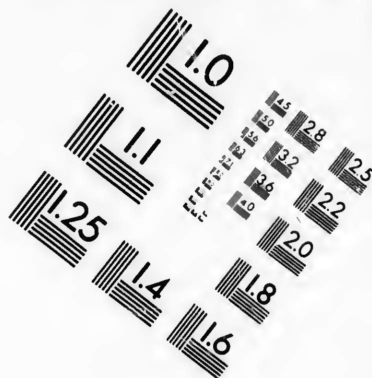

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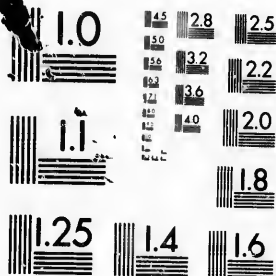
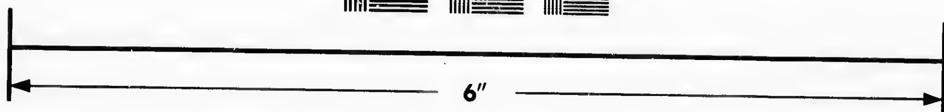
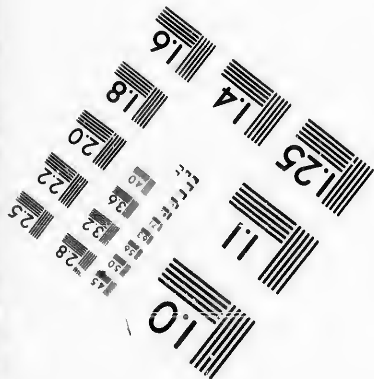
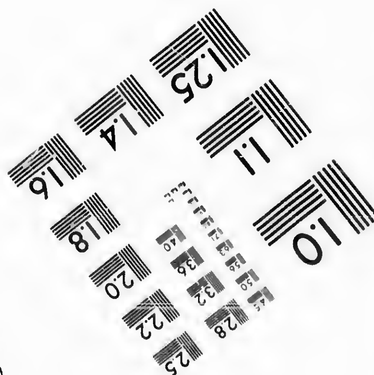

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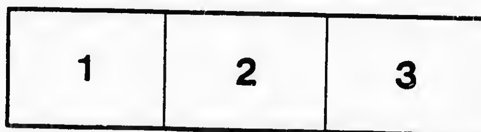

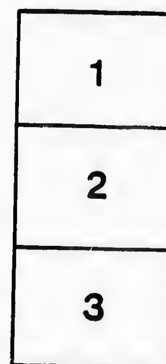

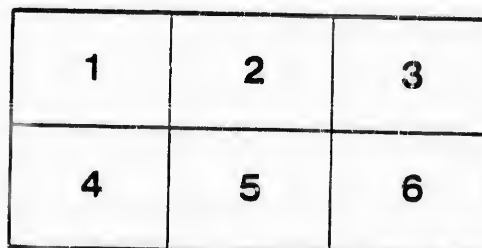

(2 vols. in 1.)

WILD SCENES

IN THE

FOREST AND PRAIRIE.

BY C. F. HOFFMAN, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "A WINTER IN THE FAR WEST."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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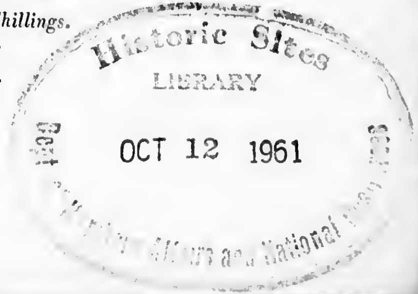

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PREFACE.

"I reckon our folks don't want none of them fixings," said an Ohio housewife to a Connecticut pedler who produced a pair of beaded moccassins, a shooting pouch, and other hunting paraphernalia from his pack: "the boys have plenty of such trash of their own providing."

The patient pedestrian offered next some prettily woven basket-ware and carved wooden bowls to tempt a purchase from the settler's wife.

"No! nor them nother," cried the virago:

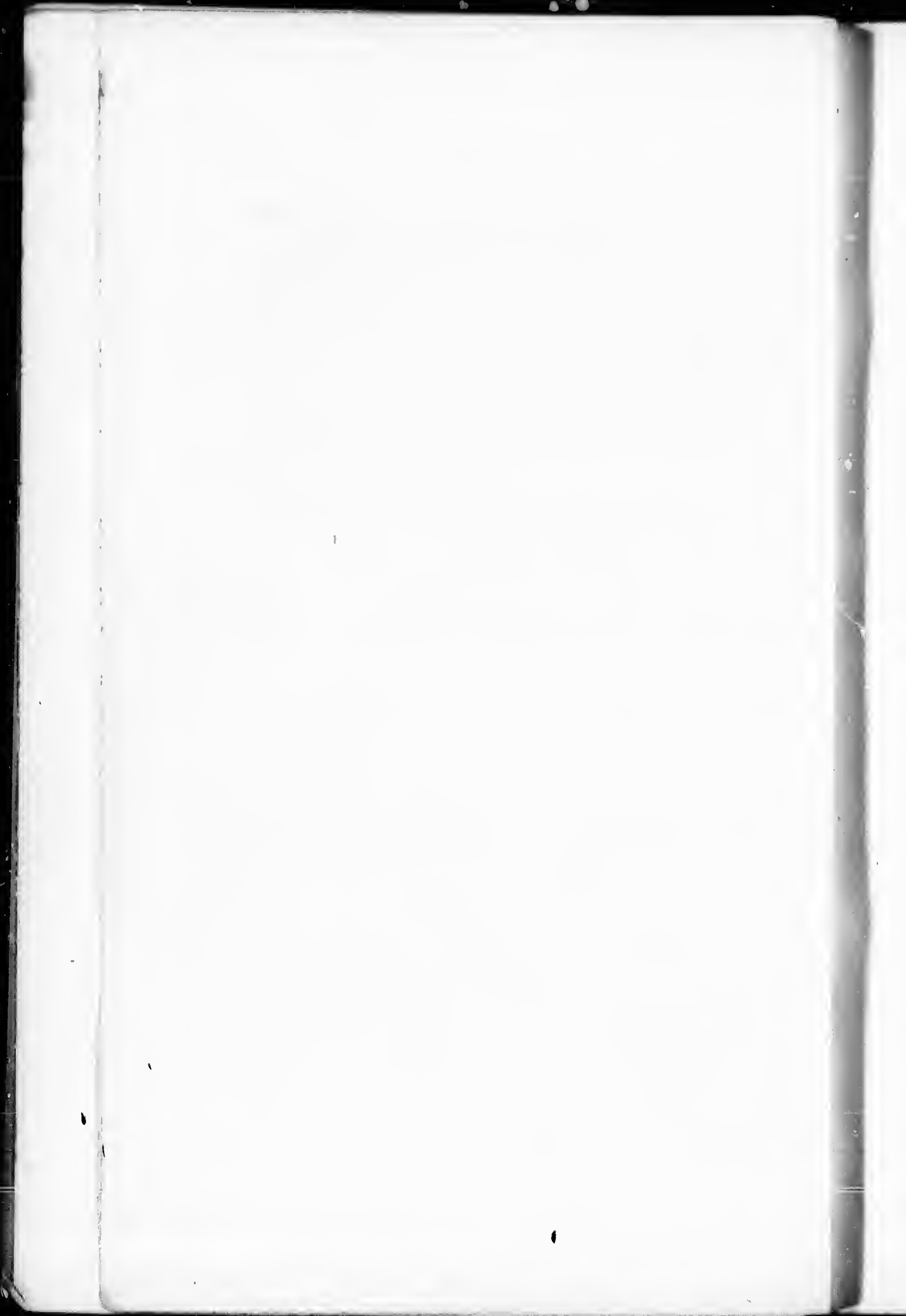
"the Miami Injuns do our basketing, and the Buck-eyes make better bowls than you can carve from your Yankee poplars. What does the fool mean by trying to sell us things we can make better nor him? Throw open your pack, manny, and let me choose for myself among your knicknacks."

The recollection of this shrewish monologue as once overheard by the author in a western cabin came vividly to his mind when about to select and remodel some of his lucubrations for a London publisher; and after cutting and carving, altering and amending, never to his own satisfaction, he finally concluded to abide by the lesson given to the worthy pedler. Instead, therefore, of attempting to cater for, or conform to tastes of which as an untravelled foreigner he knows but little, he has thrown open his pack to let the British reader choose for himself from its contents.

In a word, these American sketches, written in the first instance without any view to European publication, are here committed to the hospitality of strangers, precisely in their original shape, as they have from time to time accumulated during the rambles of the Author.

C. FENNO HOFFMA

New York, Dec. 1838.



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WILD SCENES

AT THE

SOURCES OF THE HUDSON.

CHAPTER I.

THE LAND OF LAKES.

"THE Land of Lakes," as the region of country which now forms the state of New York is termed in one of our aboriginal dialects, could hardly be characterized by a more appropriate name; as without counting the inland seas which bound her western shores, or pausing to enumerate the willowy ponds which freshen the verdure of her lowlands, or these deep and caldron-like pools which are so sin-

gularly set here and there upon the summits of her mountains, New York may still count a thousand lakes within her borders. Upon some of these fleets might engage in battle; and their outlets, broken at first by cataracts which Switzerland alone can rival, soon swell into rivers upon which the voyager may safely glide to climes a thousand miles away: while the Ohio, the Susquehannah, the Delaware, Hudson, and St. Lawrence, whose tributaries all interlace within a circle of a dozen miles in the heart of the state, give him a choice between the frozen shores of Labrador and the tropic seas of Mexico, in selecting the point where he would emerge upon the Atlantic main.

In connecting these wonderful links of internal navigation, whose union an enlightened policy has now effected, it is singular that in the various topographical *reconnoissances* of the state the sources of so important a stream as

the Hudson should only during the last year have been fully and satisfactorily explored. One would think that however the subject might be overlooked by the legislature, it could never have escaped the Argus eyes of our inquisitive, fidgety, and prying countrymen, until the year of grace '37.

Every body was, indeed, aware that the Hudson rose among a group of mountains in the northern part of the state of New York; and if you looked upon the map some of the lakes which formed its head waters seemed to be laid down with sufficient particularity. Few, however, until the legislature instituted the geological survey which is now in progress, had any idea that the mountains upon which this noble river rises overtopped the Catskills and the Alleghanies, and were among the loftiest in the United States; or that the lakes from which it draws its birth were equally remarkable for their

prodigal numbers, their picturesque variety, and their wild and characteristic beauty.

Tourists steamed upon the estuary of the Hudson, or loitered through the populous counties between the cities of New York and Albany, and, ignorant or unmindful that in ascending to the head of tide-water they had not seen quite one-half of the lordly stream, discussed its claims to consideration with an amiable familiarity, and, comparing its scenery with that of other celebrated rivers, they settled its whole character after a most summary fashion.

The worthy Knickerbockers were therefore not a little surprised, when they learned from the first official report of the surveying corps, that their famous river was fed by mountain snows for ten months in the year;* and that

* Snow remained on Mount Marcy until the 17th of July, and appeared again on the 11th of September, 1837.

there were a dozen cascades about its headwaters, to which Glen's falls, however endeared to association by the genius of Cooper, must hereafter yield in romantic interest and attraction. Many were eager at once to visit the sources of the Hudson; and, having in very early youth been much in the then savage district where some of the northern branches take their rise, the writer was so eager to penetrate farther into the same region, and behold the real head of the river, that he found himself rambling among the mountains of Essex county, within a few days after the state geologist had pronounced upon it as now distinctly ascertained.

The Hudson is formed by three mountain-torrents which unite within a few miles of their birthplace. The source of the highest fork is proved by observation to be 4700 feet above tide-water. It rises in an open mountain-meadow with two adjacent mountains swelling

in easy slopes from its sides. There is a still larger fountain-head west of this, in the same vicinity, rising in a singular gorge called "The Indian Pass:" while the northernmost source is in Lake Colden, or rather in Avalanche Lake; a small mountain tarn separated from the former by heavy earth-slides from the adjacent mountain summits, whose granite rocks glitter where the soil and trees have been swept down their denuded sides. The elevation of these two lakes, which have a fall of eighty feet between them, is between 2900 and 3000 feet above the ocean; being undoubtedly the highest lakes in the United States of America.*

* Emmons's Report—Redfield, &c.

CHAPTER II.

THE EXCURSION.

It was early in September when, accompanied by a friend—the companion of more than one pleasant ramble—I started upon the brief but novel tour. The winter sets in so early in the high mountain-region for which we were bound, that deeming we had no time to lose we struck for it by the nearest route; and instead of following the various windings of the river—which offer a delicious summer excursion for the man of leisure—we left tide-water at Lausingburgh, and passing eastward of Lake

George, went directly north by the way of Lake Champlain.

Embarking upon this lake at Whitehall, a few hours brought our steamer abreast of Port Henry, a small village which heaves in sight immediately after passing the crumbling fortifications of Crown Point. A pretty cascade tumbles from the rocks near the landing, and is the first thing that strikes you when approaching the shore. Several wooded hills rise in succession behind it, and give a picturesque appearance to a straggling hamlet along their base. Our route hence was due westward, and the evening being fine we engaged a conveyance to carry us on at once some twenty miles, through an almost unbroken forest, into the interior.

The autumnal moon was shining brightly as we commenced ascending the hills in the rear of Port Henry, rising continually until we

reached the village of Moriah, situated about three miles from the lake. The rearward view, in the mean time, was exceedingly fine. Indeed, I do not hesitate to say, that Lake Champlain, as seen from those hills, presents one of the very finest lake views in the United States. Broad enough for majestic effect, yet not too broad for the picturesque character, which, I think, is worth every thing else in scenery, the placid sheet of the lake lay silvered by the moonbeams below us. The promontory of Port Henry, with a headland of rival rock and forest opposite, nearly locked it upon the north. On the south, the narrow peninsula of Crown-Point, projecting longitudinally several miles into the lake, divided it into two friths, which gradually disappeared amid hill and forest, far in the distance; while immediately in front, though far beyond the broad, bright expanse of water, a dozen spurs of the Green Mountains,

and a dozen main peaks beyond them, loomed in the dewy atmosphere of evening, like some vast Alpine chain.

It was after midnight when we stopped at a log cabin about twenty miles from the lake. The hospitable settler, although his house was already filled with neighbours, who had come in to help him with his harvest, seemed to take the being roused from his slumbers at that late hour, to accommodate us, very kindly. A log-cabin and a pair of saddlebags are never so full, but that room can be found for something more, and we were soon packed beneath the same roof with the rest.

Let me here initiate the reader into a mode of travelling which is much in fashion about the sources of the Hudson. Did he ever see a teamster riding upon a buckboard? a stout, springy plank, laid upon the bare bolsters of a waggon! Well, now just spread a buffalo-skin

upon that buckboard, and rig the iron chain from the fore and aft stakes, so as to form a stirrup for your feet, and you have the best sort of carriage that can be contrived for rough roads. Upon such a convenience our luggage was lashed about six o'clock the next morning, and the active little settler, our host of the log-cabin, taking his axe in hand to remove any fallen tree that might obstruct our road through the woods, whistled to his dog, Buck, jumped on the board beside us, cracked his whip, and off we went into the forest. Our driver was a right-merry, stout-hearted, dashing little fellow; he had been brought up in the "Schroon country," as he called it, and had cleared every acre upon his thriving farm with his own hand; and after roughing it for several years in his log-cabin, was now prepared to build a snug framehouse upon his own ground. Our road was the worst

that I ever saw, except a *turnpike* through the bed of a mountain-torrent, which I once travelled in Eastern Kentucky. But stony declivities, stumps, quagmires, or fallen trees, had no terrors for our little Schroon hero; and his lean, but mettlesome horses, dashed through every thing. Such was the road, however, that as it slammed about among trees and logs, the motion of our vehicle was as much lateral as forwards, and we were several hours in making the first eight miles.

Accomplishing this stage at last, however, we came to an opening in the forest, where, upon the bank of a lake, and in the midst of a clearing of about a hundred acres, stood the log-cabin of a settler, at which we stopped to dine. The lake, or pond, as the people call it, was a limpid pool upon the top of a mountain, or rather an immense globular hill, flattened at top

like an old-fashioned goblet, and surrounded with mountain peaks from which it stood wholly isolated.

Upon the outlet of this lake was a saw-mill, and we here saw a model of a wooden railroad, contrived by a forester who has never seen a specimen of either, but whose ingenuity has found a field for its exercise, even in the depths of the woods.

After refreshing ourselves and our horses at this place, we started again, and by nightfall accomplished twenty-three miles more, the whole distance being through a continuous forest, with not a single house by the way.

About twilight we emerged from the forest, at the base of a lofty, cleared, and grassy hill, with a log-cabin on the summit, prettily situated in front of a grove of tall maples, called, in the language of the country, a "sugar-bush." This grassy domain, for the whole clearing of several

hundred acres, produced hay only, had a most singular effect in the bosom of a dark forest, surrounded, as it was, upon every side by mountains, which lapped each other as far as the eye could reach.

This farm—if so neglected a tract could be thus characterized—presented a scene of solitude and desertion, not uncommon in this part of the State. It had been cleared some ten or fifteen years since, but the original settler, seized with the emigrating fever which carries so many from our woodland region to the prairies of the far-west, had long deserted his mountain-home: and the place had been so neglected until the present season, that it was in danger of relapsing into the half-savage and almost irreclaimable state of what in the language of the country is called "a dead clearing." That is when thickets and briers so overrun the land and spread their roots and ten-

drils through the soil, that they become more difficult to eradicate than the original forest-growth, which yields at once to the axe of the woodman.

The new owners of the property, however, had now sent in some labourers from a more flourishing settlement to harvest the wild hay—the native grasses of these mountains being peculiarly fine—and the overseer of the proprietors being present—a frank, intelligent yeoman, to whom we had a letter from his employers—our reception was as hearty and hospitable as he could make it with the rude appliances about him. There was no womankind about the establishment, and after eating a hearty supper of fried pork and potatoes, cooked by a young hunter, of whom I may speak hereafter, we made a bed of fresh hay in a corner, and stretching a buffalo-skin over, by way of ticking, threw ourselves down and

slept with a soundness that would have been commendable in either of those celebrated disciples of Morpheus, the seven sleepers.

During the last day's drive we had crossed many of the streams which form the head waters of the Hudson; and on the morrow, we for the first time saw one of the most beautiful of the lakes which form its sources. Hereafter, therefore, I shall copy the scenes that came under my observation as taken down separately in my note-book upon the spot.

CHAPTER III.

LAKE SANDFORD.

STRIKING the outlet of Lake Sandford where it flows through a forest of dark cedars, our luggage was shifted from the buckboard and transferred with ourselves to a canoe; we embarked at the foot of a steep hill, but our course lay for some time through low swampy ground, where the canoe could sometimes with difficulty find a deep-enough channel through the sedge and water-lilies that by turns covered the surface. This amphibious track, however, soon disappeared where the hills again coming down

to the edge of the stream confined and deepened its current; and now, after a pull of a few hundred yards through a straight narrow passage, we launched out upon the bosom of one of those beautiful lakes with which this region abounds. Not a sign of a house or a clearing, nor any mark of the handiwork of man was to be seen any where, save in the rude shallop that bore us. The morning was still and lowering. There was not breeze enough to lift the fog from the mountains round. Every rock and tree was reflected, with each leaf and wild flower however minute, in the glassy surface; the islands among which we wound our course, floated double; the hermit-like loon that glanced from beneath their embowering shelter, and sent his wild cry with a dozen echoes far among the hills, was the only object that moved or gave a sound of life across the waters.

We landed upon one islet, and I paused to

observe what I have never been tired of studying, the manner in which nature effects her work of clothing the barren crags with soil.

Here, on this rocky islet, some fifty feet in diameter, the whole process may be seen—the first covering of moss and lichens; the larger growth of the same; the light black soil that is formed from their decay; the taller plants that again, in succession, are doomed to die and be decomposed, and afford earthy nourishment to the first hardy forest growth; still, in its turn, to be succeeded by softer woods, may all be traced upon Inch-Hamish.

Here, on this little spot, where you can run a stick some three feet down, through the primitive mosses that form the first covering of the rock; you have, also, the towering spruce, the ragged arbor-vitæ, and several other hardy evergreen varieties; while a single delicate

white-ash has put forth its deciduous leaves, and hung its scarlet berries over the lake. An accomplished botanist has, I am told, found upwards of a hundred varieties of plants and trees upon this islet, which is less than an acre in extent.

Cruising leisurely up the lake in this way—pausing ever and anon to admire the change of prospect as we wound round some green headland, or lying upon our oars while trying the fine echoes which the mountains gave back to our voices whenever our course lay far from the margin,—it was afternoon before we reached the point for debarking, which we attained by piercing deep within a forest that overshadows the inlet. Our canoe left the cheerful lake, and floating beneath the boughs of ancient trees that sometimes interlaced above our heads, startled the trout from the black pools which bathed their roots, and grated at last upon a

gravelly bank where it was drawn up and secured.

Not far from this point a portage of a few hundred yards enables the hunter to launch again upon Jake Henderson, and strike the first link in a chain of lakes, which with a few more brief portages will float his shallop all the way to the St. Lawrence.

CHAPTER IV.

M'INTYRE.

The portage to Lake Henderson is occasioned by rapids which extend for about half a mile between that water and Lake Sandford. They run over a bed of iron-ore which ribs the sides of two mountains that overhang the valley through which the Hudson flows from one lake into the other.

This little valley which is already cleared and under partial cultivation, is the site of a projected manufacturing town, and here we

made our head-quarters at a comfortable farm-house. We were inducted into them by the overseer already mentioned, and under his cordial auspices, my friend and myself for some days enjoyed the hospitality of the proprietors of the M'Intyre iron-works. The situation abounding, as it does, in excellent iron-ore, and affording a dozen mill sites, is admirably adapted for a manufacturing town, and might form the site of one of the most romantic villages in the Union.

The newness of the improvements, and the large clearings, marked only by stumps, give the place, as yet, a somewhat desolate appearance: care and capital will, however, soon remedy this, and when the legislature does justice to this much-neglected portion of the State, and opens a good road or canal along the beautiful lakes with which it abounds, M'Intyre will become one of the most fa-

vourite places of resort near the sources of the Hudson.

Its present loneliness and seclusion, however, would render M'Intyre not less pleasing to some tastes; while though the hand of improvement may soon make the district in which it lies, more accessible than it now is, and add some features of cultivation to the adjacent scenery, it can never soften its wildness. In fact, a partial clearing of the country will, in this region, only serve to heighten the bold features of the landscape. For the trees whose foliage now softens the sharper outlines of the mountains, and curtains many a tall crag and deep fell from view—will, when swept away, reveal scenes of desolate grandeur, which no culture can rob of their sternness. In some places the hunters' fires have already bared the pinnacles of some of these granite mountains: and earth-slides, caused by frequent rains, or

slight earthquakes, which still prevail in this region, strip them here and there of their verdurous vesture, leaving only parapets of naked rock frowning upon the deep forests below them.

CHAPTER V.

AN INKLING OF AN EARTHQUAKE.

Apropos to earthquakes, we had an inkling of one on the first night of our arrival at M'Intyre. The shock, if so slight a tremour may be thus characterized, took place about midnight; and though it woke me, I deemed it at the time the effect of fancy, until I compared notes in the morning with my fellow-traveller, who, having experienced the sensation while in Caraccas some years since, could readily recognise it now. We occupied two rooms communicating with each other — the outer one,

where my friend had his bed, opened upon the clearing. The door of this latter chamber being badly hung, shut with great difficulty, and was generally left ajar; but on this occasion, the night being cold and frosty, I took particular pains to secure it—driving it to by planting my foot against it, and forcing the latch completely home. We retired early that night, and the fatigue of travelling made our sleep particularly sound, when suddenly, about an hour after midnight, both of us were awakened at the same moment, and, notwithstanding both were struck by the circumstance, the cause did not occur to us till the morning, though our surprise was expressed after the wonted manner of sleepy men when startled from their slumbers.

"Hallo!"

"Hallo!"

"What's that?"

"Are you up?"

"No! are you?"

"My bed shakes!"

"It's that infernal hound, he's pushed my door wide open, and I must get up and shut it."

"There's no dog here in my room."

"The rascal's cleared out, then.—Confound the door, I can't get it close again."

"How's the night?"

"Clear and starry, and still as one in the tropics, but devilish cold."

With these words, my friend commenced jamming at the door, secured it anew, jumped into bed again, and we were soon after dreaming as before. No noise accompanied this tremour; but they tell us here that a sound like that of a heavy waggon upon a frozen road is often heard among these mountains, where there are no roads which a waggon can traverse. I need hardly add that no dog could have opened the door which it cost me

so much trouble to shut; nor, in fact, would the well-trained hound have ventured upon leaving his quarters to disturb ours.

CHAPTER VI.

AN UNFINISHED COUNTRY.

ADMITTING the existence of occasional slight earthquakes in this region, I am not enough of a naturalist to surmise what may be their effect upon the geological features of the country. They seem, however, among other things, to indicate the *unfinished state of the country,* if I may so express myself.

They are among the agents of nature, still at work in completing a portion of the world hardly yet ready to pass from her hands into those of man. The separation of the water

from the land, which classic cosmogonists tell us followed the birth of light, in evolving the earth from chaos, is not here completed yet. There are lakes on the tops of mountains, and swamps among wildernesses of rocks, which are yet to be drained by other means than the thick exhalations which carry them into the atmosphere, or the dripping mosses through which they ooze into the valleys, where day by day the new soil for future use accumulates.

Had our New York Indians, who now find it so difficult to hold on to their level and fertile lands in the western part of the state, but "located" their reservations among these mountains, they might have escaped the cupidity of the whites for centuries yet to come, and have hunted the deer, the moose, and the bear, or trapped for the martin, the sable, and the ermine, all of which still abound here, without molestation, save from the occasional

white hunter that might intrude upon their grounds when chasing the wolf or panther from the settled regions, to the east and west of them. There are settlements upon some of these lakes, which were commenced more than thirty years since, and which can now boast of but two or three families as residents, and these are isolated from the rest of the world, with twenty miles of unbroken forest between them and more prosperous hamlets. But the immense beds of iron-ore and other minerals recently discovered, with the increased demand for timber in our Atlantic cities, and of charcoal to work the mines here, must now bring the country into general notice, and hasten its settlement. The demolition of the pine forests, and the conversion of less valuable wood into charcoal, will rapidly clear the country, and convert the lumber-men and charcoal-burners into farmers; while the old race of hunters

already begin to find a new employment in acting as guides to the owners of lands, and projecting roads for them through districts where an ordinary surveyor could hardly be paid for the exercise of his profession. One of these hunters, a sturdy original, by the name of Harvey Holt, a redoubtable hunter and celebrated axe-man, has already marked out a road for some of the large landed proprietors through the very heart of the region. He is said to have run his lines with the skill and accuracy of an accomplished engineer; and, before another year elapses, the road will probably be opened.

Other foresters, again, finding their ancient haunts thus invaded by the pioneers of improvement, have fled to wilds beyond the Wisconsan; and a friend who hunted lately upon a tract a little to the north-west of this, in Hamilton county, told me that he heard a veteran hunter of seventy complaining bitterly that he

was too old to move, now that the settlers had pushed within thirty miles of him. It seems strange to find so wild a district in "one of the old thirteeners," the "empire state of New York." But the great western canal, in facilitating emigration to the new states, has retarded the improvement of this region for at least one generation, in luring off the young men as fast as they become of an age to choose a home for themselves. Some, however, like the mountaineer who is the subject of the following sketch, are so attached to the woods and streams of their native hills, that no inducement could lure them to the prairies.

CHAPTER VII.

A MOUNTAINEER OF THE HUDSON.

I WAS lately looking over Mr. Cooper's "Pioneers," and re-reading it after the lapse of years found myself as much delighted as ever with the best character he ever drew—"The Leather-stocking." If it did not involve an anachronism, I could swear that Cooper took the character of Natty Bumpo, from my mountaineer friend, John Cheney. The same silent, simple, deep love of the woods—the same gentleness and benevolence of feeling toward all who love his craft—the same unobtrusive kindness

toward all others; and, lastly, the same shrewdness as a woodman, and gamesomeness of spirit as a hunter, are common to both; and each, while perhaps more efficient, are wholly unlike the dashing swash-buckler of the far west, the reckless ranger of the prairies. In appearance, dress, language, and manner, those two varieties of the *genus venator* are totally different. Mr. Irving in his account of Captain Bonneville's expedition has given the best description of the latter; but though the pen of Cooper has made the former immortal, I think his genius might gather some new touches from John Cheney. Worthy John! if he chances to see himself thus drawn at full-length, I hope he will not take it amiss. I had heard of some of his feats before coming into this region, and expected of course, to see one of those roystering, cavorting, rifle-shirted blades that I have seen upon our western frontier, and was at first

not a little disappointed when a slight-looking man of about seven-and-thirty, dressed like a plain countryman, and of a peculiarly quiet, simple manner, was introduced to me as the doughty slayer of bears and panthers; a man that lived winter and summer three-fourths of the time in the woods, and a real *bonâ fide* hunter by profession. Nay, there struck me as being something of the ridiculous about his character when I saw that this formidable Nimrod carried with him, as his only weapons and insignia of his art, *a pistol* and *a jack-knife!* But when, at my laughing at such toys, I was told by others of the savage encounters which John, assisted by his dog, and aided by these alone, had undertaken successfully—not to mention the number of deer which he sent every winter to market—my respect for his hunting-tools was mightily increased, and a few

days in the woods with him sufficed to extend that respect to himself.

We were on a fishing excursion one day on a lake near M'Intyre; and after storing our canoe with a good supply of brook and lake trout, we weighed anchor, and pulled for a romantic promontory, commanding a delicious prospect, where we lay under the trees for hours, enjoying our pic-nic, and listening to hunters' stories. The air being cool and bracing, did not make the fire by which we cooked our dinner unacceptable. Our cloaks were stretched beneath a clump of cedars, and, after taking a plunge into the lake, which I was glad to make as brief as possible, I laid by the fire, watching the blue smoke curl up among the trees, or listening to my fellow-traveller, as he discoursed curiously with John about his cooking, or plied him from time to time with

questions, that elicited some anecdotes of wild-wood sports, of which my quiet friend has been no feeble practiser himself.

"Well!" said Cheney, after he had cooked the trout to a turn, and placed a plump, red, juicy fellow, upon a clean cedar chip before each of us, with an accompaniment of roast potatoes and capital wheaten bread; "now isn't this better than taking your dinner shut up in a close room?"

"Certainly, John," said I. "A man ought never to go into a house except he is ill, and wishes to use it for a hospital."

"Well, now, I don't know whether you are in airnest in saying that, but that's jist my way of thinking. Twice I have given up hunting, and taken to a farm: but I always get sick after living long in housen. I don't sleep well in them; and sometimes when I go to see my friends, not wishing to seem particular-like, I jist

let them go quietly to bed, and then slip out of a window with my blanket, and get a good nap under a tree in the open air. A man wants nothing but a tree above him to keep off the dew, and make him feel kind of homelike, and then he can enjoy a real sleep."

In Tanner's narrative, that singular character makes nearly the same remark, when speaking of the usages which annoyed him while trying to abandon the habits of a free hunter, and conform to the customs of civilized life.

"But are you never disturbed by any wild animal when sleeping thus without fire or a camp?" one of us asked.

"Well, I remember once being wakened by a creetur. The dumb thing was standing right over me, looking into my face. It was so dark, that neither of us, I suppose, could see what the other was: but he was more frightened than I was, for when I raised myself a little he

ran off so fast that I couldn't make out what he was; and seeing it was so dark, that to follow him would be of no account, I laid down again and slept till morning, without his disturbing me again."

"Suppose it had been a bear?"

"Well, a bear isn't exactly the varmint to buckle with so off-hand; though lying on your back is about as good a way as any to receive him, if your knife be long and sharp; but afore now, I've treed a bear at nightfall, and sitting by the root of the tree until he should come down, have fallen asleep, from being too tired to keep good watch, and let the fellow escape before morning, but if I had such luck as to have a good fat bear come to me in that way I would never let him go as that man did down at Ti."

I asked the story of this unworthy follower of the chase at *Ti*, into which familiar mono-

syllable, Cheney abbreviated the celebrated name of Ticonderoga, and give it here to the reader as nearly as possible in worthy John's own words.

CHAPTER VIII.

A BEAR STORY.

"I DON'T want to say any thing against any man, but some people, till they get lost in them, seem to think a knowledge of the woods a mighty small matter; but this is neither here nor there though, but it's a fact that, however big they may talk at home, folks that ain't used to the woods, sometimes get mightily flurried when they meet with these wild animals. There now's a man in the next town who went out after moose, and when he heard one trotting along the same trail he was travelling, squatted

behind a stump to shoot him; but the fellow having never seen a moose, had no idea of the sort of game he was after; and when a great bull, six year old, bigger than a horse, with horns that looked for all creation as if they never could pass between the trees of these woods, came crashing the branches with his broad hoofs, the mankinder shrunk behind a log, and says he to the moose, 'If you'll only let me alone, I'll let you alone!' Now, the fellow in Ti only knew about bears as he had heard us trappers speak of them, as carrying a half-a-dozen balls in their bodies, and sometimes killing our dogs for us when we go to take them out of our traps, after being held there by the paw, starving, you don't know how many days. Well, this man was on a lake watching in his boat for deer, when hearing a plunge and a splash, he pulls round an island, and finds a great she-bear swimming straight

across the lake. Being a good fellow with his oars, he pulls at once to cut off the bear from the opposite shore, which made the creetur change her course and try and swim round the boat. The man, however, again turned her, and the bear once more altered her course, but still kept for the same shore to which she had been steering. Gathering spunk now, the man, in turning the third time, rowed nearer to the beast, expecting in this way to drive her back a little, so as to keep the bear out in the middle of the lake until some one could come to help him. But when the starn of the boat, in swinging round, came near the bear, she put her paws upon it, and raised herself right into the boat, and there she sat on eend, looking the man in the face jist as quiet, now, as a bear could look. Well, the man, if he'd only know'd where to hit a bear, might have brought one of his oars down on the back of her skull, just as

easy as say so; and tough ash is better than a rifle-ball with these varmint. But he didn't like that kind o' quiet look the creetur gave him; and there they sat, the bear looking at the man, and the man looking at the bear. At last, when he got over his fright a little, he began to move his oars slowly, in order to creep toward the shore from which the bear had started; but the creetur wouldn't allow this; she moved from her seat a little toward the man, and showed her teeth in a way he didn't like; but as soon as the man turned the boat, the bear took her old place again, and sat there jist as contented as you please; so the man pulled for the shore to which the bear had been swimming, watching the bear's face all the while. And would you believe it, now, that bear made him back his boat in toward a rock, upon which the creetur stepped from the starn, and turning round, gave the man a growl for

his pains afore she walked off into the woods. Tormented lightening! to be treated so by a bear! Why, I would have died upon the spot before that bear should have left the boat without our trying which was the best of us."

CHAPTER IX.

LAKE HENDERSON.

Leaving the cleared fields of M'Intyre one morning under the guidance of John Cheney, we struck the arm of a lake entirely surrounded by primitive forest, and locked up in mountains wooded to the summit. The frith upon which we embarked was the outlet of Lake Henderson; and emerging from its shadowy embrace as we laid our course up the lake, we soon shot out upon the bosom of that beautiful water.

The form of the lake, for want of a better simile, I can only compare to that most re-

spectable ancient head-gear, a three-cornered hat, a little knocked out of shape. Its several friths, too, strike in among the mountains with the same sort of devil-me-care air that a fiercely-cocked beaver did whilome put on. Yet so completely do the dense woods around soften away all the harder lines of the landscape, that the general effect is that of beauty rather than savageness in the picture. We pulled for about two miles through this lake, where at each boat's length some new fold of mountain scenery was unfurled upon our left, while the two peaks of the Indian Pass and the Panther Gap kept their bold heights continually in view upon our right. We landed upon the margin of a heavy swamp, near the inlet of the lake, floating some twenty yards within the forest, and mooring our boat at last among ancient trees, whose long moss sometimes swept the water.

We were bound for "The Indian Pass," one of the most savage and stupendous among the many wild and imposing scenes at the sources of the Hudson. It has been visited, I believe, by few except the hunters of these mountains, but it must at some day become a favourite resort with the lovers of the picturesque. It is a tremendous ravine, cloven through the summit of a mountain, presenting the finest piece of rock scenery I ever beheld—a cradle worthy of the infant Hudson.

Many of the difficulties in exploring this scene will probably vanish in a few years; but as the wildness of the approach now adds not a little to its majesty, I can best convey the true character of the place by leading the reader thither in the mode I reached it.

CHAPTER X.

A ROUGH TRAMP.

The walk to the Indian Pass is difficult enough at any time, but, soon after leaving our boat at the inlet of Lake Henderson, the morning, which had hitherto been cloudy, broke into a cold rain, which, wetting our clothes through, increased the weight that we had to drag through a primitive swamp, where each step was upon some slippery log, affording a precarious foothold; some decayed tree, into whose spongy body you would sink kneedeep, or upon quaking mosses that threatened to swallow one

up entirely. Here, though, while wading through the frequent pools, or stumbling over the fallen boughs which centuries had accumulated, I would often pause to admire some gigantic pine, which, drawing vigour from the dankness and decay around it, would throw its enormous column into the air, towering a hundred feet above hemlocks and cedars near, which would themselves seem forest giants when planted beside the modern growth of our Atlantic border.

After a mile of such walking, the ground began to rise, and, instead of wading through pools, we now crossed several brisk streams, which murmured among the rocks, as their pellucid waters ran to join the main inlet of the lake. Our path lay next along the border of this inlet, which is, in truth, the main branch of the Hudson. Sometimes we would ascend for several hundred yards among mossy rocks,

thickets of white cedar, and an undergrowth of juniper; then we would come to a sort of plateau of swampy land, overgrown with moose-maple, or tangled with fern and interspersed with cranberry bogs. Another slope of rocky ground, seamed with numerous rills, that gurgled beneath the roots of hoary birches, or amid thickets of young maple, succeeded; while again and again we would cross and recross the main stream, upon fallen logs, generally lying either immediately upon or below one of the numerous cascades which diversify the river. Now we would scale some rocky hill-side, and hear the torrent roaring far beneath us, and now we found a narrow passage-way between its border and the impending cliffs.

In the mean time, though winding up and down continually, we were in the main ascending gradually to a lofty elevation. The number of the swamps were diminished, the frequent rills

flashed more rapidly amid the loose boulders of rock, which soon began to cover the soil entirely; while the boulders themselves became lofty hillocks of solid stone, covered with moss, and sustaining a vigorous growth of the birch, the mountain-ash, or clumps of the hardy white cedar upon their summits.

Wet, bruised, and weary, we sat down beneath one of those enormous masses of displaced rock, after scaling a difficult ascent, and purposed to encamp there for the night; but, looking up through an opening in the trees, we saw the cliffs of the Indian Pass almost immediately above us, as they were swathed in mist, and the heavy scud, impelled by the wind which drew strongly through the gap, drifted past the gray precipice, and made the wall look as if in motion to crush us when just entering the jaws of the ravine.

But there were still two hours of daylight

left, and though the mile that was yet to be traversed before we gained the centre of the pass, was the most arduous task of the whole route, we again commenced the ascent. It took the whole two hours to accomplish this mile, but as the glen narrowed, our further advance was animated by a new object of interest, in the shape of a fresh moose-track; and we followed the trail until it broke abruptly in a rocky gorge, wilder than any I had yet beheld.

CHAPTER XI.

A WILD GORGE.

It was new to me to find the footprints of so large an animal among rocks that seemed only accessible to a goat. We saw several places where the moose had slipped upon the thin and slimy soil, or dashed the moss from the crags with his hoofs as he leaped a chasm. Following on the trail with caution, our guide held himself in readiness to shoot, confident that we must soon overtake our noble quarry as no animal of the kind could possibly make his way completely through the defile; but we soon

came to a passage among the rocks, where the discreet brute, perceiving that there was but one way of returning if he ascended higher, had, after making a slight attempt to force himself through, struck into a lateral ravine, and sought some other path down the mountain.

I must adopt a homely resemblance to give the reader an idea of the size of the rocks, and their confused appearance in this part of the defile: he may imagine, though, loose boulders of solid rock, the size of tall city dwelling-houses, hurled from a mountain summit into a chasm a thousand feet in depth, lying upon each other as if they had fallen but yesterday; each so detached from each, that it is only their weight which seems to prevent them from rolling further down the defile: their corners meeting in angles that defy the mathematician to describe, and forming caverns and labyrinthine passages beneath them that no draughtsman

could delineate. The position of these tremendous crags seems so recent and precarious, that were it not for other indications around them, you would almost fear that your footsteps might topple over the gigantic masses, and renew an onward motion that was but now arrested. But Time has stamped the date of ages in other language upon their brows. Their tops are thatched with lichens that must be the growth of centuries; ancient trees are perched upon their pinnacles, and enormous twisted roots, which form a network over the chasms between them, and save your limbs from destruction when stepping over the treacherous moss that hide these black abysses, prove that the repairing hand of nature has been here at work for ages in covering up the ruin she has wrought in some one moment of violence.

But we are now in the bosom of the pass, and the shadows of night are veiling the awful

precipice which forms the background of the picture. We have climbed the last ascent, steeper than all the rest, and here, in a clump of birches and balsam-firs, surrounded by steeps and precipices on every side, is our place to bivouac for the night.

CHAPTER XII.

CAMPING OUT.

"It ain't so bad a place for camping out," said John Cheney, as he rose from slaking his thirst at a feeble rill which trickled from beneath the roots of a rifted cedar over which he leaned—"it ain't so bad a place to camp, if it didn't rain so like all natur. I wouldn't mind the rain much, nother, if we had a good shantee; but you see the birch bark won't run at this season, and it's pretty hard to make a waterproof thatch, unless you have hemlock boughs—hows'ever, gentlemen, I'll do the best by ye."

And so he did! Honest John Cheney, thou art at once as stanch a hunter, and as true and gentle a practiser of woodcraft as ever roamed the broad forest; and beshrew me when I forget thy services that night in the Indian Pass.

The frame of a wigwam used by some former party was still standing, and Cheney went to work industriously tying poles across it with withes of yellow birch, and thatching the roof and sides with boughs of balsam-fir. Having but one axe with us, my friend and myself were, in the mean time, unemployed, and nothing could be more disconsolate than our situation, as we stood dripping in the cold rain, and thrashing our arms, like hackney-coachmen, to keep the blood in circulation. My hardy friend, indeed, was in a much worse condition than myself. He had been indisposed when he started upon the expedition, and was now so hoarse that I could scarcely hear him speak amid

the gusts of wind which swept through the ravine. We both shivered as if in an ague, but he suffered under a fever which was soon superadded. We made repeated attempts to strike a fire, but our "loco foco" matches would not ignite, and when we had recourse to flint and steel, every thing was so damp around us that our fire would not kindle. John began to look exceedingly anxious:—

"Now, if we only had a little daylight left, I would make some shackleberry-tea for you; but it will never do to get sick here, for if this storm prove a north-easter, God only knows whether all of us may ever get away from this notch again. I guess I had better leave the camp as it is, and first make a fire for you."

Saying this, Cheney shouldered his axe, and striking off a few yards, he felled a dead tree, split it open, and took some dry chips from the heart. I then spread my cloak over the spot

where he laid them to keep off the rain, and stooping under it he soon kindled a blaze, which we employed ourselves in feeding until the "camp" was completed. And now came the task of laying in a supply of fuel for the night. This the woodman effected by himself with an expedition that was marvellous. Measuring three or four trees with his eye, to see that they would fall near the fire without touching our wigwam, he attacked them with his axe, felled, and chopped them into logs, and made his wood-pile in less time than could a city sawyer, who had all his timber carted to hand. Blankets were then produced from a pack which he had carried on his back; and these, when stretched over a carpeting of leaves and branches, would have made a comfortable bed, if the latter had not been saturated with rain. Matters, however, seemed to assume a comfortable aspect, as we now sat under the shade of

boughs, drying our clothes by the fire; while John busied himself in broiling some bacon which we had brought with us. But our troubles had only yet begun; and I must indulge in some details of a night in the woods, for the benefit of "gentlemen who sit at home at ease."

CHAPTER XIII.

A NIGHT IN THE WOODS.

Our camp, which was nothing more than a shed of boughs open on the side toward the fire, promised a sufficient protection against the rain so long as the wind should blow from the right quarter; and an outlying deer-stalker might have been content with our means and appliances for comfort during the night. Cheney, indeed, seemed perfectly satisfied as he watched the savoury slices which were to form our supper steaming up from the coals.

"Well," said the woodsman, "you see there's

no place but what if a man bestirs himself to do his best, he may find some comfort in it. Now, many's the time that I have been in the woods on a worse night than this, and having no axe, nor nothing to make a fire with, have crept into a hollow log, and lay shivering till morning; but here, now, with such a fire as that—"

As he spoke a sudden puff of wind drove the smoke from the green and wet timber full into our faces, and filled the shantee to a degree so stifling, that we all rushed out into the rain, that blew in blinding torrents against us.

"Tormented lightning!" cried John, aghast at this new annoyance. "This is too pesky bad; but I can manage that smoke if the wind doesn't blow from more than three quarters at a time." Seizing his axe upon the instant, he plunged into the darkness beyond the fire, and in a moment or two a large tree came crashing

with all its leafy honours, bearing down with it two or three saplings to our feet. With the green boughs of these he made a wall around the fire to shut out the wind, leaving it open only on the side toward the shantee. The supper was now cooked without further interruption. My friend was too ill to eat; but, though under some anxiety on his account, I myself did full justice to the culinary skill of our guide, and began to find some enjoyment amid all the discomfort of our situation. The recollection of similar scenes in other days gave a relish to the wildness of the present, and inspired that complacent feeling which a man of less active pursuits sometimes realizes, when he finds that the sedentary habits of two or three years have not yet warped and destroyed the stirring tastes of his youth.

We told stories and recounted adventures. I could speak of these northern hills, from

having passed some time among them upon a western branch of the Hudson, when a lad of fourteen; while the mountain-hunter would listen with interest to the sporting scenes that I could describe to him upon the open plains of the far west; though I found it impossible to make him understand how men could find their way in a new country where there were so few trees! With regard to the incidents and legends that I gathered in turn from him, I may hereafter enlighten the reader. But our discourse was suddenly cut short by a catastrophe which had nearly proved a very serious one. This was nothing more nor less than the piles of brush which encircled our fire, to keep the wind away, suddenly kindling into a blaze, and for a moment or two threatening to consume our wigwam. The wind, at the same time, poured down the gorge in shifting, angry blasts, which whirled the flames in reeling eddies high

into the air, bringing the gray cliffs into momentary light—touching the dark evergreens with a ruddy glow—and lighting up the stems of the pale birches, that looked like sheeted ghosts amid the surrounding gloom.

A finishing touch of the elements was yet wanting to complete the agreeableness of our situation, and finally, just as the curtain of brush on the windward side of the fire was consumed, the cold rain changed into a flurry of snow; and the quickly-melted flakes were driven with the smoke into the innermost parts of our wigwam. Conversation was now out of the question. John did, indeed, struggle on with a panther story for a moment or two, and one or two attempts were made to joke upon our miserable situation, but sleet and smoke alternately damped and stifled every effort, and then all was still except the roar of the elements. My sick friend must have passed a hor-

rible night, as he woke me once or twice with his coughing; but I wrapped myself in my cloak, and placing my mouth upon the ground to avoid choking from the smoke, I was soon dreaming as quietly as if in a curtained chamber at home. The last words I heard John utter, as he coiled himself in a blanket, were—

"Well, it's one comfort, since it's taken on to blow so, I've cut down most of the trees around us that would be likely to fall and crush us during the night."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE INDIAN PASS.

The ringing of Cheney's axe was the first sound that met my ear in the morning, which broke excessively cold. The fire had burnt low, though frequently replenished by him during the night, and he was now engaged in renewing it to cook our breakfast, which was soon ready, and for which the frosty mountain-air gave me a keen appetite. The kind fellow, too, prepared some toast and a hot draught for my enterprising companion, whom nothing could prevent from further exploring the pass.

With this view we began descending a precipice in the r[illegible] our camp, to a place called the ice-hole. The trees on the side of this precipice have a secret for growing peculiarly their own, or they could never flourish and maintain their place in such a position. The wall, some sixty or eighty feet high, and almost perpendicular, is covered with moss, which peels off in flakes of a yard square, as you plant your heels in it in descending; yet this flimsy substitute for soil supports a straggling growth of evergreens, that will bear the weight of a man as he clings to them, to avoid being dashed to pieces in the glen below. The snow of the last night which covered the mountain-tops made the stems of these saplings so slippery and cold, that our hands became numb in grasping them before we were halfway down the descent. The river runs through the bottom of this ravine, but its passage is so ca-

vernous, that it is only by letting yourself down into the fissures between the immense boulders, which are here wedged together in indescribable confusion, and crawling beneath the rocks, that you can obtain a sight of its current. From this chasm you view the sky as from the bottom of a well. A pair of eagles that have their nest in the cliff above, showed like swallows as they hovered along its face. The sun never penetrates into this gloomy labyrinth; and here, unless the waters are unusually high, you may find cakes of ice at Midsummer.

Emerging from this wild chaos of rocks we clambered a short distance up the sides of the glen, and penetrated a few hundred yards further into the pass to a sloping platform amidst the rocks, where the finest view of the whole scene is to be obtained. And here, within a few yards of its first well-springs, you behold one of the strongest features of the mighty

Hudson developed even in its birth. It has already cloven its way through a defile as difficult as that through which it rushes near West Point, and far more stupendous. A rocky precipice of twelve hundred feet rises immediately in front of you, and the jaws of the pass open barely wide enough to admit the egress of the stream at its highest stages of water. The cliff opposite looks raw and recent as if riven through but yesterday: and ponderous blocks of stone, that would almost make mountains themselves, wrenched from their former seat, in what is now the centre of the pass, stand edgwise leaning down the glen, as if waiting some new throe of this convulsion of nature to sweep them further on their terrific career. Many of these features of the place you have already seen while climbing to the point where we stand; but now, upon turning round as you gain the head of the pass, and look out from its

bosom upon the mountain region below, a view of unequalled beauty and grandeur greets the eye. The morning sun, which will not for hours yet reach the place where you stand, is shining upon airy peaks and wooded hills which shoulder each other as far as the eye can reach, while far down the glen, where the maple and beech find a more genial soil to nourish them, the rainbow hues of autumn are glistening along the stream, which, within a few miles of its fountain-head, has already expanded into a beautiful lake.

CHAPTER XV.

MOUNT MARCY.

The group of wild hills among which the Hudson rises stand wholly detached from any other chain in North America. The highest peak of the Aganuschion range, or the Black Mountains, as some call them, from the dark aspect which their sombre cedars and frowning cliffs give them at a distance, was measured during last summer, and found to be nearly six thousand feet in height.

Mount Marcy, as it has been christened, not improperly, after the public functionary who

first suggested the survey of this interesting region, presents a perfect pyramidal top, when viewed from Lake Sandford. Its alpine climate is very different from that prevailing in the valleys below, and I observed its cone sheathed in snow one day when I found the water temperate enough to enjoy swimming in the lake. The effect was equally beautiful and sublime. The frost had here and there flecked the forest with orange and vermilion, touching a single sumach or a clump of maples at long intervals, but generally, the woods displayed as yet but few autumnal tints: and the deep verdure of the adjacent mountains set off the snowy peak in such high contrast, soaring as it did far above them, and seeming to pierce, as it were, the blue sky which curtained them, that the poetic Indian epithet of TA-HA-WUS (*he splits the sky*), was hardly too extravagant to characterize its peculiar grandeur. The ascent of Mount

Marcy, and the view from the summit will hereafter puzzle many an abler pen than mine in the attempt to describe them.

The wild falls of KAS-KONG-SHADI (*broken water*)—the bright pools of TU-NE-SAS-SAH (*a place of pebbles*)—and the tall cascade of SHE-GWI-EN-DAUKWE (*the hanging spear*) — will hereafter tempt many to strike over to the eastern branch of the Hudson, and follow it up to Lake Colden; while the echoing glen of TWEN-UN-GA-SKO (*a raised voice*), though now as savage as the Indian Pass already described, will reverberate with more musical cries than the howl of the wolf or the panther, whose voices only are now raised to awaken its echoes. The luxurious cit will cool his champagne amid the snows of Mount Marcy: and his botanizing daughter, who has read in Michaux's American Sylva, of pines some two hundred feet in height! will wonder to pluck full-grown trees

of the same genus, which she can put into her reticule.

At present, however, the mountain is a desert. Wolverines, lynxes, and wild-cats, with a few ravens, who generally follow in the track of beasts of prey, are almost the only living things that have their habitations in these high solitudes: and save when their occasional cry breaks the stillness, the solemn woods are on a calm day as silent as the grave. The absence of game birds, and of the beasts of chase, which give his subsistence to the hunter, prevents him from wasting his toil in climbing to the loftiest pinnacles: and so far as I learned, it is only lately that curiosity has prompted those who have passed a great part of their lives in the neighbourhood to make the ascent. The view, however, when once realized, seems to strike them not less than it does more cultivated minds. "It makes a man feel," said a hunter,

to me, "what it is to have all creation placed beneath his feet. There are woods there, over which it would take a lifetime to hunt; mountains that seem shouldering each other up and away, heaven knows where. Thousands of little lakes are let in among them. Old Champlain, though fifty miles off, glistens below you like a strip of white birch-bark; and the green mountains of Vermont beyond it, fade and fade away, till they disappear as gradually as a cold scent when the dew rises."

CHAPTER XVI.

A WOLF ENCOUNTER.

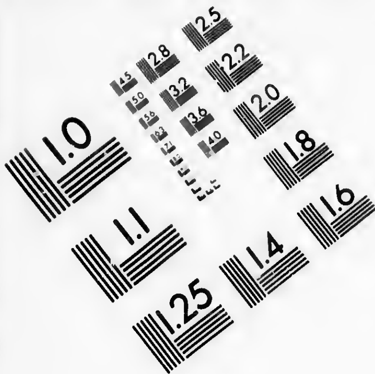
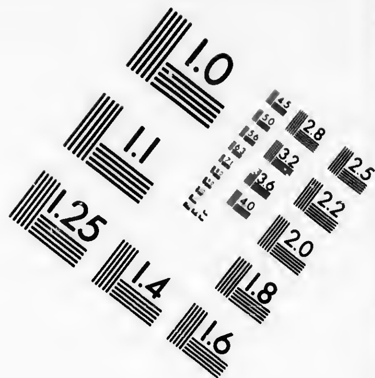
The hunter, Holt, of whom I have before spoken, has had some strange encounters with wild animals among these lonely defiles which I have attempted to describe: and John Cheney had, sometime since, a fight with a wolf, which is almost as well worthy of commemoration as the doughty feat of old Putnam.

It was in winter; the snows were some four or five feet deep upon a level, and the hunter, upon whom a change of seasons seems to produce but little effect, could only pursue his

game upon snow-shoes; an ingenious contrivance for walking upon the surface, which, though so much used in our northern counties, is still only manufactured in perfection by the Indians; who drive quite a trade in them along the Canada border. Wandering far from the settlements, and making his bed at nightfall in a deep snowbank, Cheney rose one morning to examine his traps, near which he will sometimes lie encamped for weeks in complete solitude; when, hovering round one of them, he discovered a famished wolf, who, unappalled by the presence of the hunter, retired only a few steps, and then, turning round, stood watching his movements.

"I ought, by rights," quoth John, "to have waited for my dogs, who could not have been far off, but the creetur looked so sarcy, standing there, that though I had not a bullet to spare, I couldn't help letting into him with my rifle."

He missed his aim; the animal giving a spring as he was in the act of firing, and then turning instantly upon him before he could reload his piece. So effective was the unexpected attack of the wolf, that his forepaws were upon Cheney's snow-shoes before he could rally for the fight. The forester became entangled in the deep drift, and sank upon his back, keeping the wolf only at bay by striking at him with his clubbed rifle. The stock was broken to pieces in a few moments, and it would have fared ill with the stark woodsman, if the wolf, instead of making at his enemy's throat when he had him thus at disadvantage, had not, with blind fury, seized the barrel of the gun in his jaws. Still the fight was unequal, as John, half buried in the snow, could make use of but one of his hands. He shouted to his dogs; but one of them only, a young untrained hound, made his appearance; emerging from a thicket he caught

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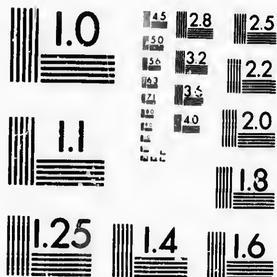

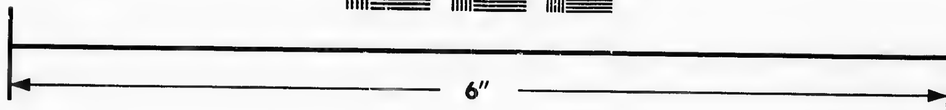

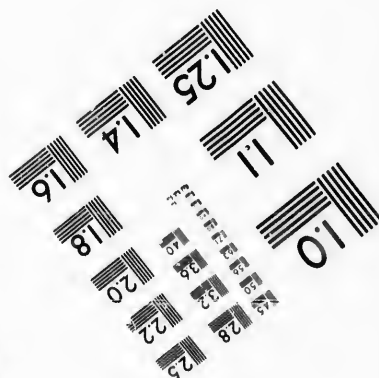

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sight of his master lying apparently at the mercy of the ravenous beast, uttered a yell of fear, and fled howling to the woods again. "Had I had one shot left," said Cheney, "I would have given it to that dog instead of despatching the wolf with it." In the exasperation of the moment, John might have extended his contempt to the whole canine race, if a stancher friend had not opportunely interposed to vindicate their character for courage and fidelity.

All this had passed in a moment; the wolf was still grinding the iron gun-barrel in his teeth: he had even once wrenched it from the hand of the hunter, when, dashing like a thunderbolt between the combatants, the other hound sprang over his master's body, and seized the wolf by the throat. "There was no let go about that dog when he once took hold. If the barrel had been red hot, the wolf couldn't

have dropped it quicker; and it would have done you good, I tell ye, to see that old dog drag the creetur's head down in the snow, while I, just at my leisure, drove the iron into his skull. One good, fair blow, though, with a heavy rifle-barrel, on the back of the head finished him. The fellow gave a kind o' quiver, stretched out his hind legs, and then he was done for. I had the rifle stocked afterwards, but she would never shoot straight after that fight; so I got me this pistol, which being light and handy, enables me more conveniently to carry an axe upon my long tramps, and make myself comfortable in the woods."

Many a deer has John since killed with that pistol. It is curious to see him draw it from the left pocket of his gray shooting-jacket, and bring down a partridge. I have myself witnessed several of his successful shots with this

unpretending shooting-iron, and once saw him knock the feathers from a wild duck at eighty or a hundred yards !

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DOG AND THE DEER-STALKER.

The Deer-stalkers, or "Still-hunters" as they are called in this part of the country, are very inveterate against those who hound the deer. For even in these woods, where you travel through twenty miles of unbroken forest in passing from house to house, people array themselves in factions, and indulge their animosities by acting in separate bodies with true partisan spirit. In fact, the deer-drivers and the still-hunters, only want their poet, or histo-

rian, to make their interminable bickerings, as celebrated as those of the Guelphs and Ghibbelines, or any other redoutable bone-breakers whose feudal "yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death."

"What business has a man got in the woods," quoth the still-hunter, "who can't take home a piece of venison to his shantee without scaring all the deer for ten miles around before he gets at it. The flesh of the poor creeturs is worth nothing neither, after their blood is heated by being driven to death with dogs."

"How can a man sleep sound in the woods," saith John Cheney, on the other side, "when he has had the heart to lure the mother of a fawn to the very muzzle of his rifle by bleating at her: or who has shot down the dumb brutes by torchlight, when they come to the waterside to cool themselves at nightfall? It ain't nateral,

and such hunting—it hunting they call it—will never prosper." Honest John! whatever may be the merits of the question, he has reason to feel sore upon the subject, from the sad and ignoble death which the hound who played so gallant a part in his wolf encounter, met with at the hands of the still-hunters.

Some of the best hounds in the country having been killed by these forest-regulators, Cheney would never allow his favourite dog to wander near the streams most frequented by them: but it chanced one day that the poor fellow met with an accident which withdrew his care from the dog. The trigger of his pistol caught against the thwart of a boat while he was in the act of raising it to shoot a deer, and the piece going off in a perpendicular direction, sent the whole charge into his leg, tearing off the calf, and driving the ball out through the sole

of his foot. With this terrible wound, which, however, did not prevent him from reloading and killing the deer before he could swim to the shore, Cheney dragged himself fifteen miles through the woods, to the nearest log cabin. A violent fever, and the threatened loss of the limb, confined him here for months. But his dog, to whom, while idling in the forest, he had taught a hundred amusing tricks, was still his company and solace; and though Tray looked wistfully after each hunter that strayed by the cabin, no eagerness for the chase could impel him to leave his master's side.

At last, however, upon one unfortunate day, poor Cheney was prevailed upon to indulge a brother sportsman, and let him take the dog out with him for a few hours. The hunter soon returned, but the hound never came back. Under his master's eye, he had been taught

never to follow a deer beyond a certain limit; but now, long confinement had given him such a zest for the sport, that he crossed the fatal bounds. The mountain-ridge of a more friendly region was soon placed between him and his master — the deer took to the treacherous streams infested by the Still-hunters, and the generous hound and his timorous quarry met the same fate from the rifles of their prowling enemy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CRUSTING MOOSE.

"CRUSTING" is the term applied to taking large game amid the deep snows of winter, when the crust of ice which forms upon the surface after a slight rain is strong enough to support the weight of a man, but gives way at once to the hoofs of a moose or a deer; while the animal, thus embarrassed, is easily caught and despatched with clubs. In our northern states more game is destroyed in this way than in any other; and you may read in the newspapers every winter some account of

the inhabitants of a whole village turning out and butchering hundreds of deer when thus entrapped. Only a few years since, it was said that more than a thousand were so destroyed in the township of Catskill in one season. All true sportsmen, however, hold "crusting deer" in contempt and abhorrence—for the venison is generally not in season at the time of year when it is thus procured; and this mode of taking it belongs rather to the butcher than to the hunter.

Crusting moose is rather a different thing, as it requires both skill and courage on the part of the hunter, and the animal has a chance at least of escape or resistance. Still, as the law will not, or cannot protect this noblest of all forest game from destruction in this manner, it must at no distant day become extinct within the boundaries of New York. The broad west has no moose-ground so celebrated as that in

our northern counties, and when you leave the sources of the Hudson, you must travel westward to those of the Mississippi before you find the gigantic moose as numerous as they were in our forests but a few years since. The woods of Maine, however, are probably richer in this noble game than any within the United States' territories.

The moose who is both more shy and more sagacious than the deer, has his favourite haunts in the depths of the forest. He moves about, not like the elk, in roving gangs, but stalks in lonely majesty through his leafy domains; and when disturbed by the hunter, instead of bounding away like his kinsman of the forest and prairie, he trots off at a gait which, though faster than that of the fleetest horse, is so easy and careless in its motion, that it seems to cost him no exertion. But though retreating thus when pursued, he is one

of the most terrible beasts of the forest when wounded and at bay; and the Indians of the north-west, among some tribes, celebrate the death of a bull-moose, when they are so fortunate as to kill one, with all the songs of triumph that they would raise over a conquered warrior.

The deepest snows of winter of course offer the best occasion for moose-hunting. The sagacious animal, so soon as a heavy storm sets in, commences forming what is called a "Moose-yard," which is a large area, wherein he industriously tramples down the snow while it is falling, so as to have a place to move about in, and browse upon the branches of trees, without the necessity of wandering from place to place, struggling through the deep drifts, exposed to the wolves, who, being of lighter make, hold a carnival upon the deer in crusting-time. No wolf, however, dare enter a moose-yard. He will troop round and round

upon the snow-bank which walls it, and his howling will, perhaps, bring two or three of his brethren to the spot, who will try to terrify the moose from his 'vantage ground, but dare not descend into it.

But, when the hunter, prowling about on his snow-shoes, discovers a moose-yard, he feels so sure of his quarry, that he will sometimes encamp upon the spot, in order to take the game at his leisure; and, when there have been several hunters in company, I have heard of their proceeding patiently to fell the neighbouring trees, and form a lofty fence around the yard, which enabled them to take the animal alive, when subdued by long confinement and starvation. An opportunity of doing this occurred near M'Intyre last winter, when a yard, with three moose in it, an old cow-moose and two yearlings, was discovered and surrounded by a band of hunters. Some of the party were

desirous of taking them alive, as one of the proprietors of this extensive property—a gentleman of great public spirit—wishes to make an attempt to domesticate the animal, and, if possible, introduce the use of it to agricultural purposes. This is an exceedingly interesting and hardly doubtful experiment, for the moose has been frequently tamed, and, unlike the common deer, can be halter-broken as easily as a horse.

The hunters, however, were too excited with their good luck to listen to any suggestion of the kind—few of them had ever killed a moose. Their rifles were in their hands, and they were bent upon having a shot at the game, which dashed to and fro, snorting and whistling, within the snowy bounds of the yard. The whoops and shouts of their enemies, redoubled by the echoes from the adjacent mountains, made them furious at being thus beset; and, at

each discharge of a gun, they would plunge at the assailing marksman so desperately, that he would be compelled to take refuge behind the nearest tree. The scene became thus so exciting, that all order was lost among the huntsmen. Each fired as fast as he could load, hardly waiting to take aim, lest some quicker-sighted comrade should bear off the prize. The moose, though repeatedly wounded, would charge again and again into the snow-banks around them, and drive their enemies from the brink, retiring, at each turn, to a corner of the yard where they were least molested, and there rally at once for another charge. Faint with the loss of blood, however, they were successively discomfited and borne down by the hunters, who, retreating upon the crust when pursued, would turn upon the moose the moment they tried to retrace their steps, and assail them with axes and bludgeons while floundering in the snow to

recover the vantage ground of the yard. The two yearlings, with their dam, after making a most gallant resistance, were ultimately despatched.

Such was the description which I had one day from a veteran hunter, while lying round a fire discussing a venison steak cut from a fine buck, whose death had been compassed after the curious fashion described as follows.

CHAPTER XIX.

WITHING A BUCK.

AFTER a week of fine trout-fishing, alternated by such picturesque rambles as I have attempted to describe, we could not leave the sources of the Hudson without devoting our last day to a deer-hunt, which had only been hitherto deferred from Cheney's hounds being absent with a brother hunter.

Taking an early breakfast, my friend and I, accompanied by John Cheney, another forester of the name of Linus Catlin, and our hospitable host, separated at the inlet of Lake Sandford,

to take our different stations. Cheney, with three hounds, was to rouse the deer from his lair upon an adjacent mountain; Catlin was to take post in his skiff, behind one of the islets of the lake; and the rest of us were to watch in the canoe, under the shelter of a bold promontory, opposite which the deer was expected to take the water.

Before entering his boat, Catlin, who appeared to be one of those quiet fellows that say little and do much, having no gun with him, proceeded to cut down a birchen sapling, and strip it of all its branches except two, the elastic wood of which he twisted together, so as to form a large noose upon the end of the pole. As he was laying this weapon in the stern of his skiff, and preparing to push off, his preparations did not seem to meet the approbation of his friend Cheney.

"What, Linus, you are not a-going to withe the deer?"

"And why not?" answered Catlin, taking his seat, and placing the oars in the rowlocks.

"Because I never see any good in withes: a man that can't tail a deer oughtn't to hunt him."

"Why, John, you couldn't hold a fat buck by his tail long enough to cut his throat with your hunting-knife."

"Can't I? I'd like to see the time! Well, if I know'd I could never tail another, as I have thousands, the cretur might go afore I'd be the man to drown him with a withe!"

The quiet Linus only replied by pushing off into the current and dropping down the stream, and we immediately followed, while Cheney, whistling to his dogs, plunged into the forest and disappeared.

The boats kept near each other for some time, and we landed together upon a sunny point to deposit a basket of bread and vegetables, an iron pot, and some other culinary apparatus which we had brought with us, under the confident promise of John that we should surely have a venison dinner in the woods that day, if he had to drive a dozen deer before we could kill one. Our craft being lightened of her lading, Catlin pulled for the islet which was yet a mile off down the lake, and we, after watching his oars flashing in the sunshine for a few moments, embarked anew and paddled round a headland; when running the canoe under the trees, whose morning shadows still hung over the lake, we stretched ourselves upon the grass, listening and looking with the most eager attention for the first intimation of approaching sport.

There was a slight ripple upon the lake,

which was not favourable to our seeing the deer should he take the water at any great distance from us; and the incessant call of the jay, with the ever-changing cry of the loon, created so many noises in the woods, generally so still, that the opening of the hounds might have escaped us unheard. These early sounds, however, soon ceased as the sun came marching up above the mountain tops, and spread the silver waves from the centre of the lake far and wide, into all its sheltered bays and wood-embowered friths. The faint ripple of the waters upon the rocky shore was the only murmur left.

My companions were conversing in a subdued voice, and I was lying a little apart from them revelling in the singular beauty of the scene, and trying to fix in my memory the peculiar outline of a ridge of mountains opposite, when I heard the faint crashing of a bough upon the other side of the lake, and running my eye

along the water, discovered a noble buck, with fine antlers, swimming beneath the bank. My comrades caught sight of him a moment afterwards, and we all waited with eager anxiety to see him put out far enough for us to row round him, and cut him off from the shore. But the buck had evidently no idea of making a traverse of the lake at this time. He was far in advance of the hounds, and had taken the water at this place not from being hotly pursued, but only to throw them off the scent, and then double on his own track. He, therefore, kept swimming along the shore, close under the steep bank, looking up at it every now and then, as if in search of a "runway" which would carry him back again into the depths of the forest. This runway was in a little cove immediately opposite to us, and though it was almost impossible now to cut him off from reaching it, yet the moment

we saw his object, we determined to make the effort.

The position of each in the canoe had of course been previously arranged; we accordingly crept into our seats, and pushed out into the lake, without making a sound that could attract the attention of the deer. The little islet of Inch-Hamish lay but a few yards out of our course, and we slid along as quietly as possible, until we could get under cover of this, and then gave way with all our strength. The lean craft glanced like an arrow through the rippling waters. We were all three familiar with the use of oar or paddle, and the buck would have had no chance of escape from that canoe had we been a hundred yards nearer. Our hopes were high in the brief moments that the islet shut him from view, but he had just reached the shore when we shot from its cover. We now threw up our paddles in despair, and paused to take a

fair view of him as he escaped from the lake. It was beautiful to see him lift his arching neck from the water when he first touched the bottom; and his whole form was brought to view while he made a few steps through the shallow waves, as leisurely as if no pursuers were near. Throwing his antlers, then, upon his shoulders to clear the boughs above him, he bounded over a fallen tree near the margin, and disappeared in the forest.

Looking now to the point where he had entered the lake, we saw one of the hounds standing out on a rock, with nose uplifted to catch the vanished scent of his quarry. The dog saw us pulling for the runway, and, dashing into the lake, swam for the point to which we were steering, and reached it just as our boat grated upon the beach. A moment sufficed to put him again upon the scent. He opened with a joyous yell—his mouthing soon became

deeper, and more distant—it neared again—and the two other hounds, who, while following some other trail, had now, for the first time, struck his, joined in the chorus. The echoes in the upper part of the lake are the finest that I ever heard; and as the morning breeze had now lulled, they were all awakened by this wild music. The deer was evidently making for the inlet; and, indeed, before we could pull out far enough to command a view of the point where he would probably cross, he had made the traverse, and we only caught a glimpse of the dogs thrashing through the wild grass upon a tongue of land upon the opposite side of the inlet.

"You may give up that buck," said our host; "he has gone over to Lake Henderson, and the best thing we can do is to start another."

Almost as he spoke, a clear whoop rang through the forest, and soon after we saw

John Cheney waving us to the shore we had just left.

"Tormented lightning! what are ye doing there, when the deer is going down the lake?"

"Down! why he has just crossed at the upper end, and gone over to Lake Henderson."

"I tell you he hasn't. No deer will go there when the water's so high that he would be entangled in the bushes before he could swim beyond his depth. I know the natur of the cretur; and that deer has gone round to the lower end of the lake, to cross back to the mountain, where I started him."

With these words Cheney waded into the water without waiting for us to approach nearer the shore, jumped into the canoe, seized a paddle, and away we sped again over the waves. The event proved that he was right. The

buck after crossing at the inlet, made a circuit of several miles, and before we could pull half way down the lake, took the water at a runway opposite to the islet, behind which Catlin was watching in his skiff.

Cool and experienced in the sport, this hunter never broke his cover until the deer got fairly out into the lake, when he launched out and turned him so quickly, that the buck made for the island which his pursuer had just left. Linus, however, was too quick for him, and threw his withe over the deer's antlers before he could touch the bottom with his feet. But the buck was a fellow of great weight and vigour, and feeling himself thus entangled, he made a lateral spring into deeper water, which dragged the hunter out of the boat in an instant. Linus fortunately seized one of the oars, which, being rigged with swivels instead of row-

locks, still kept him connected with the skiff. But his situation was a very precarious one; the buck becoming the assailant, struck at him with his forefeet, and got him again fairly under water. He rose this time, however, with the oar between himself and his antagonist, and while clutching the gunwale of the boat with one hand, seized the withe which had escaped from his grasp, in the same moment that the buck made a pass at him with his horns, which ripped up the bosom of his shirt, and was within an inch of goring him to death. But before the desperate animal could repeat the thrust, the hunter had gained the skiff, now half full of water, and seizing the first missile that came to hand, he dealt the buck a blow upon the head, which, followed up by a slash from his hunting-knife put an end to the encounter.

The conflict was over before we could reach the combatants; but the carcass was still warm when we relieved the leaky boat of Catlin by lifting the buck into our canoe; and his eye was so bright, his skin so smooth and glossy, and his limbs, not yet stiffened in death, folded so easily beneath him, that it was difficult to imagine life had departed.

When we landed at the spot before selected, it required the united strength of the whole party to lift the buck up the steep bank, and suspend him upon the timbers, which Cheney prepared, *secundum artem*, for scientific butchery. The eloquent Bucklaw, by whose learned discourse upon this branch of "the gentle science of venerie," the reader has been enlightened, when reading Scott's "Bride of Lammermoor," could not have been a more thorough practitioner of the art than John Cheney.

A group worthy of Inman's pencil was collected around the roaring fire, by which the dripping Catlin was drying himself; while Cheney, with the fat buck before him, and the dogs licking the blood at his feet, as ever and anon he paused in his operation, and turned round to us, to point out some graceful line of fat with his hunting-knife, would have formed the prominent features of the picture.

The potatoes, in the mean time, were roasted whole or sliced up with various savory matters, which were put into the kettle to boil; and though we had omitted to bring tumblers with us, Cheney's axe hollowed out and fashioned some most ingenious drinking-cups, which were ready by the time divers choice morsels of venison had been grilled upon the coals. There were a few drops at the bottom of an old flask of cognac for each of us; we had Mackinaw-blankets, stretched upon balsam branches, to

recline upon; there was no call of duty or business to remind us of the lapse of hours; and stories and anecdotes of former huntings in these mountains, with practical discussions as to what part of a deer afforded the most savory venison, prolonged the repast till sunset.

The haunch of the buck wrapped in its clean skin, was left untouched for future feasting. "Well, John," said I, as I tried in vain to lift it into the boat, by the short, fat tail, "how could you ever have taken such a fellow as this by 'tailing him,' as you call it?"

"It's all knack—it's being used to the thing only. Not but that I always said that withing is a good way."

"No, no, John!" we all exclaimed, "you said just the reverse."

"Well, perhaps I did, and without meaning to discredit Linus, who, for certain, has been

the man among us this day, I still say that withing only does for those that don't know how to tail a deer. And now let's take the old hounds in the boats and pull homewards."

CHAPTER XX.

THE DEPARTURE.

The hunters with whom we had enjoyed our last day's sport upon Lake Sandford, accompanied us some forty miles through the woods, when we started next day upon our homeward journey. John Cheney, like the rest, trudging along on foot, found an opportunity of shooting several partridges by the way, picking them from the trees with his pistol with as much case as an ordinary sportsman could have effected with a fowling-piece (admitting the thick cover to give the bird such a chance of

life as to warrant a *sportsman* to take him sitting). After killing three or four partridges, however, John could not be prevailed on to shoot at more. I several times called his attention to a good shot, but he always answered shaking his head. "It's wrong, it's wrong, sir, to use up life in that way—here's birds enough for them that wants to eat them, and that saddle of venison on the buckboard will only be wasted, if I kill more of these poor things."

About noon we halted by a brook which ran through the forest near a clump of maples which grew so widely apart as to let the sunshine down upon a grassy spot, where we spread our table upon a fallen tree, and kindling a fire proceeded to cook our dinner. All found something to do, while this was in preparation; one attended to the comforts of the horses, another kept the fire supplied with fuel, some shot at a mark with Cheney's pistol,

while worthy John himself, watched with the most sedulous care over the venison and partridges, which he roasted after a fashion peculiarly his own, and which, with four or five large trout that we had brought from the lake, and the customary accompaniment of roast potatoes and wheaten bread, all being flavoured with good humour and keen mountain appetites, made the repast a delicious one.

The day was fine, the air clear and remarkably bland for the season, and I don't know how long we should have protracted our woodland revel, as Cheney exercised his skill and ingenuity serving up every moment some tempting morsel of venison, pressing my friend and myself particularly to eat, as "we didn't know when again we might have a real nateral dinner in the woods, and it was a comfort to him to see gentlemen from the city take things in the woods as if they liked them."

No town-adoring cockney, nor patriotic villager, nor proud Castellan, could imagine himself more thoroughly identified with all the honours and glory of his distinct and especial dwelling-place, than does this genuine forester with every thing that appertains to the broad woods through which he ranges. Cheney was now, as he told me when walking by my side, after resuming our journey, going out of the woods for the first time in three months, to visit his father, who lived some sixty miles off. He was very old, and John had not seen nor heard from him for some time previously to his last visit to the settlements which we were now approaching, and from which his father lived still another day's journey distant. He seemed quite anxious as to the tidings he might hear about his venerable parent, and talked of remaining to spend a month with him. Such

was the complexion of the hunter's feelings when we came out of the forest at nightfall upon what is called the Schroon-road, where we found a good inn to receive us. Here, my friend and I, after securing a conveyance which should enable us to follow down the course of the Hudson instead of returning home through Lake Champlain, invited Cheney to take a seat in our vehicle, which would carry him some thirty miles on his next day's journey. He was so eager to see his father, that the proffer was at once accepted, and all our mutual arrangements were completed for the morrow. But just as we were on the point of starting, and had shaken hands with our hearty host of MacIntyre and his party, Cheney was hailed by a brother hunter, who, rifle on shoulder, trudged up to the inn door upon the road we were about to travel.

"Hullo, Bill!" cried the filial John, advancing to shake hands with him. "Come up from Ti', eh? and how's the old man?"

"Right well, I tell ye," replied Bill; he's killed six bear this fall, and thinking the creturs must be pretty well routed out among our mountains, I've struck over the ridge to see what I can find among your'n."

"Tormented lightning! six bear!" quoth John. "Why, the raal old chap; his grain is as tough and springy as ever. Well, Bill, if you'll hold on till I can speak a word to these gentlemen in the waggon, I'll turn round with you, and back into our woods again."

Saying this, Cheney came up to us, and repeating what we had just overheard as the reason for changing his intentions, he shook hands with us, and we parted upon our separate journeys.

We reached Lake George that night, our

road winding side by side with the Hudson for many miles, passing several picturesque lakes, crossing mountain ridges commanding the most superb bird's-eye views, or descending into valleys, where the painter might find an ever-varying novelty for the exercise of his art; but as the reader is perhaps already fatigued with these loose sketches, and as the prominent figure which gave them animation has disappeared from the scene, we will here conclude our notes upon THE SOURCES OF THE HUDSON.

WILD SCENES

ON

THE WISCONSAN.

CHAPTER I.

NIGHTS IN AN INDIAN LODGE.

"*Neshin Wikiewun,*" exclaimed White-plume, after kindling our fire in the deserted shantee of some roving hunter which we found in one of these deep ravines, through which the brooks of the north-west discharge themselves into the Wisconsan. "A good house," said he, rubbing his hands, and looking around with an air of satisfaction.

"Aneendee," growled Che-che-gwa (*the Rat-*

tlesnake) with Indian sententiousness, while his less dignified friend sliced off a couple of steaks from the moose he had just killed, and left the Canadian to prepare the supper, which was soon despatched by all four of us.

It was still early in the evening, and though somewhat fatigued, as I was not at all sleepy, I should have had a pretty tedious time of it, after the Rattlesnake had coiled himself to rest, if left alone with so laconic a companion.

But the White-plume, who had been a great traveller in his day, and was noted for his talkativeness and story-telling, seemed seized with a more than usual fit of loquacity. The other Indian appeared at first much inclined to repose, but his disposition to sleep was gradually dispelled by the vivacity of his comrade. He soon raised himself on his elbow and yielded

attention to the waggish sallies of the other. Finally, sitting erect, he carefully filled his pipe with kinnekinic, and, placing his back against the rough timbers of the lodge, seemed prepared for a long siege, as his friend entered upon one of those rambling legends of which the Indians are so fond. The story-teller also, clearing his throat, asked for "some milk from the 'Mokomuan's' *black cow!*" and emptying the whiskey-bottle, which the Canadian handed him, at a draught, he pursued his tale without further interruption, except from the guttural expression of satisfaction which now and then escaped from the deep chest of his companion, or the loud snoring of my guide, whose slumbers were as noisy as if he were sleeping against time.

My knowledge of the language used by the story-teller was so slight, that the meaning of his words often escaped me altogether; and it

was only from his frequent repetition of the same ideas, enforced by the most animated and expressive gestures, and, perhaps, from my having before heard of the wild tradition upon which it was founded, that I was at all able to follow him in the narration. It would be affectation in me to attempt to give the style, and mode of expression, in which the tale I am about to relate was conveyed to me, but the main tissue of it was as follows.

CHAPTER II.

THE GHOST-RIDERS.

A LEGEND OF THE GREAT AMERICAN DESERT.

"Away!—Away! My breath was gone,
I saw not where he hurried on!
'Twas scarcely yet the break of day
And on he foam'd—Away!—Away!—
And my cold sweatdrops fell like rain,
Upon the coursers bristling mane;
But snorting still, with rage and fear,
He flew upon his far career."

Mazeppa.

The hunters of the far west who trap for beaver among the defiles of the Oregon Mountains, regard no part of their long journey, from the borders to their savage hunting-grounds,

where the fur-bearing animals are still found in the greatest profusion, with more aversion than that which leads over the great desert, where the tributaries of the Padouca, the Konzas, and the Arkansaw rivers, are half absorbed by the arid sand. Lewis and Clarke, Major Long, and other scientific explorers of this desolate region, suffered much from the want of water while passing through it on their way to the Rocky Mountains; and they often mention the disheartening effect it had upon their followers, when, after traversing the scorching plain for weeks, it still lay stretched in unbroken and monotonous vastness before them. This portion of country, which extends along the base of the Rocky Mountains as far as we have any acquaintance with their range, is said to have an average width of six hundred miles. In the north, the surface is occasionally characterized by water-worn pebbles and hard gravel, but the pre-

dominant characteristic is sand, which, in many instances, prevails to the entire exclusion of vegetable mould. At the South, the arid plains are profusely covered with loose fragments of volcanic rocks, amid whose barren bosom no genial plant has birth; and, indeed, throughout the whole region, large tracts are often to be met with, which exhibit scarcely a trace of vegetation. In some few instances, sandy hillocks and ridges make their appearance, thickly covered with red cedar, of a dwarfish growth; but in general, nothing of vegetation appears upon the uplands, but rigid grass of spare and stunted growth, prickly pears profusely covering extensive tracts, and weeds of a few varieties, which, like the prickly pears, seem to thrive the best in the most arid and steril soils.

The Indians, who inhabit this extensive region, are composed of several roving tribes,

who, unlike the nations to the east and west of them, have no permanent villages, nor hunting grounds which they claim as peculiarly their own. They hunt the buffalo and antelope, and, dwelling only in tents of leather, migrate from place to place in pursuit of the herds of those animals; and so extensive is their range, that while they exchange their skins for blankets and strouding, with the British traders on the Cheyenne river of the north, they also trade their mules and horses, for vermilion and silver ornaments, with the Spaniards of Mexico on the Colorado of the south. The Arapahoes, Kaskaias, Kiaways, and Tetaus, which are the chief of the desert hordes, are ferocious and predatory in their habits, and are continually at war with various tribes of the Missouri Indians, who inhabit the fertile countries which lie between them and our western frontier. The grizzly bear, the king of the American wilds,

shares these dreary domains with the savages, hardly less ferocious than himself, and roams the west in quest of living prey. Here, too, the illusive mirage of the desert cheats the parched traveller with its refreshing promise, and the wanderers in these solitudes often tell of those monstrous shapes and unnatural forms, which, like the spectre of the Brocken, reflected on the heated and tremulous vapour, are magnified and distorted to the eye of the appalled and awe-stricken traveller.* Strange fires, too, are said

* As the day advanced, and the heat of the sun began to be felt, such quantities of vapour were seen to ascend from every part of the plain, that all objects at a little distance appeared magnified and variously distorted. Three elks, which were the first that we had seen, crossed our path at some distance before us. The effect of the mirage, with our indefinite idea of the distance, magnified those animals to the most prodigious size. For a moment we thought we saw the mastadon of America moving in those vast plains which seem to have been created for his dwelling-place."—*Major Long's Expedition to the Rocky Mountains.*

to shoot along the baked and cracking earth, and the herds of wild horses that can be seen trooping along the horizon, seem at times to be goaded on by gigantic and unearthly riders, whose paths are enveloped in wreaths of flame.*

* Luminous appearances, like those mentioned in the text, are also said to be common in some of the mining districts west of the Mississippi. Dr. Edwin James, of the army, the accomplished naturalist and traveller, received several accounts of them from the residents in that region, though neither he nor any of his party witnessed any such phenomena. A settler told them of two itinerant preachers, who had encountered an indescribable phenomenon, at a place about nine miles east of Loutre lick. "As they were riding side by side at a late hour in the evening, one of them requested the other to observe a ball of fire attached to the end of his whip. No sooner was his attention directed to this object, than a similar one began to appear on the other end of the whip: in a moment afterwards, their horses and all objects near them were enveloped in a wreath of flame. By this time the minds of the itinerant preachers were so much confounded, that they were no longer capable of observation,

The scientific explorer readily calls philosophy to his aid in examining these strange appearances: learning explains the phenomena of which he is himself a witness, and reason rejects the preternatural images, which he only knows from the representations of others. But the nomadic tribes, who make their dwelling upon the desert, or the uneducated adventurer, who wanders thither from some more smiling region, are differently affected. The monstrous shapes, and unearthly appearances, that present themselves to his excited vision, are regarded through the medium of superstitious awe. The wild imagination of the Indian, and the credulous fancy of the Creole and Canadian hunter,

and could, therefore, give no further account of what happened." He also stated as a fact, authenticated by the most credible witnesses, that a very considerable tract of land near by, had been seen to send up vast columns of smoke, which rose through the light and porous soil as if it had been the covering of a coalpit.

people these mysterious solitudes with actual beings; while the grotesque figures, drawn upon the mocking mirage, after presenting themselves frequently to the eye, assume at length an individuality and a name; and it is said that the Indians and Canadian wanderers become at last so familiar with the images represented, as even to pretend to recognise the features, and swear to the identity of shapes which are continually changing, and which probably never present themselves more than once to the same person. Among those most often mentioned, there are none whose identity has been more completely established, and whose names are whispered with deeper awe, than those of the GHOST-RIDERS. The Canadian Engagé always crosses himself when he utters the name, and the Otto, or Omaw-whaw warrior, who may have skirted the desert in a war party, against the Cheyennes, or the Pawnee-Loup, who has crossed it

in his battles with the Crow and Kiawa Indians, invariably places his hand upon his Metawaiiann, or repository of his personal manitto, when he speaks of these fearful apparitions.

Those who affect to have seen these strange dwellers of the desert, describe them as two gigantic figures, representing a man and woman locked in each other's arms, and both mounted on one horse, which is of the same unearthly make as themselves. Some pretend to have been near enough to discover their features, and these assert that the countenance of the man, though emaciated and ghastly, and writhed with the most fearful contortions, by an expression of shrinking horror, can plainly be identified as the face of a white man; while the features of the woman, though collapsed and corpse-like, are evidently those of an Indian female. Others insist that no one can ever have been near enough to the phantoms to remark these pecu-

liarities; for the Ghost-Riders, say they, are for ever in motion, and they scour the desert with such preternatural velocity, as to mock the scrutiny of human eyes. They appear to be goaded on for ever by some invisible hand, while the phantom charger that bears them overleaps every obstacle, as he flies on his mysterious and apparently aimless career.

There is a tradition among the Indians accounting for the origin of these fearful apparitions, to which universal credence is given. It is a story of love and vengeance—of gentle affections won by gallant deeds, and Eden-like happiness blasted by unholy passion—of black-hearted treachery and ruthless violence, that met with a punishment more horrible even than itself.

And thus the story runs:

Upon the western borders of the great desert already described, and somewhere about the

head-waters of the Padouca and Arkansaw rivers—where they approach each other among those broken sandstone ledges which lift their gray parapets, and isolated columnar rocks of snowy whiteness, from copses of hazel and shrubby oaks—there stood, many years since, the lodge of Ta-in-ga-ro;—" *The-first-thunder-that-falls.*" The hunter, though no one knew whence he came, appeared to be upon friendly terms with all the allied tribes of the desert, and he was said to have recommended himself to them on his appearance in those wilds, by bringing a dozen scalps of different tribes of the Missouri Indians at his saddle-bow, when he first presented himself in the skin tents of the roving Kaskaias. So rich an offering would have placed the chief at the head of an independent band of his own, had he wished to become a " partisan," or leader of warriors; but the habits of Ta-in-ga-ro were unsocial and se-

cluded, and the only object that claimed the solicitude, or shared the sympathies of the bold stranger, was a beautiful female—the sole companion of his exile.

The name of the hunter was evidently of Omaw-whaw origin, but there was nothing about his person to mark him as belonging to that distant nation, and it was equally difficult to identify the partner of his wandering with any neighbouring tribe. Some, from the fairness of her complexion, insisted that she must belong to the Rice-eaters (*Menomonés*), or White Indians of the north, who dwell near the country of the Long-knives; others, that she must be a *Boisbrulé*, or daughter of a Sioux mother by some Sakindasha (British) trader; but no one, after a while, troubled themselves about the origin of Zecana, or *The Bird*, as she was called in the Yauckton language. Indeed the lonely couple lived so completely by themselves, in a

spot but seldom visited, that they were soon forgotten among a people so scattered as the dwellers of the desert. The only object of Ta-in-ga-ro appeared to have been, to find a home where he could place his wife in safety; and the broken mounds, and hillocks, and angular tables of sandstone, now heaped upon the soil, like the plates of ice often piled upon each other in the eddies and along the banks of rivers, and now raising themselves in solitary pyramids and obelisks, along the grassy vales in which he sought an asylum, made this the country, of all others, wherein the outlaw might find a secure fastness—especially when the whole breadth of the desert lay between him and his people. Secure amid these wild and picturesque retreats, the sole care of the exile was to keep a few wild horses in training near his lodge, and to hunt the game that was necessary for the subsistence of his small household. The soul of Ta-in-ga-ro

appeared to be completely wrapt up in the being who had united her fate with his. He seldom allowed her to go out of his sight, and when the disappearance of the buffalo and antelope from his immediate neighbourhood extended the range of the chase, Zecana always accompanied him on his more distant expeditions. Indeed, the love which the hunter bore to his wife, was not like the ordinary affection of an Indian to his squaw: it resembled more the devotion which distinguishes those who, in some tribes, are coupled out as friends, to be nearer to each other than children of the same father, in all the concerns that mark the pathway of life.—It was like the mystic tie which unites together the fated brothers of "The Band of the Brave."*

* *Nanpashene*—The Dauntless, or "Those who never retreat." The different members of this singular and romantic association are generally coupled out in pairs; and incredible instances are told of the exclusive devotion

The genial months of summer had passed away, and the first moon of autumn still found the exile and his bride dwelling in their sequestered valley. His success in the chase had enabled Ta-in-ga-ro to exchange a pack of skins for a few simple comforts, with a Spanish trader on the Mexican border, aud by merely shifting his lodge to the mountain recesses near, when the winter called for a more sheltered situation, he was easily enabled to strike the wild goats of the Oregon highlands, and by trapping for beaver among the adjacent glens, supply all the wants of himself and Zecana. It was necessary, however, in disposing of the latter, to be frequently brought in contact with the Spaniard; and his unwillingness to leave his wife unprotected, induced Ta-in-ga-ro often to take her

to each other of the friends thus united—a devotion that extends even to death when made terrible by all the horrors of Indian torture.

with him on his visits to the trading-post. The consequences were such as are continually occurring on our own frontier, in the intercourse between the licentious whites, who are bound by no ties except those of interest and passion, and the confiding and simple-hearted Indians.

The Spaniard, whose cabin was already shared with two wives, taken from the adjacent tribes with whom he traded, soon conceived a partiality for the fairer features of the northern girl; and, with that disregard of moral obligations, which is but too characteristic of his order, when the welfare of one of the aborigines is concerned, he determined that she should become the victim of his unbridled passions. His advances were received by Zecana with indignation and scorn; but notwithstanding the disgust which his persevering in them awakened, she feared to tell her husband of the insults she received lest his impetuous disposi-

tion should embroil him with all the renegado whites, villanous half-bloods, and degraded Indians, that usually hang round a trading-post, and become the pliant creatures of its master. The return of Spring, too, was near, and Zecana thought that its earliest blossoms would find her once more alone with her lover, enjoying the sequestered privacy of their summer retreat together; and, confident in her own purity and strength, she contented herself with repelling the advances of the trader in silence. But the wily and profligate Spaniard, was not to be cheated so easily of his victim; and after meditating a variety of designs, he at last brought both cunning and force to the accomplishment of his purpose. He succeeded in luring the unsuspecting Indian into an agreement, by which a pack of skins was to be delivered within a certain period. In order that Ta-in-garo might be completely unshackled in his efforts

to procure them, and rove as far as possible in his dangerous quest, the trader prevailed upon him to leave his wife in his guardianship, while her husband went upon an expedition into the inmost recesses of the Rocky Mountains. The hunter, according to the custom of the Indians departed upon his errand, without giving Zecana the slightest intimation of his distant mission, or of the arrangements, which he had made for her care during his absence.

In one of the most romantic valleys on the eastern side of the mountains, at the foot of that snow-capped peak, which is called after the first white man that ever planted his foot on the summit,* there is a large and beautiful fountain, whose transparent water, highly aërated with exhilarating gas, has procured it the name of "The Boiling Spring," from the white hunters, who trap for beaver in this

* Edwin James's U. S. A.

lonely region. This fountain is one of the first you meet with after crossing the Great Desert, and its grateful beverage not less than its singular situation, causes it to be regarded with deep veneration by the roving natives of the mountain and the plain. The Indian hunter when he drinks from the rocky basin, invariably leaves an offering in the refreshing bowl; and the clean bottom is paved with the beads and other ornaments which the aborigines have left there as sacrifices or presents to the spring.

By the side of this fountain, one sultry April noontide, reposed an Indian hunter. His mantle of blue and scarlet cloth, beaded with white wampum, was evidently of Spanish manufacture and indicated perhaps the gay and predatory rover of the south-west; but the long-plaited and ribbon-twined locks of the Tetan, or Kaskaia, were wanting: and

the knotted tuft on his crown with the war-eagle's feather as its only ornament, characterized more truly the stern and less volatile native of the north; while the towering form and prominent aquiline nose were combined with other features and proportions which more particularly distinguished the Pawnees and other tribes of the Missouri Indians. It was, in fact, impossible to say to what nation the hunter belonged. The best blood of the noblest band might channel unmingled with any baser current in his veins; but whatever might be the totem of his tribe, it was evident that he now held himself identified with no particular clan—and was, perhaps, indeed an outlaw from his people. The expression of dauntless resolution that dwelt around his firmly-cut mouth, and the air of high command discoverable in his piercing eye, revealed, however, that the hunter was no common man—that, in fact, whatever

might now be his pursuits, he was once a warrior and a chieftain.

Weary with the chase, and exhausted by the noontide heat, Ta-in-ga-ro was reposing upon the rich greensward, which carpeted the spot. He had thrown off the gay Mexican blanket, or cloth mantle, as it might rather be called, and was occupied in stripping the beads from the woven garters of his metasses for an offering to the divinity of the place. One after another, the bits of wampum were dropped by him into the bubbling well, over which he leaned. But each, as it struck the bottom, was thrown again to the surface, by some boiling eddy, and after dancing for a moment on the brim, it topped over the lips of the fountain, and disappeared in the stream which swept down the valley. The heart of an Indian is the abode of a thousand superstitions; and Ta-in-ga-ro, though more enlightened than

most of his race, was still, so far as fancy was concerned, a genuine child of the wilderness. The sudden onset of a score of Blackfeet he had met without dismay, and their charging yell would have been flung back with his own whoop of defiance; but the soul of the intrepid savage sank within him as he beheld the strange reception of his reverential rite. Danger and death he feared not for himself, but there was another whose existence was wound up in his own; and misgiving thoughts of her condition floated wildly through his brain at this moment. A strange mist swam before his dizzied sight, and he saw, or deemed that he saw, the reproachful countenance of Zecana reflected in the mysterious pool. The appalled lover sprang like lightning to his feet, and riveted his piercing gaze intently upon the fountain. But the apparition was gone. The wampum-strewed bottom was all that met his eye within

the sacred bowl, and he knew not whether the mocking semblance, just presented on its surface, was distorted by pain, or whether the motion of the unstable mirror changed those lineaments from their wonted sweetness. A startling train had been given to his ideas, however, which fancy rudely followed up without the aid of new images to quicken her power. A sudden resolve and instant execution was the result. The call of the chief brought his horse in a moment to his side; another served to readjust his few equipments, and leaping into his seat, he at once bade adieu to the scenes, where he had hardly yet commenced his new employment, leaving his fur-traps, and all they might contain to the first fortunate hunter that should chance to light upon them.

Ta-in-ga-ro had a journey of some length before him along the base of the mountains; but at last the "Spanish Peaks" hove near,

and the impatient voyager soon after appeared before the trading-post of the Spaniard. He found it occupied by a small force of provincial soldiers, who had been ordered thither on account of some hostile movements of the neighbouring Cumanches; and a goodnatured Mexican, who was one of the sentinels on duty, apprized him that Zecana was there no longer, and warned him that imprisonment and death would be the certain consequence, should he present himself before the commandant. The anxious husband waited not to learn whether the trader was still at the station; but thinking that Zecana might have sought a refuge in his own home, during the existing difficulties upon the border, he struck the spurs into his jaded horse, and wheeling from the inhospitable gate, his lessening form soon disappeared over the rolling prairie.

Never had the road seemed so long to the

retreat where he had known so many happy hours, and where, in spite of some misgivings at his heart, he still hoped to realize many more. After winding his way for some time among the singular pieces of table-land which rise in such formal mounds from those plains, he descended at last into the little vale where his lodge was situated. All looked as still and sheltered as when last he left it; and his heart rose to his lips when, reclining beneath the dwarf willows which bent over the stream near his door, he saw the loved form of Zecana. There was something unpleasant to him, however, in the singular listlessness of her appearance. The tramp of his horse appeared not to startle her; and when, at last, his figure met her eye, she looked at him as carelessly as if wholly unconscious of his presence. She appeared to be busied in watching the ingenious labours of a group of prairie-dogs, one of whose

neat villages was clustered around a small mound near the spot where she sat; and as the little animals would move in and out of their burrows and sport in the warm sunshine, she sung to them snatches of strange airs, such as had either originated among her own people or been caught in other days from some wandering Mexican or Canadian trader. The chieftain threw himself from his horse, and stood over the insane female in agonized horror. The wild words that she murmured appeared to have no allusion to him; and, though in her fallen and emaciated features he could still recognise the face of her whom he had loved, yet the being before him could hardly be identified with his own Zecana. But the strange superstition of his race in relation to those afflicted with the loss of reason, began soon to influence his mind, and, dropping on one knee before the maniac, he listened as solemnly to her ravings

as if he had the art of a *ouabineau,* or wizard, to interpret them. They were incoherent and wandering, but they seemed ever and anon to hover near some revelation too horrible even to pass the lips of insanity. The Indian sprang from the ground as if a bullet had pierced his heart when the conviction of their import first flashed upon his brain, while the soul-piercing cry he uttered summoned back for a moment the reason of the desolated woman before him. But the gleam of mind was instantly lost in a darker eclipse than that from which the voice of her lover had evoked it. She gave him a look of anguish, more piteous even than the ravings of her previous distraction—and then —while her lips seemed convulsed with the effort — she shrieked forth the name of the Spaniard, in the same instant that a knife, which she clutched from her husband's belt laid her a gory corpse at his feet.

It would be impossible to describe the emotions of Ti-an-ga-ro at the spectacle which had just passed, like some dreadful vision, before his eyes. The very soul within seemed blasted with horror and dismay at the frightful desolation that had overtaken his happy home. The casket in which he had garnered up his hopes —the being in whom he had merged his existence — lay an irretrievable ruin, a desecrated corpse, before him! And he that had wrought this stupendous injury—he the author of this fiendish destruction — was the trusted friend of his bosom, the appointed guardian and protector of all it prized on earth or in heaven!

The lapse of hours found the wretched husband still standing in mute stupefaction where the knowledge of his calamity had first burst upon his agonized senses. But some new feeling seemed now to be at work within him; a

wild and sudden impulse gleamed fearfully over his fixed and haggard countenance. He became an altered being—changed on the instant—changed in heart, soul, and character, as if the spell of an enchanter had passed through his brain. Till now, he had been, either more or less, than an Indian. The plastic hand of love had moulded him into a different creature from the stern and immoveable children of his race. The outlawed warrior had loved Zecana; he had loved her, not as the sons of pleasure, the slaves of sordid toil—not as men enervated by the luxuries, and fettered by the interests, the prejudices, the soul-shackling bonds of civilization—not as the artificial creature of society can only love. He loved with a soul that knew no dividing cares — that was filled with no hollow dreams of pomp and power. He loved with a heart that was tenanted by one only

passion. He worshipped her with a mind that bowed to no image beneath the sun save that which was graven on his own bosom. Nor was Zecana unworthy such a passion. Gentle, as the antelope that skimmed the green savannas near, she was still a being, fond, warm, and doting; and the deepest passions of her woman's nature had been called into action by the wild devotion of her lover. The flower of her young affections had budded and matured to life, like the quickly-blowing blossoms of an arctic spring, while the fruits it bore were rich, and full, and glowing, as those which a tropic summer warms into existence. And, though no conflicting feeling had ever come athwart the fulness of their love, think not that the ties of association were wanting to knit the memory of every look and word of hers to the heartstrings of Ta-in-ga-ro. The

radiant face of nature speaks ever to the Indian of the being that on earth he most adores. Her sigh will whisper from the leafy forest; her smile will brighten on the blossom-tufted prairie; the voice that murmurs in the running stream syllables her name in tuneful eloquence for ever. And they were happy. The brook that sang beneath the willows near their lodge—the flowers that kissed its current—the bird that warbled on the spray above them, were all the world to them — those lonely lovers. And now this bower of bliss was blasted—this home of peace and simple joys was desolated—ruined and desecrated, as if the malice-breathing fiat of some unhallowed and fabled monster had gone forth against the happiness of its owner.

The pulse of no living being beat with sympathy for the master of that lonely wreck—but

the soul of Ta-in-ga-ro was sufficient to itself. The indomitable pride of an Indian chief filled its inmost recesses with new resources for battling with his fate. Love and sorrow—like the snowdrift which smooths the rocky casing of a volcano—melted in a moment before the fires that glowed within his flinty bosom, and his original nature asserted itself in every fibre of his frame. His mien and his heart alike were altered. His features petrified into the immobility of a savage, while his brain burned with a thirst for vengeance, which only gave no outward token because its fiendish cravings were unutterable through any human organ.

Calmly now, as if nothing had occurred to ruffle the wonted placidity of his disposition, Ta-in-ga-ro proceeded to occupy himself, for the rest of the day, in the few concerns that required his attention. The still warm body of

Zecana, after being carefully wrapped in a buffalo-skin, was disposed of for the time in the sungiwun, or *caché*, wherein his few valuables were usually kept—and, after carefully adjusting every thing to ensure its concealment, he occupied himself in taking care of his favourite horse—which, after the late arduous journey, required both attention and refreshment. When these necessary duties were fulfilled, the solitary, at the approach of evening, tranquilly lighted his pipe, and, passing several hours under its soothing influence, with as much equanimity as if nothing had occurred to interrupt his customary enjoyment, he at last wrapped himself in his wolf-skin robe, and was soon sleeping as soundly as if a dream of human ill had never thrown a shadow over his slumbers.

It was two nights after this that the Spanish trader lay securely asleep within the guarded

walls of his station. His repose was apparently as unmolested as that which has just been ascribed to Ta-in-ga-ro; and at the foot of his bed sat the dusky form of the Indian warrior, watching the sleep of his enemy with as mild an eye as if he were hanging upon the downy slumbers of an infant. All was as quiet as the tenantless lodge of the lonely watcher. The chamber, or cabin, stood on the ground-floor, in an angle of the blockhouse. It was guarded by sentries, both within and without the station; and how this strange visitant had penetrated within the walls no human being has ever known; but there, by the flickering light of a low fire, could be seen the wily and daring savage, sitting as calm, cool, and collected, as if patience were all that was required to effect the purpose that had brought him thither.

The tramp of armed men was now audible

near the gate of the fort, while the customary relief of sentinels was taking place. The slight commotion incident to the occasion soon ceased, and all around the post became again perfectly silent.

A considerable space of time now elapsed, and the Indian still maintained his statue-like position. At last he sank noiselessly from the couch to the floor, and placing his ear to the ground, listened for a while—as if assuring himself that all was as he wished. His measures were then instantly taken: he first loosed the wampum-belt from his person, and possessed himself of a long cord, or *lariat,* which he had either brought with him or found in the chamber of the Spaniard; placing now his scalping-knife in his teeth, he glided like a shadow to the head of the bed, and at the same moment that the noose of the *lariat* was adroitly thrown over the neck of the sleeping trader with one

hand, the belt of beaded woollen was forced into his mouth with the other, and his waking cries effectually stifled. The ill-starred Spaniard made but a short struggle for release; for the arms of the sinewy savage pinioned him so closely, that he saw in a moment his efforts were in vain, and the threatening motion of his determined foe, in tightening the noose when his struggles were more vigorous, intimidated him into deferring the attempt to escape to some more promising opportunity. He submitted to be bound in silence; and the Indian swathed his limbs together till he lay utterly helpless, an inanimate log upon the couch whereon he had been reposing.

Having thus secured his prize, Ta-in-ga-ro went to work with the same imperturbability to place it beyond the danger of recapture. He first displaced a portion of the bark roof of the rude chamber, and, lifting his unresisting

captive through the aperture, carefully placed his burden beside the wooden chimney of the primitive structure, where it projected above the timber-built walls of the station, and threw its shadows far over the area of the fort. Returning then to the room from which he had just emerged, he took an arrow thickly feathered from the combustible pods of the wild cotton-tree, which grows profusely along the river bottoms of this region, and lighting it by the dying embers before him, he swung himself once more above the rafters, and, standing in the shadow of the chimney, launched the flamingshaft far within the window of a cabin which opened upon the central square of the station, immediately opposite to the shantee of the trader. The fiery missile performed its errand with speed and fidelity—the sleeping apartment of the commandant was instantly in a blaze, and the ill-disciplined sentinels, eager

to make up for their want of vigilance by present officiousness, rushed from their posts to shield their officer from the danger which had so suddenly beset him. The exulting savage availed himself of the commotion, and the fettered trader was lowered instantaneously on the outside of the fort. One dosing sentry only, who had hitherto been unobserved in the deep shadow of the wall, witnessed the daring act, and he started aghast at the inanimate form which was placed so abruptly at his feet; but the Indian dropped like a falcon on his prey beside it, and a half-uttered cry of astonishment died away in a death-groan as the knife of the descending savage buried itself in the chest of the unfortunate soldier. The disappearance of the trader was not observed amid the pressing concern of the moment. The fire spread rapidly among the inflammable buildings, and the incendiary, who had a couple of horses

waiting for him in a slight ravine which traversed the prairie, mounted by the light of the blazing cabins, and was far on his journey before the flames which had been kindled from his captive's chamber were extinguished.

Arriving at his own lodge, by several short turns through the broken country, known only to himself, Ta-in-ga-ro unbound the trader from his horse, and, keeping his hands still tied behind him, attentively ministered to his wants, while refusing to reply to a single question, or to heed the pleadings of the anxious Spaniard for liberty. At length, being fully refreshed, the Indian left him for a few moments to his reflections, while he went to select a large and powerful charger from a herd of half-domesticated horses that were grazing near. The animal was soon caught and tethered by the door of the cabin. Ta-in-ga-ro then proceeded

to strip his captive, and compelling him to mou[illegible] horse, he secured him to the wooden saddl[illegible] thongs of elf-skin, attached to the surcingle, which girt it in its place. The wretched man trembled with apprehension, and, with a choking voice, offered all he was worth in the world, to be redeemed from the fate to which he now believed he was to be devoted. But the doomed profligate had not yet begun to conceive the nature of the punishment, to which he was destined, or his pleadings for immediate death would have been as earnest, as his prayers for life were now energetic.

"Slave of a Pale-face!" thundered the Indian —while the only words that had yet passed his lips, betrayed a momentary impatience to the craven cries of the other. "Think not that I am about to commit *thee alone* to the desert!" A murmur of thanks escaped the faltering

tongue of the Spaniard, but died away in a cry of horror, as the Indian placed a gory and disfigured corpse astride the horse before him.

When he recovered from the swoon, into which the recognition of Zecana's features had thrown him, the unhappy trader found himself bound to the stark and grim effigy of her, that was once so soft and beautiful. So closely, too, was he bound, that the very effort to free himself, only rendered nearer the hideous compact. Trunk for trunk, and limb for limb, was he lashed to his horrible companion. His inveterate foeman stood ready mounted beside him, and waited only to feast his eyes with the first expression of shrinking horror evinced by the trader, when he should regain his consciousness. A blow from his tomahawk then severed the halter by which the horse of the Spaniard was tethered; and the enfranchised animal, tossing his mane in fury as he snuffed

the tainted burden, bounded off in full career, followed by the fleet courser of the vindictive savage.

Instinct taught him to make at once for the Great Desert, on whose borders lay the little prairie from which he started; and on he went with the speed of an antelope. The dreary waste of sand was soon gained, and the limbs of the steed seemed to gather new vigour, as they touched once more his native plains. But not so with his hapless rider. The fierce sun-beams, unmitigated by shade or vapour, beat down upon the naked person of the Spaniard, while the moisture that rolled from his naked body, seemed to mould him more intimately into the embraces of the corpse, to which he was bound. Night, with its blistering dews, brought no relief, and seemed only to hasten the corruption, to which he was linked in such frightful compact. The cessation of motion, at

this time, when the horse, now accustomed to his burden, was recruiting upon the rough grasses, which forms the subsistence of his hardy breed, seemed even more horrible than the flight by day. The gore that oozed from the limbs of the trader, stiffened around the cords which bound him, while his struggles to release himself, when the Indian was no longer by his side, served only, by further excoriating his skin, to pollute the surface beneath it with the festering limbs, which were twining around him. Sleep was allowed to bring no intermission to his sufferings. His head would indeed droop with languor and exhaustion, and his eyes would close for a moment in grateful forgetfulness of his situation. But the next moment, his untiring and ever-vigilant enemy was before him. A cry, like the curses of a damned spirit, pealed in his dreaming ears; the startled charger bounded off in affright: and the break

of dawn still found the remorseless pursuer howling in his track.

And day succeeded to day, and still those ill-matched riders speeded on their goadless journey. At length the pangs of hunger which were soon added to the other tortures of the fated Spaniard, became too excruciating for endurance. His thirst being always with ingenious cruelty quenched by the proffered cup of the savage, when their horses stopped to drink, the vitality of his system was still as exacting as ever. The gnawing torments to which his body was now subjected, surpassed even those with which its more delicate senses were agonized. In vain did he try to stifle the cruel longing that consumed him—in vain did he turn with loathing and abhorrence from the only subsistence within his reach. An impulse stronger than that of mere preservation wrought within his frenzied bosom. An agony more

unendurable than that which affected his revolting senses, consumed his vitals. A horrid appetite corroded every feeling and perception, that might have stayed the vulture-like eagerness, with which he came at last to gloat upon the hideous banquet before him. A demoniac craving, like that of the fabled ghouls of eastern story, impelled him to ——

But why protract these harrowing details of superhuman suffering? The awful vengeance exacted from the foul-hearted and treacherous trader, like all things mortal, had its end. But the implacable Indian still hovered near, and feasted his eyes with the maddening anguish of his victim, until his last idiotic cry told that reason and nature were alike subdued, that brain and body were alike consumed by the fearful, ceaseless, and lingering tortures which ate them away by inches.

The subsequent fate of Ta-in-ga-ro has never

been known. Some say, that he still dwells, a harmless old man, in the wandering tents of the Cheyennes; others that he leads a predatory band of the ferocious and untameable Blackfeet; but there are those who insist that he has long since gone to the land of spirits—and these aver that when the GHOST-RIDERS are abroad, the grim phantom of the savage warrior may be seen chasing them over the interminable waste of the GREAT AMERICAN DESERT.

CHAPTER III.

MEDICINE SONG OF AN INDIAN HUNTER.

A February thaw had set in, and as the rising of the brooks compelled us to move our camp from the ravine in which we had slept for the last week, the chase was abandoned earlier than usual, in order that, after choosing a new location, we might have time to make ourselves comfortable for the night. A clump of trees on the upland offered the most suitable spot, as a few evergreens were scattered among them, and the loose heaps of stone which lay upon the edge of the prairie, might be made useful in more ways than one, should we determine to remain long in the same place, and be

at any pains in constructing our lodge. An accidental pile of these, against which the Canadian at once commenced building the fire, furnished the leeward side of our new cabin; and a couple of upright crotches being planted in the ground opposite, two saplings were laid transversely from them to this rude wall; the other sides were then enclosed with dried brush, and when a few cedar boughs had been laid across the top, we found ourselves in possession of very comfortable quarters. The Crapeau then commenced picking a wild turkey and some prairie chickens, which were the only spoils of our day's hunt, while one of the Indians went off to bring some parched corn from the caché near our old camp.

He had not been gone more than ten minutes before I heard the crack of a rifle, and the Plume, who was already engaged before the fire mending his moccasins, sprang to his feet, and

seizing his tomahawk rushed out of the cabin, exclaiming, "Ah-wes-sie hi-ah-wah-nah bah-twa-we-tahng-gah? Mukwaw ewah bah-twa-we-tahng-gah."* And true enough, I had not followed him a hundred rods before we saw needji Mukwaw desperately wounded beneath a tree, while Che-che-gwa was coolly loading his rifle within thirty paces of his sable enemy. The moon was shining as bright as day, and there being still a little snow upon the ground where the bear was lying, his huge black limbs were drawn in full relief upon its white surface. The poor animal seemed unable to move, but though the groans he sent forth were really piteous, yet he ground his teeth with such rage that it seemed undesirable to venture too near him; especially as, though his hinder parts

* "A beast comes calling—what beast comes calling? —a beast comes calling."

were paralyzed from the shot having taken effect in his spine, his forepaws were still almost as dangerous as ever. The claws of these were now continually thrust in and out with a convulsive motion as he writhed about and tore the ground with wrath and agony. Formidable as he appeared, however, the Plume did not wait for his tribe's-man to throw away another shot upon him, but rushing up with his uplifted tomahawk, he paused within a few paces of his mark, and, poising the weapon for a moment, hurled it with unerring aim at the head of the ferocious brute. The whizzing hatchet cleft his skull as it had been a ripe melon, and buried itself in the bark of the tree behind him.

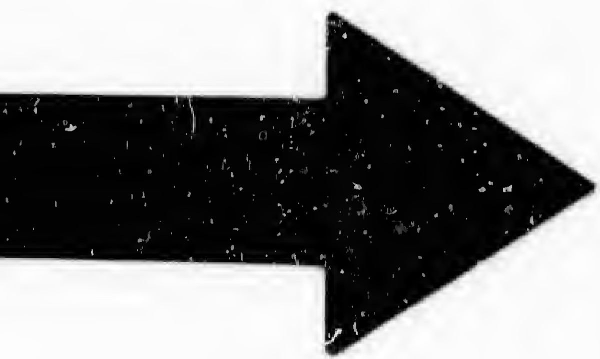
"Ah c'est bon, Needje-nanbi; vere good, sauvage," shouted the Canadian, coming up with a half-picked grouse in his hands, and his

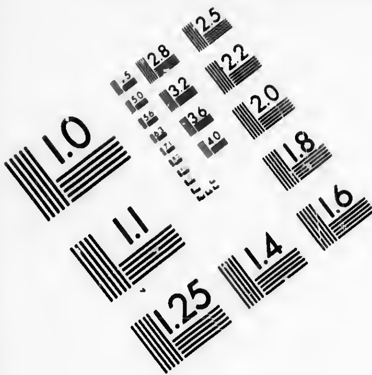
mouth full of feathers; "the bourgeois will tell his people what a great hunter is La Plume Blanche." But the Ind[illegible] answered by running up to his dead enemy, and taking him by the paw and shaking it with a ludicrous and reverential gravity, he asked his pardon for having killed his uncle. Che-che-gwa at the same time unsheathed his scalpingknife, and drawing it across the throat of the animal, he filled his hand with blood, exclaiming as he poured it upon the ground toward the four cardinal points:

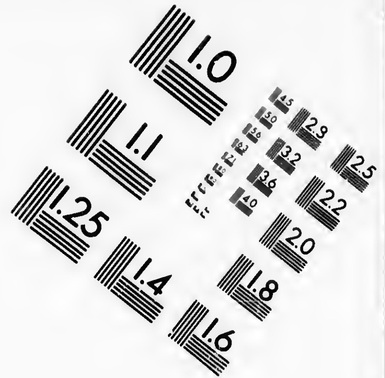
"Ma-mo-yah-na miskwee, mamoyahna. Hi-a-gwo ne-ma-na-ho-gahn-nah-we-he-a! Whe-a-ya?"*

The fat steaks that were soon broiling before our fire, made no mean addition to our supper;

* That which I take is blood—that which I take—Now I have something to eat.







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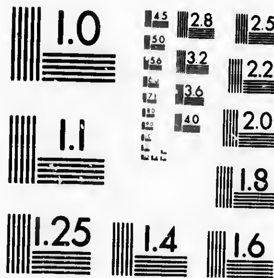

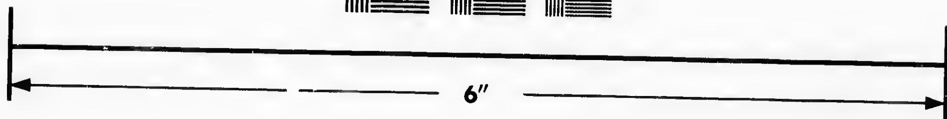

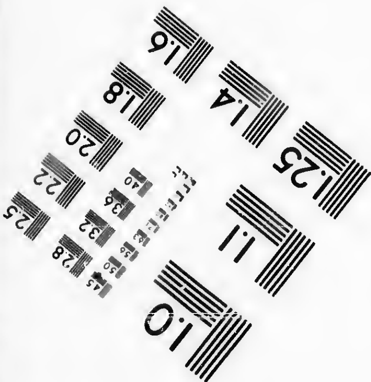

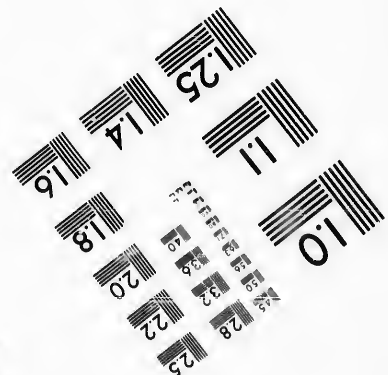

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the birds, indeed, were not touched by my companions, who, I thought, would never tire of cutting piece after piece from the huge carcass that hung in the doorway. At last they seemed filled to repletion, and in capital humour from the brilliant winding up of the day's sport. Even Che-che-gwa became quite talkative and facetious, and broke out into a half-dozen songs, all laudatory of himself as a great hunter. As for White-Plume, he dubbed his tomahawk, incontinently, "A Medicine;" while together they made up a sort of duet, which if hammered into English verse might rhyme to this effect:

They fly on—you know the clouds
  That fling their frowns o'er rock and river:
They fly on—you know the clouds
  That flee before the wind for ever!

But I—though swift as them he rushes;
Or though like them he scowls in wrath,
Am one whose charmed weapon crushes
Whoever dares to cross his path.*

"Yes," continued Che-che-gwa, still maintaining a kind of chant, when the song was ended, "though it were a bear concealed under the ground, I could find him."

* Nonogossiu nahga ahuaquœ,
Nonogoss'u nahga ahuaquœ,
Messahgoonah au ain-ne-moy-au
En enowug an ain nemo-woœ
Neen bapah-msssaghau negoche ahweisie neen-gah-kwatin ahwaw, Heo-wiu-nah hannemowetah neengetemahhah bochegahaue Moetah neengetemahhahnah.

LITERALLY.

1st *Voice.*—They fly on—you know the clouds.
2nd *Voice.*—They fly on—you know the clouds.
Both. { Truly I esteem myself
As brave men esteem themselves.
1st *Voice.*—Fly about, and if any where I see an animal I can shoot him.
2nd *Voice.*—Any thing I can kill with it (this medicine—his tomahawk) even a dog I can kill with it.

"Yes," pursued his comrade, in the same sort of recitative, "aided by the Manî-toag, and armed with the weapons of Nannabozho, what animal shall be able to escape from the hunter?"

Nannabozho, as the reader must know, is the chief of the Mani-toag or genii of fairy lore, among the Indians of the lakes. The more learned in these matters pretend to identify him (under the name of "The Nannabush of the Algoukins") with the Iswara of India, and the Saturn of ancient Italy. Mr. Schoolcraft considers him as "a sort of terrene Jove," who could perform all things, but lived on earth, and excelled particularly in feats of strength and manual dexterity.

The introduction of his name induced me now to ask some account of this worthy personage from my companions: and among a number of desultory anecdotes I elicited the

following nursery tale from Che-che-gwa, which is given as nearly in his own words as possible, a literal translation from the Chippewa or Ojibbeway dialect.

CHAPTER IV.

NANNABOZHO: HOW HE CAME TO MAKE THIS EARTH.

AN OJIBBEWAY LEGEND.

ONCE upon a time, a great many years ago, when Nannabozho was at war with Mibanaba, or the Manitoag of the water, it happened on one very warm day, that several of these spirits came out of a lake to bask upon the beach. They were followed by a train of animals of various kinds, each the largest of its species, waiting upon them. When they had all lifted

themselves from the water, and gained the shore, the two chiefs of the band appointed sentinels to keep watch while the rest should sleep.

"Nannabozho, their great enemy," said they, "was always vigilant, and this would be a good time for him to steal upon them and injure them."

The otters were, therefore, ordered to act as watchers, while the others gave themselves up to repose; and soon the whole company, both spirits and animals, were sleeping on that shore.

Now the weather, which was at first excessively warm, became gradually hotter and hotter, and the otters, after keeping awake for awhile, were at last overcome with languor; and when they saw all around them basking so comfortably on the sand, these sentinels, too,

nodded on their posts, and were soon dreaming with the rest.

The chiefs finding the otters could not be depended upon, next commanded the loons to keep watch; they were permitted to swim about in order to keep themselves awake, but they were ordered not to go far from the group of sleepers.

Now, it chanced that at this time Nannabozho was travelling about in search of these very Manitoag, nor was it long before he found out where they were. He knew at once what precautions they had adopted for their safety, but he was determined to destroy some of them before they could leave the place where he found them. Having carefully examined the position in which they were lying, he caught up his puggamaugun, or war-club, and sprang toward them. But the loons were on the

watch, and the moment Nannabozho came in sight, they gave a scream that awakened the whole band of sleepers. The chiefs were, of course, first upon their feet, while the rest of the Manitoag, and all the animals, rose in equal alarm. But when they looked around, there was no enemy to be seen, for Nannabozho had fled instantly, and hid himself in the long grass through which he had stolen toward the shore.

The chiefs said it was a false alarm, and after a while all again betook themselves to repose.

When Nannabozho saw that all around was quiet once more, he raised himself slowly from the ground, and was again about to rush upon them, when again did the loons give warning of his approach the moment he appeared in sight.

It seems that the loon, who, some say, is a

manitou, has the power of sleeping with but one eye at a time, and when most overcome by slumber, he can always keep one eye open to watch for an enemy, while the other takes its necessary repose. But now, when they awakened a second time, and saw no enemy near, the chiefs were angry with the loons for giving a false alarm; and the otters, who were jealous of them for pretending to be more sharpsighted than themselves, said that it was not Nannabozho who hovered around, for if it had been they would have seen him as well as the loons.

After much disputing, at last the otters were believed, and all, excepting the loons, once more closed their eyes in sleep.

Nannabozho was pleased with this.

The weather was still very warm, and he wished it might become yet warmer. It was so.

Then Nannabozho crept forward, and took

his station close by the group of sleepers, and the very moment the loons gave their warning cry, he wished he might be turned into an old stump, and straightway the wish was granted.

A rough bark raised itself in a moment all round his body, which stiffened into the hard fibres of a tree; his toes separated, and twisting among the loose soil, spread into roots on every side, while his hair became matted into ancient moss, that clung to the brown stump as if, moist and green as now, it had always mantled its decayed top.

The enemies of Nannabozho were completely at a loss when, having again shaken off their drowsiness at the signal of the loons, they cast their eyes about the place. They looked in every direction, but there was nothing to be seen near, save the stump of a shattered tree, which apparently had once flourished upon the edge of the water.

The loons told the chiefs that there was no stump there when they first came to the shore, but that it was Nannabozho himself who had taken this semblance. Some believed them and others did not; and to settle the question, the chiefs ordered the great water serpents to go and twine themselves around him, and try and crush him to death, if, indeed, it were Nannabozho.

These serpents then straightway glided out of a slimy pool in which they had coiled themselves to rest, and twisting their folds around the stump, they knotted their bodies together so as to press with all their might against every part of it. But it was all to no purpose. Nannabozho kept a strong heart, and did not betray the pain he suffered by the least sign or sound.

The fire serpents were next ordered to try if they could not destroy him. They had been

basking upon the hottest part of the beach until each scale had become like a coal of fire; and as their scorching folds, coil after coil, were twisting around him, Nannabozho suffered the greatest tortures. The stump became black from the heat that was applied to it; but though the wood smoked as if about to burst into a blaze, yet the slime which the water serpents had left upon it prevented it from actually taking fire. No one but Nannabozho could have kept quiet under the pain which these serpents inflicted. The stump had a little the shape of a man, and the serpents had a good place to twist around the part which represented the neck. Several times Nannabozho, finding himself choking, was upon the point of crying out, when the snakes would loosen themselves to apply their efforts in some other place. After repeated attempts in this way, the serpents at last desisted from their endeavours, and told

the chiefs that it was not Nannabozho, for it was impossible that he could endure so much pain.

The hostile spirits, however, were not yet satisfied, and the chiefs commanded the great red-nailed bears* to go and scratch the stump wfth their long claws. Nannabozho was all but torn to pieces by these ferocious creatures, but was still able to support the agony he endured.

The bears at last gave up, as the serpents had done, and went back and told that it was not Nannabozho, for he, they said, was a coward, and could not quietly endure so much pain. It was then decided that it was not Nannabozho, and all went quietly to sleep as before.

* *Ma-mis-ko-gah-zhe Mukwaw.*—The great red-nailed bear lives in woods and rocky places, and, according to Dr. James, is more dreaded by theIndians than even the *Manitou-mukwaw*, or great grizzly bear of the prairies.

Nannabozho wished they might sleep very sound; and it was so: then he assumed his natural shape, and began cautiously to approach the sleepers. He stepped lightly over the bodies of the animals, and passing by all the lesser Manitoag, he placed himself near the heads of the two chiefs. Planting his foot, then, upon the throat of the one nearest to him, he dealt a blow with his war-club, which crushed the head of the other. Another blow, and his companion was likewise dead.

But now that the deed was done, Nannabozho found himself surrounded by dangers, and nothing but his swiftness of foot gave him any chance of escape from his revengeful foes, who were, immediately, in full cry after him. But soon, the spirits finding they could not overtake him by running, adopted a new device for getting Nannabozho in their power. They com-

manded the water to rise and flow after him; and straightway the lake began to swell until its waves rushed along his path so rapidly that it seemed impossible to escape them. Nannabozho did not know what to do in this emergency; but at last, just as the water was about overwhelming him, he saw a crane, and determined to claim his assistance.

"My brother," said Nannabozho, "will you not drink up this water for me?"

The crane replied, "What will you give me in return?"

"I will give you the skin of one of the chiefs that I have killed," answered Nannabozho.

The crane was satisfied with the promise, and he commenced drinking up the water. He drank, and he drank until he had nearly drank it all, when he was unable longer to stand up.

His body had swollen to an immense size, and as he went toddling along on his thin shanks with his long neck, bobbing about, he presented such a ludicrous appearance that Nannabozho burst out a laughing to see brother Crane make such a figure. Nannabozho, indeed, must have been mad with merriment, for when he saw the crane's body become bigger and bigger, while his skin was stretched so, that he could not bend his legs as it tightened around his joints—he could not withstand the temptation of pricking the bloated mass. He drew his bow, and the arrow went through the crane's body. But quickly was he punished for his wanton sport. At once the waters began to rise again, and so fast did the big waves increase, that Nannabozho was compelled to ascend the highest mountain he could find, and still the waters followed him there. He then climbed the highest tree on the mountain. But the flood

kept rising and rising: the branches on which he stood were soon dipping in the waves, which at last rolled completely over his head.

Just as they swept finally over him, Nannabozho chanced to look up, and saw the shadow of an object floating near him; he stretched out his arm and seized it. It proved to be a piece of wood buoyant enough to sustain him, and he placed himself upon it.

Nannabozho now floated about for some time. The water encompassed him on every side. It had covered up every thing. The rocks, hills, and trees, had all disappeared. The flood seemed to ripple against the sides of the sky all around, and whichever way he looked, there was nothing to be seen but a never-ending succession of waves, that had nothing but the wind to play against.

At last he saw a musquash swimming about

alone, and he asked him to go down to the earth, and bring him a little of it. The animal obeyed, and plunged toward the bottom, but it was soon seen on the surface of the water perfectly dead. Nannabozho, however, did not yet despair. He immediately after saw a beaver paddling toward him, and as soon as the beaver got near enough to hear, he said to him—

"My brother, will you not dive and get me some earth?"

The beaver dived, but did not appear for a long time. The beaver, it seems, when he dives, can carry down so much air entangled in his coat, that, when compelled to stay long under water, he can thrust his nose into his fur and breathe for some time. At last, he appeared again upon the surface nearly dead with exhaustion; he brought up a very little piece of

mud on the flat end of his tail, which he gave to Nannabozho. Nannabozho scraped every particle of it carefully together, and placed it in the palm of his hand to dry. When it had become perfectly dried he blew it out into the water, and straightway a portion of the earth upon which we now live, was created. The dust, too, in the hand of Nannabozho, kept increasing the longer he blew, until more and more of the earth was made; and at last the whole world was finished just as large as it now is.

When Che-che-gwa had finished his legend, I could not help asking him whence came the plants and animals which had sprung into existence since the days of this Chippewa Deucalion. These, he answered, had been subse-

quently created in various ways. Many of the larger trees had been produced from the piece of wood upon which Nannabozho had floated in the deluge; and several shrubs, brought up by the loons in diving, had taken root again upon the shores to which they drifted. A shell lying upon the strand, was transformed into the racoon, and many of the other animals had come into existence in a similarly miraculous manner; while different kinds of birds had their origin in some metamorphosis like that of the pious but faint-hearted youth, who, when his ambitious father wished him to go on the war-path, pined away and was changed into a robin;* his guardian spirit permitting him to cheer his parent with songs to console him for the glory that had

* See "Life on the Lakes," by the author of "Legends of a Log-cabin." New York. 1836.

thus departed from his family. The habits of the whippoorwill, who, like the robin delights to linger near the lodge of the hunter, were accounted for in the following simple manner.

CHAPTER V.

WAW-O-NAISA; OR, THE ORIGIN OF THE WHIPPOORWILL.

The father of Rauche-wai-me, the Flying Pigeon of the Wisconsan, would not hear of her wedding Wai-o-naisa, the young chief who had long sought her in marriage; yet, true to her plighted faith, she still continued to meet him every evening upon one of the tufted islets which stud the river in great profusion. Nightly through the long months of summer did the lovers keep their tryste, parting only after each meeting more and more endeared to each other.

At length Wai-o-naisa was ordered off upon a secret expedition against the Sioux: he departed so suddenly that there was no opportunity of bidding farewell to his betrothed; and his tribesmen, the better to give effect to his errand, gave out that the youth was no more, having perished in a fray with the Menomones, at the Winnebago portage. Rau-che-wai-me was inconsolable, but she dared not show her grief before her family; and the only relief she knew for her sorrow, was to swim over to the island by starlight, and calling upon the name of her lover, bewail the features she could behold no more. One night the sound of her voice attracted some of her father's people to the spot; and, startled at their approach, she tried to climb a sapling in order to hide herself among its branches; but her frame was bowed with sorrow, and her weak limbs refused to aid her. "*Waw-o-naisa,*" she

cried, "*Waw-o-naisa!*" and at each repetition of his name, her voice became shriller, while in the endeavour to screen herself in the underwood, a soft plumage began to clothe her delicate limbs which were wounded by the briers, and lifting pinions shot from under her arms which she tossed upward in distress; until her pursuers, when just about to sieze the maid, saw nothing but the bird, which has ever since borne the name of her lover, flitting from bush to bush before them, and still repeating, "Waw-o-naisa"—"Waw-o-naisa."

CHAPTER VI.

MEDICINE SONG OF AN INDIAN LOVER.

Returning from an unsuccessful hunt about dusk on the succeeding day, we found, upon entering the lodge, that the wolves had paid it a visit during our absence on the previous night. The *pukwi*, or mats, which had formed quite a comfortable carpeting for the humble chamber, were torn to pieces; and the voracious animals had devoured whatever articles of skin or leather they could lay their teeth upon. A pair of moccassins belonging to the Rattlesnake, the carrying-straps of the Canadian, and a shot-

pouch of my own, had all been spirited off in this audacious burglary.

"*Wah!*" ejaculated Che-che-gwa, with a ludicrous intonation of dismay, as he followed me into the shantee.

"*Wha-nain-ti-et*"—"Whose dog is this?"—echoed White-plume, thrusting his head over the shoulder of the other, as his companion paused on the threshold to observe the extent of the mischief. "*Kitchi-que-naitch*"—"It is very well"—added he, drily, upon observing that a large piece of moose meat, suspended from the rafters, had escaped the long-haired pilferers.

I could not but sympathize with him in the self-gratulation, for I remembered once, while spending a day or two with a settler in Michigan, having gone supperless to bed when equally sharp set, after a severe day's hunt,

owing to a similar neighbourly visit. The prairie-wolf, though a much less ferocious and powerful animal than the wood's-wolf, makes up in sagacious impudence for his want of size and strength. On the occasion alluded to, one of these fellows had climbed into the window of a shantee, and actually carried off a whole saddle of venison which had been prepared for cooking, before the settler and myself had started, soon after dawn, on our day's tramp.

White-plume now deposited his rifle in a corner of the lodge, and leaving the Canadian to put our disarranged household to rights, he proceeded to the *sunjewun*, or caché, which was made in the bank of a rivulet near the door, and soon returned with a gourd of bear's fat and a sack of hard corn. The latter, when pounded and duly mixed with the snowy lard, made a crisp and inviting dressing for the

moose meat, and enabled the Frenchman, who acted as cook, to turn out some *côtelettes panées*, that for flavour and relish would not have discredited the *cuisine* of Delmonico. I confess, however, that my appreciation of the luxurious fare was not enhanced by the dex-terity with which White-plume would, ever and anon, thrust the ramrod of his short north-west rifle into the dish, and flirt the dripping slices into his expectant mouth; nor was the marksman-like precision with which Che-che-gwa launched his scalping-knife into the kettle, that served us for both frying-pan and platter, less refined and elegant. It was not their fault, however, that we had no silver forks at table; and they certainly committed no greater breach of decorum in their eating, than certain travel-lers affect to have seen on board some of our Atlantic steamers.

"*Caw ke-we-ah m' woi-gui-nah-needji*"—"Will you not eat, my friend?"—observed White-plume more than once, offering me a *morçeau* from the point of his chopstick. In spite of the example of Lord Byron and Sir John Malcolm—accepting the reeking pilau from the greasy knuckles of Turk and Persian—I thought myself at liberty to decline the proffered civility, inasmuch as I was not partaking of the particular hospitality of the Indian, but felt myself as much at home in the entertainment as he was himself.

The customary pipe succeeded, and there being no more "fire-water"—*skuta-warbo*—in the flask of the Canadian, we added an additional quantity of tobacco to the willow-scrapings from the kinnekinic bag, in order to make the smoking mixture more potent. The fumes of the inebriating weed very soon began

to act upon the excitable system of White-plume, and he regaled us with a number of songs, which were anything but musical. There was but one of them that appeared to me to have any thing poetical, either in sentiment or imagery, to recommend it. It was a *Mezi-nee-neence*, or "Medicine Song," of a lover, in which he is supposed to have some magical power of knowing the secret thoughts of his mistress, and being able to charm her to him from any distance. In English, it might run as follows:

I.

Who, maiden, makes this river flow?
The Spirit—he makes its ripples glow—
But I have a charm that can make thee, dear,
Steal o'er the wave to thy lover here.

II.

Who, maiden, makes this river flow?
The Spirit—he makes its ripples glow—
Yet every blush that my love would hide,
Is mirror'd for me in the tell-tale tide.

III.

And though thou shouldst sleep on the farthest isle,
Round which these dimpling waters smile—
Yet I have a charm that can make thee, dear,
Steal over the wave to thy lover here.*

In the fragments of rude and often insipid poetry with which the singer followed up this specimen of his art, there were occasional allusions which interested me, and for which I at-

* 1. O-wa-nain ba-me-ja-waunga? Manito o-ba-meje-waun-ga
Me-nee-sing, a-be-gwain neen-ge-wun-naitch Che-ha-ga-toga Me-ne-sing a-be-gwain Whe-he-yah!

2. O-wa-nain ba-me-ja-waunga? Manito o-ba-me-je-waunga
Neen-dai-yah gutche-hah hi-e-qua-waw-hah, neen-noan-dah-waw sah-ween a-ye-ke-tote whe-i-ah-hah Whe-he-yah.

3. Waus-suh wa-keem-me-ga ora-bah-gwain, whe-a whe-hah-a
Yag-gah-ming-go na-bah-qua, neen-ge-wun-naitch Che-hah-ga-toga.

tempted to get an explanation. But it was almost impossible to obtain a direct answer, for White-plume, though a great talker for an Indian, had no faculty for conversation—that is, there was no such thing as exchanging ideas with him; and even when I asked him the names of particular things, in order to increase my slight vocabulary of his language, his replies were equally rambling.

Among other objects, the evening star, which glows with remarkable effulgence in the clear frosty atmosphere of these regions, attracted my eye, as its silver rays, pouring through an opening of our lodge, exhibited even more than their wonted virgin purity, when contrasted with the red glare of our fire. He mumbled over some unpronounceable epithet, when I asked the name of it, which was wholly lost upon my ear. But the question gave a new and more steady turn to his wandering ideas; and with

the occasional assistance of my Canadian interpreter, I was able to follow him out in a very pleasing story, founded upon an Indian superstition, connected with the planet. The tale will, of course, lose much on second-hand repetition, for no writer has, as yet, succeeded in his attempt to infuse the true Indian character into his narrative, when he speaks in the person of a red man. The figurative phraseology of the luxurious Asiatic, and the terse conciseness of expression that survives in some relics of the poetry of the ancient Northmen, are sometimes so curiously reconciled and blended in the language of our aborigines, as to defy even the most ingenious and gifted pen to imitate it. I cannot, perhaps, better begin the narrative, than by recalling Major Long's account of the barbarous Indian ceremony, which gave rise to the historical incident which is here commemorated.

CHAPTER VII.

PETALESHAROO, OR THE LAST OFFERING TO THE GREAT STAR.

"So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
'She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow,' quoth young
Lochinvar."

SCOTT.

THE Pawnee-Loups, or *Ske-re* as they called themselves not many years since, and within the memory of persons now living, exhibited the singular anomaly, among the North American aborigines, of a people addicted to the re-

volting superstition of making propitiatory offerings of human victims upon the altars of idolatry. *Mekakatungah,* "The Great Star," was the divinity to whom the sanguinary worship had been, from time immemorial, ascribed. The barbarous ceremony was performed annually. The Great Star was supposed to preside over the fruits of the earth; and on each return of the season of planting, the life-blood of a human being was poured out in libation upon the soil. A breach of this duty, the performance of which they believed was required by the Great Star, it was supposed would be succeeded by the total failure of their crops of maize, beans, and pumkins, and the consequent privation of the supply of vegetable food, which formed half the subsistence of the tribe. To obviate a calamity so formidable, any person was at liberty to offer up a prisoner, of either sex, of whom, by his prowess in war, he had become

possessed; and the horrid rite was accompanied by all the solemn ceremonies which characterize the superstitious idolatry of an ignorant and barbarous people. The devoted individual was placed under the care of the *Ouabineaux*, or magi of the tribe, who anticipated all his wants, while they cautiously concealed from him the real object of their sedulous attentions, which was to preserve his mind in a state of cheerfulness, with the view of promoting obesity, and thereby render the sacrifice more acceptable to their Ceres.

When the victim was pronounced sufficiently fattened for immolation, a suitable time was appointed for the performance of the rite, that the whole nation might attend. When the appointed day of his fate arrived, he was clothed in the gayest and most costly attire, and led out to the spot where he was to suffer. Here he was bound to a cross,

in presence of the assembled multitude, and a solemn dance was performed around him. A number of other ceremonies followed, and then the warrior whose prisoner he had been, stepped forth into the open space, and assumed the inglorious task of his execution. Generally a single blow with the tomahawk despatched the victim; but if the first throw failed to cleave his head, the speedy death of the person immolated was insured by a shower of arrows from a band of archers, who were always in attendance. The abolition of this revolting custom was brought about in the manner here related.*

* The account of this singular and sanguinary superstition, as well as the interesting historical incident which follows it, and the description of the dress and personal appearance of the heroic Indian who abolished the barbarous rite, will be found in "Major Long's Expedition to the Rocky Mountains," with but little variation from the text. The portrait of the youthful and handsome Petalesharoo is preserved in the Indian Gallery at Washington.

The season of planting was at hand: the Pawnee-Soups, in order to call down a blessing upon their labours in the field, prepared for their wonted sacrifice to the cruel divinity, who they believed, presided over the genial fruits of the earth. There was more than the usual bustle in the principal village of the tribe. The faces of some of the seniors wore a look of anxiety, and the young people, for several days preceding the ceremony, could be seen grouped together before the scattered lodges, with an air of curiosity and impatience, seldom observable in their little community. The fact was, that there chanced to be at this moment, not a single captive in the band, to offer up in sacrifice. The last that had been taken—a pretty Tetau girl, of the name of Lataka—had escaped the horrible fate which awaited her, by perishing, as was thought, in a fray which had occurred at nightfall, soon after her arrival in

the village. The young partisan, Petalesharoo, the son of the old Knife-chief Latelesha, had interfered at the moment that the maid was about to be consigned to the hands of the magi, to be by them prepared for their annual rite, and in the confused broil which ensued, the prisoner disappeared, and was represented by the principal magician to have perished by falling, while her hands were yet bound, into a stream near the village, during the commotion which took place upon its immediate banks. The old crones in gossiping from lodge to lodge, had circulated a story, that the officious interference of Petelasharoo was caused by his being suddenly enamoured of the captive damsel; and they were very much incensed at the idea that the stripling might be the instrument, possibly, of cheating them out of their yearly festival, in which, unless tradition has belied them, they took no passive part. But it was more gene-

rally believed, that the act was prompted by less exceptionable motives, on the part of the young chief; that it was, in short, nothing more nor less than a manifestation of his determined purpose to put an end to a custom, which he had already attempted, by argument, to do away with, and which, it was known, that his less daring father was but too solicitous to root out from among his people.

As the time now approached when the Great Star would expect his victim, and not a single captive was to be had, the incident of the previous autumn was called up afresh to memory.

There was a great deal of murmuring and discontent among the tribesmen, and nothing but the personal popularity of the warrior, who had taken so prominent a part in the occurrence, would have prevented some violent outbreak of popular feeling; day after day

elapsed, and no captive appeared to supply the place of the victim that Petalesharoo had snatched from the sacrifice. Several warriors, who had been out on war parties, returned one after another to the village. They almost all claimed to have struck the dead body of an enemy, and some could show more than one scalp at their belt, but no one brought in a live prisoner. There was yet one more to come back, and, though "The Running Fox" had no great repute as a brave, yet the whole hopes of the tribe were now fixed upon his address alone. He had not left the village, until after almost all the other warriors that were out had returned from the war-path; but there was strong confidence in the success of his expedition, because he had been seen in close consultation with the magi before he departed, and a favourable result was said to have been propitiated, by their having a *Mezi-nee-nence,* or medicine

hunt, together. Indeed, the chief magician had given out that the Fox would certainly return with the wished-for prey. The Great Star, he said, had promised him that a victim should be forthcoming; and he had invited Petalesharoo to meet him at a lonely place, remote from the village, when he said that the young man might witness how the God he served would keep his promise.

It was a close and sultry night, and nothing but the swarms of moschitoes, which were continually rising from the wet prairie, could have induced one to tolerate the fire that was blazing on an isolated table-rock, in the midst of a lonely savannah. The singularly exposed situation, however, of this fire, which shone like a beacon over the waste, would seem to imply that it could hardly have been kindled for mere purposes of comfort or convenience—for cook-

ing the rude meal of a hunter, or for driving off the insects that might molest his slumber—and the two swarthy figures that were crouched beside it, though evidently belonging to that wild race, who find their chief subsistence in the chase, were characterized by some marks which indicated that they were not exclusively devoted to the pursuits of common savages.

The eldest of the two, whose attenuated features, projecting forehead, and screwed, sinister-looking mouth, imparted a mingled expression of fanaticism and knavery to his countenance, was perfectly naked, with the exception of an *azeeaun*, or apron of congar skin, secured by a curiously-ornamented belt, about the middle of his person; but his limbs and body were so completely covered with various devices, tattooed in strong black lines upon his copper-coloured skin, that, to a slight observer, he would appear to be dressed out in some elabo-

rate and closely-fitting apparel. The prominent device in the tattooing, was an enormous double-tailed serpent, whose flat head appeared to repose upon the chest of the Indian, while his scaly folds were made to twine themselves around his extremities, with a fidelity to nature that was equally ingenious, grotesque, and hideous.

The high, uncouth shoulders, long skinny arms, and squat figure of this person as he sat stooping over the fire, with his legs folded under him, were strikingly contrasted with the fine proportions, the rounded and agile limbs, and lion-like port of a young warrior, who was reclining along the rock on the opposite side of the fire. The features of the youth were naturally of an open and generous, almost a careless cast; but they now wore a troubled expression of impatience and curiosity, occasionally wrought up to anxiety and awe. At times, as the sub-

siding of an ember would make the fire flash up and fling its fitful light far over the plain, the young man would spring eagerly to his feet, and throw a restless glance upon the shifting gloom around him, as if he expected some one to emerge from its shadow. His companion, however, calmly maintained his sitting posture, and seemed only to busy himself in occasionally turning over a collection of roots, seeds, pap-pous, and powders, which were deposited upon a piece of wolf-skin before him, and which he never touched without mumbling over some of those strange phrases, which are only found in the mouths of necromancers and magicians, and which are said to be unpronounceable by any but a true medicine-man.

"I tell thee, Wahobeni," said the youth at last, flinging himself upon his bison-skin, as if his patience was at length wholly exhausted, "I tell thee, the Fox will never more return. The

master of life wills not that this accursed rite should ever again be performed by his red children."

"The words of the young chief are less than his years," replied the senior. "The Great Star must have his offering. The season of planting is at hand, and unless the spirit of fruits be propitiated, there will be no maize in the lodges of the She-re."

"Think'st thou, magician, that should even the crafty fox produce his victim, my father will allow the ceremony to proceed? I tell thee, no! Satelesha sheds no blood, save that which is poured out in battle."

"The sire of Petalesharoo is a great chief; but he has no power over his people, to step between them and the god of their worship. The heart of the Knife-chief is no more with his tribe, and his son hath learned to speak with the tongue of the pale-face."

The eyes of the young man flashed fire, while clutching his tomahawk, he made a sudden movement as if about to brain the magician. But the impulse was instantly checked, and he resumed his former position, with only a slight ejaculation of contempt at the reproach of an old man whom he despised.

"The spirit will keep Wahobeni from bad things," said the medicine-man, observing the movement. "Wahobeni is a great magician. the Great-under-ground-wild-cat* is his friend, and he walks with serpents along the ground. Myself—know me, my son, the servant of the Great Star. Believe my words, when I interpret the will of my master. Behold the parched and cracking earth! Behold the crowded thunders in yon blackening sky, which even now

* Gitche-a-nah-mi-e-be-zew—"The Devil yard-long-tailed."

refuse to break the clouds and let the showers through! Behold—"

A sudden flash lit up the waste, and gave an unearthly glare to the forbidding features of the magician, as the bolt went rattling by.

"*Manito Sah-iah*—There is a God!" exclaimed the youth, as he reverently took a handful of tobacco from his pouch, and threw the offering upon the fire. "The master of life himself replies to thy impious mummery, Wahobeni. The God that answered thee but now, is the only one that can send blossoms and fruits to the gardens of our tribe."

The medicine-man was silent; and the young chief, folding his arms thoughtfully, contented himself with this brief rebuke. But the stolidity of a bigot, and the cunning of a hypocrite, were too subtly and actively blended in the composition of the other, to allow him to feel more than a moment's confusion, or to rob him

of the resources with which a life of successful imposture had stored his mind. The few broad drops which succeeded the single thunder-clap, were not followed by the shower that seemed impending; and the magician cast a malignant glance of triumph at the youth, when, after adjusting the machinery of his trade in some new form upon the skin before him, and passing his hands repeatedly over his bat-skin skull-cap, the clouds suddenly parted, and the evening star shone forth redly above the horizon. "The Great Star blushes for my son," said he, stretching forth his bony arms towards the planet. "The God of planting scowls in wrath upon his minister, who listens to the ravings of a boy. The Running Fox *will* keep his promise, and the Ske-re will make their annual offering."

"Not so—not so, old man," replied the youth firmly; and then, while a sudden change came

over his features, "Not unless a Jebi steps from its grave, and the shadows of men's souls (*ojee-chaugomen*) are sent on earth to mock your bloody ceremony." And the young man placed his hand convulsively upon his sacred metawaun, while his eyes, dilating with horror, became fixed upon a well-known face, which, even as he spoke, peered above the ledge of the rock opposite to where he sat.

"And what," rejoined the medicine-man calmly, as if unobservant of the agitation of the speaker—"what if the Great Star in kindness to his red children, should call back one of those who have already passed the *je-be-ku-nong* (road of the dead), to enable Wahobeni to fulfil the sacrifice for which, till now, a victim has never been wanting. I tell thee, son of Latelesha, that a shaft of maize has never yet hung forth a tassel above the ground, that was not watered with the blood of an enemy. But now the war-

riors of the Ske-re are squaws—there are no captives in their lodges, and the Great Star who wills that there must be a victim, will send one of his own choosing from among those who have already passed the swinging tree, and attained the gardens of the happy."

With these words the magician rose, and stamping upon the ashes, he shook some combustible powder from the cougar skin that enveloped his loins. A dozen forks of yellow smoke curled up in shreds from the fire, and seemed to wreath themselves with the coils of the serpent that was twined round his body—each bursting into flame, before it reached his head. There was a sudden flood of lurid light about the place, and when its bewildering glare subsided, the form of the Tetan maiden was fully disclosed to the awe-struck gaze of her lover, as she stood with her hand locked in that of the terrible being before him.

A thousand conflicting feelings tugged at the heart-strings of the noble youth—a thousand changing images of love and fear, hope and horror, shot in maddening confusion across his brain. His senses reeled in the effort to rally their flying powers; and Petalesharoo, the dauntless partisan of the Pawnee-Loups—he, whose heart had never quailed—whose nerves had never shrunk in the wildest horrors of savage warfare swooned at the feet of the sinking damsel.

The day of the sacrifice to the Great Star had arrived. It was a beautiful morning in April, when the misguided children of the wilderness were assembled at the call of the magi, to celebrate the anniversary of their cruel deity.

The scene of their infernal orgies, was a tall grove upon the edge of the prairie, an islet of timber, which viewed at a distance, seemed

rather to repose upon, than to spring from, the broad green surface. It was a grand festival day with the Pawnee-Loups, and the wonted military watchfulness of this warlike tribe was dispensed with, upon the occasion of general relaxation—the usual sentinels of the camp were scattered round in groups among the rest of the people—and their horses, which generally were tethered, ready saddled near the lodges of the guard, were now scattered over the prairie with the other cattle of the tribe. There were two chargers only, that did not seem to share the general liberty; and these stood fully equipped, pawing the ground as if impatient of confinement, behind a small copse not far from the scene of the sacrifice. One of them, a light and graceful palfrey, was tied to a sapling which grew upon the spot, while the reins of the other were held by as gallant a cavalier as ever crossed a saddle. He was a

young man of not more than three-and-twenty, of the finest form, tall and muscular, and of a most prepossessing countenance. His head-dress of war-eagle's feathers descended in a double series over his back, like wings, to his saddle-croup: his shield was highly decorated, and his long lance was ornamented with a plaited casing of red and blue cloth. The steed he backed was every way worthy of such a rider.

It was the partisan, Petalesharoo and his charger, *Leksho*, the Arrow. The large dark eye of the young warrior wore an expression of seriousness and concern, but little in unison with the festivities of the day. And ever and anon, he turned to look along the edge of the thicket, and grasped the handle of his tomahawk, as if as restive as the champing courser beneath him. But his lips were compressed in resolution rather than anger, and the nervous

bracing of his feet in the stirrups, gave an air of high determination to his whole figure.

At length, the different groups of Indians were collected around one central spot, where a cross was erected upon a slight elevation in the prairie, and the captive Lataka was led forth among them, to be offered up as a sacrifice to the Great Star. Her youth and beauty were lost upon the sterner part of the assemblage; but her gorgeous apparel, rich with wrought ornaments of the precious metals, and gay with the woven texture of beads and feathers of the most elaborate and costly workmanship, drew a murmur of admiration from those of her own sex, who mingled with the crowd.* The multi-

* The gala dresses of the Indians in some tribes, are very costly. The minute embroidery of wampum and porcupine quills, and the profusion of silver ornaments, with the high value placed upon the war-eagle's feathers, and other favourite materials, make a full festival suit command a price of several hundred dollars

tude were generally overawed by the solemnity of the occasion, and preserved a decorous silence, as the principal Meta, with his train of Ouabineaux, led on the captive. A few, however, would thrust their heads over the shoulders of their neighbours, and fix their savage eyes as eagerly upon the victim, as if, by reading her feelings in her face, they could enjoy in anticipation, the horrid festival. But Lataka was an Indian maiden, and her soul was too proud to let the enemies of her tribe guess the feelings which swelled in her bosom, as she moved, with the step of an empress, to the spot on which she was to be immolated. The Ouabineaux now, under the direction of the Meta, entered at once upon their barbarous office; and rudely seizing the fragile girl, her limbs were bound to the stake almost before she discovered the full extent of the fate that awaited her. Still not a murmur was made by the

Indian maiden—not a sob nor a sigh escaped the lips, that quivered in the effort to repress the thrilling emotions of the moment. Her eye wandered mildly around the dusky circle of faces, as if seeking rather for sympathy than rescue—as if she wished only for some one being to appreciate the fortitude with which she could offer up her life. The grim gaze of a motionless multitude was all that met her view. There was no one there, who could have an emotion kindred to her own. There was no one there who could care for Lataka; and raising her eyes to heaven, she commended her spirit to the Wacondah, who cares for all.

And now the solemn dance commenced around the prisoner, slowly and silently at first, but gradually increasing in rapidity, as with savage yells, they encouraged each other, until the fiendish faces of her executioners whirled around her in one continuous chain of

glaring and demoniac glances. The motion ceased, and the chief of the magi stepped into the open space to make his sacrificial prayer to the Great Star.

Myself—myself. Behold me, and see that I look like myself.
I sit down in the lodge of the Metai—the lodge of the spirit.
I am a magician; the roots of shrubs and weeds make me a magician.
Snakes are my friends.
I am able to call water from above, from beneath, and from around.
I come to change the appearance of this ground. I make it look different in each season.
Notwithstanding you speak evil of me, from above are my friends, my friends.
I can kill any animal, because the loud-speaking thunder helps me—I can kill any animal.
Thus have I sat down, and the earth above and below has listened to me sitting here.

The eye of Lataka had been cast heavenward during the utterance of this prayer, and when it was concluded she merely murmured the

plaintive, *Dadainsh-ta-a*, "Oh! alas! for me," and resigned herself once more to her cruel fate. The master of the infernal rite then turned round to give the signal for her tortures to begin, and the deep roll of the Indian drum commanded silence while he spoke again for the last time. The murmur of the multitude was hushed, and the melancholy dirge died away in the distant prairie.

The Meta had raised his arm to give the fatal signal; when forth from the thicket, like an arrow from the bow of the thunder-god, shot the war-like form of Petalesharoo. With one hand he couched his quivering lance, and waved his gleaming tomahawk high above his head with the other. His bridle floated loose on the neck of his charger. On—on he came like a bolt from heaven, while his charging cry speedily made a lane for him through the multitude, as his courser bounded into the midst of it. A blow

from his tomahawk severed the thong, which bound Lataka, in an instant, and before his startled and astounded tribesmen could recover from their surprise, he had gained anew his greenwood covert, with the sinking form of the rescued damsel. A moment sufficed to place her on the fleet palfrey, that bowed his neck to the beautiful rider—in another they were speeding like the wind over the smooth prairie, while before his disappointed and baffled countrymen could mount in pursuit, Petalesharoo had placed a broad strip of forest between them; and the infuriated yells of the baffled multitude died upon the breeze which whispered nought but hope and confidence to the flying lovers.

The Pawnee and his bride enjoyed the blessings of summer in another land. But before the snows of the next season had come again, his tribesmen had invited him back to

the lodges of the Ske-re. Nor since that day have they ever offered up a human victim to the Great Star.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MISSIONARY BRIDE.

> " Young bride,
> No keener dreg shall quiver on thy lip
> Till the last ice-cup cometh."
>
> MRS. SIGOURNEY.

THE leading circumstances of the following narrative may possibly be known to more than one of my readers; but, if now recognised, notwithstanding the altered guise in which they are here given, I trust that they are still so presented to the public as to infringe upon no feeling of domestic privacy.

In the spring of 18—, the Rev. Mr. B——, of ——, in Connecticut, received a letter from his old friend and college chum, the Rev. E—— T——, who had been for some time established as a missionary in one of the islands of the Pacific, soliciting the fulfilment, on the part of his friend, of a most delicate and peculiar office for him. The request of T——, who, having been long isolated from the world, had arrived at the age of forty without marrying, was nothing more nor less than that B—— would choose a wife for him, and prevail upon the lady to come out to her expectant husband by the first opportunity. Strange as it may seem, Mr. B—— found but little difficulty in complying with the request of his friend. The subject of missions at that time filled the minds of the whole religious community; and, in some sections of the Union, a wild zeal wrought so powerfully in the breasts of individuals, that

they were eager to abandon their homes and their country, and sunder every domestic tie, in order "to do their Master's bidding" in strange and inhospitable lands. Nor was this a mere burst of enthusiasm, that was to pass off with other fashions of the day—for its fruits are still constantly maturing; and now, as then, there are not a few instances of young females of re-respectability and accomplishments educating themselves for the avowed purpose of becoming the wives of missionaries. With these preliminary remarks I will at once introduce the reader to the subject of the following sketch, with whom I became acquainted in the manner here related.

I had been enjoying a week's shooting at Quogue, on Long Island, when, wishing to return to New York by steam-boat through the sound, I engaged a seat one morning in the stage-coach for Sag Harbour, which sometimes

stopped for dinner at mine host's, Mr. Pierson Howell. In the present instance it was delayed merely long enough to receive my luggage and myself. The only other passenger was a female, whom, notwithstanding the effectual screen of her long cottage bonnet, I knew to be pretty, from the quizzical look my landlord put on as he shook hands with me at parting after I had taken my seat by her side.

The day was warm; and we had not driven far before, without appearing officious, I had an opportunity of obtaining a glimpse of my companion's face, while leaning before her to adjust the curtains on her side of the coach. It was beautiful — exceedingly beautiful Not the beauty which arises from regularity of feature, or brilliancy of complexion—though in the latter it was not deficient, but that resistless and thoroughly womanish charm which lies in expression solely. It evinced that feminine softness

of disposition which is often the farthest removed from weakness of character, though, by the careless observer, it is generally confounded with it; and which, though sometimes it may mislead one in judging of the temper of the possessor, yet almost invariably, like the ore-blossom upon the soil that is rich in mines beneath, bespeaks the priceless treasure of an affectionate and noble heart. The reader, who would realize the attractions of the countenance before me, need only call up their most winning expression in the features he most admires.

I gradually fell into conversation with my companion, and, stopping at South Hampton to change horses, her first remark upon our again taking our seats, was, that she feared we should not get into Sag Harbour until after dark, when she would be unable to find *the ship* which was expected to sail in the morning. As

I knew that no ships but whalers lay at that time in Sag Harbour, I could not at first possibly conceive what a young and delicate female could have to do aboard of such a vessel; and then, the idea suggesting itself that she might be the daughter or sister of the captain, who came to bid him farewell for his two years' cruise, I asked her if she expected to remain on board the ship till she sailed.

"Oh yes, sir," was the reply; "I go out in her."

"What! to the South Sea?" rejoined I. "You have relations on board, though, I suppose?"

"No, sir, I don't know any one in the ship; but I have a letter for the captain, which, I think, will procure me a safe voyage to the —— Islands."

"The —— Islands! Is it possible you have

friends in so remote a place as the —— Islands? They must be dear friends, too,—pardon me,—to carry you unprotected so far."

"My hu-us-band is there," she answered with some embarrassment, though the growing twilight prevented me from seeing whether the confusion extended from her voice to her countenance. The peculiarity in the young lady's manner, as she pronounced the word "husband," piqued my curiosity; but, as it would have been impertinent to push my inquiries further, I did not urge the subject, but merely remarked, that her youth had prevented me from taking her for a married woman.

"Nor am I married yet," was the reply. "And, indeed," she continued, with a slight tremour in her voice, "I have never seen the man who is to be my husband." An expression of unfeigned surprise, of a more lively interest, perhaps,—for I have said "the maid

was fair," and we had now been some hours *téte-à-tête*,—escaped me: I scarcely remember what followed, but before we had reached the inn-door, the ingenuous girl had given me a full account of herself and her fortunes. She was an orphan child, and had been bred up in great seclusion in a clergyman's family in Western New York. She was, in a word, the young enthusiast whom the Rev. Mr. B—— had chosen as a wife for his Missionary friend, and prevailed upon to encounter a six months' voyage through stormy latitudes, for the purpose of connecting herself for life with a man she had never seen. I did not express a sympathy, that would be useless in her situation, much less did I give vent to the indignation with which her story filled me: her fanatical friends, who permitted a young, a beautiful, and delicate female, to take so wild a step, had, perhaps, after all, acted from the best of motives. Indeed, the

poor thing herself, though not exactly proud of having been chosen to the station she was about to fill, seemed determined to enter upon it with all the exalted feeling of one who fulfils a high duty, and who is on the certain road to a preferment which most of her sex might envy. It would certainly have been a very equivocal kindness to interpose another view of the subject, and disturb the honest convictions of propriety which could alone have sustained her in a situation so trying.

I accompanied Alice Vere—for such I learned her name to be—to the vessel; and, after bidding her a kind farewell, I took an opportunity, while passing over the side, to whisper a few words to the captain, which might induce him to believe that she was not so friendless as she appeared to be, and secure her whatever attention it was in his power to offer. In the morning, having a few moments to spare before

breakfast, I again strolled down to to the pier; but the whaler had hoisted sail with the dawn, and a brisk wind had already carried her out into the sound: nor was it till years after that I heard the name of Alice Vere, and learned the issue of her voyage; though the name, and the features, and voice of her who bore it, did, I confess, long haunt me. It was too pretty a name, I thought, to be changed lightly; and, somehow, when I heard it I could not for the life of me ask that into which it was to be merged for ever. The sequel of her story I learned from a friend, whose vessel being driven from her course in coming from the East Indies, stopped at the —— Islands to water, where he casually heard the fate of the Missionary girl.

The tender and imaginative temperament of Alice Vere, though perhaps it impelled her to make the sacrifice for which she was schooled

by those who called themselves her friends, but badly fitted her for the cold destiny to which she was condemned. The imagination of any woman, isolated upon the great deep for six long months, with nothing to think of but the stranger husband to whose arms she was consigned, could not but be active, whatever her mental discipline might be. But with a girl of fancy and feeling, who had taken a step so irretrievable when surrounded by approving and encouraging friends, what must have been her emotions in the solitude of her own cabin, when such an influence — such a sustaining atmosphere of opinion — was wholly withdrawn. Doubt and fear would at first creep into her mind; and, when these disheartening guests could no longer be controlled by factitious notions of duty, fancy would throw her fairy veil around their forms, and paint some happy termination of a prospect so forbidding. And

thus it was with Alice Vere. Anxiety soon yielded to hope; her future husband and her future home filled her mind with a thousand dreaming fancies. She was no romance reader, and therefore could not make a *hero* of the future partner of her bosom; but a saint he indeed might be, a saint too, not less in form than in godliness, for the association of physical and moral beauty is almost inseparable in the minds of the young and the inexperienced. She imagined him, too, as one who, though not "looking from Nature up to Nature's God," for "God must be first and all in all with him," would still be one whose mind would look from the Creator to his works, with a soul to appreciate all their excellences. The fancied portrait of her future husband was laid in simple though impressive colours, but the background of the picture was filled with all the splendours of a tropical clime, of groves such as the early

Christians wandered through in Grecian Isles, and skies such as bent over Him who taught beneath them in the golden orient. True, she was to be exiled for ever from the sheltered scenes and quiet fireside of her youth; but, would she not be content to rove for ever with one only companion whose soul could fully sympathize with hers in scenes so fresh and so Elysian?

With a mind softened, if not enervated, by these day-dreams, not less than by the bland and voluptuous clime in which they had been for some days sailing, our young enthusiast could scarcely suppress a scream of delight, when, upon coming on deck one morning, she found that the ship had cast anchor in the beautiful bay of——, where her wildest visions of tropical scenery seemed more than realized. The water around the ship was as clear as the mountain-streams of her native country; and

the palm-trees and cocoas that bent over it, lifted their slender columns, and waved their tufted heads against a sky more purely bright than any she had ever beheld; while clouds of tropical birds, of the most dazzling plumage, sailed along the shore, or sported around the vessel, as if wholly regardless of man.

A number of the natives had launched their light barks from the shore, filled with bread, fruit, and other acceptable luxuries to those who have been long at sea. Alice was watching their approach with girlish interest in the novelty of the scene, when a boat from the opposite side of the crescent-shaped harbour made the ship, and, almost before she was aware of its approach, a striking figure, dressed after the clerical fashion of her own country, in a full suit of black, presented himself at the companion way, and, leaping on deck, instantly hurried towards her. She turned round—

looked at him intently for a moment — made one faltering step towards him, and fainted in his arms.

The gentleman laid her carefully upon a flag that chanced to be folded near; and, still supporting her head upon one knee, gazed upon her features with looks of surprise and anxiety, which soon yielded to complete bewilderment as she addressed him upon coming to herself.

"Thank God!" she exclaimed, gradually reviving; "thank God! thank God!—how can I ever have deserved this?" and, bending her face forward, she impressed a reverential kiss upon his hand, and then covered her face in confusion.

My readers have all read of *love at first sight*, and some, perhaps, have heard of instances of it among their acquaintance. The sceptics to the doctrine, however, I imagine, far outnumber

those who really believe in it. It is the latter, therefore, whom I will beg to recollect all the circumstances which preceded this singular scene; when they cannot deem it unnatural that the wrought-up feelings of an ardent and sensitive girl should thus burst forth upon first meeting in her affianced husband, her appointed friend and protector in a strange land, him that religion and duty taught her that she *must* love, —upon meeting in him all that her dreams of happiness for long, long months of anxious solitude had pictured. I ought to add, however, that the interchange of several letters between Miss Vere and her betrothed before leaving her native shores, had, while partially removing the awkwardness of their first meeting, supplied perhaps that "food for young thoughts" which, in a nature artless and enthusiastic as hers, might engender the most confiding affections even for an object she had never seen.

"And is this beautiful island to be our home?—Are these my husband's people around us?—Oh! how I shall love every thing that belongs to this fair land! But why do you not speak to your poor wanderer?—Alas! alas! can I ever deserve all these blessings?"

The embarrassment of the gentleman seemed only to increase as the agitated girl thus poured out her feelings. He begged her to be calm, and seemed most nervously solicitous to restrain her expressions; and the captain approaching at that moment, he made a hurried and indistinct apology for his abruptness; and, withdrawing his arm from her waist as she regained her feet, moved off to seek the mate in another part of the vessel.

"Ah! Mr. Supercargo, I mistrusted we should find you at this island!" exclaimed the mate, turning round, and shaking hands with him, as the gentleman touched his shoulder upon join-

ing this officer near the capstan. "All well at home, Mr. F—. Here's a letter from your wife."

The other tore open the letter, and devoured it with evident delight, and then shaking hands again with the officer, exclaimed,

"Thank you, thank you; all are well at home, as you tell me. But how in the world came that beautiful insane creature in your vessel?"

"A mad woman! The devil a bit of a mad woman or any other woman have we on board, except Mrs. T——, the wife of Parson T—— that is to be."

"The wife of Mr. T——?"

"Why, yes, as good as his wife. She's a gal from York State we are carrying out to be spliced to old Dead-eyes."

The gentlemanlike supercargo seemed struck with concern; in fact, the true state of the case flashed upon his mind in a moment. The deep

mourning which he wore out of respect for one of his employers, whose ship he was that day to visit, had evidently caused him to be mistaken for a clergyman; and the excited imagination of the lonely girl had prompted her to see in him the future guardian of her friendless condition. Nothing, however, could be done: an attempt at explanation would but betray her secret to the coarse creatures by which she was surrounded. Her lot in life, too, was cast; his sympathy could avail her nothing, and a few days' voyage would consign her to the care of him who might legitimately receive the proofs of tenderness which he had so innocently elicited in his own behalf. He called for his boat, and passing slowly and dejectedly over the side of the vessel, pulled for the shore.

Alice Vere had in the mean time retired to the cabin, where she expected her lover—it was the first time she had even *thought* the word—

to join her. Her own feelings had so crowded upon her mind during the brief interview, that they had prevented her from observing his; and the luxury of emotion in which she now indulged, and in which she thought there was not one consideration human or divine to make it wrong for her to indulge, prevented her from observing the lapse of time. Simple and single-hearted, with a nature whose affluent tenderness piety could regulate and delicacy could temper, though neither could repress, she poured the flood of her pent-up feelings in what seemed their heaven-appointed channel; in a word, she was gone an age in love while numbering the minutes of her acquaintance with her lover. His noble and manly figure, his alert and elastic step in approaching her, and the kindly look of feeling and intelligence his features wore, a look of intense interest, which she, poor girl, little dreamt was

prompted by concern for another, of whom he was about to ask her;—nay, even the hurried tones of his agitated but still most musical voice, all, all were stamped upon her heart as indelibly as if their impress had been the work of years.

The water rippling along the vessel's side first roused her from this delicious revery, and the mate, who was a rough but kind-hearted seaman, at that moment came below to make an entry in his log.

"Well, miss," he cried, "with this breeze we'll soon bring up at the parson's door; and right glad to be rid of us you'll be, I guess, when we get there. Only thirty-six hours more, and you'll be home."

"This island, then, is not Mr. T——'s residence?"

"This?—Oh no. There used to be a Bri-

tisher here, but they have got no missionary m[illegible] it now."

"[illegible]d does Mr. T—— have to go thus from island to island in the performance of his duty? —or did he only come so far from his people to meet me?" she asked with some embarrassment.

"*Come!*" exclaimed the seaman, not a little puzzled; "why, law bless your soul, Parson T—— has not been here, at least that I know on."

"Surely he's now on board," cried Alice, alarmed, yet hardly knowing why: "surely I saw him speaking to you on deck?"

"To *me*, missus!—I never cared to exchange two words with old Dead-eyes, axing your pardon, since I knowed him. Speaking to me! Why, that—that was—why, —— my eyes! you have not taken young Washington F——'s

handsome figure for old Ebenezer T——'s mouldy carcass?"

The rude, but not unfriendly mate, had hardly uttered the sentence before he cursed himself to the bottom of every sea between the poles, for the use he had made of his tongue. Alice fell lifeless upon the cabin-floor. The seaman shouted for assistance; and then, as he and the better-bred captain, who, as the father of a large and estimable family, was a more fitting nurse for the forlorn maiden, applied one restorative after another, she recovered animation at intervals. Fit succeeded fit, however; and then, as the wind rose, and a brewing tempest called all hands on deck, the captain could only place her kindly in her berth, in the hope that the new excitement at hand might possibly be of service to his patient.

The ship was driven widely out of her course. Alice was long indifferent to every thing around;

but as the storm lasted for several days, and finally threatened to destroy the stout craft in which she sailed, the near prospect of the death for which she had but now been longing, called all her religious feelings into action. She felt that she was the child of destiny: her gentle piety would not allow her to wish for a sudden and violent death, though the peace of the grave was what she most desired. She prayed, then, not for life, but from an escape from its horrors; alike from those which raged in the angry elements around her, and those which warred so fearfully in her own bosom.

Weeks elapsed before the vessel reached the haven, of which she had once been within a few hours' sail. The missionary girl had apparently recovered from all bodily indisposition, and her features were again as calm as ever; but they wore the calmness of rigidity, not of peace. It was a sacrifice of herself to Heaven which

she had meditated originally. "And why," exclaimed she mentally, "why should I shrink from the offering now, when Providence has enabled me to make it richer and more abundant—to make my soul's triumph more complete, as its trial is more bitter and severe!" Still, when the isle of her destination hove in view, it was with a shudder that she first looked upon the shore, and thought of the fate that there awaited her.

Woman's heart is a strange, a wayward thing. In many a bosom its strongest chords are never touched by the hand to which it is yielded. It is often bestowed with faint consent on him who seeks it—bestowed in utter ignorance of the power of loving—the wealth of tenderness it hoards within itself. "Circumstance, blind contact, and the strong necessity of loving," will afterwards mould it

to its fate, and prevent any repining at its choice; but when once its hidden strings have vibrated, and given out their full music,—when once its inmost treasures have been disclosed to its owner, counted over, and yielded up with a full knowledge of their worth, to another,—when "the pearl of the soul" has been once lavished in the mantling cup of affection, it revolts from all feebler preferences, and is true, even in death, to *its one only love.*

The missionary soon came on board to claim his bride. He was a plain and worthy man, with nothing to distinguish him from the members of his profession in our country, who, mistake the promptings of zeal for the inspiration of a special calling, and who, without minds matured by experience or enlightened by education, leave the plough or the shopboard to be come the instructors of those who, with feelings

as sincere as their own, and understandings far more exercised in knowledge of good and evil, are expected to bow to their narrow teachings, and to receive them, not as humble soldiers of the Cross needing guidance like themselves, but as the captains and leaders of the church militant, armed in full panoply,—a living bulwark against its foes.

Alice Vere had but little experience in society; but the quickening power of love had lately called all her dormant perceptions of taste and feeling into play, and a very brief interview sufficed for her to read the character of her destined husband. She felt that she could never love him. Respect him she did, as she would have done the humblest brother of her faith; and had she never known what love was, her regard would perhaps not have been withholden in time; for every woman loves the father of her children, if he be not a creature to

be abhorred. But if there be an agonizing thought to a girl of delicacy and sensibility, it is the idea of becoming a bride under such circumstances as surrounded poor Alice Vere—the thought that her heart shall beat against the bosom of a stranger, when its every pulse throbs for another. Still a high, imperious duty, as she believed, constrained her, and she prepared to resign herself to her fate.

The nuptial day arrived. It had been arranged that the master of the vessel, on board of which Alice, wistfully lingering, had begged to remain, should perform the ceremony (agreeably to the laws of the state of New York, by which marriage is merely a civil contract, requiring only a formal declaration of the parties before competent witnesses). Mr. T—— himself commenced the ceremony by a prayer, which, as giving solemnity to the occasion, was perhaps most proper in itself; but it was pain-

fully long, and seemed to refer to almost every thing else but the immediate subject of interest. At length the bride, whose languid limbs refused to sustain her so long in a standing position, sank into a seat, and the missionary, glancing a look of reproval at her, abruptly concluded his harangue. The worthy seaman was more expeditious in getting through with his share of the office. He merely asked the parties severally if they acknowledged each other as man and wife. The missionary made his response in the affirmative with a slow and grave distinctness; but Alice faltered in her reply. A tumult of feelings seemed oppressing her senses for a moment; she looked to the untamed forest, whose boughs waved unfettered on the shore, to the broad main that spread its free waves around her, and the wild bird that sported over its bosom,

"Then she turn'd
To him who was to be her sole shelterer now,
And placed her hand in his, and raised her eye
One moment upward, *whence her strength did come.*

The certificates, which had been previously drawn up, being then signed and witnessed, the missionary concluded with another homily; and the crew, who had been allowed to collect upon the quarterdeck during the ceremonial, dispersed over the vessel.

It was now sunset, and, as a heavy cloud which threatened rain brooded over the island, the captain politely insisted that Mr. T—— should not think of returning to the shore, but take possession of his own private cabin. The rain soon after beginning to fall in torrents, drove those on deck below. Here the mates claimed the privilege of having a jorum of punch to drink the health of the bride, and the captain being willing to unite with them, Alice

was compelled to retire to the new quarters which had been just provided for her; while the festive seamen insisted upon keeping their clerical guest for a while among themselves. Their mirth soon became so uproarious as to mock the tempest without, when a sudden squall struck the vessel, carrying her over, even as she lay at anchor under bare poles, upon her beamends. The seamen, followed by the missionary, rushed to the deck, where the glare of the lightning, as they looked to windward, revealed to them a female figure standing upon the taffrail, with arms outstretched towards a huge wave that lifted its over-arching crest above her, and threatened to ingulf the vessel. A cry of horror escaped the revellers, the bridegroom breathed a prayer as he clung to the rigging for safety; and then, as the descending sea righted the vessel, a suffocating moan was

heard above the surge that swept the body of Alice Vere like a drift of foam across her decks.

The morning came at last, the sun rose serenely, the bright waves rippled joyously beneath the stern of the vessel, and their reflected light playing through the sloping windows of the cabin, glanced upon the unpressed couch of the Missionary Bride. None could even tell how she had made her way to the deck in the midst of the tempest; yet none have ever whispered the sin of self-destruction against the lovely, the lonely, the ill-fated ALICE VERE.—Let this "ower-true" tale bear a sad and solemn warning.

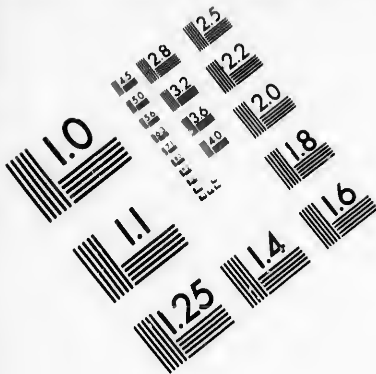
CHAPTER IX.

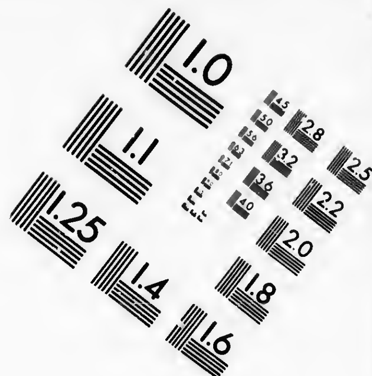
THE INN OF WOLFSWALD.

"Tramp—tramp on the oaken floor!
Heard ye the spectre's hollow tread?
He marches along the corridor,
And the wainscot cracks beside thy bed
As he tracks his way through the jarring door,
Which the wild night-blast has opened."

The Yankee Rhymer.

My horse had cast a shoe; and, stopping about sunset at a blacksmith's cabin in one of the most savage passes of the Alleghanies, a smutty-faced, leather-aproned fellow, was soon engaged in enabling me again to encounter the flinty roads of the mountains, when the opera-





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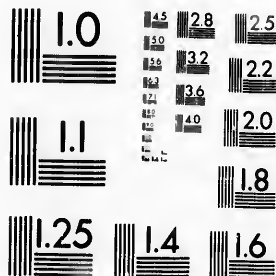

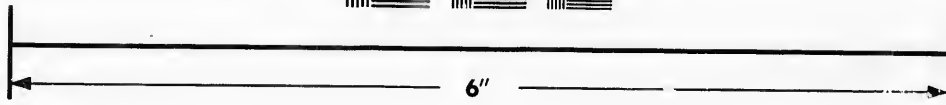

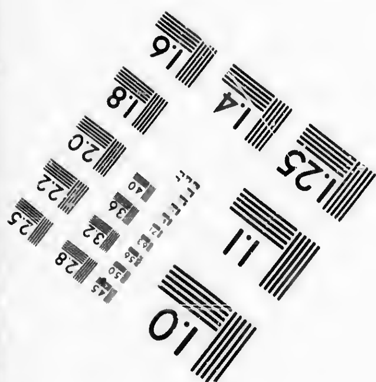

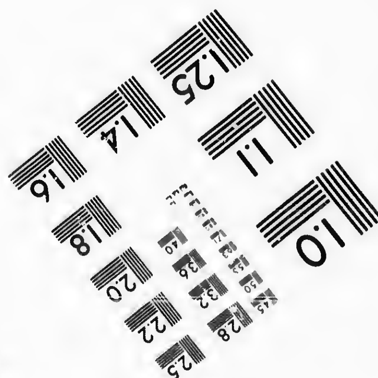

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tion was interrupted in the manner here related:—

"Pardon me, sir," cried a middle-aged traveller, riding up to the smithy, and throwing himself from his horse just as the shaggy-headed Vulcan, having taken the heels of my nag in his lap, was proceeding to pare off the hoof preparatory to fitting the shoe, which he had hammered into shape, and thrown on the black soil beside him. "Pardon me, sir," repeated the stranger, raising his broad-brimmed beaver from a head remarkable for what the phrenologist would call the uncommon development of "ideality," revealed by the short locks which parted over a pair of melancholy gray eyes, "matters of moment make it important for me to be a dozen miles hence before nightfall, and you will place me, sir, under singular obligations by allowing this good fellow to attend to my lame beast instantly."

The confident and not ungraceful manner in which the stranger threw himself upon my courtesy sufficiently marked him as a man of breeding, and I, of course, complied at once with his request by giving the necessary order to the blacksmith. His horse was soon put in travelling trim, and, leaping actively into the saddle, he regained the highway at a bound. Checking his course for a moment, he turned in his stirrups to thank me for the slight service I had rendered him, and, giving an address which I have now forgotten, he added that if ever I should enter ——'s valley, I might be sure of a cordial welcome from the proprietor.

An hour afterward I was pursuing the same road, and rapidly approaching the end of my day's journey. The immediate district through which I was travelling had been settled by Germans in the early days of Pennsylvania—a scattered community that had been thrown somewhat

in advance of the more slowly-extended settlements. In populousness and fertility it could not be compared with the regions on the eastern side of the mountains; but the immense stone barns, which, though few and far between, occasionally met the eye, not less than the language spoken around me, indicated that the inhabitants were of the same origin with the ignorant but industrious denizens of the lower country.

One of these stone buildings, an enormous and ungainly edifice, stood upon a hill immediately at the back of the Wolfswald Hotel,—a miserable wooden hovel, where I expected to pass the night,—and, while descending the hill in rear of the village, I had leisure to observe that it presented a somewhat different appearance from the other agricultural establishments of the kind which I had met with during the day. The massive walls were pierced here and there

with narrow windows which looked like loop-holes, and a clumsy chimney had been fitted up by some unskilful mechanic against one of the gables, with a prodigality of materials which made its jagged top show like some old turret in the growing twilight. The history of this grotesque mansion, as I subsequently learned it, was that of a hundred others scattered over our country, and known generally in the neighbourhood as "Smith's," or "Thompson's Folly." It had been commenced upon an ambitious scale by a person whose means were inadequate to its completion, and had been sacrificed at a public sale when half-finished, in order to liquidate the claims of the mechanics employed upon it. After that it had been used as a granary for a while, and subsequently, being rudely completed without any reference to the original plan, it had been occupied as an hotel for a few years. The ruinous inn had,

however, for a long period been abandoned, and now enjoyed the general reputation in the neighbourhood of being haunted, for ghosts and goblins are always sure to take a big house off a landlord's hands when he can get no other tenant.

"We have not room pfor mynheer," said mine host, laying his hand on my bridle as I rode up to the door of a cabaret near this old building; while three or four waggoners, smoking their pipes upon a bench in front of the house, gave a grunt of confirmation to the ungracious avowal of the German landlord. I was too old a stager, however, to be so summarily turned away from an inn at such an hour; and, throwing myself from my horse without further parley, I told the landlord to get me some supper, and we would talk about lodging afterwards.

It matters not how I got through the evening

until the hour of bedtime arrived. I had soon ascertained that every bed in the hostelry was really taken up, and that unless I chose to share his straw with one of the waggoners, who are accustomed to sleep in their lumbering vehicles, there was no resource for me except to occupy the lonely building which had first caught my eye on entering the hamlet. Upon inquiring as to the accommodation it afforded, I learned that, though long deserted by any permanent occupants, it was still occasionally, notwithstanding its evil reputation, resorted to by the passing traveller, and that one or two of the rooms were yet in good repair, and partially furnished. The good woman of the house, however, looked very portentous when I expressed my determination to take up my abode for the night in the haunted ruin, though she tried ineffectually to rouse her sleeping husband to guide me thither. Mine host had been luxuriating

too freely in some old whiskey brought by a return waggon from the Monongahela to heed the jogging of his spouse, and I was obliged to act as my own gentleman-usher.

The night was raw and gusty as with my saddle-bags in one hand, and a stable-lantern in the other, I sallied from the door of the cabaret, and struggled up the broken hill in its rear to gain my uninviting place of rest. A rude porch, which seemed to have been long unconscious of a door, admitted me into the building; and tracking my way with some difficulty through a long corridor, of which the floor appeared to have been ripped open here and there in order to apply the boards to some other purpose, I came to a steep and narrow staircase without any balusters. Cautiously ascending, I found myself in a large hall which opened on the hill-side, against which the house was built. It appeared to be lighted by a

couple of windows only, which were partially glazed in some places, and closed up in others by rough boards nailed across in lieu of shutters. It had evidently, however, judging from two or three ruinous pieces of furniture, been inhabited. A heavy door, whose oaken latch and hinges, being incapable of rust, were still in good repair, admitted me into an adjoining chamber. This had evidently been the dormitory of the establishment, where the guests, after the gregarious and most disagreeable fashion of our country, were wont to be huddled together in one large room. The waning moon, whose bright autumnal crescent was just beginning to rise above the hills, shone through a high circular window full into this apartment, and indicated a comfortable-looking truckle-bed at the further end before the rays of my miserable lantern had shot beyond the threshold.

Upon approaching the pallet I observed some indications of that end of the apartment being still occasionally occupied. The heavy beams which traversed the ceiling appeared to have been recently whitewashed. There was a small piece of carpet on the floor beside the bed; and a decrepit table, and an arm-chair, whose burly body was precariously supported upon three legs, were holding an innocent *tête-à-tête* in the corner adjacent.

"I've had a rougher roosting-place than this," thought I, as I placed my lantern upon the table, and, depositing my saddle-bags beneath it, began to prepare myself for rest.

My light having now burned low, I was compelled to expedite the operation of undressing, which prevented me from examining the rest of the apartment; and, indeed, although I had, when first welcoming with some pleasure the idea of sleeping in a haunted house, determined

fully to explore it for my own satisfaction before retiring for the night, yet fatigue or caprice made me now readily abandon the intention just when my means for carrying it into execution were being withdrawn; for the candle expired while I was opening the door of the lantern to throw its light more fully upon a mass of drapery which seemed to be suspended across the further end of the chamber. The total darkness that momentarily ensued blinded me completely; but in the course of a few moments the shadows became more distinct, and gradually by the light of the moon, I was able to make out that the object opposite me was only a large old-fashioned bedstead prodigally hung with tattered curtains, I gave no further thought to the subject, but turning over, composed myself to rest.

Sleep, however, whom Shakspeare alone has had tne sense to personify as a woman, was

coy, in coming to my couch. The old mansion wheezed and groaned like a broken-winded buffalo hard pressed by the hunter. The wind, which had been high, became soon more boisterous than ever, and the clouds hurried so rapidly over the face of the moon that her beams were as broken as the crevices of the ruined building through which they fell. A sudden gust would every now and then sweep through the long corridor below, and make the rickety staircase crack as if it yielded to the feet of some portly passenger. Again the blast would die away in a sullen moan, as if baffled on some wild night-errand; while anon it would swell in monotonous surges, which came booming upon the ear like the roar of a distant ocean.

I am not easily discomposed; and perhaps none of these uncouth sounds would have given annoyance if the clanging of a window-shutter

had not been added to the general chorus, and effectually kept me from sleeping. My nerves were at last becoming sensibly affected by its ceaseless din, and wishing to cut short the fit of restlessness which I found growing upon me, I determined to rise, and descend the stairs at the risk of my neck, to try and secure the shutter so as to put an end to the nuisance.

But now, as I rose from my bed for this purpose, I found myself subjected to a new source of annoyance. The mocking wind, which had appeared to me more than once to syllable human sounds, came at length upon my ear distinctly charged with tones which could not be mistaken. It was the hard-suppressed breathing of a man. I listened, and it ceased with a slight gasp like that of one labouring under suffocation. I listened still, and it came anew, stronger and more fully upon my ear. It was like the thick suspirations of an apoplectic. Whence it proceeded I knew not;

but that it was near me I was certain. A suspicion of robbery — possibly assassination — flashed upon me; but was instantly discarded as foreign to the character of the people among whom I was travelling.

The moonlight now fell full upon the curtained bed opposite to me, and I saw the tattered drapery move, as if the frame upon which it was suspended were agitated. I watched, I confess, with some peculiar feelings of interest. I was not alarmed, but an unaccountable anxiety crept over me. At length the curtain parted, and a naked human leg was protruded through its folds; the foot came with a numb, dead-like sound to the floor; resting there, it seemed to me at least half a minute before the body to which it belonged was disclosed to my view.

Slowly, then, a pallid and unearthly-looking figure emerged from the couch, and stood with its dark [lineaments clearly drawn against the dingy curtain beside it. It appeared to be

balancing itself for a moment, and then began to move along from the bed. But there was something horribly unnatural in its motions. Its feet came to the floor with a dull heavy sound, as if there were no vitality in them. Its arms hung, apparently, paralyzed by its side, and the only nerve or rigidity in its frame appeared about its head: the hair, which was thin and scattered, stood out in rigid tufts from its brow, the eyes were dilated and fixed with expression of ghastly horror, and the petrified lips moved not, as the hideous moaning which came from the bottom of its chest escaped them.

It began to move across the floor in the direction of my bed, its knees at every step being drawn up with a sudden jerk nearly to its body, and its feet coming to the ground as if they were moved by some mechanical impulse, and were wholly wanting in the elasticity of living

members. It approached my bed, and mingled horror and curiosity kept me still. It came and stood beside it, and, childlike, I still clung to my couch, moving only to the farther side. Slowly, and with the same unnatural foot-falls, it pursued me thither, and again I changed my position. It placed itself then at the foot of my bedstead, and moved by its piteous groans, I tried to look calmly at it;—I endeavoured to rally my thoughts, to reason with myself, and even to speculate upon the nature of the object before me. One idea that went through my brain, was too extravagant not to remember. I thought, among other things, that the phantom was a corpse, animated for the moment by some galvanic process in order to terrify me. Then, as I recollected that there was no one in the village to carry such a trick into effect—supposing even the experiment possible—I rejected the supposition. How, too, could those

awful moans be produced from an inanimate being? And yet it seemed as if every thing about it were dead, except the mere capability of moving its feet, and uttering those unearthly expressions of suffering. The spectre, however, if so it may be called, gave me but little opportunity for reflection. Its ghastly limbs were raised anew with the same automaton movement; and, placing one of its feet upon the bottom of my bed, while its glassy eyes were fixed steadfastly upon me, it began stalking towards my pillow.

I confess that I was now in an agony of terror.

I leaped from the couch and fled the apartment. The keen-sightedness of fear enabled me to discover an open closet upon the other side of the hall. Springing through the threshold, I closed the door quickly after me. It had neither lock nor bolt, but the

closet was so narrow, that by placing my feet upon the opposite wall, I could brace my back against the door so as to hold it against any human assailant who had only his arms for a lever.

The sweat of mortal fear started thick upon my forehead as I heard the supernatural tread of that strange visitant approaching the spot. It seemed an age before his measured steps brought him to the door. He struck;—the blow was sullen and hollow, as if dealt by the hand of a corpse—it was like the dull sound of his own feet upon the floor. He struck the door again, and the blow was more feeble, and the sound duller than before. Surely, I thought, the hand of no living man could produce such a sound.

I know not whether it struck again, for now its thick breathing became so loud, that even the moanings which were mingled with every

suspiration became inaudible. At last they subsided entirely, becoming at first gradually weaker, and then audible only in harsh, sudden sobs, whose duration I could not estimate, from their mingling with the blast which still swept the hill-side.

The long, long night had at last an end, and the cheering sounds of the awakening farm-yard told me that the sun was up, and that I might venture from my blind retreat. But if it were still with a slight feeling of trepidation that I opened the door of the closet, what was my horror when a human body fell inward upon me, even as I unclosed it. The weakness, however, left me the moment I had sprung from that hideous embrace. I stood for an instant in the fresh air and reviving light of the hall, and then proceeded to move the body to a place where I could examine its features more favourably. Great heaven! what was my horror

upon discovering that they were those of the interesting stranger whom I had met on the road the evening before.

The rest of my story is soon told. The household of the inn were rapidly collected, and half the inhabitants of the hamlet identified the body as that of a gentleman well known in the country. But even after the coroner's inquest was summoned, no light was thrown upon his fate, until my drunken landlord was brought before the jury. His own testimony would have gone for little; but he produced a document which in a few words told the whole story. It was a note left with him the evening before by Mr. ——, to be handed to me as soon as I should arrive at the inn. In it the stranger briefly thanked me for the slight courtesy rendered him at the blacksmith's, and mentioning that, notwithstanding all precaution, his horse had fallen dead lame, and he

should be obliged to pass the night at Wolfswald, he would still further trespass on my kindness, by begging to occupy the same apartment with me. It stated that, owing to some organic affection of his system, he had long been subject to a species of somnambulism, resembling the most grievous fits of nightmare, during which, however, he still preserved sufficient powers of volition to move to the bed of his servant, who, being used to his attacks, would of course take the necessary means to alleviate them. The note concluded by saying that the writer had less diffidence in preferring his request to be my room-mate, inasmuch as, owing to the crowded state of the house, I was sure of not having a chamber to myself in any event.

The reason why the ill-fated gentleman had been so urgent to press homeward was now but too apparent; and my indignation at the

drunken innkeeper, in neglecting to hand me his note, knew no bounds. Alas! in the years that have since gone by, there has been more than one moment when the reproaches which I then lavished upon him have come home to myself; for the piteously appealing look of the dying man long haunted me, and I sometimes still hear his moan in the autumnal blast that wails around my casement.

END OF VOL. I.

WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

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