

## THEE-KIS-HO ; OR, THE WHITE SWALLOW.

[CONTINUED.]

They crossed the Rocky Mountains, here also strictly adhering to the trail of the Athapascows, and were at no great distance from the Coppermine River, when one night, at some distance on the plain, they saw a small, low, flickering light. Their own fire was composed of mere embers, but even these were hastily covered up. Matonaza cast his eyes around. Not a tree, not a bush was there to aid their approach, though the camp in the distance seemed to be near a dark object, which looked like a stunted grove of trees. This could not be, however, they having already passed, as they supposed, the region in which trees are found.

The three men looked to their rifles, stooped low, and began to crawl towards the distant fire on their hands and knees. The night was pitchy dark. The sky was lowering, and threatened rain. The low fire, scarcely distinguishable at times, was all that guided them. Presently, however, its glare became more evident, and Matonaza discovered that it was placed under the cover of some low trees, which grew on the borders of the Coppermine River. He could now clearly distinguish a party of men sitting round the small fire in the act of smoking ; and leaving his companions and his rifle, advanced unarmed, bidding them slowly reach a bank within pistol-shot of the camp. He then began to writhe or slide along the ground instead of crawling, moving a yard or two, and then stopping to breathe or listen. In about ten minutes they saw him roll himself behind the bushes of the camp. They saw no more, for a strong ray of the moon peeped through a cloud, and they could no longer raise their heads above the ground. They fell behind the low bank agreed on, and waited.

Three-quarters of an hour passed, and then Matonaza rejoined them, using the same caution as before. He was out of breath with his hard labour, for such it is to crawl along the ground like a snake, never rising on the hand or knees. As soon as he could speak, he told his companions in a whisper that these were the Athapascows returning after a terrible foray among the Exquimaux. The White Swallow, however, was not with them. They spoke of her absence with regret, and as a severe disappointment, but how her absence was occasioned he could not tell. Matonaza spoke in a tone which was new to his white friend. He seemed husky, and his eyes glared like those of a panther. The fearful excitement he had endured, and his terrible awakening from a dream of happiness, all the greater from his half-European education, had almost driven every civilized idea out of his head.

"Roaming Panther," said he to the Indian runner, "is thy rifle ready?"

"What would my brother do?" asked Dalton hurriedly.

"Kill my enemies!" replied the warrior coldly.

"What! skulking behind a bank?"