

for an opportunity of loading his pack-horse with the beaver skins of some solitary Blackfeet trapper, who was to be murdered and despoiled of the property he had acquired by weeks and perhaps months of toil and danger."

The proximity of the Blackfeet caused the old hunters to recollect their former adventures in the same neighbourhood; and one evening, as the party sat around the camp fire, wrapped in their warm blankets, these old hunters became talkative, and related their individual adventures for the general amusement. The best story was one told by Richardson, of a meeting he once had with three Blackfeet Indians. He had been out alone hunting buffalo, and towards the end of the day was returning to the camp with his meat, when he heard the clattering of hoofs in the rear, and upon looking back, observed three Indians in hot pursuit of him. To lighten his horse, he immediately threw off the meat he carried, and then urged the animal to his utmost speed, in an attempt to distance his pursuers. He soon discovered, however, that the enemy was rapidly gaining upon him, and that in a few minutes more he would be completely at their mercy, when he hit upon an expedient as singular as it was bold and courageous. Drawing his long scalping-knife from the sheath at his side, he plunged the keen weapon through his horse's neck, and severed the spine. The animal dropped instantly dead, and the determined hunter, throwing himself behind the fallen carcass, waited calmly the approach of his sanguinary pursuers. In a few moments one Indian was within range of the fatal rifle, and at its report his horse galloped riderless over the plain. The remaining two then thought to take him at advantage by approaching simultaneously on both sides of his rampart; but one of them happening to venture too near in order to be sure of his aim, was shot to the heart by the long pistol of the white man at the very instant that the ball from the Indian's gun whistled harmlessly by. The third savage, being wearied of the dangerous game, applied the whip vigorously to the flanks of his horse, and was soon out of sight, while Richardson set about collecting the trophies of his singular victory. He caught the two Indians' horses, mounted one, and loaded the other with the meat which he had discarded, and returned to his camp with two spare rifles, and a good stock of ammunition.

Having now procured a sufficient quantity of buffalo meat, the hunting party set out on its return to the fort, and arrived there on the 25th, after nine days' absence. Their return had been anxiously expected, and "I could well perceive," says Mr Townsend, "many a longing and eager gaze cast upon the well-filled bales of buffalo meat as our mules swung their little bodies through the camp. My companion, Mr Nuttall, had become so exceedingly thin that I could scarcely have known him; and upon my expressing surprise at the great change in his appearance, he heaved a sigh of inanity, and remarked that I 'would have been as