

it afforded relief from some of her sufferings, though it brought rather an increase than diminution of her labors. The Indians being as fond as the whites of the delicious product of the lofty maple, its sweet waters had to be secured, and Abigail was compelled to pierce the trees, collect the sap, and boil it into sugar, herself also providing the necessary wood.

The unwonted exposure and excessive labor brought on ague and fever early in the season, but, the Indians having little sympathy for her sickness, she was still pushed to her work with unrelenting severity, they insisting that her illness was merely a fit of laziness.

Sugar-making over, the planting soon commenced, leaving our maiden captive little opportunity to properly recover from her sickness, or regain strength, but obliging her to resume the last year's wearing round of exhausting toil. Thus, uncheered by kind word or friendly office, she labored and suffered till, worn down by sickness, cruelty, and want, her life became a burden to her, and she longed to lie down and die.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COUNCIL—THE BRAVES ON THE WAR-PATH—RETURN OF THE WARRIORS—THE NEGRO CAPTIVE—VALUE OF BUFFOONERY—THE FRENCHMAN—HOPE FOR THE CAPTIVE MAIDEN.

The warm weather having returned, the Indians called a great council. The chiefs, medicine-men, old men, and warriors assembled at the council-house. Due formalities having been observed, one after another of their old men dilated with much native eloquence upon the great achievements of their forefathers, the aggressions of the whites, and the wrong the red man had suffered, or had reason to apprehend from these intruders, upon the land given by the Great Spirit to the Indian race. The young warriors, now wrought up to the highest pitch of patriotic enthusiasm, were eager to go out upon the war-path, each emulous to exceed the other in killing,

scalping, or taking captive as many as possible of the palefaces.

The council having decided that the braves should go on the war-path, a great war-dance was held. At the termination of the dance, the warriors were sent off with much pomp and ceremony, on their errand of cruelty and death. Several weeks passed away—weeks of intense anxiety and painful apprehension to our young captive. Thoughts of happy family circles broken in upon by the savages; their members torn from each other, perhaps fathers, husbands, or brothers left dead; and the others taken into captivity, like herself, filled her young heart with sadness.

At length, intelligence arrived that the warriors were returning, and all parties—young and old—ran to the council-house to meet the braves, and share in the spoils. Abigail's apprehensions caused her to be no less anxious than the others to ascertain the result of the expedition.

But how did triumphant ferocity fade from the expectant faces of the assembled multitude, as the war-party marched in, bringing with them but one prisoner!—a negro lad of about fourteen or fifteen years of age. Abigail hid her face lest its expression should betray to her disappointed associates the joy of her heart at the failure of the enterprise.

An Indian ran up to the prisoner, to pull him from the horse on which he rode; but he, drawing himself up with an air of importance, cried in a loud tone, and with much emphasis,

"Ye don't pull dis chile off on dis yere hoss. I be Captain Johnson."

At his ludicrously consequential tone and manner, the Indian paused, and the young African was suffered to alight in his own way. As soon as he reached the ground, and was "loosed from his bands," he commenced to whoop, jump, scream, and dance, to the great amusement of the savages. Too dignified to make sport for themselves, they were delighted with his antics, and he was not slow to discover the advantages to be gained by his buffoonery.