



THE PRAIRIE ON FIRE.

THE
AMERICAN FAMILY ROBINSON;

OR,

The Adventures of a Family

LOST IN THE

GREAT DESERT OF THE WEST.

BY

D. W. Belisle.

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With Illustrations  
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PHILADELPHIA:
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Preface.

THE lofty mountains, mighty forests, rivers and valleys of the West, many portions of which have never been explored, furnish abundant resources for the gratification of the Naturalist, the Lapidary, and the Antiquarian. It is with the view of directing attention to these sources of information, that the author has grouped together in this little work, many startling incidents in prairie life, and alluded to relics of antiquity, bearing unmistakable indications of a high order of civilization and science, in regard to which subsequent discoveries have proved the hypothesis he assumes correct. That this country has been peopled by a civilized race of sentient beings anterior to the existence of the present tribes of Indians or their ancestors, is no longer a matter of uncertainty; for everywhere throughout the West, and in many places East of the Mississippi Valley, incontrovertible evidences attest the high antiquity of monuments and relics of a people, whose race, name and customs have been lost in the deep gloom that hangs over the mighty past. In order

more successfully to call attention to these ancient reminiscences of our own country, and to incite a spirit of inquiry in the minds of the young, he has incidentally alluded to them while following the family of Mr. Duncan in their toilsome journey and wanderings through the Great American Desert. To those unacquainted with the antiquarian characteristics of this continent, some of the allusions may appear improbable; yet sufficiently competent authority has been consulted in the preparation of this work to give the allusions reliable authenticity. If we shall be successful in awakening such an inquiry, we shall be content, and feel that our labors have not been unrewarded.

Philadelphia, 1852.

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THE WANDERERS:

OR,

LIFE IN THE WESTERN WILDS.

Chapter First.

Mr. Duncan's Discontentment.—He starts for the West.

NEAR the Cold Springs, in Lafayette county, Missouri, lived Mr. Duncan, a sturdy woodsman, who emigrated thither with his father, while the Mississippi valley was still a wilderness, inhabited by wild beasts, or the still more savage Indians. His grandfather was an eastern man; but had bared his brawny arm on many a battle field, and had earned the right to as many broad acres as he chose to occupy. So, at least, he said, on leaving his eastern home, after peace had been declared, for the then verge of civilization—the Ohio. Here the soldier lived to see the wilderness blossom like the rose, and here he died, grieving that infirmity prevented his flying from the din of the sledge hammer, and the busy hum of mechanical life. Mr. Duncan's father, in the vigor of manhood, crossed the Mississippi, and settled at the Cold Springs, a region then isolated from civilization, as

the Ohio was many years before the white man had planted his foot west of the Alleghanies. But he lived to see the silent echoes resound to the shrill whistle of the engine, and luxury with its still but mighty sway enervate the sons and daughters of the pioneers, until the one quailed at the sight of danger and the other dosed away the morning in kid slippers and curl-papers. Time claimed its own, and he died; and then his son, the Mr. Duncan of our narrative, began to turn his attention to the west, as his grandfather and his father had done before him. He had married a trapper's daughter, twenty years before, and his family consisted now of four sons and two daughters, an adopted son, and his brother-in-law, Andy Howe, who had spent his life in trapping, and trading with the Indians.

Lewis, his eldest son, nineteen years of age, was a man in strength, proportion and judgment, cool and prompt in emergencies, but on ordinary occasions caring for little else than his dogs, gun and uncle, whose superior knowledge of all that pertained to the forest, made him an oracle among the less experienced.

Edward, a boy of seventeen, passionate and headstrong, but generous and brave.

Jane, a girl of fifteen, the mother's supporter and helper, high spirited, energetic and courageous.

Martin, a pleasure-seeking, fun-loving, mischief-making lad of twelve years.

Anne, a timid child of ten years, who went by the soubriquet of the baby, by all except Lewis, who understood her better and called her the "fawn."

And last, but not least, the son of his adoption, Sidney Young, a noble young fellow of eighteen, whose parents dying left him to the care of Mr. Duncan, who had reared him with as tender care as that he bestowed upon his own children.

"Little Benny," or Benjamin more properly, we must not forget to introduce, a manly little fellow of eight, who could handle a bow and arrow, or hook and line, and propel a canoe with as much dexterity as a young Indian.

Such was the family of Mr. Duncan, when he resolved to penetrate the almost unknown region of the west. No hypochondriac papa or aristocratic mamma, can I introduce, but a hale, robust yeoman, who looks upon himself as in the prime of manhood, though nearly fifty years of age, and who boasts of never having consulted a physician or taken a drug. Mrs. Duncan wore her own glossy hair at forty-five, without a thread of silver among it, while her step was as elastic, and eye as bright, as in her girlhood. Her cheek was less rounded than it was formerly; but the matronly dignity and motherly kindness that characterized her, amply compensated for its loss. True types of man and womanhood were they, whom no dangers or vicissitude could daunt, no trials swerve from the path of right or inclination. Mr. Dun-

can well knew the undertaking he proposed was not one to be entered into thoughtlessly, or without due preparation. His habits from earliest infancy, of daily encountering the perils of border life, had taught him this, and with it taught him to love the boundless forest, the dashing waterfalls, and the deep stillness that retreated as refinement advanced.

"This is no place for me," he said, as he heard of some new innovation on old customs, as having taken place in the vicinity. But when a favorite haunt by a small stream was taken possession of, the trees felled, the brooklet dammed, and a factory set in motion, he for a moment seemed astounded, his eye wandered inquiringly from one member of his family to another, and finally rested upon Howe, as though expecting him to provide some remedy to stay the hand of innovation.

"It cannot be done, Duncan," said the trapper, comprehending the unspoken inquiry. "We are completely ensnared. Don't you see we are surrounded?"

"Had they only chosen some other spot for this last shop, or factory, or whatever else you call it, I would have tried to borne it. But there—no, it is too much."

"I have news that will be as unpleasant as the mill. The surveyors will pass near here in laying out a railroad to-morrow," said Lewis.

"I will never see it," said Mr. Duncan. "The

world is wide enough for all. It may be for the best, that there should be a general revolution in the mode of manufactures and commerce, but I cannot appreciate it; I am willing to fall back to the forest to give place to those who can."

It must not be inferred that Mr. Duncan was an illiterate man. On the contrary, he was well posted on all the great events that transpired, and was conversant with many ancient and modern authors. He had carefully instilled into the minds of his children, a love of truth and virtue, for the contentment and nobleness it gave, and to despise vice as a thing too contaminating to indulge in by thought or practice. This love of forest life had become a part of his being, and he could no more content himself among the rapidly accumulating population that sprang up around him, than a Broadway dandy could in the wilderness. When driven from his accustomed fishing ground by the demolition of the forest, whose trees shaded the brooklet with their gigantic arms stretching from either side, interlacing and forming an arch above so compact as to render it impenetrable to the noonday sun, he wearied of his home, and sighed for the forest that was still in the west. Here he had been accustomed to resort to indulge in piscatory amusement; with his trusty rifle, full many a buck and even nobler game had fallen beneath his aim, as lured by the stillness they had come to quench their thirst at the brook, unconscious of

the danger to which they were drawing near. He had long looked upon this haunt as peculiarly his own, not by the right of purchase, but by the possession, which he had actually enjoyed many years, until he considered it as an essential to his happiness.

For Mr. Duncan to resolve was to accomplish. Seconded by his family, his farm was sold, his affairs closed, and May 10, 1836, saw him properly fitted out for a plunge into the western wilds. Three emigrant wagons contained their movables, each drawn by three yoke of stout oxen. The first contained provisions and groceries, seeds and grain for planting, with apparatus for cooking. The second contained the household furniture that was indispensable, beneath which lay a quantity of boards, tent canvass, an extra set of wagon covers ready for use, twine, ropes &c., and was also to be the apartments of Mr. and Mrs. Duncan, and the girls. The third was loaded with agricultural and carpenter's tools, and contained the magazine, and was appropriated to the use of Andy Howe and the boys. Two saddle horses, five mules and three milch cows, with six as fierce hunting dogs as ever run down an antelope, constituted their live stock.

Thus prepared the family bade a glad adieu to their old home to find a more congenial one. I say a glad adieu, for certainly the older members of the family went voluntarily, and the younger

ones, carried away by the hurry of preparation, had no time to think, and perhaps knew not of the dangers they would have to encounter. Youth is ever sanguine, and they had learned from the older ones to look upon the forest freed from the Indians as the Elysium of this world.

Onward to the west the tide of emigration is still rolling. Three centuries ago, the Massachusetts and Virginia colonies were the west to the European, three thousand miles over the Atlantic ocean. Brave was the soul, and stout the heart, that then dared it. A century later Pennsylvania and New York was the west; the tide was rolling on; still a century later its waves had swept over the Alleghanies, and went dashing down the Mississippi valley, anon dividing in thousands of rivulets, went winding and murmuring among the rugged hills and undulating plains. But even the burden of its murmurings was *the* west, still on to the west. And now where is the west? Not the Mississippi valley but the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains. That part we find on charts as the "*unknown*." A valley situated among mountains, sunny and luxuriant as those of a poet's dream; but guarded by a people driven to desperation. This is now the west.

Chapter Second.

The Journey—Encampment—Buffalo hunt—Anne and Edward lost
—They discover an old fort—Fight with a Wolf—Take refuge in a
Tree—Rescued by Howe and Lewis—Return to the Camp.

MR. DUNCAN chose the trader's route to Oregon as the one most likely to lead him to his desired haven. He was familiar with this route, having frequently made it some years before. To Andy Howe, every rock, tree, and river, was like the face of a friend so often had he passed them. Mrs. Duncan had no misgivings when they entered on the forest. She had so often heard the different scenes and places described as to recognize the locality through which they passed, and with perfect confidence in the forest craft of her brother and husband, she gave herself no trouble, save that of making her family as comfortable and pleasant as circumstances would allow.

No incident disturbed their journey, worthy of note, day after day as they easily moved along. It was not Mr. Duncan's policy to exhaust his teams at the outset by long weary marches; but like a skilful general, husband his strength, in case of emergencies. The road was smooth and level, being generally over large extended prairies.

The fifth day out they crossed the Kansas, when the country became more broken, and they saw the first buffalo on their route, which Lewis had the good luck to kill. With the aid of Howe it was cut up and the choicest parts brought to camp. Never was a supper enjoyed with more zest than that night. Delicious steaming beef stakes, wheat cakes, butter, cheese, new milk and tea, spread out on a snow white cloth, on their temporary table, to which they had converted two boards by nailing cleets across the back, and resting each end on a camp stool, made a feast worth travelling a few days into the wilderness to enjoy.

Their camp was pitched for the night on the mossy bank of a small stream, overshadowed by large cotton-woods through which the stars peered, and the new moon with its silvery crescent gleamed faintly as the shadows of evening closed around them.

After night fall the party was thrown into quite an excitement by the approach of figures which they supposed to be Indians, but which turned out to be a herd of deer feeding. Howe laughed heartily at the fright, for the Indians were to him as brothers. His father had been known and loved for many acts of kindness to them, and had been dignified as the *great Medicine*.* Accompanying his father on his trapping excursions, while still a boy, he had spent many a day and

* A name applied by the Indians to their benefactors.

night in their wigwams, partaking of their hospitality, contending with the young braves in their games, and very often joining them in their hunts among the mountains. Hostile and cruel they might be to others, but Howe was confident that he and those with him would meet with nothing but kindness at their hands.

Antelopes were now seen often, and sometimes numerous buffalo; but nothing of importance had been killed for two days. The morning of the twenty-fifth dawned clear and beautiful. Howe and Lewis brought the horses, and with Sidney mounted on a fleet mule, the three set out on a hunt. They had been tempted to this by a moving mass of life over the plain against the horizon, that resembled a grove of trees waving in the wind, to all but a practised eye; but which the hunters declared to be a herd of buffalo. Such a sight creates a strange emotion of grandeur, and there was not one of the party but felt his heart beat quicker at the sight. The herds were feeding, and were every where in constant motion. Clouds of dust rose from various parts of the bands, each the scene of some obstinate fight. Here and there a huge bull was rolling in the grass. There were eight or nine hundred buffaloes in the herd. Riding carelessly the hunters came within two hundred yards of them before their approach was discovered, when a wavering motion among them, as they started in a gallop for the hills, warned

them to close in the pursuit. They were now gaining rapidly on them, and the interest of the chase became absorbingly intense.

A crowd of bulls brought up the rear, turning every few moments to face their pursuers, as if they had a mind to turn and fight, then dashed on again after the band. When at twenty yards distant the hunters broke with a sudden rush into the herd, the living mass giving away on all sides in their heedless career. They separated on entering, each one selecting his own game. The sharp crack of the rifle was heard, and when the smoke and dust, which for a moment blinded them, had cleared away, three fine cows were rolling in the sand. At that moment four fierce bulls charged on Sidney, goring his mustang in a frightful manner, and would probably have terminated his hunting career, had not the sudden shock of the onset thrown him some distance over his mustang's head. He was not much hurt, and before the buffaloes could attack him again, they were put to flight by Howe and Lewis. On examining the animal they soon saw he could not live, and shot him to end his suffering.

This they felt was an unlucky incident, and with saddened hearts turned their faces campward, which on reaching they found in consternation at the prolonged absence of Edward and Anne. They had gone out a few moments after the hunters, Edward to fish in the brook by which they had

encamped, and Anne to gather curious plants and flowers, of which she was passionately fond. Mr. Duncan had been in search of them and came up as the hunters were dismounting.

"Have you found them?" was asked by every one in a moment, as he came up.

"No! but I found this, and this, about two miles down the stream," said he, holding up a fading wreath of wild flowers, and the skeleton of a fish that Edward had evidently cut away to bait his hook with.

"It is now nearly noon, and by the looks of that fish and those flowers, they have laid in the sun three hours. Give us a lunch, Mary, and now for the dogs, Lewis. No time is to be lost," said Howe.

"I fear the worst," said the father; "I saw signs of Indians."

"What were they?" quickly asked the Trapper.

"A raft on the opposite bank of the stream."

"They will bring them back, if they have taken them," said Howe, to which the surmise was not new, for it had occurred to him the moment he found the children were gone, but did not like to say so, lest he should raise an unnecessary alarm. But there was no outcry, no lamentation or dismay, though all was bustle and hurry. They knew it was time to act, not to spend their time in useless sorrow.

"Bring up two mules," said Howe, filling his

pockets with bread and cheese, which he told Lewis to do also, "for," said he, "we may not come in to supper, certainly not unless we find them."

"I will go with you," said the father.

"And I," said Sidney, decidedly.

"No: a sufficient force is necessary here; you will take care of the camp, and if you hear the report of three guns in succession, bring the horses, which must be fed immediately," said the Trapper. "But, if we do not have to go a long distance, the mules will do."

"How will you know whether they are lost or have been carried off by savages," asked the mother, and though no coward, she shuddered and turned white as she asked the question.

"Easily enough known, when once on the ground. I know the red-skins as thoroughly as I do my rifle. Here Buff, here Lion," cried the Trapper, calling two noble bloodhounds to him—"Now, Mary," he continued, "give me a pair of Edward's and Anne's shoes, that they have worn." They were given him, and taking the hounds by the collar, he made them smell the shoes until they got the scent, then leading them to the bank of the stream pointed to them the tracks made in the morning.

"They have it! they have it!" shouted the family, as the hounds, with their noses to the ground, led off in fine style.

“Take Prince and Carl in the leash, Lewis, and fasten it to your saddle, then mount and away,” cried the Trapper, throwing himself into his saddle, and giving the mule the spur, he was rapidly following in their wake.

Two hours passed, when the signals were given for the horses. Sidney saddled them, took a basket of provisions which Mrs. Duncan had put up with her usual thoughtfulness for others, and started in the direction from which the firing proceeded.

Edward and Anne, in the morning, had followed the course of the stream as far down as their father had traced them, Edward whiling away the time in drawing the finny tribes from their element, Anne in weaving in wreaths the gorgeous tinted wild flowers, sweet scented violets, and glossy green of the running pine. The children heeded not time, nor the distance they were placing between themselves and the camp, but wandered on. The wild birds were trilling the most delicious music, which burst on the ear enchantingly, and was the only sound that broke the solemn stillness that reigned around, save the soft gurgling of the water, as it glided over its pebbly bed. The forest was dense, the foliage above them shielding them from the sun, while the bank was smooth, mossy, and thickly studded with wild spring flowers, now in all the luxuriance of their natural loveliness. When they came to the bank of the stream where their father lost their track, they had their curiosity

excited by a grove of willows on the opposite side, in the midst of which they could discern trunks of large trees piled up systematically, with a quantity of rubbish laying around. Thoughtlessly they resolved to cross over. The stream was about forty feet wide, but very shallow, not over three feet deep at any point, and in many places not more than two. But in order to get over, it was necessary to make a raft. Edward was at no loss how to begin; he had too often seen his father make temporary rafts to hesitate. Indeed, he looked upon it as a thing too small to be of much importance. Collecting two as large pieces of drift-wood as he could manage, he drew them to the bank, collected fallen limbs and brush wood, laying them across the drift wood, until he found, by walking upon it, that it would sustain their weight; then seating Anne in the centre, and with a long pole in his hand, placed himself beside her, and with the end of his pole pushing against the bank, launched his strange looking craft into the stream, their weight pressing against the water and its density resisting the pressure, kept the raft together. Slowly but securely they moved along; by pressing the pole against the bed of the river he propelled it until they finally reached in safety the opposite bank, where, drawing their raft a little out of water, that it might not float out of their reach into the stream, they prepared to explore the grove of willows that had drawn them thither.

It was the sight of this raft across the stream that caused Mr. Duncan's alarm about the Indians.

On entering they found a large space cleared of its primitive growth, in the centre of about three acres, which was slightly overgrown with stunted shrubs, but the willows that formed the grove were of gigantic proportions, many of them three and a half, and some four feet in diameter

In the centre of the clearing, was an immense fort, evidently built of the willows that had been felled to clear the space. The logs had been cut, straightened, and made to fit each other, with some sharp instrument, the corners being smoothly jointed, making the whole structure solid and impregnable to gun-shot or arrows. What had evidently been the door was torn away, and lay mouldering on the ground. The whole structure was apparently very old, and had been long deserted. The grass was growing within the enclosure, with weeds and briars, while the logs that formed it were covered with moss, and were crumbling to decay.

The children's curiosity was now blended with an absorbing interest, and Anne longed to follow Edward into the enclosure, but hesitated until he called out, "Only look! Anne! what can this be?" Then forgetting all her timidity, she hastened to see what he was dragging out of the rubbish, and as he held it up triumphantly for her inspection, she looked on with wonder and amazement.

"It is a huge plate cover; here is the handle," said Anne, turning it round with eagerness.

"Hardly that," said her brother; "this is two feet across, and is hardly the right thing for a plate cover; it is made of some metal."

"We will take it home," said Anne; "father and uncle Howe will know what it is, don't you think so?"

But Edward was not listening, and did not answer. He was digging down where he had found the thing, and came to a quantity of arrow heads, evidently made of the same material as the other, but of what it was he could not determine. Anne, with a strong stick in her hand, commenced searching, and soon came upon what they knew to be a stone mortar, for they had often seen them before.

Anne now began to complain of hunger, and Edward said he would give her a treat, Indian-fashion, to celebrate their arrival into, as he facetiously said, an Indian palace!

"But what can you give? We brought nothing with us; besides we have been out quite as long as we ought to, and had better return immediately."

"Oh, no; we have not. You know the camp will not move to-day, and I intend to make a day's work of it."

"We certainly must return; they will be alarmed about us. Come, let us go back."

"Not until we have the feast. Now keep quiet,

Anne, until that is over, and then I will return with you."

"A funny feast it will be, composed of nothing."

"A finny feast it is to be, composed of fish. Now see how I will make a fire." And taking a flint he had found, he struck his pocket knife blade slant-wise against it, when it emitted sparks of fire in profusion, which, falling on a sort of dry wood, known to woodmen as "punk wood," set it on fire, which Edward soon blew into a blaze, and by feeding it judiciously a fire was soon crackling and consuming the fuel he had piled on it. In the mean time he had taken the fish he had caught, dressed and washed them at the stream, and laying them on the live coals until one side was done, turned them on the other by the aid of a long stick he had sharpened for the purpose, and when done he took them up on its point, and laid them steaming on a handful of leaves he had collected, and presented them to his sister.

Anne was sure she had never ate fish that tasted so delicious, a conclusion an excellent appetite helped her to arrive at. Edward was highly elated at his success, and laughed and joked over a dinner they enjoyed with a relish an epicure might covet. There is an old proverb about stolen waters being sweet; certainly their stolen ramble and impromptu dinner had a charm which completely blinded them to their duty to their parents, and even their own safety; for Edward proposed they

should take a short ramble on the other side, where they were to try if they could discover some other ruins like those at the fort, and overruling the slight opposition Anne made, they gathered up the relics they had found, and moved on from the stream towards the deep lurking shades, that were the same for many thousand miles, unbroken by the bound of civilization, but bewildering by its still mystic loveliness.

On they went, regardless of taking any notes or landmarks until the exhaustion of Anne warned Edward it was indeed time to return. Changing their course for one they mistook for that they had come, they plunged deeper and deeper at every step into the woods, without discovering their error, until they knew by the distance they had traversed they ought to have reached the old fort: but now it was no where to be seen, neither were there any signs of a river. They wandered to and fro, hoping every moment to make out the true direction to take, yet becoming more confused and bewildered at every step. Finally, Edward laid his ear to the ground, and listening, was sure he heard the faint murmuring of water. They hastened on towards the direction whence it proceeded, guided by the sound, until, oh joy! a stream burst upon their sight. Reaching its banks, Edward took his sister in his arms, plunged into the water, and was soon in safety on the opposite shore. He was now in a great quandary, for

though he had gained what he supposed to be the bank he had left, without having lost time in building a raft, yet he knew if he missed his way he would not be able to gain the camp by sunset, for he saw by the long falling shadows that the sun was rapidly descending.

Anne was greatly terrified, and wept bitterly. "Do not grieve," said Edward, "they will of course miss, and come in search of us, if we do not get home soon. I am very certain we are very near the camp already."

"I am afraid we are lost," Anne replied, sobbing, "and if we are, we may never get back again!"

"Fie! Anne, don't be a coward, for I am very certain we shall, and that within the hour."

"How can you be certain? you do not even know which direction to take."

"Oh! yes I do: we came south, and of course must go north to get back again."

"If we only knew which way was north. No stars are to be seen to indicate it."

"Easily enough told,—come, we must not lose a moment, and as we go I will tell you an unmistakable sign."

"Oh! I am so weary I can go no farther," and again the child sobbed bitterly.

"Never mind, I am not tired, and can help you," and passing one arm around her he rendered her great assistance, and again they were hurrying on.

"You observe these trees," said he; "the bark on the side that faces the way we are going is quite smooth and even, while the opposite side is rough and the branches jagged. It is always so on forest trees, and a person may rely on this as a natural sign, when he has none other to go by, with perfect security. I have heard uncle Howe and father say that they have repeatedly lost themselves in the woods, but by following in one direction to a given point they could soon find themselves again."

"It is getting so very dark. Oh! Edward, what shall we do?"

"The first of every thing we *must* do is, to keep up our courage."

"Hist! what is that?—There it is again! Oh! Edward, let us run! There! there it is!" screamed the terrified girl.

Edward turned to the direction indicated, and a wolf was crouching with glaring eyes, ready to spring upon them. Edward's only weapon was a pocket-knife, one of those long two-edged bladed weapons, so common in the west; yet he did not despair, but placing Anne behind a large tree stationed himself before it, and with his knife open and a huge club he awaited the approach of the wolf.

It soon came. The wolf was lean and desperate, and with a terrific growl he bounded forward, but was met by the brave boy, who sprang aside as he came, and before the monster could

recover his leap, Edward had dealt him several deep and deadly blows. Following up his advantage he sprang at the wolf with his knife, plunging it again and again in his side. The brute feeling he was being conquered, with a mighty effort turned on Edward with jaws extended, and would have done him harm had not Anne sprung forward with the circular metallic relic they had found at the fort, and placed it before her brother. This drew the attention of the enraged wolf on her; but before he could spring, Edward had felled him a second time to the ground, where he soon dispatched him.

It was now too dark to make their way farther, and Edward was forced to acknowledge the only hope of getting to camp that night, lay in their being found by his friends and carried back. Many a boy would have been discouraged, but Edward was not; though but seventeen he was athletic and brave, and felt that he was answerable for his sister's safety, whom he had led into this difficulty. "I *can*," said he to himself, "and I will; and where there is a *will*, there is a *way*."

He immediately kindled a fire, as he had done in the morning, in order to keep other wild beasts away, as well as to prepare some supper; then taking his line he soon had some fine fish, (for he was on the river bank he had last crossed,) which he broiled on the coals.

He could not shut his eyes to the terrible truth that they were in a very dangerous place; for,

though they piled on fuel to frighten the beasts, yet they could hear the fierce growl of the wolf, the yell of the panther, and their stealthy tread, and see their eyes flash and glare in the surrounding gloom. The smell of the broiling fish seemed to have collected them, and sharpening their voracious appetites, made them desperate. To add to the difficulty of the children, the fuel was getting scarce around the fire, and they dared not go away from it, for it would be running into the very jaws of their terrible besiegers.

"We must get up into a tree, Anne," said Edward; "it is now our only hope."

"Then, Edward, there is no hope for me; I cannot climb, but you can. Save yourself while you can!"

"No, Anne, these monsters shall never have you while I live; never fear that. I know you cannot climb of yourself, but I can get you there. We must make a strong cord somehow. My fishing-line doubled twice will help, and here is a tree of leather-wood;* this is fortunate, I can now succeed."

Collecting together all the fuel he could, he piled it on the fire, then taking his knife, stripped off the leather-wood bark, and tying it around Anne's waist, with the other end in his hand, he climbed up to the lowest limb, and then cautiously drew her up after him. Seating her securely on that

* *Dirca palustris*, a very tough shrub, of the *Thymala-*
~~ce~~ species, growing in the deep forests.

limb, he climbed higher up, drawing her after him, until he reached a secure place, where he seated her, taking the precaution to fasten the cord that was around her to the tree. It was a large hemlock tree, and the limbs being very elastic, he proceeded to weave her a bed, that she might take some repose, for the poor child was wearied with fright and fatigue. Disengaging part of the cord from her, he bent together some limbs, and fastened them securely with the leather-wood string; he then broke some smaller branches, and interlaced them with the larger ones, until he had made a strong and quite comfortable bed. In this singular couch he placed Anne, where she soon fell asleep.

Gradually the fire died away, and nearer and nearer their dreadful enemies approached, until they came to the carcass of the dead wolf, which they tore into pieces and devoured, amidst frightful growlings and fightings. When nothing but the bare bones were left, they surrounded the tree in whose friendly branches the children had taken refuge, and kept up a continued howl through the night. Edward sat on a limb by his sister through the night, his knife ready for use, wondering if ever there was a night so long before. To him it seemed as though day would never dawn; and when he espied the first faint glimmer in the east, his heart bounded with gratitude that he had escaped the perils of the night. But would the wolves go

away with the darkness? alas! they did not, but still prowled around, so that they did not dare to descend from their place of security.

Howe and Lewis had discovered the place where the children had ate their dinners at the fort, and had traced them until they came to the place where they first found they had missed their way. Here the hounds became perplexed in consequence of the children having doubled their track, and were unable to make out the path. After some delay it was again found, and followed to the river bank, which Howe hesitated to cross, as it was now quite dark; accordingly they encamped for the night. At dawn the next morning they crossed the river; the dogs were turned loose, and after a few moments they set off at a rapid pace in one direction; Howe and Lewis followed, and came in sight in time to see the dogs give battle to the wolves that were watching the children in the tree.

"Our rifles are needed there," said Howe, as his practised glance took in the combat, and drawing his eye across his trusty gun, a sharp crack was heard, and a wolf was felled to the ground. Again it was heard, and another bit the dust. Lewis had not been idle; he too had brought down two of them, and the remainder fled, with the hounds in pursuit.

The children's joy I will not attempt to describe, as they saw their rescuers approach, nor yet the

agony of the parents, as the night wore away and the absent ones came not. Lewis took his sister in his arms, holding her on the saddle before him, and bore her back to camp. She would not relinquish the trophies found at the fort, which she had purchased so dearly, but carried them with her.

"My children, how could you wander away so, when you well knew the dangers of the woods?" said the father, when they were once more safely in the camp.

"It was not Anne's fault, father: do not blame her. I persuaded her to cross the river, and after leaving the old Indian fort, somehow we got turned around, and instead of recrossing the river, we went on and crossed over another stream," said Edward.

"Neither was it all Edward's fault," replied Anne; "I wanted to see what was in the Willow Grove, and when once there the woods were so shady and looked so cool and inviting—

"Wolves and all, sister?" said Benny.

"The wolves were not there then; nothing but birds and squirrels, and such bright flowers and—"

"Were you not very much frightened, when you found you had lost yourselves?" asked Jane.

"Oh! yes; and when the wolf jumped at Edward, I thought we should never see any of you again."

"Where is your 'plate cover' you used so effectually," said Edward, "for I want you all to

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know that when the wolf was getting the better of me, Anne, usually so timid, suddenly became very courageous, and with this for a weapon turned the brute's attention on herself, and thus perhaps saved my life."

"Give me Anne's 'plate cover;'" said the father, "I am curious to examine what seems to have played so active a part in your adventure."

"A curious thing, very," said he, examining it closely. "Howe, did you ever come across anything like it in your wanderings? It is heavy, evidently of some kind of metal."

"Once, and once only. But its description would be a long story. Scrape away the rust, Duncan, and see if it is made of copper."

Mr. Duncan cut away a thick scale of corroded metal, then scraping it with a knife a pure copper plate was exposed to view.

"I thought so," said Howe. "It is a **strange story**, but I will tell you all I know of it."

Chapter Third.

Howe's Story of a singular piece of Metal.

IN compliance with Mr. Duncan's wish Howe related the story of the singular piece of metal he had seen, similar to the one they had discovered.

"Some twenty years ago," said he, "my father and I carried on an extensive traffic with the Indians around Lake Superior for furs, often being gone a year on our expeditions, during which time we lived entirely with the Indians, when not in some inhabited region, by ourselves, which we often were, for a trapper penetrates and brings to light hidden resources, of which the Indian never dreams. During one of these excursions, we had been struck with the singular appearance of an old man, tottering with age, who belonged to the wigwam of the Indian chief with whose people we were trading. His thin hair, falling from the lower part of his head, was long, curling and white, leaving the top bald, and the scalp glossy. His beard was very heavy, parting on the upper lip, and combed smoothly and in waving masses, fell on his breast. His must have been a powerful, athletic frame in his manhood, for when I saw him he was over seven feet high, and though feeble and tottering,

his frame was unbent, and his eye was blue and glittering, with a soul his waning life could not subdue. His features, as well as complexion, were totally unlike the rest of the tribe. His forehead was broad and high, his chin wide and prominent, his lips full, with a peculiar cast about them I had never seen on any other human being, giving the impression of nobleness mingled with a hopeless agony and sorrow. Such, at least, was the impression made on my mind, which time has never effaced. He was a strange old man, with such a form and face, and so unlike any other human being, that his very presence inspired the heart with feelings of reverence. The Indians have no beard. This fact impressed us with the idea that he was a white man; but when I compared him to the white race, he was as unlike them as the Indians. Singular in all his ways and manners, he seemed a being isolated from every human feeling or sympathy.

“My father said he had known this man for thirty-five years, and when he first saw him he was old, but then there was a woman with him, whom he tenderly cherished, and who, but a few years before, died of extreme old age. Otherwise he knew nothing more of them, as he never sought to learn farther than what the chief had told him. When he asked who they were, he was answered that they were all that was left of a nation their ancestors had conquered so many moons ago, and

the chief caught a handful of sand, to designate the moons by the grains.

“I was more deeply impressed with the sight of this old man than I can describe; and what I heard of him only deepened the impression, until it haunted me continually. Who was he? How came he here? And where came he from when he came here? Who were his kindred, and of what race and nation was he? These were questions that I asked myself day after day, but was unable to answer them. I resolved to find out, and attempted to make friends with him as the most tangible way of succeeding. He was reserved and haughty, and I doubted my success; but I was agreeably surprised when he deigned to receive and converse with me, though at the same time he treated me with a degree of contempt by no means agreeable; yet it came from him with such a glance of pity in his eye as if he earnestly commiserated my inferiority, that I half forgave him at the moment. He conversed about everything save the one subject nearest my heart—*himself*. But on this point he was silent, and when, day after day, I entreated him to give me a history of himself, the thought seemed to call up such agonizing recollections as to make every renewal of the subject difficult for me and painful to him.

“Many months went by, but as yet I was no farther advanced than at first, on the one great subject of which I so longed to be familiar. I fancied

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Of late the old man had become more taciturn and reserved than formerly, showing a disinclination to converse on any subject, and I could not avoid seeing his steps grow slower; he took less exercise than had been his custom, and I saw plainly he was passing away. Then I feared he would never relent; that death would come upon him and his history remain unknown.

“One evening, after I had in vain endeavored to gain access to the old man through the day, I wandered out and stood on a high cliff, against whose base the waves of the lake beat with a sullen roar; and looking far away over the turbulent surface of this prince of inland seas, was wondering if ever its waters would become tributary to the will of my race, or if, as now, the canoe of the Indian was all the vessel that should breast its rugged waves. The place where I stood was a sort of table, or level rock, the highest peak of the cliff, rising in a cone-like shape, some thirty feet above. Below it was irregular, and the path to the place where I stood tortuous, difficult, and dangerous; but when once there, one of the grandest views on the whole lake was presented. I had not been there long, when, hearing a footstep approach, and thinking it a dangerous place to be caught in if it should be an unfriendly Indian, I caught hold of some shrubs growing in the crevices of the rock, and silently let myself down a few feet below the table, whose overhanging rock I knew would protect me from

observation, and where I could have a full view of the rock by looking through the shrubs, by whose friendly aid I had descended to my retreat.

"I had scarcely secreted myself when, to my astonishment, the old man advanced slowly up the path, his labored breathing showing how painful to him was the exertion. Fearing no harm I was soon by his side, begging him to lean on me and to allow me to assist him. He looked down on me with a peculiar expression, akin to that I should express should Benny here insist on going out buffalo hunting, and which annoyed me exceedingly, of which he, however, took no notice.

"After standing with folded arms, looking intently over the water towards the far south, he turned to me and said:

"It shall be even so. Come hither, son of a degenerate race, and learn the secrets of the past. Long before your race knew this continent existed, my people were in the vigor and glory of national prosperity. From the extreme north, where the icebergs never yield to the sun, through the variations of temperature to the barren rocks in the farthest south, were ours, all, from ocean to ocean!"

"He paused for a moment, as if endeavoring to recall some half-forgotten facts, then proceeded in a sorrowful tone.

"But troubles came. Our kings had fostered two different races on their soil, who were at first

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but a handful, and who had at two different periods been driven by winds on our shore. The first that were thus cast on our hospitality were partially civilized in their ways, and though far removed above the brute, were not like us; so wide was the difference that an intermarriage with them would have been punished with death. They were human, and therefore protected, their insignificance being their greatest friend; for my ancestors no more thought of laying tribute on them, even when they came to number themselves by thousands, than you would on an inferior race. The other race were savages of the worst character; more savage than beasts of prey, and so they multiplied and became strong, and even preyed upon themselves. Thus our forests became filled with beasts in the shape of man, and our districts with an imbecile race. Centuries rolled onward, and the savages multiplied and grew audacious. They even penetrated our cities and preyed upon us, while we, paralyzed by such acts of ingratitude, were weakened by what should have made us strong. We passively beheld a loathsome reptile, that might at first have been crushed in an hour, thrive to become a monster to devour us.

“At length, but, alas! too late, we awoke to the danger of our situation. We drove them from our cities to the mountains, but ere we could take active measures to prevent a recurrence of these outrages, the other race we had fostered started

up like a swarm of locusts, and declaring themselves our equals, demanded to be recognized as such. So preposterous was this demand, that we were at first disposed to treat it only as the suggestion of a disordered intellect, but, of course, could never comply with so degrading a request, for nothing we could do could invest them with strength, intellect, or form like ours. Soon after our refusal they too grew audacious, and forming a league with the savages, set up a king whom they said should make laws and govern the land. Then commenced a terrible war of extermination. This whole continent was drenched with blood. *We* fought to save *our* homes and our country, *they* to gain the supremacy. It was not a battle of a year or of half a century. As many years as I have seen, the torrent was never stayed, and when an advantage was gained, on either side, life was never spared. By slow degrees, they possessed themselves of fortress after fortress, and city after city: *we*, the while, growing weaker, they stronger, until we were compelled to take refuge in the cities of our king. These cities were built and walled with granite, and we supposed them to be impregnable; and laying as they did in the *centre* of the continent, and in *proximity* to one another, we hoped yet to withstand them. But, alas! we had another foe to encounter. Gaunt hunger and famine came with their ghastly forms and bony arms, blighting the strong and the

brave. But it could not make traitors or cowards of us, and dying we hurled defiance at our foes. The walls of our cities unmanned, were scaled—the gates thrown open; and our streets filled with the murderers whom we had reared to exterminate us. A few were found alive, and these few were saved by the victors that the arts and sciences might not die. From these I am descended; but though we refused to transmit this knowledge to them, they treated us with great care, hoping that after a lapse of time we would amalgamate with them. But we were made of sterner stuff than that. We could see our race and nation blotted from existence, but not degraded. After the lapse of many centuries we were forgotten in the struggles of a half civilized race and the savages for supremacy, and my people dying out year by year, are all gone save *myself*, the last of the rightful owners of this continent.”

As the old man concluded, his head fell forward on his breast and he remained silent and motionless so long, that I feared the recalling of the past had been too great a task for him, and going up to him, I laid my hand on his. Throwing it aside, he said: “Young man, I have told you of the past, and now there is a page of the future I will unfold to you. Your race shall possess the heritage of my ancestors. And as the savages exterminated us, so shall you them. But, beware, you too are fostering a serpent that at last will sting, and per-

haps devour you." "The arts and sciences of your race speak of them; were they like ours," I said, anxious to learn more of this strange people: "Yours," he replied with more warmth than he had exhibited, "are not unlike ours, though far inferior to them. Your race boasts of discoveries and inventions! ah! boy, you are but bringing to light arts long lost, but in perfection centuries of centuries before your people ever knew of this land."

"Is there any proof of this? is there nothing remaining to give ocular demonstration of these facts?" I asked.

"A few, said he. Nothing very satisfactory, but what there is, you shall see."

So saying, he let himself down to the same spot where I had, in hiding from him, I following. On removing a few pieces of loose rock the door leading to a cavern was visible, which we entered. It was a large cave running back into a lofty arched room, as far as I could see in the surrounding gloom. The old man took a couple of torches from a pile that lay on a shelving rock close by the door, lighted them, and giving one to me bade me follow. The farther we went the wider and loftier was the cave, until I began to wonder where it would end. At this moment he paused before a stone tablet of immense proportions, raised about three feet from the floor, the ends resting on blocks of granite. All over its surface was hierogly-

phics engraved in characters I had never seen before, though I have often found similar ones since.

"Here, said he," are recorded the heroic deeds of our race while fighting to save our firesides from a rapacious foe. Every character is a history in itself. Yet your race know it not; but still boast of sciences you do not possess."

"No," said I, "we cannot decypher these characters, we have never claimed to have done so; but if you can give me a key to them, tell me how we may make an alphabet to it, we may still be able to do so."

"It would be useless for me to do so," said he, with his old manner of superiority, "your intellect could not grasp it; you would not understand me."

"Try me," said I, eagerly, "try me and see."

But he only beckoned me away, then advancing a few paces took from a recess in the rock, a heavy flagon not unlike our own in shape, and placing it in my hand, informed me that their vessels for drinking were like that, varied in shape and size according to taste. Holding it to the light, I was astonished to find it was made of gold, fine and pure as any I had ever seen. There were instruments of silver, also, which he assured me, would carry sound many miles, and others of glass and silver to shorten objects to the sight at an equal

distance. And these, said he, handing me some curious shaped vases are like the material of which we made many of our ornaments to our dwelling. They appeared to be made of glass, yet they were elastic. He said the material was imperishable. There were helmets, shields, curiously shaped weapons, chisels, and many things I knew not the use of, all made of copper, among the rest a shield precisely like the one you have, Anne."

"Did you bring nothing away? uncle," asked the children.

"No: when he had shown me all he desired me to see, he led me back to the mouth of the cave, and motioning me out, followed, closing the opening he had made and ascending to the table where we stood before.

"Then I begged the old man to tell me more of his race, to unfold the curtain that hung like a pall between them and us. He shook his head sadly, and standing with his face towards the south, communing with himself awhile, turned to me, and said: 'You believe in a God, good and evil, rewards and punishments?'

I answered in the affirmative.

"Would you hesitate to break an oath taken in the name of the God in which you believe?" he asked.

"I would not dare to commit such a crime," I answered.

"Then, swear," said he, "that what I have

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told and shown you, you will never reveal to noman being by word or sign."

"Oh, no, you cannot mean that; leave us some clue to your lost race," I entreated.

"Yes, swear," repeated he imperiously.

"No: oh! no, I cannot. Though for your sake," I said, "I will be silent any reasonable number of years you shall dictate to me."

He gazed sternly on me for a few moments, then said.

"Let it be so. When I have passed away you are absolved from your oath."

"You will teach me to read the recorded past," I said inquiringly, and tell me of the arts now lost, at some future day!"

"It is too late, my days are spent, he said; then rousing himself, he exclaimed, in a voice that still rings in my ears: 'Son of a degenerate race, go over this whole continent and there trace the history of my people. Our monuments are there, and on them are chiseled our deeds, and though we moulder in the dust, they can never die; they are imperishable. Go where the summer never ends, where the trees blossom, still laden with fruit, and there we once were mighty as these forests, and numerous as the drops in this lake; there read of our glory—but not of our shame—that was never chiseled in our monumental pillars; it is here, (placing his hand on his heart) and with *me* must die. Go, (said he, waving with his hand to-

wards the path that ascended the table) go, and leave the last of a mighty race, to die alone. It is not fitting you should be here: Go? I am called.'"

I obeyed him reluctantly, but I never saw him again.

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Chapter Fourth.

Their journey continued—Finding a Prairie—Encamping for the Night—Singular incident—A Mirage on the Prairie—Alarm in the Camp—The Prairie discovered to be on fire—Flight to the Sand Hills—Their final escape—Search for water—Finding a stream—Encampment.

THE next day the camp was struck and packed; the oxen, rested and invigorated by roving over and cropping the rich grasses that grew in luxuriance along the banks of the river by which they had encamped, moved with a brisk step along their shady track, while the voices of the drivers sounded musically, reverberating through the stillness of the forest. Towards noon they came to one of those singularly interesting geological features of the west, a *Prairie*. This was something entirely new to the younger children, who had never been far from the place where they were born, and it very naturally surprised them to see such a boundless extent of territory, without a house, barn, or fence of any kind—nothing but a waving mass of coarse rank grass

“Oh! father,” cried little Benny, as the vast prairie burst on his sight, “see what a great big

farm somebody has got! But where does he live? I don't see any house."

"And the fences, apple, peach, and pear trees?" said Anne.

"It is not a farm; it's a big pasture kept on purpose to feed buffaloes and deer in," said Martin.

"You are all wrong," retorted Lewis, "for though buffaloes and deer do feed on the prairie, it is not kept for them alone; it has always been so—trees will not grow on it."

"You, too, are wrong, Lewis," said Mr. Duncan. "Though it is true trees will not grow on the prairie now, yet it was not always so. Geologists tell us that the vegetable growth, some thousand years ago was, in many respects, different from what now covers the solid surface of our earth. Changes of temperature and constituents of soil are going on from age to age, and correspondent changes take place in the vegetable kingdom. Over large tracks, once green with ferns, stately trees have succeeded, followed in their turn, in the course of ages, by grosser and other herbaceous plants."

"According to that theory, after a regular course of time has elapsed, these rank grasses will be succeeded by some other form of vegetable growth," remarked Sidney.

"Certainly," replied Mr. Duncan. "When one class of trees has exhausted the soil of appropriate

pabulum, and filled it with an excrement which, in time, it came to loathe, another of a different class sprang up in its place, luxuriated on the excrement and decay of its predecessor, and in time has given way to a successor destined to the same ultimate fate. Thus, one after another, the stately tribes of the forest have arisen, flourished, and fell, until the soil has become exhausted of the proper food for trees, and become fitted for the growth of herbaceous plants."

After pitching their camp that night, the children in rambling round it, came to one of those landmarks with which the prairies are so thickly studded along the different trails—a *grave*. Saddened at the thought of any one dying in that lonely place, they gathered around it, wondering if the hand of affection soothed his last, his darkest hour, if tears bedewed his resting place, or whether he died unmourned, unwept, hurried with unseemly haste beneath the sod, and only remembered by a mother, wife or sister, who a thousand miles away was wondering why the absent one, or tidings of him, came not.

The children assembled thus in a group, Howe drew thither also, to ascertain what they had found.

"A grave," said he, "ah! poor fellow, he sleeps well in his prairie bed."

"Here is a name cut in this bit of board at the head, uncle, but it is done so badly I can't make it out," said Martin.

“Let me try,” said Howe; “it is plain enough, sure.”

“JOSHUA CRANE

“DIED

“OCT. 20, 1834, AGED 27.”

“Now, children, would you like to see Mr. Joshua?” said Howe.

“Why, uncle,” said they, “how can you make light of such a thing?”

“I am in earnest; for, from various indications about it, I am of opinion that he is a curious fellow.”

Anne, with a tear in her eye, cast a reproachful look towards her uncle, while the rest were too much surprised to do anything but stare at him in wonder.

“Bring me a crowbar and shovel, Edward. I find I must convince these little doubters that I am really in my senses.”

“Oh, uncle!” said Jane, “you could not have the heart to disturb the dead!”

“Bless me, child, who thinks of disturbing the dead; I am only going to show you what a funny fellow Joshua is. Now,” said he, raising the crowbar, “if Joshua is sleeping here, this iron cannot reach him; but, if as I suspect, why, then, you see”—and down went the crowbar in the loose earth. “Now give me the shovel,” said he, and commenced removing the dirt, the children looking on in astonishment. He soon brought to the

surface, and rolled on the grass a *barrel of brandy*. The broad lonely prairie fairly resounded to the shouts and laughter of the children, as they danced about the barrel; Howe standing by enjoying a deep ha! ha! peculiarly his own.

"What a curiosity, Joshua is! Who would have thought of finding such a thing there?"

"It is a rare thing, I own," said Howe, "yet occasionally resorted to when oxen have given out, or died. Sometimes wagons have been over-loaded, and then unable to make their way over the rough roads, some heavy article is taken and buried with all the signs of a grave about it, to prevent its being disturbed and stolen, as in the present instance. Probably the owner will be along here for it, or sell it to some one who will come for it in course of the summer."

"Will you leave it here, or bury it again?"

"The prize is mine; I shall carry it along with me," said Howe.

"That would not be right," rejoined Martin.

"It is another man's property."

"Which he forfeited by false pretences. No, children, whatever found without an owner in these wilds, falls to the finder by right," said the Trapper.

"I think the children are right," said Mrs. Duncan, who had come hither at the sound of their mirth.

"Suppose the owner is dead and never comes for it," said Howe.

"It in no wise alters the case. It is better that it never finds an owner than possess ourselves of what has purposely been hid from us."

"Such notions are right and proper for a settlement, but for a place like this, it is carrying it to too nice a point."

"The rights of others should be as sacred to us in one place as another," replied Mrs. Duncan.

"Suppose somebody had trapped beaver and foxes in some particular locality, would that make the animals that were uncaught in that locality his own?"

"Certainly not. The case is different; as the beaver uncaught never were his, he had no claim on them. But if he caught a hundred beaver and cured the skins, and secreted them in some place until he chose to sell them, it would be decidedly dishonest for any one to take them away as their own, because they had found the place in which they were hidden."

"I believe you are right, Mary. Joshua shall be reinterred," said Howe, rolling the barrel in its old bed, and proceeding to cover it.

"Mother is always right," cried the children, as they wended their way back to camp.

Early the next morning, as they were moving over the prairie, a beautiful vision burst on their sight. It was a mirage of the prairie. As the sun rose in all the splendor of an unclouded sky in the east, the objects in the west became suddenly elon

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gated vertically, the long rank grass stretching to an amazing altitude, while its various hues of green were reflected with vivid accuracy. As the emigrants approached the optical illusion, it gradually contracted laterally above and below towards the centre, at the same time rapidly receded towards the horizon, until it assumed its original aspect. As the sun approached the meridian, the atmosphere became so intensely warm that Mr. Duncan thought it prudent to rest until it began to descend, to which they all joyfully assented, as their oxen appeared to be almost overcome with the heat. They had been a day and a half on the prairie, and as the water they brought with them would not last them longer than the next morning, they were anxious to make the distance to the hills, which were looming faintly before them in the west, where they were sure of finding an abundant supply. Accordingly, the oxen were turned loose, the horses and mules being picketed, and all resigned themselves to the disagreeable necessity of an encampment in a burning noonday sun on the prairie, with not even a shrub to shelter them from its rays. But there was no help for it, the oxen could not proceed with the wagons, and they were obliged to wait until the heat of the day was over.

Towards evening, a light breeze began to stir the heated air, and borne on its wings, came also a disagreeable odor caught only at long intervals, but which served to put Howe and Mr. Duncan on their guard.

“There is a fire on the prairie, away at the north,” said Howe, “and there is not a moment to be lost, if we would save our baggage, cattle, or even our lives!”

“It is true, there is fire, and now I see the smoke away yonder, looking like a thin mist against the sky; should it blow this way, our only refuge is the Sand Hills, that I know lay yonder towards the forest,” said Mr. Duncan, looking intently towards the point whence the odor came.

“Saddle the horses and mules, boys,” said Mr. Duncan, “and place Mary and the children on them. Benny, you must ride with your mother, I am afraid to trust you alone on a mule chased by fire. You must sit still, my boy, and keep up your courage; the Sand Hills are yonder, not more than three miles over the plain; you see them, Mary,” he continued, “but do not mind the trail; keep your horses headed direct for them, and ride for your lives. I do not think there will be any danger for any of us; but it is better to make all ready for the worst.”

“But, suppose you, with the oxen, wagons, and cows, are surrounded with fire,” said Mrs. Duncan.

“We will do our best in the emergency. But I hope to gain the hills in safety. Perhaps the wind will shift and blow the fire in another direction. We must hope for the best, doing everything in our power for our safety. Now go; give the horses and mules a loose rein.”

And away over the plain the cavalcade went, followed by the wagon as fast as the oxen could travel, but the progress they made was slow in comparison to that of the fire. On it came, and on went the cattle, goaded by the drivers at first, but at last catching sight of the heavy, rolling wave of fire that was sweeping towards them, they started into a gallop, frightened and seeming to comprehend the danger that menaced them. Mr. Duncan saw his wife and children gain the Sand Hills in safety, and then the smoke and half consumed grass filled the air, hiding the rescued from view as the burning wave swept toward them, maddening the oxen and making the stout hearts of the pioneers quail, as the burning fragments eddying through the air, fell thick and fast among them. Prairie dogs, in droves went howling past, wolves and panthers laying their bodies close to the ground in their rapid leaps, heeded not each other, and even an antelope joined in the flight unmolested, from their common foe. Innumerable prairie fowls filled the air with their cries; but, above every other sound arose the roar and crackling of the scorching billowy mass, as on, still on it came, now rising until its seething flame seemed to touch the sky, then falling a moment only to rise the next still higher.

A prairie on fire is a sublime spectacle, which those who have had the good fortune to see, in a place of safety, will not soon forget. But a hor

rible ordeal it is for those who are overtaken by the raging flame; for, if the grass is dry, with a slight breeze to fan the flame, it travels with the speed of a whirlwind.

Mr. Duncan could not abandon his noble beasts in the extremity, for he knew if left to themselves, unaccustomed to the ground, they would lose themselves, and ensure their destruction; but, in keeping by their sides, encouraging them by his presence and urging them on, he still hoped to save them, although half blinded with smoke and the hot air that surrounded them. Howe had charge of one of the teams, and Sidney the other, who, following the example of Mr. Duncan, stood their ground bravely, resolving to share the fate of their cattle.

Mrs. Duncan and the children, from their hill of refuge, saw with terror the fearful and unequal race on the plain below, until they were entirely enveloped in smoke, and then their suspense was harrowing till a puff of wind lifted the smoky cloud, which it occasionally would, giving them for an instant a glimpse of their friends, as on they came towards them in their headlong career. But, as nearer, still nearer came the flames, the cloud became too dense to be lifted by the wind, and all was one circling, eddying wave, hiding every object from view. A few moments of suspense, during which no words were spoken, and then bursting through the cloud came their noble oxen, their

tongues dry and blackened and hanging from their mouths, their hair scorched from their sides, and the wagon covers on fire, while the drivers feeling they were safe sank on the sand, half way up the hill from exhaustion.

Mrs. Duncan, and the children, were soon by the wagons, tearing off the covers, and by so doing, saved the contents from burning. Then pouring water over and down the throats of their exhausted oxen, they were soon able to breathe freely. In the meantime, by Mrs. Duncan's direction, Anne had taken a basin of water and bathed the faces and hands of the drivers, so that they were, though quite exhausted, very comfortable. The fire rolled past them without reaching them further, and finally, after having spent itself died away, leaving the broad prairie that was at noon so heavily covered with verdure, a blackened plain.

"This is a pretty fix for us to get in, Duncan," said Howe, as the fire rolling away, left them clear of smoke, and gave them a full view of their position. "Here we are," he continued, "every drop of water spent, without a blade of grass around us, begrimed with soot and smoke, looking worse than any Indians I ever saw."

"We ought to be thankful," said Mr. Duncan, "that no lives are lost. We have escaped better than we had reason to hope, placed as we were."

"To be sure we have escaped ourselves, but see what a pitiable plight our oxen are in. They will

not be able to draw another load in a week, at least; and what are we to do in the meantime?"

"I declare, uncle, I think you have the horrors; for whoever before saw you at a loss for an expedient under any circumstances?" said Jane, with a merry twinkle in her eye; for this was a peculiar phase in her uncle's character, to hold up to others the worst side of any circumstance, while at the same time he was taking active measures to remedy it. So in this instance: for he had already made arrangements to reconnoitre the forest, that lay west of the Sand Hills, not over two and a half miles distant. Accordingly, mounting one horse, with Lewis on the other, they galloped over the plain, and striking the forest at the nearest point, they found it dry, destitute of grass, and totally unfit for a camping ground. Taking a circuit in a southerly direction, where the surface seemed more broken, they found they were on higher ground, and as they rode on, the thick undergrowth all the while growing more dense, encouraged them to proceed; for which they were rewarded by striking a small brooklet of pure water, whose banks were lined with rich grasses, sheltered by tall trees that grew on either side. Here he resolved the camp should be pitched, and lighting a fire to mark the place, they galloped back to the Sand Hills. To remove the heavy wagons was no easy task, as the oxen were only able to walk without a burthen.

There were two pairs of mules and one of horses, and these being hitched to one of the wagons, were taken to the place designated by the stream, and then brought back for another until all the wagons were on the ground, which the last reached about ten at night. In the meantime, Mrs. Duncan had walked thither with the children, Mr. Duncan, with the other boys, driving the oxen a little way at a time, and at last reached the camp ground as the last wagon came up.

Chapter Fifth.

Preparing a Supper—Heavy Storm—The Place of their Encampment—Straggling Indians seen—Apprehensions of an Attack—Preparations of defence—A friendly Indian approaches—Warns them of their danger—Approach of the Crows—A Fight—The Camp Attacked—Capture of Five in the Camp—The Pursuit—Recovery of some of the Captured—The pursuit Continued—Tabagauches meet the Crows, and defeat them—They are discovered—Encampment.

TIRED and sleepy, our travelers provided themselves with supper, having pitched their tents, and laid down to court sleep the great restorer for body and mind. The sky was cloudless betokening a clear night; and presuming on this they had not recovered their wagons, intending to leave it until they had slept off their fatigue. But in this, even Howe had something to learn. People under such circumstances should presume on nothing, but make everything sure, for at one hour they are not certain that the next will find them secure. It did not them, for they had slumbered scarcely three hours, when the whistling winds and creaking of their tent poles aroused them from their slumbers. Springing from their beds they were almost blinded by the lightnings' glare, as flash followed flash, in quick succession, each accompanied by a deafening peal of thunder

that reverberated portentiously through the forest. Mr. Duncan hastened into the open air. The sky was overcast with fleecy clouds, while from the northwest came slowly up a dark heavy cloud stretching over the whole of that part of the sky. As higher and higher it rose, louder grew the thunder, and more vivid the lightning, the wind sweeping round in angry blasts until it seemed as if every element in nature was in commotion.

Immediately every hand was brought in requisition to fasten the tent poles more securely, and by the time it was accomplished, the storm, with all its fury burst upon them, while they were straining every nerve to fasten the tarpauling covers on the wagons to protect the contents from the storm, should the rain penetrate the tent. The cover on Mrs. Duncan's wagon they had succeeded in fastening, and were proceeding to the next, when a terrible crash was heard near them, that shook the ground.

"There is high wind to-night," said Howe. "It must have taken more than ordinary force to have blown down that tree—there goes another—crash! what a fearful night it is!"

"The smoke from the burning prairie has formed itself in clouds, which, becoming overcharged with moisture, are discharging themselves," remarked Mr. Duncan.

"A glorious cooling we shall get, after being nearly baked," remarked Sidney.

“Oh! what is that!” cried Mrs. Duncan, as a heavy body fell against the tent, crushing it as if it had been a feather.

But no one could answer, for in a twinkling their light was out, and the rain in torrents pouring in upon their water-proof wagons. The whole family had taken refuge in Mrs. Duncan’s wagon, after having secured the covers in their proper places; and it is well they did, or they would have been deluged in an instant; for it seemed as if the heavens had opened their windows, and were pouring from thence a flood of water. They could only catch a glimmering of the mischief done to their tent by the flashes of lightning; but they saw enough to ascertain that a tree had fallen across it, and had crushed one of the wagons beneath its weight. They had escaped unhurt, being buried beneath the falling canvass by its splitting in the centre. Gradually the storm spent itself, and by morning, but a few flitting clouds were seen above the horizon.

Less stouter hearts than those of our pioneers would have been dismayed at the destruction which had been going on in the night, and which the light revealed. Their tent, rent in a dozen pieces, one of the wagons badly broken, and everything out of the wagons saturated with water. Right manfully, however, they went to work. The tent was spread where the sun would fall upon it, and everything that had been wet during the night,

together with the blackened suits that went through the fiery ordeal the day before, were taken to the brook-side by Mrs. Duncan and Jane, and very soon were waving in spotless purity from the bushes where they had been hung to dry, giving the scenery around the encampment a home-like appearance.

The place of their encampment was a lovely spot; but truly refreshing after their tiresome journey over the prairie; and though their first night was exceedingly uncomfortable, it was owing to the warring elements, and not to any fault of the place. Before the night again set in, busy hands had been at the tent, and once more it reared its conical shaped head among the forest trees, but bearing marks in its numerous patches, of the tempest that had raged so fiercely through the past night.

Day after day wore away, and still the cattle exhibited a great deal of lassitude, so much so, as to preclude the possibility of moving on. This was no great annoyance to the travelers, as it was early in the summer, and their only object was to find a place that would suit them for a permanent settlement, before cold weather set in, which they were sure of not effecting, should they be detained a month in their present encampment. Besides, their camp being in a lovely valley, on the borders of a clear stream, surrounded by everything that could make the lordly groves enchanting, game of almost every kind abounded, to which they paid

particular attention, as their stock of dried meat and roasted ribs, broiled stakes, and savory soups, could testify.

Howe's time was spent, when not following game, in giving the boys lessons in distinguishing one kind of game from another by signs before they were near enough to see it; and then the best mode of bringing it down and disposing of it. They practised shooting at a target, with both gun and bow, hurling a knife or tomahawk, and handling the Indian's war club daily. Mrs. Duncan's tent bore more the semblance of a large room in a thriving farmer's house, than a temporary camp in the wilderness, so homelike was its appearance. A cupboard made by standing two boards perpendicular, with cleets nailed across, in which were laid the shelves, held her crockery and tinware; a temporary table, made in equally as primitive a style, but now covered with a table cloth, stood at one side, while at the left, was a barrel covered also by a white cloth, on which was set a dressing glass, the top wreathed with mountain laurel, and wild flowers, and placed in that post of honor by little Anne, who was sure to renew it every day. Camp stools stood around the tent, while the whole surface of the ground in the tent was matted with dried buffalo skins, making it free from dampness, and not altogether uncomely in appearance.

Mrs. Duncan, had ever been noted for a love of orderly household arrangements, and now, as ever,

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they developed themselves in a thousand little comforts that she had thoughtfully stowed away; and now that they were needed, added essentially to their comfort and pleasure. Hardly an article was desired that she did not produce from some corner, its whereabouts unknown to the rest of the family, until wanted; and when she one day brought out an old familiar boot-jack, one being wished for, Mr. Duncan said he believed she was in possession of Aladin's lamp.

They often saw around their camp a straggling Indian of the friendly tribes, to whom some of them were known. But this was not always to continue, for a few had been spies, that had carried to their tribes an account of the emigrants, their heavily loaded wagons containing a coveted prize, and the owners too few to protect it from any great force against them. Some of these were "Crows," a tribe noted for treachery, and others "Arapahoes," in whose professions of friendship Howe and Mr. Duncan had great confidence. They were under no apprehension of being molested, and retired every night as usual, with the precaution of a single guard. Everything went on as usual for a week, when they were aroused with caution, and armed by Howe, who was sentinel that night, who said he saw things in the forest that, at the least, looked very suspicious. Nothing transpired, however, to confirm his suspicions until daylight, when Howe cautiously reconnoitered the ground

around. He discovered traces where they had been, but so artfully had they covered their trail, that, without the tact of detecting it, possessed by the trapper, it would have passed unobserved, for the rest of the travelers declared they could see nothing.

“Their designs are against us; their approaching and then returing without coming into camp, proves it a certainty,” remarked Howe, after satisfying himself that they had not only been there and gone away, but were anxious to obliterate all traces of their presence.

“We must not be taken by surprise,” replied Mr. Duncan. “Courage has more effect in subduing an Indian than even a ball. However, I do not apprehend that they really intend to make an assault on us.”

“Perhaps not,” said Howe, “but they act very suspiciously, prowling about like beasts. Why don’t they show themselves, if friendly? But,” he continued, “if they want to skulk about, and pounce upon us, let them take the consequences, our rifles do not miss fire.”

“We had better use great precaution about wandering from camp, for a few days, or they will carry all off while we are away. Perhaps it is only a straggling war party returning home, and in a few days we will be rid of them.”

That night they retired, but Howe was too suspicious of treachery to allow any one else to be

sentinel but himself, and as he had slept a while during the day, he was equal to the self-imposed task. As the shades deepened, his practised ear detected sounds that others would have thought little of, but which he considered, unmistakably to be produced by the stealthy tread of Indians. As hour after hour went by, shadows were flitting from tree to tree, and then Howe knew for a certainty that the camp was surrounded by hostile foes.

Stealthily every one in the camp was awakened, and armed with rifles, with the exception of Benny and Anne, who were placed in a secure position. Mrs. Duncan and Jane could handle a rifle with as much precision as was necessary to protect themselves in an emergency. Mr. Duncan and Howe, disposed their little band so as to bring their arms to bear on three different points from which they were certain, in case of an attack, the foe would come, by the moving figures in the shadows but dimly seen, but which could be traced by keeping the eye intently fixed upon them.

"Make no movement or noise," was the order, "but at the first sound from the savages, every one be ready to fire; probably when they find their fire anticipated, they will retreat, if not, give them another volley on the moment." They had stood in this position for half an hour, when a single savage stepped from behind a tree, advanced a yard or two into the open glade that lay for a few rods around, and divesting himself of his tomahawk, scalping

knife, bow and arrows, laid them on the ground, and after pointing at them, as if to draw attention to them, advanced with finger on his lip towards the camp.

Howe had observed his movements, but when he saw him lay down his arms and come towards them, he felt certain the Indian desired a conference. Duncan thought it a ruse to draw some of them from the camp where the ambushed Indians could make a sure target of them.

"I agree with you that it is not safe to go out of the camp, but there can be no harm in letting the savage in. He is unarmed, and at the first appearance of hostility, he must be dispatched," replied Howe.

"If he enters the camp to-night, he must not return until daylight," said Mr. Duncan.

"Certainly not! Hark! he is close to us; see, he pauses: what can he mean?"

"Arapahoe! white man's friend," distinctly they heard him pronounce.

"What are you doing here, then?" said Howe, "don't you see I could shoot you like a dog, that comes stealing around, as if afraid of daylight?"

"The son of the 'Great Medicine' would not hurt Whirlwind," replied the Indian.

"Ha! Whirlwind, what are you doing here, you are indeed, safe," said Howe, lowering the barrel of his rifle.

"Whirlwind, returning to his village with his

braves, found a snake encircling his white brother's wigwam, and has crept within the circle to save them," returned the Indian.

"What is that you say? are there other Indians beside your own, about?"

"The hills are dark with 'Crows,' who stand ready at the sound of the war-whoop, to sweep down on my brothers, drink their blood, and steal their goods."

"Perhaps it is not so easily accomplished," said Howe, "you know we are no cowards, to give our lives and property without striking a blow to save them."

"My brothers are a handful, the Crows cover the hills; but my warriors, though but few, are brave and will fight for their white brothers."

"If things are as bad as you represent, this is very kind of you; but, how are we to know that the 'Crows' are around in large numbers to attack us?"

"The tongue of Whirlwind is not forked; he cannot lie;" returned the Indian proudly.

"I know it, Whirlwind, I know you are true, as well as brave. The danger forced the thought, though I really did not doubt your truth for a moment. I will take your advice, Whirlwind. What is the most effectual mode of protecting ourselves?"

"My white brothers will guard their camp, and should the Crows press us too hard, help to repel them," said the Indian, and by his tone, he evi-

dently had not forgotten the suspicion cast upon his veracity.

"You do not intend to stand the brunt of the fight, do you?" said Howe. "No, Whirlwind, I can't allow that."

"The braves of the Arapahoes have, for many moons longed to meet the 'Crows' in battle; now, surely, my white brother will not go between them."

"I certainly shall not consent to any blood being shed," interposed Mr. Duncan, "without provocation. We wish to be on friendly terms with all the tribes, and will not do anything that will have a tendency to irritate them."

"Yonder, the Crows, in numbers, await the signal of their chief, to drink the blood of my brothers, and carry their wives and children prisoners to their wigwams; when this is done, it will be too late to strike a blow. But it shall not be; see, yonder in the thicket, a hundred Arapahoe warriors are panting for the onset. The children of the 'Great Medicine' shall be saved. They are in Whirlwind's hunting grounds, and he will protect them." So saying, the irritated Chieftain turned on his heel, and strode away, pausing to collect his arms, when he disappeared in the thicket.

A council was immediately held in camp; but before any decision was determined upon, a deafening war-whoop was heard from the hills, at the same moment the battle-cry of the Arapahoes broke

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from the thickets around the camp. Then a charge was heard and the combatants' yells, shrieks and groans were mingled with the fierce war-whoop, as the Indians rushed on each other. The Crows astounded to find they were confronted by their deadly foes, at first broke and retreated; but the taunting jibes of the Arapahoes as they pressed on them aroused the demon in their natures, and turning, they charged on their pursuers, driving them back before them, towards the camp, at the same moment making the forest re-echo their cry of victory. Howe heard the hoarse note, as it swelled fiercely on the air, and springing from the camp, cried, "Come! now is our time: follow me!" and dashing into the forest, followed by Mr. Duncan, Sidney and Lewis, he met the retreating Arapahoes who, encouraged by this timely assistance, faced about, and the rifles of the pioneers telling with fearful effect, caused the Crows to fly with terror; and as their pursuers loaded running, the constant volleys prevented the Crows rallying, and in a few minutes the whole band was either killed, wounded or dispersed through the forest.

"Back to your camp, there is trouble there," cried Whirlwind, "my braves will pursue the Crows," and calling a dozen warriors to his side, he bade them follow on with him after the pioneers.

When the Crows gave the cry of victory, about a dozen of them rushed through to secure the whites prisoners, and having been unobserved by the

Arapahoes, or our pioneers, when they heard their own tribe a second time driven back, they determined to carry them off as first intended, hoping to secrete themselves before the victors returned.

With varying sensations of hope and dismay, Mrs. Duncan heard the combatants advance, retreat, advance again, and at last retreat, followed by their rescuers, and at the moment when she supposed they were freed from danger, the swarthy robbers burst into her camp, and were in the act of seizing her when the sharp crack of a rifle was heard, and the foremost savage leaped in the air with a hoarse yell, and fell dead at her feet. Martin had saved his mother, for stepping back on the instant, she raised her rifle and another fell beneath her aim; at the same moment Jane's rifle disabled another; but the savages closed so fast around them that they were disarmed and overpowered, their hands bound and they were hurried away over the stream towards the South. Not ten minutes had elapsed before they were pursued by their friends; but in that short time their captors had effected their escape, and morning dawned on the agonized pioneers still scouring the forest in search of the lost ones. They were ably seconded by the Arapahoes, a few of them having been left in charge of Anne and Benny who, having been concealed in one of the wagons, had been saved. Those stolen were Mrs. Duncan, Jane, Edward and Martin.

At daylight the dogs were let loose, and mount-

ing the horses and mules they renewed the pursuit with hearts determined to perish or bring back the fugitives. After two hours' hard riding they overhauled two of the savages who had Mrs. Duncan in charge, and she was borne back triumphantly to camp. She could give no account of her children, not having seen them since their capture, but thought they had gone in a more westerly direction. Every art was used to persuade the Crows taken to give some intelligence of them, but they were obstinate, and were finally placed, bound, into the hands of the Arapahoes, who had charge of the camp, for safe keeping.

About noon they came up with two more Indians having Martin in charge; but he knew nothing further; the two that carried him off having separated from the rest, the more easily to escape detection; and the Crows, like those that had charge of his mother, refused to give any intelligence, and were placed with the others in custody. The pursuers were again bewildered and were obliged to find a new trail, before they could proceed further, which they succeeded in doing as the evening shades were setting in; but as it was impossible to follow it in the dark they reluctantly returned to camp to spend the night. At the first dawn of light they were again in the saddle, provisioned for a number of days, as they anticipated a long chase, from the fact that the fugitives had a long start of them, and they could scarcely hope to overtake them the

first day. But the other pursuers were more sanguine; they knew not the stratagems of the Indians so well as the trapper. After five hours' hard riding they came to a spring of water in a deep glen where the Indians had evidently breakfasted the day before. And from the quantity of bones around, and the trampled grass, it was apparent that there was a number of them.

"Some six or eight persons, certainly. I think this time we shall secure both the missing ones," said Howe.

"We will do as they did, take a lunch, and let our horses feed on this grass by the spring. Perhaps we shall overtake them very soon if we rest and then ride hard," replied Mr. Duncan.

"We shall not see them before to-morrow, depend upon it. They travel, when pursued, like bloodhounds."

Refreshed, and again in the saddle, they went over hill and valley, forded streams, and crept through narrow defiles, still keeping the trail, by the aid of the dogs, without much difficulty. About three in the afternoon, they came to the place where the Indians had encamped for the night. The pursuers were evidently gaining on the pursued. Again they rested themselves and horses for awhile and then continued the pursuit. After two hours rapid riding, while going through a defile, they came to a spot which gave indications of a struggle having taken place. Dismounting and examining

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closely, they found places where evidently some heavy body had laid and bled profusely. The blade of a broken scalping knife lay among the leaves, with a broken bow and a war-club. These the Arapahoes identified as belonging to the Crows. Searching a thicket of laurel, a little farther on, they found three of the Crows dead. They had probably been mortally wounded, and crawled there to die. They had been scalped, perhaps, while still alive, as the scalp on the crown of the head was gone.

"Tabagauches! Tabagauches!" yelled the Arapahoes, as they discovered a fragment of a blanket, on which was embroidered, in gay colours, the crest of that tribe. "There, away where the sun sets, over the Medicine Bow Mountains, they are. They have conquered the Crows and taken them alive, with the pale faces, prisoners, to their village."

"We must follow them. We may overtake them, for evidently, the fight occurred this morning," said Mr. Duncan.

"Is my brother mad, that he thinks to compel a great nation to give up its prisoners, with a handful of warriors?" interposed Whirlwind.

"Can you think I would desert my children?" said Mr. Duncan, in a severe tone. "No! we white men are made of sterner stuff than that. I will save them, or die with them."

"If my white brother is brave Whirlwind

is braver," returned the Chieftain. "What you would attempt and fail to accomplish by force, I will accomplish by stratagem. Let my white brother return, and leave the recovery of the children to me."

"Never!" replied Mr. Duncan, decidedly. "My children are prisoners, in the power of merciless foes, and until I recover them, I will never again turn my back on their path."

"My brother has spoken, but has not spoken well," said the chief.

"We will lose no time in delay—an hour may be of the utmost importance," was all the answer of Mr. Duncan.

At nightfall, as they were casting their eyes around for a good and secure position to encamp in, they discovered smoke arising from a deep ravine that lay below them.

"The camp-fire of the Tabagauches," said Whirlwind.

"Ha! we have overtaken them, at last," exclaimed the trapper. "We must fall back to a secure covert, and send out scouts to see if they have the children, and ascertain their numbers."

Selecting a pine grove, they secured their horses, and sat down to take a lunch of cold bread and meat they had brought with them, not daring to light a fire, knowing it would be a beacon to guide their foes to their retreat. After resting a mo-

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ment, a guard was posted, and Howe and Whirlwind set out to ascertain the desired information respecting their foes, while the rest of the party threw themselves on the ground to take an hour's repose.

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Chapter Sixth.

Strength of the Tabagauches—Attack of their camp—Flight of the Whites—A Council—Pursuing the Indians—Desperate Engagement—Taken Prisoners—Carried off Captives—Submission to their fate—A Curious Dream—Singular Springs of Water—Kind treatment by the Indians—Discovery of Gold—Displeasure of Whirlwind—His story of the early white men—A herd of deer, &c

CAUTIOUSLY Howe and Whirlwind crept onward, and coming within pistol shot of the blazing camp fires of the Tabagauches, discovered that they were full two hundred strong, probably, a war party, in search of adventure, intending to fall unawares on some neighbouring tribes. By the middle fire, in the centre of a group of some twenty savages, were Jane and Edward, looking pale and wearied. A little behind them, on the ground, with stoic-like indifference, sat five Crows, the remainder of their captors; but now like themselves prisoners. Evidently, their fate was being decided upon. As cautiously as they went the scouts returned to the pine grove, and decided to make an immediate attack for the recovery of the captives. There were eleven Arapahoe warriors with their chief, and these, together with Mr. Duncan, Howe, Sid-

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ney, and Lewis, made fifteen, all well armed and mounted.

Led by Howe and Whirlwind, they noiselessly gained a place where they could obtain a fair view of the enemy, who were in high altercation on some point on which they seemed to be divided.

"Now is our time," said Howe. "Let every gun be discharged when I give the signal, and every one mark his man. Fall into a line, and bring your rifles to bear on the right hand savage of the centre group, and you the next, so on down the line that no two shots be aimed at one Indian, for we have none to lose. Now, are you all ready?" said Howe, running his eye from his little band to the foes, who stood revealed by their blazing fires perfectly distinct, but entirely unconscious of the danger that menaced them. Not a word was spoken, but Howe knew all was right; then, in a low distinct tone, he gave the word "*fire.*" There was but one crack of rifles heard, so simultaneously every gun was discharged, and as they were discharged, fifteen Tabagauches fell dead, with scarcely a sound uttered. "Quick! fire again!" said Howe, "mark your men, the savages are stupefied." Aiming their rifles on the instant, fifteen more fell dead.

Their second fire revealed to the Tabagauches the direction whence the attack proceeded, and with maddening yells of rage they sprang after them.

"Save yourselves;" cried Howe, but he had no need to give the order, for every one had placed a

tree between himself and his foes, according to the custom of warfare with Indians, and as they came on, every moment, one or more fell by their unerring aim. They had the advantage, for the Tabagauches were between them and the light, and could be picked off as fast as the guns could be loaded, while they rushed headlong into the darkness, their only guide the flash from the rifles that were thinning their ranks at every fire. But, as the savages gathered closer and closer around them, they were obliged to fall back towards the pine grove, and as time after time they retreated into the darkness, they could distinguish their foes with less certainty, and finally they were obliged to make a scattered flight to save themselves from being surrounded. Strange to tell not one of them had been wounded, which could be only accounted for by the gloom, in which they were enveloped, hiding them from an accurate aim. They were sure fifty of their foes had been slain.

The Tabagauches retreated to their camp, putting out the fires and keeping silent, so as not to guide their foes a second time to them.

On gaining the pine grove, a council was held to devise what was the most prudent step to take.

"I," said Whirlwind, "think it best to hover around them and find out their next movement and guide ours by it."

"That is impossible," said Mr. Duncan. "They will be so on their guard that no one can ap-

proach without detection, which would be instant death."

"Whirlwind has said and will do it. Here await his return." So saying, with noiseless strides the chief vanished in the gloom.

"A strange compound of generosity, bravery, and recklessness!" said Mr. Duncan.

"Depend upon it, he knows what is for the best," replied Howe.

"Then you think we had better not take any step until the chief returns?"

"That is my impression. He will return in two hours, or so."

Two, three, and nearly four hours elapsed before the chief returned, and the suspense had become painful, when, without warning, or their knowing he was near, he stepped into their midst.

"Why, Whirlwind, had you dropt from the clouds you could not have come more noiselessly. What success did you have?" said Howe.

"The Tabagauches are cowards, they will not fight, but will steal away like dogs. The pale faced prisoners are even now moving toward the west, guarded by fifty of their braves."

"We must head them," cried Sidney, springing to his feet. "They shall never escape thus."

"The pale faced brave has spoken well. We must divide our warriors; part attack the cowards in the rear, to prevent them joining those in charge of the white prisoners, while the other part must

ride ahead and attack them in front, and secure the children."

"If we break up our force in this way, all will be lost," said Mr. Duncan. "It is my opinion we had better all keep together, and try to get ahead of the main body by a circuitous route, and thus be more certain of overcoming the savages."

"Certainly, father, the party must not be divided, the half of fifteen is almost too few to attack seventy or a hundred," remarked Lewis.

"Let us keep together, by all means," said Sidney.

"I do not think we had better divide our force," said Howe, after hearing all their opinions, and finding they all coincided with his own, excepting the chief. "We will be too few for them."

"The white chief forgets we cannot expect to overcome them by a fair fight, but must depend on strategy for success."

"If we have as good success as we had last night, I think we may," returned Howe.

"They will build no more fires to give us another such a chance," said the chief.

"We had better follow Mr. Duncan's suggestion," said Howe, "and try to head them off by a circuitous route. Come boys! Lead on chief; we will follow you."

Light began to break in the east, so that they could see to make their way, and rapidly they pursued it, their animals refreshed by the night's

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rest. On they went, and about sunrise, saw the detachment of Indians not more than a mile ahead. Whirlwind threw the halter (the only accoutrement, his half-tamed prairie horse boasted,) loosely on the proud steed's neck, and with his body bent almost on a level to his back, rode like a Centaur over the ground. The rest gave their horses the spur, but they were out-stripped by the Arapahoes, who one by one darted past them, in the wake of their chief. Before Mr. Duncan and his party had accomplished two-thirds of the distance, the war-whoops of the combatants burst on the air, and when he joined them many a brave had gone to the "spirit land."

And now, fiercer than ever the battle raged, the Tabagauches retreating as they fought, and being on foot were slain or dispersed at will, until they saw the other detachment of their tribe advancing, when they turned and fought with the fury of demons. This furious charge killed one of the Arapahoes, badly wounded Mr. Duncan in the shoulder with a tomahawk, and Lewis slightly in the thigh with an arrow.

During this time they saw nothing of Edward and Jane, but distinctly heard their voices as they called out to encourage their friends, from a little distance, where they were bound and closely guarded.

Encouraged by the thought they were so near the captives, and maddened by the obstinacy with

which the savages contended for the captives, they made a desperate charge, breaking through the savages, and falling upon the guard that surrounded the children, shot them, and unbinding the thongs around their hands, and placing Edward on the dead Arapahoe's horse, and Jane behind Edward; they then attempted to fly. While doing this, the two detachments had joined, and now bore down with terrible force on the little band. But they were met with volley after volley, until desperate from the loss of their braves that fell around them, the savages closed in and attempted to drag them from their horses. Mr. Duncan, Lewis, and three of the Arapahoes, being mounted on high met-tled steeds, finding all would be lost if they fell into the hands of the savages, spurred their steeds, and bounding over the assailants, escaped into the forest. Not so fortunate were the rest, for Howe, Sidney, Whirlwind, Edward, and Jane, were pulled from their horses, overpowered, and bound prisoners. The rest of the Arapahoes had fallen by the hand of their foes.

Mr. Duncan, faint with the loss of blood, and suffering severely from his wound, would still have plunged into the midst of the savages, had not Lewis and one of the Arapahoes ridden at his side, with his bridle rein in their hand to prevent him from plunging into certain destruction. They bent their course to the east whence they came, and the second day reached camp half dead with fatigue

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and distress they endured at the inevitable fate of the lost ones.

Terrible was the revulsion to Edward and Jane, for now they had no hope from their friends, as Sidney and their uncle were captives with them, and they supposed their father and Lewis had fallen by the savages who went in pursuit. They knew all was lost unless they could elude the vigilance of their pursuers, which they could not expect to do, bound and guarded as they were.

Calmly they resigned themselves to a doom they could not avert, to be offered as burnt-offerings to the spirits of those who had fallen in battle. The savages having lost half of their number, were intoxicated with rage, and with demoniac yells, goaded on their prisoners with the points of their arrows, causing the blood to flow from numberless punctures. Occasionally they would bring their tomahawks circling round their heads as if to sink them in their skulls; and then with savage gestures retreat and make the forest ring with their howls of rage. For three days they were hurried on deeper and deeper into the wilderness, now passing over broad level prairies, then plunging into swamps and deep ravines; anon climbing precipices, rugged mountains, and then passing over the deeply shaded valley, through which streamlets sung year after year their sweet songs of peace and love.

The third day, towards night, as they were

going through a thick coppice that skirted a prairie they had just crossed, they were surprised by a party of Pah-Utah Indians, and after a short but fierce engagement, in which the Tabagauches were completely cut up, the captives fell into the hands of the victors. They had eaten but very little since they were captured, and faint and exhausted from their sufferings, they hailed any change with joy. The Pah-Utahs treated them with great kindness, washed and dressed their wounds, presented them with parched corn and dried meat, and fitted them a bed of ferns and dried leaves to sleep upon. They were congratulating themselves on their happy change, when they saw with horror, the Indians roast and devour with great avidity the dead Tabagauches: they were at the mercy of cannibals! Late in the night the revolting feast was prolonged, and then all was still, save the soft tread of their guard, as he hovered around them. The next morning a deer was given them which had been just killed, and they were shown a large fire, and given to understand they were to cook and eat it. This they did with very good appetites, and, together with the parched corn, made a savory repast. When this was done, they were placed on horses and driven on, now taking a south-west direction. Though treated very kindly, their wants anticipated, and provided for, yet they were given to understand that an attempt to escape would be punished with death by fire

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Whirlwind told his fellow captives that their safest way was to assume an air of indifference, and even gaiety, in order to deceive their captors, and impress them with the idea that they had no hope of escaping. "There is a possibility that we may throw them off their guard and slip away, if we are cunning, at stratagems; but, should we fail, they will eat us without further delay."

Accordingly they rallied their drooping spirits, and appeared more like a party roaming through the forest for pleasure than doomed captives, for such their captors held them, and only delayed their death, that they might enjoy the horrid feast in their village at leisure. They journeyed on, and the second day when the savages halted they were astonished to see them, instead of kindling a fire, touch a burning torch to what they had taken for springs of water that bubbled up from the base of a rugged range of hills, but which blazed with a clear, strong flame on being touched with fire, and by which the savages cooked their supper, by placing it on a forked stick and holding it in the flame.*

The captives gathered around the singular phenomena with astonishment, which so amused the Indians that, taking a burning stick, they ran from

*This curious phenomena was at that time entirely unknown to the white man, but has since been discovered to exist four hundred miles east of the land of the **Ama-chuba**.

place to place lighting the curious liquid where it bubbled up in jets, until fifty fires were blazing around them, lighting the forest with brilliancy. On examining this liquid they found it clear, and having the appearance of pure spring water. The Pah-Utahs gave them to understand that it flowed unceasingly, and was much used by them for light and heat. It was a great curiosity, and elicited a great deal of speculation as to what uses it might be applied if it could be conveyed to the haunts of civilization. That night they slept quite soundly, considering the circumstances under which they were placed, and arose much refreshed.

"I really feel well this morning," remarked Howe, "and do believe we shall yet escape from these demons."

"The white chief has dreamed," said Whirlwind.

"I believe I did dream a curious dream last night," said Howe. "It seemed as though I stood on a precipice looking calmly on the plain below, when an eagle came down, and taking me in his talons, carried me to his eyrie, which seemed to be perched on a mountain whose summit passed the clouds; and there, oh! horror, a hundred eaglets with open mouths stood ready to devour me. Then it seemed as if a heavy cloud passed by, and with a fearful leap I sprang upon it and floated through the sky until it began

gradually to grow thinner and thinner and I lay unsupported in mid-air. Then I began to sink, first slowly, but gradually increasing in velocity until I seemed to go swifter than the wind, and at every moment expected to be dashed to pieces. But as I neared the earth I began to descend slower; when, lo! I softly alighted at the door of our camp, and there I found Duncan and Lewis. Indeed it seemed we all were there as if nothing had happened."

"A singular dream, uncle," said Jane, "but you know it could not come true. Besides," she added sadly, "there is little hope that father and Lewis escaped."

"I am impressed with the idea they did," said Sidney. "Had they been murdered, the savage murderers would not fail to have scalped them and exhibited the scalps in triumph."

"The young brave is right; they have escaped," said Whirlwind. "The Tabagauches would have scalped the white chief had they taken him."

"You always said you did not believe in dreams," said Jane, upon whose imagination it seemed to have considerable influence.

"Neither do I, generally. But now, even a dream of freedom and friends is gratifying, and I cannot help feeling elated by it."

"The Great Spirit visited the white man in his slumber. Believe what he showed to thy slumber

ing spirit, lest he be angry and destroy thee," said Whirlwind earnestly.

"Really, Whirlwind, it is as absurd as singular," remarked Edward, "and is taxing credulity too much to ask an implicit confidence in it."

"The brave is young, and cannot interpret the signs of the presence of the Great Spirit. His children know him better, and recognize his teaching."

"Oh! well, chief, I hope he is in earnest now, at least, and will succeed in getting us out of the clutches of these promising children of his," said Edward.

"Then the young brave must not anger him," returned the chief, solemnly.

"I should like to know how far we are from camp, and how much farther they intend taking us," said the trapper.

"Their village is half a day's march to the setting sun," replied Whirlwind, "and we evidently are from six to seven days' journey from our camp."

About noon they entered their village, displaying their captives in triumph to the rest of the tribe, who surrounded them in great numbers, grinning and twisting their naturally ugly visages into frightful grimaces, at the same time filling the air with yells of delight and satisfaction.

That night there was another revolting feast. The victims being three Indians of a peculiar

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form and features different from any they had ever seen.

"They are from over the desert," said Whirlwind to Howe's inquiry of what tribe they were, "and have been taken in battle. The tribes all through this region are very warlike, and every year countless numbers are taken and sacrificed at their feasts. The tribes are cannibals, and eat their enemies" as you see these do; therefore, they fight with more desperation knowing they must conquer and feast on their foes or be conquered and feasted upon."

"What is our chance, do you think, of being sacrificed?" asked Howe.

"We shall be, of course, unless the Great Spirit saves us. It is the fate of war," replied the chief, with as much indifference as if he was discussing a puppy stew.*

"I could bear it for myself, Whirlwind, but these children!—No; we must out-wit them and escape," replied the trapper. "Prudence and cunning may save us."

The village of their captors was situated on a low, level plain, sloping gently towards the south and west, bordered by the Wahsatch mountains on the east, a spur of which, branching from the regular chain, ran a number of miles from east to west, and formed a high barrier on the north,

* A great delicacy with Indians

rising in perpendicular precipices to the height of three hundred feet. The village was very populous, the corn fields numerous, and now just in bloom, promising an abundant yield. The lodges were large, convenient and well stored with furs and skins, while large quantities of arms for defence hung around, intermixed with curiously wrought baskets, elaborately embroidered tunics and moccasins, gay colored blankets, scalps of fallen foes, eagle plumes, bears' claws, antlers of deer, and innumerable tails of fox and beaver.

The captives were distributed among the different lodges, at first closely guarded; but as they evinced perfect content, they were allowed gradually more and more liberty, until at last they were permitted to roam through the village at will, with a single guard, whose duty it was to give the alarm in case they should attempt to escape. This greatly elated them; and, as not one of the tribe understood English, they were able, at all times, to converse and devise plans without fear of detection by being overheard.

About two weeks after their captivity, they were wandering around the outskirts of the village, and approaching the precipice at the north, penetrated the thick underbrush that grew at its base, and seated themselves in its cool shade, their sentinel taking up his position a few rods from them in the path by which they had entered. Some of them sat so as to recline against the rock that rose above

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them, whilst others leaned in thoughtful mood against a cluster of bushes that were entwined with the wild grape, forming a strong but easy support. Jane was pulling up the ferns and wild flowers, and as they drooped in her hand threw them aside and gathered fresh ones until there were no more in her reach; then her eye becoming attracted by some rich, green mosses, she gathered them, when among the black earth from which they were taken something gleamed bright and distinct from everything around it. Sidney, who was nearest her, regarding her with a sorrowful look, was the first one attracted by its glitter, and being undecided what it was, called the attention of Howe to it.

"It is gold!" cried the trapper, after closely examining the tiny flake Sidney had placed in his hand.

"Gold! let me see it," they all cried. "Is gold always found in that shape?" queried Edward.

"Not always," he replied. "Sometimes it is imbedded in the rocks, and has to be dug out by blasting; while, at others, it comes in globules, called nuggets, often of great value."

"Perhaps there is more around here; let us see," said the trapper, and taking a stick he dug among the soft earth, when, lo! it was speckled with the precious ore.

The sentinel seeing them gathering up the glittering scales with great eagerness, came forward,

and with his hatchet struck a few heavy blows against a fragment that projected from a fissure in the rock, when it split from the solid mass, and revealed the precious ore, intermixed with quartz rock; then turning away with disdain, left them to amuse themselves, and took up his former position in the pathway.

"We can gather as much as we please; and if we have the good luck to escape the vigilance of these demons, we shall be rich," said Sidney.

"It is something, at least to have made the discovery. These mountains, I judge from the fragment broken, must be full of ore?" said the trapper.

"The Indians," said Whirlwind, "say there are stones still farther towards the setting sun that give light like stars, and glitter in their bed with a hundred fires; but they are never seen in these hunting grounds. All through the mountains these are to be found in abundance," said he, pointing to the gold that lay glittering in the earth.

"You never told me of this before, Whirlwind," said the trapper. "Why were you so wary about what you must have known was of importance?"

The chief drew up his tall, athletic form, and pointing with his finger to the sky, said:

"As many moons ago as there are stars yonder, when the sun is in the west, there came to the hunting-grounds of the red man a band of white men. They were few, and my fathers fostered

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them; and, when the white men found the glittering earth accidentally, as you have, they showed them where it could be scooped up by handfulls, and where the star stones lighted up the caverns. Then grew hatred between the red and white man; for the star stones are bad spirits who stirred up evil passions in the heart, then laughed and mocked at their warring. The white man grew many and strong, and more came from beyond the big water. Then they made the earth red with each other's blood, and my forefathers were obliged to give up their hunting grounds, and fly into other possessions, where there was again war for a place to hunt in, until the earth was again red with blood. And now all between the swift water and the great sea towards sunrise is covered by the pale faces' lodges, while, we, a remnant of former days, are forced to give way until we shall have all perished, and the graves of my ancestors become the play grounds of the white man's papoose. Then let the glistening earth sleep where the Great Spirit buried it, that the evil spirits may never again gloat over the earth dyed with the blood of its people. Whirlwind has spoken, let his white brother hear, that their love be not turned to anger, and that they slay not each other."

As he ceased speaking, he quietly walked from amid his fellow captives and taking a position but a few feet from them, bent a decisive look of commiseration on their every movement.

"Throw down the stuff," said the trapper, "the chief is angry, and we can have no use for it here, so it is not worth while to provoke him by even retaining what we have."

The children obeyed, for they were not willing to risk the friendship of the chief for whom they entertained great respect, although they could not always appreciate his curious logic. He seemed relieved when he saw them do so, and proposed they should quit the dangerous spot, which they acceded to.

Towards evening of the same day, they were wandering leisurely on the southern border of the corn-fields, when they were startled by a drove of deer bounding past them, and making for the forest beyond. A noble buck was the leader, with head erect, making ten feet at every jump. Away they went, casting the earth from their slender hoofs, caring for neither brush or brake, for a relentless pursuer was on their track.

"See! there goes three small specks close to the ground; there they are, three monstrous black wolves with glistening coats, their fiery eyes sparkling, and jaws distended."

They were larger than the largest dog; long, gaunt limbs, small, and all muscle, and so persevering that every thing tired before them. They seldom, when they start in a chase, give up their prey.

"Without doubt, the weakest of that noble herd

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LIFE IN THE WESTERN WILDS. 99

will make a supper for their rapacious foes,' said Howe.

Such is the black wolf of the western wilds, attacking every thing he meets when hunger is on him; even the buffalo falls a prey to him.

Chapter Seventh.

Their continued Captivity—Attempt to Escape—They are cautiously watched and guarded—Fears and apprehensions—They discover Gold in various quantities—A singular Cave—Preparations to escape into it—Lassoing the Chief—Enter the Cavern and close the Door—They are missed by the Indians—Tumult in the Camp—They follow the Cavern—Singular adventure—Jane rescued from Drowning—Strange appearance of the Cave—Mysterious discoveries—They Continue on—Cross a stream—Discovery of an Outlet—They halt for repose.

SIX weeks elapsed and they were still prisoners, treated with great kindness; although they were forced to be present at the revolting feast on human flesh, as often as a war party returned, which was almost every week. And, though they saw the Indian captives sacrificed with relentless cruelty, yet the fear that they should be made victims had partially subsided, as week after week went round, and, except the single sentinel who was relieved from duty morn and night, they were left entirely to themselves to do as they pleased. They had often attempted to draw him into the forest with them, but when he had accompanied them to a certain boundary, he gave them to understand they must return immediately to the

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village; and, as they knew the penalty of attempting an escape they did not dare to undertake it, knowing they would be pursued with fleet horses, and perhaps be taken and sacrificed the same day. They were wearied with their captivity, and became gloomy and sad. The Pah-Utah saw this, and directed the sentinel to give them a wider range. This they hoped might facilitate an escape. But in this, they were mistaken; for the sentinel used renewed vigilance. The moment they were beyond the prescribed boundaries, the guard, with his fiery eye fixed on them with a lynx-like keenness, would follow them with his horn trumpet to his mouth, ready at a second's warning, to sound the note of alarm.

Things were in this state when they went together to the base of a precipice, half a mile to the east from where they found the gold. Here they whiled away an hour discussing the ever present theme of their captivity, except Edward who, not having the fear of the chief before him began to tear up mosses, and dig into crevices in search of precious ore. While doing this, his foot slipped from under him, and he fell heavily forward against a smooth, slab-like surface of the rock, when, to his dismay, it gave back a hollow sound, and a large block yielding an inch or two, showed an aperture within.

Calling his uncle, he pointed it out to him, who after examining it closely, declared it to be a

cavern within; but how the stone came fitted into the door way, was a question they could not solve, for the Pah-Utahs had no way of shaping stone with such precision, and evidently were not aware that the cavern existed.

"Walk quietly away, and appear to be busy about anything you chose, in order not to draw the attention of the sentinel this way, and I will communicate it to Whirlwind," said the trapper. The chief after examining the place, retreated with Howe a few rods distant, and then said. "That cavern will prove our deliverance. Evidently it is one of those of which tradition speaks, and that it communicates to some distant point. That stone door is unknown to the Pah-Utah for the trailing mosses have become imbedded in the fissures of the rock in a way it would have taken a hundred years to have accomplished, showing it could not have been entered in that time."

"Had we better enter it, and try to find another outlet?" asked the trapper.

"I hardly like to decide; the undertaking is very hazardous. We might possibly find it, if there is an outlet, but if we should not, a horrible death awaits us—buried alive; or if we should return, a worse one at the hands of our captors."

"What reason have you to suspect there is an outlet at a distant point?" asked the trapper.

"The similarity of this opening to one on the side of the Medicine Bow Mountains, towards the

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rising sun. That has been known by the red men since the Great Spirit gave them their hunting grounds; and at that time he told my fathers they were built by a people whom he had destroyed in anger. And to this day they are strewn with bones and utensils of the lost people."

"Is this story of the opening a tradition, or have you seen it, and what is the appearance of the interior of the cavern?"

"I have been through it often. In some places it is rough, and in others as smooth as sleeping water. It is a long, toilsome journey; and at its end opens at the base of a hill a day and a half's journey towards the west," replied the chief.

"Then you think this cavern is similar to the one you have seen, and that, if we enter it, we shall escape in safety?"

"Were I alone, I should not be afraid to venture in it. Whirlwind is not a coward, and pines in captivity. If he escapes, it is good, he will then be a free chief. If he dies, he will go to the hunting grounds of the Great Spirit, where the deer, beaver, and buffalo are as plenty as the leaves in the forest."

"For one, I am willing to make the trial, and am certain the children will be also. We must provide some food and light before we try it. It would never do to venture in unprovided with these."

"My brother would betray us if we should attempt to conceal either, for the Pah-Utah are as

vigilant as brave, and would be sure to know it, and determine our fate on the instant. Our only way of escape is to fast, and be fleet of foot."

"Perhaps you are right. When would it be prudent for us to make the trial, do you think? For my part, I am ready at any moment. It is five days since these demons made one of their horrid feasts; and as we came by the chief's lodge, I saw him in council with his warriors, and I thought they looked very suspiciously towards us as we passed."

"Whirlwind also saw it; but his heart was then almost dead within him. It is alive now, and we will enter the cavern. My white brother will tell the children of our design, and lead them to the mouth of the cavern, and keep his eye on the sentinel. The moment he sees this around his enemy's neck, roll away the rock, and have it ready to put in its place again as soon as I enter," said the chief, taking from beneath his tunic a strong, long cord made of hide, formed into a lasso.

"He will blow his horn, and draw the whole tribe on us if you attempt to strangle him. I think we had better try to slip in one by one, and not disturb him," said the trapper.

"We should be missed before we could replace the stone, and they would drag us from our hiding place as soon as we entered it. Whirlwind's step is as noiseless as the wing of a bird, when after a foe. But should the sentinel give the alarm, enter

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and close the door; for, perchance, I may escape from them at last; if not, I shall have drawn his attention from you so as to enable you to facilitate your escape."

"No, brave chief, we are captives together, and we will all be saved, or perish together. You shall not be left alone for them to wreak their vengeance upon. We will not enter the cave unless you are with us."

"My white brother speaks like a child. Whirlwind has said and will do it," returned the chief, who possessed a truly royal soul, imperious in decision, impatient of contradiction, and never turned from a course he had determined to pursue, when assured it was for the good of others.

As he ceased speaking, he left the trapper, and disappeared in the bushes. Howe thought it most prudent to obey the injunction of Whirlwind, and making a sign to the children to follow, he carelessly made his way to the spot, and with palpitating heart, awaited the signal. The children shared with him the anxiety, till at last so intense it became, that their hearts almost ceased to pulsate. Life or death was in the throw, and death itself could not exceed the agony they endured. The signal came at last—a circle in the air—which in an instant tightened on the sentinel's throat; five minutes elapsed, when the chief came bounding towards them with a tame deer, that belonged to the tribe, in his arms, then rolling away the stone, and enter-

ing the cavern, they replaced it with great precision, so as to prevent detection. But great was their surprise and gratification to see the cavern was quite light, by the rays penetrating innumerable small fissures in the rocky precipice. Whirlwind immediately killed and dressed the prize that so fortunately happened to be in his path; and distributing it among them, they prepared to penetrate into the darkness of the cave. Where they entered, it was about twenty feet wide, and about fifty feet high, having the appearance of the rock having been blasted, and hewn down smoothly at the sides. The floor was of a solid rock, smooth and level, though strewn with some rubbish, which they did not stop to examine. They were too anxious to place distance between themselves and the cannibals, to think of anything but how to ensure their safety. Accordingly they pressed boldly on, but had not gone over twenty rods, when yells of disappointment and rage made the air quiver as they echoed and re-echoed through the cavern. Their escape had been discovered; and now, if the door to the cavern was known, they knew they had but a few moments to live.

"Give me your hand, Jane," said Whirlwind; "take hold of Edward, Howe, that we may not be divided. The young brave will keep in our tracks, now, let us proceed, and, perhaps, if the cave is found we may hide in some of its recesses. On they went, and louder and fiercer grew the yells, as

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the village poured out its hordes, until it seemed to our heroes as if every rock had a tongue, and was telling, in thundering echoes, the place of their retreat. Still on they went, and now, the voices began to soften in the distance; then they grew fainter, until nothing but low, confused sounds were heard. The cavern was level on the bottom, which facilitated their flight; being actuated by the most sacred passion of our nature—the love of life, which gave them courage and strength, and with the hope of freedom beckoning them on, they made unprecedented speed. They had been blessed for about half a mile by the rays of light that penetrated the cavern at the mouth; but for the last hour they had been plunging on in total darkness, not knowing where they went; but now, as no sounds were heard, and they were getting fatigued, they halted and began to devise some means of guiding them on their way.

Howe commenced moving around in the darkness to see where the boundaries of the cave were, and the rest following his example, part of them touched one side, and feeling its smooth surface, thought the cavern must be uniform throughout; for, as near as they could tell, by feeling, it had the same appearance as it had at the entrance.

At that moment Jane, who was groping round to find the other side, uttered a piercing scream which was quickly followed by a heavy splash in water.

"Jane! Jane!" they all cried; and the chief, at the moment springing towards the place where she had stood, with a half-uttered exclamation, fell heavily with a loud splash also.

"Keep back! keep back! there is danger here!" he cried; "I can save her if any one can! Jane! Jane! where are you?" he called eagerly, as he splashed round in the water, which was so deep he could not touch the bottom. "Jane! Jane!" he cried, but no sound came from the still water, till at last a faint bubbling sound was heard, and a hand grasped him. Catching her round the waist, he raised her head above the water, when the half-drowned girl began to revive; but too much exhausted to assist herself in the least. The chief swam with her towards the place where they had fallen, hoping to find a projecting rock to support her on, but he was disappointed, although he was enabled to obtain footing in three feet water, where he stood holding her in his brawny arms.

"All safe," he cried, the moment he had obtained footing. "But how we are to get up there is a different affair."

"Keep up your courage," cried the trapper; "we must have a light I have a flint, knife, and punk-wood; so far all is well, but what are we to burn?"

"There is wood in here I know," said Sidney, "for I have stumbled over it a number of times?"

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will go down after Jane and the chief," said Edward.

"Here is wood, plenty of it," said Sidney, bringing forward a handful of sticks. In the meanwhile the trapper had struck fire, and was blowing the punk into a blaze, and taking some of the sticks in his hand to communicate with the burning punk, found them in a crumbling condition but perfectly dry, and they quickly ignited. A cheerful blaze was in a few minutes lighting up the cavern; they then cautiously approached the place where Whirlwind and Jane had fallen, who were patiently awaiting light and assistance from above. Holding some blazing sticks over the edge they discovered the chief and Jane ten feet below them, with water smooth and placid, full thirty feet beyond, and extending along the cavern as far as the eye could reach. Evidently they had been making their way on its verge quite a distance, and the least deviation on that side would have plunged them all into its waters. The rock was rough and jagged with many small fissures in which they could get a foothold, and by the assistance of Sidney, who descended a few feet, Jane was soon lifted up to the floor of the cavern, where, with the agility of a deer, the chief followed her. Saturated with water, without a single extra garment, they were in a very uncomfortable condition, yet they laughed heartily over their mishaps; for, indeed, they thought anything preferable to being in the power

of cannibals. Piling together the half decayed wood and wringing their clothes as dry as they could, they were in a fair way of recovering from the ducking, and as they apprehended no further danger from their enemies, they concluded to make a short halt and examine the locality around them. The cave in this place was no more than twenty five feet high, but was very wide, as well as they could determine over a hundred feet, thirty of which was water, and beyond which they could not distinguish the appearance of the cave. But the other side was as singular as wonderful. Eight feet from the floor it was smooth and even as hewn rock could be made; then there was a vast niche cut in, extending to the top of the cave, thirty feet wide and sixteen deep. This niche was ascended by a flight of six very steep steps cut in the rock in the centre of the front of the rock below the niche and were as perfect and uniform as if just made. Ascending these steps they discovered a chair of graceful form cut out of a huge stone, fantastically carved, which they found themselves unable to move by reason of its great weight, but being of a different material than the rock of which the cave was composed they supposed it to be separate from it. On each side of this curious chair there arose a tripod three feet high and two in diameter, the top being scooped out concavously, like a basin, in the centre of which was a round orifice, half an inch in diam-

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eter, out of which bubbled up a clear liquid, which, filling the basin, ran down its sides into a drain cut in the rock, and was conveyed into the lake in which the chief and Jane had fallen.

"Astonishing!" cried the trapper, examining the curiosities as well as his light would permit.

"The place of refuge of the lost people!" said the chief. "Our traditions say that they were mighty and strong, and, like the tall trees for strength; they had skill in cutting stone, and digging copper from its bed, and making it into armor and utensils."

"And these were their fountains: well, I think they were people of taste. That chair is good enough for the president, and I suspect he has not got one half as curious. We will take a drink at their fountain, replenish our light, and see if there is anything else around."

Bending his head to take a drink in a primitive way, he drew a mouthful of the clear and transparent liquid, but quickly discharged it, with a grimace. "Whew! they must have been a strong people to drink such strong drink," cried the trapper.

"Perhaps it is not water;" so saying, the chief touched the brand he had in his hand to it, when, lo! it blazed with a strong white flame. Touching the other also, two clearer, purer lights never illumined a cavern. The light penetrated the recesses and laid open every object to view, and as their eyes

fell once more on the curious chair they uttered an exclamation of wonder. It was sparkling and glowing with a thousand rays. Approaching it they saw it was covered with dust, which they brushed away; and if they were astonished before, now they gazed with speechless wonder at the curiosity before them, that threw back the light that fell full upon it, in flashing rays, dazzling the eyes of the beholders.

"The fire stones! Touch them not!" cried the chief, waving the rest back with his hand imperiously. "The evil spirit presides in this spot, and we are in his power. Provoke him not, or we shall be all destroyed like the lost people were, a thousand moons ago."

"Pshaw! Chief, you are ridiculous. This has evidently been a chair of state, and has been made for one high in power to sit in. The material appears to be quartz, studded with diamonds enough to enrich a kingdom. The bad spirits are all in your imagination; they will keep a respectful distance from us, I promise you."

"Glad to hear you speak up, uncle," said Sidney, "for unless we overcome Whirlwind's prejudice against carrying any of these wonderful things home with us, to give ocular proof of what we saw, every one will think our account exaggerated. For instance, now, I intend breaking off one of the arms of the chair to give proof of what it is composed."

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"No, no; not for any consideration shall it be mutilated. It would be desecration to do it. If we never get home, it could do no good; and if we do, the day may come when we can return in safety, and remove it whole, or at least we might give the information that would lead to its removal," returned the trapper.

"Oh! well then, I must find something else that will answer my purpose as well," and going to one of the corners of the niche, or rather an elevated room, he came to a pile of rubbish which he commenced pulling away, and, which, on examining, proved to be a human figure. Starting back, with a cry of terror, the rest hurried to where he stood staring with distended eyes toward the form that was stretched on the rocky bed, in the corner; when they saw the figure, they too stepped involuntarily backwards, and Howe, advancing, laid his hand on the form before him, discovered it was stone—a petrified human body.

On examination, it proved to have been a man nearly nine feet high, of extraordinary muscular proportions. He had evidently been slain here or wounded elsewhere, and crawled in this cavern to die, for a javelin was sticking in his side, which he had endeavoured to extricate, but died in the act, as his hand was clenched around it. It proved to be made of copper, a fact which they ascertained by scraping the corroded metal away, leaving the pure copper beneath. They attempted to withdraw

the javelin, but could not move it. The body, in petrifying, had closed around it like a vice—the hand holding it in a position slanting downwards, as if in that direction he had attempted to draw it from the wound. On examining the rubbish that Sidney had pulled off him, they found a helmet, precisely similar to the one found by Edward and Anne in the old fort, which was in a good state of preservation. Besides these, there was a broken javelin—the two pieces looking as if, when whole, it had been a formidable weapon. Scraping these relics away with a quantity of other things, too much decayed to ascertain what they originally were, they came to what they had supposed to be the floor, but which they discovered to be a skin of some kind petrified also. It did not have the appearance of a buffalo skin, for it had a soft, silky, or furry appearance. In the other corner, there was a large pile that looked as if something had been stowed away, but on its being disturbed, a dry musty vapor filled the air, and the heap became a shapeless mass—the original character of which they could not ascertain. Time had claimed its own; and what once, perhaps, were costly and beautiful fabrics, was now a pile of dust.

Descending the stone steps to the cavern, they found that the brilliant light from the tripods dispelled the gloominess around them, and gave, as far as the eye could reach, a lively appearance to the place.

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The party were now quite hungry; after roasting and eating some of their venison, they prepared to penetrate still further in search of an outlet. At first they thought of leaving the lights burning, but on prudent second thought, they concluded to extinguish them, that, in case their enemies did discover the cave, they might not discover that they had been there.

"If we had a vessel to carry some of it in to light us on our way, we should be saved much trouble," remarked the trapper.

"Perhaps we shall find something," said Sidney; "let us not despair, but look around."

"I think we had better spend no more time," said Jane; "I long to be going on. We can make light enough to guide us with sticks."

"The pale-faced maiden speaks well," said the chief; "let us proceed, and save ourselves while we can. The venison will not last long, and we must find an outlet or die."

"I think so likewise," said Edward. "Come, uncle, let us be moving."

"Very well; but we must beware of the gulf by our dim light, or we shall all be in it in a twinkling," said the trapper, as he prepared his torch.

Again they were moving on. Sometimes the cavern presented a low, narrow defile, with hardly ten feet of rock to pass on; then it again widened and grew lofty, until they could not make out its

size by the rays of their lights, which illumined out a few feet around them. After proceeding about a mile further, they came to an abrupt halt, for a barrier was in their track. The gulf extended across the cave from side to side, and so wide that they could not see the opposite shore. Here was a barrier, indeed, which they knew not how to overcome. They could all swim, for that is an accomplishment that our borderers, of either sex, never fail of acquiring. But they had great objections to plunging into water of an unknown extent or depth.

"I will explore it," said the chief, throwing off his moccasins and tunic; and with a torch in one hand, he let himself down with the other, and then moved cautiously out into the unknown lake.

The chief was an adept in swimming, and made good headway with the only hand at liberty. After swimming about twenty rods, his feet touched a pebbly bed, and in a moment more he was in shallow water enough to obtain footing; and wading a little further on, he came to land. Astonished beyond measure, he looked around, and at a little distance saw what looked as though large masses of rock had been cut away—the bottom of which was about two feet higher than the ground; and in the centre of this slight elevation, stood a single tripod, like the one they had seen in the niche that they had passed. This was also filled with the singular liquid that burned; and on the chief's

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touching it with his torch, the cavern around was illumined in an instant.* A shout of exultation burst on the air from those on the other shore, as the brilliant light showed them that the chief had gained his object.

After lighting the tripod, the chief saw, a little way up the shore, three objects that, from their resemblance to a canoe, attracted his attention. Going close to them, he found the largest ten feet long, and four wide in the middle, oval at the bottom, and tapering to a point at the ends. They seemed to be made of metal, for, though quite strong, they were covered inside and out with corroding rust. A thought struck the chief that, perhaps, they were canoes, and might still be used. To settle the point was but a moment's work; and he dragged one to the water, when, lo! it floated in a handsome style, and jumping in, and using his hands for paddles, with wild delight beaming from his bronzed features, he gained the other shore. As he approached, they laughed and shouted with pleasure. One at a time was conveyed over, until all, in a little while, were landed safely on the beach. Here the water evidently terminated; but the sides were still precipitous, although the cavern was of much less height than formerly, and they had some hope that they were near the outlet. The

* By filling a tumbler nearly full of water, and pouring a small quantity of ether upon its surface, on application of a torch, it will burn with a very beautiful light.

shore was covered with smooth white pebbles, that shone brightly in the light, and had much the appearance of quartz worked by the constant action of water. The children, who were eager to find something that they could convey away without the knowledge of the chief, searched eagerly among these pebbles; nor was their labor lost, for every few minutes one or the other found a "star stone," as the chief called them, and adroitly placed them in their pockets. In this way they had made quite a collection by the time they were called to move on. They found, also, at this spot, piles of what had evidently been of some importance, but so much decayed by time, as to defy the possibility of telling their original compositions.

On they moved, but, still, they came to no outlet. The bottom had the same pebbly appearance, the sides precipitous, the top low; and, for more than a mile, there was not the slightest variation in the appearance of the cavern.

"This is a long cave," said Howe, "and the strangest I ever saw. And that is saying much, for a trapper gets in all sorts of places."

"Strange enough, that is true," said Sidney, "I wonder if there is an end?"

"I guess so," said Edward, "everything that has a beginning has an end, I believe; but, whether we shall find it, is another question."

"I propose we halt and rest," said Jane. "For one, I am exhausted. I think it must be far into the night."

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"I suspect it is," said the trapper. "Suppose we take a little sleep, and then start afresh. But, then, if we do this, what shall we do for light? No sticks are to be gathered on these pebbles, and ours will not burn an hour longer. If it is possible for you to stand it, Jane, we had better move on. I can help you, for I am too much used to travelling to tire."

"Perhaps, we can find more of the burning water, if we keep a look out," said the chief.

But on they went; yet no tripod met their eye, until they feared Jane would be unable to proceed, and worst of all, two of their torches gave out, and the rest would not last twenty minutes longer.

"The braves and maiden, will await us here," said the chief, "while my brother and I bring relief. Come," said he, to Howe, "we are the strongest, let them rest, and when we have found light we will return."

"Perhaps it is best," said the trapper. "Sit here, we will leave the venison with you, that we need not be encumbered. Sit down on these pebbles, they are dry and much easier than the fire of the cannibal. Keep courage, and sleep if you can," so saying, he and the chief, took the torches to light them on the way, and soon disappeared in the distance. Sidney seated himself on the pebbles beside where Jane had sank quite exhausted, and drawing her to him rested her head

in his arms, where she soon fell asleep. Edward was also soon in the land of dreams, while Sidney watched over them with the care of a mother. Here his whole life passed before him. His orphanage, the care of Mr. and Mrs. Duncan, the tenderness they had bestowed upon him, his boyhood, and dawning manhood, his capture by the Indians, and providential escape, up to the present moment, and finally his present position. Long did the children sleep, and long did he watch without a ray of light, in a darkness more intense than anything he had ever imagined surrounding him. No sound was heard, not even the faintest breath, save the soft respiration of the sleepers. The time seemed to him endless; and the oppressive silence had become more painful than can be expressed, when, oh! joy, the distant sound of a human voice was heard, which every second grew louder and louder, and then a bright glittering light was seen in the distance approaching. His uncle and the chief had returned, bearing new torches, the light of which awoke the sleepers, who were much refreshed by their repose.

"Come," said Howe, "we must make our way some three miles farther, where we can find not only daylight, but plenty of wood and water, and as I am getting ravenous, we must hurry on."

"Then you have found an outlet!" cried the children. "Oh, uncle, we may yet see home again."

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“Certainly, you not only may, but probably will. We have undoubtedly gone right through the mountain, and as the cannibals will never think we have effected this, all we have to do is, to be wary, so as to escape from roving parties, and we shall be safe enough.”

They were soon at the outlet, which they found was concealed by a stone, like the inlet, and the only way the trapper and chief had discovered it, was by the daylight that came peeping through its crevices; for night had already gone and the day again was nearly spent. They thought it prudent to build their fire for cooking a little way in the cavern to prevent being discovered, and after satisfying their hunger with broiled venison, for which their long fast had sharpened their appetites, they put out their fire, and as it began to grow dark, fastened the outlet of the cavern, and laid down to rest. Their only bed now was the earth, having left the pebbles, full a mile behind them. Sweet and calm were their slumbers, for they felt secure and free.

Chapter Eighth.

▲ Night of invigorating Repose—Entering the unknown Wild—They capture a mountain sheep—The encampment attacked by Panthers—They save themselves by climbing a tree, and building up fires—The Panthers kill one of their pack—They continue their journey—Whirlwind becomes lost—They find a wild Goat—They start for the mountains—Everything strange about them—Their Deception—Talk of preparing for Winter—Encampment at the base of the mountain.

OUR wanderers awoke the next morning from a long and refreshing sleep, and on rolling away the stone from the outlet of the cavern they found the sun up, and the forest vocal with the feathered songsters. Never sounded melody sweeter than that; and, as the birds jumped from branch to branch, or soared away on free wing, trilling their sweet notes, breaking into the wildest gushing songs, they involuntarily exclaimed, "We too are free, and sing with great joy of our deliverance!"

After consuming the rest of their deer for a morning's repast, they plunged into the unknown wild, for so various had been their trials that they had lost all conception of distance or place; and, save the knowledge that they had travelled sometimes south, then again west, they had no idea

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where they were. Taking a north-easterly direction as near as they could determine the points of compass, they boldly set out and travelled until the sun was high in the heavens; then faint and weary, they sought for a place to rest, and something to satisfy their hunger. They soon found a cool shady spring, and after quenching their thirst, saw with pleasure, a little way beyond, where there had been a windfall, and as berries generally grow profusely in such places, they hastened to it and found, as they had anticipated, an abundant supply, as it was now the season for their ripening. After eating as many as they desired, the chief took some stout twigs, and weaving them into a basket, lined it with leaves, and recommended filling it with the fruit; which they did, and then returned to the spring where they sat down to rest.

"Well, chief," said Howe. "I don't think we shall make much headway, living on berries. We must contrive some means of taking some of the game with which these woods are filled."

"True," said Sidney. "I, too, do not think a dinner of berries is at all necessary. The game here, evidently, has never been hunted, for it is remarkably tame. I almost laid my hand on a pheasant once 'or twice before it flew away, while picking berries."

"I must say, a roasted pheasant would be very welcome now," said Edward, "I wish you had quite laid your hands on it."

“Hark!” said the chief, “I hear steps: something is coming to the spring to drink. Stay in your positions without making a noise, and I will see what can be done.” So saying, he swiftly and noiselessly crept among some bushes that grew on the side of the spring, which would bring him a few feet behind any animal that approached by a small path which had probably been beaten by the denizens of the forest as they came here to slake their thirst. His only weapons were a tomahawk, a long hunting knife, and bow and arrows, which he had taken from the sentinel. Indeed, these were all the weapons of any kind in the possession of the whole party, except a hunting knife that the trapper had adroitly concealed from the cannibals. Whatever game was approaching, it evidently intended to take its time, for they could hear it, every few minutes stop to browse, which argued well for its being a deer, and which they earnestly desired it should be. At last it came in sight, and they beheld a small mountain sheep. Though it was not what they anticipated, yet it was a welcome prize, and the chief’s unerring aim secured it.

They dressed and broiled a few steaks of it, but hesitated to build a large fire, for fear that straggling Indians might see the smoke rising above the tree tops, which would direct them on their trail. After satisfying their hunger, taking the remainder and the basket of berries, they again set out on their journey and travelled until sunset, when they

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encamped in a valley for the night. They had put out their fire, and with Whirlwind for sentinel, had a feeling of security, which they acknowledged by the deep sleep which enshrouded them. At midnight he was relieved by the trapper, and he too slept soundly.

About the second hour of Howe's watch, his ear was attracted by stealthy advancing steps, and in a few moments within ten paces of the sleepers, gleamed a pair of glaring eyes flashing in the darkness that surrounded them, like coals of fire.

"A panther," muttered the trapper, and then he continued as if the beast could understand him, "you had better stand back, old fellow, if you have any respect for yourself. We shall not accommodate you with a meal to-night, so keep back."

But the panther did not understand him, or, if he did, he did not heed the advice; for the trapper could tell by his low growl that he was preparing to spring; quickly drawing the bow, and taking aim between the flashing eyes, he gave him an arrow. With a howl of rage, the beast sprang back into the bushes, and retreating to the top of the hill, set up a quick, fierce, and wailing cry, which sounded like that of an angry child, only fiercer, until it seemed as if the whole forest had taken up and echoed the sound. The beast's first howl had awakened the sleepers; and when they heard him on the hill, all were frightened, for they well knew it was the panther's call for help.

The panther being eminently a social animal, it is said, go in bands, but usually search for food singly; and when found, if too formidable to be secured by the finder, he retreats a little distance, and then sets up his call for help.

"We must take to trees," said the chief; "nothing can save us if they come down with the whole pack, which they will be likely to do by what that coward is telling them."

"Why, chief, do you suppose the beast is telling his mates that we are five strong, and he cannot kill us all, and if he should, there would be too much for one to eat?"

"Yes," replied the chief, "and not only that, but there are two old ones, and the rest are young, so they must fetch their mates and cubs, that all may enjoy the great feast."

"Ha! ha! chief," laughed Howe: "but that is going it strong for the brutes!"

"Don't laugh, uncle," said Jane. "It is really horrible to be torn to pieces by these animals."

"Why, who intends to be torn to pieces by these howling vagabonds? Not I; nor do I intend any of us will. Here, Sidney, you climb this tree and fix a place for Jane. Edward, help yourself into this one also—catch hold of that limb. Jane, place your foot on my hand, and raise yourself so as to catch the next limb. Help her, Sidney. There, all are safe now but us, chief, and I believe we know how to take care of ourselves. Had we

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better kindle a fire? The panthers, you know, would as soon run up these trees as not; but a fire would have a tendency to keep them at a respectful distance."

"And, perhaps, draw the cannibals on us!"

"I think not, chief. I think that in going through the mountain we escaped from their territory."

"Build the fire and run the risk. They can climb trees like cats; and as we have no weapons but our clubs to defend ourselves with, they would have us, if they come in numbers, in a twinkling."

"Oh! yes, do!" cried Jane and Edward, as they now heard the yells of the beasts from distant parts of the forest, giving back the call from the hill.

"Let us run the risk, chief, and light three or four fires around the tree, keeping within the circle, and then, if they press us too hard, we can climb the tree also. It is large and strong, and will hold us with ease."

Accordingly the dry brush wood that always covers the grounds in our primitive forests, was hastily scraped together and fired; and as the blaze lighted up the forest, three other heaps were collected in a circle around the tree, which were also fired, and larger sticks brought and heaped upon them—the smoke and heat of which drove the children to the topmost limbs of the tree. It is well they had decided on the fires, for they had not been blazing ten minutes, when the whole pack of beasts, numbering full fifty, with ferocious

growls, came down from the hills around them. They came within a few feet of the fires, then retreated into the darkness; but in a few moments advanced again, wrangling among themselves, and endeavored to penetrate the ring of fire. But the heat drove them back a second time, when the fighting and wrangling became frightful from the din they made. After a while they again advanced, eyeing the tree and fire alternately, keeping up the growls for half an hour, when they formed a circle around a solitary panther which occupied the centre, with drooping head and tail, and after eyeing him a moment, precipitated themselves upon him with a bound, tearing him into fragments, and devouring him.* They then quietly separated, and bounded away into the gloom, leaving our young friends astonished at the singular termination of the fray.

“Why, uncle, do panthers prey upon each other when hungry?” asked Edward.

“Seldom; but when they do, it is to punish one of their number that offends them. In this instance, the panther was destroyed because he had deceived them by calling them when it could do no good.”

“Do you think that was the panther that yelled so on the hill?”

“Quite certain of that,” said Whirlwind. “He was calling his mates, but did not tell them we were surrounded with fire, or in a tree, and that they

* A fact which was related to the author by a trader, who was one among some others that saw a similar circumstance.

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could not reach us ; because, when the brute saw us, we were on the ground, and without that element. Most beasts fear fire. It was for this they destroyed him. They were led to expect a feast, and being disappointed, devoured him to punish him for the deception."

"Really, Whirlwind, do you suppose beasts reason, and have a language so as to converse?"

"The reasoning part I cannot answer for; but that they can convey thought and feeling as well as the passions, from one to another, there is no doubt. You and I understand what each other wishes to be understood by language; but we cannot comprehend the first sound a beast makes, yet, they not only understand their own language, but many words of our own. Which then has the most intellect?"

"You are not in earnest when you would compare man and beast together?"

"The Great Spirit made them both, and gave to each the attributes best suited to the station it was to occupy; and when those attributes are exhibited as they were to-night, it would anger the Great Spirit to believe they were not bestowed upon a creature, because that creature was not a man."

"It is a truth well known to those who have spent the greater part of their lives in the forest as I have, that the scene we have witnessed to-night, is not of rare occurrence. This is the third time

that I have had to save myself by strategem from panthers in my life," said the trapper.

The next morning they again bent their course towards the north-east; and as the day began to wane, the lofty peaks of a range of mountains loomed up before them directly in their path.

"What can that mean," said the trapper, calling the attention of the others to them. "It cannot be the Wahsatch mountains, for we went through them; besides, they ought to be nearly a hundred miles behind us. And they are not the Medicine Bow Mountains, for I am familiar with them, and these are quite unlike them."

"Oh! uncle, it cannot be we have been travelling the wrong direction, and are quite lost," said Jane, anxiously.

"I hardly know myself," he replied, with some trepidation. "I was sure we came south and west when carried away, and then of course the opposite direction is north-east, and we have, as near as I could tell, been travelling that direction. Yet," he added, musingly, "I ought to know the ground, but I do not recall one feature of it as familiar. What do you think about these mountains?" he asked of the chief, who stood moodily apart gazing upon the distant range with a troubled look.

"It is time Whirlwind visited the hunting grounds of the Great Spirit, for he is no longer a chief to lead his warriors to victory, but is a child that can-

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not find his way to his village through the forest," returned the chief.

"Then we are lost! I feared it! Oh! we shall never see home again!" said Jane, weeping.

"Why, child! there is none of your mother about you," said the trapper. "When she was not more than half your age she and I wandered off into the forest, got lost, and saw no human face for fourteen days, and during that time, although we had to eat leaves, berries and roots, she never shed a tear; but if she saw I was getting sad, she would begin some funny story that was sure to get us laughing. But there are no more girls like your mother was; they are all down in the mouth at the sight of danger now; nervous they call it, I believe."

"No, no, uncle, Jane is none of that; but she is tired, and will have courage enough when rested," spoke up Edward.

"I believe it is all your work, chief; you have frightened her, she places such confidence in your wood craft that she supposes if you cannot find your way out no one can."

"My shoes are worn to shreds," said Jane, holding up the remnant of what once had been a pair of strong leather shoes, "and my feet are lacerated and bleeding. I am sure I have been patient; for, though I have been travelling with great pain, I have borne it uncomplainingly, hoping every day we

shou'd arrive at some place where relief might be obtained."

"My poor sister you shall have mine," said Edward, taking them off; "for, though much worn, and too large, yet they will be a better protection than your own."

"Young brave, put on your shoes again. I can provide the antelope* with moccasins that will be softer, and more effectually protect her feet than your shoes."

So saying, the chief took off his tunic, which was made of fawn-skin, laid it on the ground, and bade her place her foot upon it, and then drawing his hunting-knife around, cut the exact shape of her foot in the skin. Then taking some strips of leather wood he split it and twisted it into a strong thread, after which he punctured small holes with the point of his knife in the shoe he had cut, and drawing the thread through, soon had completed a pair of strong soft moccasins.

"Well done, chief," said Jane, delighted with his handy work; "I did not think of this resort to a covering, but own it is effectual and very neatly done. You must kill another fawn and I will make you a new tunic to replace the one you have spoiled."

As it was getting late they encamped on the spot, there being water but a few rods distant,

* A pet name bestowed on Jane by the chief for her agility in travelling

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and visiting it, the chief pulled from the earth some roots, at the same time crying, "Yampa! yampa!"*

"Nothing so welcome in our situation," cried the trapper. "Collect enough of them, while I try to kill some turkies that I have a glimpse of yonder."

Sidney and Edward went to work and soon had a nice fire blazing, and then began to clear away the rubbish from around it, so as to make it more comfortable. This accomplished, the chief returned with his arms full of vegetables, and directing Sidney and Edward where plenty of berries could be had near the spring, he proceeded to cook them. In a little while the trapper returned, but instead of a turkey he brought a string of very large fish.

"Where did those come from?" they all exclaimed.

"From a river, of course," he replied laughing. "You don't suppose they grew on bushes, do you?"

"Certainly not; but are we really near a large river?"

"Within half a mile of it," he replied.

"Then, can't we find our way out, if we follow it to where it empties?" asked Jane.

"I should think not. Now, for supper; there

* A root much used by the Indians as food.

come the boys laden with fruit, and between them and our fish and vegetables, I intend to have a feast."

"Hist!" said Jane, "I heard a noise—a bleat, I am sure; There, it is again; don't you hear it?"

"Now I do, and will soon know what it is," said the trapper, making his way towards it, guided by the noise. About fifty rods distant he found a goat with its leg wedged between two rocks, so as to hold it fast, and preclude the possibility of its escaping. The goat was much emaciated, and had probably been there two or three days. But a few paces distant, was its kid, being about five months old, browsing with perfect unconcern. Howe released the goat and attempted to drive her to the camp, but she was too weak to walk, and he was compelled to take her in his arms, and carry her, the kid following, as though it was nothing new to have its dam carried away.

"He has found a goat," said Edward, "now we can drive it with us and keep it for milk."

"Poor thing!" said Jane, "it is almost dead: see how parched its mouth is? Take it to the spring and let it drink, and we will collect something for it to eat. What a pretty thing the kid is, and so very tame. You will not kill it, will you?"

"Not unless necessity compels us to. If we can get a little strength in this goat, I think, myself,

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she will be of service to us. Now for supper, for this mountain air gives me a voracious appetite."

"And after supper, uncle, we had better build a bough-house, for last night the dew fell heavy and cold. I think the summer must be over and September already here."

"The young brave is right; the harvest moon is yonder a crescent. When it is full, comes the harvest feast; and, then, unless Whirlwind returns, another will be chief in his place."

"If we are not there then, we have this consolation, others have been in as bad situations as we are."

"But, uncle, supposing we are still wandering around the forest when the snows begin to fall?" said Jane.

"Why, then we must make the best of it we can."

"That is, lay down and freeze."

"Does the red man lay down and die, when the snows fall?" asked the chief. "If we cannot find our homes, we must make a new one. Then we shall be content again. The antelope shall sit in her lodge happy as the singing bird, while her brothers bring her venison, fish, and the choicest fruits that grow."

The next morning they were again in motion, making direct for the lofty peaks before them. expecting to find a pass, and hoping when on the other side to find a country with which they were

familiar. For turn it as they could, they arrived at the same conclusion at last, that they ought to travel towards the northeast, a course they believed they constantly kept. But they were mistaken in supposing the cave went through the Wahsatch mountain; for, instead, it went through a spur of it, leaving the principal range on the east, instead of the west as they supposed. And now another spur lay between them and the principal range, rising in lofty peaks, beyond which was an extensive level plain many miles in extent, before the principal range could be reached. The reason they were so deceived in the locality was, that they had never been on the western side of the Wahsatch mountains, until carried prisoners there; and, supposing the outlet of the cavern was on the eastern side, they boldly pushed ahead. Had they known of these two spurs—(the one the cavern conducted them through, and the one that lay before them,) they would have known precisely where they were. But, as the savages had gone round them by crossing the mountains a hundred miles below, when they took them prisoners to their village, they had no means of knowing it.

That night they encamped at the base of the second spur, by which ran a small brook, and after a hearty supper, laid down to rest, with Sidney on the watch, who was to be relieved at twelve by the chief.

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Chapter Ninth.

Encounter with a Wolf—Sidney seriously wounded—They construct a bed—Whirlwind procures medicine—Dressing Sidney's wounds—They Build a Cabin—A high fever sets in—Fears entertained of Sidney's death—Talk of Pow-wowing the disease—Howe's story of encountering a Polar Bear—His faith in the Indian's Medicine Man—Miscellaneous conversation on the matter—Their final consent to the Pow-wow.

HARDLY an hour of Sidney's watch had elapsed, when, feeling very thirsty, he stepped down the embankment to the stream, (which was only two rods from the camp fire,) to get a drink; when in the act of raising it to his lips, a huge black wolf sprang at him from beneath a coppice of laurel that skirted the bank, and planting its huge teeth in his shoulder, crushed the bones in a terrible manner—at the same time his great weight bearing him to the ground.

The attack came so suddenly, that he was totally unprepared; and the mangled shoulder sending a sickening effect through him, caused him to faint with a single cry for help. However, it had been heard; Howe and Whirlwind bounding to their feet on the instant, with their clubs in their hands, which they always slept with by their sides, sprang on the beast

that was now growling ferociously over the insensible boy.

"Let him have it!" cried the trapper, dealing him the first blow; but scarcely were the words uttered, when, with a leap, the wolf sprang past the trapper at Jane, who stood on the bank above gazing with horror on the mangled form of Sidney below her, and catching her by the side, bore her also to the ground. Scarcely had she fallen, when a powerful hand grasped him by the throat, and the chief's hunting knife was buried a dozen times in the monster's heart—its life-blood almost suffocating the prostrate and terrified girl.

Raising her in his arms, the chief carried her to the brook, bathed her face, hands, neck, and even her hair—which was saturated with blood—in the water. Then cleansing her dress, carried her back to the camp-fire, and calling Edward to watch her, hastened to the side of Sidney to assist the trapper, who was dashing water in his face in his endeavors to bring him to consciousness.

"Hold, there!" cried the chief; "would my brother drown the young brave?"

"Not exactly; only put a little life in him," said the trapper, dashing over him some more water.

"Stop, or you will kill him! He must be brought up the embankment nearer the light, so as to give us a better chance to care for him. Raise his feet while I lift his shoulders. Oh! he is dread-

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fully lacerated. Gently, gently; there, lay him softly down. He is recovering! see, he breathes and turns his eyes."

"Sidney! Sidney! look up: are you much hurt?"

A heavy groan, and a relapse into unconsciousness, were all the answers he could give. But it was very expressive to the wanderers, who were without surgical aid, or even a bed to lay him on, or roof to shield him from the dews of night.

"A terrible business, this," said the trapper. "I fear the poor boy has received his death-wound. How is it with Jane? is she much injured?"

"I think not," said the chief; "the monster jumped too far to do much harm, save that which she received by the fall, and I gave him no chance to try a second time."

"We must take off his clothes, examine his wounds, and dress them," said the chief, "but first, we must make a bed to lay him on. My brother will watch him while I make it—it is but a few minutes' work." So saying, he took his tomahawk, cut and drove four stout posts into the ground, notched at the top, across which he placed two stout poles, which constituted a strong bedstead, though of a very primitive order; yet it was better than lying on the damp ground.

The bed was next to be manufactured, which was done by placing short poles across the structure

On this hemlock boughs were placed, and on these again a thick covering of dried leaves. Nor was this bed as hard as a person would imagine who had never reposed on one. The poles that upheld the upper structure were springy; the boughs were soft and yielding, while the leaves filled all the little crevices, and made it smooth and easy.

Lifting their patient upon his couch, they took off his upper garments, and then saw, to their dismay, the bones broken and protruding, the flesh mangled and torn, presenting a terrible spectacle. Besides, there were two other flesh wounds, but these alone would not have been dangerous.

"Nothing can be done until I collect some medicine leaves," said the chief, "which I am not sure of doing before daylight; but as the case is so urgent, I will try."

Taking a torch of pitch pine knots, he began searching round in the forest for the plant he desired, which he succeeded in finding very soon. Pressing some of the leaves so as to start the juice, he put them into a gourd, filled it with water, and after replacing the fractured bones as well as he could, with Howe's assistance, who had some practice that way during his roving life, proceeded to cleanse the wounds with the decoction: after which he held some of them in his hands until they were wilted, then laid them smoothly over the wound, confining the whole with the small fibre of

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Jane was next attended to; but, on examination, hers proved to be a mere flesh wound, neither deep nor large, but which they thought prudent to dress so there need not be any danger of inflammation.

“We will take care of the monster’s skin,” said the trapper, “for we may need it, if we can save Sidney’s life, to protect him from the cold before he recovers.”

To take off and stretch the skin for drying, was but the work of a few minutes for their practised hands; and the rest of the night was spent in endeavoring to determine what was the safest plan to adopt; but the morning broke, leaving them as undecided as at first. At one moment they were for dividing their force, part remaining until the wounded could be removed, or, as they feared, died, the rest hasten on, and return with assistance as soon as possible. This was rejected, as it would be weakening their numbers, already too small to provide for their sick properly. Thus project after project was rejected, for their condition was bad enough before, but now they felt it was doubly appalling. Sad, indeed, they were; for they dreaded every hour the fate of him who had been as a son and brother; and to have him die there, and be buried in the vast wilds, the location of which they knew not themselves, and, perhaps, could not

point out should they be so fortunate as to escape a similar fate, was enough to wring the stoutest heart. But it was now the time that the untutored Indian showed his superior tact and energy. Howe was cheerful, still hopeful, but not resigned, like the chief, who, at first, had pined for the station of a free leader of a free people; but, as the time advanced when the authority would be given to another, unless he returned by the harvest feast according to custom, and the injury Sidney had received, would prevent their travelling, he nobly resolved that let the consequences to himself be what they might, he would not desert the young man in his hour of need.

Anxiously they watched by the couch hour after hour, until dawn of day, when the poor fellow began to call for water; a fever had set in. When this new evil became apparent, it destroyed what little hope remained, and though they sought every way to baffle the disease, yet it was through a desire to leave nothing undone, that might possibly in any way relieve him. The trapper gathered some roots noted for their cooling properties, and bruising them extracted their juice which was given to the patient, while a tea made by soaking slippery elm bark, was his constant drink. It all seemed to do no good; for his fever rose higher and burned fiercer, until his brain wandered, his eyes grew wild, and his skin became dry and husky. He raved alternately of home and his wanderings. At

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one time, talking familiarly with his friends, as though he was by the old fireside in Missouri, then in piteous accents calling on some one to save him from the fire of the cannibals who he said were roasting him, alternately with praying them to kill him with their arrows to end his sufferings. Again, he imagined the wolf was at his throat, and it then required all their tact to soothe, and keep him from tossing about, and again displacing the fractured bones of his shoulder.

They built a hut of boughs, making the corners of four saplings which they cut off at the proper height, where they formed a crotch supporting strong poles, across which other poles were laid, and which they covered with hemlock boughs; this again was covered with bark they had detached from fallen trees, and which made a good defence against heat or rain. The sides were fitted up the same way, with the exception of a door which they closed by a large piece of bark, when they desired.

Day after day went by, and though they could not see that their patient was better, yet he was, certainly, no worse. This encouraged them.

"If we can keep him quiet, so as to give the mangled bones time to set, the fever will die off itself. For, no doubt, it is caused by the irritation of the wounds," said the trapper.

"If the Medicine Man* of the Arapahoes was

* Physician.

here, to pow-wow the disease, the young brave would live," said the chief.

"That would only frighten him," said Edward, who had often seen this same mode of curing diseases exercised, and had no very high opinion of it.

"The more complete the fright, the sooner the recovery," retorted the chief.

"Suppose you pow-wow him," said the trapper, "you know the virtue lies in you by your right of chief, if you choose to exercise it, which you should be willing to do, if it would heal him."

"Oh! no, no; don't think of such a thing, he could not bear it. The least noise makes him worse, even the chirping of the birds and squirrels in the trees overhead, irritates him; and only an hour ago, I had to lead the goat and her kid farther away to tether them; for, at every bleat they made, he started nervously, and moaned," said Jane, who had great faith in quietness, and soothing applications in restoring the sick.

"He has got no medicine bag," said Edward, "and could not, very happily. Any one that is well and canstand a pow-wow, ought to live forever, but I am sure if I was as sick as poor Sidney is, and they undertook to raise such a rumpus about me, I would die to get out of the noise."

"Hush! you don't know anything about it. I am sure I should have died once if I had not been pow wowed," said the trapper. "As for the medi-

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cine bag, every chief is gifted with making one at will."

"Why, uncle, you would not consent to have such a din raised around Sidney, would you? I am sure it would kill him

"I rather think it would help him. A sick man among the wilds and one in a populous district are to be treated on different plans, and the one recovers as often as the other. Still there is this difference: the one, if he recovers, carries a poison in him that finally does its work; while the other, if he recovers, soon regains his former vigor," said the trapper.

"Really, uncle, I did not think you superstitious before; but this seems like it," said Jane.

"Prejudiced, Jane; he has been among the natives until almost one of them," said Edward.

"Call it what you like. I have reasons for it. When I was about thirty, I, in company with my father, had been trading with the Hudson's Bay Company, and were preparing for a homeward voyage when it occurred to us that our collection would not be complete without a polar bear skin. This we resolved to have, and supposing it could be had from the natives, we started out one morning to visit the different lodges that were located around the station in search of our object. We found enough that had been divided into parts, but there was but a single complete one to be found, and that was the skin from a young cub which would

give but a faint idea of the size and strength of the full grown animal. It was our object to get a complete one, as a large price had been offered for a perfect skin of full size.

“There were reports of polar bears having been seen at no great distance, within a few days, and my father was too famous a hunter to be balked when bears could be had by hunting. Engaging six Esquimaux to accompany us with their dogs and spears we set out. We knew it was dangerous game that we were after, but we thought two rifles, six Esquimaux spears and dogs were strong enough for them, and we went carelessly on, guided by a native until we were in their haunts, as the natives informed us.

“‘You don’t pretend to say that the beasts are in that ugly looking hole, do you?’ said father, as the guide pointed to a low hole that ran beneath a high cliff, bordering the bay.

“‘There,’ said the native, still pointing to the hole; ‘one, two, big, one little.’

“‘Three of them! Why, you rogue, what made you lead us into their den? A pretty time there will be if they all charge us at once!’

“‘White man shoot one big one, other white man shoot one big one, red men and dogs, six men, six dogs kill little one,’ said the Esquimaux, smiling at the allotment he had made.

“‘All very well if they have the goodness to die at the first, or even second fire; but there have been

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animals of this kind that have required twenty balls before it was safe to approach them. If wounded, without being disabled, they are ferocious.'

"'Bear eat white man then; bear very fond of him,' said the native, enjoying the scrape he had led us into.

"'Look here, you villain,' said father, 'if we are killed I will blow your brains out, depend upon it, when we return to the station!'

"'White man may, when he gets back, if he is killed,' said the guide, who stood grinning horribly with his keen, serpent-like eyes fixed on the den of beasts.

"The ground was covered with snow, and the bay for half a mile out with ice strong enough to have held a hundred tons in one solid body. Beyond, the bay was filled with a sea of floating ice, that ebbed in and out again as the wind or tide carried it. I said the cliff skirted the bay; still there was a beach some twenty rods wide that lay between it and the bay which was covered with snow as every thing else is in that region in March.

"'We are in for it, Andy,' said father. 'Keep a good look out that the beasts do not get at you; if they do, depend upon it, they will give you cause to repent your hunt. See! the natives are pricking them up with the points of their spears. Stand back so as to give him a wide berth, and we will let the natives see that some things can be done as well as others.'

“Back! back!” yelled the natives; at the same moment a savage shaggy head protruded from the den, and with angry growls, made for the nearest native. Every one of us, in our haste to clear the way for his bearship, tumbled over each other until he was in a fair way to have us all in a heap to devour at leisure.

“Pretty doings this, with our backs to the game!—face round every one of you. Seek him! Seek him, there! Now, you red rogues, give him your spears while he is engaged in boxing over the dogs as fast as they get at him. Ho! that makes him sorry,” said father, who was all alive with sport, for the old bear was a male of the largest kind; and he was just congratulating himself on the easy victory he was obtaining, when his mate came with flashing eyes and ferocious growls towards us.

“I was the first to note her exit from the den, and drawing my rifle to my shoulder gave her a ball in the side. With a roar of rage she bounded towards me, and giving her another ball I attempted to save myself in flight, but my foot slipping on the snow, threw me on the ground, at the mercy of the terrible brute. Father saw the affray, and after discharging every ball in his rifle at her, clubbed her with blows that shivered the stock of his gun into splinters. So I afterwards learned, for the first blow she dealt me with her huge paw, took me on the temple, and I knew no

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more of the terrible whipping she gave me until it was all over. That was soon enough, for I thought my last hour had come for many a week. The physician at the station gave me over, and as a last resort the medicine man of a neighboring tribe took me in hand, pow-wow'd me, and from that hour I began to recover."

"You really think that the medicine man saved your life, do you?" queried Jane.

"Certainly—nothing can be clearer. The Indians know more of the art of healing, than half of your pop-in-jay doctors."

"How about the noise: it must have set you most wild," said Edward.

"It was a little too strong, I thought at the time, but afterwards was convinced it was all for the best."

"And the bears: were they secured?"

"Oh! yes, and the cub, too. But they told me it was a terrible fight."

"My brother has seen the efficacy of our medicine men. The Great Spirit would assist his son to cure the young brave, if the white chief desires it should be done," said Whirlwind.

"I am inclined to think it would help him, and at least could do no harm."

"Let him try, uncle. I am willing anything to save him should be tried," said Edward.

Jane was silenced, but not convinced, by her uncle's story; and though doubting the termina-

tion, offered no more opposition. Whirlwind retreated into the forest, desiring that no one should follow him, where he remained all night—during intervals of which, they heard his voice alternately in entreaty, command, and supplication.

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Chapter Centh.

Preparations for a grand Pow-wow—The apparent solemnity of Whirlwind—He dresses himself in the wolf-skin—The Pow-wow—Its effects upon Sidney—He becomes delirious—Favourable turn in his fever—His health improves—They proceed on their way—The Indian acknowledges himself lost—Encamp for the night—Their journey continued—Singular trees discovered—Preparations for spending the winter.

AT noon the next day, the chief returned, carrying in his hand a small bag made of bark, and filled with something they did not attempt to ascertain, well knowing the chief would look on such an act as unpardonable profanity. He had gone into the forest without supper, and had taken no breakfast, yet he refused anything to eat. They did not urge him, for they had never seen such an expression of humility and meekness on the chief's features before as they wore then; and Jane and Edward felt rebuked for the levity they had exhibited, for evidently he was acting the farce in which he was engaged, with a sincerity and purity of motive that commanded respect.

With eager curiosity, blended with fear for the result, they watched every movement of the chief's preparations, which were as unique as singular.

After depositing his bag with great care on the limb of a tree, he took the now dry wolf-skin, wrapped it around him, running his arms through the skin of the fore legs. The skin of the head, which had been stretched and dried whole, he drew over his own, confining the body of the skin around him with a string, leaving the long bushy tail dragging behind him. Then taking his medicine bag in his hands, he assumed the appearance of the wolf; and thus accoutred, no one would have taken him for a human being, so completely was he metamorphosed. With stealthy tread, he crept slowly round the couch on which the patient lay, snuffing the air like a hound on a scent; then placing his hands on the side, raised his head, and, after taking a survey of the sick man, again dropt down, and commenced moving around very slowly, and snuffing the air for full half an hour. Suddenly, with a yell that made the old forest ring, and a bound, he darted round the couch with a velocity truly astonishing. He did not run, nor bound, but jumped, and at every jump, sent out one of those hideous yells, that startled the echoes from their retreats, and sent them forth with a hundred voices.

After whirling around the bed in this way a number of times, with frantic howls he sprang upon the bed, and commenced snuffing round the patient. Starting with terror, the poor boy half raised his head, and a glance of intelligence lighted

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his sunken eye, as he cried, with gestures of fear and horror, "The wolf! the wolf! Save me! oh, save me!" and then sank back, fainting. They at first thought he was dead.

"You have killed him. Stop! for mercy's sake, stop!" cried Jane, placing herself between the hideous looking object and Sidney.

"The young brave will live," said the chief, suddenly raising himself, and speaking in his natural tones; and after divesting himself of the skin, without another word, disappeared in the forest.

"Give me water," said Jane, "and chafe his hands while I bathe his temples."

"Put some water in his mouth," said the trapper. "I fear we did wrong in this affair. Poor boy! he thought the wolf had him again."

"We certainly ought not to have permitted it. The shock to the nervous system must be terrible. Should he never have his reason again, I shall never forgive myself. That Whirlwind would adhere to so ridiculous a farce is not to be wondered at; but that we, born and bred among a civilized nation, educated, and with claims to intelligence and refinement, should consent to such mummery, is a libel on humanity."

"I believe you, Jane," said the trapper. "The poor boy was too ill to bear it. As for myself, I think, when I was pow-wowed, I must have been already on the mend. But these savages *do* exert an influence over one. I don't know how it is, but

I never knew a person that had been much with them, but what was forced to acknowledge it."

"See! he breathes. Edward, hide away that ugly skin that he need not get another fright.—Sidney! Sidney! don't you know me!" said Jane, as the invalid slowly opened his eyes, and then with a shudder, closed them again.

"Come, Sidney, rouse up," said the trapper. "We are only waiting for you to be able to travel in order to start for home. We cannot be far from it now."

"The wolf! the wolf! take him away!" cried Sidney, in piteous accents, and then once more fainted with terror and fright.

"Now, keep out of sight, every one of you, and be careful that not a sound or noise is made. I think I can manage him best alone," said Jane, as she commenced bathing his temples with water.

Slowly his eyes again opened, and as they rested on her, she smiled softly, as she said in gentle tones; "You know me, surely, Sidney, don't you?"—and then she added, after a moment's pause, "there is no one else around, but me, and I do not frighten you, do I?"

Suddenly his eye lit up with an intelligent light, and a half smile hovered round his lips, as he said: "Oh no, I am not afraid of you, Jane, but what has happened? what am I lying here for?—Ah! ah! my arm, I cannot move it," said he, as a sharp

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pain ran through his shoulder, when he attempted to raise himself.

"Do not attempt it," said Jane, laying her hand on his to keep him quiet, as he again stirred. "You are very ill, and your life depends on your keeping quiet. You must neither move nor talk much."

"Then I have not been dreaming; a wolf has"—

"Yes, you have been dreaming; there is nothing here, except myself, and I really think, I frighten you, and will have to go away."

"Oh, no, do not: but I am quite sure I did see a great black—"

"Hush! hush! if you talk so strange, you will frighten me. There is, nor has been nothing here. Come, now, don't you feel better. I am sure you do; you look like yourself again. Here are some delicious blackberries, cool and juicy, try one," she said, putting one to his lips.

"Delicious, give me more. But Jane, I am quite sure there was a monstrous black—"

"Come, if you do not stop such nonsense, I will give you no more berries," said Jane, gaily.

"Well, then, I will, yet I saw his great, shaggy—"

"I tell you, Sidney, you dreamed; and, as dreams all go by the rule of contrary, I presume you never will see one. Come, you must sleep now—not another word," and she playfully placed her hand over his mouth to enforce her command.

It was the tenth day, since he was hurt, and the first that he had showed consciousness—and tremblingly the young girl watched his slumbers, fearing lest, when he awoke, the delirium would return. If it did not, he was certainly improving, and he would live. If it did—she shuddered to think of the probable consequences. Long and quietly he slept, and when he opened his eyes, he turned them quietly to the watcher, and observed :

“I think, Jane, I did dream of the wolf, for I have been dreaming of him again, and this time I thought I killed him ; and as I know I have killed no wolf, I conclude the whole is a dream.”

“Now, you talk rational, and are better, I am sure.”

“I think I am, for I am hungry,” said Sidney, pleasantly.

Sending Howe to watch by the couch, Jane began to consider what could be procured among their limited resources that would be nourishing, and yet harmless. Cooking utensils they had none. Their whole stock of vessels consisted of the shells of wild gourds that grew abundantly in the forest. Necessity often compels a resort to recipes in cooking not laid down in all the editions of gastronomy. It did in this case, and grateful was Jane that she had the shell of the gourd to prepare a meal in for Sidney. Taking some smooth white stones from the bed of the stream, she placed them in the fire, and then put the wings of a partridge

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into a gourd half-full of water, and as soon as the stones in the fire were at a red heat, one was taken up by running under it a forked stick; the dust that adhered to it was blown away, when it was dropped into the gourd, and in a short time the water was boiling. As soon as it ceased, another stone was put in, and in a little while a broth not unsavory, though so rudely cooked, was ready and eaten by him with relish.

At sunset the chief returned from the forest, all traces of the recent farce were gone from his face, on which rested the old expression of pride and *hauteur*. He asked no questions, expressed no concern; after eating a hearty supper, he threw himself on the ground by the camp-fire, and was soon asleep.

From the first night that Sidney had been attacked by the wolf, up to this time, not a night or a day had elapsed that some kind of wild beast had not been seen prowling about them; though they kept up large camp-fires, they were in fear of a whole pack making their descent upon them, when they must all be devoured, in defending Sidney, or leave him to fall a defenceless victim. They found, to their dismay, that they were in a portion of the forest overrun by beasts, which no doubt, looked upon them as trespassing on their rights; the dislike of which proceedings they evinced, by threatening in plain enough language to be understood by our wanderers, to eat them for their audacity. After enduring these hints a week

longer, during which time the beasts had become so venturesome as to come in uncomfortable proximity to them, they began to think the most prudent course would be to vacate the neighbourhood as soon as Sidney could be removed with safety, which they had hopes of being soon, as he was rapidly gaining strength. The broken bones were in a fair way to join, and the wounds to heal.

The nights were becoming cool, and as the time flew by, they became anxious to remove from their dangerous position, as well as to be on their journey in order to find their way out of the forest before the winter set in. Without tools to work with, or weapons to defend themselves, or proper clothing, they quailed at the thought of being caught by the frost and snow in the mountains. But Sidney did not recover his strength very fast, and they put off their departure day after day on his account, after they had first set the time to start, until two weeks had now elapsed when they crossed the small stream and began to ascend the mountain. It was slow work, and at night they encamped on the summit, where no water could be had, instead of descending it, as they in the morning had calculated. That night Sidney was unable to sleep, and moaned until daylight. After breakfasting they began to descend; he insisted he was quite able to go, but the rest saw it was too great an exertion for him. To remain on the mountain they could not; to return to the place they had

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left was impossible. There was no other alternative but to go on. The chief on one side and the trapper on the other, he was half carried most of the distance; a little after the middle of the day they reached the foot of the mountains, and found themselves in a beautiful valley, along which ran a clear stream about a quarter of a mile from the base of the mountain.

Their first thought was to build a couch for Sidney, who had lain down on the ground with his head on a pile of leaves for a pillow. They could not shut their eyes to the reality that he was really quite ill again. Selecting a spot favorable for building a couch, they had one soon completed, on which he was laid, and a temporary cover of hemlock boughs and bark was thrown over it. They then commenced preparations for supper. That night they were unmolested by wild beasts, which augured well for their selection of a good ground to encamp on.

The next morning Sidney was much worse, and a cold, drizzling rain having set in during the night, drove them all under the shelter through the day, and even sent the goat and her kid, who had become very tame, bleating to their side. As the day advanced the storm became more furious, so much so that the water penetrated the roof and began to fall upon Sidney's couch.

"This will never answer," said the trapper
"We must have a more regular layer of bark over

the cabin. I saw plenty of it but a little distance where some large trees have fallen." Starting out with the chief, they were peeling off the bark with the tomahawk by the aid of a lever, when they discovered further down the stream a herd of deer feeding. Seizing his bow and arrows which the chief had taken with him, he stole cautiously towards them, and before they had taken the alarm a noble buck and a doe had each an arrow shot through the heart. They were conveyed to the cabin, and the successful hunters returned to cutting their bark. After having rendered the cabin impervious to water they dressed their game, stretching the skins to dry; "for," said the chief, "snow will come and much skin be wanted." The venison was then cut in slices and hung up to dry, so that it would be on hand if the game should become scarce around them.

Towards night the chief with his tomahawk in his belt and his bow in his hand went out to explore the country around in order to determine what course was best to pursue. Taking a south-east direction, the face of the country was level and very fertile, producing wild fruits and nuts in abundance, which were now ripe, and with which the trees were loaded.

"We shall not starve, at least," said the chief to himself, "if we cannot go any farther, which I fear we shall not this fall. It is plain the young brave cannot travel, and if he could, we are per

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haps farther from home now than ever. The Great Spirit only knows which way is the right one to travel in order to find ourselves." He was surprised as he went on to find the trees of the forest of less primitive growth, especially those peculiar to the soil; and still greater surprised to find them interspersed with trees now laden with ripe fruits of a species he had never seen before; and more surprising still, these trees were much larger than the wild ones, appearing of not more than a hundred years growth. As he went further on the scenery became perfectly enchanting. It had the appearance of having been a garden deserted and run to waste after many years of high cultivation, rather than a part of the wilds in a new world. Satisfied with discovering a spot more congenial for building a hut that would withstand the winter storms which were approaching, and around which he saw no signs of wild beasts, he returned to the cabin and reported what he had seen.

"We are lost," said the chief, "past all doubt. The forest here is as new to me as if I had never seen a tree before, and our safest way is to prepare for winter."

"Prepare for winter!" said Edward, gloomily, "what have we to prepare? No warm garments to make, for we have neither cloth, nor anything to make them with if we had."

"There is much that can be done," said the trapper, "if we are obliged to winter here, which

I fear we shall be, as it will soon be here, and Sidney is confined to his couch again. I will go in the morning and see the place you speak so highly of, and if we then agree upon it, we had better endeavor to erect something that will defend us from our enemies as well as cold and rain."

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Chapter Eleventh.

The storm subsides—Search for winter quarters—Strange Discoveries—Works of the Lost People—Their search among the Ruins—Walls, roads, and buildings found—Their state of Preservation—The Wanderers decide upon selecting a place to spend the winter in—They prepare to locate themselves—Hunting deer and other Game—They find abundance of fruit—A salt spring—Their joy at their discoveries.

THE next morning the storm had passed over, and the sun arose bright and clear upon our wanderers, who felt relieved as they found Sidney much improved, though yet quite ill, but in a fair way to be able, in a few days, to be on his feet again. Making everything as secure as possible for those they left behind, the chief and Howe set out to visit the spot where the chief earnestly desired their cabin should be located. When arrived at the spot, Howe was not surprised at the enthusiasm of the chief; and was astonished at the loveliness, as well as the strangeness of the whole landscape that lay before him. Penetrating the alluring wood before them half a mile further, the scene still retaining its strange beauty, they came to a stream with an artificial embankment, built of stone, cemented, five feet high from the

river's bed, and running up and down the stream as far as they could see in the distance.

"The work of the lost people!" said the chief, endeavouring to displace some stones from their artificial bed, but which resisted all his efforts.

"This does look as though civilized people had lived here," said the trapper. "This wall has been built to confine the water to its channel, in times of heavy rains, so that it shall not inundate the plain. Probably, these strange fruit trees are the seed of some brought here from other regions by those builders which have planted themselves, flourished, grown, and outlived all the changes that time has wrought."

"My forefathers have a tradition that it was a strong people that built these things, more cunning and powerful than the white man, until the Great Spirit became angry with them, and then they dried up like the grass on the prairie when there is no rain; for, who is there that dare brave him without being consumed with his anger?"

"We will go down to that copse yonder," said the trapper. "If I am not mistaken, there is more than trees there."

"An herd of deer, perhaps," said the chief, preparing his bow for action.

"I think not, unless deer are grey, and of inordinate proportions. From here, it looks like piles of stone. Perhaps more of the work of those who curbed these waters," said Howe.

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As they drew near, large blocks of stone, squared and smoothly hewn, lay in their path, and covered the ground around them. Crossing over these, they came to a range of grey stone, that had the appearance of once having been a high building, but which was now thrown down, and tumbled into a shapeless mass. To the right of these stones they saw a small square enclosure, strongly built of grey hewn stone, and the joints fitted with a precision that would do credit to a stone-cutter in our day. Every layer was strongly cemented with a composition that seemed to have amalgamated with the stone, for on striking it with the tomahawk, it did not even chip off, but gave back a ringing sound, like the hardest granite. One thing they noticed was very singular, both in the wall of this enclosure and in that by the river. The cement in which it was laid was much darker than the stone, being almost black, while the fallen building which they first came to was laid in a white cement, quite like, in appearance, our own.

Going around this enclosure they were astonished to find that they were in a city in ruins. Before them lay whole squares of shapeless masses, overgrown with trees and shrubs, but the perfect regularity of the form and finish of the blocks of stone, of which they had been composed, with the mortar in which they had been laid still clinging to them, were sufficient to convince them that

they had once been buildings of more than ordinary proportions and finish.

They attempted to force their way over this irregular pile of rubbish; but found it a dangerous undertaking, as the blocks on which they placed their feet yielded to their weight, and slipping from their beds, threw them on the sharp edges of the stones—a proceeding they did not at all relish. After receiving three or four such falls apiece, and preferring the longer route as the safest, they started to go around it, in order to investigate the forest beyond as they caught a glimpse of some buildings still standing, through the leaves, that hid the main structure from sight.

Taking their way around the western side of the obstruction, they came to a long wide avenue, on which nothing but moss and small dwarf shrubs grew, and which was perfectly smooth and level.

“This is singular,” said the trapper. “I wonder why it is not overgrown like the rest?”

“Perhaps it is a road,” said the chief. “Sometimes they covered their highways with stones, and laid them so close together, that a tree could not take root in them.”

“Did you ever meet with one?” asked the trapper.

“No: but tradition speaks of them, as once having been quite common. We can soon see whether this is one by scraping away the leaves and dirt that have accumulated over it.” So

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saying, he commenced digging away the accumulated earth, which was no easy task, as the rain the night before had saturated the surface, making it adhere tenaciously to whatever it came in contact with. Scraping away about four inches in depth of forest mould, they came to a layer of stone blocks, the only one which they laid bare being twelve feet long, and eight wide, the thickness of which they could not ascertain, as it was so closely fitted to the adjoining one, that the blade of a knife could not be inserted between them.

Following this avenue, it led them around a graceful curve for half a mile, and there terminated at a flight of stone steps, which ascending, they found themselves on a high elevation of earth, that contained as near as they could calculate, about five acres of ground, in the centre of which, on another elevation of about half an acre, which was also mounted by stone steps, stood a large imposing structure, still magnificent in its ruins. This building they found likewise laid with the dark cement, as indeed all the buildings were which they found standing. The ingenuity of man had cheated time of its prey.

Entering this pile, they were struck with awe at the evident symmetry and beauty that had once reigned within, for though time had accumulated mould and moss over its walls, and covered its floors to a depth of several inches with earth made up of dust and leaves that had penetrated its open doors and windows;

yet the walls themselves were there, heavy blocks of granite in an iron-like cement that bound them in place, perchance for a thousand years that have gone, and bid fair to withstand the ravages of time for ages to come.

"Here," said the chief, "is a big house already built, which we can winter in. It will save us the trouble of building, and be more secure than anything we could make."

"Well," said the trapper, "I guess, by the trouble they took to put it up here, that it was a palace or a temple. In either case, they had it built a little tasty, and we will acknowledge the merit due them by preferring it to any other."

"There is the forest full of fruits and nuts," said the chief, waving his hand towards it, "and if we winter here, we must gather them in before the rains come. The leaves are thickening on the ground, and when another moon is spent, the rains will fall and the winds come down from the north."

"You are right, chief. It is our place to make due preparation against hunger and cold, for all the year roots, berries, and game cannot be then as easily obtained as now. The sun is at the meridian, and they will be alarmed at the cabin, if we do not return soon. But, we will be here in the morning again, and clear out some of this rubbish, so that we can take up our abode here as soon as

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Sidney can be moved, and then we will devote our time in preparing for every contingency in our power."

Following the avenue out until it was obstructed by rubbish, they turned in the direction they knew their cabin lay. After proceeding twenty rods through the lovely grove, with fruit trees blending with the growth of the forest, they came to a small stone structure not more than twenty feet square, nor eight high, in perfect preservation. It had no floor, but in the centre bubbled up a jet of transparent water, while all around its edges, and even on the side of the wall, as well as over head it was encrusted with a white substance as though spray had congealed over it.

"What a new wonder!" cried the trapper, "really I don't think they will ever cease, for this excels them all. I would like to know if that is really water."

"Perhaps it is the burning water," said the chief, "dip your hand in and taste it."

"Salt! a salt spring!" cried the delighted trapper, on placing a drop of the water on his tongue. No wonder it caused a sudden excitement and great joy; for it was months that they had been without it, and it was a privation under which they had suffered greatly, as its loss made many a dish unpalatable that otherwise would have had a fine relish.

"The Great Spirit has led us here, and will

finally deliver us from our wanderings," said the chief, who was equally as well pleased, but it was not his nature to make any extravagant exhibition of passion.

"Well, chief, the Great Spirit has our thanks, for this last blessing. It is a gift of great value in our isolated position," said the trapper.

On arriving at the cabin, they found them all safe, but suffering from great anxiety at their prolonged absence, which fled on their return in safety, their arms laden with the fruits they had gathered, the quality of which they desired to test. The children listened with wonder at what they heard in regard to the discoveries, it sounded so like a fairy tale, and when assured that it was all really there as described, and that they should see it themselves within a few days, they seemed to forget their forlorn condition in the pleasure it afforded them.

The crusted salt they had gathered, gave them more real pleasure at their dinner that day than is often experienced in many a life time—a pleasure, satisfaction and joy that they could never have enjoyed, had they not been deprived of it so entirely as they had been.

Here we might moralize if we had the room, but moralizing is out of the question. We have a history, a complication of incidents to relate that caused certain effects to develop themselves, and it is our only aim to cause others to moralize—to lead inquiring

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minds into certain directions by revealing something of the heretofore unwritten past.

The next morning Howe and the chief returned to the temple, as they called the building on the elevation, and scraping the accumulated mass of rubbish from the floor swept it with a broom made by tying the twigs of hemlock on a long stick. A rude broom enough, but one often used as far east as the new settlements in Pennsylvania to this day. When this was done, they found the floor covered by a slippery black mould that could not be swept off, and which they would have to remove by scrubbing. Here was a new dilemma. They had no bucket in which to bring water from the river, and their gourds would not hold over a quart each, which would make the task of bringing it from such a distance almost an endless job.

"We must do it," said the trapper. "This is a little too much filth for civilized people. We can bring each four gourds full at a time which will do something towards it. If we could turn the river into it we could clear out the shell of its filth in a very short time."

"Perhaps," said the chief, "we can find something to bring water in if we hunt over the big house."

"Not worth while now, chief: wait until the children are with us and then we will go over it; at present our business is to make one room habitable."

So saying they set out towards the river for a supply of water; but on descending the first elevation at the side on which the building stood, the chief, when partly down, placed his foot into a trough-like duct, running parallel with the elevation which was filled with leaves so as to obscure the sight of the water until it penetrated his moccasin.

“Water plenty!” cried the chief, drawing his foot from the unexpected bath, and then commenced clearing the place from the leaves and earth with which it was partially filled. They soon found it was an artificial duct about one foot deep and two feet wide, built of the same kind of grey stone as the rest of the ruins around, and still supplied with water. They went on clearing it of rubbish in order to see how far it extended; but after removing it a few rods they became weary, and filling their gourds, hastened to finish their renovating task.

That night they found Sidney up and cheerful, insisting he was quite well enough to be removed. Howe would not venture it, but insisted on waiting a few days more, during which he and the chief spent the time making couches in the temple for their accommodation, and hunting, in which sport he was very successful, having killed a number of deer, turkeys, and mountain sheep. In searching for game they rarely attempted to take any other than those whose skin would be

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valuable to them as well as the meat, owing to their anxiety to secure as many skins as possible while game was plenty, as skins and furs were all they had to rely on as covering for their beds and for clothing.

Chapter Twelfth.

Astonishment of the Children—The Antiquity of the Ruins—Preparations for making the temple their quarters—Building a chimney to their house—The Chief's contentment—He asks to marry Jane—Sidney's anger—Strange discoveries—Set out on a hunting expedition—Discovery of wild horses—The chief captures a colt—He presents it to Jane—The winter sets in—A series of storms prevails—A deer hunt—They discover an Indian woman and her papoose—They take her into camp and provide for her—Her inexpressible thanks for her deliverance.

THE children were filled with wonder and astonishment at the magnificence as well as the evident antiquity of the ruins, and spent many days of actual pleasure wandering among them. They had read of similar remains having been found in Europe; but these were rendered vague in outline by distance, and meagre in description by their utter impossibility to comprehend the actual appearance of things, the like of which they had never seen. These were more tangible. They saw and felt them; ascended and descended the symmetrical steps; ran their fingers along the seams of wonderful cement that bound the pile in its place like ribs of iron; drank water from a duct where a thousand years ago others had drank, but of what

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nation, race or name they knew not. Oblivion with her sombre mantle had closed over them, to remain, until a mind capable of grasping the past shall arise, and with its giant intellect give back the forgotten alphabet—the key that shall open to us the rise, progress and fall of a nation, the relics of whose once powerful but unknown people may be found over the whole continent.

They covered the floor of the room they had cleared with dried skins, laying them with the hairy side up, thus making a comfortable carpet; large blocks of stone were piled at intervals around the rooms for seats, and these were also covered with soft skins, making very passable but immovable seats. A table was built by setting four blocks of stone up endwise in the centre of the room and laying one large, smooth, thin slab on its top, around which were placed five movable seats to be used while eating.

What annoyed them greatly was, there was no way of warming the room, and as the weather now was becoming cold, they found it a great discomfort, as the sun could not penetrate the thick stone walls to dry the dampness that gathered on them. They were quite puzzled to know how they were to be comfortable in that place without a fire, there being no place in which to build one. There were two windows that extended from the floor five feet, up which, probably, had been frames, that were once filled with some perishable material, but of which

not a vestige now remained. These openings they always closed at night by hanging skins before them, which were taken down in the morning to let the light in. The door-way that led into the room, was entirely destitute of any vestige of a door, although they found grooves cut in the blocks of stone that ran along the side on which a door had been hung. This door-way opened into a long hall, that ran through the house from the front portal to the back—the doors that led into the four rooms of which the temple was composed, opening on the inside. This hall, which was truly a magnificent one, was thirty-five feet wide, and fifty long, forty feet high, tapering towards the centre overhead, in a lofty dome.

“We must have a fire,” said the trapper, one morning, after an unusually frosty night. “This is too cold. Can’t we build one in the hall, chief?”

“The smoke will suffocate us; we could not stay in doors with it,” said Whirlwind.

“Why don’t you build it in one of the windows? the smoke could then go out, while much of the heat would come in,” said Edward.

“Better yet,” said Sidney: “build a chimney by one of the windows, then all the smoke will go out, and all the heat come in.”

“You have it exactly,” said the trapper. “I wonder we did not think of it before. What say you, chief—shall we have the chimney?”

The chief, not only assenting, but entering with

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alacrity into the project, the whole party went to work to collect the material, of which there was plenty, but as the blocks were nearly all large ones that lay round them, they had to bring them from the mass of ruins by the river, which was of smaller material, and which they could handle to better advantage. They worked hard all that day, Sidney standing by quite uneasy, because they would not allow him to help. The next morning they mixed some mud and clay for mortar, and commenced laying up the chimney, and succeeded by night in finishing a very serviceable, though not a very beautiful one. They found, on building a fire in it, that it worked to a charm, filling the room with a genial warmth and cheerful light, while it carried away all the smoke.

They had gathered some twenty bushels of fruit, that tasted like our apples, but resembled a pear in shape and color, which was very hard and tough, not fit to eat then, but which, the chief said, would be good in midwinter. They had taken the precaution to gather them by his advice—he having made some large baskets of the pliable twigs of willow, in which they were conveyed from the trees to the temple, where they were deposited in the room they occupied.

“The fire will injure them,” said the chief.
“We must put them in another room in order to save them.”

“There is one adjoining us, that opens like ours

from the hall. We can clear out that as we did this, and make it a store house. We shall need some place to keep our fruit and nuts in, which it is time now to gather, and also our dried venison," said the trapper. "It is best to make ourselves as comfortable as we can while here, for as the winter will soon be on us, nothing but an especial providence can get us out of the scrape we are in, until the weather is warm enough for us to travel again."

"I am the cause of your wintering here. If it had not been for me, you would all have been home now, instead of being, we don't know where," said Sidney, who was often gloomy in his weakened state.

"Perhaps we should, and then, perhaps, we might have wandered into a worse place. Indeed, we ought to be thankful for the shelter and fruits we have found. I hardly think many that are carried away by savages, escape as well as we have, and then find such winter quarters," said Jane, glancing complacently round the room, for, to tell the truth, she felt a sort of pride in the ample blazing fire, soft skin-carpeted floor, numerous seats, with gay colored skins thrown over them, and their couches, on which they slept, neatly spread over with skins, while at one corner, in a little nook screened from view by skins joined together and hung around, was a couch appropriated to her own use, covered with the finest furs they had taken—for the trapper had set his snares from

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the first day of their abode there, and their store of furs and skins was fast accumulating.

"We are here, that is a fact that cannot be doubted," said the trapper, "and if I knew the way out, and had my rifle, ammunition, a supply of hounds and traps with me, I would not leave it until spring, if I could, for the whole valley is filled with the right kind of game. There is a beaver dam a mile down the stream, which contains some of the finest coated fellows I ever saw. I have got some more there, and will show fur that is fur, or else I will give you leave to call me no trapper."

"What matters it whether we are in one part of the forest or another?" said the chief, addressing Howe. "We have lost our home, now we have made one, even better in some respects than the red man ever has. The hunting ground is good—then let us be contented to live here. Whirlwind is a warrior; he has taken the scalp from his enemies in battle—he is a chief; he has led his warriors to victory. Let the white chief give him the antelope for his squaw, and he will no more go out to battle; but remain here, where the Great Spirit has led him, and spend his days in filling his wigwam with the softest furs, best fish and venison in the forest, and the antelope's life shall be happy as the singing bird, and bright as the sun."

"Why, Jane, what does this mean?" asked Edward, bursting into a fit of uncontrollable

laughter, that awoke the echoes from the venerable pile that had slept through a long list of ages. But Jane did not know herself what it meant, as the expression of blank astonishment on her face amply testified. But Sidney for one, knew precisely the meaning of it, and with flashing eyes and clenched hand, he limped to the side of the chief, with a threatening attitude. Howe saw the material he had to deal with, and thought it best to interfere to prevent ill-feeling, as well as to get such an idea out of the chief's head.

"When Jane has grown up she can speak for herself. The white men do not give away their maidens: when they are old enough they select for themselves."

"Whirlwind can wait," said the chief complacently.

Jane turned her head, and placed her hand over her mouth to keep down the smile that would come, as her eye caught her uncle's grave countenance, for he saw at a glance it would now require all his tact to undeceive him, in regard to the possibility of such a union, and yet retain his friendship. Sidney would have had the matter settled on the spot, but the trapper motioned him to keep silent, which he did, though his lips were compressed, and his looks angry and threatening.

"Come," said the trapper, cheerfully, "we will clear out the adjoining room, and take these apples

from here, then we will be ready to gather in our nuts to-morrow.

"A disagreeable place this," said he, as he commenced scraping up the accumulated mass and throwing it out of the window.

"Probably, it is a long while since it was cleansed," said Jane. "A very singular place, and if we could get home safe at last, it would be worth a little trouble and privation to have seen it."

"Something new again: wonders will never cease," said the trapper, holding up a vessel of some kind of heavy material, oval at the bottom, and capable of containing some two gallons.

"It looks like a dinner kettle; but how could a dinner kettle get here?"

"You don't think the people that used to live here lived without eating, do you?" said Howe.

"Or, that they knew how to build houses like this, and did not know how to make a dinner pot."

The rest thought they must have known how to do so natural a thing, as the proof of it was before them, and then the question arose; could they use it themselves? "For, if we can," said Jane, "we can have such nice stews and soups."

"Which we can eat with a *split stick*, as we do our meat, especially the *soup*," said Edward.

"We can have some nice wooden spoons made for that," replied the trapper. "I really think the kettle can be put in a cookable order, by taking off a coat or two of rust."

"Here is another just like it," said the chief, dragging out a similar vessel.

"You see," said Howe, "the people must not only have eaten like civilized people, but had a good appetite, or we should not find so many vessels in one place."

The room being cleansed, the fruit and dried venison were removed from the warm room, and the next day they began to gather in their store of nuts. Butternuts, walnuts, and hickory nuts, were gathered in large quantities, as well as acorns which, when roasted, formed a delicious as well as nutritious food. Chesnuts were also gathered, as well as the pine knots; these last were mostly for the light they would give when burning, the only thing excepting their fire, which they were dependent on to illumine their house. The collection of these occupied them a number of days. Then the chief and Edward took the baskets, and went down the stream in search of yampa, a root much used for food by the Indians. This they found in abundance, about two miles distant, and collected a number of baskets full of it.

When these precautionary measures were completed, they felt a security and satisfaction about them which they had not felt before. The fact of their being lost was shorn of half its terrors. Their door was barricaded against the cold and starvation. Sidney had made up his mind it was his fate to have the worst of the trouble; for, weak in body,

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his arm still in a sling, he was unable to join in the busy preparations that the rest entered into with such a keen relish. This worried him; but not half as much as did the assiduous, delicate attention which the chief bestowed on Jane. Had the chief been hunting and procured game, it was laid at her feet; did he secure a bird of rare plumage, its plumes fantastically arranged, were modestly presented to her; and furs of rare softness and beauty in profusion adorned her apartment, at the request of the chief. Unwilling to offend, and as he had never spoken on the subject to her, she could do nothing but accept them with the best grace she could. She saw how it irritated Sidney, though she thought little of it after the moment, supposing his illness caused the irritation as much as the singular mode of winning favor pursued by the chief.

No buffalo had yet been seen in the valley, and the chief had more than once expressed his belief they could be found by following the open country down the valley a few miles. Making himself a strong lasso, and with hunting-knife, bow and arrows, and tomahawk, he set out one day, more for the sport than anything else. After proceeding about seven miles over a broad, heavily wooded valley without any signs of the desired game he began to think he was too far in the mountains from a prairie for them, and was about to retrace his steps when a rustling at a little distance attracted his attention.

Going thither, as he approached, a wolf darted up from the spot, and with a few leaps was out of sight. The chief soon saw he had been feeding on a wild horse that had died of old age and looked as though it had lain there some days. However the sight seemed to excite him, and after marking the trees to designate his course, he closely scanned the tracks around and then started farther down the valley at a rapid pace.

After travelling some ten miles farther, he had the satisfaction to come up with the drove. They were not feeding, but some were laying down, others standing leisurely around, evidently unaware of the proximity of the chief, who divesting himself of all his weapons but the lasso, with exceeding caution crawled along the ground without rustling the leaves or branches until within throw of the nearest, which was a young brown colt of great beauty and graceful proportions.

Winding one end of the lasso around his wrist, he gently raised himself. The lasso whirled above the colt, and the next instant closed around its throat. The rest of the horses with a snort darted away, leaving the terrified colt plunging and rearing with the Indian who had sprung on its back, where he now clung with perfect security. Seeing its companions flying down the valley it too leaped away after them making fearful jumps over brooks and logs for many miles, every few minutes rearing and plunging in its mad endeavors

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to free itself from its burthen, until covered with foam and trembling in every limb it paused, and turning its head gazed wildly and terrified on the chief, who smoothed it gently as he spoke to it mildly, and then holding the lasso tight in his hand, slipped off its back. Feeling the burthen removed it attempted to escape, but being still held it was soon subdued and induced to follow the chief. The colt seemed to understand that it was a captive, for its manner became subdued and quiet under the hands of its captor who viewed its symmetrical proportions with the eye of a connoisseur. The chief actually laughed aloud at his success. He had now a horse, it was so like old times, and with this he could pursue the herd until he caught others, when he had it perfectly trained. Satisfied with his day's hunt, he followed the tracks of the herd back, sometimes riding, then again walking, as the fancy struck him, until he reached the temple about sunset, where he and his prize were greeted with every demonstration of joy.

With a grave, dignified countenance he led the colt to where Jane stood, and placing a halter, which he had tied around its neck in place of the lasso, in Jane's hand, he said :

"Whirlwind's gift to the antelope," and walking away left the young girl in possession of his noble love-token.

Puzzled and blushing at her awkward position, Jane turned to her uncle an imploring look, who

amused and laughing, came forward and catching her by the arms, seated her on her prize.

"Ride her round a few minutes, the chief expects it," he whispered in her ear. Obeying him, she walked it back and forth before them a few times, then slipping off placed the halter in her uncle's hand.

"Here chief," said the trapper, "Jane is well pleased with your present and desires you to take good care of it for her, and will never be better pleased than when she sees you on its back."

The chief, with a gratified look, led away the colt, and fastening it to a sapling, took a skin from which he cut a long stout halter so that it could have the range of a few rods, and fastening it left it to feed on the wild grass and herbage around.

"Look here, uncle," said Sidney, as the chief walked away; "I wish I was dead or well, I don't particularly care which."

"Why, boy, what is in the wind now? Why the rest of us are trying to make out something good of a bad business, while you are fretting and fuming like a caged lion. Be easy, boy, and if you cannot be easy, do as we do, and be as easy as you can."

"It is well enough to say be easy, crippled, helpless, and obliged to eat of the things the rest of you bring in; to sit here all day long and be pitied, while that black rascal—"

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"Hold! hold!—not another word like that," said the trapper, sternly. "We are too much indebted to as noble a heart as ever beat, for a return like this. What matters it, then, that his ways and complexion are not like ours? His father was my father's friend, as well as my own; and him I have known from earliest boyhood, and to this hour have never known him guilty of a mean or dishonest act."

"What greater, more dastardly act of meanness could he perpetrate, than stealing away the heart of that young girl, or are you so blind you cannot see through his manœuvring?"

"Sidney, you are not yourself to-night," said the trapper, "I am convinced of that, and I do wrong to chide you: sickness and suffering, toil and privation have unnerved you. When you are well, you will see things clearer than you do now. Come, I must take you in, the night dew is falling fast and cold around us. I see and know all that is going on, and understand the chief much better than you do. Trust in my management of the affair, and you will have no cause to complain at last, however appearances at times may be against you."

The chief was now as contented and happy as if he had never known other scenes than those that lay around him. The lodge, as he called their abode, was filled with fruit, venison, skins and furs; the antelope accepted his offering, and a half-tamed,

high mettled colt was at his command, on which, sometimes for a whole day, he went dashing madly through the forest, a piece of hide around the colt's neck his only accoutrements. Then he was in his element and free, with the fresh mountain air fanning his dusky brow, infusing into his stalwart frame new life and vigor.

Snow now began to fall, and the fierce northern winds swept through the forests, creaking the leafless limbs of the trees, as they swayed them to and fro, anon rending them in twain, and scattering the fragments over the white mantled earth. The wanderers now spent most of their time within the temple, by their glowing fire that blazed so cheerfully, the window and door closed tightly by skins, shutting out the cold air. Here they amused themselves in recounting past scenes, and strange wild legends with which they had become familiar. Without a written language, the Indian preserves his national and domestic history solely by oral instruction, handed down from father to son. Thus every tribe has its own legends, while many vague traditions of national history are peculiar to the whole of the North American Indians without regard to tribe.

They had been kept within the tent for many days by a series of storms, and their stock of fresh meats had become quite exhausted, when Howe and the chief announced their determination to go on a hunt for game. They could not take the colt, as

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in the deep snow it would make more trouble than it would be of service to them. Telling the children to be of good cheer, and keep up a good fire, they launched forth, protected from the cold by the thick, warm fur garments they had manufactured for themselves, and armed with their bows and arrows they had made also, they gaily took the way down the valley as the one where game was generally most abundant. A pair of partridges, a wild turkey, and an antelope, were soon brought down; but as it was early in the day, and they were only warmed in the sport, they hung these on a sapling, and proceeded on.

"I tell you what, chief," said the trapper, "I am in for a buck. They are never so fat and tender as now, and I intend to have the plumpest, nicest venison steak for supper there is in this forest, if I have to work for it. There are signs of them about, and a little further down we shall find where they have been browsing, if I am not mistaken."

"My brother is right," said the chief; "yonder they have passed, and their trail is still fresh in the snow. There are many of them, and our wigwam will again be full of fat venison. Hist, yonder they are; they will see us if we do not move with great caution. You take the circuit round that clump of spruce to the right, and I will keep farther down to the left."

Warily they made their way until within shot of

them, when they discharged their arrows, and one fine doe selected by the chief, fell, shot through the heart. Howe was not so fortunate, he having selected a noble buck, who bounded away with the arrow sticking in his side, but from the quantity of blood that flowed from his wound, staining the snow, they knew he could not run far. Hanging up the doe after dressing it, they set out to recover the buck, which they expected to find dead not far off. In this they were mistaken: he led them many miles before he gave out, and by the time he was dressed, and they were ready for returning, the sun had passed the meridian.

They had not retraced their steps more than half a mile, when a wailing sound was faintly heard from a thicket a few rods distant. They paused in a listening attitude. Again came the sound like the wail of a young child.

"A panther," said Howe, "he wants some of our venison, perhaps a bite of us. Let us on or we shall have to fight."

Again it was heard now louder, and then followed a heavy sob and groan.

"No panther," said the chief throwing down his load and making for the thicket. Howe began to think so too, and was following, when the chief, with a cry of surprise, disappeared beneath in the thicket. Howe hastened forward, and there on the bare ground which she had cleared of snow lay a young squaw with a papoose but a few years

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old huddled in her arms which she was vainly endeavoring to shield from the cold. They were terribly emaciated, with the seal of gaunt famine in their sunken eyes and hollow cheeks. The mother's limbs were frost bitten and entirely benumbed with cold.

"Lost," said the chief; "she has been lost like us in these interminable wilds."

"We must save her," said the trapper. "Wrap her in that skin from the venison while I build a fire to warm her by and cook her some meat. Poor thing, she looks as though she was nearly dead with hunger and cold. She is human, see the tears in her eyes as she hugs that little thing closer in her arms. Bless me but it makes a child of me—poor thing! poor thing!"

Gathering some wood, the trapper soon had a large place cleared from snow, and a fire was quickly kindled, in the fierce heat of which some of their slices of steaks were held a few minutes then given to the famished woman. Eagerly seizing them she held one to the mouth of the child, when it seized it and commenced sucking the juicy food with great voracity, while the rest disappeared with a rapidity that astonished even the chief, who was so rarely astonished at anything.

"I would like to know who she is and where she came from," said Howe. "Ask her if you can make her understand."

But she could not understand them, nor could

they her. She told them by signs that she had been wandering a long while and could not find her home, and begged them not to leave her there to die.

"That we will not, chief; you stay with the woman and I will take a load of venison home and return with the colt for the woman to ride on, for she is too weak to travel."

The squaw looked her thanks while she pressed her child to her bosom as if she would "say we shall still live perhaps to see home and kindred when the snows melt from the hills"

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Chapter Thirteenth.

Jane's reception of the Indian woman—Whirlwind's indifference—Condition of the party—Sidney begins to use his broken arm—Their health—They cannot calculate the day nor month—The chief imagines he has found the locality of the Arapahoes hunting grounds—He becomes enamored of Jane—The party troubled about it—Howe explains his experience in love matters—A reconnoitre suggested—Edward joins them—Deer chased by a wild man—The chief lassoes him—A desperate struggle—The wild man captured and taken into camp—Things in the camp, &c.

THE young mother and her babe received a warm welcome from Jane, whose tender heart ached as she scanned the half frozen, emaciated beings before her; and even repining Sidney was forced to acknowledge that his sufferings had been nothing in comparison to those the mother and babe had endured. A few weeks spent under the hands of their gentle nurse had a wonderful effect in their condition, and the babe, especially, had regained its infantile merriment, and played at rough and tumble on the soft skins before the fire like any other child of two years, as the squaw reckoned its age. It was very lively and frolicsome, and served to make merry many an hour that otherwise would have lagged heavily on their

nands. Not so its mother; she had regained her strength, but no effort could bring back the smile to her lip or chase the look of sadness from her brow. She had, from the first, exhibited great signs of fear of the chief, and did she catch his eye resting on her she would hurriedly gather her child in her arms, and with a wild look of terror cower away into the corner of the room farthest from him she could get, and there sit murmuring in wailing tones to the babe nestling in her arms.

The chief, after the first day of her rescue, exhibited perfect indifference to her presence, and rarely gave her a glance; but they had noticed that when his eye did rest on her or the child it had a peculiar exulting savage glitter seen at no other times, for his eye usually had a mild expression, and they had known him to exhibit disinterested humane acts that set at defiance the supposition that he was devoid of sensibility.

This was a new phase in the character of the Indian, and one that highly amazed the young people. As for Hówe, though he did sometimes open his eyes with wonder, it did not interest him, and he never spoke to them of the "by play" that was every day growing more interesting to the younger ones, and becoming a great torture to the young mother. Jane, who was daily becoming more and more attached to her guests, used every art in her power to inspire her with more confidence, and at the same time assure her of the

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kindness and friendship of the chief, but without success. She was equally silent as to what tribe she belonged; for, though she had learned to use many words correctly in expressing her wants, she never seemed to learn any to express the past with regard to herself, except that she was lost, and could not find her way home. Jane had made her and the babe clothing before she had recovered her strength; but, though it was as neatly done as that she herself wore, the squaw had, as soon as she was able to move around, taken some skins, and had manufactured a suit for herself and child, that was really pretty, so neatly was it done. This finished, she made one also for Jane, presenting it to her with gestures of gratitude for the kindness she and her babe had received at her benefactress' hands.

Jane looked really much better when adorned in the handiwork of the young squaw, than she did in her own, for the suits they had on when carried off by the Indians, had been worn and torn to shreds in their wanderings, and they were all dressed in skins dried with the fur on, having been made soft and pliable under the skilful hands of Howe and the chief

It was now midwinter, and the valley was covered with a mantle of snow, but not as deep as they had anticipated it would be. They found they were partly defended from the storms, by a spur curving round to the principal range of mountains,

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giving the valley the form of a horse shoe—three high, precipitous sides breaking the storms of wind and snow, so as to make it really a very desirable situation. And a most fortunate one it was to the wanderers, the trapper often declaring, that if he ever reached home again, he would conduct the whole family to the spot, as it would not only make a desirable farm, but afford rare facilities for hunting and trapping, which desideratum was of the utmost importance to both Howe and Mr. Duncan.

It is really surprising to one reared in the lap of luxury, how little is actually necessary to support the human body healthfully. Take these wanderers, for instance, utterly debarred from procuring the simplest products of civilization, entirely thrown on such resources as savages are called to practice to sustain life and health, yet they have not only surmounted great obstacles, but are undaunted by those that lay before them, and have actually made themselves comfortable. Simple as their abode and fare were, nay, even extremely rude, yet they experienced a satisfaction and enjoyment when they retraced their wanderings since they were carried away captives, and the feeling of thankfulness for their wonderful escape from the savage cannibals, begat one of contentment in their present lot. It is true, they were fortunate in having found and occupied the building in ruins, as it afforded them a more secure shelter than they could have built, with the small complement of

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tools they possessed. yet it is a safe venture to conclude, that had they not discovered them, they would have made themselves an abode that would have shielded them from wet and cold.

There were four rooms in the temple, two only of which had been cleared. They had often been in the others, but as they had no use for them, they were left unmolested. The goat and the kid were stabled nightly in the hall, but as she had become so tame as to return at nightfall, she was allowed to roam at pleasure through the day. Following her instinct, she sought her food among the crags and defiles of the mountains, thus relieving them from the trouble of providing for her. When the snow first began to cover the ground in early winter, it caused them much anxiety as to how she was to be provided for until spring. Her milk was of too much importance to think of killing her, or turning her loose to run wild again, and she was at first tethered so as to prevent her wandering away. This was relinquished after a while, when they saw she returned of her own accord.

The colt caused them more trouble. Recently captured, they did not dare to turn it loose to seek food as they did the goat; and the only way left for them, was to tether it in the thickets of maple and basswood—the young tender growth of which the wild prairie horses are very fond of. These thickets were usually studded with a luxuriant undergrowth of small shrubs and evergreens

that were very nutritious, and of which the fat condition of the wild horses, buffaloes, deer, antelope, mountain sheep, and goats that feed thereon, is sufficient proof. Often in the winter, plats of grass may be found in patches sheltered from the storms; but the chief dependences for food of the multitudes of cattle that roam through the western wilds, is the luxuriant growth of shrubs that spring up uncropped in the summer, as the cattle then prefer the tender grass on the prairies.

Sidney, to his great satisfaction, now began to use his arm without the slightest difficulty, and with his strength his spirits resumed their wonted healthful vigor, greatly to the relief of the trapper and Jane, who had been under the necessity of keeping a watch over him to prevent his coming to a rupture with the chief. He was now active, and only laughed heartily at what had annoyed him before, and tormented Jane unmercifully on the conquest she had made.

They were all in excellent health, and only waited with impatience for the winter to break up, so that they could resume their journey in safety in search of home. One thing alone grieved them—the evident increasing terror with which Mahnewe, the Indian mother, regarded the chief. In order to free her as much from his presence as possible, Howe had proposed long hunts, by going to the forest at early dawn, and not returning until evening. They enjoyed the sport, as it not only placed

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Mahnewe at ease, but they gained a perfect knowledge of the surrounding country, which was of much importance to them, as well as kept their larder supplied with abundance of game.

They had lost the day and month; and now their only guide was the fluctuations of the weather, of which, fortunately for themselves, they were good observers, and could calculate within half a month of the time at any season of the year. About the middle of February, as they calculated time, Howe and the chief went out one morning for a hunt, and following the valley down a mile or two, crossed the stream, and ascending a knoll, stood on its summit, surveying the country around them. The trees being shorn of their foliage, gave them an uninterrupted view of the broad valley, with its barrier of hills, and peak rising above peak, until they towered up and seemed almost to pierce the sky.

"I do not think it would be safe for us to cross this mountain," said the trapper. "Our homes, I do not think, are in that direction. We must have been deceived in our course."

"Yonder," said the chief, pointing down the valley, "are the hunting grounds of the Arapahoes. Far away, over a broad prairie, four days' journey, the warriors of Wirlwind follow another chief to battle, and listen to him in council, as they were wont to their lost chief, whose death song they

have sung amidst the wail of the squaws. Yet Whirlwind does not grieve. He has found another squaw, fleetier than the antelope, more graceful than the fawn, whose voice is like the singing birds, and face fairer than imagery of the spirit land. Let my brother go to his home, but Whirlwind's home is where the antelope is, he will live and die with her."

"Pshaw! chief. You will be as much the chief of your people when you return as ever. Probably they have supposed you dead and elected another chief; still, according to your customs, if you return, the authority would be by universal acclamation, given back into your hands. As for that other little matter, why the child is too young to talk of it. Our first great object is to find our way out of this scrape, and the rest will then come natural enough."

"Whirlwind will hunt the deer and beaver here: this is his home; he is not a child, but a warrior, and can wait for the antelope," said the chief in a tone of decision not to be mistaken.

"I can tell you, chief," said Howe, "we will find our way out, and bring the whole family here. This place will exactly suit Jane's father, and then you know she would be so much more contented if they were here?" he added.

The chief regarded the speaker with an inquiring glance for a moment, then said: "Whirlwind is not to be played with. When the antelope says

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she will go with him, he will take her, if she is hemmed in with arrows."

"Whirlwind, I will be plain with you," said Howe, "for I know you are noble, generous, and brave. Jane is not my child, and is not mine to dispose of; but as she has no other guardian here, I will protect her until once more restored to her family. You must wait until then, and if her family consent, and she desires it, I shall make no objections. Perhaps by that time your love fit will be over, and you will not want her. There is Mahnewe, why don't you make love to her?"

"The eagle mates not with the owl, nor the Arapahoe with the Snake," retorted the savage angrily.

"Oh! well, just as you like; yet I think she is rather pretty. Come, chief, you cannot help but see it, as well as I. Don't you think she would make a wigwam look comfortable, and more home-like than Jane?"

"I cannot tell; I never see the stars when the sun shines," returned the Indian.

"It is a pity no one but an old bachelor heard that compliment. it is such a waste," laughed the trapper. "I see you are over ears in love, chief. I know precisely how you feel. I was once in love myself. It did not last long though, for my flame gave my keepsakes to a good for nothing popinjay from down east; one for a string to bind round a broken knapsack, the other to carry home with him

for a show. That was enough for me. I just told her I was done with her."

"You in love! that is capital! ha! ha!" rang out a voice behind the speaker, who, turning round, stood face to face with Edward, who had taken it into his head to share in the sport, and, following their track in the snow, had come up with them unperceived.

"What sent you here? anything the matter at the camp?" they asked in a breath.

"Nothing at all, that is why I came. I mistrusted you had some fun together out here, and I came to share it. Come, uncle, give the whole history of your love making. The bare idea of your being in love is rich," and the merry boy laughed until the woods rang with the joyous peals.

"I shall do no such thing. Do you think because I am old and ugly now, that I have always been so. There has been a day, boy, when—"

"You were once handsome, uncle, that is a fact, and they do say I look just as you used to. Come now, tell us about this affair."

"Well," said the trapper, mollified by the flattery, "when I was about three-and-twenty, I was just about as green as young, and took it into my head to get married, having persuaded myself that I was in love, and that, if I did not, I should not live long. Polly Crane was a nice girl, she could hoe corn, thresh grain, break fractious colts, or shoot a bear, just as well as I could myself. She

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was just the one for me, and we had got everything all fixed to be married, when a chap came travelling up there, (making mischief I thought) dressed exactly like a minister, only I knew he was not, he used such profane language. Well what does he do but begin making love to Polly, which made me very angry."

"“Never mind, Andy,” said Polly. “You know I don’t care for him or anybody else but you. I am only trying to see how bad he will feel when we are married.”

"“Go ahead then,” I said, “if that is your game,” and sure enough she did go ahead, as I soon found out. When I was up round Lake Superior, the winter before, trapping with father, we got one night by mistake, into a grizzly bear’s den, intending to spend the night. We soon found out our mistake, when we saw some cubs, and got ourselves out of the scrape as soon as we got in; but, as the cubs were such pretty things, I thought what a nice keepsake one of them would make Polly. So I hid one under my jacket unbeknown to father, until the old bear came snarling about us, after we had built a fire and laid down to sleep.”

"“Wonder what’s the matter with the beast,” said father, “guess she has tracked us from her den.”

"“Guess she misses her cub,” said I.

"“By George, Andy, you have got us in a fine scrape. However, my lady,” said the old man to

the bear, 'you can't have that cub now: we never give up to anybody;' and, with that, he fired a ball between her eyes. But instead of dying, she attacked us, and we had a desperate fight. She got the worst of it though, for we carried off both her skin and cub. You ought to have seen the cub, it was a beauty, and when I gave it to Polly, she pretended that she thought it the nicest keepsake she ever saw. The other was, the skin of a snake. It was nearly six feet long, and very wide, spotted all over its back with white, brown, and black spots, and its sides were striped with brown, so that, when I split it open in the middle, it looked like a ribbon. I made it as soft, smooth and pretty as anything you ever saw.

"I did really think Polly was trying to deceive him, until he was going away, when I saw that pretty snake skin tied around his plunder, and as if that was not enough with a string in hand, he was leading away the cub of the grizzly bear that I had brought all the way from Superior for her."

"My brother's squaw's tongue was forked—the antelope's tongue is not forked, she cannot lie," said the chief.

"Look here, chief; they are all alike. When they say they will have you, they mean they will if they don't get out of the notion of it."

"My brother's heart is dark, and, looking through it, he sees nothing but gloom, where I see sunshine," returned the chief.

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"That is, I am to understand, you are in love, and uncle thinks it is an exploded fallacy," said Edward, laughing; for, in truth, he was in a merry mood, and his uncle's mishaps did not have a tendency to lessen it in the least.

"It is nonsense, all nonsense," said the trapper.

"Hist!" said the chief, laying his finger on his lip, "there is large game approaching!—there! I hear it again: have your arrows in readiness," he continued, after a moment's pause.

"Deer, perhaps," said the trapper, "it comes in leaps; I hear it distinctly."

"Yes, deer," said the chief, drawing his bow to his shoulder as a noble buck bounded in sight, with his tongue protruding from his mouth, and his eyes had a wild look of agony and terror, such as is only seen at a moment of despair.

"Chased by a wolf! let the deer pass and shoot the pursuer," said the trapper; but, scarcely were the words spoken, when a giant form covered with hair, but bearing in form a semblance to humanity, came bounding after, clearing from ten to twelve feet at every bound. On he came, and, at the base of the knoll on which they stood, overtook his prey, and grasping it by the throat, with one hand dealt it a succession of furious blows on the head which knocked it down, when choking it until life was extinct, he stood upright contemplating his prey.

They had instinctively dropped their arrows

when they saw the pursuer; and Whirlwind motioning the others to keep still, glided on towards the singular creature, slipping from tree to tree until within a few rods of him, when, taking from beneath his tunic his lasso, which he always carried with him, he cut a circle with it in the air, then giving it a throw, it quickly descended, girdling the strange being in its fold. With an unearthly yell, he attempted to free himself from its coil. Unfortunately it did not confine either arm, as the chief hoped it would, and the creature finding it could neither break the stout hide nor gnaw it off, sprang with ferocity at his captor, who had just succeeded in fastening the other end of the lasso to a tree, and before he had time to get out of the way, seized and threw him on the snow with terrific force.

Howe saw the chief at the mercy of the monster, and in a moment an arrow winged its flight, burying itself in its shoulder, causing the monster to lose his hold. Another and another were shot in quick succession, striking where they would not give a mortal wound, for it looked so human, the trapper would not kill him if he could save the life of the chief otherwise. This new attack puzzled the monster for a moment; then seeing Howe and Edward, who had approached within a few yards of him, he rushed with such force upon them, that they had no time to get out of reach, and they were also caught by him and hurled to the ground,

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but not before a blow dealt by Edward with a club had broken his left arm. At that moment the chief, who had recovered from the stunning effect of the fall, rushed upon the monster, and with a single blow of his tomahawk, felled him to the ground, and before he could rally, the lasso that was still on him, was tied around his arms and feet to render him powerless. In defiance of the wounds he had received, he was in nowise tamed, but glared on them, howling and gnashing his teeth, while the foam rolled from his mouth, and he writhed and rolled with rage on the snow a captive. The stout lasso of hide they had cut in pieces, and so tied his hands and feet that he was powerless to do them harm.

They now had a chance to examine the powerful creature at leisure. He was entirely naked, with a perfect human form and face, but was perfectly covered with hair, except the forehead, eyelids, palms of the hands, and soles of the feet. They were surprised to see that the skin, where it was protected from the sun by the hair, was white and fair as their own. He was powerfully built, full six feet high, and uttered no sound that approached the pronunciation of words; a succession of snarls, growls, and yells, were all the sounds he uttered, and these approached, when accompanied by his efforts to release himself, the terrific, nearer than anything they had ever heard.

"Well, uncle, what will you do with him now you have got him?" said Edward.

"Kill him," spoke up the chief, indignantly.

"Take him home and tame him," said the trapper. "He is a human being like ourselves; probably has been lost in infancy, and grown up wild, without doubt, never having seen his kind before to-day."

"He will kill us if you take him home," said the chief; "better shoot him."

"No, chief, I could not kill him, but will see he does us no harm. I will make him as tame as a kitten in a month."

"How will you get him home, uncle? We can not carry him, and if you untie his feet he will run away."

"That is what I was just thinking about. I think one of us had better return for the colt, and make him ride."

"Very good, if you can get him on and make him stay there," said the chief.

"Make him go himself: tie him so he cannot run away," suggested Edward.

"I am not sure but that would be the best plan," said Howe. "I am sorry he got that blow on his arm; I am sure it pains him; see how he attempts to raise it, and groans at every motion he makes."

"Do you really think, uncle, he is human? It strikes me he is a monkey, or an orang outang, rather than human."

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"There is neither monkey nor orang-outang in the North American forests. One such snow as now lies on the ground, would kill a myriad of them. I am quite confident of the customer I have to deal with. He is no more nor less than a wild man, whose long exposure to the elements, and total isolation from every human being, has caused the hair to grow over his body. This also explains why he cannot speak like us."

They then endeavored to get him forward, having partly untied his feet so as to allow him to move. The chief, with a stout cord, went forward and endeavored to urge him on, but the wild man refused to move. After exhausting every plan they could devise, they bethought themselves of coercion. Howe accordingly raised a club as if he would strike, when, with a wild cry of alarm, he raised his eyes imploringly, at the same time starting forward, when the chief moving on, gave him to understand he was to follow.

On perceiving what was required of him, and finding it was useless to attempt an escape, he made no further opposition to follow, although it was not safe to be near him as he gnashed with his teeth at every one that approached him.

Reaching the temple without further trouble, Edward called the attention of Jane to the new addition to their family, and said with perfect gravity—

"I really think you have one of the most devoted

woopers; see what a rare prize he has risked life and limb in securing for you, which he begs you will have the kindness to accept from him in token of the love he bears you."

"Why, what a monster it is," said Sidney, walking round and round it. "It is a comical keepsake to give a girl, I must say. Really, chief, you Indians have curious tastes about such matters."

"My brother gave his squaw a cub," retorted the chief, angrily, as they all burst into a laugh at the very idea of the monster being presented to Jane, who was casting furtive glances from it to the chief, and was just beginning to think that she might next be called on to accept a wolf or panther, and was casting in her mind the chances she had in escaping such an infliction, when the chief said, as if divining her thoughts,

"It is not for the antelope. See, Whirlwind kill it," and he raised his tomahawk, and would have driven it into the wild man's skull had not his arm been caught by the trapper.

"Chief! would you be a murderer?" asked the trapper, sternly. "See him crouch! he fears you, and depend upon it, if we use our power over him discreetly, we shall tame him."

The chief dropped his arm and doggedly walked away. Jane brought some nuts and placing them where he could reach them, begged her uncle to unbind the cord around his hand so that he could eat

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them. This he did not think prudent to do until the broken bone was set, which, after a great deal of trouble, he succeeded in doing, effectually binding up the fracture with soft strips of the mountain sheep skin, of which they had an abundance in their store room.

After this was done he was dressed in a tunic and small clothes, the long hair was cut from his face as well as they could with their hunting-knives, to which they had given an extra sharpening for the occasion. Tightening the cord around his feet they unbound the cord that confined his hands, when he seized the nuts, cracked them with his teeth and devoured them with avidity.

"Broil him some steaks, Jane," said the trapper, "I think he is hungry."

"There is a cold haunch of venison in the store room; perhaps he will eat that," said Jane.

"Of course he will; bring it in." Cutting off some thick slices she laid them before him; eyeing them intently for a moment as if not knowing what they were, he cautiously turned them over and then turned his eye with an inquiring look towards Jane, who smiling, cut off another slice and commenced eating it. Seeing the action he cautiously raised his slice to his lips; but as soon as he had tasted it all doubt seemed to vanish, for the venison disappeared rapidly. Jane continued to cut as long as he continued to eat, and when he had done gave him a gourd of water to drink.

“I am afraid we have fed him too highly for his broken arm. There will be danger of fever,” said the trapper. They miscalculated his nature, and supposed causes produced the same effects in a healthful and an enervated constitution. This knowledge gradually dawned on them as day after day went by without exhibiting the least derangement in his system. From the first, he had been docile and obedient to Jane, and when in the most violent paroxysms, if she spoke to him, his anger vanished and his countenance assumed a pleasing expression. He had eyes of clear, deep blue, large, quick and varying as the emotion in his heart. They could see the passion that held sway over him by his eye; for he had not, like his brothers, learned to dissemble and hide the workings of the soul within. Howe had also become a great favorite with him; but he feared the chief, always cowering and uttering a shrill cry of fear if he came near him. Edward was also a favorite and spent much of his time in learning him to pronounce words in which he was quite successful, his powers of imitation seeming to be boundless. After he had pronounced the first the difficulty seemed to vanish, and he was never tired of repeating words after others. The greatest trouble they experienced with him was during his fits of passion. Then he was furious, tore his fur garments in shreds, and threw down every thing in his reach. They had not dared to liberate him on account of these paroxysms of

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anger, over which he did not seem to have the least control. He evidently pined to be free again; for if left to himself he uttered a low moan, while tears chased each other down his weather-beaten cheeks.

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Chapter Fourteenth.

The return of spring—Their thoughts of home—Preparations to continue their journey—The chief insists upon their course being wrong—Escape of the Wild Man—They discover a borough of Prairie Dogs—Traces of Buffalo observable—They suffer from want of water—A party of Indians—A beautiful landscape—A terrific storm—The chief rendered insensible by a stroke of lightning—He recovers and returns to the camp.

THE warm south wind now began to stir the air, while the lengthened days, swelling buds, and melting snows, assured them the patiently waited for and much desired spring had come.

“Home—father, mother, brothers, sister; for, where they are, there is home. Shall we indeed see you and once more be folded in your arms? Shall these wanderings ever cease, of which our souls are weary, and our hearts are sick? Oh! home; thou hope of the weary, and haven of rest, though thy place be the tomb, when shall we see thee!” they sadly and feelingly exclaimed.

Howe and the chief made daily excursions down the valley, in search of wild horses, being anxious to secure each member of their party one for riding and two for pack horses. “For,” said Howe,

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"we will start with good horses, and as the summer is before us, it will go hard with us, if we do not find home before cold weather comes again."

"Before the snows again fall," said the chief, "we will not only have found the son of the great Medicine, but will be back here, never more to leave again."

They were successful in their hunts, and a finer set of horses never wore a halter than those wild ones they had secured, and which twice a day they rode round the forest, in order to tame, and accustom them to carry burthens. They had quite a store of nuts still on hand, packed in bags made of skins, which they lashed on one of the horses' backs; and their jerked and dried meats, together with a quantity of salt that they collected at the salt spring, were packed on another; as was also, half a dozen gourd shells, and one of the kettles they had found, which had, from the many uses to which they applied it, become a necessity. Three or four skins according to their thickness, that had been cured with the hair on, were tightly sewed together for a saddle with small strings, and the whole firmly bound on the horses back by a broad band. By means of the leather they had been enabled to make a very good bridle for Jane and Edward, but Howe and the chief preferred riding with a single band or string for a halter, and this they rarely held in their hands, but went dashing through the forest, their hands

free, and their bodies bent almost to their horses' necks.

With something like the feeling of parting with a friend, they bade adieu to the friendly shelter that had protected them from the wet and cold so many months; the beautiful valley with its park-like trees, many now in bloom; and the smooth verdant sward, its ruins, the sole links of the present with the past, and the only token left that others had lived, known joy and sorrow, and died on a land, supposed to have never, before the present race become its masters, known a civilized people.

They rode gaily forth—Howe with his niece and nephew, the Indian chieftain, the timid Mahnewe with her child, and the wild man, whom they had christened Oudin, from a habit he had of repeating a sound very much like the pronunciation of that word. He had become quite docile, understood many sentences, and could be made to understand by words and signs all that was required of him. He also attempted to use words in conveying his wants to others, and they noticed with pleasure, his fits of passion were less frequent, and when they had passed away he seemed ashamed of them.

Taking their course down the valley, which grew broader and gradually assumed the appearance of a primitive forest, and pursued their way along the stream that kept its course at the base of the mountain on their right until night, when they encamped

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on its bank. At early dawn they again commenced their journey, and leaving the stream, took their course farther to the left, as the chief persisted in his belief that their whole course had been wrong, and that in order to find their friends, they must take another direction. Howe readily assented to this; for, in fact, he was so completely bewildered that he was at a loss what course should be pursued. The forest now began to lose much of its grandeur, the soil grew sandy, and every species of verdure had a stunted and gnarled appearance. At night they encamped on the verge of a broad prairie that stretched far away towards the horizon. They had much difficulty in procuring a supply of water for their horses that night, the surface around where they were having a parched, arid appearance; so different from the fresh verdure of the forest through which they had been travelling, as to cause a feeling of momentary sadness to come over them. This was, however, dispelled by the chief who was highly elated at having struck the prairie.

"Over yonder," said he, stretching his hand towards the wide expanse before them, "our friends await us. Let not our hearts fail us, for before two more suns shall set, we will be among them!"

"So soon! Oh, what joy!" said Jane, transported with the thought.

"They may have left the encampment, and

pursued their journey, if they had the good fortune to get out of the hands of the Crows; and, then, it may be many days before we overtake them."

"No," said the trapper. "If your father is living, he never leaves the ground on which he was encamped, until he ascertains the fate of his children. Probably he has built a cabin, and is cultivating a patch of ground around it. He will never leave it if we do not return. If it is not so, I have a wrong conception of the man."

With the chief for a guard, they lay down to sleep. On awakening the next morning, they found, to their amazement, that Oudin had escaped to the forest. This was a great disappointment to them, after they had taken so much care to keep him safe and tame him, as he gave promise of much intelligence when he should become civilized. There was no help for it, as he had evidently watched his opportunity to escape and, perhaps, was now miles away.

"The ungrateful wretch," said Edward, "to thus run away after we had done our best to civilize him."

"Good!" said the chief; "glad he is gone. He would kill us some day had he remained."

"I think not," said Howe. "But it is a mystery to me how he escaped your vigilant eye and ear. Whirlwind, I think you must have slept during your watch."

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"No," returned the chief, proudly, "Whirlwind never sleeps when on guard. Whirlwind saw Oudin loose his bands, but kept still, and when he stole softly away, did not pursue him."

"What! you saw and permitted his escape?" said the trapper, hurt at the want of good faith in the chief.

"He pined for the forest even as I should pine in the white man's village. What right had we to detain him in a place, and confine him to a life for which he had no inclination? Let him go; he is free, and it is all he craves."

"We had the right of the civilized over the savage. It was our place to instruct and enlighten him, and we have done him a great wrong in permitting him to return to the brutish life he led when we found him."

"Would he be happier when civilized, and had learned to curse the Great Spirit, and drink the white man's fire water? Is the red man happier than he was before the white man came?" asked the Indian, scornfully.

"You know, chief," said the trapper, "no one regrets the wrongs my race have inflicted on your own more than I do. I hope there is a brighter dawn in store for you, and that you may live to bless the coming of my people to your shores."

"The dawn of a never-ending day in the spirit land awaits us—no other. I give you my hand,

brother ; let there be peace between us," said the chief, sadly.

The trapper grasped the offered hand in a moment, and after due preparation, they once more pursued their journey, taking their way directly across the prairie that stretched out before them. Their horses were fleet travellers, and they hurried over the smooth, green sward that covered the prairie, for two hours, when they were brought to a sudden pause by stumbling on a borough of prairie dogs, the ground being tunneled in every direction underneath, leaving a thin crust of earth, through which the horses broke, sending the yelping denizens howling from their dens over the prairie in admirable fright and confusion. Making a circuit round the deceptive traps of the snarling curs, they again struck out for the distant boundary of the prairie, which they hoped soon to reach. At noon they rested by a pool of stagnant water, the first they had seen since morning, which was unfit for use, but of which the horses drank sparingly. The spring grass, now tender and nutritious, was cropped with avidity by the horses, and after a halt of two hours, they again pursued their journey. They soon found the first buffalo they had seen since the preceding autumn, and they hailed the sight of them as an omen of good. About sunset, Whirlwind had the good fortune to kill one, and they deemed it prudent to encamp, as it would be impossible for them to reach the boundary of

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the prairie that night. Steaks constituted the chief feature of their supper, and a rarity they were, having so long been deprived of them, and which, with the addition of the Indian bread-root, made a no mean repast.

They had searched every ravine, cavity, and hollow for more than a mile around for fresh water, but without success. A pool of unwholesome water similar to the one they rested by at noon, being all they found. This was a little relief to the distressed horses, but none to them. Dividing the milk of the goat between them, they lay down to sleep. At dawn, they were again in motion; and after three hours' hard riding, they saw the distant forest, that bounded the prairie, looming against the horizon. Buffalo, antelope, elk, deer, and fowl now became quite numerous, giving indications that the forest was well watered and fertile. With renewed energy, they rode on, and about noon entered the welcome heavily timbered forest—the surface of which was uneven and rolling, sometimes rising in gentle hills, then towering in precipitous cliffs, interspersed with sylvan dells, through which streamlets wound, sometimes in quiet beauty, and again dashing down ledges of rock, lashing their waters to a foam.

Eagerly they drank the waters of the limpid stream for which they as well as their beasts had been suffering. Tired with their rapid marches which the necessity of procuring water had

forced them to take they resolved to rest the remainder of the day. Selecting a spot by the stream, shut in by tall cliffs on either side, they secured their horses and were preparing to spend the night when the chief hurriedly motioned them to be silent. He then with noiseless tread ascended the cliff behind them. Evidently some new danger awaited them, and with terror they clung to each other for protection from the unknown evil. In half an hour he returned. "Indians yonder!" said he, briefly, pointing towards the cliff on the opposite side of the stream.

"Have you seen and do you know them?" asked the trapper, adding, "Perhaps we are nearer home, and they belong to some friendly tribes?"

"Does she?" asked the chief, turning with a scornful gesture towards Mahnewe

The squaw rising from the bank where she had been sitting advanced with the look of sadness entirely dispelled from her face, which was now sunny and radiant with joy.

"Mahnewe," said she, speaking earnestly and rapidly, "is the friend of the white man, and so are her people. Over the hills yonder is their village and these are their hunting grounds. Let not the white man fear; he has saved the life of a wife of the chief, and Mahnewe will answer for his safety."

"Are you sure of what you say?" asked Jane, whose dread of cannibals was the torture of her life

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"Mahnewe cannot mistake the place of her people," said the squaw, looking amused at the evident fright of the young girl.

"I mean of what tribe are they,—are you, Mahnewe?"

"The squaw will not tell," said the chief, tauntingly. "She knows they are the enemies of the Arapahoes. The Snake fears the Eagle."

"Mahnewe is the daughter of a chief, and the wife of a chief. She is not a coward; red blood is in her veins. She is a Snake, and fears not the Arapahoe!"

"Come, this will never answer, chief! Leave Mahnewe to me. Now, tell me truly,—are we on the hunting-grounds of the Snakes, and are you one of that tribe?"

"Mahnewe has said it, and cannot lie," returned the woman earnestly, and with great dignity of manner.

"If this is true, we are saved," said the trapper. "I have friends among that people, and know my way home from their hunting-grounds."

"Are you sure of what you tell us, Mahnewe?" asked Sidney; "for a mistake on this point might involve us all in destruction."

"Are not yonder the hills where my childhood's years were spent? Who can forget the home of their kindred, the place of their birth?"

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blance to others, which vanishes on a nearer approach," observed the trapper.

"Let Mahnewe go to her people, she fears not of finding strangers in their place," said she, in pleasing tones.

"A good idea, uncle, let her go and ascertain positively; but keep the child to prevent treachery," suggested Sidney.

"Mahnewe goes not without her child, if all our lives should depend on her going!" said the squaw, decidedly.

"But consider, Mahnewe, if they should not prove to be your people the child would only hinder your retreat, and if they should be, you can return and claim it in safety," said Howe.

"If my brother listens to the forked tongue of the Snake's squaw, she will guide the warriors of her people to our retreat, where we shall all be slaughtered," said the chief.

"I think not, chief; there is an air of sincerity about the squaw that dispels all thought of treachery in my mind; besides, she is under great obligations to us for saving her own and the child's life. The Indians are not ungrateful you know, chief, and I think we do her wrong to suspect her motives in wanting to go."

"The Snakes are friends of my brother, and will not harm him. Let the squaw conduct the dogs to our camp; Whirlwind knows how to die," returned the chief.

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"They shall not hurt you while we live," said Edward. "Those who are our friends must not offer harm to you, unless they want us their enemies."

"Do not go, Mahnewe," said Jane. "Some harm might result from it for which we should all repent. We shall find out in the course of to-morrow at furthest if these are the Snakes, and if they are you can join them when we are assured no harm can result to us from it."

Mahnewe turned her dark, liquid eyes imploringly to Howe as if to gain his voice in her favor, but they were evidently all against it, and he did not like to take the responsibility.

"Not to-night," said he, kindly, "but perhaps to-morrow you may go."

Sad and sorrowfully she walked away, and they saw how bitter was her disappointment.

"Never mind, child," said Howe, "it will all be well yet. Patience and perseverance will overcome everything. Our first business must be to secure ourselves on the defensive. From the appearance of the Indians, I do not think they suspect our being in this vicinity, and I propose that our horses be secured in this thicket that skirts the bank here, where they can feed and not be detected. We must do without a fire, and one of us had better go cautiously to the top of the cliff yonder, and reconnoitre."

"Whirlwind, will go. Keep watch of the squaw,

or she will betray us." So saying, the chief started on his scouting expedition.

Following the course of the brook until it curved around a sudden bend of the cliff, he crossed it, and striking a narrow ravine overhung on one side by shelving rock, he followed on within its shadows for over a mile, when the ravine began to widen, the sides gradually lessen in height, and which, a mile farther on terminated in rolling acclivities, covered with verdure, while the ground between became a beautiful dell, shaded with tall, stately trees, the branches of which were vocal with a hundred bird voices, filling the air with their melody. The dell was quite free from undergrowth, and the sun was excluded by the primitive trees, that interlaced their branches, making the forest almost impenetrable. The soul of the Indian was entranced, as he gazed on this scene, so wild and silent in its beauty. It was his beau-ideal of the Spirit-Land; and, as he gazed, he drew his hand across his eyes to see if he, indeed, was waking. Still, there lay the landscape before him, with the melody above. At that moment the spell was broken by a herd of deer, leisurely crossing the dell. Drawing his bow, he was on the point of shooting, when recollecting his errand thither, he recovered his prudence; for, should the deer escape with an arrow sticking in it, and be seen by the Indians, he was in search of, it would give them to understand that others were near them.

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Cautiously he proceeded across the enchanting landscape, and, after an hour's walk, discovered an opening in the forest. "Here," thought the chief, "I shall get a glimpse of the dogs, and if, as I think, they are Snakes, it will go hard with me, if I don't carry off one scalp at least," and his eyes glared with the ferocity of a tiger. He was as much a savage still at heart as ever. Nearing the opening, he saw before him a lake to which he approached by a smooth grassy plat, of several rods wide, dotted here and there with mosses, ferns, and beautiful wild flowers, with an occasional tree shorn of half its limbs which lay scattered along the water's edge. The opposite bank skirted the base of the hills they had seen from the encampment, rising in peaks, barren and rocky on their summits. The water of the lake was transparent and calm, and looked as placid as though nothing had ever penetrated the lonely spot in which it was nestled, to mar its surface. The chief on emerging into the open glade, saw the sky had become flecked with clouds that were scudding across the heavens, in a thousand fantastic waves, while just above the peak of the topmost hill over the lake, a black cloud, heavy and portentous with a gathering storm, was rising slowly, leaving a long streak of light unbroken cloud against the horizon.

The chief surveyed the lake, the hills and the forest from which he had emerged, with the sur-

rounding scenery long and earnestly, and then murmured to himself in a tone, that betokened a sorrowful certainty; "It is not true, these are not the hunting grounds of the Snakes; they have none so good and beautiful as these. We are lost! lost! in the interminable wilds of the West, where hope or deliverance may never come." And the stern but proud chieftain bowed his head in despair for a moment: then stretching his hands towards the sky, which dimly shone through the dark rolling clouds, he cried: "Father, Manito! why hast thou left thy child to wander from his people, and cast a spell* over his feet so that he cannot return?—Has he done an evil in thy sight, that he is thus punished?—Great Spirit, Manito! thy prophet awaits thy sign!"

As he concluded, a peal of thunder that shook the ground, burst from the clouds above, followed by a blinding flash of lightning, which was quickly followed by another, and another; and, as the wind came sweeping down in angry blasts, it seemed as if every element in nature were warring against each other. The chief stood unmoved on the spot, his arms still raised, his lips parted but motionless, stupified by the storm around him.

* The Indians imagine that good and evil spirits can cast a spell over any person they desire, and while under it, they have no control over their own actions, but are obliged to follow the inclination of the spirit by which the spell is cast.

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The Great Spirit he imagined had spoken to him angrily in the storm; and superstitious as all the Indians are, it filled his soul with horror. Large drops of rain soon began to fall, the wind rose furiously, lashing the water on the lake into huge waves, while wild fowls and birds darted frightened through the air. Still the chieftain stood there. What was now the storm to him? Was not the Great Spirit angry? and as the rain fell on his upturned face in torrents, the lightnings descended, shivering a tree near where he stood, and stunning him with the shock. He was prostrated, and lay on the green sward motionless, the rain forming a pool about him, which was every moment augmented as the torrents came down upon him.

When consciousness again returned, the sky was clear, without a single cloud to mar its serenity. It was night, and the heavens were dotted with a thousand gems that apparently smiled at the forlorn appearance of the half-drowned chief as he slowly dragged himself from his unsought bath. The lake was as placid as when he first saw it, and there was nothing to remind him of the commotion that had raged around him, save the shivered tree and his saturated garments and hair.

"It is the abode of the Evil Spirits," said he, "and they have lured me hither." Starting in the direction whence he came, he saw within half a mile, a camp-fire dimly burning as if struggling with wet fuel. Highly elated at the discovery, as

it plainly showed by their lighting a fire that they were unaware of others being around, he crept noiselessly towards them. Approaching within a few rods he saw they were a party of about thirty, who were evidently on a hunt. They were not Snakes; he was sure of that; but of what tribe they were he could not tell. Evidently not of any tribe of which he had any knowledge, and they had a stronger resemblance to the cannibals than to any others he had seen. With this information he returned about midnight, much to the relief of the rest at the camp, who had feared he had been captured, and were in great suspense for his safety.

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Chapter Fifteenth.

They endeavor to conceal themselves from the Indians—They are discovered—A frightful rencounter—Escape of Mahnewe—They pursue their journey in the night and take a wrong direction—Discovery of a river, over which they cross—Came to a prairie—Desolate appearance of the country—Approach a sandy desert and conclude to cross it—They provide themselves with ample provisions and set out over the cheerless waste.

ALL the next day they remained concealed in order to escape observation, and to allow the strange Indians to go far enough away so that they could proceed without being molested. Which way to journey next was a difficult question to them, but as it would be quite impossible to cross the barren, rocky hills before them, they finally determined to go down the stream until they came to the terminus of the hills that the chief had seen, and instead of crossing over as he had done to strike out into the woodland beyond the dell, and take their course on as far as it extended. Having made everything ready for an early start the next morning, they laid down to sleep. About midnight they were awakened by the blinding glare of torches, and found three hideous savages bending over them with raised tomahawks. Comprehending at

once the nature of the assault, they sprang to their feet and attacked their assailants. The chief had the fortune to cleave the scull of the one nearest him at the first blow of his tomahawk, and turning, saw another who had the trapper at disadvantage, with tomahawk raised above his head, and with a dexterous blow he disabled the arm raised with the murderous weapon. In a moment he would have killed the Indian had not the screams of Jane, whom the remaining savage attempted to carry off in his arms after knocking Sidney senseless with his war-club, made him forget all else, and spring to her rescue. The trapper, who was not hurt, made a blow at his assailant, but he evaded it and fled into the forest where Howe thought it not prudent to follow, as he imagined a whole ambuscade of Indians might be in waiting to seize upon him. Hastening to the assistance of Whirlwind, he saw him closed hand to hand with the savage, their hunting-knives being their only weapons, both having dropped their tomahawks. Howe saw they were equally matched, and fearing the chief would get a bad wound, raised a club and dealt the savage a blow that felled him to the ground. The chief soon despatched him, and then they turned to Sidney and Edward. Already were they reviving, not having received any serious wounds. The copious gourds of water that Jane had sprinkled over them were all the care they needed. They now bethought themselves of Mahnewc. She was

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gone; not a vestige or clue remaining of her or the child.

"Betrayed!" said the chief with compressed lips and glistening eyes.

"Oh, no; she has never betrayed us!" said the trapper. "I fear there was more than three of the savages, and they have stolen her."

"It is horrible! they will kill her! Oh, uncle, cannot we pursue and overtake them?" said Jane.

"I will go and bring her scalp," said the chief. "She is a foe and has led the dogs to murder her benefactors."

"No; we shall have to leave her to her fate," said Howe. "One of the Indians has escaped to give the alarm, and perhaps within this hour or as soon as daylight, the whole tribe will be down upon us. Our only hope for our own lives is in flight. Our horses may out-travel them if they defer the attack until daylight. Fortunately for us the horses are fresh and strong."

Hastily mounting in the darkness, with no light save the faint glimmer of the stars, they plunged into the unknown wilds before them, Whirlwind leading them as a guide. But instead of taking the direction they had determined on after a long consultation the day before, they mistook the route in their haste and the darkness, and fled north-west of it; but they pursued their way in silence.

At last the welcome day broke, and halting to take a drink themselves and water their horses,

they remounted, and galloped rapidly through the forest. In about two hours they came to the bank of a river, the largest they had seen in their wanderings. Entering this in order to throw their pursuers off the track, they rode up it as long as the river continued wide, but as it contracted the water became too deep to be breasted by the horses, and they crossed to the opposite bank. Here, to their great sorrow, their goat and her kid gave out, and no urging could induce them to proceed. The animals had evidently gone as far as they were capable, and with sorrow they turned them loose and left them. The goat's milk had been such an indispensable addition to their store that they felt as if parting with one of their main reliances in leaving her behind.

Still they pursued their way, avoiding the hills as much as possible until the sun was high in the heavens; when becoming weary with their hard ride, and faint for want of food, they halted in a spot where a cool spring gushed from beneath a huge boulder that looked as if it had been hurled from a rocky acclivity above to its bed. Tethering their horses where they could feed, they set a guard and began with all haste to eat such as their provision bags afforded. Cooking was out of the question, for the smoke would point out the exact spot where they were, a thing they were most desirous to hide.

They now calculated they were thirty miles from the place of their last encampment, and beyond the

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danger of being overtaken, provided their enemies had no horses, which they thought quite probable. However, they deemed it imprudent to rely on such a supposition; and after an hours' halt, they again moved on, pausing occasionally to refresh themselves, until towards sunset, when the ground became more even and the soil more sandy. Here they noticed the vegetation was becoming more sparse, what trees there were having a stunted and gnarled appearance; after a long search they found a spring of pure water, by which they encamped for the night, being now relieved from the fear of an attack; for, had they been ever so well mounted they could not have made a greater distance than they had, and having the advantage of a start of their pursuers they calculated on a certain escape. They were unmolested through the night; and early in the morning they again set forth. At noon where they halted the face of the country was much as it was when they set out in the morning; but, after a rapid ride in the afternoon, the vegetation entirely disappeared except the rank grass, leaving a broad prairie before them. Here they paused, resolving to rest themselves before they proceeded farther.

Alas! had they only known which way to proceed,—what direction would lead them to their home and friends, it would have been well with them. But they had pursued so many different directions they had become bewildered, and all

courses seemed to them alike. The next and the next day passed over and found them undecided whether it was best to cross over the prairie or not; but the third day they concluded to do so, and refreshed and invigorated they set out. Two days of their journey they found occasional supplies of water, and on the third towards noon they came to its boundary. The forest skirting the border of the prairie was a clump of stunted trees, and there was very little grass or shrubs growing around. Everything looked forlorn and desolate about them, offering but scanty subsistence for themselves or beasts.

Following the forest down a short distance they found a tolerable camping ground where they spent the night. The next day on riding through the forest about three miles they found that it terminated, leaving a field of sand without a blade of grass or shrub growing upon it. It was nothing but sand, drear and desolate as far as the eye could reach. They were stupefied, and gazed sadly on the barren waste before them.

"This," at last said the trapper, "is the desert of which we have heard by vague rumors and traditions, but of which, until now, I never believed existed. We have undoubtedly made our way on the opposite side, and it will be necessary for us to either go across or round it in order to get home. The nearest course is across, and even when there, we shall be many hundred miles from home."

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Jane could hardly repress the sob that arose as her uncle announced the dismal prospect that lay before them, and even hope almost died in her heart. For the first time she entertained the thought that there was a probability of ending their days in those unknown, unbroken regions. Whirlwind saw the emotion that was stirring her heart, for he was a keen observer, and read human nature with that accuracy peculiarly characteristic of the Indian. Placing himself by her side, he said in a mild tone—

“Why is the antelope troubled? is not her warrior by her side to make her a new home? The wilderness encircles us on every side, and the Great Spirit makes a barrier of sand that we cannot escape. It is his will that we remain; let us not attempt to leave the forest.”

“Look here, chief, let Jane alone,” said Sidney, angrily, as he attempted to draw her from Whirlwind.

“Sidney,” said Howe, in an authoritative tone, “how long will it be before you learn prudence?”

An angry retort rose to his lips, but catching the pleading eye of the young girl fixed upon him, he remained silent and walked away.

“Come, chief, what say you, shall we strike the desert or not.”

“Were I to consult my own inclination, I should say not, but return to our quarters, and prepare for winter.”

"That is out of the question, chief; go home we must," spoke up Edward, with a tone of energy and decision quite new to him.

"Yes, go home! we not only *must*, but *will*," said Sidney.

"If we can get home," added Jane, sadly.

"We will do our best," said Howe, in a cheerful tone. He saw, too, that he had an arduous trial to contend with in the angry feelings Sidney entertained for the chief, which to his credit the chief never seemed to notice or resent. He knew the temper of the chieftain well, and knew him patient and forgiving, but knew him also unrelenting in his hate, when his anger was aroused. Howe's policy was to keep up a unity of feeling and purpose between every member of his little band, as he well knew a division would weaken their exertions, and cripple their efforts to extricate themselves from the trials that every day were thickening and becoming more complicated around them.

A consultation ensued, in which they came to the conclusion to cross the desert; but, as tradition said there was not a drop of water or a blade of grass to be had between the two boundaries, and that the desert was two days' journey across, they retreated to a spot where grass and water could be collected in quantities sufficient to last them the three days they would be in crossing the barren waste. Happily they were well provided with horses, having still in their possession those

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that had been appropriated to the use of Oudin and Mahnewe, as well as the two pack horses. Gathering large quantities of grass by cutting it up with their hunting knives, they bound it in compact bundles; then taking some skins, they sewed them up, making them tight and secure for water-bags. The morning of the third day found them ready for their perilous adventure. Each one taking a water-bag, a bundle of grass and provision on his own horse, sufficient to last them through the first day, which, together with the four horses heavily laden with provision, water and grass, they thought quite sufficient to last them, double the time they intended being on the desert.

Hope again gilded the future to the wanderers as they surveyed with satisfaction the result of their labors; and, when they turned their horses towards the sandy plain before them, their hearts were elated, and a feeling of security against its terrors made them even gay and joyous. It is well the future is always hid from view; were it not, the heart would faint and shrink from its trials when called to endure them, and instead of bravely contending with them, it would be palsied and weakened by fear.

Chapter Sixteenth.

They set out over the Desert—Encampment in the sand—An island in the sand discovered—Singular appearance of rocks—Human skeletons found in the sand—A mirage—Dreary prospects—Some of their horses give out—They arrive at an oasis—Beautiful scenery—They come to a lake—Singular geological features, They discover and explore a cavern in which they come upon mysterious implements—Gold found in abundance—The cavern supposed to have been an ancient mine—Its remarkable features.

THE sky was overcast with clouds as they entered the desert, which broke and finally cleared away before the day was half spent. It had been their intention to ride as fast as their horses could travel; but they found that travelling in the sand, where, at every step the horses' hoofs sank above the fetlock, was easier talked of than performed, and to their dismay, they found themselves reduced to a walk, by the time they lost sight of the forest whence they started. A feeling of loneliness now crept involuntarily over them which deepened by finding the desert bestrewed with bones bleached in the sun, of those who had probably been lost in this barren waste, and had perished with hunger and thirst. The mid-day sun now poured its rays

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on their unprotected heads, causing a feeling of dizziness, while its glittering reflection from the sand almost blinded their sight. At sunset, when about to halt for the night, they caught a faint glimmer of a body rising against the horizon, brought into relief by the expiring light. "A forest!" they all shouted joyously at the sight. But, as they were now fatigued and hungry, and the object ahead, if a forest, was apparently miles away, they concluded to spend the night where they were. That night the sand was their bed, the skins they used for saddles their pillows, and the star-gemmed canopy above their only covering. At dawn they were again on their march, and as they proceeded the objects they had seen the night before faint and indistinctly, became more clearly defined, having the appearance of uneven bodies, scattered over a considerable extent of territory. In a few hours, they came to them and found, instead of a forest, a singular mass of rocks, sometimes rising in smooth perpendicular columns, some of them capped by a huge flat rock laying as regularly as if placed there by the hand of mechanical skill, and then again they were thrown down and lay scattered around as if by some violent throe of nature. Though there were vast fields of rock, not a shrub, nor any sign of vegetation could be seen. All was desolate, sand and rock. What struck them as being very singular about these rocks, was the fact that, they were divided into two distinct

parts, leaving a pathway through them fifty feet wide, unincumbered by boulder or stones, and which was smooth and even. Guiding their horses through this defile, which seemed like a portal to the desert beyond, they could not refrain from the thought that the hand of man had built here a barrier, to prevent the incursion of some foe; still these rocks were so massive, rude, and in such gigantic proportions, it almost set at defiance the supposition that human agency could have placed them there. Riding further on a few miles, they came upon the skeleton of an Indian, half buried in the sand, entirely denuded of flesh, and laying as if he had calmly lain down to die. Shuddering at the spectacle, they rode on a few paces, when another, and another, met their sight, until they had counted fifteen skeletons. They had probably been a party lost in the desert, and being unable to extricate themselves had miserably perished in that dreary spot.

Surveying these a moment, and then with a glance at their own store of provisions, they urged on their horses until night, when they were obliged to halt, for their animals exhibited signs of giving out from fatigue, although no indication of the expected forest, with its supply of water and game, was in view, as they had anticipated. Nothing but a plain of sand, occasional rocky beds, and huge boulders scattered among them were seen. Well it was for them that they had taken an extra

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supply of provisions, or they, too, might have perished by a death more lingering and terrible than cannibals could inflict. With heavy hearts and dread forbodings when light again dawned, they once more resumed their journey, the desert retaining the same appearance it had the day before, until towards night, when, to their joy! a forest loomed against the horizon. Forgetting their fatigue, they urged their wearied beasts on, mile after mile, until darkness hid every object in its mantle of gloom. Still on they went, till the horses paused, trembling and tottering, ready to fall. They could proceed no farther. Giving them water and grass, they ate their own supper and lay down to sleep, with the expectation of being in full view of the forest when daylight should break upon them.

Worn with fatigue they slept soundly, forgetting for a few hours, the terrible anxiety that tortured them when awake, and the sun had already risen before they awoke from dreaming of beautiful forests, through which clear streams went murmuring, and where game of every description, from the huge buffalo to the tiny singing bird, abounded. Rousing themselves, their first thought was of the forest, and looking around not a vestige was to be seen, and the truth gradually dawned upon them as they gazed horror stricken in each other's bloodless faces, that they had seen a mirage, and that, instead of terminating, it betokened that the

desert extended far beyond them. Seeing the panic into which they were all thrown by this discovery, Howe said in a cheerful tone—

“Come! come! this will never do: we have provision and water enough for us and the horses for to-day, and we can easily divide, and make it last two days. We are caught and must do the best we can; at least we can never free ourselves, if we stand still and bewail our fate.”

“Oh, uncle! this is terrible,” said Edward, gazing abstractedly around where nothing but desolation met his eye.

“We can do no better than help ourselves out of it,” said Jane, encouragingly. “Be a man, Edward, and, doing your best, take your chance with the rest.”

“That is a brave girl,” said Howe, with a nod of approval. “Let us be courageous; the darkest hour of the night is that just before the dawn. Is it not so, chief?”

“Always,” answered the chief. “I have heard our old men speak of these deserts, but they are more vast and dreary than even the report portrayed them. But if we would escape, every moment is precious, and we must haste away.”

“Alas! a new evil had visited them, for on going to their horses they found them lame, stiff, and hardly able to move. One refused to rise from the bed of sand, and no effort could move him. Constant travel in the desert beneath the

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burning sun, had done the work for him ; he was useless, and to save his dying from thirst and starvation, they killed him. They did that with sorrowful hearts, well knowing if they waited to take him with them, it would be death to them, and that he could never escape from his girdle of sand, if left alive.

The other horses soon began to show sufficient activity to warrant their travelling, and again they rode on. That day they had sufficient to last them, but they could not make it hold out longer unless they put themselves on short allowance. Halting at noon, where not a ray of deliverance shone upon them any more than their first day out, they concluded to kill the three spare horses in order to save the water and grass for the rest. Selecting the three that exhibited the greatest signs of lassitude, they killed them. Confident now of holding on their course another day, they took their luggage on the horses they rode, and again set out. A copious shower of rain fell before night which was a great relief, as it refreshed their heated bodies as well as their horses, and cooled the temperature of the sand, from which they had been greatly annoyed by its scattering, and sometimes almost blinding their eyes, causing them to become inflamed and exceeding painful. That night also rain fell ; but making a covering of the skins they used for saddles, they managed to get a few hours' sleep, and as it served to refresh them and the

horses, and knowing that rain in the desert is of rare occurrence, they felt as if it was truly providential. They also found their horses in the morning in better condition than they had expected, and with a faint hope that they might reach a forest that day, they set out expecting that, in all probability, they were near land well moistened, and the showers they had received had been only the extension of a larger one that had passed over a tract of country supplying moisture for plenteous evaporation. This they knew the desert could never do, and it caused their spirits to elate with hope. In a few hours more a small speck was seen circling in the air. "A bird! a bird!" cried the chief, pointing at the object. Howe's quick eye caught the sight of it, when it disappeared, and was lost in the distance.

"Thank Heaven," cried Jane, fervently; "we shall be saved at last!" and tears of joy filled eyes that trials could not dim.

"Yes, we are near a forest," said the chief; "the dark hour is passing; may the day in its brightness repay us for its darkness."

"Amen to that!" said Sidney; "and may the day bring no evil worse than the night."

"What can be worse," indignantly asked Edward, "than the terrible days we have spent on these burning sands."

"Do not repine, Edward," said Jane, gently "Those bleaching bones we passed indicate that

others have fared worse than we have; for *we* still live."

"They were nothing but Indians, and they get used to such things," said Sidney.

"Does the young brave think the Indians cannot feel?" asked the chief, reproachfully. "He will not repine at his lot, because red blood flows in his veins, and he scorns to be a coward. Those that wail most feel the least; they throw their griefs to the winds; but the Indian is too proud to be pitied, and hides the grief in his heart, singing his war-song to cover its workings."

"You make heroes of your people, chief," said Sidney, touched by the deep tone of feeling with which these words were uttered.

"We are warriors and braves," returned the chief.

About noon the waving tops of trees became visible, strangely intermixed with bold outlines which they found on a nearer approach to be rocks. This time the trees proved to be real; and as they approached, the forest grew more clearly defined, and towards night to their inexpressible joy, they came to patches on which were found sparse and stunted vegetation. Halting, they used their last water for themselves and horses, consumed their last provisions, and lay down to rest, until daylight should enable them to explore the place around them. Alas! when the rising sun lit up the scenery around them, they saw that they had not

gained the main land, but had come to an oasis of about three miles in circumference, much of which was quite barren, and the rest covered with coarse grass, large beds of slate rock, with here and there a huge boulder, and the whole intermixed with scattered trees that looked as if they had struggled hard to maintain existence. The whole tribe of cactæ was here represented, stretching its long snake-like arms over the rocky place, giving it a peculiarly ugly appearance. Fortunately, a few shrubs grew scattered over the oasis, on which their horses might feed, and turning them loose to glean where they could find anything, being well assured they would not of their own accord, enter the desert, they dispersed in search of water and something to satisfy their own hunger. For, having been on short allowance the day before, they did not relish the idea of fasting any length of time.

Edward and Jane took a course to the right, while the rest separately took courses in different directions, with the understanding that they were to communicate with each other by hallooing, if they found either water, roots, or game. The children's course at first was over a pebbly bed, which terminated in a disjointed mass of sandstone, which towered up to a considerable height, and was one of the objects that had attracted their attention from the desert. Ascending to the top of this with much difficulty, a vision of loveliness met their sight—a vision which gladdened the

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hearts of the half famished children. A vale lay before them shaded by luxuriant foliage, and covered with a green sward, in the centre of which, a lake spreading over about three acres of ground slept in tranquil beauty, its waters dotted with numerous water fowl of brilliant plumage.

They stood for some time silently contemplating the scene before them; their hearts were too full for words, and a feeling of gratefulness that they had been led thither, made them forget for the time all they had suffered.

"Shout, Edward, and call them to us," said Jane, as the trance-like feeling that first seized her, wore away.

The hallo of Edward rung out on the clear air, answered the next moment by another, and then another, until all had been apprized of their discovery. Guided by Edward's voice, they all arrived on the ledge of rocks in half an hour, and as they, in turn, looked down on the scene below, they were almost overcome with joy, at the sight of the deliverance at hand. They soon descended the rocky ledge, which they found exceedingly hazardous, as the pebbles gave way under their feet, often precipitating them on the sharp stones below. They heeded not their difficulties, for the vale lay invitingly before them, and with their eyes on that, they finally reached the bottom in safety, and entered the welcome shade. They found the soil

was rich and productive, teeming with vegetation, and the woods filled with fowl. No signs of other game were around, but they saw the lake was filled with fine fish, which were so tame that they swam close to the water's edge.

"Build a fire; we all want breakfast," cried the chief, exultingly, as, with stick in hand, he waded out a few feet, striking right and left among the finny tribes. In a few minutes a number of large fish, stunned by the blows, turned over on their sides, and floated on the surface, when they were caught up by the chief, and thrown on the shore. A plentiful repast was soon ready, and having satisfied their hunger, they turned their thoughts to their future.

"We will encamp here," said the trapper, "until we shall have recruited ourselves and horses. Our luggage, though it is so scanty, is of incalculable value to us, and must be brought thither also."

"How the poor horses will relish this tender grass and cool water?" said Jane.

"I am going for them," said the chief. "Let one of the young braves go with me, and all may be brought at once." Sidney and the chief set out on their way, following the base of the ledge of rocks in order to get around it, when they met the horses making their way towards them at a rapid gait. The instinct of the wild prairie horse had caused them to scent the water, for which

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they were making by the nearest route. Poor things! they were worn almost to skeletons, lame and crippled, and were pitiable sights to look upon.

Building themselves a hut to shield them from rain and dew, they made preparations to remain a number of days before they again ventured on the dreary desert. They supposed by the large quantities of fowl, that they were at no great distance from main land; but as this was mere conjecture, they dared not rely upon it. Past experience, dearly purchased, warned them to presume on nothing, and that their own boasted woodcraft was of little avail, under difficulties like those in which they were now placed.

For the three first days of their sojourn at that place they were so fatigued and debilitated that they were content to keep quiet by the lake, the delightful repose which they enjoyed so intensely, after the harrassing terrors of the desert, strengthened the spirits of the wanderers, as well as their bodies.

The fifth and sixth days they began to explore farther around the place, and the seventh they had become quite strengthened, so magically had the pure water and an abundance of fish and fowl, together with the numerous roots which they found, acted upon them. They found this lake had no streams entering or running from it, and that no motion stirred its placid bosom save a singular circular one

that never changed from the slow monotony of its course.

In one of their rambles they had noticed a singular opening in the rocks that formed the ridge; but something else attracting their attention at the moment, they had passed it by without a close inspection of it. A week afterwards they chanced to be in its vicinity, and they at once resolved to explore the cavern, for such the opening they had no doubt would lead them to. Providing themselves with torches, they ventured in, the chief leading the way. The opening was about eight feet high and three broad, resembling a doorway; and holding their torches close to the edge they found it had been actually cut, as distinct traces of where the rock had been broken off were still visible. Passing over the rubbish that had accumulated at the mouth, they came to a solid rocky floor quite smooth as if worn so by constant friction. For about fifty feet the passage had a uniform appearance, the sides and roof looking as if recently cut by a mason's hand. The passage suddenly terminated, and they found themselves in a place about six feet wide, and running parallel to the ledge. How long it was they could not see, as it extended in two directions. Taking the one leading to the right they had gone but a few feet when a peculiar glittering in the opposite side of the cave arrested their attention, which on close inspection they pronounced to be particles of gold mixed with the rock.

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They found, as they proceeded, that they were ascending gradually, and that the passage was of a uniform height; and, as the particles of gold were plainly visible imbedded in the rock, they came to the conclusion that they had come to an ancient gold mine, and the tunnel had indeed been cut by human skill.

They soon came to the terminus of this part, and when they returned they resolved to explore the cavern at the left, being very anxious to do so. The chief, however, dissented, for he had been troubled from the moment they had discovered the particles of gold. At first he peremptorily refused to go with them until he found they were resolved to go even if he remained behind. Then yielding a reluctant consent he took his torch and led the way. This passage was precisely similar to the other, with the exception that it descended gradually while the other ascended. Here too the particles of gold were discovered glittering in the rock that formed one of the sides of the passage; and, as none of the precious ore was visible on the roof or other side, they supposed a vein had run through the rock in a dip formed by an upheaval of the rock, and which having been discovered by some unknown persons, the ledge had been tunneled and the ore taken from its hidden bed.

Following the tunnel a short distance, they came to a single step, about two feet high, which descending, they found others at regular intervals of about

ten feet apart, until they had counted fifty of them. The sides along which the vein ran bore indications of having yielded vast quantities of ore, with still enough to repay the labor of crushing the quartz in which it was imbedded, and extracting the gold. The steps now terminated, and the passage branched in two directions at right angles with each other. In one of the branches they found the continuation of the vein of precious ore, and followed it up. Instead of its descending, they found it perfectly level, the passage having the same width and height as at its mouth for a considerable distance, when it suddenly opened into a large room, which they found, by pacing it, to be three hundred feet long, and two hundred and twenty wide, in the longest and widest parts. Its shape was very singular, jutting out here and there, and as the glare of the torches lighted up the gloom, millions of particles from every crevice and jutting point of its rugged sides, reflected back their light in flashing rays.

"The abode of evil spirits!" cried the chief, in great alarm, with more agitation perhaps than he would have exhibited before a shower of darts aimed at him, or than at the stake of an enemy. "Fly!" he continued, "before it is too late! The anger of the Evil Spirit is fearful, when aroused; fly! fly! and save yourselves," and, with a vice-like grasp, he caught up Jane and bounded up the passage. Howe saw the movement, but the chief had been so quick,

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that he had made half the distance of the passage before he could overtake, and get ahead of him so as to block up the passage.

"Put her down!" thundered the indignant trapper, with menacing gestures to the chief.

Sitting her on her feet, he glanced first at the trapper who stood before him with compressed lips and flashing eyes, then at the terrified girl, from her around the cavern, as if he expected a demon to pounce upon them at every moment.

"Chief! this is hardly what I should have expected from you!" said the trapper, angrily.

The chief seemed stupefied, and stood gazing around him like one suddenly demented.

"No violence shall be offered to Jane, while I live," continued the trapper. "I am her guardian here."

"And after you, I, and her brother," said Sidney, defiantly.

"Don't be too hard on the chief," spoke up, Edward. "He intended no wrong, and, judging from his actions, I take it, he thought he was doing her a great kindness by securing her from some imagined danger. What say you, Jane? is the chief culpable or not?"

"He was frightened, I presume," returned the young girl, evasively.

"I am not a coward; yet, who is there that dare contend with invisible spirits?" said the chief, in an humble tone. "This is an evil place,

and the evil spirits that have their abode here, have stirred up strife among us already! Come, let us hurry away, else we shed each others' blood!"

"Take my hand, chief, and forgive my anger," said the trapper, kindly. "I was wrong to deal so harshly with prejudices taught at your mother's knee, and which are inherent with your very nature."

"That is right, uncle," said Edward. "Jane and I have long been under the impression that it is no way to eradicate prejudice by becoming angry with it. This," he added, addressing Sidney, "is quite as much for your benefit as any one's."

"There, the evil spirit is at work again!" said Jane, as a cutting retort fell from Sidney. "Come," she added, "I have not seen half enough of that wonderful room; let us return and give it a thorough exploration."

"No, no," said the chief, in alarm, "do not go, we have seen too much already."

"I shall go, and so shall Jane," said Sidney, decidedly, "you can return any moment you like; but your heathen prejudices shall never mar our pleasure."

"Oh, yes, chief," said Edward, kindly, "we must explore the cavern. If bad spirits preside there, they will not harm us; you need not go; we shall think none the less of you for returning."

"We are desirous to give this cave a thorough exploration, and while doing this, you get us some

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ducks for dinner," said the trapper. "We do not desire you to accompany us since you have such a great repugnance for doing so."

"Does the white chief think his brother is a coward, that he asks him to desert him in the hour of danger? If you go and rouse their anger, I go also to share your fate; though that be death!" So saying, the chief caught up some broken rocks with which the floor was scattered in one hand, and drawing his hunting knife in the other, cried out in a tone of desperation, "lead on; I am prepared for them!"

This last act of the chief of arming with missile and knife to fight invisible spirits was too much for Edward's risibility, and the consequence was a shout of laughter in which they all joined save the chief. The merry, mocking tones reverberated through the cavern, swelling and gathering strength from a thousand echoes that threw back the sound until it seemed as if a legion of demons were mocking them from every crevice and niche of the passage. They were silent for the moment, and glanced around them in terror. The superstition of the savage had not been without its influence, although reason refused to acknowledge it.

"You are not frightened at an echo, are you? why I believe you are all cowards, scared out of your wits at your shadows!" said Howe, in a subdued voice; for, in truth, he did not care himself to awaken the echoes needlessly.

Entering the room they had left so unceremoniously, they found the vein of ore had probably once covered the whole area and had been about seven feet thick, as the vein of pure ore commencing about two feet from the bottom of the cavern extended that height and then it was mixed with quartz rock three feet further up. The whole cavern was about eighteen feet high, and had the appearance of being entirely artificial. The children could not repress a cry of astonishment as they comprehended the vastness of the hidden treasures before them—a treasure sufficient to enrich kingdoms. It might, for aught they knew, cover miles in extent around of the same thickness; certainly what was visible was unparalleled for purity and extent by any that had ever been discovered. Heaps of quartz rock, in which particles of gold glittered, strewed the bottom of the cavern as if they had been blocked out and cast aside in digging the purer metal. Among these were found a number of chisels made of a metal which, by reason of its being so corroded, they could not make out. Mallets of stone were also found, looking as if but lately used. These instruments had cheated time of its prey, and lay there in their pristine distinctness a link binding the past with the future. They also found an instrument which was something like our pick-axe, and had evidently been used in dislodging the treasure from its bed.

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Great Spirit destroyed in his anger!" said the chief.

"Rather say, the treasure-house where the natives obtained their treasure before our people came to this continent, and for which misguided Europeans put thousands to death for not revealing the locality where the golden deposit lay!" said Howe.

While carelessly tumbling over the masses of rock that lay scattered over the floor, they came to a circular helmet of copper, similar to the one they had previously found; and by its side a javelin resembling that found sticking in the petrified body in the cavern through which they escaped from the cannibals. Stimulated by these discoveries they began to search with earnestness and were soon rewarded by the discovery of a quantity of bones, some of them still quite perfect, sufficiently so for them to ascertain that they were those of a man, and that he had been of extraordinary size. Pushing their exertions farther on they came across a massive urn of pure gold bearing the appearance of having been cut out of a solid lump. The brim was elaborately wrought, as were also the handles and the three feet on which it rested, leaving a space running through the middle perfectly plain with the exception of several beautifully carved hieroglyphics that were placed with great regularity and precision around the centre. The trapper took the urn in his hands, and after clearing it from dust and mould held it close to the torches

and examined the hieroglyphics long and minutely and laying it down, said—

“Could we tell the meaning of these characters we should have more light to illuminate the gloom that enshrouds the history of a nation that once held this continent and enriched their coffers from this cavern. This urn has been the work of the ancestors of the old man of Lake Superior. The characters on it are identical with those he showed me, and may the day be not far distant when we may be enabled to read these records of the past.”

“How beautiful!” they all remarked, as this discovery came to light, with the exception of the chief, who sullenly stood apart regarding the discoverers with unmistakable disapproval.

“This must be ours,” said Sidney; “if we should ever find our way home it would be a great curiosity sufficient to repay us for some of the suffering we have endured.”

“Oh, yes; this is too beautiful to leave here any longer,” said Jane. “We can wrap it in grass and furs and carry it on the horses very well.”

“I agree with you in this,” said Howe, “and think it would be a sacrifice of the beautiful to leave such a mark of civilization in this lonely spot.”

“My brother forgets himself, as he will sacrifice the lives of the children of the great Medicine for a paltry love of a glittering bauble,” said the chief, sadly.

"We must have our way this once, chief," said Howe, good humoredly, "but promise you faithfully whatever else we may find may remain."

"That you may safely promise, for nothing more rich and beautiful could be found," said Jane.

"Unless we find another chair of state set with star stones, as the chief calls them, but which I believe are veritable diamonds," said Sidney.

On further examination numerous pieces of pottery were found, and also more bones, javelins and helmets, but nothing different from what they had seen. Leaving this vast treasure-house, they retraced their steps to the place where the other avenue branched off, and there depositing their treasures, prepared to explore this part of the cavern. This passage they found grew wider as they advanced about a hundred feet, when it enlarged into a lofty, spacious room remarkable for nothing except being of an extraordinary size, and faintly lighted by an opening in the top which permitted a few rays of light to penetrate and soften the gloom below. This part of the cavern was evidently a natural freak of nature, for they found no traces of hewn rock or precious ore. From the opposite side of the cavern they found a low opening which, on entering, they gradually descended winding round in a curve, the passage enlarging a little until two could pass abreast without stooping. Following this a distance of nearly

two hundred feet they were astonished to hear the roar of water which sounded like the breaking of surf against rocks. The sound grew louder and louder as they advanced, until its roar filled the cavern with stunning echoes reverberating along its hidden passages. The cavern now became more lofty and wider, the sides more rugged, and at last it terminated on the brink of a stream which boiled and lashed its rock-girt sides with its troubled waters. To attempt to penetrate further would have been dangerous, and they retraced their steps. They concluded that they had found a connexion with the lake above, which was some reward for exploring that part of the cavern.

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Chapter Seventeenth.

Recovery, and continuation of their journey—A joyous prospect—They discover a Lake—It changes to gloom—Discovered and followed by Indians—They finally escape, though compelled to leave their baggage, &c.—They wander on, unconscious of their way—Discover a beautiful valley, by which they encamp and rest themselves—Their journey continued—They meet with friendly Indians, who offer them their hospitality—The Indians give them cheering intelligence—They rest with them a few days.

SIX weeks had now elapsed, and they, with their horses, were fairly recovered from the wearying effects of their journey over the desert, and they were ready to launch once more on the unknown barren waste before them. Large quantities of fish and fowl had been provided—some by smoking, and others by drying—which, together with the fresh and dried fruits and vegetables they had secured, they calculated would last them five or six days. There were no animals of any kind, consequently they had not such facilities for preparation of dried meats as before; and being without any salt, it was both inconvenient and difficult for them to preserve their provisions. Loading their horses with what they had prepared, and with a

supply of water and grass, they set out on foot, for it would be impossible for the beasts to carry them and the baggage, and they would be obliged to travel on foot for two days at least, until the provisions were consumed sufficiently to relieve the beasts of part of the weight. It was now mid-summer: they knew that by the intense heat that poured its scorching rays upon them so that they were obliged to halt before noon, and entrench themselves behind a mass of rock they found, to protect themselves from its burning rays. When the greatest heat of the day was over, they again set out, and after an hour's travel, came in sight of a dense forest, which they reached long before the sun had set. They now laughed heartily at the idea of their sojourn on the oasis so long, preparing with so much pains and anxiety for so short a journey. Whithersoever they went they found the forest increasing in fertility, and they knew by the extent of it this time, they had reached the main land, and had really crossed an immense desert.

They were not all joyous feelings that agitated them that night; for on every hand they saw traces of Indians, and should they prove to be unknown, hostile tribes, they feared sad consequences. The night passed, however, quietly enough; and when morning broke, they set out, taking the precaution to move cautiously along, and though they often came upon places where Indians had encamped to cook their meals, and sometimes found the brands

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of fires still smoking, they had the good fortune to travel three days without falling in with them. On the fourth day, about noon, as they were turning the bend of a stream that wound round a hill, they were suddenly confronted by a party of five fierce looking savages, entirely naked, who seemed to be as much surprised at the meeting as they were, for they stopped, glanced wildly around them a moment, and then precipitately fled.

"Well, chief," said the trapper, "how do you like the looks of these customers?"

"They are a people I know nothing of, and this is the first time they have ever seen a pale face."

"I fear we have not mended matters by crossing the desert," said Jane, sadly. "The sight of Indians does not speak well for our speedy return to the land of civilization."

"Let not the antelope be fearful. Strong hearts and hands are still around her," said the chief.

"Which can avail but little against the hordes of savages that infest these wilds," remarked Jane.

"What is that Jane? You were lecturing me awhile ago, about doing our best,—courage, &c.—and leaving the rest for time to unravel," said Edward, cheerily.

"I am glad you reminded me of it," said Jane, "for the old feeling of despair was fast creeping into my heart."

"I do not see anything to fear," remarked Sidney, "evidently the savages are afraid of us, and

if they are not, so long as they run away from us, we are surely safe enough."

"You do not know the treachery of the Indians who apparently infest these regions," said Jane. "Perhaps they are cannibals, and it would then be terrible to fall into their hands."

"The Indians are not naturally treacherous; but the wrongs they have endured have perverted their nature, and they meet treachery by the treachery they have learned while smarting under it," said the trapper.

"The white chief speaks like one of us," said Whirlwind, proudly. "We have endured wrong and suffering, and been submissive; but, at last, goaded to resistance, our lands were drenched with the blood of our wives and children, because our warriors dared to strike a blow for freedom. All this we have suffered, and must finally suffer extinction, while the pale faces will thrive on the soil enriched by our blood, and to future ages hold us up as a nation notorious for all the vices and crimes ever known, even that of drunkenness, which the Indian never knew until the white man came to our then peaceful shores."

"You are not all treacherous, even now," said the trapper, "and whether the tribe is to which these belong is for the future to determine. One thing is certain, we must keep out of their hands if possible, and to do this, we had better ride on as fast as we can, and place as great a distance

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between us and them as we can before dark ; for, if they interfere with us, it will be undertaken after we are encamped for the night."

Much to their relief, they were not molested, although they were kept in constant excitement by seeing the Indians hanging on their trail, keeping at a proper distance from them, halting when they halted, and travelling when they travelled. This continued for several days, and then the Indians entirely disappeared, greatly to the relief of our wanderers.

For the last few days they had been travelling first in one direction and then in another—alas! they knew not whither, perfectly bewildered. They seemed to be disheartened in pursuing a regular course, and went where their judgments dictated for the hour, perhaps retracing their steps the next. One afternoon they came to a high, rolling part of the forest, which terminated at the foot of a range of hills rearing their heads in mural peaks, and on ascending them, they found that they overlooked a beautiful plain below, in the centre of which a vast lake stretched away over many miles, and lay nestled in that wilderness like a gem in a setting of emerald. This lake was studded with numerous islands which were heavily timbered, and formed a beautiful scene. Taking a circuitous route so as to reach the lake in safety, they encamped on its banks as the last rays of the setting sun were reflected in golden gushes from its placid

bosom and nestling isles. As they gazed on the enchanting scene before them, it seemed as if nature had reserved all her beauties for this chosen spot, denying to the vast desert they had traversed fertility enough to make it inhabitable.

On the opposite side of the lake arose precipitous ridges, varying in height from five hundred to a thousand feet, covered with the balsam-pine, whose dark stately green, formed a magnificent contrast with the graceful foliage of the aspen, which bordered the lake. A curious phenomenon here attracted their attention. Beneath the transparent waters of the lake were distinctly visible, trees of enormous proportions, standing erect, with the leaves and branches entire, looking as though they had grown there, or been sunken in their watery bed. Making themselves a raft of dry wood, they explored every part of the lake, and found beneath them in the water the same forest-like appearance, and they concluded that the lake had once been unobstructed, and that there had been an immense land-slide which had precipitated itself from the ridge over which they had entered the valley into the lake; part of the wood drifting on the surface, had formed itself into the little isles, while the rest had become submerged, and still rested at a great depth beneath the waters that closed placidly over its topmost branches.

Innumerable fowl filled the branches of the trees in these isles, while countless numbers of them

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were sporting in the water, undisturbed by the intrusion of our wanderers. Evidently they had never seen man before, and had yet to learn he would prey on their numbers to sustain life. Here they also found the salmon trout, grown to great size, so large that one was enough for a supper for the whole party. There were also great quantities of tender grass which, growing undisturbed in a constant shade, was as tender, and which the horses cropped with as much avidity, as the grasses of early spring, although now the mid-summer, with scorching sun, was upon them.

Not a trace of a native was visible, and the whole valley, nestled among the high ridges on every side, had probably never before echoed to the voice of civilized man, or the soil pressed by his foot, for ages on ages—at least, by any race now known. Perhaps, too, thousands of years ago a race knew of its existence, when the world was young, if that time ever was. For the world is always young to the young, but when old age comes on, it becomes hoary to his heart also. The heart of every man is his world. When it is young, joyous, and happy, the world is seen through the emotions that hold his soul in rosy meshes, and it is thus tinged to his sight with youth, love, hope, and a joy that fills the heart with a fulness and exstasy of happiness that leaves nothing further to be desired. Let the rosy meshes fall, and hoary age, or the long list of hours of a misspent life,

hold up another scene, in which despair contends with the waning hours, and sombre clouds obscure the future! Then the world is always old, always sad, hard, and cold; and man learns too late that the beauty and gracefulness of age can be only with the heart that is still young, though it has seen long years—and that, to enjoy life to the latest hour, the heart must still be kept green.

As enchanting as this valley was, they dared not spend a day in it longer than was necessary, and with reluctance they left it to launch forth, they knew not where. Crossing over the ridge, they came to a high table land, broad, and over which a fresh pure air constantly circulated. This was lightly timbered, and they feared another desert was before them. They were, however, relieved from this fear by coming to a high range of hills, which, on crossing, they found a succession of ridges, the first ridge having hid the summits of the others; as they crossed one after another, they became more and more entangled among them, and continued for two days wandering among shady dells, and over rocky, craggy precipices, until they sat down at night exhausted, with their flesh torn by the thorns and stones over which they had made their way. For the last two days, they had been unable to ride, the ground being so broken that they found it quite as much as their beasts were able to do, to make their way along unburthened, and now they were lame, their hoofs being much

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bruised, and the flesh around the hoofs swollen. Selecting a narrow defile, the best spot for a camp they could find, they turned their horses loose to graze, having no fear they would run away, and then turned to provide for their own wants.

This was soon over, and then they lay down to rest. When the morning broke, their horses had disappeared, and on examining the trail where they went, they discovered they had been led away in Indian file, having been stolen by savages. Here, now, was new trouble for them; for, without doubt, the Indians would hang around, and attack them, perhaps, the first moment it suited them, or that they could be sure of success.

"There was but a small party of them last night that stole the horses; I am sure of that, and they will return with augmented numbers very soon, or I shall be deceived," said the trapper.

"We can fight as well as they," said the chief; "so let them beware."

"Yes, we can do that; but we must get out of this spot. There is not an uglier one in the whole continent to be attacked in," replied the trapper.

"How can we get away? our horses gone, and if here, would be as helpless almost as we are, and ourselves so worn out that very little life is left in us," said Jane, in a desponding tone.

"While there is life there is hope," said the trapper. "Do not give up so, we have passed

too many severe trials to despair at the loss of our horses."

"Than which, a greater calamity could not have happened," said Sidney; "but, as uncle says, we must get out of this place, for if we are obliged to defend ourselves, we shall stand but little chance of doing it effectually, hemmed in here."

"Look! look! and save yourselves; we are too late!" cried Edward, pointing upward towards the top of the precipice that overhung the defile, and from which, as they raised their eyes, they saw a dozen savages on its verge, in the act of hurling a shower of rocks upon them.

The savages, seeing their whereabouts was discovered, set up an unearthly yell, which was given back by the chief with one of defiance, as he darted behind a tree, an act the rest had performed at the first moment of alarm. The stones and arrows flew around them like hail, but glancing against the large trunks of the trees behind which they were entrenched, fell harmless at their feet. After keeping up this mode of warfare upwards of an hour to no purpose, they held a council on the cliff, and after a short debate dispersed again, but now about half of the number began to let themselves down by catching hold of the saplings that grew along the cliff, and bending them, held on to the tops until they obtained a foothold several feet below, and then repeating the operation until they

were two-thirds down. The chief said to Howe, "It will never do to let them among us—better pick them off before they get down."

"So I think," returned the trapper; "you stop the swinging of the lower one, and I will take the next."

Drawing their bows, two messengers of death hissed through the air, propelled by strong, true hands, and the two lower savages fell to the ground, striking on the very stones they had hurled down from the summit, and were horribly crushed and mutilated. The rest seeing the fate of their comrades, with a wild cry of alarm quickly swung themselves up again, and the whole party precipitately fled. The savages had evidently supposed they were unarmed, and on finding to the contrary, had probably retired to take counsel how to more safely carry their point.

"Now," said the chief, "is our time to save ourselves; for they are exasperated at the loss of the two warriors, and will never rest satisfied until they have destroyed us, if we remain within their reach."

Starting down the ravine, for about a mile, they ascended a cleft-like formation of the hills, which terminated at the base of an overhanging precipitous ledge of rocks rising two hundred feet above them, with rents occasionally along the line, extending from the top to the bottom in yawning chasms, in one of which they hoped to shield them-

selves from further pursuit. Ascending one of these chasms to the top of the ledge, they saw the savages running to and fro along the valley in search of them, having evidently lost the trail, much to their satisfaction, for now they could gain on their pursuers.

Following up their present advantages, they descended the mountain on the other side, and finding themselves at the foot of another less lofty, ascended it also, from which they saw before them a beautiful plain, level and well timbered, stretching away as far as the eye could reach. It was now dark, and secreting themselves the best they could, they spent the night supperless; for, alas! they had nothing to eat; their whole stock of provisions, furs, gourds, kettle, and, indeed, every article they had accumulated, being left behind them in their flight from the savages. Very little game was to be found on the mountains; but as day dawned, they struck out on the plain, hoping to find abundance.

The sun had far advanced, and they had become faint and weary, when they came to a stream which was filled with excellent fish, from which, with some berries and roots, they made a plentiful repast. While despatching this, deer came to the water to drink, and a fine doe was shot by the trapper, much to their satisfaction. Cutting it up, they shouldered it, and pursued their way. At nightfall they halted much exhausted, and had the savages

then found them, they would have fallen an easy prey. But as they saw nothing of them they hoped they had relinquished the pursuit.

The next and the next day, they found themselves too sore and lame to move, and the third attempting to travel, they proceeded about three miles, when they gave out, building a bough hut by a clear spring of water, and resolved to stop until better fitted for travelling. No traces of Indians were visible, and they now found their greatest foes were beasts of prey, with which it seemed as if this part of the forest was filled. They managed, however, to spend three weeks without sustaining any serious injury from them, although they nightly prowled around their camp.

The days now began to shorten perceptibly, and the nights to lengthen, and the disagreeable truth forced itself upon them that the summer was waning, and they were as far, for aught they knew, as ever, from attaining the sole object of their lives,—their lost friends. Crossing the plain which extended many miles, they came to another range of hills which was so barren that they endeavored to avoid crossing it by going around them, and with this object, followed them down two day's journey, when they found the hills decreased to half their former height, and assuming a more fertile appearance, so they started to go over them. On arriving at the summit a scene of grandeur met their vision, although it appalled the stoutest

hearts. Before them, stretching away in the distance and rising until its summit, capped with snow, pierced the clouds, a range of mountains lay—a formidable barrier over which they knew they ought not to go—and then came the conviction that they had wandered to the foot of the great barrier that separated the Pacific from the vast unexplored sandy desert, and the snowy peaks that rose before them were those of the Sierra Nevada. Now they were more certain of their whereabouts than they had been before; for, though they had never seen the great Sierra, they had heard of it often and knew the snows never left its summit, and to attempt to cross it was a feat they had no disposition to undertake. They knew moreover, that their friends were this side of the great Mountain, and that the desert they had passed must consequently have been between them. Then came the conviction that they had not wandered round the desert before they had crossed it, as they supposed, but had been on the eastern side instead of the western, and had from that moment been travelling directly from home during the journey in which they had endured so much, forced itself upon them. And yet, with the certainty of these facts, they did not dare to turn back and retrace their steps, for to do so in the bewildered and weakened state in which their minds and bodies were, would be almost sure destruction, could they hope or attempt to make their way

through the territories of the savages that they had so fortunately evaded in their journey thither.

Long they stood on the summit of that mountain, their position commanding a view of the country for many miles around them, overlooking everything but the great Sierra that lifted its hoary head above them, as if commanding them to retreat. Awe and terror held them in breathless silence for a while, when a half sob was heard, and Jane pressed her hand tightly over her mouth to restrain the emotion which, in her weakened state, she could not control. Seeing her distress, the chief took her gently by the arm, and led the way down the mountain, until they came to a spring, where they stopped, kindled a fire, cooked their supper, and as the night air bid fair to be very cold before morning, built a temporary shelter of boughs. With a large fire burning to frighten beasts and dispel the damp air, they laid down to sleep.

Refreshed the next morning, they were better fitted to calmly reflect on their condition than the night before; still they were unable to form any decided course to pursue further than to remain through that day near their present encampment. After breakfasting, they descended to the valley, and there, to their surprise, found an encampment of Indians. Frightened, they turned to ascend the mountain, when the Indians came running towards them making unmistakable signs of friendship.

“They are friendly tribes, thank Heaven! for it betokens assistance when we least expected it,” said Howe, joyfully, as he advanced to meet them.

“You had better be careful, uncle, and not get in their power, as they may prove treacherous,” cried Jane.

The chief turned with a sorrowful look to her, and said,

“The pale faced maiden has no faith in the words of her darker skinned brothers. Is it because they have wronged her people more than they have suffered wrong; or because they dared in their manhood to defend, to the last moment, the houses of their wives and children, and the graves of their kindred?”

“No, no; not that, chief,” said Jane, earnestly. “Why let such thoughts forever disturb you? Some cannot be trusted, and these may be of the number, for that reason I bade uncle be cautious. You, we never suspected, and you wrong us in being so sensitive on this subject.”

“It would be a fearful thing,” returned the chief, “to see your race and kindred blotted from existence, to see their homes and pleasant places occupied by those who may be the cause of their extinction, and to know when the last of the race shall have departed, their name will be held synonymous with treachery and cruelty to futurity! Maiden! maiden!” added he, with a

wild look, distorting his dark features, "may you never experience the torture of this feeling, nor the agony that hourly and yearly is mine."

"Think you, chief, the sorrow you feel for the extinction of your people is greater than that the people felt whom you extinguished in ages gone by, and whose existence can be traced only by the works of art they left behind them, which alone have survived, and still defy ages to come?"

"Listen to me, girl; for I speak from the promptings of the *Great Spirit*. The day may come when no longer our lands shall be yours, for another race may arise and avenge my people by the extinction of your own. You will be spared the torture of seeing it, as I do the struggles of my people. Nevertheless, the day will come when this shall be." So saying, with a hasty step and defiant brow, he turned from her, and joined the group of Indians who were conversing with Howe, Sidney, and Edward.

These Indians had evidently seen white men, or heard of them before; but could not speak a word of English, or any dialect the wanderers understood. They were, however, very communicative, and by signs and lines drawn on pieces of bark, gave them to understand that two moons' journey down the mountains was a pass over them, and on the other side there were plenty of people like themselves. But as it was now getting late in the season, they had better defer their journey until

spring came again. At the same time they offered to take them in their village, and provide for them until they could depart in safety. They would not listen to this proposition, but accepted with eagerness their hospitality for a few days, in order to have an opportunity of making further inquiries as to the route and locality of the country they would have to pass through.

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Chapter Eighteenth.

Thirty persons in the village—Their stay with the Indians—They proceed on their journey—Jane bitten by a rattlesnake—Taken back to the village—Frightful effects of the poison—It causes a violent fever to set in—Fatal consequences apprehended—She becomes delirious—The chief's unremitting exertions to counteract the disease—It slowly abated and Jane finally recovers—A war party returns having two white prisoners—Fears entertained of their safety—Minawanda assists them to escape by a sound indicating that of a whippoorwill—The white men also accompany them as guides—Their joy at their anticipated deliverance from the wilds of the forests—Miscellaneous conversation—They proceed on their flight unmolested.

THERE were about thirty persons in the lodges, the rest of the Indians, with their women and children, having gone out on one of their yearly hunting expeditions, as well for the excitement as for the supplies which they gather from them. These few were left to look after the village in the absence of the rest, and were principally those who were too old or ill to travel and hunt. After remaining a few days to prepare themselves, they set out, persuading an old Indian to accompany them as a guide two days' journey, in order to get them once

more started in the right direction. They had no hope of returning directly to their friends. In fact, they knew that would be an impossibility to do by crossing the Sierra, and their object at that time was to find a settlement where they might know their whereabouts, and in what direction to go in order to return. The old Indian was positive there were people like themselves over the mountain of snow, and knowing they must have wandered a great way to come to it, they determined to make the most direct route to the nearest European habitation; for they had wandered so long that their friends had become a secondary object with them. Their first thoughts were to free themselves from the interminable forest, and sustain life.

About mid-day, as they were making their way among a thick growth of brush, a quick rattle was heard, which they all recognized as the warning of a deadly snake; but before they could save themselves, it had struck its poisonous fangs deep into the fleshy part of Jane's right foot.

Howe saw the snake bite her, and was at her side in a moment, and with a heavy club killed the terrible reptile on the spot. He then proceeded to bind the limb to prevent a free circulation of the blood, which in a few minutes would have conveyed the poison to the heart, and proved fatal. In the meantime, the chief and Sidney had been gathering an herb, which they bruised between two flat stones and poured over the

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wound, and put a few drops of the juice in her mouth.

She soon began to suffer excruciating pain, the limb swelling rapidly and turning a livid hue, while the bruised herbs which were bound over the wound every few minutes had to be exchanged for fresh ones, so rapidly did the poison act upon them.

"I feel it here!" said the poor girl, laying her hand on her heart; "it chokes, it suffocates me! Oh, it is terrible to die here! can you do nothing more? can nothing save me?" she added, turning her eyes inquiringly from one to the other of the group around her.

"We will do our best," said Sidney, "but that is very little," he added bitterly.

"Be brave, my poor child and never say *die* while there is life. As yet I see nothing to fear. The Indian's remedy is doing its work; we see that by the poison it extracts," said Howe, at the same time turning aside to hide the emotion that was welling up from his heart.

"The antelope shall not die," said the chief, "there is another remedy if the plant can be found," and with these words he hastened away into the forest. Her breathing now became more labored, her eye grew glassy, and languor began to pervade her whole frame. With breathless anxiety they awaited the return of the chief; for, if even successful in finding what he was in search of, he might be too late, as already life was waning; and

as they knelt around her in speechless agony, and saw the distorted features and glassy eye, they knew that unless some active and powerful stimulant could be procured immediately she would be dead.

After twenty minutes' absence, though it seemed to them to be an hour, the chief returned with his hands filled with roots freshly torn from their bed, and laying them between two flat stones crushed them. Then pressing the juice into a drinking cup they had procured at the Indian village, held it to her lips. She made a motion as if she would drink, but her limbs were powerless, her teeth set, and every muscle rigid. With a low moan she closed her glassy eye, and hope then even fled from her heart. Not so the chief; prying open her teeth with the aid of his hunting-knife, he poured the extract down her throat, and then with a solution of it mixed in water, washed the wound, binding over it the bruised roots from which he had extracted the antidote. He then procured more of the same roots,* extracted the juice and repeated the process, continuing his efforts for half an hour, when she slowly opened her eyes, looked around, and whispered faintly, "I shall not die now, uncle. I breathe easier," then closed her eyes again with a sweet smile playing around her lips.

* Rattlesnake root—Botanical, *Polygala Senega*—being an active stimulant, will counteract the bite of this most poisonous of reptiles.

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Still the chief did not for a moment relax his exertions; he knew too well the subtlety of the poison of the rattlesnake, but while the rest were active in building a soft couch of boughs and leaves on which to lay her, he continued extracting the antidote with as much energy as at the first moment.

Her skin now began to assume a more natural hue; the eye lost its glassiness, and she could articulate with ease. An hour afterwards the swelling began to subside, and the danger was past. The chief had again saved her life.

He said not a word in exultation of his success, but it gleamed from his dark eyes, flushed his swarthy cheek, and swelled his brawny chest. Never strode he with loftier step or more regal carriage—a very impersonation of barbarian royalty. His superior knowledge in many emergencies into which they were brought in their primitive mode of life, his coolness, courage and energy under the trying circumstances that often occurred, commanded their voluntary reverence for the untaught, uncivilized Indian chief. The day and night wore away, and when they had hoped to resume their journey they found that a fever had succeeded the prostration produced by the poison, and she was too ill to travel. Dismayed at this new calamity, they were at a loss for awhile how to proceed. Their guide settled the point for them by insisting that the sick girl should be conveyed

on a litter back to the village, where she could have a better shelter, and where her wants could be better supplied than in that lonely spot.

This they gladly acceded to, and when the sun again set she lay tossing in feverish delirium on a couch of skins within the tent of Minawanda their benevolent guide.

Cooling drinks were given her, and her throbbing, burning temples laved with cold water, fresh from the fountain. This soothed the pain, but it did not arrest the raging fever that burned in her veins, wasting her strength, and reducing her to a state as helpless as that of infancy.

The women in the village were untiring in their exertions to alleviate her suffering, and although they rendered her condition comparatively comfortable, yet the fever grew higher and stronger each day, until she became deprived of both reason and strength. The chief stood by the door of her lodge day and night, apparently without observing anything that was passing around him, and with the one feeling filling his entire soul—that of the antelope lying at the point of death, and he could do nothing to save her. Sidney was more active, and never left her couch, save to procure something for her. He, with Edward by her side, caressed her in her wild ravings until the excitement passed, and she was again calm. Then they would renew their exertions to assuage the fever, and cool the brain by laving it with water. It was all the

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remedy they had, and they used this freely. The ninth day of her illness the fever suddenly died away, and closing her eyes she slept as peacefully as the sleep of infancy for half an hour, when her breathing grew shorter, her chest heaved laboriously, and she unclosed her eyes, from which the light of reason once more shone. She whispered faintly, "Edward, come nearer; where are the rest of you? I feel so strangely! is this death?"

"We are here—all here!" cried Sidney, with a broken voice; "and you know us now, do you not, sister?"

"Yes, I know you now; but I feel so weak, and so strangely! have I been sick long? I remember now," she added, "the snake bit me, and I am poisoned, and shall die!"

"No, oh! no, you will not," said Howe, in his cheering tones; "you will not do any such thing. You are a brave girl, and will live many a long year yet. Here is a good draught for you, take it and keep quiet, and you will be well in a few days," he added, as he presented her some whey he had made from goats' milk and ripe grapes. Then ordering every one from the lodge, he shut out the light, and stationing himself by her side, bade her sleep, taking the precaution to arouse her every few minutes to administer to her the whey. She slept at intervals till sunset, when she again awakened perfectly conscious, and declared she

felt much better. She now improved rapidly, and in a week's time was enabled to walk with assistance in the open air. Her appetite returned which, together with the pure air, caused her rapidly to improve, and regain her strength again; but they were at a loss in what manner to prosecute their fatiguing journey with her. To set out on foot was out of the question, as she would probably give out the first day, and to be carried on a litter she would not consent to, as she rightly argued it was as much as one was able to do to get himself along, without carrying a burthen.

There was not a horse or a mule in the village, although the Indians insisted that the hunting parties that had gone out had some with them, and if they would await their return, they could obtain one for her. While hesitating what course to pursue, shouts of the returning party were heard from the summit of the hill, and were recognized as those that betokened a great victory. The answer was taken up by every inhabitant of the village, and echoed back in full chorus.

In half an hour, the Indians, in admirable confusion, came galloping into the village, decorated in all the savage panoply of war; their grotesque features made still more repulsive and hideous by the paint with which they were besmeared. This, together with the shouts of the women, and wild yells of the children, constituted a more vivid picture of pandemonium than anything earthly.

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One group of the returning party seemed to concentrate the curiosity of the Indians in the village more than another, and going thither they saw with surprise two white men confined as prisoners, their hands bound behind them with leather thongs. They looked almost worn out with fatigue and anxiety. Apprehensive for their own safety, they retreated to the lodge of their guide, and there learned that these two men had been captured three hundred miles south, and that they belonged to an overland emigrant party, who, in a battle with the Indians, had all been killed, with the exception of the two, and these, with the oxen, horses, and baggage, had fallen into the hands of the savages, and were conveyed to their village.

"This does not look well for our own safety," said Sidney.

"Not an arm will be raised against the pale faces who have eaten and smoked beneath the lodge of Minawanda," said the guide, solemnly.

"Perhaps not, with your consent," retorted Sidney, "but they may not think it worth while to ask it."

"The rights of hospitality are sacred with my people; let not the young man fear; no harm will come to him," said the guide, indignantly.

"One thing is certain, a light is breaking on our path. We have found some of our own race, though under unfavorable circumstances. Yet we

may learn from them how to find our homes," said the trapper, encouragingly.

"If we get a chance to speak to them," said the chief, pointing significantly towards a lodge whence rose the wail of despair for a warrior who had gone out in the pride of manhood and returned not. "They will be avenged for the warriors who fell in the fight with the whites," he added, "and though they will respect us while guests of Minawanda, they will hem us round so we cannot escape, at last falling into their hands, if the blood of the two prisoners do not satisfy the bereaved friends of their lost warriors."

"We must deceive them some way and slip away privately," said the trapper, in a subdued voice as the guide left the lodge, and wended his way over to the lodges whence proceeded the mournful sounds.

"Let us fly from here, now we are alone and free," said Jane, nervously. "The deepest recess of the forest is preferable to staying here."

"We cannot do that; we should be discovered, brought back, and strictly guarded, and thus be frustrated in all our chances of escaping. No, no; we want some of their horses to give us a start, besides several hours of the night to cover our retreat," said the chief.

"Besides this," said the trapper, "it is hardly a Christian act to leave these two men to perish by the hands of the savages. I do not think they

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will offer us any harm, and we may not only effect their escape peacefully, but induce the Indians to carry us to the nearest settlement with their horses. We must keep a strict and vigilant watch, and see which way things turn, and act accordingly."

The day passed and the sun had set, yet Minawanda had not returned to his lodge, from which the wanderers had not ventured for fear of further exasperating the Indians. This occurrence troubled them, and in truth looked ominous, as it had never occurred before, and with great impatience they watched for his coming. Still, hour after hour passed, and he came not, and with forbodings of evil, they proposed that one of them should reconnoitre the village under the cover of darkness to discover what was brewing among them. The chief volunteered his services, as possessing a subtlety which was unequalled, and with his noiseless tread, he went silently forth; but, before he had gone twenty yards from the door a hand was laid on his shoulder, and the voice of the guide whispered in his ear, "return to the lodge! your life depends upon it. I will be there in an hour!"

The chief stood irresolute a moment, then as silently returned to the lodge and related the circumstance, and asked the advice of the rest whether he had better wait or proceed.

"I think Minawanda is our friend, and we had better do his bidding," said the trapper.

Silently they remained a few moments, when

the sound of a light step fell on their ear, and the *Fawn*, a child of twelve years, and a daughter of the guide stepped within the lodge, and with a startled look stood irresolute for a moment, then going up to Jane, nestled close to her side fixing her dark starry eyes on hers with a bewildered gaze.

"What would you with me?" inquired the young girl, as she endeavored to reassure her.

"My father can no longer protect the white strangers," she replied, "but he can save them if they will place themselves under his directions."

"What says the young squaw?" asked the chief, whose acute ear had caught the low tones of the child.

Jane repeated what the fawn had said, when the trapper placed himself by her side and demanded what they were to do.

"I do not know, except that, when the Whip-poorwill is heard behind the lodge, you are all to go out silently, and as the cry is heard, you are to follow the sound until you meet others who will be in waiting for you—"

"To lead us to the stake!" said the chief. "Is my brother mad, that he listens to this chattering, and will he run into the snare laid to entrap him?"

"Really, chief, you see through the treachery of these savages better than any one else, and do credit to your education," said Sidney.

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dark," said Edward. "If they want anything of us, here we are, and here we will be until daylight."

"It will then be too late," said the fawn, sadly. "My father bade me say the two pale faced prisoners would be there, and when day broke, and it was found they had escaped, my people could not be restrained, but would sacrifice you in their stead. He would have come himself to tell you this, but feared to be from the council that has been held, for fear of suspicion, as it is known to all the returned hunters that you are in his lodge."

"I do not believe that Minawanda meditates treachery," said Howe. "If he wanted to give us up, why take the precaution? He knows we are in his lodge, and he could lead his warriors to take us any moment, if that was his object. I think he is sincere, and, for one, am willing to place myself in his hands."

"I, too, am willing to trust him," said Jane. "We cannot make matters worse, and it may be the means of our return to our friends. The sight of others inspires hope, and if we could get away with them, they could probably lead us out of the forest."

Their conversation was here cut short by the clear shrill notes of the Whippoorwill, close behind the lodge.

"There it is," cried the fawn, bounding to her

feet. "Go! go! do not hesitate, or you will be lost!"

"Come," said the trapper, taking Jane by the hand; "I feel assured there is truth in that child's face. Let us hasten on."

"If you go, I do," said Edward; "I can stand as much, and more than you can."

"And I," said Sidney.

"If the antelope goes, I will go to defend her," said the chief, following, as the trapper, with Jane, moved away in the darkness, in the direction whence the sound had come. Hurrying into the thick forest that skirted the back of the lodge, they were at a loss which direction to take, when again some distance ahead the shrill cry burst on their ears, and they noiselessly and rapidly advanced as near as they could imagine a quarter of a mile, when it was again heard ahead of them. Still following, they travelled about the same distance again, when the hand of Minawanda was laid on Howe's arm, as he said—"Stand still a moment!—I will apprise the others of your presence!" and disappearing in the darkness, they heard him talking low, but rapidly, for a few moments; then he once more stood before them, and bidding them follow, led them on a short distance where, by the faint glimmer of starlight, they saw men and a number of horses standing. "Mount!" said Minawanda; "there are horses for all. Here is the best one for the young squaw;" so saying, he lifted Jane

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from the ground, and seated her firmly on her horse's back—and placing the bridle in her hand, turned to assist the rest; but they had all mounted, and were waiting directions which way to proceed. Up to this moment they had not heard the voices nor seen the forms of those who were to accompany them, save by the dusky outlines which did not even reveal the number, and so quiet and rapidly had the whole transpired, that they had no time to think of anything.

“Guides! move on!” said Minawanda; “follow, brothers, they will lead you to your own people—and when there, forget not that a generous, disinterested deed may be performed by an Indian, although he risks life in so doing.” So saying, he shook hands with them all in rapid succession, and darting away, they were alone with the guides, whom they saw were two in number, and mounted like themselves.

“Well, Jones,” one of them said, in a very subdued tone, “if this is not one of the queerest pieces of work I ever saw, then call me an Arab.”

“Never mind, Cole,” the other answered, “push ahead as fast as you can, or the Indians will broil us yet. We must get a good start to cheat the rascally red-skins.”

“Hush about the broiling, you make me nervous. How about our company? All there?” again sung out the one called by his companion, Jones.

"Here! all right; five of us, following we do not know who, nor where he will lead us to," said Howe, in a merry tone.

"Don't know? Well, perhaps you never heard of Jones, son of old Major Jones, away down in old Connecticut. That is me, and I guess you will not be sorry you are following me, especially as Cole says, we were all to be broiled in a heap by those red skins."

"That I shall not, and right glad I am of your services to help us out of as deep an entanglement as I think ever a set of Christians got into," said the trapper.

"Well, I do not know, but I guess we will cheat them; the moon will be up soon, and then we can ride faster," replied Jones.

"Are you sure of the way you have to go?" asked Sidney, who was still nervous about getting bewildered in the forest.

"I guess I am," replied Jones. "Did I not come over it this morning?"

"Yes, but you might miss your way," returned Sidney.

"Might miss! Why young man, where was you educated, to learn the possibility of doing such a thing? There is no such word as failing to a downeaster."

"I think you must have failed once, or you would not be here," retorted Sidney, facetiously.

"The best failure for us that was ever made,"

said Jane, earnestly. "We shall find our way out by that means."

"Only that object is attained, I do not care for the rest," remarked Edward. "See yonder the moon is rising, and welcome enough will be its light."

They made their way quite rapidly, and as mile after mile was placed between them and the village, their hopes of eluding their pursuers were strengthened. Jane did not feel the fatigue, so excited had she become, although, Howe had taken the precaution soon after they started, of riding close by her side, so that he could assist her at a moment's warning; for he knew she was too weak to bear such rapid travelling over fallen trees, stones, brush, and marshy ground long, and he feared that a reaction would ensue. He did not know how strongly the love and desire to reach home again burned in her heart, strengthening by its power every muscle and nerve.

Chapter Nineteenth.

They arrive at a stream of considerable magnitude over which they cross—Encampment on its bank—They ride in the water to elude their pursuers—Jones and Cole give them some information relative to their friends, having met Lewis at Fort Laramie—The joyful reception of the news—Desire to return—The lateness of the season prevents it—They continue on—Arrival at the base of the Sierra Nevada—Fear of crossing the mountains in the snow—They retreat to a place of security with intentions to encamp for the winter—They construct themselves winter quarters as well as they can.

AT daylight the fugitives came to a considerable stream which they crossed and halted on the opposite bank. They turned their horses loose to feed and rest, and taking some fish from the stream by means of shooting them with their arrows,* they broiled them. The fish, together with some roasted *yampa* roots, made a plentiful and nourishing repast. Letting their horses rest as long as they dared, they mounted and entering the stream, followed it down a mile, so as to deceive the Indians, should they be pursued, then again taking to the bank they rode with great

* A common mode of taking fish among the Indians.

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speed, until their beasts began to flag, when again halting on a position that overlooked the country around, they prepared themselves a dinner, turning their horses loose to graze while they ate. After partaking of their meal, Jane fortunately fell asleep, and when they feared to remain in that position, they awoke her, and proceeded on till late in the night. Again halting, and posting a sentinel who was relieved every two hours, they lay down to sleep, for they were worn out with their rapid marches. At the first faint streak of light, they were in motion, and thus pursuing their way rapidly for three more days, they were glad to halt, as their horses were emaciated, lame, and sore, and were scarcely able to keep their feet, so galling and toilsome had been their journey.

They calculated they had saved themselves from pursuit, and accordingly prepared for a few days' rest which was made doubly sweet to them by the prospect of the dear home and friends which loomed up before them. Building a temporary shelter, they spent several days in that place and became more acquainted with their two new companions. Jones was a curiosity in himself, fearing nor caring for nothing but being broiled alive, a fate for which he evinced the utmost repugnance, and declared he would be willing to adopt any emergency than encounter it, an alternative they all coincided heartily in, with the exception of Cole,

who expressed a decided belief that it was preferable to many things, and delighted to hold up its advantages, but what they were he never specified to his more sensitive companion.

They were both from Connecticut and had been some years sailors, their ship having been driven and wrecked by winds on the Pacific coast they were obliged to content themselves as best they could; and as they enjoyed a large share of constitutional Yankee restlessness, sought to turn their misfortunes to some account. While waiting for relief they explored the deep unbroken wilds that surrounded them. In doing this they encountered many difficulties, and often hazarded their lives, but were rewarded by finding, as they asserted, gold mines scattered over a large district. Returning home by an overland route with specimens of the ore, they had induced others to return with them, accompanied by their families, their object being to take up the land on which the precious metal was found and settle it, guessing with characteristic shrewdness that as soon as it was known in the Eastern States that there was gold in the place, the land would be of immense value.

There were eleven of them all, two women and two children, one ten and the other twelve years old; the rest being well calculated for such a daring enterprise. It was their intention to keep the same Indian trail back they had gone over in returning home, trusting to memory to keep them

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from straying. When their journey was two-thirds accomplished the Indians had come unawares upon them and after fighting as long as they could hold out, all were killed but these two, who were made prisoners with all their baggage. "It was a struggle for life, and two days we kept them at bay," said Jones, "but we were one after another picked off until but five of us were left, when the savages maddened by the sight of their killed and wounded which must have been in great numbers, closed around us and we fought hand to hand for a few minutes, when Cole and myself were overpowered, disarmed and captured, the rest were killed, scalped, and their dead bodies left on the ground unburied to become a prey to beasts scarcely more savage than the Indians. Our fate was decided on in council the same evening we were taken to the village. We were sentenced to run the gauntlet.* If we survived we were to become part of the tribe to supply the places of the lost warriors; if we fell, the stake awaited us. We looked upon

* The gauntlet consists in drawing up the members of the village in two files facing each other four feet apart, through which the victim has to make his way, the Indians striking at him as he runs with clubs, knives, tomahawks or any weapon they choose to arm themselves with. Not one out of a hundred get through the file, and if they do they are sure to meet with kindness; but if beaten down they are either killed on the spot or carried wounded and bleeding to the stake where they perish amidst horrible tortures.

ourselves as doomed, when an old Indian came to us, and displacing the thongs with which we were bound, bade us follow him. The rest you know, and we are here together."

"For which I am really grateful," said the trapper, who informed them of the principal events of their wandering for the last year and a-half. They listened with great interest until the recital was finished, and then Jones said, musingly, "It must be that you are the same of whom we heard so much, more than a year ago, although your friends believed you had perished by the cruel hands of the Indians."

"Then you have seen them! Are they well? Have they removed from the encampment by the brook?" and numberless other questions were showered in a breath upon them.

"One at a time," said the imperturbable Yankee; "one at a time, and I will answer them all."

"Then, are they alive and well?" asked Jane, who could not restrain her anxiety.

"They are, as far as I know," said Jones. "I saw but one they called Lewis, and he was well, and I heard him tell another man who was inquiring for the rest of the family that the rest were."

"Thank heaven for that," said Jane, fervently.

"Where are they," asked the trapper.

"I don't know, exactly," said Jones. "The young man I saw was at fort Laramie. He had heard there were several distant tribes of Indians

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encamped there to trade with the whites, and had come to see if he could learn from them the fate that had befallen you."

"Then I suspect," said the trapper, "they have remained near the spot where they were encamped when we were stolen."

"Who is the chief of the Arapahoes?" asked Whirlwind.

"I think he is called the Bald Eagle, but I don't remember distinctly. When I passed through their country last spring, I heard about a great Medicine man, who was likewise their chieftain, who had been killed or carried away at the same time part of the family of Mr. Duncan had."

"This is the chief," said the trapper, "he still lives, and I hope will for many a long year yet to come."

"That would be great news for the Arapahoes," said Cole, "and their joy could scarcely be exceeded by that of Mr. Duncan's family, could they know their lost ones were safe."

They had somewhat recovered from the fatigues of their flight, and proposed renewing their journey. The autumn, which was far advanced, warned them it was time to be on the move, if they intended to reach the haunts of civilization before the snows began to fall, and as Cole and Jones assured them they would certainly strike a trail that led to the Pacific coast in three or four days' travel, they were impatient to be on the move

They suffered much with the cold, as the nights were keen enough to create ice an inch in thickness, and the frosts destroyed a great deal of the herbage on which the horses subsisted. The third day the sky began to grow heavy in the morning, and as the air was keen they feared snow would fall, but it partially broke away before night, greatly to their satisfaction. They lay down by their camp-fire with the stars gleaming, though faintly, above them.

About midnight they were awakened by flakes of snow falling on their faces, and on awaking, they discovered the ground white around them. Before morning the white covering was three inches deep. The winter had set in uncommonly early, and they with saddened hearts rode all day through the falling snow. Night came on, and scraping the ground clear of leaves and snow, they built themselves a temporary shelter, leaving one side open, by which the camp-fire was built. They had nothing to eat, having laid by no supply of roots or meat, and the ground was covered with snow so that the roots could not be found. Leaving Sidney, Edward, and Jane in the camp, the rest went out to get some game, and in half an hour the trapper returned with a pair of wild turkeys. He was followed soon by Cole who brought some pheasants and a grey squirrel. As the shades of night began to gather around them, the others came in with a fawn and a mountain sheep. There

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was no fear then of their being supperless ; and, after eating a hearty meal, they laid down to sleep with the snow still falling around them. When they awoke in the morning the sky was clear and the sun arose warm, and by noon had softened the snow so much as to make it wet their clothing, as they brushed it from the pendant branches in riding along. When they encamped that night, Jane was shivering with cold, and too ill to eat ; but the rest lay by the fire, and slept as well as the disagreeable situation in which they were placed would allow. Jane was quite ill the next day, and they did not think it prudent to travel ; but by night she felt much better, and as they calculated they could strike the trail in another day's journey, they determined to be in the saddle by daylight.

Riding, as fast as the rugged uneven country through which they were travelling would permit, for three hours, they came to the trail earlier in the day than they had anticipated, greatly to their relief. Here now they were on a road that would lead them to their friends from which they had so long been separated, during which time they had encountered so many trials and so much suffering. The sight of it dispelled all fatigue from them, and they were ready, nay, eager, to turn their horses homeward. They were restrained from such mad proceedings by the cool, undisturbed equanimity of Jones, who said : " The journey home

requires three months' hard travelling, and if we undertake it in our present unprepared condition, we shall certainly perish by cold and hunger. On the other hand the trail in the opposite direction, will lead us to a safe harbor, in a third of the distance which, when accomplished, we shall be willing to stay in till spring comes again. It is always dangerous travelling through these wilds when prepared, but in our destitute condition it is most hazardous."

"Lead us on; we can endure it," cried the children, enthusiastically.

"No, no; children," said the trapper, "Jones tells the truth, we can never cross the country that lies between us and our friends, in the dead of winter. We must content ourselves in a place of security, if we can find one, until spring again comes."

"Yonder," said the chief, pointing towards the west, where the Great Sierra arose with its snowy peaks towering among the clouds, "are the Snow mountain. To reach the white settlement beyond we must cross it. We are too weak and destitute to do it. Let us build a lodge here and gather what provisions we can before the snow is deeper, and the deer all leave us."

"I believe it is the best thing we can do, for our safety," said the cautious trapper.

"Oh! no; do not think of such a thing!" said Sidney. "I am sure we can cross the mountain,

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and when over them, it cannot be far to civilized habitations."

"You are young and sanguine," said the trapper, "and do not know the dangers before you."

"We might as well pursue the trail a day or two," said Jones, "and then, if we think we cannot cross the mountain, we can build winter quarters. For my part, I do not relish a winter here, any more than Sidney."

"Well," said Cole, casting an admiring glance towards Jane, "I think quarters might become tolerable, if well supplied with venison—and I think they might, between us all."

The chief saw the look, and a close observer might have for an instant observed a peculiar glitter in his eye, but no word or movement of his indicated that he had witnessed it, or if he did, cared for it. Resuming their journey, they were soon made aware that the ground before them was rising, and covered with a greater depth of snow. By noon they had come to the base of high ranges of hills that rose one above another, and above all towered the Sierra Nevada. Over these the trail extended, and they were compelled either to encamp on the spot, go back, or cross over the mountains. To pass over them seemed impossible—to encamp on the exposed slope on which they were would subject them unnecessarily to severe suffering from cold; and their only safe alternative was to fall back to

some secure, unexposed position, and raise a winter camp.

A few miles back, a sheltered position was discovered; the snow was cleared away, and all working with an earnest will, a commodious hut was soon erected consisting of strong poles for the frame work, which were covered with bark, and this again thickly studded with boughs to keep out the cold. The ground was also strewn with them, for they had no skins to spread over it, nor even to make themselves a covering through the night with—a want from which they suffered much. Taking advantage of their experience the last winter, they collected stone from beneath the snow, and built themselves a rough but efficient fire-place, which occupied nearly one side of the hut, and in which they could build large fires that diffused their genial warmth over the room without endangering the frail fabric.

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Chapter Twentieth.

The cold increases—The men take large quantities of fur—At andart supplies of game—Conversation on various matters—Jones and Cole tell some of their adventures in the gold regions—A boulder of gold—Shooting it from a precipice—Jones loaded down with riches—Comfortable condition of the children—Howe describes an adventure he experienced near Lake Superior by falling into an Indian's deer-pit—Whirlwind relates a circumstance that occurred to himself and Shognaw in reference to their escape from the Crows—The party's resignation to their lot.

As the severity of the winter increased, they took daily hunting excursions, in order to procure the necessary furs and skins to help ward off the cold, always preserving their game, which was brought home, dried and smoked by the fire, to preserve it against an hour of need. They soon had their hut lined throughout with skins, the edges joined with sinews or slender strips of hide, which kept the wind from finding its way to them through the openings. They also covered the ground with skins, reserving the fur of the foxes and beaver which they snared, as well as the lighter skins, to make themselves new and warm clothing. Their food was almost entirely animal, as they

rarely succeeded in getting anything of a vegetable character. They occasionally found a "nut-pine" tree, from which they gathered its fruits, but they disliked the taste of them, and gathered them more for the light they gave when on fire, than for eating. Though they were not as comfortably housed, or as well provided with the necessaries of life, as the winter previously; yet they did not suffer so as to endanger health, by either hunger or cold, and their greatest discomfort arose from the want of vegetable food and salt. For the last article they had searched in vain, and had come to the conclusion that there were no saline beds within many miles of them. Jones and Cole never grew tired of listening to their account of the hidden wealth they had discovered, and they would spend days speculating on the best plan of opening a communication with the districts containing the golden prize.

"I would have kept the urn," said Cole, "if a whole legion of Indians had been at my back."

"Perhaps not," said Jones. "I myself have seen the time when gold was a burthen."

"The time you shot the boulder!" remarked Cole, laughing.

"Laugh as you will," said Jones; "that was a lucky shot if it was an almost fatal one."

"What is it?" they all asked, seeing there was more than Jones felt disposed to tell.

"Why," said Jones, "when among the gold

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mines on the other side of the mountain we were not satisfied with the flakes of gold in the sand, and supposed, of course, that there was a solid bed of it somewhere up the river, from which it was washed down by the constant action of the waters. As we proceeded along the river the ground became more rugged until it led us into a cluster of hills and precipices jumbled up together. Entering a narrow ravine we soon came to a curious looking place with smooth sides standing perpendicularly, about twenty feet apart, which was gradually contracted to within two feet, leaving the end narrow and jagged. We soon saw there was ore in it, and on examining closely we discovered places where large blocks of the precious metal had been torn from its bed, with the marks of the mining tools still plainly visible. Looking around us we picked up among the loose pieces on the ground some lumps of pure gold, which were among the specimens we carried home."

"Yes, yes; that is all very well, and very true," said Cole, "but it is not all; tell the rest."

"They will not believe it if I do. They never did in the States. so what is the use of it?" said Jones.

"We have seen such wonderful things ourselves that we are prepared for anything," said the trapper

"He may if he chooses," said Jones, pointing to Cole. "I shall not, it is of no use."

"The narrow place," said Cole, "where we found the gold was about fifty feet high, and nearly half way up to the top we discovered a huge boulder of pure gold, as large as a bushel basket, hanging by a slim thread of gold no larger than your finger. This thread was fully four inches long, and seemed to have been cut that way by some one who had been supported while doing so from above, for the boulder was in that position that if worked at from below it would crush the artizan in its fall. We were equally resolved to get hold of this mammoth prize, but the question how we could get it was not so easily solved, as it rested against the opposite side and would evidently turn and fall if this narrow thread was broken.

"'I have it!' said Jones, exulting at the happy thought. 'I'll shoot it off,' for we both had rifles.

"'And be crushed with its weight,' said I; but the words had not died on my lips when the sharp crack of the rifle was heard, and down came the prize. Both turned to fly from the danger, but Jones's foot caught in some loose stones and he was prostrated, and the boulder rolling as it fell deposited itself exactly across him. I removed the uncomfortable load as soon as possible, but Jones's stomach has been out of order ever since, especially when he sees solid bodies overhead."

"What became of the lump of gold?" asked the trapper.

"We hid it in the earth; but should have been

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to it again before this time had we not been overhauled by the Indians."

"A fortunate escape," said Howe, "equal to one I made many years ago, ere I learned to distrust the ground I walked over before testing its security. Being on one of our trapping expeditions, father and myself found ourselves on the territory of the St. Croix Indians, who evinced great friendship for us, insisting we should take up our abode in their village as long as we thought fit to remain in their territory. We soon became domesticated among them, and spent our nights there although our days were spent in the most secret recesses of the forest in setting our traps, curing skins, and in observing the habits of the wild denizens of the forest. One day father and myself separated, he to look after our traps set in one direction, I in another; and as I neared the place of destination, while walking over ground smooth and level as you ever saw the ground in the forest, suddenly it gave way, precipitating me into a hole full ten feet deep with smooth, perpendicular sides that defied all attempts to climb them. I had fallen into an Indian's deer trap, dug and covered over so as to deceive them; but which would readily give way precipitating the game into the snare, the escape from which was impossible. I laughed at my stupidity at first, as I knew within an hour, father would be along when with his assistance I could be easily extricated.

I soon had enough to do without laughing, for in half an hour after, I heard a step above, but before I had time to speculate on it, the nose of a half grown cub was thrust over the top, and in the next moment its ugly carcase came tumbling down and fell with a crash at my feet, uttering a cry of pain as it fell, which was answered by a growl from above, and in a minute more its dam stood on the brink growling fiercely at me, as she saw her cub lay helpless and moaning on the ground. With a spring she lighted on her feet within six feet of where I stood, for I had retreated into the farthest corner, not at all relishing a fight in such close quarters, for the hole was only about eight feet square—and not a very agreeable place to be cornered in with an enraged bear. Fortunately I had clung to my rifle, in falling, and had also my hunting knife in my belt, so I concluded if she was in for a struggle, not to back out of it. I saw at once the cub had been killed in the fall, for the old bear smelt round and moaned softly to it, and then finding it did not stir, turned it over and over with her paw. Finding it still exhibited no signs of life, she turned towards me with gnashing teeth and flashing eyes, and then, I must say, I really felt cornered. You know I told you," he added apologetically, "that I was young then; in fact not more than twenty. Well, the beast raised herself for a spring at me, when I gave her a pair of bullets, that made her howl; but she sprang and

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grasping me in her huge arms, fastened my arms to my side so that my knife was useless in my belt, and I was making up my mind that all was over with me, when father halloed above, he having been drawn thither, by my calls for help, followed by a leap into the hole, and a half dozen thrusts of his knife into the monster's heart, relieved me from the closest embrace I hope ever to encounter."

"I should suppose you could have seen some signs to indicate the trap," said Edward.

"The Indians take good care that there are none; covering slender poles over with a thick layer of leaves that hides effectually the abyss beneath."

"My brother was in danger," said the chief, laughing at his mishaps, "but it was not equal to one of my warriors who, with me, went out once to recover some horses the thieving Crows had driven away. We found the horses, and starting for home had proceeded about a mile, when we discovered a whole army of the Crows start in pursuit. Our only hope of safety for ourselves lay in flight, and abandoning our horses for which we had risked our lives, we went scouring through the forest at a furious rate. The animals we rode were jaded, and those of our pursuers fresh, and we soon saw they gained upon us, and abandoning our horses behind a sharp curve that hid us from sight, we made them gallop away, and then betook ourselves to trees for safety. In ten minutes after the Crows

galloped past us, leaving us safely secreted in the friendly branches in which we had taken shelter. Shognaw had climbed a large beech tree that stood within a few feet of the one in which I had taken shelter. I once or twice thought I heard a growl like that uttered by cubs, but the excitement I felt for our safety, dispelled it the next moment. As soon as we were left alone, and the sounds of the pursuers died away in the distance, I felt some alarm, for I knew if there were cubs about, the old bear would dislodge us, and, in all probability, our retreat would be discovered by some straggling Crows. At that moment, Shognaw, calling my attention in a low tone, said, 'I have got into a bear's hole, full of young cubs, what shall I do? for the old one will not be away long, as she, on finding a commotion raised by the Crows will, for her own safety, take refuge in her den.'

"'We cannot fight her, that is certain,' said I, 'for we should then be discovered; but, if we watch our chance, we may get away from this spot, and find safety in some other, but we must be very cautious that no Crows are in sight first.'

"'I think there are none now,' he replied, not at all relishing the idea of trespassing on the domicile of madam Bruin.

"'Hist! there they are,' said I, as we saw a number of them come yelling towards us, and on looking again, I discovered them in pursuit of something which, in a few minutes, bounded from

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a clump of bushes and made for the tree in which Shognaw had hid, and then to our dismay, we saw it was the old bear pursued by the Crows. He too saw her coming, and ascended to the topmost branches high above the hole, and well he did, for in a moment more, she had crawled in just as the hunters came to the foot of the tree. They were foiled of their game, and after consulting for a moment whether it was best to cut or burn down the tree, they concluded to burn it, as the less laborious way to dislodge the old bear. Accordingly, they dispersed in search of fire, leaving half their number to guard the tree while away. I saw at once that we were caught in a trap, and that nothing but coolness and strategy could save us. The tree in which I was, being a little out from the one they were watching, favored my escape, which I effected by noiselessly descending, and edging away by darting from tree to tree, until I had attained a safe position that overlooked the spot where I feared Shognaw would meet his doom. The fire was soon kindled, and being fed with dry brush, soon wound and crackled up the trunk, and began to scorch and consume the branches and leaves of the tree. I began to think I ought to face the whole band single handed, in an attempt to rescue the poor fellow, when I saw him swing himself down from limb to limb, and drop to the ground in the midst of the astonished Crows, and take to flight. For a moment they were

too surprised to comprehend that it was really a man, and a foe; but they soon recovered from the panic, and sounding their war cry, the whole band gave chase. Shognaw took to a river half a mile distant, and plunging in, rose among some rushes that skirted the bank, among which he hid himself till dark, when he made his way in safety home, which he reached before I did, for I was looking out for him the whole night, and returned when I made up my mind that he had at last fallen into the hands of the Crows."

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Chapter Twenty-First

Departure of winter—Joy at the fact of knowing which way they were travelling—Their encampment by the side of a beautiful lake—They reach the first ranges of the Sierra Nevada mountains—Whirlwind offers to go to Mr. Duncan's encampment and guide them through the forests—He starts on that expedition accompanied by Cole—The children pursue their journey—Discovery of gold—They experience great difficulties in crossing the Sierra—Three of their horses dashed to pieces over a precipice—Narrow escape of Jones—Discovery of singular ancient walls—An engraved slab of granite—They reach the foot of the Sierra in safety—Their route continued—They finally arrive at the residence of a Spanish Curate—They consent to tarry awhile at his house.

WINTER gradually wore away—the snow-girt hills and valleys were divested of their mantle of gloom, and were clothed with vestments of green, spangled with crimson, blue, and gold flowers, the perfume of which called forth the soft hum of bees as they flew from flower to flower, extracting the honied dews. Far from the sunny South the birds came with their glad, cheering voices, giving forth a welcome to the dawning spring. The winter had been long and tedious, cheered only with the certainty that they knew which way they had to travel in order to reach the haunts of civilization; and

though they had kept the hunger wolf at bay, their strength gradually gave out under their unhealthy diet, and when they were ready to travel, they were in a pitiful condition to endure its fatigues. Their horses were even worse off than themselves. Worn with privation to skeletons, they were drooping and spiritless; and had not the wanderers used great exertion to collect the young grass for them, they would have perished, for they were too languid to crop it themselves.

Slowly at first new vigor became infused into them, and in a few weeks' delay, and the spring rains being over, their horses gathered strength, and they determined to proceed on their journey. Upon mature deliberation they considered it prudent to cross the mountains to the Pacific coast, and then send word to Mr. Duncan where they were, as they did not deem themselves strong or well enough prepared to make the distance back to their friends. Whirlwind heard the decision, and then told them he thought it best that one or more of them should return to Mr. Duncan, and as he could be spared best, offered to go, if either Jones or Cole would guide him on the road; "for," said the chief, "Duncan and the rest can come to you better than you can go to them, in your present condition."

"Always generous," said Jane, with gratitude beaming in her eye, for in truth she felt heart-sick at the thought of placing a still greater distance

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between herself and those her heart yearned to see.

"It is nothing," said the chief. "Whirlwind would give his life, if it would save the antelope a pang of sorrow or grief."

"I think Duncan would as soon settle here as in Oregon, his original destination," said the trapper; "and if we can so arrange it as to make it safe for us, I think myself it would be a better plan, than for all of us to proceed over the mountains, and then, when we are able, return again."

"In doing this," said Cole, "we can reach Mr. Duncan's camp, if still where you left him, which I think he is, before midsummer, and then he will be able to reach you at the nearest settlement by the time frost again comes. I am willing to accompany the chief, while Jones can guide you in safety over the Sierra before you."

Selecting two of the best horses for the use of Whirlwind and Cole, they took leave of them, charging them with a multitude of messages for their friends, and when they started on the homeward route, they too moved on towards the mountain before them, whose snow-crested head loomed up among the clouds. At noon our wanderers halted at the spot they retreated from when they went into their winter quarters, and after resting, began to climb the rugged ascent, Jones leading the way; and, save an occasional path beaten by the denizens of

the forest, their only landmark was the blazed trees.* Jones had been over the ground before, and as his memory was very tenacious, he saved them from much anxiety, and often from danger, as well as unnecessary fatigue. Their progress was necessarily slow and painful, but they were still brave at heart, and bore it in silence. At night they halted by the side of a beautiful lake, around which the hills curved gracefully, forming a natural basin, which held the transparent waters against the side of the mountain. Its banks were richly covered with grass, and shaded by aspens which, with the rugged peaks of the mountains that towered above, gave it a sylvan appearance.

Numerous flocks of ducks were seen on the surface of the lake, and some of them contributed to the supper of the travellers, whose appetites, sharpened by the mountain air, relished their delicious flavor. Following down this lake the next morning for nearly half a mile, they passed round it, and commenced the ascent of the range above them. Innumerable springs dotted the trail on either side, while shrubs and the earliest spring flowers hung and overrun every crevice in the rocks around them. The scenery was wilder here than any they had met with before in all their wanderings. Their path led them often between

* Bark cut off from trees to indicate a certain course through the forests. It is a very common practice among the pioneers of the West

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stupendous, curious looking rocks, which rose on either side, narrowing the pass so that they were obliged to travel in Indian file. It was a singular place—the grey, smooth, rocky precipices—the strip of blue sky far above—an open chasm, in which one would naturally expect if anywhere, to encounter spirits and hobgoblins. Happily for our wanderers, they were well aware they had not emigrated from the old world, but in their place feared to encounter hostile Indians. Emerging from this defile, they continued their course over a rocky surface, the vegetation every moment growing more sparse, and when night came on they were nowhere near water, and all they had to relieve their thirst was what they found in crevices of rocks that had collected there during the last rain. A little scanty herbage was all their horses could find after their hard day's travel, and had they not brought a supply of fowl from the lake where they had camped the night before, they would have gone supperless to rest.

At early dawn they left that inhospitable spot, and by sunrise came to the top of the acclivity of the range. Below them lay a beautiful valley clothed with verdure, through which flowed a considerable river, and beyond the range of hills that skirted it on the other side, rose the topmost snow-covered peak of the Sierra. They found the descent into the valley far more difficult than the ascent, the trail often leading them along a narrow

footpath, the rocks rising perpendicularly on one side, while on the other were yawning chasms a hundred feet below, apparently ready to receive them, should they stumble, or deviate from the rugged path before them. They made the descent in safety, and rested themselves for the remainder of the day on the bank of the river. On examining the stream, they found it too deep to be forded in the usual way of riding their horses over. They built a raft, on which they crossed, holding the horses by the halter, making them swim by its side.

The next morning, with a day's supply of provisions for themselves and animals, they began the ascent of the range before them, the summit of which they gained the next day with perfect safety, and then began the opposite descent, camping for the night on the western side. The slope at this point was less rugged and difficult of descent than the other, and they encamped at its base, having made extraordinary marches the last few days, taking into consideration the dangerous path over which they had travelled. There was no valley here, the ground between this range and the Sierra being a commingling of rolling hills, shady dells, and narrow ravines, all densely covered with verdure, through which small rivulets murmured, taking their rise at the base of the Sierra, and wound their way through the broken surface, now in tranquil beauty, and anon dashing in waterfalls down ledges

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of rocks, their clear limpid waters lashed to a foam. Large quantities of deer, elk, antelope, and mountain sheep, were found there, as well as wild turkeys, geese, partridges, duck, and numerous other smaller fowls. Secure in the mountain fastenings the game had multiplied till it had completely filled the whole country, and Howe declared that during all his hunting and trapping career, he had never encountered such a variety and quantity in so small a space of territory.

"I cannot think it a small space," said Jones. "In my opinion, it extends many hundred miles each way, giving game range enough."

They were now at the foot of the last and most formidable object that debarred them from civilization, and here they thought it prudent to halt a few days to recruit their own as well as their animal's strength, and prepare provision to carry with them. The second day of the halt while they were in search of the roots of the yampa, they found on turning up the earth that it was specked with fine particles of gold. They were highly elated at this, for now, with a fair prospect of freeing themselves from the wilds, it had its old intrinsic value; and doubly valuable would it be to them, on gaining a settlement, as not one of them had an article of clothing about them that was not made of skins, and many in not over good repair.

"We can save this now, I suppose," said Sidney, "that the chief is not by with evil spirits?"

"Certainly, as much as you like," returned the trapper. "I intend to find some on my own account."

"You will not find any that will equal in quantities and value, that of the cavern in the oasis," said Edward.

"You don't know that," returned his uncle. "I have always noticed where gold is found in flakes, mixed with earth, that it has been washed in ages past into its present bed, from where it originally was in a pure state. At least such is the conclusion formed by present appearances."

"No harm in searching for it," said Jones, who was in ecstasies at the discovery of gold, and he began to tear up the loose earth in every direction around him. Leaving the rest picking out the tiny flakes from the earthy bed, Howe and Jones spent the day in examining the localities around where they thought it most likely the ore was to be found, but obtained only torn hands and feet for their labor, and were glad to give up the search and return to camp. During their absence the children had collected a great deal, sometimes finding nuggets as large as a walnut.

"Oh! well," said Jones, in a fretful tone, when the children displayed their wealth before him, "I can get enough when I am over the mountains, if I have missed it to-day."

"As for that, we will share with you," said Jane. "You have lead us so far out of the wil-

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derness where, without your aid, we might have perished. We do not forget this, and what we have to bestow, which is very little, is at your command."

"Well, well, there is no need of it: I tell you I have lumps of gold over the mountains larger than I can lift. Besides, can I not get some myself out of the earth to-morrow?"

After a few days' sojourn here, they prepared themselves as well as their scanty means would allow, to cross the barrier before them. All day long they rode over the broken ground, along which the trail lay, and at night halted far up its rugged side, where they could look down upon the rolling valley below. Here they found the night air very cold, and they were obliged to enclose boughs around them to break the wind from their miserable retreat while they slept.

Taking an early breakfast, they started on, and at night, having made a good day's ride, reached within a short distance of the summit of the mountain. Here they experienced much difficulty in respiration. The vegetation also became very sparse; the ground sometimes in large spaces being covered with piles of slate and limestone, among which, not a shrub could take root. They often terminated in precipices making the trail through their windings difficult and dangerous. By the aid of large fires they spent the night very comfortably, and the next morning determined, while still refreshed

by rest, to cross the summit and make the descent so far as would make respiration less difficult, for even now they were at times dizzy and faint. To ride through these difficult places was impossible, and dismounting, they passed up the narrow path one at a time; sometimes the ascent was so glassed with ice and so steep that they were obliged to pull themselves up by clinging with their hands to the rocks above them. A crust of ice and snow covered the ground, and the horses being unshod, floundered and stumbled, and often made narrow escapes from being precipitated into the abyss below. The poor beasts seemed to comprehend the danger, and carefully tried the ground at every step before venturing their weight fully upon it, and shuddering and trembling, kept as far from the edge of the ice-bound rocks as the narrowness of the pass would allow them. The sun shone brightly, but it created little warmth, and in the middle of June they were suffering the rigors of winter.

Safely they stood upon the summit of the Sierra! Away to the west a smooth blue belt girt the horizon, while to the east a long range of mountains rose against the sky. It was the Pacific on the west, and the Wahsatch mountains on the east, with the broad valleys basking in a summer sun between them, through which rivers wound their dark serpentine lines, while away to the north-east:

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the great desert lay, with its white sands glittering beneath the rays that fell upon it.

What struck them as peculiar, was numerous dark spots scattered at intervals over the barren waste, while in the centre lay some of immense size, clothed with dark verdure, from the midst of which rose a mountain, looking from that distance, like a shaft against the sky. They concluded to themselves, these must be strips of land, yet in their wanderings they had come across but one. They did not relish the idea of being caught in darkness on that inhospitable elevation, and turning their steps once more into the trail, began the descent. Greatly to their relief, they found this more even and less steep, and descended a few hundred feet without any great exertion. They now could breathe freer, and began to be much relieved. Ice and snow also disappeared, and keeping on their way steadily, by night they reached a refreshing spring, around which grass grew in abundance, and by which they encamped for the night. Tired and weary as they were, they were more cheerful and happy that night than they had been for months previously, it seemed to them that the great barrier had been overcome, and they had safely passed the last fiery ordeal they should be called to encounter. They felt as though the night had passed, and day was dawning on their weary and forlorn prospects.

They were in no great hurry to be on their road

the next morning, for on awaking they found themselves sore and stiff in their limbs, and their beasts' hoofs torn and swollen. Towards noon, however, much refreshed, they once more started, and after proceeding on their journey about two hours, they came to a dangerous pass—the path being not over three feet wide, steep, and difficult of descent.* Directing Sidney, Jane, and Edward ahead, Howe and Jones began the descent with the horses; when in the most difficult place, one of the animals became restive, and rearing, was precipitated below, dragging Jones, who had hold of the bridle, with him. One terrible cry of distress was heard as the horse went over the side, and then a crash on the jagged rocks, and the noble beast was dashed to atoms two hundred feet below them. Frightened at the plunge and cries of mortal anguish, the rest of the horses broke, and bounded wildly down the path. Howe, seeing he could not control them, sprang close to the wall of rock, thus saving himself from being crowded over the abyss by the terrified beasts who, in their headlong career, heeded nothing before them. As they came to a sharp angle in the trail, as it wound down the mountain, the two foremost horses, instead of turning, plunged over the side, and with a neigh of terror,

* Since 1840 this pass over the Sierra has been abandoned, and one far easier and less difficult discovered twenty miles below it. It was originally used by the Indians, as the shortest route to the valley beyond.

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were soon crushed, like their companion, on the rocks in the deep abyss below. The others seeing the two disappear, paused sufficiently to avert the danger, and turning the angle, landed safely on the table, where the children had preceded them.

Terrified at seeing the horses without Howe and Jones, they hastened up the mountain to where the first catastrophe had occurred, and arrived in time to see their uncle assist Jones into the path from a jutting rock a few feet below, where he had landed in no wise hurt, with the exception of a few bruises. The rock that had caught him was but a few feet broad, and it was nearer a miracle that he was not dashed to the bottom of the abyss than we are accustomed to experience. The poor beast was a pitiful sight to look upon, and at a glance at his mangled body they turned sickened away. The other two had also been crushed instantly and lay lifeless where they had fallen. Thankful for their own escape, yet grieving for the fate of their faithful animals that had been through so many privations with them, they encamped on the broad table below, where they found a spring of pure water and plenty of grass for their two remaining horses.

The next day as they were wending their way slowly along, they came to a range of walls so singular in their conformation as to make them pause in their journey to examine them. On a

broad table, girt in on either side by the rocky fortresses of the Sierra, a column arose twenty feet long and sixteen wide at the base, diminishing as it rose to a height of thirty feet so as to leave the top eight by twelve feet in dimensions. This column was ascended by a flight of steps, regular and perfect in their construction. They were not long in ascertaining this to be a work of art, and perhaps for centuries on centuries it had stood there defying the elements, and was even now as solid and perfect, with every block of granite in its place, as when first laid.

"This is the work of the ancestors of the old man of Lake Superior," said Howe, thoughtfully.

"Perhaps the savages he told you of, whom he said inhabited the mountains built it," returned Jane.

"It was never built by a people destitute of the arts and sciences. Mark the accuracy with which each stone is made to fit its place, hewn and polished until it is as smooth as marble. Note also the cement in which it is laid, black and hard as glass, like that in which the temple was laid where we spent our first winter. No, no; depend upon it, a civilized people have been here centuries before our forefathers ever heard of this continent."

A cry of astonishment from Edward who had ascended to the summit, called their attention there

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also. Gaining the top, they found on the centre, raised on blocks of granite, a foot from the smooth floor, a heavy slab of granite six feet long and two wide and six inches thick, elaborately carved on the edges, the design being entwined serpents, the heads laying over the ends with closed mouths and open eyes. They were represented as being scaly, and each scale was chiseled with some strange device, all differing in shape and finish. On this slab lay a flint, the edges sharp, hollowed into a slightly oval form, being made into a sharp and thin scoop with the shape of a shell. By its side lay a stone mallet perfect also in its finish. With feelings of awe they left this memento of the unknown past, and pursued their journey.

The rest of the descent they found comparatively easy, and they were once more where birds sang and flowers bloomed, game roamed, and savages prowled. Making easy journeys, in a few days they hailed with joy a clearing which they saw was inhabited. The owner proved to be a Creole missionary from a Spanish settlement below, who had been stationed there to look after the spiritual welfare of the Indians, and who received our wanderers with great kindness. When they told him who and what they were, the benevolent curate, like a good christian, insisted they should make his domicile their home until they heard from their friends. This offer they gladly accepted; and in exchange

for their gold which fascinated the pious man's eyes in a wonderful degree, they obtained some clothing, and when once more dressed in the garb of civilization, they began to think their wanderings were indeed over.

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Chapter Twenty-Second.

Return to the family of Mr. Duncan—Lewis and his father succeed in getting back to camp—The effect the capture of the children produced on the health of Mr. and Mrs. Duncan—Cole and the chief reach the camp of the Arapahoes—Their surprise—They continue their course to Mr. Duncan's camp—Joy at the news they bring—They start again for the west—Thirty Arapahoes accompany them—They arrive at the Sierra Nevada.

HAVING followed our wanderers through many exceedingly trying and difficult scenes, since they became separated from the rest of the family and were lost in the deep and dreary desert, to the hospitable fireside of the curate beyond the Sierra Nevada where they again met with the comforts of civilized life, we will leave them for the present and return to the family of Mr. Duncan. The last we saw of Mr. Duncan and Lewis was in the battle with the Crows; but they succeeded in making their escape, and finally returned to their camp, only, however, to convey the sorrowful intelligence of the sad fate of all who had gone out to the rescue except himself and Lewis. This sad event confined him to a bed of sickness from which he arose after many weeks of suffering, with feeble

and tottering steps, and locks whitened by suffering. Grief had done what time had not—it had made him old and grey.

Mrs. Duncan submitted meekly to the terrible blow; but the elasticity of her step was gone, the light from her eye, and the usual glad smile from her lips had disappeared. Had her children sickened and died, she could have laid them away in the grave, with the consoling thought, that all must lay there at last. But the harrassing idea of the torture they would be subjected to, and the terrible death they must at last suffer, if indeed they still lived, was a constant source of agony to her.

“If I only knew that they were dead and at rest, I would be content; but, alas! I fear they still live!” she often said to herself, and then the throbbings of her heart would not be still. Poor mother! her thoughts made her life a torture of the deepest intensity.

Lewis would not believe they were dead, and had devoted the whole time of their absence in wandering from tribe to tribe, in his endeavors to gain some information of them. Once he heard there were some white persons captive in a distant Indian village, but he could not learn the name of the tribe, or in what part of the vast western wilds they were located. Twice he had been through to Oregon in hopes of obtaining a clue to their whereabouts, but heartsick had returned only to sink the already drooping spirits of his parents

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still lower. Mr. Duncan had removed his family farther east, where he would be less liable to be annoyed by hostile Indians, and there taking up his abode determined to await until he could learn the fate of his children.

Cole and the chief travelled with great rapidity. They were inured to hardship from infancy, and with nothing to impede their progress, sometimes riding, and sometimes walking, the fourth week out they came to the Arapahoe village in the evening just as the shades of night were drawing to the lodges, the men, women, and children who had scattered themselves during the day through the forest. The chieftain's eye kindled as the old familiar faces passed before him, and his breast heaved with pride as he read in their cheerful steps and careless ways the security and prosperity of his tribe. Cole and the chief were standing in the shadow of a large chesnut tree, which protected them from observation, but from which they saw all that was passing in the village without being seen. Gradually the Arapahoes seated themselves on the bank of a small stream in little groups, and then the chief saw who it was that had succeeded him in command—it was his best friend—the brave and good Eagle.

“Stay here, till I return,” whispered the chief to Cole, and then folding his arms over his brawny chest, he walked with a proud step into their midst. Every tongue seemed to be paralyzed, every limb

nerveless, as they, with horror depicted on their swarthy faces, saw him approaching.

At last one old man slowly arose and stretching his long bony hand toward him, said—"Does not our chief rest well in the spirit land, that he comes back to his people again? or does he come to warn us of danger?"

"The Arapahoes have forgotten their chief," said Whirlwind, bitterly.

"No, no: not forgotten him!" cried a young girl—his sister—bounding into the circle, and throwing herself into his arms.

"The Singing-Bird does not forget," said the chief, holding her tightly in his embrace.

"We did not forget, but thought you dead!" they all cried, after fairly recovering from their panic. The Eagle was one of the first to give him a hearty welcome back, and as he did so, he laid his plume on the returned chieftain's head—thus resigning his title and authority.

"No, keep it yet for awhile," returned Whirlwind, "I must leave you for a time." He then explained the disasters that had befallen them, and, finally, his self-imposed duty in uniting the severed family.

The Indians never do a generous act by piecemeal. They are either warm friends or bitter enemies, knowing no medium between the two. They will lay down their lives to serve a friend, and murder a friend's enemy for the same reason,

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although they have never seen him before, and personally have no animosity towards him. The Arapahoes applauded the noble design of their chief, and furnished fresh horses to him and Cole, with which to accomplish the distance to the frontier, where Mr. Duncan and his companions were.

Mr. Duncan and family were seating themselves at their evening meal, as the two horseman halted at the door. A glance was sufficient to tell them one was a stranger, and the other—could it be?—was the Arapahoe chief, who was taken captive with his lost ones! They all with one impulse started for the door, but Mrs. Duncan, too overcome with anxiety, stood trembling, pale and speechless, leaning on a chair, from which she had just arisen. Mr. Duncan reached the door, but the words he would have spoken died on his lips, as Lewis bounded past him, and grasping the chief's arm convulsively, cried—"Do *they* live!—speak, if you would not see *them* die!" pointing to his father and mother—"do they live?"

"All live!" said the chief; and as the words fell from his lips, a cry of joy and gladness resounded from the chastened hearts of the family. The certainty that the lost ones still lived, though they yet knew not where nor under what circumstances, roused their enervated energies, nerved their limbs and called back the healthful flush to the cheek, and the light of joy to their eyes.

"To be sure they are well," said Cole to their

inquiries, "and we have come all the way from the Sierra Nevada mountains to bring you the news, and take you to them."

"Yes, yes; we will go. To-morrow we will be on the road to see them," said Mrs. Duncan.

"Not so fast as that," returned Cole; "I lost all my traps by the red-skins, and must collect some more. Besides, you need more preparation than could be made in that time, or you will fall into savage hands the second time."

"Let it be a week, then; we can be ready in that time," said Mr. Duncan. Their wanderings were recounted by Whirlwind, and when he had concluded, Mrs. Duncan's joy was nearly turned to sorrow, for fear they had not escaped the dangers of the Sierra. Accordingly, their arrangements were made to set out after a week's preparation. Mr. Duncan's equipments being nearly the same as those with which he had started two years before, when his journey was so unfortunately interrupted. Their destination now was somewhat different than what it was then; their only object being to recover their lost children. Cole had given such glowing descriptions of the country west of the Sierra that they thought it probable they should settle there; still, this was a minor consideration with them.

They reached the Arapahoe village in safety, where they found thirty of their warriors ready to accompany them as a guard. Their love and

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devotion to their chief prompted them to this disinterested act. They were all well mounted on half-tamed prairie horses,—their swarthy forms fantastically painted, and their heads and tunics adorned with shells, beads, and feathers, which gave them a wild, grotesque, but not unbecoming appearance. This was their gala costume, prepared after the most approved Indian style, and France never looked upon her sovereign with more pride when decked in his costliest regal vestments, than this tribe of savages did upon these thirty warriors, that the whole village had been laid under contribution to decorate in befitting pomp for this occasion. It is unnecessary to follow them minutely as they progressed in their journey. Suffice it that their guard protected them from the depredations of other Indians, and at the same time kept them supplied with meat and fish in abundance, cleared the path when obstructed, and daily rendered invaluable service to the emigrants. On reaching the Sierra, they were shown another pass by some Indians they met with, which was less dangerous, although farther over, and quite as toilsome in crossing.

Chapter Twenty-third.

The Curate has become much attached to the Wanderers—Arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Duncan's family, accompanied by a number of Arapahoes—Whirlwind demands Jane in marriage—Duncan's feeling in the matter—Jane refuses and the Indians take their departure—The curate gives an account of the discoveries he made of a singular road, city, pyramid—The marriage of Jane and Sidney—Prosperous condition of Mr. Duncan's family—The lapse of twelve years—Change of their condition—Age whitens their locks—Conclusion.

WE will go back again to the Pacific valley. The good curate had formed a strong attachment to our wanderers who had been so unceremoniously thrown upon his hospitality, and he held out such strong inducements for them to settle permanently there that Howe had taken some land, and by the aid of Indians whom the curate had partially civilized and taught to labor, cleared a few acres and built thereon a neat and convenient house for the reception of Mr. Duncan, whose arrival he was expecting daily.

Not long after this was completed, as they were all assembled on the porch, a troop of wild looking horsemen emerged from the forest, and galloped towards the house.

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"It is a party out on a hunt," said the curate, "we have nothing to fear from them. They will no doubt give us a call, and then hasten away to the forest again."

Howe had been looking intently towards them from the first moment they came in sight, as if in doubts as to who and what they were. The approaching Indian's vision was keener than Howe's, for recognizing the trapper, Whirlwind's joyous shout rang in the air in a prolonged "*tu tu-la-la-lah!*"

"The chief! it is the chief!" cried Howe, recognizing the sound, "he has come to bring us joyful tidings."

"May it be so for your sakes," returned the curate, with apparent joy.

Approaching with their panting horses, the Indians were dismounted the next moment, and shaking hands with the little group; but, when the chief came to Jane, he caught her in his arms and gazed wistfully in her clear blue eyes.

"They are all safe and close at hand," said he speaking rapidly, anticipating her inquiry, "and I have come to claim the antelope. Will she not now go with her chief?"

"I cannot tell you yet; my mother! father! let me see them," cried the bewildered girl.

"They will be here very soon. The hill yonder is all that now hides them from view," replied the chief, releasing her from his embrace.

"We will go to meet them," said Sidney who, in gratitude to the chief for safely conducting his more than father and mother over the dreary wilds, forgot to evince jealousy at the embrace to which the chief had so unceremoniously treated himself.

"Yes, yes; let us go to meet them," responded Jane, eagerly.

"The white mother longs for her children," said the chief; "you shall go to meet her. The antelope can ride,—will you?" he continued, pointing to his horse, and before she had time to speak he caught her in his arms, and with the agility of a chamois, sprang on the horse's back, placing the half terrified girl before him, and then galloped away to the forest in the direction whence he came, with the rest, including the curate, following after them. Turning the curve of the hill, they came suddenly upon the emigrants, who at sight of their children, uttered an exclamation of joy, and ran forward, catching Jane who was the first to come up, from the chief's arms, and who, with a glad cry, sprang to meet a long embrace from her father and mother.

"Mother! father! Jane!" was all they could say, for their hearts were too full to speak.

"I come! father! mother—I come!" cried Edward, rushing into their arms, which were glad to hold him there again.

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me these lost ones!" cried the mother fervently, still holding her recovered children in her arms.

"Amen!" responded the curate, gently.

"Joy, for your arrival—joy for our escape and re-union," cried Sidney, returning the warm embrace with which he was greeted.

"These children make children of us," said Howe, shaking Mr. and Mrs. Duncan by the hand, while endeavoring to keep his joy at again seeing them in becoming bounds, for the children's volubility was becoming contagious.

Lewis, Martin, Annie, and Benjamin were not behind the rest in their greeting. Indeed they were extravagant in their joy.

The emigrants were now conducted to the dwelling prepared for them, which gave them a pleasant surprise, for they had not anticipated finding a house awaiting their arrival. The baggage was soon placed in it, and by nightfall they were fairly domiciled in their new home. Tired of being unsettled, Mr. Duncan, on examining the locality around him, determined to make himself a permanent home, much to the gratification of the curate, whose choice of society had been hitherto necessarily limited, as there were but few settlers within twenty miles of his station. Jones and Cole refused to take up their abode there. Visions of gold mines constantly haunted them, and after a week's delay they departed for their hidden treasure.

The chief now became impatient to return, and to the astonishment of all, and great indignation of Sidney, formally demanded of Mr. Duncan that he should give authority for him to marry Jane, in order that he might be on his journey back to his people. This demand was so extraordinary that the father did not know what to do, and sought Howe, to see if he could throw any light on this singular freak of the chief. A shade of sorrow settled on the brow of the trapper when Mr. Duncan told him his errand. "The chief," he remarked, "has been making love in his fashion to Jane ever since we have been away, greatly to the annoyance of Sidney, who looks upon her as if he thought no one had a right to make love to her but himself."

"How is it with Jane?" asked Mr. Duncan, anxiously.

"If I am not greatly deceived, she prefers the chief to Sidney. I am not certain of it, however. She was too guarded in her looks for me to ascertain positively."

"This is strange! What am I to do?"

"Not strange at all, Duncan," returned the trapper. "Do what is right, and all will be well enough."

"The question then is, what is right?"

"Not a hard one, by any means, to answer. If she prefers him, and he will abandon his savage habits, live and be civilized like other people, let her take

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him by all means. He is a noble, generous fellow, and we are under great obligations to him, and common gratitude demands from us any consistent return."

"But this mixing of the races!—I must acknowledge I can but feel a repugnance to it; but we will see what Jane says, and leave it all to her."

On approaching, they found her in earnest conversation with the chief, and as they came up, they heard her say--"Do not ask me to leave them; I feel as if a separation from all my kindred would be fatal to my happiness. Your people are strangers to me; and though they would undoubtedly, as you say, be kind to me, yet it would not be like my own people. Their ways are not like ours; and though I could not live among them, you could with ours."

"Whirlwind was cradled in the forest, and he is not a child to die in a white man's wigwam," returned the chief. "If the antelope will not go with him to his people, he must leave her;" and though the words were slow and measured as they fell from his lips, his chest heaved convulsively, and his eye was bent with intense light on her, as if he would read the secret workings of her soul.

"Oh, I cannot, cannot go!" she said, extending her clasped hands appealingly, as she raised her eyes towards him.

"Because you do not love as I do," said he,

clasping her in a long and close embrace, then releasing her with a single bitterly uttered "Farewell! we may never meet again," bounded away, leaving the poor girl alone to ponder on the strange conduct of the chief.

"She is better alone," said Howe, "let us away," and retreating, they found the Arapahoes in commotion, and before they could rightly comprehend the meaning of what had transpired, they formed into a body, each one holding his horse by the halter, and at a signal from the chief, were firmly mounted on their steeds. Waving their adieu to their host, they were out of sight before Mr. Duncan and Howe were conscious of their design.

"Poor fellow," said the trapper, "he has carried away a sad heart—an inadequate return, indeed, for all he has done for us."

"I would willingly have had it otherwise, but it seems they were both too strongly attached to customs and kindred among which they were born and which have become a part of their being, to give them up for each other."

"Well, well," said Howe, "I have little faith in broken hearts; at least what I have had was never strengthened by observation or experience. It is all for the best, I suppose, but I liked the chief, and feel as though I had parted from a brother."

While assembled together in a group a few evenings after, of which the curate occupied a promi-

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nen: position, our wanderers had been recounting some of the wonders they had seen, among which Mr. Duncan related to the curate the story of the Old Man of Lake Superior, and Howe gave them a description of the ruins among the mountains. The curate listened silently, but, evidently, with great interest to the recital until its conclusion. He then commenced telling what he had seen:

“Last summer I was in Nacogdoches, an inland village of Texas, and while transacting some business that had called me thither, I incidentally heard a curious road spoken of, and much speculation was entertained as to who could have been the builders. ‘It never was built by the Mexicans,’ said one, who seemed both learned and gentlemanly, ‘for had it been some record would have survived, and I am confident there is none, for I have made the early annals of the country my sole study for years, and must have found a record or something to throw light upon such a costly and stupendous undertaking had it been built by them.’ This was enough to arouse my curiosity, for I had already seen works of art still perfect, that were known to be older than any erected by the inhabitants of this continent at the time of the conquest; and, joining the group of gentlemen, learned that the road referred to was a broad paved avenue leading west, and was said to extend many hundred miles: so far indeed into the wilderness that its termination was unknown. Rumor said it termi-

nated at the Pacific Ocean. My resolution was at once taken. I determined to return to the Pacific valley by this route, for if there was such a road it would be conferring an incalculable benefit on travellers to explore it. My business completed, in company with four others, one of them being Don Quavale, an amateur antiquarian, with his servant, Jose, and a man by the name of Campbell, we set out. I had a servant, Diego, the same who you see here every day. It was a small party for such an adventure, but we were not aware of the dangers that lay before us, and we entered the wilderness with light hearts."

"You followed it up, then?" said Howe; "bravo! you priests have nerve as well as kind words, it seems."

"Yes: we followed it up," replied the curate, quietly. "Light hearted and eager to explore the whole extent of this stupendous monument of a lost people, we entered the wilderness, and soon struck the object of our search. We examined it closely and found it about eighty feet wide and paved with granite in slabs twenty feet long and ten wide, and were evidently of great thickness. The whole road was covered with a soil, made up of decayed leaves and branches sometimes, more than a foot in thickness. Still we were enabled to follow the road without the slightest difficulty, as it would not support a large growth of trees, for the blocks of granite were so closely fitted against each other that

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it precluded the possibility of their taking root between them. Consequently they ran along the surface, and as soon as the branches attained any large size the wind overturned them, leaving a broad avenue through the tall forest trees. We followed this road through the day; sometimes the ground had been raised, as was plainly visible from the low lands on either side; then again it went through hills that had been excavated, as they rose on either side in their original height, giving the road the appearance of a broad defile between them. Towards sunset of the fourth day we came to a cluster of what we at first thought to be rocks overgrown with shrubs and moss, but which, on a closer view, proved to be a large building in ruins. Removing the accumulated soil we found it still perfect in some of its parts. One of its doors in particular had its lintel of granite on which rested a huge mass of fallen stone without displacing it. Passing inside this door we entered a room perfect in all its proportions, being about twenty feet square; but what excited us still more than the discovery of the ruins was some beautiful hieroglyphics carved on one side of the room directly beneath a human figure cut in relief and curiously decorated, holding a sceptre in its hand.

“Observing a curious knob in one side of the room, Don Quavale took hold of it roughly to see if it was a part of the wall, when to our astonishment it clicked heavily, and an unseen door slowly swung

open revealing an inner room of the same size as the first, but different in appearance. Having been kept closed and, as near as we could tell, air-tight, it was still in its original appearance. The floor which was entirely destitute of rubbish, was of beautiful white marble, smooth and even as glass, while the sides were covered with paintings drawn on the wall of the size of life, the colors still vivid and beautiful. The characters drawn were men, birds and fishes, and sometimes a nondescript animal—half eagle and half man—a perfect monster in appearance. Overhead was a representation of the sun, the rays emanating from the centre in flashing colors covered the surface and finally died away in the softest possible tints of rose color. A more perfect representation of the sun I never beheld, and as we gazed upon it, it seemed as if we were contemplating some beautiful creation of an artist of our own day rather than the remains of a people of whom we know not even the name."

"What you have seen, exceeds in finish our discoveries," said Howe.

"Yes: we found there stranger things still," continued the curate. "Ranged around three sides of the room, at regular intervals, were knobs like the one on the door by which we entered, and on pressing one with considerable force it slowly opened, and within we discovered a small, low niche in which lay a corpse as perfect as if just deposited there. It was that of a young woman with symmetrical form, dim-

pled cheeks and flowing hair, decorated in rich habiliments of gorgeous dyes, her waist encircled by a zone of diamonds, and her arms with bracelets of precious stones. Wonder stricken at what we saw we gazed in silence upon her, and while we gazed the body slowly crumbled away and in half an hour it had dissolved in air leaving but a handful of dust and the glittering gems that had decked her a bride of death, to mark the spot where she lay. Turning another knob another door opened like the previous ones, and in a niche before us lay a warrior in the prime of manhood. He was very tall and muscular, a perfect Hercules in proportions, with a broad, massive forehead and prominent features. He was attired in a sort of uniform of curious workmanship. This apparition vanished quicker than the other, owing probably, to the room being better filled with fresh air. We had, without doubt, lighted on a mausoleum of the lost people; and wishing to preserve the rest of the niches for scientific investigation, we did not open any more. With reverence we left the bodies of the builders of these ruins to their repose.

“Proceeding onward we came, in two more days, to a high table land, on which was a place known as Gran Quivira. It is now in ruins, but bears the appearance of once having been a large populous city, regularly laid out in streets at right angles. The city is about three miles long, running from north-east to north-west, and nearly a mile in

breadth. It is built of stone hewn and accurately fitted together. Some of the houses are still standing, though the greater part of them are thrown down. Entering one of these which exhibited signs of original magnificence amidst the crumbling ruins around it, we found ourselves in a capacious hall, the walls of which were covered with paintings of which a faint tinge of distinct coloring was visible, but as the figures had been cut in the wall before being colored they were easily defined, and were similar to those we had found in the mausoleum two days before. This room was so filled with rubbish, among which were the dried bones and decayed carcasses of animals, that we were on the point of quitting the disagreeable vicinity, when Campbell called our attention to a stairway that descended to some place below. Descending the steps with care—for the slabs of granite which composed them were loosened and seemed ready to tumble down—we found ourselves in a room entirely empty about eighteen feet square, the walls of which were covered with figures in bas-relief and colored elaborately, the tints being still vivid and quite fresh.

“We discovered on examination that we were on a level with the street, and that time had accumulated a soil to the depth of many feet, hiding the exterior of what had been, originally, the first floor, from view. This room was also strewn with rubbish, but we saw enough of it to suppose that

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the structure had been an imposing one when in the possession of its builders. Leaving this structure, we followed some fallen and shapeless masses of ruins until we came to a range of hills, where we found a curious opening in them, which we soon ascertained to be artificial, with the rock hewn away so as to give free egress from within. Providing ourselves with torches, we penetrated this cavern, and discovered it to be an ancient mine, with the implements of the miners scattered around, as if the artisans had been suddenly interrupted in their labors. There were crowbars quite like our own, though not of iron, chisels, hammers, and a kind of axe more wieldy than ours, but not unlike it. These implements of mining were black, and all of the same kind of metal, but what metal it was, we could not determine. We found also here vessels of pottery, beautiful in shape and highly colored.*

Returning from the hills, we came to a large building, which must have been five or six stories high, of which half of the walls were thrown down. On clambering over the blocks of granite, we found, by what remained that it had been a guard-house, as there were port-holes in the walls which

* Since the above was written, a gentleman who became acquainted with the above facts from the Curate, visited the spot and made other discoveries of importance, which he communicated to the Maryland Historical Society in an important document, to which the reader is referred.

were four feet in thickness. This building, like the others we had seen, was made of hewn stone, smoothly cut and fitted together without any cement. Indeed they needed none, for the thinnest knife-blade could not have been inserted between them. To the north of this guard-house we found a reservoir in the form of an ellipse, its axis one hundred and fifty yards in length, its breadth at least one hundred, and its depth about fifty feet, paved at the bottom, and built up at the sides with hewn stone. At the northern side an aqueduct entered it, and this we followed a long way, but not finding where it terminated, and being too fatigued to pursue it farther, we returned.* The width of this channel is about twelve feet, and ten in depth, finished at the bottom and the sides like the reservoir. Continuing our journey, we followed the road which led us a little north of west. We often saw Indians entirely nude who fled from us, and as we took the precaution of getting out of their vicinity as soon as our horses could carry us, we were not molested by them. We saw nothing further of interest, until we struck the desert through which the road lay, and, for the first time, we found it difficult to follow, as the desert was without vegetation, the dry sand covering the whole

* Within a year past the aqueduct has been traced forty miles, terminating at the banks of a beautiful stream, which now empties its waters into the Pecos, the mouth of the aqueduct being blocked up.

extent for miles around, with an arid and even surface. We should, in all probability, have lost ourselves in that trackless waste, had there not been huge shapeless piles of stone at intervals, and we soon found that on digging down near these, we came to the paved road, and that on removing the sand from around one of these piles of stone, we came upon unmistakable evidences that they had once formed a building in all probability to refresh travellers while journeying over this barren waste.

“Keeping in the track as near as possible, we came to the Colorado, and crossing over on a raft we made for the purpose, we saw on the western side, rising from the plain at a considerable distance, a curious shaft, and we soon found that the road ran by it. It must have been six or eight miles from the Colorado, for we rode two hours before coming to it, and when we did our astonishment was overwhelming to find a pyramid rising one hundred and twenty feet from its base. It was level at the top, and about fifty feet square, and afforded an easy ascent on the opposite side from which it leaned. This pyramid projected ten degrees from the perpendicular. I am inclined to think it was not built in that position, but has been thrown out of an erect construction by some convulsion of nature which, at the same time, displaced and threw down the top. This conclusion we arrived at unanimously on examining the struc-

ture, and a mass of fallen stone that lay at the base on the side towards which it leaned. These were in a pile, shelving from the pyramid, looking as though but lately fallen from above. If we were right in our conclusion, the structure must have been one hundred and fifty feet high. The sand had accumulated about its base to a great depth, a fact we ascertained by digging it away a few feet. To lay bare the shaft to the base was a greater task than we were able to accomplish, and we left it to be more thoroughly explored by some future antiquarian.*

“It is impossible to describe the sensation we felt in standing before this monument of the past—this proof of a once strong and powerful people, who erected the structure. We knew that no European had ever gazed on it before, and we almost expected to see the builders, indignant at our intrusion, start up from the desert around, and drive us from their shrines. Pursuing our journey, we found the road dotted on either side, at intervals, with evidences of a once civilized people; but nearly every vestige of peculiar interest about them had been destroyed by time, save the bare blocks of granite, cut into various forms to please the mysterious builders, all, all was gone! and desolation had made their pleasant places her abode.”

* Early in the year 1853, a party of California explorers came across this same pyramid, but as they were not prepared to investigate it nothing new was elicited.

Twelve years have passed since Mr. Duncan and his family settled on the California coast of the Pacific; and, in conclusion, let us look in once more upon them and witness their prosperous condition.

In a neat and tastily arranged cottage sits a woman in the prime of matronly beauty, with love and happiness beaming from her soft blue eyes, as they wander in gratified pride from a fine boy some eight years old, who stands at her side, to a man who sits reading by a window that overlooks the beautiful landscape. This is the home of Sidney and Jane, and they are now enjoying a life of contentment that cannot fail to encircle their lives with a halo of bliss which gold can never buy. They never recrossed the Sierra in search of the riches that still lie buried in the mountains and desert, for the mere mention of them, vividly recalls the recollection of the terrible sufferings they endured in their wanderings through the wilds of the west. The rest of Mr. Duncan's children are also happily settled near them, while the trapper is an inhabitant of each cottage and the forest alternately, as inclination dictates, and is supposed to be the most contented man in the Pacific valley.

We said that twelve years had elapsed since our wanderers reached the Pacific Valley—that is a short period of time, yet it is long enough for events to transpire whose influences shall be felt for centuries to come; long enough to develop

the strength and resources of a continent. Great is the change which civilization has made in that portion of the west. The broad and almost interminable forests have yielded to the woodman's axe; the streams and rivers, and even old Ocean itself, have become transformed into channels of commerce and trade, and bear upon their bosoms the auxiliaries of progress and science. The mountains and valleys, where once nothing but the wild shouts of untutored savages and the howls of beasts of prey broke the stillness of the dismal solitude, are now vocal with the voice and bustle of civilization, as in giant strides science and art triumph over the rough barriers, and open avenues for the advancement of moral reform.

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