



CHAPTER VI.

TO Oowikapun this interview was of great value; and while he could not but feel a certain amount of humiliation at the cowardice he had been forced to confess or admit, and felt also that it was a new experience to be thus talked to by a woman; yet his conscience told him that she was right, and he deserved the reproofs she had given; and so, with something more to think about, he resumed his onward journey, and when he stopped that night and made his little camp he was many miles nearer his home.

As he sat there by his cheery fire, while all around him stretched the great wild forest, he tried to think over some of the new and strange adventures through which he had passed. With startling vividness they came before him; and above all the brave words of the maiden, Astumastao, seemed to ring in his ears. Then the consciousness that he who had been trying to make himself and others believe that he was so brave was really so cowardly took hold of him, and so depressed him that he could only sit with bowed head and burdened heart, and say within himself that he was very weak and foolish, and all seemed very dark.

The stars shone out in that brilliant northern sky, and the aurora danced and blazed and scintillated: meteors flashed across the heavens with wondrous brightness, but Oowikapun saw them not. The problem of life here and hereafter had come to him as