, 'twas you that charmed me to it. If I have forgotten my name and family, your form supplied the place of memory. If I have forgotten my wrongs, 'twas you that taught me charity. No—no—dearest Elizabeth, I may die with you, but I can never leave you!"

Elizabeth moved not, nor answered. It was plain that her thoughts had been raised from the earth. The recollection of her father, and her regrets at their separation, had been mellowed by a holy sentiment, that lifted her

above the level of earthly things, and she was fast losing the weakness of her sex in the near view of eternity. But as she listened to these words she became once more woman. She struggled against these feelings, and smiled, as she thought she was shaking off the last lingering feeling of nature, when the world, and all its seductions, rushed again to her heart, with the sounds of a human voice, crying in piercing tones :

"Gal! where be ye, gal! gladden the heart of an old man, if ye yet belong to 'arth!"

"List!" said Elizabeth; "'tis the Leather-Stocking; he seeks me!"

"'Tis Natty!" shouted Edwards, "and we may yet be saved!"

A wide and circling flame glared on their eyes for a moment, even above the fire of the woods, and a loud report followed.

"'Tis the canister! 'tis the powder," cried the same voice, evidently approaching them. "'Tis the canister, and the precious child is lost!"

At the next instant Natty rushed through the steams of the spring, and appeared on the terrace, without his deer-skin cap, his hair burnt to his head, his shirt, of country check, black and filled with holes, and his red features of a deeper color than ever, by the heat he had encountered.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Even from the land of shadows, now
My father's awful ghost appears."

—GERTRUDE OF WYOMING.

FOR an hour after Louisa Grant was left by Miss Temple, in the situation already mentioned, she continued in feverish anxiety, awaiting the return of her friend. But, as the time passed by without the reappearance of Elizabeth, the terror of Louisa gradually increased, until her alarmed fancy had conjured every species of danger that appertained to the woods, excepting the one that really existed. The heavens had become obscured by degrees, and vast volumes of smoke were pouring over the valley; but the thoughts of Louisa were still recurring to beasts, without dreaming of the real cause for apprehension.

She was stationed in the edge of the low pines and chestnuts that succeed the first or large growth of the forest, and directly above the angle where the highway turned from the straight course to the village, and ascended the mountain, laterally. Consequently, she commanded a view, not only of the valley, but of the road beneath her. The few travellers that passed, she observed, were engaged in earnest conversation, and frequently raised their eyes to the hill, and at length she saw the people leaving the court-house, and gazing upward also. While under the influence of the alarm excited by such unusual movements, reluctant to go, and yet fearful to remain, Louisa was startled by the low, cracking, but cautious treads of some one approaching through the bushes. She was on the eve of flight, when Natty emerged from the cover, and stood at her side. The old man laughed as he shook her kindly by a hand that was passive with fear.

"I am glad to meet you here, child," he said; "for the back of the mountain is a-fire, and it would be dangerous to go up it now, till it has been burnt over once, and the dead wood is gone. There's a foolish man, the comrade of that varmint who has given me all this trouble, digging for ore on the east side. I told him that the keardless fellows, who thought to catch a practys'd hunter in the woods after dark, had thrown the lighted pine-knots in the brush, and that 'twould kindle like tow, and warned him to leave the hill. But he was set upon his business, and nothing short of Providence could move him. If he isn't burnt and buried in a grave of his own digging, he's made of salamanders. Why, what ails the child! you look as skeary as if you'd see'd more painters! I wish there were more to be found! they'd count up faster than the beaver. But where's the good child with a bad father? did she forget her promise to the old man?"

"The hill! the hill!" shrieked Louisa; "she seeks you on the hill with the powder!"

Natty recoiled several feet at this unexpected intelligence.

"The Lord of Heaven have mercy on her! She's on the Vision, and that's a sheet of fire ag'in this. Child, if ye love the dear one, and hope to find a friend when ye need it most, to the village, and give the alarm. The men are used to fighting fire, and there may be a chance left. Fly! I bid ye fly! nor stop even for breath."

The Leather-Stocking had no sooner uttered this injunction, than he disappeared in the bushes, and, when last seen by Louisa, was rushing up the mountain, with a speed that none but those who were accustomed to the toil could attain.

"Have I found ye!" the old man exclaimed, when he burst out of the smoke; "God be praised that I have found ye; but follow—there's no time for talking."

"My dress!" said Elizabeth; "it would be fatal to trust myself nearer to the flames in it."

"I bethought me of your flimsy things," cried Natty, throwing loose the folds of a covering buckskin that he carried on his arm, and wrapping her form in it, in such a manner as to envelop her whole person; "now follow, for it's a matter of life and death to us all."

"But John! what will become of John?" cried Edwards: "can we leave the old warrior here to perish?"

The eyes of Natty followed the direction of Edwards's finger, where he beheld the Indian still seated as before, with the very earth under his feet consuming with fire. Without delay the hunter approached the spot, and spoke in Delaware:

"Up and away, Chingachgook! will ye stay here to burn, like a Mingo at the stake? The Moravians have taught ye better, I hope; the Lord preserve me if the powder hasn't flashed atween his legs, and the skin of his back is roasting. Will ye come, I say; will ye follow me?"

"Why should Mohegan go?" returned the Indian, gloomily. "He has seen the days of an eagle, and his eye grows dim. He looks on the valley; he looks on the water; he looks in the hunting-grounds—but he sees no Delawares. Every one has a white skin. My fathers say, from the far-off land, Come. My women, my young warriors, my tribe, say, Come. The Great Spirit says, Come. Let Mohegan die."

"But you forget your friend," cried Edwards.

"'Tis useless to talk to an Indian with the death-fit on him, lad," interrupted Natty, who seized the strips of the blanket, and with wonderful dexterity strapped the passive chieftain to his own back; when he turned, and with a strength that seemed to bid defiance, not only to his years, but to his load, he led the way to the point whence he had issued. As they crossed the little terrace of rock, one of the dead trees, that had been tottering for several minutes,

fell on the spot where they had stood, and filled the air with its cinders.

Such an event quickened the steps of the party, who followed the Leather-Stocking with the urgency required by the occasion.

“Tread on the soft ground,” he cried, when they were in a gloom where sight availed them but little, “and keep in the white smoke; keep the skin close on her, lad; she’s a precious one—another will be hard to be found.”

Obedient to the hunter’s directions, they followed his steps and advice implicitly; and, although the narrow passage along the winding of the spring led amid burning logs and falling branches, they happily achieved it in safety. No one but a man long accustomed to the woods could have traced his route through the smoke, in which respiration was difficult, and sight nearly useless; but the experience of Natty conducted them to an opening through the rocks, where, with a little difficulty, they soon descended to another terrace, and emerged at once into a tolerably clear atmosphere.

The feelings of Edwards and Elizabeth at reaching this spot may be imagined, though not easily described. No one seemed to exult more than their guide, who turned, with Mohegan still lashed to his back, and, laughing in his own manner, said:

“I know’d ’twas the Frenchman’s powder, gal; it went so all together; your coarse grain will squib for a minute. The Iroquois had none of the best powder when I went ag’in the Canada tribes, under Sir William. Did I ever tell you the story, lad, consarning the scrimmage with——”

“For God’s sake, tell me nothing now, Natty, until we are entirely safe. Where shall we go next?”

“Why, on the platform of rock over the cave, to be sure; you will be safe enough there, or we’ll go into it, if you be so minded.”

The young man started, and appeared agitated; but, looking around him with an anxious eye, said quickly:

“Shall we be safe on the rock? cannot the fire reach us there, too?”

“Can’t the boy see?” said Natty, with the coolness of one accustomed to the kind of danger he had just encountered. “Had ye stayed in the place above ten minutes longer, you would both have been in ashes, but here you

may stay forever, and no fire can touch you, until they burn the rocks as well as the woods."

With this assurance, which was obviously true, they proceeded to the spot, and Natty deposited his load, placing the Indian on the ground with his back against a fragment of the rocks. Elizabeth sank on the ground, and buried her face in her hands, while her heart was swelling with a variety of conflicting emotions.

"Let me urge you to take a restorative, Miss Temple," said Edwards, respectfully; "your frame will sink else."

"Leave me, leave me," she said, raising her beaming eyes for a moment to his; "I feel too much for words! I am grateful, Oliver, for this miraculous escape; and next to my God to you."

Edwards withdrew to the edge of the rock, and shouted—"Benjamin! where are you, Benjamin?"

A hoarse voice replied, as if from the bowels of the earth, "Hereaway, master; stowed in this here bit of a hole, which is all the time as hot as the cook's coppers. I'm tired of my berth, d'ye see, and if-so-be that Leather-Stocking has got much over-hauling to do before he sails after them said beaver, I'll go into dock again, and ride out my quarantine, till I can get prottick from the law, and so hold on upon the rest of my 'spaniolas."

"Bring up a glass of water from the spring," continued Edwards, "and throw a little wine in it; hasten, I entreat you!"

"I knows but little of your small drink, Master Oliver," returned the steward, his voice issuing out of the cave into the open air, "and the Jamaikey held out no longer than to take a parting kiss with Billy Kirby, when he anchored me alongside the highway last night, where you run me down in the chase. But here's sum'mat of a red color that may suit a weak stomach, mayhap. That Master Kirby is no first-rate in a boat; but he'll tack a cart among the stumps, all the same as a Lon'on pilot will back and fill through the colliers in the Pool."

As the steward ascended while talking, by the time he had ended his speech he appeared on the rock with the desired restoratives, exhibiting the worn-out and bloated features of a man who had run deep in a debauch, and that lately.

Elizabeth took from the hands of Edwards the liquor

which he offered, and then motioned to be left again to herself.

The youth turned at her bidding, and observed Natty kindly assiduous around the person of Mohegan. When their eyes met, the hunter said sorrowfully :

“His time has come, lad ; I see it in his eyes—when an Indian fixes his eye, he means to go but to one place ; and what the wilful creatures put their minds on, they’re sure to do.”

A quick tread prevented the reply, and in a few moments, to the amazement of the whole party, Mr. Grant was seen clinging to the side of the mountain, and striving to reach the place where they stood. Oliver sprang to his assistance, and by their united efforts the worthy divine was soon placed safely among them.

“How came you added to our number ?” cried Edwards. “Is the hill alive with people at a time like this ?”

The hasty but pious thanksgivings of the clergyman were soon ejaculated, and, when he succeeded in collecting his bewildered senses, he replied :

“I heard that my child was seen coming to the mountain ; and, when the fire broke over its summit, my uneasiness drew me up the road, where I found Louisa, in terror for Miss Temple. It was to seek her that I came into this dangerous place ; and I think, but for God’s mercy, through the dogs of Natty, I should have perished in the flames myself.”

“Ay ! follow the hounds, and if there’s an opening they’ll scent it out,” said Natty ; “their noses be given them the same as man’s reason.”

“I did so, and they led me to this place ; but, praise be to God, that I see you all safe and well.”

“No, no,” returned the hunter ; “safe we be, but as for well, John can’t be called in a good way, unless you’ll say that for a man that’s taking his last look at ‘arth.”

“He speaks the truth !” said the divine, with the holy awe with which he ever approached the dying ; “I have been by too many death-beds, not to see that the hand of the tyrant is laid on this old warrior. Oh ! how consoling it is to know that he has not rejected the offered mercy in the hour of his strength and of worldly temptations ! The offspring of a race of heathens, he has in truth been ‘as a brand plucked from the burning.’”

“No, no,” returned Natty, who alone stood with him by

the side of the dying warrior ; “ it is no burning that ails him, though his Indian feelings made him scorn to move, unless it be the burning of man’s wicked thoughts for near fourscore years ; but it’s nater giving out in a chase that’s run too long.—Down with ye, Hector ! down, I say ! Flesh isn’t iron, that a man can live forever, and see his kith and kin driven to a far country, and he left to mourn, with none to keep him company.”

“ John,” said the divine, tenderly, “ do you hear me ? do you wish the prayers appointed by the church, at this trying moment ? ”

The Indian turned his ghastly face toward the speaker, and fastened his dark eyes on him, steadily, but vacantly. No sign of recognition was made ; and in a moment he moved his head again slowly toward the vale, and began to sing, using his own language, in those low, guttural tones, that have been so often mentioned, his notes rising with his theme, till they swelled so loud as to be distinct.

“ I will come ! I will come ! to the land of the just I will come ! The Maquas I have slain ! I have slain the Maquas ! and the Great Spirit calls to his son. I will come ! I will come to the land of the just I will come ! ”

“ What says he, Leather-Stocking ? ” inquired the priest, with tender interest ; “ sings he the Redeemer’s praise ? ”

“ No, no—’tis his own praise that he speaks now,” said Natty, turning in a melancholy manner from the sight of his dying friend ; “ and a good right he has to say it all, for I know every word to be true.”

“ May heaven avert such self-righteousness from his heart ! Humility and penitence are the seals of Christianity ; and, without feeling them deeply seated in the soul, all hope is delusive, and leads to vain expectations. Praise himself ! when his whole soul and body should unite to praise his Maker ! John ! you have enjoyed the blessings of a gospel ministry, and have been called from out a multitude of sinners and pagans, and, I trust, for a wise and gracious purpose. Do you now feel what it is to be justified by our Saviour’s death, and reject all weak and idle dependence on good works, that spring from man’s pride and vainglory ? ”

The Indian did not regard his interrogator, but he raised his head again, and said in a low, distinct voice :

“ Who can say that the Maquas know the back of the Mohegan ? What enemy that trusted in him did not see

the morning? What Mingo that he chased ever sang the song of triumph? Did Mohegan ever lie? No; the truth lived in him, and none else could come out of him. In his youth he was a warrior, and his moccasins left the stain of blood. In his age he was wise; his words at the council fire did not blow away with the winds."

"Ah! he has abandoned that vain relic of paganism, his songs," cried the divine; "what says he now? is he sensible of his lost state?"

"Lord! man," said Natty, "he knows his end is at hand as well as you or I; but, so far from thinking it a loss, he believes it to be a great gain. He is old and stiff, and you have made the game so scarce and shy, that better shots than him find it hard to get a livelihood. Now he thinks he shall travel where it will always be good hunting; where no wicked or unjust Indians can go; and where he shall meet all his tribe together ag'in. There's not much loss in that, to a man whose hands are hardly fit for basket-making. Loss! if there be any loss, 'twill be to me. I'm sure after he's gone, there will be but little left for me but to follow."

"His example and end, which, I humbly trust, shall yet be made glorious," returned Mr. Grant, "should lead your mind to dwell on the things of another life. But I feel it to be my duty to smooth the way for the parting spirit. This is the moment, John, when the reflection that you did not reject the mediation of the Redeemer, will bring balm to your soul. Trust not to any act of former days, but lay the burden of your sins at his feet, and you have his own blessed assurance that he will not desert you."

"Though all you say be true, and you have scripter gospels for it, too," said Natty, "you will make nothing of the Indian. He hasn't seen a Moravian priest sin' the war; and it's hard to keep them from going back to their native ways. I should think 'twould be as well to let the old man pass in peace. He's happy now; I know it by his eye; and that's more than I would say for the chief, sin' the time the Delawares broke up from the head-waters of their river, and went west. Ah's me! 'tis a grievous long time 'that, and many dark days have we seen together sin' it."

"Hawk-eye!" said Mohegan, rousing with the last glimmering of life. "Hawk-eye! listen to the words of your brother."

"Yes, John," said the hunter, in English, strongly affected by the appeal, and drawing to his side; "we have

been brothers ; and more so than it means in the Indian tongue. What would ye have with me, Chingachgook ?”

“Hawk-eye ! my fathers call me to the happy hunting-grounds. The path is clear, and the eyes of Mohegan grow young. I look—but I see no white-skins ; there are none to be seen but just and brave Indians. Farewell, Hawk-eye—you shall go with the Fire-eater and the Young Eagle to the white man's heaven ; but I go after my fathers. Let the bow, and tomahawk, and pipe, and the wampum of Mohegan be laid in his grave ; for when he starts 'twill be in the night, like a warrior on a war-party, and he cannot stop to seek them.”

“What says he, Nathaniel ?” cried Mr. Grant, earnestly, and with obvious anxiety ; “does he recall the promises of the mediation ? and trust his salvation to the Rock of Ages ?”

Although the faith of the hunter was by no means clear, yet the fruits of early instruction had not entirely fallen in the wilderness. He believed in one God, and one heaven ; and when the strong feeling excited by the leave-taking of his old companion, which was exhibited by the powerful working of every muscle in his weather-beaten face, suffered him to speak, he replied :

“No—no—he trusts only to the Great Spirit of the savages, and to his own good deeds. He thinks, like all his people, that he is to be young ag'in, and to hunt, and be happy to the end of eternity. It's pretty much the same with all colors, parson. I could never bring myself to think, that I shall meet with these hounds, or my piece, in another world ; though the thoughts of leaving them forever sometimes brings hard feelings over me, and makes me cling to life with a greater craving than beseems three-score-and-ten.”

“The Lord in his mercy avert such a death from one who has been sealed with the sign of the cross !” cried the minister, in holy fervor. John——”

He paused for the elements. During the period occupied by the events which we have related, the dark clouds in the horizon had continued to increase in numbers and multitude ; and the awful stillness that now pervaded the air, announced a crisis in the state of the atmosphere. The flames, which yet continued to rage along the sides of the mountain, no longer whirled in uncertain currents of their own eddies, but blazed high and steadily toward the heavens

There was even a quietude in the ravages of the destructive element, as if it foresaw that a hand greater than even its own desolating power, was about to stay its progress. The piles of smoke which lay above the valley began to rise, and were dispelling rapidly ; and streaks of livid lightning were dancing through the masses of clouds that impended over the western hills. While Mr. Grant was speaking, a flash, which sent its quivering light through the gloom, laying bare the whole opposite horizon, was followed by a loud crash of thunder, that rolled away among the hills, seeming to shake the foundations of the earth to their centre. Mohegan raised himself, as if in obedience to a signal for his departure, and stretched his wasted arm toward the west. His dark face lighted with a look of joy ; which, with all other expressions, gradually disappeared ; the muscles stiffening as they retreated to a state of rest ; a slight convulsion played, for a single instant, about his lips ; and his arm slowly dropped by his side ; leaving the frame of the dead warrior reposing against the rock with its glassy eyes open, and fixed on the distant hills, as if the deserted shell were tracing the flight of the spirit to its new abode.

All this Mr. Grant witnessed in silent awe ; but when the last echoes of the thunder died away, he clasped his hands together, with pious energy, and repeated, in the full, rich tones of assured faith :

“O Lord ! how unsearchable are Thy judgments ; and Thy ways past finding out ! ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.’ ”

As the divine closed this burst of devotion, he bowed his head meekly to his bosom, and looked all the dependence and humility that the inspired language expressed.

When Mr. Grant retired from the body, the hunter approached, and taking the rigid hand of his friend, looked him wistfully in the face for some time without speaking, when he gave vent to his feelings by saying, in the mournful voice of one who felt deeply :

“Red skin or white, it’s all over now ! He’s to be judged by a righteous Judge, and by no laws that’s made to suit times, and new ways. Well, there’s only one more death, and the world will be left to me and the hounds. Ah’s me !

a man must wait the time of God's pleasure, but I begin to weary of life. There is scarcely a tree standing that I know, and it's hard to find a face that I was acquainted with in my younger days."

Large drops of rain now began to fall, and diffuse themselves over the dry rock, while the approach of the thunder shower was rapid and certain. The body of the Indian was hastily removed into the cave beneath, followed by the whining hounds, who missed and moaned for the look of intelligence that had always met their salutations to the chief.

Edwards made some hasty and confused excuse for not taking Elizabeth into the same place, which was now completely closed in front with logs and bark, saying something that she hardly understood about its darkness, and the unpleasantness of being with the dead body. Miss Temple, however, found a sufficient shelter against the torrent of rain that fell, under the projection of a rock which overhung them. But long before the shower was over, the sounds of voices were heard below them crying aloud for Elizabeth, and men soon appeared beating the dying embers of the bushes, as they worked their way cautiously among the unextinguished brands.

At the first short cessation in the rain, Oliver conducted Elizabeth to the road, where he left her. Before parting, however, he found time to say, in a fervent manner, that his companion was now at no loss to interpret :

"The moment of concealment is over, Miss Temple. By this time to-morrow, I shall remove a veil that perhaps it has been weakness to keep around me and my affairs so long. But I have had romantic and foolish wishes and weakness ; and who has not, that is young and torn by conflicting passions? God bless you! I hear your father's voice ; he is coming up the road, and I would not, just now, subject myself to detention. Thank Heaven, you are safe again ; that alone removes the weight of a world from my spirit !"

He waited for no answer, but sprang into the woods. Elizabeth, notwithstanding she heard the cries of her father as he called upon her name, paused until he was concealed among the smoking trees, when she turned, and in a moment rushed into the arms of her half-distracted parent.

A carriage had been provided, into which Miss Temple hastily entered ; when the cry was passed along the hill,

that the lost one was found and the people returned to the village wet and dirty, but elated with the thought that the daughter of their landlord had escaped from so horrid and untimely an end.*

CHAPTER XXXIX.

“Selictar ! unsheathe then our chief’s scimeter ;
 Tambourgi ! thy ’larum gives promise of war ;
 Ye mountains ! that see us descend to the shore,
 Shall view us as victors, or view us no more.”—BYRON.

THE heavy showers that prevailed during the remainder of the day completely stopped the progress of the flames ; though glimmering fires were observed during the night, on different parts of the hill, wherever there was a collection of fuel to feed the element. The next day the woods for many miles were black and smoking, and were stripped of every vestige of brush and dead wood ; but the pines and hemlocks still reared their heads proudly among the hills, and even the smaller trees of the forest retained a feeble appearance of life and vegetation.

The many tongues of rumor were busy in exaggerating the miraculous escape of Elizabeth ; and a report was generally credited, that Mohegan had actually perished in the flames. This belief became confirmed, and was indeed rendered probable, when the direful intelligence reached the village that Jotham Riddell, the miner, was found in his hole, nearly dead with suffocation, and burnt to such a degree that no hopes were entertained of his life.

The public attention became much alive to the events of the last few days ; and, just at this crisis, the convicted counterfeiters took the hint from Natty, and, on the night succeeding the fire, found means to cut through their log prison also, and to escape unpunished. When this news

* The probability of a fire in the woods similar to that here described has been questioned. The writer can only say that he once witnessed a fire in another part of New York that compelled a man to desert his wagon and horses in the highway, and in which the latter were destroyed. In order to estimate the probability of such an event, it is necessary to remember the effects of a long drought in that climate and the abundance of dead wood which is found in a forest like that described. The fires in the American forests frequently rage to such an extent as to produce a sensible effect on the atmosphere at a distance of fifty miles. Houses, barns, and fences are quite commonly swept away in their course.

began to circulate through the village, blended with the fate of Jotham, and the exaggerated and tortured reports of the events on the hill, the popular opinion was freely expressed, as to the propriety of seizing such of the fugitives as remained within reach. Men talked of the cave as a secret receptacle of guilt ; and, as the rumor of ores and metals found its way into the confused medley of conjectures, counterfeiting, and everything else that was wicked and dangerous to the peace of society, suggested themselves to the busy fancies of the populace.

While the public mind was in this feverish state, it was hinted that the wood had been set on fire by Edwards and the Leather-Stocking, and that, consequently, they alone were responsible for the damages. This opinion soon gained ground, being most circulated by those who, by their own heedlessness, had caused the evil ; and there was one irresistible burst of the common sentiment that an attempt should be made to punish the offenders. Richard was by no means deaf to this appeal, and by noon he set about in earnest to see the laws executed.

Several stout young men were selected, and taken apart with an appearance of secrecy, where they received some important charge from the sheriff, immediately under the eyes, but far removed from the ears, of all in the village. Possessed of a knowledge of their duty, these youths hurried into the hills, with a bustling manner, as if the fate of the world depended on their diligence, and, at the same time, with an air of mystery as great as if they were engaged on secret matters of the state.

At twelve precisely a drum beat the "long roll" before the "Bold Dragoon," and Richard appeared, accompanied by Captain Hollister, who was clad in his vestments as commander of the "Templeton Light Infantry," when the former demanded of the latter the aid of the posse comitatus in enforcing the laws of the country. We have not room to record the speeches of the two gentlemen on this occasion, but they are preserved in the columns of the little blue newspaper, which is yet to be found on the file, and are said to be highly creditable to the legal formula of one of the parties, and to the military precision of the other. Everything had been previously arranged, and, as the red-coated drummer continued to roll out his clattering notes, some five-and-twenty privates appeared in the ranks, and arranged themselves in the order of battle.

As this corps was composed of volunteers, and was commanded by a man who had passed the first five-and-thirty years of his life in camps and garrisons, it was the nonpareil of military science in that country, and was confidently pronounced by the judicious part of the Templeton community, to be equal in skill and appearance to any troops in the known world; in physical endowments they were, certainly, much superior! To this assertion there were but three dissenting voices, and one dissenting opinion. The opinion belonged to Marmaduke, who, however, saw no necessity for its promulgation. Of the voices, one, and that a pretty loud one, came from the spouse of the commander himself, who frequently reproached her husband for condescending to lead such an irregular band of warriors, after he had filled the honorable station of sergeant-major to a dashing corps of Virginia cavalry through much of the recent war.

Another of these skeptical sentiments was invariably expressed by Mr. Pump, whenever the company paraded, generally in some such terms as these, which were uttered with that sort of meekness that a native of the island of our forefathers is apt to assume when he condescends to praise the customs or character of her truant progeny :

“It’s mayhap that they knows sum’mat about loading and firing, d’ye see, but as for working ship? why, a corporal’s guard of the Boadishey’s marines would back and fill on their quarters in such a manner as to surround and captivate them all in half a glass.” As there was no one to deny this assertion, the marines of the Boadicea were held in a corresponding degree of estimation.

The third unbeliever was Monsieur Le Quoi, who merely whispered to the sheriff, that the corps was one of the finest he had ever seen, second only to the Mousquetaires of Le Bon Louis! However, as Mrs. Hollister thought there was something like actual service in the present appearances, and was, in consequence, too busily engaged with certain preparations of her own, to make her comments; as Benjamin was absent, and Monsieur Le Quoi too happy to find fault with anything, the corps escaped criticism and comparison altogether on this momentous day, when they certainly had greater need of self-confidence than on any other previous occasion. Marmaduke was said to be again closeted with Mr. Van der School, and no interruption was offered to the movements of the

troops. At two o'clock precisely the corps shouldered arms, beginning on the right wing, next to the veteran, and carrying the motion through to the left with great regularity. When each musket was quietly fixed in its proper situation, the order was given to wheel to the left, and march. As this was bringing raw troops, at once, to face their enemy, it is not to be supposed that the manœuvre was executed with their usual accuracy; but as the music struck up the inspiring air of Yankee-doodle, and Richard, accompanied by Mr. Doolittle, preceded the troops boldly down the street, Captain Hollister led on, with his head elevated to forty-five degrees, with a little, low cocked hat perched on his crown, carrying a tremendous dragoon sabre at a poise, and trailing at his heels a huge steel scabbard, that had war in its very clattering. There was a good deal of difficulty in getting all the platoons (there were six) to look the same way; but, by the time they reached the defile of the bridge, the troops were in sufficiently compact order. In this manner they marched up the hill to the summit of the mountain, no other alteration taking place in the disposition of the forces, excepting that a mutual complaint was made, by the sheriff and the magistrate, of a failure in wind, which gradually brought these gentlemen to the rear. It will be unnecessary to detail the minute movements that succeeded. We shall briefly say, that the scouts came in and reported, that, so far from retreating, as had been anticipated, the fugitives had evidently gained a knowledge of the attack, and were fortifying for a desperate resistance. This intelligence certainly made a material change, not only in the plans of the leaders, but in the countenances of the soldiery also. The men looked at one another with serious faces, and Hiram and Richard began to consult together, apart.

At this juncture, they were joined by Billy Kirby, who came along the highway, with his axe under his arm, as much in advance of his team as Captain Hollister had been of his troops in the ascent. The wood-chopper was amazed at the military array, but the sheriff eagerly availed himself of this powerful reinforcement, and commanded his assistance in putting the laws in force. Billy held Mr. Jones in too much deference to object; and it was finally arranged that he should be the bearer of a summons to the garrison to surrender before they proceeded to ex-

tremities. The troops now divided, one party being led by the captain, over the Vision, and were brought in on the left of the cave, while the remainder advanced upon its right, under the orders of the lieutenant. Mr. Jones and Dr. Todd—for the surgeon was in attendance also—appeared on the platform of rock, immediately over the heads of the garrison, though out of their sight. Hiram thought this approaching too near, and he therefore accompanied Kirby along the side of the hill, to within a safe distance of the fortifications, where he took shelter behind a tree. Most of the men discovered great accuracy of eye in bringing some object in range between them and their enemy, and the only two of the besiegers, who were left in plain sight of the besieged, were Captain Hollister on one side, and the wood-chopper on the other. The veteran stood up boldly to the front, supporting his heavy sword in one undeviating position, with his eye fixed firmly on his enemy, while the huge form of Billy was placed in that kind of quiet repose, with either hand thrust into his bosom, bearing his axe under his right arm, which permitted him, like his own oxen, to rest standing. So far, not a word had been exchanged between the belligerents. The besieged had drawn together a pile of black logs and branches of trees, which they had formed into a chevaux-de-frise, making a little circular abatis in front of the entrance to the cave. As the ground was steep and slippery in every direction around the place, and Benjamin appeared behind the works on one side, and Natty on the other, the arrangement was by no means contemptible, especially as the front was sufficiently guarded by the difficulty of the approach. By this time, Kirby had received his orders, and he advanced coolly along the mountain, picking his way with the same indifference as if he were pursuing his ordinary business. When he was within a hundred feet of the works, the long and much-dreaded rifle of the Leather-Stocking was seen issuing from the parapet, and his voice cried aloud :

“Keep off! Billy Kirby, keep off! I wish ye no harm; but if a man of ye all comes a step nigher, there’ll be blood spilt atwixt us. God forgive the one that draws it first, but so it must be.”

“Come, old chap,” said Billy, good-naturedly, “don’t be crabb’d, but hear what a man has got to say. I’ve no consarn in the business, only to see right ’twixt man and

man ; and I don't kear the valie of a beetle-ring which gets the better ; but there's Squire Doolittle, yonder behind the beech sapling, he has invited me to come in and ask you to give up to the law—that's all."

"I see the varmint ! I see his clothes !" cried the indignant Natty : "and if he'll only show so much flesh as will bury a rifle bullet, thirty to the pound, I'll make him feel me. Go away, Billy, I bid ye : you know my aim, and I bear you no malice."

"You over-calculate your aim, Natty," said the other, as he stepped behind a pine that stood near him ! "if you think to shoot a man through a tree with a three foot butt. I can lay this tree right across you in ten minutes, by any man's watch, and in less time, too ; so be civil—I want no more than what's right."

There was a simple seriousness in the countenance of Natty, that showed he was much in earnest ; but it was also evident that he was reluctant to shed human blood. He answered the taunt of the wood-chopper, by saying :

"I know you drop a tree where you will, Billy Kirby ; but if you show a hand, or an arm, in doing it, there'll be bones to be set, and blood to staunch. If it's only to get into the cave that ye want, wait till a two hours' sun, and you may enter it in welcon.e ; but come in now you shall not. There's one dead body already, lying on the cold rocks, and there's another in which the life can hardly be said to stay. If you will come in, there'll be dead without as well as within."

The wood-chopper stepped out fearlessly from his cover, and cried :

"That's fair ; and what's fair is right. He wants you to stop till it's two hours to sundown ; and I see reason in the thing. A man can give up when he's wrong, if you don't crowd him too hard ; but you crowd a man, and he gets to be like a stubborn ox—the more you beat, the worse he kicks."

The sturdy notions of independence maintained by Billy neither suited the emergency nor the impatience of Mr. Jones, who was burning with a desire to examine the hidden mysteries of the cave. He therefore interrupted this amicable dialogue with his own voice :

"I command you, Nathaniel Bumpo, by my authority, to surrender your person to the law," he cried. "And I command you, gentlemen, to aid me in performing my

duty. Benjamin Penguillan, I arrest you, and order you to follow me to the jail of the county, by virtue of this warrant."

"I'd follow ye, Squire Dickens," said Benjamin, removing the pipe from his mouth (for during the whole scene the ex-major-domo had been very composedly smoking); "ay! I'd sail in your wake, to the end of the world, if-so-be that there was such a place, where there isn't, seeing that it's round. Now mayhap, Master Hollister, having lived all your life on shore, you isn't acquainted that the world, d'ye see——"

"Surrender!" interrupted the veteran, in a voice that startled his hearers, and which actually caused his own forces to recoil several paces; "surrender, Benjamin Penguillum, or expect no quarter."

"Damn your quarter!" said Benjamin, rising from the log on which he was seated, and taking a squint along the barrel of the swivel, which had been brought on the hill during the night, and now formed the means of defence on his side of the works. "Look you, master or captain, rhof I questions if ye know the name of a rope, except rhe one that's to hang ye, there's no need of singing out, as if ye was hailing a deaf man on a top-gallant yard. Mayhap you think you've got my true name in your sheep-skin; but what British sailor finds it worth while to sail in these seas, without a sham on his stern, in case of need, d'ye see. If you call me Penguillan, you calls me by the name of the man on whose land, d'ye see, I hove into daylight; and he was a gentleman; and that's more than my worst enemy will say of any of the family of Benjamin Stubbs."

"Send the warrant round to me, and I'll put in an alias," cried Hiram, from behind his cover.

"Put in a jackass, and you'll put in yourself, Mister Doo-but-little," shouted Benjamin, who kept squinting along his little iron tube, with great steadiness.

"I give you but one moment to yield," cried Richard. "Benjamin! Benjamin! this is not the gratitude I expected from you."

"I tell you, Richard Jones," said Natty, who dreaded the sheriff's influence over his comrade; "though the canister the gal brought be lost, there's powder enough in the cave to lift the rock you stand on. I'll take off my roof if you don't hold your peace."

"I think it beneath the dignity of my office to parley

further with the prisoners," the sheriff observed to his companion, while they both retired with a precipitancy that Captain Hollister mistook for the signal to advance.

"Charge baggonet!" shouted the veteran; "march!"

Although this signal was certainly expected, it took the assailed a little by surprise, and the veteran approached the works, crying, "Courage, my brave lads! give them no quarter unless they surrender;" and struck a furious blow upward with his sabre, that would have divided the steward into moieties, by subjecting him to the process of decapitation, but for the fortunate interference of the muzzle of the swivel. As it was, the gun was dismounted at the critical moment that Benjamin was applying his pipe to the priming, and in consequence some five or six dozen of rifle bullets were projected into the air, in nearly a perpendicular line. Philosophy teaches us that the atmosphere will not retain lead; and two pounds of the metal, molded into bullets of thirty to the pound, after describing an ellipsis in their journey, returned to the earth rattling among the branches of the trees directly over the heads of the troops stationed in the rear of their captain. Much of the success of an attack, made by irregular soldiers, depends on the direction in which they are first got in motion. In the present instance it was retrograde, and in less than a minute after the bellowing report of the swivel among the rocks and caverns, the whole weight of the attack from the left rested on the prowess of the single arm of the veteran. Benjamin received a severe contusion from the recoil of his gun, which produced a short stupor, during which period the ex-steward was prostrate on the ground. Captain Hollister availed himself of this circumstance to scramble over the breastwork and obtain a footing in the bastion—for such was the nature of the fortress, as connected with the cave. The moment the veteran found himself within the works of his enemy, he rushed to the edge of the fortification, and, waving his sabre over his head, shouted:

"Victory! come on, my brave boys, the work's our own!"

All this was perfectly military, and was such an example as a gallant officer was in some measure bound to exhibit to his men; but the outcry was the unlucky cause of turning the tide of success. Natty, who had been keeping a vigilant eye on the wood-chopper, and the enemy immediately before him, wheeled at this alarm, and was appalled

at beholding his comrade on the ground, and the veteran standing on his own bulwark, giving forth the cry of victory! The muzzle of the long rifle was turned instantly toward the captain. There was a moment when the life of the old soldier was in great jeopardy; but the object to shoot at was both too large and too near for the Leather-Stocking, who, instead of pulling his trigger, applied the gun to the rear of his enemy, and by a powerful shove sent him outside of the works with much greater rapidity than he had entered them. The spot on which Captain Hollister alighted was directly in front, where, as his feet touched the ground, so steep and slippery was the side of the mountain, it seemed to recede from under them. His motion was swift, and so irregular as utterly to confuse the faculties of the old soldier. During its continuance, he supposed himself to be mounted, and charging through the ranks of his enemy. At every tree he made a blow, of course, as at a foot-soldier; and just as he was making the cut "St. George" at a half-burnt sapling he landed in the highway, and, to his utter amazement, at the feet of his own spouse. When Mrs Hollister, who was toiling up the hill, followed by at least twenty curious boys, leaning with one hand on the staff with which she ordinarily walked, and bearing in the other an empty bag, witnessed this exploit of her husband, indignation immediately got the better, not only of her religion, but of her philosophy.

"Why, sargeant! is it flying ye are?" she cried—"that I should live to see a husband of mine turn his back to an inimy! and such a one! Here I have been telling the b'ys, as we come along, all about the saige of Yorrektown, and how ye was hurted; and how ye'd be acting the same ag'in the day; and I mate ye retraitsing jist as the first gun is fired. Och! I may trow away the bag! for if there's plunder, 'twill not be the wife of sich as yerself that will be privileged to be getting the same. They do say, too, there is a power of goold and silver in the place—the Lord forgive me for setting my heart on worrldly things; but what falls in the battle, there's scripiter for believing, is the just property of the victor."

"Retreating!" exclaimed the amazed veteran; "where's my horse? he has been shot under me—I——"

"Is the man mad?" interrupted his wife—"devil the horse do ye own, sargeant, and ye're nothing but a shabby captain of malaishy. Oh! If the ra'al captain was here, 'tis

the other way ye'd be riding, dear, or you would not follow your laider!"

While this worthy couple were thus discussing events, the battle began to rage more violently than ever above them. When Leather-Stocking saw his enemy fairly under headway, as Benjamin would express it, he gave his attention to the right wing of the assailants. It would have been easy for Kirby, with his powerful frame, to have seized the moment to scale the bastion, and, with his great strength, to have sent both of its defenders in pursuit of the veteran; but hostility appeared to be the passion that the wood-chopper indulged the least in at that moment, for, in a voice that was heard by the retreating left wing, he shouted:

"Hurra! well done, captain! keep it up! how he handles his bush-hook! he makes nothing of a sapling!" and such other encouraging exclamations to the flying veteran, until, overcome by mirth, the good-natured fellow seated himself on the ground, kicking the earth with delight, and giving vent to peal after peal of laughter.

Natty stood all this time in a menancing attitude, with his rifle pointed over the breastwork, watching with a quick and cautious eye the least movement of the assailants. The outcry unfortunately tempted the ungovernable curiosity of Hiram to take a peep from behind his cover at the state of the battle. Though this evolution was performed with great caution, in protecting his front, he left, like many a better commander, his rear exposed to the attacks of his enemy. Mr. Doolittle belonged physically to a class of his countrymen, to whom Nature has denied, in their formation, the use of curved lines. Everything about him was either straight or angular. But his tailor was a woman who worked, like a regimental contractor, by a set of rules that gave the same configuration to the whole human species. Consequently, when Mr. Doolittle leaned forward in the manner described, a loose drapery appeared behind the tree, at which the rifle of Natty was pointed with the quickness of lightning. A less experienced man would have aimed at the flowing robe, which hung like a festoon half-way to the earth; but the Leather-Stocking knew both the man and his female tailor better; and when the smart report of the rifle was heard, Kirby, who watched the whole manœuvre in breathless expectation, saw the bark fly from the beech, and the cloth, at some distance above the loose folds, wave at the same instant. No battery was ever un-

masked with more promptitude than Hiram advanced from behind the tree at this summons.

He made two or three steps, with great precision, to the front, and, placing one hand on the afflicted part, stretched forth the other, with a menacing air toward Natty, and cried aloud :

“Gawl darn ye! this sha’n’t be settled so easy; I’ll follow it up from the ‘common pleas’ to the ‘court of errors.’”

Such a shocking imprecation, from the mouth of so orderly a man as Squire Doolittle, with the fearless manner in which he exposed himself, together with, perhaps, the knowledge that Natty’s rifle was unloaded, encouraged the troops in the rear, who gave a loud shout, and fired a volley into the tree-tops, after the contents of the swivel. Animated by their own noise, the men now rushed on in earnest; and Billy Kirby, who thought the joke, good as it was, had gone far enough, was in the act of scaling the works, when Judge Temple appeared on the opposite side, exclaiming :

“Silence and peace! why do I see murder and bloodshed attempted? is not the law sufficient to protect itself, that armed bands must be gathered, as in rebellion and war, to see justice performed?”

“’Tis the posse comitatus,” shouted the sheriff, from a distant rock, “who——”

“Say rather a posse of demons. I command the peace.”

“Hold! shed not blood!” cried a voice from the top of the Vision. “Hold, for the sake of Heaven, fire no more! all shall be yielded! you shall enter the cave!”

Amazement produced the desired effect. Natty, who had reloaded his piece, quietly seated himself on the logs, and rested his head on his hands, while the “Light Infantry” ceased their military movements, and waited the issue in suspense.

In less than a minute Edwards came rushing down the hill, followed by Major Hartman, with a velocity that was surprising for his years. They reached the terrace in an instant, from which the youth led the way, by the hollow in the rock, to the mouth of the cave, into which they both entered, leaving all without silent, and gazing after them with astonishment.

CHAPTER XL.

“ I am dumb.
Were you the doctor, and I knew you not ? ”

—SHAKESPEARE.

DURING the five or six minutes that elapsed before the youth and Major reappeared, Judge Temple and the sheriff, together with most of the volunteers, ascended to the terrace, where the latter began to express their conjectures of the result, and to recount their individual services in the conflict. But the sight of the peace-makers ascending the ravine shut every mouth.

On a rude chair, covered with undressed deer-skins, they supported a human being, whom they seated carefully and respectfully in the midst of the assembly. His head was covered by long, smooth locks of the color of snow. His dress, which was studiously neat and clean, was composed of such fabrics as none but the wealthiest classes wear, but was threadbare and patched; and on his feet were placed a pair of moccasins, ornamented in the best manner of Indian ingenuity. The outlines of his face were grave and dignified, though his vacant eye, which opened and turned slowly to the faces of those around him in unmeaning looks, too surely announced that the period had arrived when age brings the mental imbecility of childhood.

Natty had followed the supporters of this unexpected object to the top of the cave, and took his station at a little distance behind him, leaning on his rifle, in the midst of his pursuers, with a fearlessness that showed that heavier interests than those which affected himself were to be decided. Major Hartmann placed himself beside the aged man, uncovered, with his whole soul beaming through those eyes which so commonly danced with frolic and humor. Edwards rested with one hand familiarly but affectionately on the chair, though his heart was swelling with emotions that denied him utterance.

All eyes were gazing intently, but each tongue continued mute. At length the decrepit stranger, turning his vacant looks from face to face, made a feeble attempt to rise, while a faint smile crossed his wasted face, like an habitual effort at courtesy, as he said, in a hollow, tremulous voice :

“ Be pleased to be seated, gentlemen. The council will

open immediately. Each one who loves a good and virtuous king will wish to see these colonies continue loyal. Be seated—I pray you, be seated, gentlemen. The troops shall halt for the night.”

“This is the wandering of insanity!” said Marmaduke: “who will explain this scene?”

“No, sir,” said Edwards, firmly, “’tis only the decay of nature; who is answerable for its pitiful condition, remains to be shown.”

“Will the gentlemen dine with us, my son?” said the old stranger, turning to a voice that he both knew and loved. “Order a repast suitable for his Majesty’s officers. You know we have the best of game always at command.”

“Who is this man?” asked Marmaduke, in a hurried voice, in which the dawnings of conjecture united with interest to put the question.

“This man,” returned Edwards, calmly, his voice, however, gradually rising as he proceeded; “this man, sir, whom you behold hid in caverns, and deprived of everything that can make life desirable, was once the companion and counsellor of those who ruled your country. This man, whom you see helpless and feeble, was once a warrior, so brave and fearless, that even the intrepid natives gave him the name of the Fire-eater. This man, whom you now see destitute of even the ordinary comfort of a cabin; in which to shelter his head, was once the owner of great riches—and, Judge Temple, he was the rightful proprietor of this very soil on which we stand. This man was the father of——”

“This, then,” cried Marmaduke, with a powerful emotion, “this, then, is the lost Major Effingham!”

“Lost indeed,” said the youth, fixing a piercing eye on the other.

“And you! and you!” continued the Judge, articulating with difficulty.

“I am his grandson.”

A minute passed in profound silence. All eyes were fixed on the speakers, and even the old German appeared to wait the issue in deep anxiety. But the moment of agitation soon passed. Marmaduke raised his head from his bosom, where it had sunk, not in shame, but in devout mental thanksgivings, and, as large tears fell over his fine, manly face, he grasped the hand of the youth warmly, and said:

“Oliver, I forgive all thy harshness—all thy suspicions. I now see it all. I forgive thee everything, but suffering this aged man to dwell in such a place, when not only my habitation, but my fortune, were at his and thy command.”

“He’s true as ter steel!” shouted Major Hartmann; “titn’t I tell you, lat, dat Marmatuke Temple vast a friend dat woult never fail in ter dime as of neet?”

“It is true, Judge Temple, that my opinions of your conduct have been staggered by what this worthy gentleman has told me. When I found it impossible to convey my grandfather back whence the enduring love of this old man brought him, without detection and exposure, I went to the Mohawk in quest of one of his former comrades, in whose justice I had dependencē. He is your friend, Judge Temple, but, if what he says be true, both my father and myself may have judged you harshly.”

“You name your father!” said Marmaduke, tenderly—“was he, indeed, lost in the packet?”

“He was. He had left me, after several years of fruitless application and comparative poverty, in Nova Scotia, to obtain the compensation for his losses which the British commissioners had at length awarded. After spending a year in England, he was returning to Halifax, on his way to a government to which he had been appointed, in the West Indies, intending to go to the place where my grandfather had sojourned during and since the war, and take him with us.”

“But thou!” said Marmaduke, with powerful interest; “I had thought that thou hadst perished with him.”

A flush passed over the cheeks of the young man, who gazed about him at the wondering faces of the volunteers, and continued silent. Marmaduke turned to the veteran captain, who just then rejoined his command, and said:

“March thy soldiers back again, and dismiss them; the zeal of the sheriff has much mistaken his duty.—Dr. Todd, I will thank you to attend to the injury which Hiram Doolittle has received in this untoward affair.—R chard, you will oblige me by sending up the carriage to the top of the hill.—Benjamin, return to your duty in my family.”

Unwelcome as these orders were to most of the auditors, the suspicion that they had somewhat exceeded the wholesome restraints of the law, and the habitual respect with which all the commands of the Judge were received, induced a prompt compliance.

When they were gone, and the rock was left to the parties most interested in an explanation, Marmaduke, pointing to the aged Major Effingham, said to his grandson:

"Had we not better remove thy parent from this open place until my carriage can arrive?"

"Pardon me, sir, the air does him good, and he has taken it whenever there was no dread of a discovery. I know not how to act, Judge Temple; ought I, can I suffer Major Effingham to become an inmate of your family?"

"Thou shalt be thyself the judge," said Marmaduke. "Thy father was my early friend. He intrusted his fortune to my care. When we separated he had such confidence in me that he wished no security, no evidence of the trust, even had there been time or convenience for exacting it. This thou hast heard?"

"Most truly, sir," said Edwards, or rather Effingham, as we must now call him.

"We differed in politics. If the cause of this country was successful, the trust was sacred with me, for none knew of thy father's interest. If the crown still held its sway, it would be easy to restore the property of so loyal a subject as Colonel Effingham. Is not this plain?"

"The premises are good, sir," continued the youth, with the same incredulous look as before.

"Listen—listen, poy," said the German. "Dere is not a hair as of ter rogue in ter het of Herr Tchooge."

"We all know the issue of the struggle," continued Marmaduke, disregarding both. "Thy grandfather was left in Connecticut, regularly supplied by thy father with the means of such a subsistence as suited his wants. This I well knew, though I never had intercourse with him, even in our happiest days. Thy father retired with the troops to prosecute his claims on England. At all events, his losses must be great, for his real estates were sold, and I became the lawful purchaser. It was not unnatural to wish that he might have no bar to its just recovery."

"There was none, but the difficulty of providing for so many claimants."

"But there would have been one, and an insuperable one, and I announced to the world that I held these estates, multiplied, by the times and my industry, a hundred-fold in value, only as his trustee. Thou knowest that I supplied him with considerable sums, immediately after the war."

“You did, until——”

“My letters were returned unopened. Thy father had much of thy own spirit, Oliver ; he was sometimes hasty and rash.” The Judge continued, in a self-condemning manner : “Perhaps my fault lies the other way : I may possibly look too far ahead, and calculate too deeply. It certainly was a severe trial to allow the man whom I most loved, to think ill of me for seven years, in order that he might honestly apply for his just remunerations. But, had he opened my last letters, thou wouldst have learned the whole truth. Those I sent him to England, by what my agent writes me, he did read. He died, Oliver, knowing all. He died, my friend, and I thought thou hadst died with him.”

“Our poverty would not permit us to pay for two passages,” said the youth, with the extraordinary emotion with which he ever alluded to the degraded state of his family ; “I was left in the Province to wait for his return, and, when the sad news of his loss reached me, I was nearly penniless.”

“And what didst thou, boy ?” asked Marmaduke in a faltering voice.

“I took my passage here in search of my grandfather ; for I well knew that his resources were gone, with the half-pay of my father. On reaching his abode, I learned that he had left it in secret ; though the reluctant hireling, who had deserted him in his poverty, owned to my urgent entreaties, that he believed he had been carried away by an old man who had formerly been his servant. I knew at once it was Natty, for my father often——”

“Was Natty a servant of thy grandfather ?” exclaimed the Judge.

“Of that too were you ignorant ?” said the youth in evident surprise.

“How should I know it ? I never met the major, nor was the name of Bumppo ever mentioned to me. I knew him only as a man of the woods, and one who lived by hunting. Such men are too common to excite surprise.”

“He was reared in the family of my grandfather ; served him for many years during their campaigns at the West, where he became attached to the woods ; and he was left here as a kind of *locum tenens* on the lands that old Mohegan (whose life my grandfather once saved) induced the Delawares to grant to him when they admitted him as an honorary member of their tribe.”

"This, then, is thy Indian blood?"

"I have no other," said Edwards, smiling—"Major Effingham was adopted as the son of Mohegan, who at that time was the greatest man in his nation; and my father, who visited those people when a boy, received the name of the Eagle from them, on account of the shape of his face, as I understand. They have extended his title to me. I have no other Indian blood or breeding; though I have seen the hour, Judge Temple, when I could wish that such had been my lineage and education."

"Proceed with thy tale," said Marmaduke.

"I have but little more to say, sir. I followed to the lake where I had so often been told that Natty dwelt, and found him maintaining his old master in secret; for even he could not bear to exhibit to the world, in his poverty and dotage, a man whom a whole people once looked up to with respect."

"And what did you?"

"What did I! I spent my last money in purchasing a rifle, clad myself in a coarse garb, and learned to be a hunter by the side of Leather-Stocking. You know the rest, Judge Temple."

"Ant vere vast old Fritz Hartmann?" said the German, reproachfully; "didst never hear a name as of olt Fritz Hartmann from ter mout of ter fader, lat?"

"I may have been mistaken, gentlemen," returned the youth; "but I had pride, and could not submit to such an exposure as this day even has reluctantly brought to light. I had plans that might have been visionary; but, should my parent survive till autumn, I purposed taking him with me to the city, where we have distant relatives, who must have learned to forget the Tory by this time. He decays rapidly," he continued, mournfully, "and must soon lie by the side of old Mohegan."

The air being pure, and the day fine, the party continued conversing on the rock, until the wheels of Judge Temple's carriage were heard clattering up the side of the mountain, during which time the conversation was maintained with deep interest, each moment clearing up some doubtful action, and lessening the antipathy of the youth to Marmaduke. He no longer objected to the removal of his grandfather, who displayed a childish pleasure when he found himself seated once more in a carriage. When placed in the ample hall of the mansion-house, the eyes of

the aged veteran turned slowly to the objects in the apartment, and a look like the dawn of intellect would, for moments, flit across his features, when he invariably offered some useless courtesies to those near him, wandering painfully in his subjects. The exercise and the change soon produced an exhaustion that caused them to remove him to his bed, where he lay for hours, evidently sensible of the change in his comforts, and exhibiting that mortifying picture of human nature, which too plainly shows that the propensities of the animal continue even after the nobler part of the creature appears to have vanished.

Until his parent was placed comfortably in bed, with Natty seated at his side, Effingham did not quit him. He then obeyed a summons to the library of the Judge, where he found the latter, with Major Hartmann, waiting for him.

“Read this paper, Oliver,” said Marmaduke to him, as he entered, “and thou wilt find that, so far from intending thy family wrong during life, it has been my care to see that justice should be done at even a later day.”

The youth took the paper, which his first glance told him was the will of the Judge. Hurried and agitated as he was, he discovered that the date corresponded with the time of the unusual depression of Marmaduke. As he proceeded, his eyes began to moisten, and the hand which held the instrument shook violently.

The will commenced with the usual forms, spun out by the ingenuity of Mr. Van Der School ; but, after this subject was fairly exhausted, the pen of Marmaduke became plainly visible. In clear, distinct, manly, and even eloquent language, he recounted his obligations to Colonel Effingham, the nature of their connection, and the circumstances in which they separated. He then proceeded to relate the motives of his silence, mentioning, however, large sums that he had forwarded to his friend, which had been returned with the letters unopened. After this, he spoke of his search for the grandfather who unaccountably disappeared, and his fears that the direct heir of the trust was buried in the ocean with his father.

After, in short, recounting in a clear narrative, the events which our readers must now be able to connect, he proceeded to make a fair and exact statement of the sums left in his care by Colonel Effingham. A devise of his whole estate to certain responsible trustees followed ; to hold the

same for the benefit, in equal moieties, of his daughter, on one part, and of Oliver Effingham, formerly a major in the army of Great Britain, and of his son Edward Effingham, and of his son Edward Oliver Effingham, or to the survivor of them, and the descendants of such survivor, forever, on the other part. The trust was to endure until 1810, when, if no person appeared, or could be found, after sufficient notice to claim the moiety so devised, then a certain sum, calculating the principal and interest of his debt to Colonel Effingham, was to be paid to the heirs-at-law of the Effingham family, and the bulk of his estate was to be conveyed in fee to his daughter, or her heirs.

The tears fell from the eyes of the young man, as he read this undeniable testimony of the good faith of Marmaduke, and his bewildered gaze was still fastened on the paper, when a voice, that thrilled on every nerve, spoke near him, saying :

“Do you yet doubt us, Oliver?”

“I have never doubted *you!*” cried the youth, recovering his recollection and his voice, as he sprang to seize the hand of Elizabeth; “no, not one moment has my faith in you wavered.”

“And my father—”

“God bless him!”

“I thank thee, my son,” said the Judge, exchanging a warm pressure of the hand with the youth; “but we have both erred: thou hast been too hasty, and I have been too slow. One-half of my estates shall be thine as soon as they can be conveyed to thee; and, if what my suspicions tell me be true, I suppose the other must follow speedily.” He took the hand which he held, and united it with that of his daughter, and motioned toward the door to the major.

“I telt you vat, gal!” said the old German, good-humoredly; “if I vast as I vast ven I servit mit his grand-fader on ter lakes, ter lazy tog shouldn’t vin ter prize as for nottin’.”

“Come, come, old Fritz,” said the Judge; “you are seventy, not seventeen; Richard waits for you with a bowl of egg-nog, in the hall.”

“Richart! ter duyvel!” exclaimed the other, hastening out of the room; “he makes ter nog ast for ter horse. I vilt show ter sheriff mit my own hants! Ter duyvel! I believe he sweetens mit ter Yankee melasses!”

Marmaduke smiled and nodded affectionately at the young

couple, and closed the door after them. If any of our readers expect that we are going to open it again, for their gratification, they are mistaken.

The *tete-à-tete* continued for a very unreasonable time—how long we shall not say ; but it was ended by six o'clock in the evening, for at that hour Monsieur Le Quoi made his appearance agreeably to the appointment of the preceding day, and claimed the ear of Miss Temple. He was admitted ; when he made an offer of his hand, with much suavity, together with his “amis beeg and leet’, his père, his mère, and his sucreboosh.” Elizabeth might, possibly, have previously entered into some embarrassing and binding engagements with Oliver, for she declined the tender of all, in terms as polite, though perhaps a little more decided, than those in which they were made.

The Frenchman soon joined the German and the sheriff in the hall, who compelled him to take a seat with them at the table, where, by the aid of punch, wine, and eggnog, they soon extracted from the complaisant Monsieur Le Quoi the nature of his visit. It was evident that he had made the offer, as a duty which a well-bred man owed to a lady in such a retired place, before he had left the country, and that his feelings were but very little, if at all, interested in the matter. After a few potations, the waggish pair persuaded the exhilarated Frenchman that there was an inexcusable partiality in offering to one lady, and not extending a similar courtesy to another. Consequently, about nine, Monsieur Le Quoi sallied forth to the rectory, on a similar mission to Miss Grant, which proved as successful as his first effort in love.

When he returned to the mansion-house, at ten, Richard and the major were still seated at the table. They attempted to persuade the Gaul, as the sheriff called him, that he should next try Remarkable Pettibone. But, though stimulated by mental excitement and wine, two hours of abstruse logic were thrown away on this subject ; for he declined their advice, with a pertinacity truly astonishing in so polite a man.

When Benjamin lighted Monsieur Le Quoi from the door, he said, at parting :

“If-so-be, Mounsheer, you’d run alongside Mistress Pettybones, as the Squire Dickens was bidding ye, ’tis my notion you’d have been grappled ; in which case, d’ye see, you mought have been trôubled in swinging clear ag’in in

a handsome manner ; for thof Miss 'Lizzy and the parson's young 'un be tidy little vessels, that shoot by a body on a wind, Mistress Remarkable is sum'mat of a galliot fashion ; when you once takes 'em in tow, they doesn't like to be cast off ag'in."

CHAPTER XLI.

“ Yes, sweep ye on !—We will not leave,
 For them who triumph those who grieve.
 With that armada gay
 Be laughter loud, and jocund shout—
 —But with that skiff
 Abides the minstrel tale.”—LORD OF THE ISLES.

The events of our tale carry us through the summer ; and after making nearly the circle of the year, we must conclude our labors in the delightful month of October. Many important incidents had, however, occurred in the intervening period ; a few of which it may be necessary to recount.

The two principal were the marriage of Oliver and Elizabeth, and the death of Major Effingham. They both took place early in September ; and the former preceded the latter only a few days. The old man passed away like the last glimmering of a taper ; and, though his death cast a melancholy over the family, grief could not follow such an end.

One of the chief concerns of Marmaduke was to reconcile the even conduct of a magistrate with the course that his feelings dictated to the criminals. The day succeeding the discovery at the cave, however, Natty and Benjamin re-entered the jail peaceably, where they continued, well fed and comfortable, until the return of an express to Albany, who brought the governor's pardon to the Leather-Stocking. In the mean time, proper means were employed to satisfy Hiram for the assaults on his person ; and on the same day the two comrades issued together into society again, with their characters not at all affected by the imprisonment.

Mr. Doolittle began to discover that neither architecture nor his law was quite suitable to the growing wealth and intelligence of the settlement ; and after exacting the last cent that was attainable in his compromise, to use the

language of the country, he "pulled up stakes," and proceeded farther west, scattering his professional science and legal learning through the land ; vestiges of both of which are to be discovered there even to the present hour.

Poor Jotham, whose life paid the forfeiture of his folly, acknowledged, before he died, that his reasons for believing in a mine were extracted from the lips of a sibyl, who, by looking in a magic glass, was enabled to discover the hidden treasures of the earth. Such superstition was frequent in the new settlements ; and, after the first surprise was over, the better part of the community forgot the subject. But, at the same time that it removed from the breast of Richard a lingering suspicion of the acts of the three hunters, it conveyed a mortifying lesson to him, which brought many quiet hours, in future, to his cousin Marmaduke. It may be remembered that the sheriff confidently pronounced this to be no "visionary" scheme, and that word was enough to shut his lips, at any time within the next ten years.

Monsieur Le Quoi, who has been introduced to our readers because no picture of that country would be faithful without some such character, found the island of Martinique, and his "sucreboosh," in possession of the English ; but Marmaduke and his family were much gratified in soon hearing that he had returned to his bureau, in Paris ; where he afterward issued yearly bulletins of his happiness, and of his gratitude to his friends in America.

With this brief explanation, we must return to our narrative. Let the American reader imagine one of our mildest October mornings, when the sun seems a ball of silvery fire, and the elasticity of the air is felt while it is inhaled, imparting vigor and life to the whole system ; the weather, neither too warm nor too cold, but of that happy temperature which stirs the blood, without bringing the lassitude of spring. It was on such a morning, about the middle of the month, that Oliver entered the hall where Elizabeth was issuing her usual orders for the day, and requesting her to join him in a short excursion to the lakeside. The tender melancholy in the manner of her husband caught the attention of Elizabeth, who instantly abandoned her concerns, threw a light shawl across her shoulders, and, concealing her raven hair under a gypsy, she took his arm, and submitted herself, without a question, to his guidance. They crossed the bridge, and had

turned from the highway, along the margin of the lake, before a word was exchanged. Elizabeth well knew, by the direction, the object of the walk, and respected the feelings of her companion too much to indulge in untimely conversation. But when they gained the open fields, and her eye roamed over the placid lake, covered with wild-fowl already journeying from the great northern waters to seek a warmer sun, but lingering to play in the limpid sheet of the Otsego, and to the sides of the mountain, which were gay with the thousand dyes of autumn, as if to grace their bridal, the swelling heart of the young wife burst out in speech.

"This is not a time for silence, Oliver!" she said, clinging more fondly to his arm; "everything in Nature seems to speak the praises of the Creator; why should we, who have so much to be grateful for, be silent?"

"Speak on!" said her husband, smiling; "I love the sounds of your voice. You must anticipate our errand hither: I have told you my plans: how do you like them?"

"I must first see them," returned his wife. "But I have had my plans, too; it is time I should begin to divulge them."

"You! It is something for the comfort of my old friend, Natty, I know."

"Certainly of Natty; but we have other friends besides the Leather-Stocking to serve. Do you forget Louisa and her father?"

"No, surely; have I not given one of the best farms in the county to the good divine? As for Louisa, I should wish you to keep her always near us."

"You do!" said Elizabeth, slightly compressing her lips; "but poor Louisa may have other views for herself; she may wish to follow my example, and marry."

"I don't think it," said Effingham, musing a moment; "I really don't know any one hereabouts good enough for her."

"Perhaps not here, but there are other places besides Templeton, and other churches besides 'New St. Paul's.'"

"Churches, Elizabeth! you would not wish to lose Mr. Grant, surely! Though simple, he is an excellent man. I shall never find another who has half the veneration for my orthodoxy. You would humble me from a saint to a very common sinner."

"It must be done, sir," returned the lady, with a half-concealed smile, "though it degrades you from an angel to a man."

"But you forget the farm?"

"He can lease it, as others do. Besides, would you have a clergyman toil in the fields?"

"Where can he go? You forget Louisa."

"No, I do not forget Louisa," said Elizabeth, again compressing her beautiful lips. "You know, Effingham, that my father has told you that I ruled him, and that I should rule you. I am now about to exert my power."

"Anything, anything, dear Elizabeth, but not at the expense of us all: not at the expense of your friend."

"How do you know, sir, that it will be so much at the expense of my friend?" said the lady, fixing her eyes with a searching look on his countenance, where they met only the unsuspecting expression of manly regret.

"How do I know it? why, it is natural that she should regret us."

"It is our duty to struggle with our natural feelings," returned the lady; "and there is but little cause to fear that such a spirit as Louisa's will not effect it."

"But what is your plan?"

"Listen, and you shall know. My father has procured a call for Mr. Grant, to one of the towns on the Hudson, where he can live more at his ease than in journeying through these woods; where he can spend the evening of his life in comfort and quiet; and where his daughter may meet with such society, and form such a connection, as may be proper for one of her years and character."

"Bess! you amaze me! I did not think you had been such a manager!"

"Oh! I manage more deeply than you imagine, sir," said the wife, archly smiling again; "but it is my will, and it is your duty to submit—for a time at least."

Effingham laughed; but, as they approached the end of their walk, the subject was changed by common consent.

The place at which they arrived was the little spot of level ground where the cabin of the Leather-Stocking had so long stood. Elizabeth found it entirely cleared of rubbish, and beautifully laid down in turf, by the removal of sods, which, in common with the surrounding country, had grown gay, under the influence of profuse showers, as if a

second spring had passed over the land. This little place was surrounded by a circle of mason work, and they entered by a small gate, near which, to the surprise of both, the rifle of Natty was leaning against the wall. Hector and the slut reposed on the grass by its side, as if conscious that, however altered, they were lying on the ground, and were surrounded by objects with which they were familiar. The hunter himself was stretched on the earth, before a head-stone of white marble, pushing aside with his fingers the long grass that had already sprung up from the luxuriant soil around its base, apparently to lay bare the inscription. By the side of this stone, which was a simple slab at the head of a grave, stood a rich monument, decorated with an urn, and ornamented with the chisel.

Oliver and Elizabeth approached the graves with a light tread, unheard by the old hunter, whose sunburnt face was working, and whose eyes twinkled as if something impeded their vision. After some little time Natty raised himself slowly from the ground, and said aloud :

“Well, well—I’m bold to say it’s all right! There’s something that I suppose is reading; but I can’t make anything of it; though the pipe and the tomahawk, and the moccasins, be pretty well—pretty well, for a man that, I dares to say, never seed ’ither of the things. Ah’s me! there they lie, side by side, happy enough! Who will there be to put me in the ’arth when my time comes?”

“When that unfortunate hour arrives, Natty, friends shall not be wanting to perform the last offices for you,” said Oliver, a little touched at the hunter’s soliloquy.

The old man turned, without manifesting surprise, for he had got the Indian habits in this particular, and, running his hand under the bottom of his nose, seemed to wipe away his sorrow with the action.

“You’ve come out to see the graves, children, have ye?” he said; “well, well, they’re wholesome sights to young as well as old.”

“I hope they are fitted to your liking,” said Effingham; “no one has a better right than yourself to be consulted in the matter.”

“Why, seeing that I an’t used to fine graves,” returned the old man, “it is but little matter consarning my taste. Ye laid the major’s head to the west, and Mohegan’s to the east, did ye, lad?”

“At your request it was done.”

"It's so best," said the hunter ; " they thought they had to journey different ways, children ; though there is One greater than all, who'll bring the just together, at His own time, and who'll whiten the skin of a blackamoor, and place him on a footing with princes."

"There is but little reason to doubt that," said Elizabeth, whose decided tones were changed to a soft, melancholy voice ; "I trust we shall all meet again, and be happy together."

"Shall we, child, shall we?" exclaimed the hunter, with unusual fervor, "there's comfort in that thought too. But before I go, I should like to know what 'tis you tell these people, that be flocking into the country like pigeons in the spring, of the old Delaware, and of the bravest white man that ever trod the hills."

Effingham and Elizabeth were surprised at the manner of the Leather-Stocking, which was unusually impressive and solemn ; but, attributing it to the scene, the young man turned to the monument, and read aloud :

"Sacred to the memory of Oliver Effingham, Esquire, formally a Major in his B. Majesty's 60th Foot ; a soldier of tried valor ; a subject of chivalrous loyalty ; and a man of honesty. To these virtues he added the graces of a Christian. The morning of his life was spent in honor, wealth, and power ; but its evening was obscured by poverty, neglect, and disease, which were alleviated only by the tender care of his old, faithful, and upright friend and attendant, Nathaniel Bumppo. His descendants rear this stone to the virtues of the master, and to the enduring gratitude of the servant."

The Leather-Stocking started at the sound of his own name, and a smile of joy illuminated his wrinkled features, as he said :

"And did ye say it, lad ? have you then got the old man's name cut in the stone, by the side of his master's ? God bless ye, children ! 'twas a kind thought, and kindness goes to the heart as life shortens."

Elizabeth turned her back to the speakers. Effingham made a fruitless effort before he succeeded in saying :

"It is there cut in plain marble ; but it should have been written in letters of gold !"

"Show me the name, boy," said Natty, with simple eagerness ; "let me see my own name placed in such honor. 'Tis a gin'rous gift to a man who leaves none of his name

and family behind him in a country where he has tarried so long."

Effingham guided his finger to the spot, and Natty followed the windings of the letters to the end with deep interest, when he raised himself from the tomb, and said :

"I suppose it's all right ; and it's kindly thought, and kindly done ! But what have ye put over the red-skin ?"

"You shall hear :

"'This stone is raised to the memory of an Indian Chief, of the Delaware tribe, who was known by the several names of John Mohegan ; Mohican——'"

"Mo-hee-can, lad, they call theirselves ! 'hecan."

"'Mohican ; and Chingagook——'"

"'Gach, boy ; 'gach-gook ; Chingachgook, which interpreted, means Big-sarpent. The name should be set down right, for an Indian's name has always some meaning in it."

"I will see it altered. 'He was the last of his people who continued to inhabit this country ; and it may be said of him that his faults were those of an Indian, and his virtues those of a man.'"

"You never said truer word, Mr. Oliver ; ah's me ! if you had know'd him as I did, in his prime, in that very battle where the old gentleman, who sleeps by his side, saved his life, when them thieves, the Iroquois, had him at the stake, you'd have said all that, and more too. I cut the thongs with this very hand, and gave him my own tomahawk and knife, seeing that the rifle was always my fav'rite weapon. He did lay about him like a man ! I met him as I was coming home from the trail, with eleven Mingo scalps on his pole. You needn't shudder, Madam Effingham, for they was all from shaved heads and warriors. When I look about me, at these hills, where I used to could count sometimes twenty smokes, curling over the tree-tops, from the Delaware camps, it raises mournful thoughts, to think that not a red-skin is left of them all ; unless it be a drunken vagabond from the Oneidas, or them Yankee Indians, who, they say, be moving up from the sea-shore ; and who belong to none of God's creatures, to my seeming, being, as it were, neither fish nor flesh—neither white man nor savage. Well, well ! the time has come at last, and I must go——"

"Go !" echoed Edwards, "whither do you go ?"

The Leather-Stocking, who had imbibed, unconsciously, many of the Indian qualities, though he always thought

of himself as of a civilized being, compared with even the Delawares, averted his face to conceal the workings of his muscles, as he stooped to lift a large pack from behind the tomb, which he placed deliberately on his shoulders.

"Go!" exclaimed Elizabeth, approaching him with a hurried step; "you should not venture so far in the woods alone, at your time of life, Natty; indeed, it is imprudent. He is bent, Effingham, on some distant hunting."

"What Mrs. Effingham tells you is true, Leather-Stocking," said Edwards; "there can be no necessity for your submitting to such hardships now. So throw aside your pack, and confine your hunt to the mountains near us, if you will go."

"Hardship! 'tis a pleasure, children, and the greatest that is left me on this side the grave."

"No, no; you shall not go to such a distance," cried Elizabeth, laying her white hand on his deerskin pack—"I am right! I feel his camp-kettle, and a canister of powder! He must not be suffered to wander so far from us, Oliver; remember how suddenly Mohegan dropped away."

"I know'd the parting would come hard, children—I know'd it would!" said Natty, "and so I got aside to look at the graves by myself, and thought if I left ye the keepsake which the major gave me, when we first parted in the woods, ye wouldn't take it unkind, but would know that, let the old man's body go where it might, his feelings stayed behind him."

"This means something more than common," exclaimed the youth. "Where is it Natty, that you purpose going?"

The hunter drew nigh him with a confident, reasoning air, as if what he had to say would silence all objections, and replied:

"Why, lad, they tell me that on the Big-lakes there's the best of hunting, and a great range, without a white man on it, unless it may be one like myself. I'm weary of living in clearings, and where the hammer is sounding in my ears from sunrise to sundown. And though I'm much bound to ye both, children—I wouldn't say it if it was not true—I crave to go into the woods ag'in—I do."

"Woods!" echoed Elizabeth, trembling with her feelings; "do you not call these endless forest woods?"

"Ah! child, these be nothing to a man that's used to the wilderness. I have took but little comfort sin' your father come on with his settlers; but I wouldn't go far,

while the life was in the body that lies under the sod there. But now he's gone, and Chingachgook is gone ; and you be both young and happy. Yes ! the big house has rung with merriment this month past ! And now, I thought, was the time to get a little comfort in the close of my days. Woods ! indeed ! I doesn't call these woods, Madam Effingham, where I lose myself every day of my life in the clearings."

"If there be anything wanting to your comfort, name it, Leather-Stocking ; if it be attainable it is yours."

"You mean all for the best, lad, I know ; and so does madam, too ; but your ways isn't my ways. 'Tis like the dead there, who thought, when the breath was in them, that one went east, and one went west, to find their heavens ; but they'll meet at last, and so shall we, children. Yes, ind as you've begun, and we shall meet in the land of the just at last."

"This is so new ! so unexpected !" said Elizabeth, in almost breathless excitement ; "I had thought you meant to live with us and die with us, Natty."

"Words are of no avail," exclaimed her husband : "the habits of forty years are not to be dispossessed by the ties of a day. I know you too well to urge you further, Natty ; unless you will let me build you a hut on one of the distant hills, where we can sometimes see you, and know that you are comfortable."

"Don't fear for the Leather-Stocking, children ; God will see that his days be provided for, and his ind happy. I know you mean all for the best, but our ways doesn't agree. I love the woods, and ye relish the face of man ; I eat when hungry, and drink when a-dry ; and ye keep stated hours and rules ; nay, nay, you even over-feed the dogs, lad, from pure kindness ; and hounds should be gaunty to run well. The meanest of God's creatures be made for some use, and I'm formed for the wilderness. If ye love me, let me go where my soul craves to be ag'in !"

The appeal was decisive ; and not another word of entreaty for him to remain was then uttered ; but Elizabeth bent her head to her bosom and wept, while her husband dashed away the tears from his eyes ; and, with hands that almost refused to perform their office, he produced his pocket-book, and extended a parcel of bank-notes to the hunter.

"Take these," he said, "at least take these ; secure them

about your person, and in the hour of need they will do you good service."

The old man took the notes, and examined them with a curious eye.

"This, then, is some of the new-fashioned money that they've been making at Albany, out of paper! it can't be worth much to they that hasn't larning! No, no, lad—take back the stuff; it will do me no sarvice. I took kear to get all the Frenchman's powder afore he broke up, and they say lead grows where I'm going. It isn't even fit for wads, seeing that I use none but leather!—Madam Effingham, let an old man kiss your hand, and wish God's choicest blessings on you and your'n."

"Once more let me beseech you, stay!" cried Elizabeth. "Do not, Leather-Stocking, leave me to grieve for the man who has twice rescued me from death, and who has served those I love so faithfully. For my sake, if not for your own, stay. I shall see you in those frightful dreams that still haunt my nights, dying in poverty and age, by the side of those terrific beasts you slew. There will be no evil, that sickness, want, and solitude can inflict, that my fancy will not conjure as your fate. Stay with us, old man, if not for your own sake, at least for ours."

"Such thoughts and bitter dreams, Madam Effingham," returned the hunter, solemnly, "will never haunt an innocent parson long. They'll pass away with God's pleasure. And if the cat-a-mounts be yet brought to your eyes in sleep, 'tis not for my sake, but to show you the power of Him that led me there to save you. Trust in God, madam, and your honorable husband, and the thoughts for an old man like me can never be long nor bitter. I pray that the Lord will keep you in mind—the Lord that lives in clearings as well as in the wilderness—and bless you, and all that belong to you, from this time till the great day when the whites shall meet the red-skins in judgment, and justice shall be the law, and not power."

Elizabeth raised her head, and offered her colorless cheek to his salute, when he lifted his cap and touched it respectfully. His hand was grasped with convulsive fervor by the youth, who continued silent. The hunter prepared himself for his journey, drawing his belt tighter, and wasting his moments in the little reluctant movements of a sorrowful departure. Once or twice he assayed to speak, but a rising in his throat prevented it. At length he

shouldered his rifle, and cried with a clear huntsman's call that echoed through the woods :

"He-e-e-re, he-e-e-re, pups—away, dogs, away!—ye'll be footsore afore ye see the end of the journey!"

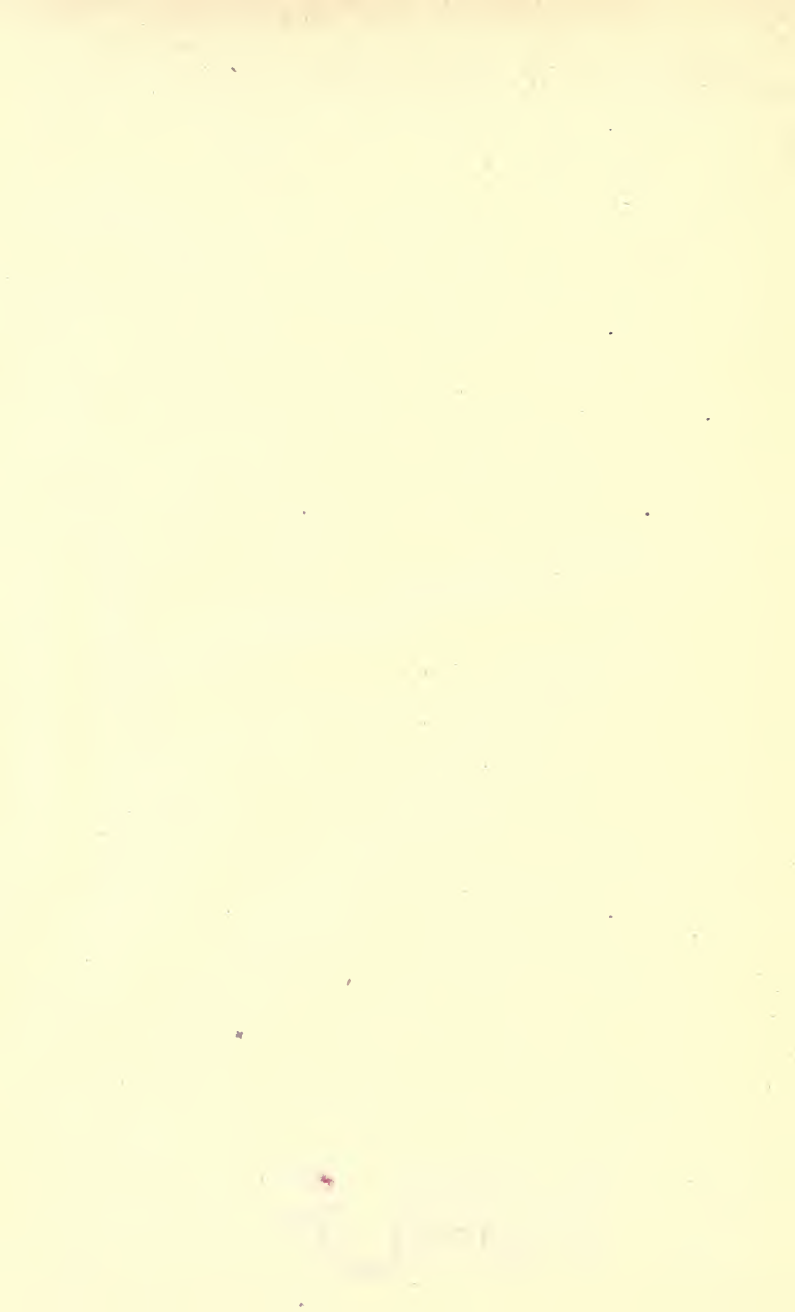
The hounds leaped from the earth at this cry, and scenting around the grave and silent pair, as if conscious of their own destination, they followed humbly at the heels of their master. A short pause succeeded, during which even the youth concealed his face on his grandfather's tomb. When the pride of manhood, however, had suppressed the feelings of nature, he turned to renew his entreaties, but saw that the cemetery was occupied only by himself and his wife.

"He is gone!" cried Effingham.

Elizabeth raised *her* face, and saw the old hunter standing looking back for a moment, on the verge of the wood. As he caught their glances, he drew his hard hand hastily across his eyes again, waved it on high for an adieu, and, uttering a forced cry to his dogs, who were crouching at his feet, he entered the forest.

This was the last they ever saw of the Leather-Stocking, whose rapid movements preceded the pursuit which Judge Temple both ordered and conducted. He had gone far toward the setting sun—the foremost in that band of pioneers who are opening the way for the march of the nation across the continent.

THE END.



NRLF

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