

CHAPTER XLVII.

A FESTIVE WINTER — CONVERSION OF THE SHOSHONIES — VISIT OF TWO FREE TRAPPERS — GAYETY IN THE CAMP — A TOUCH OF THE TENDER PASSION — THE RECLAIMED SQUAW — AN INDIAN FINE LADY — AN ELOPEMENT — A PURSUIT — MARKET VALUE OF A BAD WIFE.

GAME continued to abound throughout the winter, and the camp was overstocked with provisions. Beef and venison, humps and haunches, buffalo tongues and marrow-bones, were constantly cooking at every fire; and the whole atmosphere was redolent with the savory fumes of roast meat. It was, indeed, a continual "feast of fat things," and though there might be a lack of "wine upon the lees," yet we have shown that a substitute was occasionally to be found in honey and alcohol.

Both the Shoshonies and the Eutaws conducted themselves with great propriety. It is true, they now and then filched a few trifles from their good friends, the Big Hearts, when their backs were turned; but then, they always treated them to their faces with the utmost deference and respect, and good-humoredly vied with the trappers in all kinds of feats of activity and mirthful sports. The two tribes maintained toward each other, also, a friendliness of aspect which gave Captain Bonneville reason to hope that all past animosity was effectually buried.

The two rival bands, however, had not long been mingled in this social manner, before their ancient jealousy began to break out in a new form. The senior chief of the Shoshonies was a thinking man, and a man of observation. He had been among the Nez Percés, listened to their new code of morality and religion received from the white men, and attended their devotional exercises. He had observed the effect of all this, in elevating the tribe in the estimation of the white men; and determined, by the same means, to gain for his own tribe a superiority over their ignorant rivals, the Eutaws. He accordingly assembled his people, and promulgated among them the mongrel doctrines and form of worship of the Nez Percés; recommending the same to their adoption. The Shoshonies were struck with the novelty, at least, of the measure, and entered into it with spirit. They began to observe Sundays and holidays, and to have their devotional dances, and chants,