

an hour by the blood marks on the ground, and found it at last in the agonies of death, lying near a large swamp, and into which it had made a vain attempt to enter. He immediately drew his knife across its throat, to put an end at once to its sufferings; and then skinning the hinder part, cut off the two quarters, which he threw over his shoulder, and commenced his return—following carefully his own footmarks. But in the excitement of the chase, he had lost all knowledge of the distance he had come, for night set in while he was yet endeavouring to distinguish the blood stains on the leaves. The red buds of the wild flowers that plentifully strewed the ground, confused him, and in the gloom of the evening he lost his track altogether. He felt alarmed at his situation, as he had no knowledge whatever of the country he was in, and he began to picture to himself the pleasure of wandering for days in the wilderness—not knowing whether he was bending his steps, unless he could regain the Ottawa. The forest was now dark as the absence of the sun and moon could make it, and Pierre cutting down with his tomahawk several small trees, constructed a circular barrier, inside of which he kindled a fire; and thrusting a stick through a portion of his venison, roasted it over the blaze.—While engaged in this duty, he was startled by a dismal cry that came faintly to his ears from a distance. He listened anxiously for a repetition of the sound, and it again came louder than at first. The third time it was repeated, the thought struck him like lightning—it must be the howl of wolves—and wolves they were indeed, for the silence of the forest, so unbroken in day time, was now alive with the cries of those beasts of prey. A pleasant night I shall have, thought Pierre; those devils are feasting on the poor deer I left behind, and they will be down here presently, attracted by the scent of this roasting venison. His courage sank for a moment at the threatened danger; but he determined to sell his life dearly, if it should come to that extremity, and he set about doing all that a brave spirit could do in such an emergency; he collected together all the fuel he could find, and stacked it up, ready to supply the fire at any time; he felled a few more trees, raised and strengthened his barrier, and saw that both barrels of his rifle, which he fortunately happened to bring with him, were properly loaded; and he examined his bow and quiver of arrows, determined to use them first, and resort to his other weapons afterwards. Being rather hungry, he set to eating his supper—hoping that, with it, at least, the wolves would not be beforehand with him. He had not long to wait for their coming, for a deep and startling howl behind him, discovered to him a single wolf prowling round the enclosure, which, after circling several times, suddenly vanished among the trees. He has gone off for his companions, thought Pierre, I may expect a whole army of them; and he was right in his conjecture, for half an hour had scarcely elapsed, when a perfect chorus of yells burst around him. Three wolves rushed forward and raised their heads over the barrier, gnashing their long fangs with savage fury; but Pierre bent his bow, and shot an arrow that sent the foremost one rolling back on his companions in the agonies of death. Another and another shared the same fate, as fast as they

showed themselves over the enclosure. He turned round, and had barely time to snatch up his rifle, when two were almost over on the opposite side. One received the contents of one of the barrels, and before he could draw trigger on the other, the wolf, with a single leap, was beside him. Dropping his gun in an instant, he buried his long knife to its hilt, in the body of his determined assailant—in doing which, however, he received a severe bite in his left arm. Again he plunged the bright steel into the quivering body, which he took up in his arms, and cast beyond the barrier, where it was immediately torn in pieces by its ravenous companions; and they became more shy as they experienced the effect of Pierre's furious resistance—retreating beyond the light of the fire, where their howls of rage echoed fearfully far and near. Pierre took the opportunity of this respite to reload his rifle, and replenish the fire, which burned up brightly, and cast its light for some distance round among the trees; and between which he could perceive the wolves glancing like so many demons, their eyes shining like burning coals. They suddenly trooped themselves together—setting off at the top of their speed from the place, and Pierre sent some leaden messengers after them—the cries of the wounded signifying they had taken effect. He thought he was now rid of his enemies, and he addressed a fervent thanksgiving to the Almighty for his safety. Replacing those parts of the barrier that were pulled down by the first rush of the wolves, he lay down, thinking that his fierce visitors, finding arrow heads and leaden ingots rather hard of digestion, had determined to leave him alone. But he was mistaken, for just as his eyes were closing in slumber, that he had vainly endeavoured to overcome, their distant howls, coming nearer and nearer, banished every inclination for sleep, and the tramp of their feet on the leaves sounded like advancing wind through the forest. They had gone off for a reinforcement, and were now returning with double their previous number; and Pierre concluded, as near as he could judge, that there were between thirty and forty of them—for they surrounded his barrier almost on every side, and placing their fore feet on the top, pushed their heads over without attempting to come any farther, as the fire, which shot its forked tongues high into the air, held them for a few minutes in check. Two of them fell back wounded or dead before Pierre's fatal rifle; but the others, undaunted by their fate, pressed furiously on. He had not time to load again, before several of them leapt on the top of the enclosure, but were dashed down by Pierre, who had seized a burning brand from the fire, and dealt strokes madly about him; and for two or three minutes he held them at bay. But the fight was too unequal to last long; his arm began to tremble and his brain to reel from such tremendous exertion, and his hungry assailants were on the point of forcing their way into his defences, when the simultaneous discharge of about a dozen rifles, laid half that number of them dead and dying among the trees, and a party of Indians dashing in, charged the remainder with their heavy tomahawks—putting them completely to flight. Pierre recognised, as his deliverers, a company of Irinkas, whom he warmly thanked for their assistance. They stated that when night