

he passed by, and you at that moment came up the path, and he at first mistook you for me."

"And you overheard *all*?" cried Miriam, springing up in bed, her brilliant eyes glowing and glittering, and the hectic rapidly flushing her cheek.

"I could not help it, Miriam. At first I was spell-bound by what you said; then, when I was able to think, I could not go. Could I have stolen away, and you and Ralph not know it, I would have done so; but you would both have seen me, and I could not betray you, though you wronged me so deeply."

"Oh, Edith, what did you think? You now it all, and have kept it all this time! You did not love Ralph, then, did you? Tell me, Edith, that you did not! I fancied you did; and I loved him so passionately, that to have seen you his wife would have killed me. Oh, Edith, say that what I told Ralph *was true*, and you did not care for him!" cried Miriam, again rising up from the pillows.

"Miriam, if it would ease your heart for me to utter the words, I would gladly do it; but I could not in truth, for I *did* love Ralph even as your own heart worshipped him," said Edith, solemnly.

"Oh, Edith! Oh, heaven pity me!" cried Miriam, hoarsely as she clasped her hands with emotion.

Edith bent down again. Her face was deathly pale, rivalling even that of the sufferer.

"Forget this, Miriam!" she said, in a voice she strove to steady. "You won Ralph. He is yours now: and he has been a tender, affectionate husband to you. Be happy while life lasts to you, and forget what I have said. Ralph knows it not; and my nature is strong, so that none have been able to suspect it."

"No, Edith. Noble generous-hearted as you are, I cannot have it thus! Ralph *must know* all ere I sleep again!"

When she next saw Ralph, Edith felt that he knew all. But now there was no time to think of aught save of Miriam, who failed very rapidly; and, in a week more, she had passed beyond earthly sorrows and temptations.

Time passed onward; and, as it strange that, knowing each other's hearts as they did, Edith and Ralph for a time shunned each other? Miriam had begged Edith to look tenderly after her babe, and Edith had promised it; and she kept the promise made to the dying parent.

One day Doctor Reed came home, saying to Edith, who had just returned from a visit of a few weeks to a distant relative—"Ralph's little one is very ill; and the nurse is suffering with severe influenza, which, I think, will terminate in low fever."

Edith hastened over to the personage, and round Ralph with the little girl in his arms pacing to and fro in the nursery, the nurse having become too ill to leave her own room.

"Give her to me, Ralph!" she said, as she held out her arms to receive the ailing child; and the father tenderly laid his little one into them.

"She is safe with you, Edith; I feel that you will save her life!" he exclaimed.

Days went by, and the little Miriam grew strong and well under Edith's faithful watching and care. The nurse continued ill: and Edith decided to take the child home with her for a time, till the full recovery of the woman.

One morning, several weeks after Edith had taken little Miriam to her home, she and the child were out upon the lawn. It was a full year since the mother had died. Little Miriam played and prattled about Edith's feet as she sat with her work in her hand. The little one, tired of play, soon held up her cunning little hands for Edith to take her into her lap.

"Edith's darling," cried our heroine, as she caught the child to her bosom and kissed her sweet rosebud lips and smoothed the soft curls of her hair.

Just then, Ralph English came out of the house. He had seen the sweet picture, and it sent a thrill through his heart which must find vent in words. He approached, and Edith blushed as he caught his eyes fixed upon her. Putting down the child, she would have fled; but he detained her.

"Edith, is it sinful for me to tell you my heart now?" he said, tenderly. "*She* is gone for ever; and in her last moments it was her expressed wish to me—that you should take her place, and be a mother to our babe. Edith, am I wrong? Has your heart changed from its first love?" he asked sadly, as she turned away.

"Ralph!"—and now her face was towards him, her blue eyes filled with tears. She was holding the babe in her arms, having caught it up when she found she was not to go. "Ralph, take me, and I will try to be a mother to your child."

He passed his arm around her, and drew them both to him—Edith and the babe.

"Edith, darling!" he murmured. "Mine for ever, now!"—and, raising his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, as he imprinted the first pure kiss of love upon her forehead—"Let us be happy in the way God has appointed for His creatures here on earth, as husband and wife! This wish was Miriam's atonement."

AN INDIAN ADVENTURE.

IN the year 1790, on the banks of Hockhocking, a few miles above its junction with the Ohio, stood a small stockade, then one of the frontier posts of the north-west. Its inmates had been annoyed by repeated attacks of Indians; but, protected by their works, and actuated by the hardy courage of their class, they had uniformly repulsed their assailants, and frequently with considerable loss.

Some time in the month of October, intelligence reached the little garrison that the savages were preparing an expedition against the settlements in great force. A council was immediately held, and scouts were sent out with instructions to ascertain, if possible, the number of the enemy, and the probable point of attack. Two of these, named McClelland and White, ascended the river as far as the picturesque promontory now known as Mount Pleasant, the summit of which commanded an extensive view of the surrounding country.

Here the two scouts took their station, and were not long in discovering the objects of their search. The smoke of the encampment rising through the trees betrayed the presence of their foes, at a distance much better adapted to scrutiny than to securing the safety of the watchers. Each day brought fresh accessions to the warriors; and every new arrival was greeted with prolonged and exulting yells. Such sounds were well calculated to appal those to whom they were unfamiliar; but to our gallant scouts they served, like martial music, to string the nerves and stir the spirits. From early youth they had lived on the frontier. It was not likely, therefore, that they would either be circumvented by their foes, or, without a desperate struggle, fall victims to the scalping-knife.

On several occasions small parties left the encampment and ascended the hill, at which times the scouts would hide in the cleft of the rocks, or creep among the branches of some fallen tree, till the danger was past. For food they depended on the supply in their knapsacks; for they dared not kindle a fire, and the report of one of their rifles would have precipitated upon them the entire band of savages. It had recently rained, and a pool of water among the rocks served them for drink. In a few days, however, this disappeared; and the alternative was presented of finding a new supply or abandoning their undertaking.

McClelland volunteered to make the attempt. Carrying his trusty rifle in his hand, and with two canteens strung across his shoulders, he cautiously descended to the verge of the prairie, and keeping within the thickets of hazel which skirted the hills, directed his course to the river, on the banks of which he had the good fortune to find a gushing spring, from whose waters he filled his canteens, and returned in safety.

The success of this enterprise determined the two friends to have a fresh supply of water daily, and the task of procuring it was to be performed alternately. The next day, when White had

filled his canteens, he sat a few moments watching the limpid element as it gurgled from the earth. While thus employed, a sound of light footsteps caught his ear; and, turning, he saw a couple of squaws (Indian women) within a few feet of him, the elder of whom immediately uttered one of those far-reaching whoops peculiar to her race.

White at once comprehended the peril of his situation. If the alarm should reach the camp, both he and his companion must inevitably perish. Self-preservation prompted the infliction of a noiseless death upon the two squaws—a proceeding to which, in all probability, he felt but little repugnance from any scruples of border gallantry. The purpose was no sooner formed than acted upon. He sprang on his victims with the strength and activity of a panther, and tightly grasping their throats, leaped with them into the river. Without difficulty he succeeded in thrusting the head of the elder beneath the water, where she speedily became insensible; but the younger made a stouter resistance, and during the struggle, to his great surprise, addressed him in his own language, though in words scarcely articulate. He quickly released his hold, when she informed him that, ten years before, she had been made a prisoner by the Indians, who had brutally murdered her mother and two sisters before her eyes.

During this narrative White let go his grasp upon the squaw, whose body floated where it was not likely soon to be discovered; and then hastily directing the girl to follow him, with wonted speed and energy he pushed for the hill. They had scarcely gone two hundred yards, when shouts of alarm were heard about a quarter of a mile below. Some warriors, on their way to the camp, had probably reached the river as the body of the drowned squaw floated past. White and the girl succeeded in reaching the hill, where McClelland had remained no indifferent spectator of the commotion so suddenly excited. The Indians had immediately struck off in every direction, and a number of them, before the fugitives could reach the summit, had commenced to ascend the acclivity—picking their way with caution, and keeping constantly under cover. From time to time glimpses were caught of their swarthy faces, as they glided from tree to tree and rock from rock, till at length it became evident that the base of the hill was surrounded, and every hope of escape cut off.

Nothing was left the two pioneers but to sell their lives as dearly as possible. This they resolved to do, advising the girl to lose no time in making her way back to the Indians, whom she would have no difficulty in convincing that she had just escaped from capture.

"No!" she exclaimed; "death with my own people is a thousand times preferable to a longer life of captivity!"

Further remonstrance was useless, and the scouts addressed themselves to preparations for a vigorous resistance. The only perceptible access to the hill was by a narrow causeway or "back-bone," along which the savages were compelled to advance in single file, though, for the most part, under the shelter of rocks and trees. But in passing from cover to cover, each warrior was obliged to incur a moment's exposure, and two inches of his dusky form was target sufficient for the unerring rifles of the scouts.

For several hours the outnumbering foe was held in check; but a new and hitherto undiscovered danger menaced the hardy woodsmen. Their crafty enemies were preparing to assail them in flank—a movement which might be successfully accomplished by means of a detached portion of rock which lay adjacent to one of the sides of the promontory. The brave scouts fully realized their desperate situation; but so far from being unnerved by its hopelessness, they felt their courage emboldened by the thought that the certainty of death was not greater than the certainty of vengeance.

Soon McClelland saw a dusky figure preparing to spring from a cover so near the fatal rock that a single bound must reach it. Everything depended on the accuracy of a single shot, and, though less than half a hand's breadth of the war-