

vented the man from speaking more plainly. The fort interpreter, who was of the party and who all along suspected something more than appeared upon the surface, took the precaution to carry his gun with him, and when they drew near to the path which led from the bed of the river to the top of the bank where the Indians were encamped he lingered a little behind. On the others mounting the ascent they were simultaneously shot down, at one discharge, by the natives who were in ambush awaiting them. When the interpreter heard the shots he was convinced of foul play; he therefore turned and made for the fort as quickly as he could, pursued by the whole party of savages, whose aim was to prevent him from alarming the establishment. The man was a famous runner, and despite the disadvantage of small tripping snow-shoes, which permitted him to sink more deeply than the Indians, who, on their large hunting snow-shoes, almost skimmed over the surface of the snow, he would have reached the houses before them had not the line that confined the snow-shoe on his foot broken. His enemies were too closely upon him to allow time for its repair, so, wishing to sell his life as dearly as possible, he levelled his gun at the nearest Indian, who evaded the shot by falling upon his face, whereupon the whole party made up and despatched him. After perpetrating this additional murder the band proceeded to the fort, which they reached at early dawn. A poor old Canadian was, without suspicion of evil, cutting fire-wood at the back gate. His brains were dashed out with their axes, and they entered the establishment, whose inhabitants, consisting, with one exception, of women and children, were buried in profound repose. They first opened Mr Henry's room where he was asleep. The chief pushed him with the end of his gun to awaken him. He did so, and seeing numerous fiendish and stern faces around him, made a spring to reach a pair of pistols that were hanging over his head; but before he could grasp them, he fell a bleeding corpse on the bosom of his wife, who, in turn, became a helpless victim of the sanguinary and lustful revenge of the infuriated savages. Maddened by the blood, and demons in heart and act, they next proceeded to wreak their vengeance on the innocent women and children, who expired in agonies and under treatment too horrible to relate. The pillage of the stores was the next step, after which they departed, leaving the bodies of the dead unburied. No measures further than the abandonment of the fort for several years were taken by the Northwest Company, to whom the establishment belonged, to punish the perpetrators of the atrocious deed, yet it is a curious fact that when I visited Fort Liards in 1849, but one of the actors survived, all the others having met with violent deaths, either by accident or at the hands of other Indians. This man, who was at the time only a lad, confessed to have dashed the brains out of an infant, taking it by the heels and swinging it against the walls of the house.

The fear of enemies, when in these peaceful times there are none to dread, is a remarkable trait of the timidity which so strongly influences the minds of the eastern Tinnah. It is, I conjecture, a traditional recollection of the days when the Knisteneaux or Crees made annual forays into the country of the Tinnah, pushing so far as Bear river in search of scalps and plunder, when the Yellow Knives bullied the Slaves and Dogribs, and the Beavers warred with the Sickanies. A strange footprint, or any unusual sound in the forest, is quite sufficient to cause great excitement in the camp. At Fort Resolution I have on several occasions caused all the natives encamped around to flock for protection into the fort during the night by simply whistling, hidden in the bushes. My train of hauling dogs also, of a large breed and great hunters, would, in crashing through the branches in pursuit of an unfortunate hare, frighten some women out gathering berries, who would rush in frantic haste to the tents and fearfully relate a horrific account of some strange painted Indians whom *they had seen*. It was my custom in the spring, during the wild fowl season, to sleep outside at some distance from the fort. Numerous were the cautions that I received from