

pack that has the fox in view. Still he appeared to possess a charmed life; for though the bullets whistled round him on every side, and his clothes were several times torn, nothing cut his skin. When the shell passed through the logs below, the old sailor dropped his bucket, waved his hat, and gave three cheers; in which heroic act he was employed as the dangerous missile exploded. This characteristic feat probably saved his life; for from that instant they ceased to fire at him, and even to shoot their flaming arrows at the block, having taken up the notion simultaneously, and by common consent, that the "Saltwater" was mad; and it was a singular effect of their magnanimity, never to lift a hand against those whom they imagined devoid of reason.

INDIANS AND AMBUSH.

The savages now ceased speaking, and the party that was concealed heard the slow and guarded movements of those who were on the bank, as they pushed the bushes aside in their wary progress. It was soon evident that the latter had passed the cover; but the group in the water still remained, scanning the shore with eyes that glared through their war-paint like coals of living fire. After a pause of two or three minutes, these three began also to descend the stream, though it was step by step, as men move who look far an object that has been lost. In this manner they passed the artificial screen, and Pathfinder opened his mouth in that hearty but noiseless laugh that nature and habit had contributed to render a peculiarity of the man. His triumph, however was premature; for the last of the retiring party, just at this moment casting a look behind him, suddenly stopped; and his fixed attitude and steady gaze at once betrayed the appalling fact that some neglected bush had awakened his suspicions.

It was perhaps, fortunate for the concealed, that the warrior who manifested these fearful signs of distrust was young, and had still a reputation to acquire. He knew the importance of discretion and modesty in one of his years, and most of all did he dread the ridicule and contempt that would certainly follow a false alarm. Without recalling any of his companions, therefore, he turned on his own footsteps; and while the others continued to descend the river, he cautiously approached the bushes on which his looks were still fastened as by a charm. Some of the leaves which were exposed to the sun had drooped a little, and this slight departure from the usual natural laws had caught the quick eye of the Indian; for so practised and acute do the senses of the savage become, especially when he is on the war-path, that trifles apparently of the most insignificant sort often prove to be clues to lead him to his object.

The trifling nature of the change which had aroused the suspicion of this youth, was an additional motive for not acquainting his companions with his discovery. Should he really detect anything, his glory would be the greater for being unshared; and should he not, he might hope to escape the derision which the young Indian so much dreads. Then there were the dangers of an ambush and surprise, to which every warrior of the woods is keenly alive, to render his approach slow and cautious. In consequence of the delay that proceeded from these combined causes, the two parties had descended some fifty or sixty yards before the young-savage was again near enough to the bushes of the Pathfinder to touch them with his hand.

Notwithstanding their critical situation, the whole party behind the cover had their eyes fastened on the working countenance of the young Iroquoise, who was agitated by conflicting feelings. First came the eager hope of obtaining success where some of the most experienced of his tribe had failed, and with it a degree of glory that had seldom fallen to the share of one of his years or a brave on his first war-path; then followed doubts, as the drooping leaves seemed to rise again, and to revive in the currents of air; and distrust of hidden danger lent its exciting feeling to keep the eloquent features in play. So very slight, however, had been the alteration produced by the heat on bushes of which the stems were in the water, that when the Iroquois actually laid his hand on the leaves, he fancied that he had been deceived. As no man ever distrusts strongly without using all convenient means of satisfying his doubts, however, the young warrior cautiously pushed aside the branches, and advanced a step within the hiding place, when the forms of the concealed party met his gaze, resembling so many breathless statues. The low exclamation, the slight start, and the glaring eye, were hardly seen and heard before the arm of Chingachgook was raised, and the tomahawk of the Delaware descended on the shaven head of the foe. The Iroquois raised his hands frantically, bounded backward, and fell into the water at a spot where the current swept the body away, the struggling limbs still tossing and writhing in the agony of death. The Delaware made a vigorous but unsuccessful attempt to seize an arm, with the hope of securing the scalp; but the blood-stained waters whirled down the current, carrying with them their quivering burden.

From the Ladies' Companion.

HARD TIMES.

LETTER FROM FLORENCE TO HER COUSIN.

DEAR COUSIN—You see I am faithful to my promise of writing as soon as possible, after I arrived in this great city, and shall at once proceed to acquaint you with all I have seen and heard since I have been here. I entered the city with a sorrowful heart, as

before I came, and on the way hither, the *hard times*, bad state of business affairs, and scarcity of money, had been so much the theme of conversation, that I felt much sympathy for the suffering inhabitants. I almost regretted accepting my aunt's invitation, fearing I should be a burden to her. However, the idea struck me she might wish to make me useful, in case she was suffered to part with some of her servants, or take the children from school. As I never flinch from duty, I dismissed all my previous visions of parties, theatres, and walks in Broadway, and determined to spend the most of my time in the nursery and school-room—and even if it were necessary share my allowance with my cousins. I feared they might have been obliged to leave their comfortable house since their failure, but was agreeably surprised, when the stage stopped, to see the same silver plate—although it was too dark to read the name—which told the stately granite mansion before me was still occupied by uncle Bankly. Hastily bidding adieu to the kind friends who had taken me under their protection during the journey, I followed the driver who bore my trunk up the marble steps. A dandy negro answered the bell—I was glad to see they had not been obliged to part with every servant. I was ushered into the front drawing room, and while the waiter went to report my arrival, I had leisure to examine the room, and to admire the gorgeous carpet, velvet-cushioned chairs, satin curtains, the chandeliers, tabourits, girandoles, candelabras, and a hundred other articles of magnificence with which they were adorned. The servant requested me to walk up stairs, and I eagerly tripped through the soft carpet halls and staircases, lighted and warmed as a parlour. At the landing, I was met by a neatly dressed chambermaid, who ushered me into my aunt's bedroom—an apartment which occupied the whole front of the house. Before a large *psyche*, whose richly gilded frame reflected brilliantly the fire light, stood aunt Bankly, undergoing the operation of being dressed for a party. She seemed very glad to see me, seated me in a luxurious red velvet *voltaire* and after asking after you all, begged my permission to go on dressing, as she was engaged out to a dinner party.

'Pray aunt, do not consider me as a stranger,' I said, 'I intend to make myself useful, and will do any work you may wish to have done.'

'Useful, dear child,' she said smiling, 'I wish you to enjoy yourself; I have plenty of people to do my work.'

I saw the ladies' maids smiling at each other, and felt confused. 'Oh, I thought I might be of some use,' I stammered, 'the times are so bad, aunt.'

'Are they?' she said, with an indifferent tone. 'Jeannette, which turban shall I wear—the gold-sprigged lace with lappets of fringed gold, or the blonde lace and flowers?'

'Where are the dear children?' I asked.

'Dear me! I am glad you reminded me,' said aunt, looking at her splendid watch; 'it is past five, and I have not sent for them. Jane, just ring the bell for Thomas, and tell him to order the carriage immediately for the darlings.'

It was with great pleasure I beheld my dear cousin Helen now enter the room. She wore a riding habit, and a man's hat, that being the most fashionable one to ride in at present. She ran towards me—was delighted to see me once more, and in spite of my entreaties, she declared she would relinquish her dinner party and spend a quiet evening with me. Her mother, with a remark that rest would do her good, as she looked jaded from being out so much, gave her consent to the arrangement.

I had expressed so much anxiety to see poor cousin Sophia, as I have called her ever since I heard of her husband's *failure* in business, that the next morning aunt ordered her carriage, and with Helen we drove to her house. As it was now two months since we heard of cousin Cotton's misfortune, I was afraid they were suffering from privation. In the way thither, I asked if they had changed their residence yet.

'Oh, no,' said my aunt, 'they are very well satisfied with their house, and when the new room is finish at the back, which they design as a picture gallery, I think they will be very comfortable.'

'Dear me, I have been misinformed then,' I said, 'I heard Mr. Cotton had failed.'

'What difference should that make—it is an event which often happens among merchants—one must live you know. Besides, your cousin has only *suspended*.'

My ignorance of mercantile phrases was such that I really began to fear Sophia's husband had hanged himself in vexation at the turn affairs had taken.

'Suspended?' I exclaimed, staring at aunt, with my eyes and ears open, like a raw country girl.

Helen burst into a laugh. 'I see you are no merchant, coz. Where a man has suspended, it means he has suspended paying his debts, and of course has more money to spend upon his family.'

'Nonsense, Helen,' said her mother, reprovingly. 'You know nothing about business matters. Your cousin, Sophia, I am sure, is obliged to use much economy lately.' Helen shrugged up her shoulders, and we rode on in silence.

As we approached Mr. Cotton's lordly mansion, two elegant carriages drew away to give us room. One, I was told, belonged to cousin Sophia, and the other to a visitor. The foot-boy opened the door—we ascended the steps, and were ushered, by a gentlemanly-looking waiter, into a room furnished in a style of princely magnificence. The walls were covered with rare paintings, in massy gilt frames—the carpets, cushions, and curtains of the most

costly fabric—the grates were of silver, and wherever I directed my eye, it fell upon gold, or crystal, or velvet. A lady sat upon an embroidered divan, who was introduced as Mrs. Manly. In a few moments, cousin Sophia entered, equipped for a morning round of calls. After the first greetings were over, we seated ourselves in a circle round the fire, and while the others conversed, I amused myself gazing around me upon the new and splendid furniture. I saw no marks of the *economy* of which aunt Bankly had spoken, in any thing, except in cousin's dress, and I was glad to see her old things had been made over new. It was true, her collar was of delicate French work, edged with expensive point de Paris lace—her pocket handkerchief was a mass of embroidery and *mehlin*—and her dress a superb silk, surrounded with two *flounces*—but her hat, which was so small it would scarcely reach her forehead, I had no doubt had been made out of her last year's old one, the soiled parts being cut away had thus reduced its size. Her cloak, also, although of rich green velvet, had, no doubt, been one she had outgrown, as it reached only a little below the knees, and was eked out with a silvery white plush. I commended her economy, but felt sorry for her, as I imagined how the wind must blow in her face, and how cold the lower part of her body must be.

'So, Sophia,' said aunt, 'I see you have one of the new small hats. I have been waiting for the new fashions to appear, in order to purchase my winter bonnet. I cannot imagine how you obtained yours so soon, as neither Mrs. Blond nor Madame Brussels have opened yet.'

'I am so good a customer of these ladies,' said my economical cousin, with exultation, 'that they always give me the first choice of their new things. Madame Brussels sent me word two days ago that she had just received a box of hats from Paris, from which I might choose one before she opened them to the public.'

'Really she is very partial,' said Helen, with pique. 'I am sure we waste money enough upon her.'

'She made me pay well for this,' said Sophia; 'only think of her charging me thirty dollars for this little hat.'

'Oh, I do not wonder,' said aunt, 'the rich lace and feathers make it worth that.'

'Yes, one must pay for these things. But how do you like my new *palletot*?' she added, pointing to what I had foolishly imagined an old cloak made over and curtailed. 'It has just arrived from Paris, and there is not another like it to be seen in the city. It cost me sixty-five dollars.'

'Beautiful! charming!' burst from my aunt, while Helen gazed upon it with a gloomy discontented air. I supposed she was vexed with her cousin for her thoughtless extravagance, while her husband's affairs were so embarrassed.

'Mamma,' at last she said, 'I am so provoked I did not see cousin's cloak before. It is so lovely. I should certainly have ordered one exactly like it.'

'I am sure, cousin,' said Sophia, 'your velvet mantilette is very handsome, with its beautiful fur edging.'

'Besides,' said her mother, she has only worn it a week, and paid sixty-dollars for it to Madame Reys, in Broadway.'

'I am so tired of mantillettes—I cannot go into the street, but they stare me in the face, of every hue and material. I want something new. However, I am determined to have a new muff. Yours is pretty, Sophia—what do you call it?'

'Silver Fox.'

'Very pretty,' said aunt Bankly, taking it. 'Are these expensive?'

'Oh, I only gave a hundred dollars for it,' said Mrs. Cotton quietly; but Helen, why do you wish to get a new one? Your black lynx suits your mantilette so well.'

'Dear me, you do not think I shall wear a black muff when light furs are in fashion. No, no; I shall get me a stone marten, or natural lynx, or Isabella bear.'

'In the first place, you must attend to your new hat,' said her mother. 'As you have seen the new fashions, what do you advise, Sophia? A dark changeable silk like your own?'

'Oh, by no means; I selected it for its novelty, but immediately repented, as I fear they will become so common.'

'I can then change it,' remarked Helen. 'I much prefer it to those greys, drabs, and other grave colours we have been wearing so long. When July Fairfax came on here last summer from the South, she asked if every one had become quakers, as wherever she turned, in church, street, or auction, there was a universal hue of drab or slate.'

Mrs. Manly, who had withdrawn to the other room, to look over some new annuals which lay upon a marble table, now returned.

'Ladies, with your permission,' she said, 'I will now fulfil the mission upon which I came. I am going round with a subscription paper in order to gain a little sum to relieve a suffering family.'

How their faces fell!

'It is a disagreeable task, but I feel so much for them, I shall not shrink from it. They were once doing quite well with a small shop, but the husband lost all by the failure of a merchant with whom he was connected in business; since then they have struggled on, it would seem, to plunge themselves deeper into poverty and sickness.' She then handed the paper to Mrs. Cotton. Her own name headed it for a reasonable sum.

'Really, Mrs. Manly,' began cousin Sophia, 'I do not know what to say to this. I have so very little to give away. When I