

conviction of their return was strong on his mind, he changed his determination, resolving to make the best of his way to the fort with the aid of the approaching dawn. With this view he partly withdrew his body from beneath its canopy of underwood; but, scarcely had he done so, when a hundred tongues, like the baying of so many blood-hounds, again rent the air with their wild cries, which seemed to rise up from the very bowels of the earth, and close to the appalled ear of the young officer.

Scarcely conscious of what he did, Captain de Haldimar grasped one of his pistols, for he fancied he felt the hot breathing of human life upon his cheek. With a sickly sensation of fear, he turned to satisfy himself whether it was not an illusion of his heated imagination. What, however, was his dismay, when he beheld bending over him a dark and heavy form, the outline of which alone was distinguishable in the deep gloom in which the ravine remained enveloped! Desperation was in the heart of the excited officer: he cocked his pistol; but scarcely had the sharp ticking sound floated on the air, when he felt a powerful hand upon his chest; and, with as much facility as if he had been a child, was he raised by that invisible hand to his feet. A dozen warriors now sprang to the assistance of their comrade, when the whole, having disarmed and bound their prisoner, led him back in triumph to their encampment.