

"Warrior of the Pale Faces, hear my words! Does a bear show himself in the distance when lying in wait for his prey? Does a white warrior, when in ambush, give a signal? We are three: the Athapascow dogs are seven. Not one shall see the home of his fathers: their squaws shall find other husbands. They have robbed Matonaza of *his* squaw: they shall die!"

A double report followed; and then, as the Indians with a fearful cry rose in the air to lie down again in the dark, the Little Snake, as the handsome young chief was called, levelled and discharged the rifle of Dalton, who declined to shoot at the unprepared savages.

"I spit on ye, dogs of Athapascows!" yelled the Little Snake, as they returned fire at random. "A Dog-ribbed chief will leave your bones to bleach on the plains of the Icy Sea!"

With these words the three friends retreated, loading their rifles, and wading across the river, concealed themselves in a low hollow, and sought rest. Mark slept uneasily. The neighborhood of fierce and bloody enemies, roused to desperation by recent losses, was far from being pleasant; and he was little surprised when, on rising in the morning first amongst his party, a leaden bullet at once hit the bank near him. He dropped down, and in an instant the whole three were again prepared. The Athapascows, six in number—one had been killed—were near a bush on the other side of the river. They had just at daybreak tracked the Dog-ribbed Indians. These fired, nor was Mark behind-hand; and so fatal was their aim, that two warriors fell headlong into the river. The others, who were not aware of the nature of rifles, introduced only by the chief himself and Mark, flew to cover, astounded at the distance at which they had been struck. The friends loaded, and pursued. The Athapascows turned, and fled across the plain.

Matonaza gave vent to a low and scornful laugh. "Let them go and boast to their women that their brothers were killed in a terrible fight. They are squaws, and will tell of a battle with a hundred warriors in their war-paint."

Mark at once added, that to follow them was to lose all trace of the White Swallow, who was either a prisoner among the Esquimaux, or hiding somewhere in the hollows of the hills, awaiting the departure of their enemies. Besides, no time is to be lost, for the winter was coming on, and all hope of finding her would vanish with that season.

Matonaza replied by turning his back on the river, and searching for the old trail of the party. They soon found the remains of a fire, with bones of animals—deer, &c.—which had been recently devoured, and thus continued their journey at some distance from the banks of the Coppermine River.

IV.—THE ESQUIMAUX VILLAGE.

We left the White Swallow advancing towards the village of the Esquimaux with her captors.

It was this unfortunate race who, from their helplessness and