

forth their loud, dissonant caws. One old blackamoor had spied the men lurking in the edge of the woods, and was both curious and clamorous; but very shortly got an answer in three distinct cries away down the creek. Bent was getting impatient, but this sound caught his ear and he and the Chief brightened up.

The old crow, perched upon a dead limb over their heads, scratched his pate with one foot and listened; the cry came again, now nearer, and was at once answered by the Chief; the crow, quite puzzled with these imitations, stretched out his neck and looked down with contempt upon such miserable crow jargon.

Of course Bent had no idea of the great accession to their force which White and the lads were bringing, so that when he saw the reinforcement he became less cautious in his mode of attack. The settlers, with White leading, crept up behind a fence so as to get to the rear of the house. Bent's first movement was to pick off the two Indians at the gate, Hawk and Eagle being his assistants. The Chief and his other sons were stealthily crawling up, meanwhile ready to rush forward when Bent fired.

Resting his rifle upon a lower rail of the fence, he watched for an opportunity; the two sentinels were conversing, the trigger was pulled, and the ball, true in its aim, passed through the bodies of both; they sprang from the ground simultaneously, and fell together with mingled shrieks.

"Two of the vermin done for, or will be soon, I guess," said Bent, deliberately reloading his rifle and at the same time watching his friends, the Molawks, who had crept up under cover of a low fence, so as to command the entrance, fully expecting that a rush would be made to the assistance of the sentinels; but not a man appeared.

The reason for this will be understood from what had occurred.

Startled by the thundering noise mingled with the horrid yell, the marauders instantly concluded that White, with perhaps some of his neighbors assisting him, had somehow been apprised of their approach and had prepared for their attack. The two French *coureurs* from the root house further alarmed them by reporting that their comrade was totally *tout à fait*, smashed by some awful, invisible agency; their countenances, fully more than their words, speaking of supernatural, rather than of mysterious power.

The human mind, educated or otherwise, under the influence of superstitious fear, loses all true control of its actions, and in this respect is mad.

The Indian will not contend against mysterious, or what he supposes to be mysterious, powers; like many of the lower animals, he is instantly cowed by some new combination, or form abnormal to his ideas of the natural.

Much in this state of mind were the marauders when they were standing at the end of the log house, perplexed and alarmed.

The crack of Bent's rifle and the death shout of their companions startled them, but in a different manner; those were sounds proceeding from causes with which they were familiar, and they acted accordingly: each man instinctively, and instantly seeking shelter behind something and intently watching the entrance gate. So completely were they occupied in this direction that attack from any