

OUR TABLE.

THE LAST OF THE ERIES—A TALE OF CANADA; BY

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"The events of this tale," says the Author in his Preface, "are commenced and continued through the years 1756 and '57, when the war between France and England was carried on with vigor, and which ultimately ended in the conquest of Canada by the British." "In delineating the Indian character, the writer has endeavored to give the reader some information regarding the principal tribes of Western Canada, and those people generally known as the Five or Six Nations; and, although it was not his intention to attempt anything like a biographical history of the Eries, yet he has availed himself of a knowledge of their early history, to make them the prominent characters of this tale—and he has always kept in view that great desideratum in the compilation of books, namely, the obligation under which an Author rests to his readers, that in furnishing them with amusement for an idle hour, he should not only avoid presenting to them language, which it might be beneficial to forget, and ideas or characters which it would be pernicious to emulate; but that, on the contrary, he should endeavor to entwine the fictitious and real portions of his subject in such a manner, that many, who have only commenced its perusal for the purpose of acquiring some useful information, or banishing a tedious hour, may have a pleasing recollection of its most striking passages."

It affords us sincere pleasure to be able to say that the author has fully redeemed this promise.

There is a palpable *vraisemblance* in the incidents of the story, and a vigor and freshness of delineation not ordinarily found in fictitious histories.

That our estimate of this writer's talents is well founded, may be made to appear more readily by a few extracts than by a formal critical analysis.

Pale Lily, the daughter of Manhatti, the Erie Chief, thus speaks:—

But listen—I see a calm, gentle lake, and its banks are lined with flowers; the air is scented with sweet perfume, which is wafted to and fro by the gently sighing breeze. A canoe, of a beautiful make, floats joyously on its bosom—the small fishes dance and sparkle in the rays of the warm, bright sun; the birds leave their airy nests in the tree tops, and descending to the lake, circle round the canoe, which rises and falls in the small ripples of the water, as if nodding in approbation of their sport. The warbling notes of the birds come

softly to the ear—the lake replies in soft murmurs, and the trees bend their branches to listen. But, behold, again! what shadow is that coming swiftly down afar off—it reaches the canoe, which can be hardly seen in the thickly gathering gloom. The birds have ceased their songs; the water murmurs no longer; the flowers droop in sorrow, and all is still in the dark shadow. A roar is heard that shakes the ground; the shadow becomes more dark, and flashes of fire pierce it through on every side. Swifter than the rush of a strong warrior, the wind comes down, and catching the unresisting water, hurls it in masses against its shores. Alas, for the poor canoe! where now is its graceful motion? where now can it be found? Ask the foaming waters—ask the raging winds.

Pierre, a *sous-lieutenant* in a French Reserve Battalion, quartered at Montreal, and who may be pronounced the hero of this tale, accompanied a party of Indians in their pursuit of Coswenago, the Chief of the Iroquois, who had abducted the daughter of Manhatti, plunges into the forest in quest of game, leaving the Indians engaged in the task of forming canoes for their immediate necessity. His adventures on this occasion are thus related:—

He took the bow—rather mistrusting, at the same time, from his last experience with it, that very few deer would feel the points of the arrows. Carefully marking the trees and bushes that he might not lose himself on his return, he made his way toward a range of hills before him, about two miles distant. Innumerable squirrels crossed his path, and the bushy tail of a fox now and then appeared, slinking through the leafy underbrush. These animals he thought too insignificant to send an arrow after, though he had a great mind to practise his aim on them before trying a deer. But time was precious, and he stationed himself on a rising piece of ground, looking eagerly about for the appearance of any of those animals. He waited patiently, as near as he could judge, two hours, and was about retiring in despair, when he perceived a troop of them passing very near, taking their way to the river, there to quench their thirst. Stealthily retreating from his position, he made a circuit to get in advance, and succeeded in so doing; and hiding behind a tree, waited the approach of the foremost deer, which showed himself, a fine large buck, snuffing the air as if suspicious of the vicinity of a foe. He suddenly came to a full stop, about twenty yards from Pierre, and erecting his head, stared hard about him. Pierre at that moment drew an arrow to its head, and the shaft buried itself deep in the broad mark before it. The animal erecting himself on his hind legs, pawed the air wildly for a few moments, and then with a snort of terror and pain, started madly back into the wilderness. Pierre dashed after him, fearful of losing so fine a piece of game, which he tracked for upwards of