

disappointment, be rendered unfit to harmonize with it as in calmer moments. Such was the case with our young stranger, now again left alone, and with a mutter of vexation, he turned his back to the lake, and strolled leisurely into the forest. By and by he stopped opposite the smooth trunk of a magnificent beech, which towered considerably above the neighbouring trees, and for a while contemplated in silence this beautiful production of the forest. The beech is my own especial favourite among trees, from a boy I loved it, and in later times have even written some of my best verses upon it—these, however, I shall not here inflict, for my modesty is at least equal to my genius, however admirable the latter.

To return to the solitary individual of whom I write—after standing some time gazing on the noble tree before him, suddenly his eye brightened, as with some new occupation of thought. He hastily, but carefully leaned his rifle against the stem of the beech tree, and searching his pocket, drew forth a penknife, with which he began to carve upon the bark, evidently amused with the task he had commenced—and here for a few minutes I shall leave him, for the purpose of continuing my narration in its proper order.

In less time than I have taken to describe the circumstance of the stranger's leaving the side of the lake, and his subsequent actions, a fearful and portentous change had taken place in the aspect of nature; so rapidly too, that it might almost be termed instantaneous. As if by magic, or at least, as if by some unnatural impulse, at once arose from every quarter of the horizon numerous masses of small lead coloured clouds, which, without the accompaniment of a breath of air, felt below, ascended rapidly upwards toward the zenith, as apparently the general focus of attraction. The edges of these clouds were hard and abrupt, and in their course upwards they appeared to have a rotatory motion, as if not impelled by a direct wind alone, but as if they were forcibly driven through a region of whirlwinds. Long successions of these clouds continued rising, even after the first had attained the mid heaven, and by their union had assumed a more condensed and embodied appearance. As the succeeding masses rapidly closed towards the point of attraction, and the blaze of the sun became eclipsed, the gloom grew deeply profound, and at length assumed the omenous aspect of a dark black cloud, which overspread, as with a mantle, all the heavens, excepting a broad circle of light which remained parallel to the horizon wherever it was visible.

Hitherto not a breeze had stirred the surface of the water; but the change above had now communicated to it so deepened a hue, that it might be justly likened in appearance to a vast basin of ink. A singular moaning noise too could now be distinguished among the trees of the forest, though as yet

not a leaf fluttered visibly to the eye. Suddenly a deep rushing sound was heard, as if approaching from the farther extremity of the lake, and on looking towards the stately pines on the hills beyond, their mighty heads were seen at once to bend, as if they had been rushes, whilst some were wrenched sheer off and tossed about through the air like feathers. Other trees fell bodily, with an awful crash, plainly distinguishable from the outlet of the lake—and now poured the tempest down upon the water with terrific effect, for in an instant its hitherto placid surface was lashed into monstrous waves, and covered with broad jets of white foam, which came surging violently upon the rock where the traveller had stood, and completely broke over it some distance inland.

This overwhelming blast continued for nearly five minutes, before it lulled—the heaven above was now shrouded in utter blackness—a fearful pause ensued for the space of a few seconds, when a blinding blaze of lightning, (it could hardly be termed a flash,) accompanied by crackling thunder, loud as the reports of a thousand great and small cannon, directly overhead, burst through the gloom in unutterable brightness—the mountains, far and near, reverberated the tremendous volleys of the thunder claps, until gradually their echoings subsided into silence. Then poured forth, from the shattered clouds, a deluge of fierce rain, as if a water-spout had burst overhead and threatened complete inundation of the district; again the mighty voice of the wind arose, bearing on its wings destruction to the tall forest trees, hundreds of which were uprooted by the roots, and fell prostrate before its violence. This again gradually died away, until it subsided into a cool agreeable breeze. On looking upwards, the mass of clouds appeared scattered, and to be now driving away hastily before the upper current of air, which continued steadily from the westward; the rain also diminished now to a shower, grew lighter and lighter, and in a few minutes the descending sun, emerging suddenly from behind the most western of the departing clouds, shone out in sobered radiance upon the scene, and all nature assumed the appearance of recovered beauty, as if rejoicing at the termination of this severe but necessary visitation.

A short time afterwards the sound of voices was heard approaching. It was the party of voyageurs returning with their canoes carefully poised on their shoulders, and dexterously avoiding any impediment of rock, branch, or fallen tree, that obstructed their passage. The clearing up the weather had perceptibly added to their usual light heartedness, and even with their cumbersome burthens on their shoulders, these happy fellows found time and spirits to utter their jokes, often interrupted in the middle, however, by a "garde la." Having with much care placed their canoes on the ground, and then launched them into the lake, they began the task of