

weakness, had been selected as the fitting victims of the seven Athapascow warriors. In this the Red-Skins only acted in accordance with the true principles of war—to respect the strong, and prey upon the weak. The White Swallow remained behind on one occasion while two scouts went out to scour the banks of the stream in search of intelligence. They soon came back with the information, that about fifteen miles distant were five tents of Esquimaux, so placed as to be completely open to a surprise. It was then decided that the attack should take place the following night. Meanwhile they waded across the river, to be on the same side as their wretched victims. Here they halted to load their guns, furbish their lances, and prepare their shields.

Every man set to work to paint his buckler—one representing the sun, another the moon, others birds of prey and other animals, with imaginary beings, fantastic human creatures, and beasts of all kinds. They were all to serve as their protection during the combat, their shields being at once "medicine." Even the White Swallow, who was used to their Indian customs, was puzzled to know the meaning of half the rude drawings daubed with chalk and red clay, as not one had any resemblance to anything in heaven or upon earth. But, like the knights of chivalry, who scorned to write their own names, and seldom could ever read a love-letter, these Red-Skin paladins were quite satisfied that military glory was above all artistic merit. They were but of the general opinion of mankind, who admire far more the successful slayer of thousands, than the man who can achieve a splendid picture, a magnificent epic poem, or a great scientific discovery.

The shield-painting being over, the party advanced, still following the banks of the river—strictly avoiding all eminences, for fear of being seen, and all speech for fear of being heard. The way was arduous and painful in the extreme. They fell upon swampy marshes and muddy sloughs, in which they sank above their knees. But not a word was spoken, not a murmur or complaint given vent to. A tall youth had been selected as leader of the band, and no orchestra ever kept better time. They trod in each other's footsteps with the most praiseworthy unanimity; and might, from their silence, their gravity, their stiff, erect manner, have not inaptly been compared to moving mummies. The White Swallow carried in a bundle the whole of their provisions—no inconsiderable weight, as they desired not to halt an hour when their horrid surprise was effected.

About an hundred yards from where they first caught sight of the Esquimaux village they halted in council behind some rocks. It was now late at night, and yet these savage warriors, not satisfied with their martial air, now began to paint themselves anew. They daubed their faces with a horrid mixture of red and black—on one side with one colour, the other with the other; some tied their hair in knots, others cut it entirely off. Then they lightened themselves of every possible article of clothing, which they made