

FOR THE ACADIAN MAGAZINE.

NATHANIEL SMITH.

A TALE.

And down he sinks
Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,
Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death.

Thompson.

THE sound of the conch announced to Nathaniel Smith that supper was on the table and as he approached his hut he carelessly swung his axe over his shoulder, and drove it into the end of a huge maple log. "Rest there my good fellow," said Smith, "to day thou hast fallen the largest tree in the forest." Smith was a native of Nova Scotia, and had settled in the year — on the banks of the River Jordan, a few miles from the harbor of Shelburne. His hut was built after the fashion of the early settlers of America. The logs placed together without the labour of hewing, and the openings filled up with moss, to prevent the intrusion of the rain or snow. The chimney was made of rough stone, cemented with mud, with a piece of an old barrel placed at the top. In the erection of his pig sty, he seemed to have studied convenience rather than cleanliness or comfort; it was placed at one side of the front door, where the music of these hungry gruntings was heard whenever it opened, or when by chance their twinkling eyes caught a glimpse of a bucket. They were of the grey hound description, but their owner partook not of their leanness, he was short and chubby, and of a lively animated disposition. His son George was eighteen years of age, and could fell a tree, wield a flail, or handle a pick-axe with any man in the neighbouring settlement. He was an able assistant to his father; they had been three years on their new residence, and had cleared a large patch of ground around them; in the centre of which, on a slight eminence, stood their habitation. Spring had opened, and the robins

began to warble their soft notes, perched on the lofty ash and towering elms by which they were surrounded. — At a distance were to be seen the rough cliffs of granite formed into variegated shapes, projecting their huge tops over the river below, as if threatening to fall from their stupendous weight: he who would enjoy the wildest scenes of nature must plunge into the forest, climb the rugged cliff, or float on the broad streams of the rivers of America. — They had five children, younger than George, and Smith's wife, though industrious and economical, was frequently hard driven to find clothing for her flock. It was not unusual to see Neddy with an old pair of daddy's pantaloons containing a huge sheep skin patch, or Dan with a green baize sleeve to a blue homespun jacket. The girls' frocks descended in rotation from the oldest to the youngest, or rather from the largest to the smallest, and were patched and patched again until it was difficult to say of what colour the original garment had been dyed. They might be called orderly children, for by long lectures and frequent application of the rod, Mrs. Smith had got them into tolerable training. One circumstance added greatly to the enjoyment of the family and particularly to that of the children. George could play on the fife, and it was amusing indeed, to see these little urchins skipping on the rough logs of the floor of the hut to the tune of "Over the hills and far away." He had no great variety of airs, and what he had acquired, were caught by ear at a rolling frolick, or perchance from the whistle of a passenger, for secluded as they were from the rest of the world, a stranger on his way to Shelburne would sometimes make his appearance, when the native hospitality of the country was discom-

Mr. G.
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