

AN OLD FUR HUNTER'S ADVENTURE IN THE NORTH-WEST.

WHEN you see gipsies sleep all the year round on the bare ground, under black ragged tents, or sitting before their fires, in sunshine or rain, in the open air, you think they must lead a pretty hard life; but it is nothing compared to the hardships I had to go through when, in my youthful folly, I took to trapping wild animals for the sake of their fur, far away in the north-west territory of America. Often for months together I never saw a white face. Sometimes I was alone for weeks and weeks without meeting with a fellow-creature, and was right glad to fall in with a band of red Indians, heathens and savages as they were.

I was trapping along the banks of the great Saskatchewan river, which runs into Lake Winnipeg, some three or four hundred miles away from the British settlements. After passing three weeks by myself, and having collected a good pack of furs, I began to think that I would turn my face homewards. Just as I had come to this resolution, I fell in with a party of Crees. We camped on the bank of the river, close to a thick wood, which kept the wind off us; for it was autumn, and the nights were getting cold, though the sun was still hot enough in the daytime to blister the skin off a man's face not accustomed to it. I soon learned from the talk of my companions that they had had a quarrel with a tribe of Blackfeet, born enemies to the Crees. They live by hunting the buffalo, and delight in killing and scalping their enemies. The Crees were boasting of having killed two or three of them, and swore before long to have the scalps of as many more. They wanted me to join them; but I said that, although they were no friends of mine, I could not see that I had any business to go and kill my fellow-creatures.

We were all seated round a big fire, which was blazing