

where a plentiful feast was prepared, which speedily vanished before the attacks of so many well armed mouths, and a hunger that nothing seemed to mitigate or assuage. After this pleasing and important part of the observances to which the day was devoted had been complied with, the Indians with lively gestures and many a grin of promised merriment, unbent from the cold, dignified demeanor so general during the former ceremony. They now seized their guns, charged with powder only, or provided themselves with stout thongs of moose skin, and fell into a double line of considerable extent, through which the new chief was doomed to run the gantlet, in pursuance of custom immemorial;—as thereby the endurance and activity of the Sachem were supposed to be tested in no small degree. Divested of his state tunic and its various appurtenances, Argimou appeared at the top of the long lane, stripped to the waist, from which a piece of bear skin descended over the loins, revealing a form moulded in the purest contour of natural beauty, whose naked majesty was not unworthy a comparison with the ideals of antique sculpture. At a given signal off he darted with amazing swiftness, saluted from either side with sharp lashes on the arms and shoulders; while at the same time the repeated discharges of fire arms, the muzzles of which were pointed at his uncovered legs, occasioning a severe pricking sensation in those members, blended in loud discord with the yells and laughter of his tormentors—increasing in a burst of stronger excitement and applause as the agile Indian would avoid, by some extraordinary leap or sudden dodge, the blows and aim of the assailants. Three times this ordeal was repeated, when the chief, having escaped with no greater injury than a few slight erasements of the integument, and a plentiful sprinkling of powder grains in his lower extremities—which were considered an honourable commemoration of his induction, was lifted in triumph upon the athletic backs of the warriors, and escorted to the palaver house, where a lighted *to-ma-gan* was presented, and he was allowed to indulge in a short period of repose after the unusual exercise and rigorous treatment he had undergone.

CHAPTER II.

THE broad disk of the sun which hung for a moment like a shield of burnished gold above the forest groves, had pressed his last kiss on the face of the western sky; ere its warm blush faded, the deep peal of a watch-gun from the ramparts of the fort rolled over the glassy

bay with booming reverberation, till, spreading its roar over the strait of Northumberland, the distant shores of Prince Edward's replied in a low murmur like the subdued resonance of a distant thunder growl. The first shades of evening darkened over the earth and air, while from the clear arch overhead, the sparkling beam of one glorious star gazed down upon the dim woods and their drowsy solitudes. The bear looked out of his den, and saw its ragged, piercing the leafy labyrinth, and glistening upon the drops of dew that fringed the moss-covered entrance of his cavern, and gazing without consciousness, upon the faint glow until his sleepy eyelids closed; with a grunt, the hermit buried his head in the pillow of his brown hairy paw. The moose, quenching his thirst at the shore of some quiet lake, starts with vague fear at the burning reflection in the depths of the dark water, and turns away with a scanty draught, to the security of his well-wooded lair. But the old grey owl uncloses an eye, and when he recognises his old friend sends a shriek of joy—a merry war-whoop, over the hills and groves; for he knows that star, though the herald of darkness and repose to the race of creation, is to him the harbinger of an opening, busy day. The Micmacs lighted a large fire, which shed a ruddy glow upon the adjacent foliage, and poured a lengthened stream of brilliancy far across the surface of the bay. Around the flame a ring of natives of both sexes moved with slow unvaried tread to the cadence of a guttural chant, and the monotonous "cush! cushion!" sound of the rattle,* which the singer beat untiringly upon his bended knee. Then the figure was changed, and in the snake-dance they strove to imitate the movements of that reptile in a series of graceful convolutions, which was kept up with much spirit until the performers were completely exhausted. They lit then each a birchen torch, and hurrying to the beach embarked in their canoes, at the prow of which the ignited brands were secured on elevated poles, the chief leading in advance with a double flambeau. When the miniature flotilla was ready to proceed, a simultaneous yell, terrible and unearthly, seemed to burst from the bosom of the bay, and was wafted from shore to shore, from point to inlet by the startled echoes, until it died away in the far forest glades. The sentinel, pausing in his lonely walk, felt a thrill of dread creep through every

* This is made by filling the shell of a tortoise—the scull of any small animal, or, simply, a cow horn, with fine shot; and is used to mark time in the dance.