

The White Rose of the Cherokees.

"O'er the dark waters, without sail or oar
She drifted on, at mercy of the waves.—*Anon.*

A venerable old man sat in a country inn, before a ruddy fire. Without, the rain was pouring down in torrents: within, a group of idlers, travellers, prevented, like the old man, by the inclemency of the day, from pursuing their several routes, were snugly ensconced in corners, endeavouring to while away, as best they could, the lagging hours.

A party, seated around a table in the centre of the room, were engaged in a quiet game of whist. A peddler, who kept one eye on a pack of Irish linens, lying on the floor beside him, studied with the other a last year's almanac. A little short man, with a stump of a pipe between his lips, sat with his head thrown back and his feet resting on the jam of the fireplace; at the same time contemplating with great apparent satisfaction the little cloud of smoke that curled slowly up from under his nose. The landlord, as fat and rosy a specimen of humanity as can well be manufactured out of good wine and fat beef, went hither and thither, bustling about among the guests and servants with the air of one who evidently felt that a rainy day had brought with it a world of business.

The old man before the fire gazed among the coals as if he was endeavouring to construct out of them a piece of fiery mosaic: he was very silent—evidently a stranger to all about him. He was cleanly clad in cloth which must have been the product of a domestic loom; his face was a good deal wrinkled, and the hair, which hung over his old-fashioned coat-collar, was white as cotton. The little dark man who was smoking, now and then squinted up his eyes and looked at him through the smoke, as though he was trying hard to make out who and what he was. At length he made bold to address him.

"You are from the West, stranger, I take it?" he queried.

The old man nodded.

"From Missouri, or, it might be, from Arkansas?" continued the little man.

"I live a hundred miles above Council Bluff," answered the old man quietly.

"Good gracious! above Council Bluff, did you say? Why, then, you must be right among the red skins. You are surrounded by Indians aren't you?"

The old man smiled and looked at his eager questioner.

"Yes," he said. "The Winnebagoes are just above us; below are the Sacs and Foxes; if we cross the river we get among the Omahas, the Otoes, the Iowas, or the Kickapoos. Our country is certainly an Indian country. We have few white neighbours."

"I dare say that you are a trapper," continued the little man. "You live there for the peltries that you can gain. Come now, do tell us all about it. I have read Capt. Bonneville's adventures, and was mightily interested in the book. May be, you can tell us as great stories as he does. For anything we know, you may be the Captain himself."

The old man shook his head.

"My name is Comstock," he replied. "I have not the honour of being in any way related to the adventurer you speak of. I have never met with him or read his book. Moreover, you misjudge my occupation; I am not a trapper."

The little man looked at the old gentleman more keenly than ever.

"You trade with the Indians, then?" he said. "Do you belong to the Hudson Bay Company, or to the Northwest Company? Exciting times those fur traders have: I should like to be among them myself. If it wasn't for the old woman and the children at home, I'd be on my way there to-morrow."

"No," said the old man; I am not