

THREE-KIS-HO ; OR, THE WHITE SWALLOW.

[CONCLUDED.]

The centre of the island was a large and deep hollow, used from time immemorial as the winter residence of the tribe which now occupied it. About a hundred and fifty yards long, by sixty broad, it contained thirty large huts or wigwams, so arranged, as to leave a considerable space in the centre. It was perhaps a dozen yards deep, and so overhung by trees, that whatever fire was made—and the Indians rarely make more than is necessary—never could be discovered by the smoke, which, rising in small columns, was swept by the currents of air among the dense foliage, to escape in such light vapours as were imperceptible. A large fire was now made, however, beside a rock, close below where the astonished pair stood. Round this were, perhaps, forty dark and fierce-looking warriors. The women stood in groups near the huts, whispering.

But the captives were what they chiefly sought ; and these were soon distinguished in the very centre of the council of the tribe.

A debate was going on, to which neither Mark Dalton nor the Roaming Panther seemed to pay any attention. They were on a log by themselves, and spoke in whispers.

“Listen !” said Matonaza, crouching down beside his bride in such a position as to see and hear all that passed, while he was at the summit of a path which led down to the fire.

Various opinions had apparently been uttered before their arrival. The last speaker, a fat, luxurious, greasy-looking warrior, with a nose and eye that spoke of the rum of the Yengees, was, when they first listened, doing battle for the protection of the white man's scalp. He urged the fact, that if he were taken to the nearest fort in the spring, they would be amply repaid for their trouble, and receive both powder, ball, and shot in abundance, with plenty of fire-water, that made a poor Indian's heart glad. As for the Red-Skin, his tribe could spare him ; besides, he was of no value. Let them take his scalp. A few applauded, but the rest murmured loudly, for the speaker was a notorious drunkard ; and the Red-Skins, even those who occasionally give way to the suicidal madness of drink—the worst suicide, because of mind and body—despise a habitual sot.

Then up rose a warrior in the very prime of his days. He was about five-and-forty, handsome, well-made, tall, and of grave and rather melancholy mien. It was the Lightning-Arm, the renowned warrior who, taken prisoner by the English, had resisted all the temptations which ruined his fellows. He was the bravest, the wisest, the ablest chief of that day ; and his renown was universal. So was his terrible cruelty, in putting to death all the white men and the Dog-ribbed, and other north-western Indians, who fell in his way. This was his oration.