

agility and ferocity of the wild cat, to the judgement of the man;—but the holders of the Fort were not daunted at that,—they too were men used to the woods, and European pride, grafted on American practise, made them scorn the supposition that they need fear any of their own species, no matter what the colour of their skins, or the savageness of their manners.

The Indians who ran to the westward soon returned, having satisfied themselves that the fugitives could not have gone in that direction. They and others stopped for a moment in consultation, on the spot where the travellers first came in sight of the fort, and then, taking the trail, they descended the hill rapidly, no doubt tracing it to the river.

“Steady for your lives” now said Great Beaver, “they will soon examine the shore right and left, and track us to our cover.”

One of the men who stood on post by the horse, left it for a moment, and joined the men at the loop holes, confident that the first show of the enemy now would be on the path which they themselves had taken to reach the fort. Much time had not elapsed, during which the traveller's hearts could be heard beating with excitement, before the bushes appeared suddenly shaken over the brow of the bank, and soon after three Indians bounded up, fully exposed, like deer hounds in the chase. As they discovered that the trail led directly to the fort, they stopped suddenly, and seemed struck with astonishment, and doubtful what to resolve on. “The white skin shall be avenged,” gasped Great Beaver; “take that fellow on the right, Nathan, and when you are sure, fire.” So saying, he rested his rifle's muzzle in the loop, and almost instantaneously the two were discharged. The savage to the right fell as if struck by a thunder bolt; the one to the left jumped convulsively from the ground, ran half a dozen paces towards the fort, as if to take revenge, fell forward, writhed for a moment among the dry leaves, and was still. The third Indian, with the speed and agility of a panther, crouched and slid over the bank, and was immediately hidden from view.

A yell now arose from the lower ground, indicating the rage of the band, at the manoeuvre of the white men, and the fall of their comrades.

The beleaguered travellers had scarcely time to load, when the chief of the Indians exhibited his skill, by pushing a detachment up the sward in front of the fort, resolved on making a sudden attack on the weakest point. Two other rifle cracks awoke the echoes, the smoke wreath curled above the fort, and two more of the Indians rolled on the prairie grass. The band faltered for a moment, and then pushed on, reckoning on some awkwardness of the travellers in reloading. But not waiting for that, the holders of the fort picked up a couple of spare pieces which had been strapped to the panniers of the horse, and gave a second volley; one other Indian fell, and another wounded, turned limping, and retraced his trail. The party, thus weakened and foiled, and dreading a continuation of the warm treatment, scattered right and left, over the hillocks. Another yell, not so strong, but more hideous in expression than the former, rent the air, and then a silence ensued, which seemed doubly deep, after the explosions and shouts of the preceding moment. It appeared as if utter solitude had again revisited the wild, and that the ground had swallowed up the besiegers and besieged. A sharp ticking denoted that the deadly rifles were again ready for action, and the travellers' eyes glanced keenly in every direction, over the back and neck of the patient horse, and through the loop-holes of the hut.

Night now settled down rapidly: the trees became mingled with the sward, and clumps of bushes appeared like groups of the enemy, prowling around. The poor travellers still standing to their arms, looked round, exhausted, seeking some mode by which they might get the refreshment that nature called for. The fort was left empty by the Indians, except some cooking utensils, and the embers of a fire—and the provender of the travellers had been thrown off the horse to lighten him of his load, in the first moment of alarm. The bags of biscuit and buffalo meat lay near the spot where their poor comrade fell, and they were often earnestly looked at, until the shades of evening hid them from view. It would be death to attempt getting them in possession, for doubtless the Indians kept watch behind the near hillocks, and would pick off any who ventured out of the fort. Rest was denied almost as much as food. The besieged knew not when another attack might be made, and an incessant watching, in the clear starlight, was their only chance of safety. A flicker of a pine torch had been already seen in an unexpected direction, and the flight of a bullet aimed at the flame, was followed by shrieks, as if that also had done its work on the enemy.

It was now evident that about one third of the band were disabled, and the absence of provender in the fort, gave the travellers hopes, that the Indians would soon be forced to depart on a hunting excursion. If then they could defend their fortress successfully all night, deliverance might come with the morning; and the American cities, the homes of the home-sick men, might yet reward their exertions. Under the influence of these views they resolved to watch all night, forcing nature to forego her wonted renovation, while struggling for life. A heap of grass was scraped together for the exhausted horse, and with sleepless eyes the men glanced out the live-long night, on bank and stump and bush, wherever a human being would have advantage in approaching their hiding

place. But none came. The Indians had been taught to respect their opponents, and were resolved not to throw any more of their lives away in attempting to surprise men who were their match in desperation and cunning.

Morning came, and ghastly did the men seem in its light. Restlessness, and fatigue, and hunger, had traced their corroding lines on the weather beaten countenances, which glinted forth, like those of wild foxes, from the fort. One laid down and rested while the others held dozing watch,—after a short hour's fitful sleep, another took a draught of nature's balmy repose, and then another, but it was like a drop of water to the thirsty, exciting a feverish desire for more.

Famine also, pressed very closely, and the spot most intensely watched was that where the provisions lay, beside their slaughtered and scalped companion.

Hope, however, was not altogether absent; the morning smoke of the Indians was seen, as they cooked their early meal, but perhaps they had since slunk off, or would soon do so. Silent, and crouched at their posts, the travellers sat revolving all the chances of escape, hardening themselves, to the gnawings of hunger, which, wolf-like, was preying upon their vitals; ever and anon they indulged anticipations of freedom, and yearned for friends and home like harrassed children for the mother's breast.

A rifle crack made the sufferers jump to their feet, and the next moment their living barrier, the poor horse, which had stood muzzling his wisp of grass fixed as a statue, trembled violently, sank to the earth, and rolled on his side. The blood oozed from beside his shoulder,—he had been shot, and was dying. This was indeed a cutting down of the chief stay of the wretched; if they even escaped the Indians how could they travel the weary miles which yet lay before them, without the aid of their poor servant? When they saw him fall, an involuntary exclamation of horror burst forth, and it was answered by a yell from the thicket beyond the nearest breast of land. Still, not a red skin was to be seen; from a rifle directed by a person prostrate on the ground, the horse could not be hurted; it was evident that an Indian must have crept to one of the nearer trees, climbed it, and from that taken his aim. But the work was done, the besieged were starving, they were exhausted in body and mind,—their slave, whose services were so indispensable, was lifeless,—and despair settled down with iron pressure on the heart of each wretch. Still they gave another hour's watching for vengeance; but none of the enemy appeared. “We may as well die at once, as die thus,” gasped one of the men who was posted in defence of the open side of the fort,—“let us storm the devil's camp.” “No, no,” said Great Beaver, “that would be sheer madness, let us die here like men, who were men to the last.” “I must have food,” answered the other, “good bye, I will get the bread yonder, or die in the attempt.” “Good bye, good bye,” ejaculated his two companions; they had not hope enough to induce an attempt to dissuade him from his purpose, and they knew that he was going to his death. Adjusting his knife, and seizing his rifle, the gaunt man rushed forth from the fort, his step unsteady from want of rest and food, yet his eye glaring threateningly around, as if he would yet be a formidable antagonist. He had not gone one half the distance between the fort and the place where the bread lay, when a flash from a tree caught his eye, a shot was heard,—and he staggered forward; he grasped a sapling for support, and looked keenly around. In a moment he made a convulsive spring, a pace or two on one side of his path,—sunk on his knee and fired. He bent forward watching the effect of his shot, as if that was all he then cared for in creation. The bullet was not sped for nought; an Indian fell heavily from the tree whence the flash came. The traveller had his revenge; a maniac laugh pealed frightfully on the desert, he waved his hand in triumph, fell languidly on his back, and resigned life without a further struggle. Another shot, and another, at the body of the prostrate man, told that the Pawnees were close on the edge of the level; but he cared not,—no motion was visible as the ruthless bullets struck his manly form,—he was gone, beyond the reach of any further sufferings of the wilderness.

The poor men in the fort now yielded to despair; another evening approached, the demands for rest and food were imperative, and the exasperated enemy were as watchful as ever. They threw down their rifles, and gathering some leaves around the embers which they had contrived to keep alive, proceeded to cook, for food, portions of the dead horse. A bullet whistled through the opening of the fort, they heeded it not,—let death come, it was unavoidable; another and another made its ominous music within their frail shelter, and one of the miserable twain fell. The last, roused by this final outrage, sprung to his feet, gnashed his teeth, and glared out like a spectre; in that position he received a ball which placed him motionless beside his late brother in affliction. There they lay, side by side, in that dismal fort; silent, pale, and bloody, while the evening sun went down on the plains, pouring a flood of blessed radiance over the verdant expanse.

They are gone, those poor travellers,—no home, no friends, for them. Distant were the companions of their youth, at that hour of extremity; secure in the heart of the busy city, while those whom they once loved were dying on the desert. Happy ignorance. Dreadful, indeed, if, with the evils which make themselves felt and seen, by their proximity,—we were conscious of those at a distance, and bled in sympathy with friends whom we could not as-

sist. The cities to which the travellers' steps were directed, were gay, noisy, and joyous on the evening of their death; and some who would readily have died in their defence, laughed merrily, at the time when defence was needed the most. One homestead, indeed, exhibited a shade of pleasing melancholy, connected with the travellers, at the moment of the death struggle. The wife of him who was returning home an altered man, had heard of his alteration, and intended return. No hour passed in which she did not mention his name to a group of little ones, renewing the love of a father, in their hearts, and filling their tender minds with visions of cheerfulness, connected with that nearest and long lost relative. When the time had elapsed in which he should have arrived,—she watched with feverish anxiety; at morn, expecting that before evening her former love and pride would once more appear, and at night, expecting that morn would bring the promised treasure. But he came not,—the hearts of mother and children sickened—and again, after awhile, melancholy forebodings yielded to the kind force of forgetfulness; the fate of the father and husband became, at length, as some vague dream, which it was not wise to strengthen by any endeavour at tracing its features.

The Indians scalped their victims, and left their bodies in the deserted fort to feed the prairie wolf. In after days the story became known, and the bones obtained burial. The grave still rises in the fort in the grove; it is a mark of the vengeance of the desert tribes, and a charm to urge the progress of the white man, in his feuds with the wild race which he is every where supplanting.

Z.

For the Pearl:

## CAMPING OUT.

I have always been a fisherman—that is, since I can remember any thing. When but a rosy cheeked six-year-old, my delight used to be to get down upon the end of the old stone wharf, in front of the paternal dwelling, with a crooked pin made fast to three yards of Herring twine, and a whittle of the same length, and there, for hours together, would I pull in perch, and pollock, and tom cod, and busy myself with the most abundant, and most easily deceived, of the finny tribes that line our shores. I can remember yet the first sculpin I caught, and the labor it cost me to extract my hook from the fathomless depths that seemed to lie beneath its capacious jaws. With what childish apprehension I gazed upon this sea monster, and speculated upon the best mode of disengaging my tackle without the loss of a finger. To touch him was out of the question—to venture my tiny hand into his awful throat, seemed to be certain destruction to a limb at least. How I pumbled him, and wondered at the creature's tenacity of life—till, despairing of ever getting clear of my prize, I planted one foot firmly on his tail, and pulled, till the pin straightening, I found myself free of entanglement, and vowed to fish no more so near the bottom.

A year or two after, as a bright reward for learning some long lesson, or for some extra piece of good behaviour, I got permission to accompany an elder brother to Williams's Lake. I had never seen a trout caught, although I had a vague idea of their whereabouts, and of the superior skill that was required to tempt them from the dark waters in which they dwelt. I could not sleep for thinking of the pleasures of the coming day; and before sun-rise, was thumping at my brother's door, with all the vehemence of a boy panting for knowledge and amusement, in new forms and scenes as yet untrodden. In a couple of hours I was perched upon a venerable granite rock, taking my first lesson in that art which has since so often refreshed a weary spirit and afforded so much of recreation. Pleasant hours have I spent by Lake and Stream since that day; but never have I known the boundless exultation with which I grasped the rod, that was at last, after a basket full had been taken, good naturedly resigned into my hands, and I, JOHN WILKINSON, just turned of eight, in corduroy jacket and trowsers, stood upon that granite rock with a four jointed rod, itself a wonder, in my own hand, paying out and winding up, that I might hear the reel tick, and switching the flies about upon the surface of the water. The hope, the pride, the novelty, of that hour, have never since been surpassed, by any of the delights or triumphs of life. It was here that I killed my first fish, I mean the first with the fly, and if it had been a whale, with forty barrels of sperm in his head, the prize would not have seemed of greater value. With what transport I drew it at night out of the basket,—I would have known it among an hundred—and held it up by the gills before the whole family circle, as my own peculiar share of the spoil. There was a year's growth in that single day—such stories as I had to tell the next morning to all my young companions and playmates, who had never handled a rod or killed a trout with a hair line! I was the envy of the whole circle, and there was not one of them that gave fathers and elder brothers any rest, until they had shared the same indulgence, and performed the same exploit. As we grew older, we got rods and lines of our own, and passed sportively through the Angler's novitiate. Then came little parties to the lake, without any body to take care of us, with the cautions and fears of anxious mothers, who wearied for our return. Glorious days those—when we had an old leaky boat all to ourselves, and rowed about from stand to stand—trod on each other's tips—tangled each other's lines, and strove who