

against the French plantations, for the season, and were returning to winter quarters, upon the falling of the snow.

The presence of these warriors, therefore, interrupted the daily routine, and gave an air of gay activity and excitement unusual to the place. The fighting men, relieved from the duties of an arduous campaign, hung up their weapons; and relaxing from the rigid discipline of the war-path prepared to enjoy, to the full, the truce which Nature offered to a life of almost continual hostility.

Conrad noticed, as he passed along, many a family group seated in the open air, before the doors of the different lodges. Here was the father, laughing gaily as he played with his children, or beguiling the time by conversing with his mild-mannered squaw,—smoking his pipe, meanwhile, with a luxuriant indolence pleasant to contemplate. There were a couple of inveterate gamblers, seated on the ground, and tossing the bone dice with rapid alternations, amid the plaudits of a circle of noisy lookers-on. And there again was to be seen a young soldier, fighting his battles over again, for the edification of an attentive audience; among which, many a soft-faced woman might be distinguished, who cast a glance of bright approval at the speaker, from time to time; while