

A Tale of The Indian Days.

BY J. WILLIAM FISCHER.

CHAPTER V.

Joy and Grief.

"Oh, Life ! Oh, Death ! We know not which is best, The day of toil, or night's unending rest."

—James Clarence Harvey.

"THIS has been a rough and gloomy day for us, yet I am sorry it is at an end," said a man, in an undertone,—a member of the caravan which is winding its way across the deserted prairie. "I think that by tomorrow evening quite a bit of snow will have fallen and then—may God lead us safely out of the territory of these wild Osage Indians ! They are our bitterest enemies."

"Are they, then, such bad friends of ours ?" asked one. He was a finely built man and the long black garb he wore was undoubtedly that of a Catholic missionary priest.

"Certainly," was the answer. "It was only yesterday that a battle took place between ourselves. We must therefore be strictly on the 'qui vive.'"

While both were speaking, a young Indian came riding up to them and in the rough dialect of the Jaways, yelled out that he had noticed foreign footsteps not far off and they were those of Indians.

"Osage footsteps?" hastily asked one of the guides.

"No !" replied the scout. "I have examined them closely and, finding the tracings of moccasins, I concluded that they must be those of the Pawnees."

"Pawnees ?" returned the captain. "Good, my friends ! We can breathe easier now. Surely they won't harm us."

Just then a second scout came riding rapidly toward them with the

news that he had met a Pawnee chief, who had addressed him in the following words : "Good man, is the Blackrobe coming with the caravan that is moving towards the village ? If so, tell him I wait to speak to him."

"Wishes to speak with me ?" asked the priest. "Strange ! But take me to him. No doubt he is afraid to come here." And saying this the Indian and the good priest departed and in the distance three or four Pawnees awaited his coming patiently.

The scout suddenly interrupted the silence and, pointing to the little group of Indians, he began : "They also said, 'O, tell the Blackrobe to come at once, that he might assist a dying white woman in her wigwam.'"

Just then the Indians came to meet the priest and one of their number stepped forward and, making a gracious bow, spoke thus : "Will my Father follow me to my wigwam, where a dying mother awaits his coming with joy ? Mah-toree and his red children will lead thee back in safety to your people, who wait you yonder."

The priest kindly bowed his assent and in a short time reached the wigwam. Here lay the dying woman—her face pale and emaciated, and her large dark eyes staring into space. Several squaws and Indian maidens were kneeling silently around the bed, their eyes all filled with tenderness. At the side of the sick woman stood a young child, beautiful beyond expression, and it seemed as if an angel had suddenly entered the room. It was Angela, with trembling lips and watery eyes.

The priest entered and he was visibly moved. His face turned red, then pale ; his eyes met those of