

"he is certainly not to be despised as respects his strength; it took three of our fellows to hold him; but what are you staring at, Marston?"

"As Hay and you were talking," answered the young man excitedly, "I saw two bright eyes staring at me intently from that low tree—just beyond where Toma is seated."

"Nonsense, Marston," replied Osborne; "your infantile imagination has been so stimulated by Hay's story that you are commencing to see ghosts and Indians in every bush."

"See, see!" said Marston, "there they are again. Look now—all of you!"

The party seized their guns and proceeded to the place to which Marston had pointed them; but, as they came close to the tree, the flapping of wings was heard, and a large owl began to *hoot*, and flew off to some more quiet haunt, to the amusement of all with the exception of poor Marston, who was very much disgusted, and would have found even a hostile Indian welcome at that juncture. However, this trivial incident put all the party in first-rate humor, and made them forget for the while all their apprehensions of any Indians having been in the vicinity; for it was probably the same cause that had made the dog so restless on more than one occasion in the night time.

CHAPTER IV.

Yet pass we that,—the war and chase
Give little choice of resting place;
An autumn night in greenwood spent
Were but to-morrow's merriment;
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better missed than found.

—SCOTT.

On the following day, Hay and Marston, accompanied by the Indian, strolled off a short distance into the woods, agreeing to return in three hours at the latest, as it was intended to shift the camp further down the Musquodoboit, in the course of the afternoon. When the others had left, Fortescue took his fishing tackle, and said he would go down to the river side to see if he could not hook a few trout. Osborne decided he would remain in the

camp to clean the lock of his rifle, and would join his friend as soon as he was done.

When Osborne was left alone he piled a few logs on the fire, for the morning air felt a little chilly, and then set to work determinedly to put his gun in order; but when his task was completed he remained buried in thought. To most persons it is a pleasant sensation—indeed a most grateful relief from the noise and excitement of the city or town—to be left alone to enjoy the solitude of the forest. One may never feel desolate or solitary when he can listen to the solemn roar of the wind-swept forest, so like the swell of the "deep voiced ocean"—or watch the shadows, at evening, slowly creeping into the recesses of the groves, until the trees at last assume the most fantastic shapes—or see the moonlight quivering on the leaves, lighting up the glades, sending "its long trail of splendor" athwart the bosom of some sequestered lake, or mingling its radiance with the brooks as they dash over the pebbles, until they look like chains of brilliant jewels. A charming conceit was that of the Greeks of old, which gave a personality to even the trees, and peopled the forest with troops of Dryads and Hamadryads—those creations of a pure, poetic fancy.

So it was not strange if Osborne, who was peculiarly sensitive to the influences and circumstances around him, should have yielded to the sense of perfect repose—to the very witchery that the scene around him presented. For the once, the world with all its worry and unrest, seemed so far away, and no thought of danger even in those wilds arose to mar the pleasant sensations which he felt as he sat beneath the shadow of the tall trees.

Then, his imagination took him far from the present scene—to his pleasant home in far off Devon. When would he again see the oaks and the elms in the parks of England? When would he once more sit under their shade or wander by the fragrant hedge-rows that surrounded the pretty rectory where his boyhood had been spent, and breathe the air laden with the odor of the hawthorn, the sweet-briar and the honey-suckle? These and other thoughts mingled confusedly in his mind until at