

Young People's Department.



AN INDIAN ENCAMPMENT.

WAHALA.

FROM "THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN SOLDIER."

MORE than a hundred years ago, famine was sore in the land. The winter had been severe and the spring tardy. The store of food in the settler's camp was very low. There were reports of abundance farther north, on the other side of the dark pine woods of Maine, and three families made up their minds to seek that land of plenty. "It is no worse to die there in the forest than here," said they; so the women took their babies in their arms, the men loaded themselves with such provisions as could be spared, the children laughed and capered with excitement, and the Indian guide led the way.

"Wahala good Indian," said he; "he great hunter; he will make a pa'h for his white brother."

So he pushed on, cutting through the underbrush, picking out a ford across the streams, bearing the heaviest burdens.

"Wahala needs no compass," he said; "the sun tells him the way; the wind whispers it in his ear; the stars write it for him at night. He knows the step of the wolf and the track of the bear; the white sisters need not fear, their papooses are safe when Wahala watches."

But the terrible forest stretched on and on; the wolves howled at night, and gnashed their teeth at the camp fire; the swollen rivers leaped and barred the travellers' path; the dense thickets shut out all beyond. Patiently the Indian plodded on,

and patiently the settlers followed, their weary feet dragging more and more heavily, their starving bodies weaker and weaker, till at last they sank down, too faint to go on.

"Let us die here," they said; "we can go no farther; we never shall reach the land of plenty; perhaps there is no such land."

Then Wahala spoke. "The good land lies yonder," said he, "toward sunrise, as the crow flies. The white squaws can go no farther; my brothers must stay with them; there is food for five days. Wahala will go, he can find the way: He will send back help and plenty of meat." And so he left them.

He would not take any of the food, for he said, "Wahala mighty hunter; he knows what roots will feed the red man also. The white squaws must not weep. The Great Spirit of the white man will watch over Wahala, and over the little ones too; has not my Brother said it?"

These were brave words, but when the Indian was out of sight of the women, he shook his head, for he was already weak through fasting, since, for many days, he had lived on roots, that the children might have bread, and well he knew the strength that was needed for that hard journey. But he buckled tight his deer-skin belt, to quiet the pangs of hunger, and pushed on, running, crawling, swimming, day by day, night by night, miles and miles; and still the forest stretched on, and new trees and bushes ever came to take the places of those he had passed.

Hope slowly died in the brave heart. The