

she had no doubt of the messenger's fidelity, nor that the desired escort was already awaiting us at the place appointed. This communication which, lest something might occur to defeat our hopes, Ascaora had before withheld from me, was listened to with joyful interest. It seemed a confirmation of our freedom—danger was surely at an end—every bound of our flying vessel carried us nearer to the goal of promise, and once under the protection of Olocatara and his warriors, our safe conduct to rejoin the company of De Gourges, who it was rumoured still lingered on the coast, would be a matter of little or no difficulty.

In that moment of deep and heartfelt joy, with what fervour did I breathe my gratitude to the great giver of life for his protecting care; with what glowing words did I bless that bright forest maiden for all her tenderness, and how pure and holy were the emotions, with which I vowed to cherish her ever in my bosom, and live for her happiness, as she had done for mine, in the deep recesses of her wild and savage home. How beautiful was the look of grateful love which in return she lavished upon me; and when I added, that if even now she grieved to quit the sylvan haunts of her childhood, my hand, fondly as it longed to clasp hers through life, should not tear her thence—how touching was the tenderness, the maiden modesty, with which she made reply. There are lovely traits in woman's nature, beautiful instincts in her heart, wherever she may dwell, but never have I seen them developed with such power and beauty as in the character of the gentle Ascaora. Softly she bent her head towards me, and in a low sweet tone, answered in her own peculiar and figurative dialect:

"Brother, should'st thou depart and leave her, Ascaora would be like the flower that droops its head when the warm sun no longer smiles upon it. The rains and the dews shed no joy upon it—the bee visits it in vain, and the song of the bird awakes it not to beauty—slowly it withers, and if the glory that it loves woo it not back to life, it perishes, and ceases to mingle its fragrance with the odour of its sister blossoms. Understandest thou my words? Thy dark eyed maiden is that flower, and she exists only in the light of thy love—let it be shed ever upon her—even in that far off land to which her steps will follow thine, and no blight shall fall upon the blossom of her life, till the Great Spirit gathers it to bloom in the fair fields of the sweet South West."

Scarcely had she uttered these words, when we were startled by the sound of other oars mingling with the dash of our own. Wildly Ascaora looked around, while she guided her canoe still nearer to the shore, hoping to escape observation beneath the thick boughs that overhung the water. As for me, cowed that I was, my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth, a cold dew stood upon my forehead, and

the warm current of my blood, that an instant before had coursed with such vehemence through my veins, now seemed to congeal in masses of ice around my heart. Silently and with a rigid finger, I pointed to a single canoe that shot round a small headland into the broad flood of moonlight that silvered the middle of the stream. It was crowded with Indians, and as with dilated eyes we gazed upon them, their plumed heads and savage ornaments, glancing and glittering in the moonbeams, we saw that they were part of that band of hunters, with Takaltha at their head, on whose absence our fate depended. Another and another boat now rounded the headland, and breathlessly we crouched within our little bark, hoping, but ah! how vainly, that our concealment was secure. Their acute sense had caught the squalor of our oars, and neither the silence of the grave, nor its "Cimmerian darkness," could have protected us from their eagle glance. The white edges of our canoe, formed of the silvery bark of the birch, betrayed our lurking place, and instantly the first boat, in the bow of which stood the fierce Takaltha, darted upon us like an enraged animal upon its prey. His cry of savage triumph, was echoed by all his followers, and never shook the walls of Pandemonium with more horrible and fiendish sounds, than those that on this fearful night rung through the wooded shores of that lonely and beautiful river. The chief himself, might well have been mistaken for the prince of darkness; around his neck was wreathed the body of an enormous serpent, that he had slain during the day—its head thrown over one shoulder, and from the livid jaws, protruded the red and poisonous fangs that had been thrust forth in fury against its assailant—such an adornment, added to the natural ferocity of his aspect, and scowling with rage and hatred, on he came, brandishing a massive club, as though to deal upon his victims instant death, and backed by his terrible band, shouting with wild and savage fury. Idle would have been all show of resistance, and with a heart quailing before the horrors of the scene, I stood clasping the hand of Ascaora, and passively awaiting my doom. Not so the noble Indian girl—passionately she urged me to fly. "Thou knowest not how fearful are their cruelties," she said; "let us flee to the forest, and we may yet reach the country of Olocatara—or if we perish by savage beasts, let it be so—their fangs are less terrible than the wrath of Takaltha."

"Can the kite flee, with the talons of the eagle in her breast," thundered the stern voice of the chief, as with our feet raised to spring upon the bank, he leaped from his canoe and grasped the shrinking form of the maiden fiercely in his arms. "Shame to thy race!" he exclaimed; "speedily shall thy eyes feast upon the blood of the pale face, and then thy own shall flow, to wash away the stain thou hast cast upon the name of Takaltha. Yet