

## CHAPTER V.

At the appointed time, the troops, with the exception of that portion which was intended as a permanent garrison, were drawn up on the parade in the centre of the fort. In front, on their respective chargers, sat Colonel Monckton, the chief in command, and the Honourable Colonel Winslow, who was in charge of the New England corps, surrounded by a number of officers in the uniform of their several regiments, and further distinguished by the different degrees of that high, martial demeanour, only to be acquired by long and active participation in the practices of war; of which they were possessed. But, if, to the eye, the dashing equipments and soldier-like air of those holding commissions in the king's service, presented a more showy and chivalrous exterior, the simple and unpretending appointments and bearing of the Provincial officers were equally indicative of physical capability and stern determination to brave and endure whatever duty required or hardship imposed, in the prosecution of the present undertaking. While the group conversed gaily and without reserve, the roll was being called and the men told off. When the preliminary arrangements were concluded, the commander looked at his watch.

"Gentlemen," said he, "we must be moving now, the sun is getting up already, and there is a lengthy road before us. Remember the orders—there are to be no stagglers from the column, and keep a sharp eye about you: an Indian ambushmen would be no child's play in these woods. To your places—one more blow for His Majesty and merry England, and the campaign is finished!"

Colonel Monckton bent low in courtesy to his colleague as they separated, while the rest took their respective stations in the ranks.—The word was given, the troops wheeled into column, and to the inspiring sound of martial music, the gallant array moved out of the fortress, in compact order and animated spirits. In a few minutes the bayonets of the front files and a white plume were seen to glance for a moment ere they were hidden among the dark foliage that formed a rich belt beyond the glaucous; the main body slowly followed, and finally the rearward files also disappeared behind the trees, while the roll of the drums grew fainter, and at last ceased altogether to woo the listener's ear, as the warlike column penetrated deeper into the bosom of the interminable forest.

Some time after the departure of the British

force from the defences of Beau Sejour, or Fort Cumberland, as it was henceforth to be designated—having experienced a change of both name and masters at the same time—a party much more scanty in numbers and display, pursued the same route for a short space, when turning aside into a by-road which ran at right angles with the former, they descended gradually into the valley of the Massiquash, and stuck across the open marsh in the direction of some earthen mounds, the salient angles of which were visible upon the eminence beyond. These consisted of Edward Molesworth, mounted on horseback, while his servant Dennis, though fully accoutred, led another steed by the bridle, whose caparison sufficiently shewed that it was intended for a lady's use; and a guard of twenty men in the scarlet uniform of the king's troops. As the young officer conducted his small force over the river by means of a rude bridge that had been hastily thrown across to facilitate the transportation of guns and munitions, and also for the purpose of establishing a communication between the two forts, his thoughts were naturally engrossed with the object of the present excursion, and his heart bounded joyfully at the prospect of meeting his beloved. The beauty of the day, and the cheerful scene around, added to the healthful tone of his mind, no longer a prey to the anxiety which so strongly pervaded it in the morning, while every sense was conscious of an invigorating influence. The eye turned from the fair blue vault of heaven, to become dazzled with the sun-light that glittered over the warm meadows, the grass of which rustled and waved in the soft breeze from the sea that sparkled like a zone of moving diamonds beyond the fields. The ear drank the mingled music of a thousand living voices, keeping jubilee in the sunbeam, appearing to gladden the face of old mother Nature, as she smiled to see her children so happy, and decked herself in the choicest garlands to do the summer honor. The grasshopper chirped a merry treble from the ground, while the bobolink, swinging on the top of some long reed, bore the burthen betimes of his clear flute-like song; and anon the robber bee would rush like a ball athwart the track, blowing blithly on his wild bugle-horn, as he carried his spoils homeward; and the balmy odours of innumerable flowers and sweet shrubs, almost intoxicated with their fragrance. The tall grass reached the girths of the horses, and half hid the bodies of the soldiers, who kept close together, and cast suspicious glances on either side, as if expecting