

grasped the throat of his foe regardless of the watery grave that yawned beneath and from which they were only separated by the ledge of rock on which they stood. The thought of saving their own lives became a secondary consideration to that of taking the life of their foe, and with this determination they approached the mighty gulf that had already swallowed four of their number. The Dixons as well as the Indians were strongly built powerful men and each though foaming with rage showed the utmost skill in attacking his adversary and defending himself; sometimes they were at the edge of the rock neither daring to give the final push, as the hold they had on one another must have inevitably been the destruction of both, then they would be down upon each other, twisting and gliding from each others grasp like serpents, then knotting together and rising to their feet they would seize one another's throats until their tongues hung from their mouths and the eyes starting from their sockets and resting upon the cheek bones seemed ready to burst with their extreme tension. The Indian, if he has not been victorious in the onset is generally obliged to succumb to his harder rival, it was so in the present instance, the brothers felt their antagonists growing weaker and weaker and after a struggle of about fifteen minutes they each found means to take their knives from their girdles and despatch their foes. In the meanwhile, the scene below had become very exciting, the Indians were advancing upon the encampment as the savage alone can advance, the wild and unearthly war-whoop rose simultaneously from a thousand voices; it is a sound which cannot be imagined by those who are so fortunate as never to have heard it, but once heard it is one never to be forgotten. At the time the war whoop was given, the main body of the hunters were returning to camp, and though two miles distant the yell fell with fearful distinctness upon their ears. The meaning of the well-known sound could not be mistaken and the direction from whence it came told that something was wrong in the encampment; with shot boxes and powder horns well stored with ammunition, knives stuck in their belts, their rifles primed and loaded, with the greatest care they advanced rapidly, ready to meet the enemy, fully aware that the delay of a few minutes might accomplish the murder of their wives and children. In a short time they reached the heights surrounding the spot that held all that was dear to them, the scene that burst upon their sight was terrific beyond description. The Indians either by design or accident had set fire to the dry thick grass, the growth of former years, which lay about a foot deep like a bed of hay upon the ground. Owing to the inflammability of the material and a brisk wind springing up the fire spread with the greatest rapidity towards the waggons which formed the enclosure, shortly hundreds of them were enveloped in a sheet of fire. The flames leaping into the air the height of a hundred feet, while the smoke rolling in vast clouds across the little lake entirely hid it from sight. Stealthily the flames kept moving forwards, at first in a straight unbroken line, consuming everything in their progress, now and then smouldering for a few minutes, then bursting forth with a dull leaden sound as the wind fanned the thick smoke into a flame. As it spread the elements seemed to partake of its nature, the atmosphere glowed with fervent heat and the lake, when a glimpse of it could be seen, through a break in the smoke, appeared a continuation of the fire. When the hunters appeared in sight, the women and children with their heroic defenders were nearly enclosed by the flames which had already approached within twenty yards of the tents, and the little party were driven by the intense heat toward the lake, the most fearful of all deaths seemed to await them for only one outlet remained by which they could escape, this was at the North-west corner of the enclosure and already guarded by Indians. The ground here swelled into a gentle eminence and its Western slope was shielded from the wind, owing to this the fire progressed but slowly which being observed by the hunters they made for the spot as the only means of escape there they found their foes ready to drive them back into the increasing flames; the position of the party became every instant more critical, the tents had by this time