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MARGUERITE:—A TALE OF FOREST LIFE IN THE NEW DOMINION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "GENTLEMEN ADVENTURERS IN ACADIA," &C.

(Continued.)

CHAPTER III.

On pass the hours; the camp fire bright
Steeps the near leaves in bronzing light,
And, shifting, plays o'er the figures laid
In the generous glow on the grassy glade.

—STREET'S FRONTENAC.

The following day passed away without anything having occurred to excite the apprehensions of the party, who spent nearly all the daylight in following a large moose, which the Indian finally succeeded to his delight in bringing down. In the evening they were seated as usual around the camp fire, chatting on the incidents of the day's sport—the two green hands, Fortescue and Marston, being very enthusiastic on the subject of forest life, and anxious to avail themselves of the experience of the older hunters of the party. In the conversation, however, Hay took little or no part, except when he was specially addressed. He sat moodily apart, as if he was suffering from some indisposition of mind or body.

"What is the matter?" asked Osborne at length, surprised at the unusual silence of his friend. "You appear out of sorts. Are you tired by the exertion of the past two days? But that cannot be; for, if I mistake not, you are an old hunter compared with the rest of us, and accustomed to rough it in the bush.

"Perhaps Hay misses some fair face," lisped the young Ensign, Marston; "and is fretting to get back to the gay town we have just left.

"You are right, Osborne," replied Hay, without paying any attention to the badinage of the younger man. "It is not the sport that has affected me. I never feel so well as when I am breathing the fresh and reviving air of the woods; but, somehow, I have had a slight touch of the blues ever since I left the garrison, and I cannot shake off an uncomfortable feeling that something unpleasant will happen to me before we get back to civilized life—or at least so far as it is represented in the log huts of Halifax."

"Nonsense, Hay; your liver is out of order," said Osborne. "You've been too long cooped up in that stupid old fort of Port Royal. A few days more of forest life will set you up again."

"I suppose," replied Hay, after a moment's pause, "if I were to tell you fellows why it is that I feel depressed, you would make me the subject of your amusement: especially our young friend Marston, who has assumed the privileges of a licensed jester, and only requires a cap and bells to be perfect."

"And a little longer ears," interrupted Fortescue.

"Come, don't hit a fellow too hard," said Marston, afraid that he was now to be paid off old scores.

"But I do not feel in a humor for jesting, and as it may perhaps relieve me and amuse you, I will tell you what has been pressing upon my mind for the past two days. If you have the patience to listen to