

wise tortoise, who at once called upon the other animals to dive to the bottom of the lake, bring up mud and stones and place them on his back; thus in time to receive the descending spirit was formed the floating island of the world which we now inhabit.

Such was the belief of the benighted aborigines of America. It was almost impossible to convince them that there was but one God for themselves and for the whites. "If," they asked, "there was but one God, why did he make some of his children white and some red? Why did he teach his white children so much more than the Indians? To make knives and coats so much better than they could?"

Once she tried to convert the warrior Tecumseh and spoke earnestly to him about the eternal rest which remains for good people in heaven, the brave listened quietly to her gentle earnest voice as he ever did, for it was music in his ears.

"Do they hunt in heaven?" he asked when she ceased.

"Oh, no!" replied his fair teacher.

"Do they go on the war path?"

"Oh, no! all is peace and love," rejoined Miriam.

"Do they go to dances and feasts?"

"No."

"Then," returned the savage, "I will not go to heaven. It is not good to be lazy!"

CHAPTER XIII.

MIRIAM'S ESCAPES.

Slowly yet surely rolled on the wheels of the chariot of Time, the weeks lengthened into months and the months into years. The seasons came and went. Nature alternately arrayed herself in a vesture of beautiful green adorned with flowers of every hue,—in her cloak of brightest colour as the frosty nights told of the approach of winter,—and in her robe of purest ermine, when the cold north wind swept over the land with its icy breath, sealing up the fountains, fettering the streams, and tearing from the forest its leafy covering causing it to stand in shivering nakedness. But no change of condition came to the captive Miriam, her daily toils and sorrows, her daily hopes and fears were ever the same, a dull variety of woe.

Some time after the peace of Greenville the Shawanees had removed further south and west, and now on the banks of the Wabash were to be seen the warriors of the nation smoking and dreaming over the fading glories of their race: the young braves, with tomahawks and scalping knives as yet unstained by human gore, vaunting and boasting of the deeds of valour and renown that they intended to perform: children, guiltless of clothing, shooting with their mimic arrows the little songsters of the groves: while the wives and mothers toiled for the daily food, with their wooden spades scraping the rich virgin soil and preparing it for the yearly crop of corn, or weaving mats of rushes, dressing skins for clothing, or fashioning with skilful hands the swift canoe. Apart from all these on his couch of furs reclined the chief Tecumseh, his bright eye flashing, his lofty brow stern and haughty, revolving in his subtle mind how he might accomplish the destruction of the hated white man and win back the rich birthright of the red man. Here, too, every spring took place the marriage of the nets, and every winter the feast of the white dog.

One day, when all the men had left the village, some for their hunting grounds, others in their canoes to search for fish, Miriam Howard escaped from the watchful eye of her guardian, rushed into the woods resolved to make her way to the nearest fort or perish in the attempt, for to her life was now nothing but a burden too grievous to be borne. She knew well in which direction lay her wished for goal, but feared lest she should be overtaken by her captors or seized by some other tribe, ere she had gained it.

So in the day time she lay concealed amid the thick under-bush that covered the fertile earth, and only when the sun had set and the pale light of the twinkling stars or the soft beams of the peaceful moon gleamed through the forest did she venture to pursue her way to the home of the white man. Night after night she journeyed on through wood and glade, by the swiftly flowing stream, or the placid lake; at one time rushing through briars, tearing her tender flesh, then over rough stony ground bruising her feet; again plunging into the cool waters of some broad river, bravely breasting the stream and swimming like a nymph, while the drops upon her hair glistened in the moonlight like very gems: now starting the waterfowl from their nests, now frightening the timid deer as they browsed the velvet grass. Thus she sped on living on the fruits of the forest, guided by the stars of heaven, her way lighted up by the brilliant blaze of myriads of fire-flies as they flitted about in the darksome woods.

At length on gaining the top of a high hill one morning, just as the sun shone forth clear and bright, she saw with gladsome heart the fort lying at her feet some three miles off. Alas! she was too tired, weary and worn to go any further then, and creeping under the shadow of a rock she fell asleep. Dreams of

the green fields and flower-docked hedges of her English home, dreams of her absent lover, of her life of misery flitted through the brain of the slumbering girl. Then she dreamt she was seized by a foul fiend, who rattling heavy chains hissed fiercely in her ear and plunged her into icy waters; in agony she sprang up, uttering a wild cry of terror as she beheld a huge rattle-snake glide over her naked arms, and its neck arched, its white fangs gleaming in its open mouth, rays of terrible brightness darting from its small eyes, and its rattles ringing their sharp warning notes—prepare to strike at her with deadly aim. Fear lent strength to her weary limbs and she bounded far out of reach of the dreaded monster. But what was that which sounded through the forest and fell like a death-knell on her ears? Is it the slumbering echoes of the woods, aroused by her piercing shriek, giving back the cry of fear! Ah! no; she knew it was the war whoop of the savage Illinois, and turning, saw a party of half-naked warriors rushing at her. Flight was hopeless; ere she could turn, her struggling form was seized by a dozen stalwart arms. These Indians had been prowling about the fort watching for unwary stragglers when they were guided to Miriam by her cry. Who can tell what thoughts filled the mind of the poor girl as she was rudely hurried away? Again to drink of the bitter cup of captivity when she thought she was about to taste of the sweets of liberty; it was very hard. Worn out with sorrow, hunger and fatigue, she could go no further, and full senseless at her captor's feet: a chief lifted her in his arms as if she were an infant and bore her to the margin of a stream, where lay their canoes hidden by overhanging bushes. The still lifeless form of the girl was thrown into one of the boats, and the whole party paddled down the narrow rivulet into the broad waters of the Ohio, thence into the mighty Father of Rivers, to the tents and wigwams of their tribe.

As they drew near, the village became alive with sudden commotion, snatching sticks and stones, knives and clubs, men, women, and children yelling like the fiends of hell, rushed forth to visit upon the unhappy prisoner a foretaste of the deadlier torments in store for her.

But these devils incarnate were balked; as she was a white girl, Miriam Howard was not compelled to run the gauntlet, but was conducted safely to the place of confinement until the following day, when she was to be burnt to satisfy those whose friends had fallen before the white man's bullet.

All through the dreary night she lay bound hand and foot to rods driven firmly into the ground, mocked by the vile squaws, tormented by the pangs of hunger and thirst, thinking sadly of the morn.

At noonday she was led forth and tied to the stake; bundles of wood were scattered about ready to be ignited, women and children stood around her with lighted torches in their hands to apply to her tender body when once the word was given. In this the bitterest hour of her agony, when her imagination painted in vivid colours the terrible sufferings she would have to endure before death would come to her release, she prayed and entreated her tormentors to strike her down with their clubs; but in vain; there was no pity for her in the breasts of those dark savages.

At length the Medicine-man, whose duty it was to attend to the sacrifice, emerged from his tent bearing the sacred fire in his hand; all stood anxiously waiting to enjoy the spectacle of the first contact of the flames with their victim's body. But suddenly a stranger chief rushed forward, with a single stroke of his sharp knife severed the thongs that tied Miriam to the stake, and with the swiftness of thought bore her in his strong arms beyond the astonished spectators, to where, unobserved, he had stationed two horses, placed her upon one, and mounting the other himself rode swiftly away towards the camping grounds of the Shawanees. As the fugitives vanished into the woods, with a yell that made the very earth tremble, the warriors and braves sprang forward to give chase, but the chiefs ordered them back; for in the stout, stalwart frame, lofty bearing, eagle eye and fierce stern countenance they had recognised the bravest of the brave, the dread leader of the Shawanees, the great Tecumseh.

(To be continued.)

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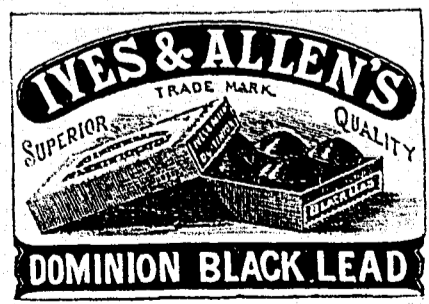
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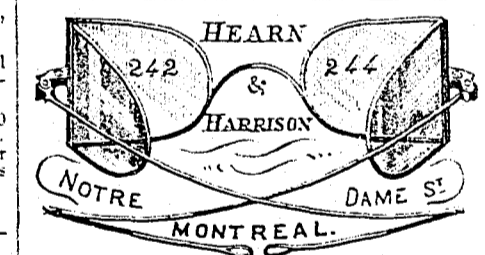
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