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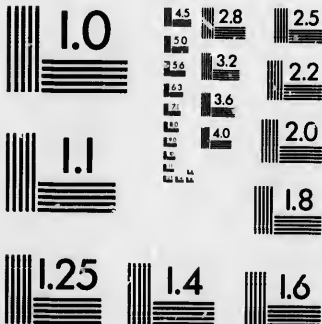
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OR,

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THE
NOMADES OF THE WEST;

OR,

ELLEN CLAYTON.

BY

S. DOUGLASS S. HUYGHUE.

"But all is o'er the Indian's grave;
Pause, white man! check thy lifted stride!
Cease o'er the flood thy prow to guide,
Until is given one sigh sincere
For those who once were monarchs here."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

CIVILIZATION has triumphed, and the New World now owns the sovereignty of the European. The tide of emigration sweeps in a continuous surge across the vast continent of North America, from sea to sea. The last barrier of the Indian's domain is riven asunder, his most sacred right violated, his latest hope crushed.

Now I have lived in the wigwam of the Red Man; I have smoked, talked, and hunted with him; I have trusted him with money; and whenever uncontaminated by intercourse with his white neighbours, I have invariably found him to be a happy and a noble man.

I have beheld him in each phase of his simple life, and discovered how many elements of good are implanted in the natural heart, independently of culture or creed; not that he is devoid of

either, for to me he ever appeared less a *savage* than a high-souled and religious being.

I have stood by his peaceful grave where the trees he loved wept their leaves over the bones of the forest-child, and the mattock of the pioneer had not yet unearthed them to make a highway; and the spirit of the solitude has taught me to be just to my brother man.

The following tale is associated with this extraordinary people,—extraordinary as unfortunate, for they are becoming rapidly extinct. It presents them to the reader as they were before their ranks were thinned, or their spirit broken by aggression. May it awaken his sympathies in their behalf, and would that it might impel the spirit of philanthropy, which is the redeeming feature of the age, to devise some plan to rescue those perishing tribes !

LONDON,
JANUARY, 1850.

ELLEN CLAYTON;

OR,

THE NOMADES OF THE WEST.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEAVER HUNTER.

SITUATED at the distance of a few miles from the Metawaquam, a tributary of the north-west branch of the river St. John, is a small lake, embosomed in the depth of the forest that covers the whole of that wild region with its shade. Bounded by a zone of vegetation, and seldom ruffled by the winds that play among the surrounding groves, it remains, year after year, still as a nun in her cell, with but the occasional cry of a waterfowl to interrupt its repose.

Yet although its very existence was unknown, till within a few years, save to those hunters who ranged about the head waters of the St. John, from time immemorial it had been the resort of

the aquatic tribes; and the beaver, otter and muskrat left a track in every secret nook that lay along its sedgy borders. Often too, in the stillness of the night, the great moose stalked down from the hills and buried his head in its wave to the base of the antlers, in quest of the roots of the water-lily which grew abundant there.

The human lineaments alone, were seldom reflected from its depth, but the hosts of heaven ever smiled auspiciously in a glass that wrote no wrinkle on the brow, and upon a scene of such alluring peace.

Here the forest denizens found a sojourn freed from the danger of more conspicuous haunts, where they could obey the Creator's law—increase and multiply—secure from man.

But, as we have said, it was within the range of a few hunters belonging to the neighbouring tribes, who were wont to obtain from its shores an addition to the stock of peltry collected during an excursion to the various resorts of game in the vicinity. Yet, at the period of our story, these devastating inroads of the forest lord had faded altogether from the recollection of the furry revellers of the lake, for the numerous tribes, whose hunting-grounds comprised that portion of North America embraced by the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, the Mississippi and the Atlantic

Ocean, were agitated and absorbed by the incessant struggles of the two great European powers for exclusive dominion on their soil; and urged by that wild passion for war, inherent in his blood, the red man had raised the hatchet, in joint confederacy with the foreigner; and thus drawn into the current of English or French aggression, he forsook the chase as an occupation, and became a hunter of men.

Encouraged by long security, a family of beavers had planted themselves near the outlet of the lake, and with their usual sagacity, constructed a dam of earth and branches across the opening, leaving a depression in the centre, through which the surplus water fell, in a minute cascade. At a distance of fifty yards from this, arose the conical roof of the cabin, elevated about seven feet above the water, beneath which its entrance was concealed; and not far from this, a second mound of mud and sticks, smaller and but slightly raised above the surface, announced that the industrious colony was on the increase, and that a youthful pair had begun to establish themselves, independent of the parent stock. The principal structure, conspicuous from its height, was rendered still more so by being covered with a network of alder sticks, which, taken from the winter deposit, and barked for food, had afterwards been placed on the roof,

where they had bleached to a dazzling white, which, at a distance, gave it the appearance of a birch wigwam, that might have deceived other than an Indian's eye.

The beaver-lodge was joined to the shore by a ribbon of soil, on which were a few cedars and black-spruce saplings, that spread their boughs over it, and behind and on either side, to an unseen distance, was a maze of alders and stunted evergreens, with tufted tops and branches, half covered with lichens, long, hairy, and grey; the whole possessed of the sombre character peculiar to swampy ground. And here and there, lofty trees were tottering, leafless and dead, over the lake, which had destroyed them by over-flooding, when dammed up, at the discharge.

Still there was a redeeming feature in this funeral scene. The birch mingled its graceful spray with the foliage, while its silvery stem gleamed cheerfully among the twisted trunks, and very distinct and beautiful were the reflections in the pellucid water.

One evening, an unusual commotion was visible in the lake, directly in front of the principal abode. This was caused by the gambols of two of the inmates, who, in frolic humour, chased each other in circles, now upon and now beneath their favourite element. Many a harmless bite had been given

and returned, and still the pursuit continued undiminished;—the main object being, to seize with the teeth the broad, paddle-shaped tail. At length, one emerged, after doubling upon its companion, but no sooner was its brown head above the surface, than, with the quickness of thought, it dove again, striking the water in the act with the flat of its tail, in token of alarm, and neither of them appeared again.

The object that had so suddenly terminated the beavers' sport, was the unusual apparition of an Indian, who, bending with neck outstretched, watched their proceedings in silent enjoyment, from the edge of the thicket opposite the lodges. This individual drew back from the constrained attitude he had maintained, as soon as the well-known whack of the beaver's tail startled the solitude around, and folding his arms, he displayed a double row of the whitest teeth imaginable, in a broad grin; while, at the same time, he nodded his head repeatedly, in a way which would have appeared droll to one who knew the usual gravity of his demeanour. Then, taking up a number of steel traps from the moss beside him, he pursued his phantom-like way towards the discharge, which he crossed by wading, and then struck into the alder swamp that lay in the rear of the beaver-lodges.

This person presented no bad sample of the race to which he belonged ; and as we shall have much to do with aboriginal life in these pages, it may be as well to give the reader a brief outline of his endowments, *en passant*, that it may serve as a general introduction to the character of the native American.

He was of a tall and erect figure, which, though possessing the massive proportions of middle-age, still retained, in a remarkable degree, the pliancy and elasticity of early manhood, as was seen in every motion he made, while threading his way through the intricate underwood, that obstructed the passage of the swamp ; now bending almost to the moss, to avoid a horizontal limb, then, with a cat-like spring, clearing some pool, half concealed by rushes and wild grass, and alighting dexterously upon an insulated scrap of vegetation, which became soaked as a sponge beneath his pressure ; at one time, crawling under a clump of dense cedar, with the undulating motion of a serpent ; at another, crossing a brook by a fallen tree, on which he curved his springy foot, and preserved his balance, in a manner that would have done credit to a rope-dancer. His limbs were clothed with muscles smaller than those of the European, but harder in texture, and capable of enduring extraordinary toil. His face, rather round than oval, was chiefly charac-

terised by the great elevation of the cheek-bones, and a pair of black eyes, piercing and restless, while a mouth, wide, thin-lipped, and firmly closed, gave an air of sternness to the whole countenance, from its tendency to curve downward at the corners, and its distance from the nose, which was well developed, and somewhat aquiline. His forehead was low and retreating, but strongly marked over the eyebrows, where phrenologists place the perceptive faculties, and his head was small and round. Upon the whole, it was a face not unpleasing to the observer, though rather too stolid in repose; yet, amid its calm, uncommunicable lineaments might be traced a lurking intelligence and strength of purpose, that belied its usual character;—for, in utter insensibility to ordinary impression, it exhibited so great a contrast to the rest of his body, that, in beholding it, one might have supposed that nature, in imparting an unusual degree of mobility to the limbs, had robbed the features of their just proportion of those qualities. But this apparent insusceptibility was a mere mask, imposed by the rigid self-restraint considered essential to the dignity of a warrior, and could be thrown aside when the fury of passion prompted, or when under the influence of a playful mood, he would condescend, among his familiars, to relax from his habitual reserve. His head, like his face, was devoid of

hair, the latter being shaven to the crown, whence a crest-like tuft of feathers depended; being fastened there to a solitary lock left for that purpose, and stiffened by the application of glue.

His apparel consisted of a loose shirt of dressed deer-skin, fringed in the seams, and gathered in at the waist by a leather belt, which contained a long-bladed knife, a light hatchet, or *casse-tête*, as it was significantly termed, and a pouch of mink-fur. His lower limbs were encased in tight leggings, of the same material as the principal garment, garnished with a fringe of hair tassels, stained red, and gartered at the knee; and strong moose-skin mocassins, fastened buskin-wise, with a thong. His equipment comprised besides a quiver of grey fur, well-stocked with arrows, that hung at his back, and a strong bow, which he carried in his hand.

His character may be briefly drawn. He was a being of simple wishes and a placid soul, true to his nation, generous, and of invincible bravery. In every action of his life he was governed by a religious sentiment, and sought to propitiate the Great Spirit by frequent fasting and prayer. To him he humbly looked for success in the chase, and protection from the spell of the sorcerer, and the evil influences of earth and air; while he awaited in patient faith, the solemn moment when death should

open for him the path to the blessed hunting-grounds, where, according to the Indian creed, in the enjoyment of his favourite pursuits, and a never-failing abundance, he was to obtain compensation for the want and suffering incident to his earthly lot. For the rest, he was slow to anger, save when anything touched his pride as a hunter and a warrior, for then his passion, once roused, burst beyond all control.

Moreover, he held it as the essence of manly virtue, neither to forget an injury, nor let a benefit, even from an enemy, go unrequited.

Such was Salexis, who enjoyed the reputation of being one of the most noted braves of the Abenakes, then a numerous and powerful nation, allied with the French of Canada, and occupying the rivers and coast of what now constitutes the State of Maine, and that portion of Canada which is adjacent as far as the shores of the St. Lawrence:—the northern boundary of their hunting grounds. And he was, indeed, a most striking object, seen by the light of evening in that solitary place; for in every attitude and motion, there was a certain grace arising from the natural ease habitual to a forester, and in his mien, a lofty air; the offspring of freedom, fostered by pride of race and conscious integrity. His dark, bronzed complexion, touched with a warm, ruddy hue, suited well with the tints

of the surrounding foliage, and altogether he looked in every particular, a fitting being to hold sovereign sway over the wide realm in which he moved; for so strongly was he stamped with the impress of that solemn calm, and severe beauty, which were the pervading *animus* of the scene, that, to separate one from the other, would have rendered both incomplete and wanting in harmony.

The hunter, as before-mentioned, pursued his way among the alders, in the rear of the beaver lodges, until he arrived at a place where several marks of recent cuttings gave evidence of the daily visits of their inmates, in quest of materials for construction or food, and taking one of his strongest traps, he set it at the bottom of a shallow creek that ran winding through the swamp from the lake; taking care, however, to conceal it under a thin covering of loam; then fastening the chain, with which it was furnished, round the stem of a young cedar, he crossed the outlet a second time, and pursued his swift, but noiseless way through the woods, in the direction of the Metawaquam, from whence he had come that morning, to interrupt the long prosperity of the colony of the forest lake.

CHAPTER II.

THE MEDICINE-MAN AND THE CAPTIVE—A RESCUE.

THE evening following, the same hunter might be seen standing, with a perplexed air, by the spot where he laid the trap; for the tree, to which the chain had been attached, was lying prone on the swamp, its trunk severed by the teeth of a beaver in two places, while both trap and chain, with the portion of the tree it embraced, had entirely disappeared. The turbid state of the water, however, and the marks in the soft mud, gave evidence of the recent struggles of the animal, to escape from its toils, and following these traces, Salexis issued out upon the shore of the lake to which the beaver had retreated.

The Indian's sole thought now was to recover his missing trap, an article of much greater value to the native in those days of early intercourse with

the Europeans, than even at present, when it constitutes frequently his only substantial property. He therefore collected what drift-wood he could find, and forming with it a *radeau* or float, he cut a setting-pole to aid him in its propulsion, and commenced the circuit of the lake, keeping as close to the shore as he could among the meadows of stiff grass, and the mass of gnarled tree-trunks that fringed the shallow borders. In this manner, he reached the furthest extremity of the lake, without obtaining any clue to the object of his search, when he observed a movement among the rushes near the bank, and, pushing the raft quickly toward the place, saw a beaver entangled in their maze, and vainly endeavouring to break free.

A moment sufficed for the hunter to leap into the shallow stream, to strike a death-blow with his hatchet upon the head of the beaver, and to seize it in his powerful grasp; but the capture was not effected with impunity, for the creature turned with open jaws upon its enemy, and in the madness of an expiring effort, made its long, sharp teeth meet between the sinews of his hand. Salexis, smarting with pain, dragged the beaver to the shore, and discovered his trap elinging to one of the fore paws, which had been caught in its vice-like grip; while at the end of the chain trailed that part of the cedar-tree to which he had secured it; this, acting

as a clog upon the movements of the animal, one of the largest of its kind, had led to its recovery. Shouldering his acquisition, he now struck directly through the woods, for his distant bivouac, but he had not proceeded further than a bow-shot, when his quick ear caught the sound of a drum, which, ever and anon, seemed to penetrate the still evening air, from a wooded ridge on the right. The Indian came to a sudden halt, and uttering a guttural ejaculation betokening surprise, bent slightly down in a listening attitude, and was soon convinced that he was not deceived, for, borne upon a soft breeze that rustled among the leaves above, the unusual sound struck fuller and with a quicker repetition upon his organs; whereupon, he dropped his burden, glanced quickly over his arms, and diverging from the route, stole with cautious footsteps towards the point to which his curiosity had been directed.

Guided by the beats of the drum, which grew more distinct as he drew near, Salaxis gained the summit of the elevation before alluded to, and winding stealthily among the stems of a grove of sugar maple he beheld a curious spectacle. At a few paces from where he stood, screened from view by an intervening trunk, was a small space cleared from the underwood that grew thickly elsewhere, and in the midst of this was an Indian of a

wild, haggard aspect, and dressed in a fantastic style. He immediately recognized in him one of the conjurers of his nation, who had acquired considerable influence from the belief generally entertained of his great supernatural power, encouraged by a native audacity, and a kind of rude eloquence which dazzled the imaginations of those who sought the fulfilment of their desires, by the agency of his charms and incantations. But that which gave him a still stronger claim to the consideration of his countrymen, was a sort of aberration of intellect to which he was subject, as, with the aptness of an untutored people, for the superhuman, they believed that he possessed the faculty of communicating with the world of spirits, and of interpreting their wishes in language intelligible to the initiated, when labouring under the paroxysms of his malady.

This strange being was arrayed in a close tunic of dressed reindeer skin, such as is worn by the tribes to the northward of the St. Lawrence, painted in a variety of fanciful figures, in gum colours, upon its white surface. To the back of this was attached a hood of otter fur, garnished with two horn-like ears, and depending between the shoulders ; while, on the shorn crown of the sorcerer, was a crest of dark feathers, that gave a sombre character to a face remarkably saturnine, attenuated and grim, and the latter quality was

enhanced by several patches of black and vermilion, traced in broad bars, from cheek to cheek, and continued over the skin of the throat, around which was fastened a necklace of wampum woven in mystic characters. To this was attached an amulet, inclosed in a small bag of leather, and suspended over his naked breast. He wore besides a girdle of bearskin about his loins, and two stuffed serpents, wound, bracelet-wise, around his bony wrists. He was evidently engaged in some important rite; for in one hand he held uplifted a huge knife, and in the other a knobbed stick, with which he struck sharply upon a drum of bark and skin, placed upright beside him. And as he stood gazing with an insane eye upon the void above, and beating a rude accompaniment to an invocation, his gaunt form half enveloped in the smoke of a neighbouring fire, he might have been mistaken for one of those malignant natures comprehended in the red man's creed, over whom he was supposed to possess a privileged control.

But this strange exhibition engrossed only a portion of the observer's attention, for the interest of Salexis was immediately attracted by a very different object, directly in front of the sorcerer.

This was a European boy, not more than thirteen years of age apparently, who was fastened by the arms to the stem of a tree, in a kneeling posture,

indicative of great exhaustion and terror. His form was naked to the waist, and defective in that roundness of outline common to his age; for want, or ill-treatment, had so reduced it that the ribs protruded in strong relief, covered only by the skin which was of dazzling whiteness. His features were almost hidden from view by the drooping of the head upon the breast, and the masses of light hair that fell, in graceful curls, on either side to his bare shoulders; but judging from a casual glimpse, they seemed moulded in a form of the highest physical beauty, though marred by an expression of misery and despair strangely at variance with their natural fairness of proportion. His eyes were closed, as if to shut out some abhorred vision, while, from time to time, his lips moved tremulously under the influence of sudden spasm, or in the utterance of prayer. The whole formed such a picture of wretchedness and woman-like delicacy, that it made a powerful impression upon the simple-minded Salexis, and he resolved, whatever the consequences might be to himself, to rescue the youthful prisoner from the grasp of the dangerous being, who appeared about to offer him in sacrifice to some sudden caprice—the offspring of his wayward brain. Yet, it must not be supposed that the hunter was devoid of that superstitious awe of the conjurer, common to the rest of his nation, and in giving way to the prompt-

ings of his better nature, he was still withheld by a feeling of repugnance which it required a deep sense of justice, and an unusual share of generosity to overcome.

In the meantime, the actions of the dealer in spells and incantations, waxed more furious, and his passions became more strongly roused by the violence of his language, as he proceeded with his wild harangue, in which he invoked his favourite spirits to assist him in a project, the extraordinary nature of which may be gleaned from his words, whose purport, as far as will be necessary, we translate for the reader.

"Hearest thou, great Managwon* of the painted bow—thou storm-slayer and dweller by the rolling waters—or is my voice too weak to reach thy ear, encompassed with their thunder? I have worked the spell, and dreamt the dream, yet the life in my veins is still but the life of a beast—of a form without soul; yea, without soul! I wander, I wither, I sicken, I strive! Help me, O Managwon!"

And in chanting, with strong energy, this half-measured rhapsody, he gave a deeper emphasis to his utterance by striking incessantly upon the drum.

* The Indian Irls.

"Seize in thy strong grasp, Winasosis of the cunning thought, which, subtile and quick as the lightning, pierces the mysteries of the viewless shapes of air; hold with a powerful charm the ghost of the young stranger; that it escape not when the knife kills. I would chain it within these limbs, and shut it up securely within these hollow bones; for my heart is empty—my blood pale! But with the fresh spirit of another it will swell and bound, and grow bright as the gay-winged *mamigola*.* Then will I be a child again, and leap lightly along the paths, and be no more weary or lonely, with entangled dreams.

"The hungry Manetou, who watches to devour the souls of those that go astray, crept upon me like a thief, when I was asleep, and drew away the spirit from within me, and since then I have wandered powerless and without memory. I struggle and sicken, like a man with fever. A form without soul—yea, without soul! Aid me, Winasosis the Wise!

"I have grown old with many troubled dreams: I am without joy. Why do I still live—why do I stay? When the seed is ripe the leaves fall, when the warm season vanishes the gnats die: then why, oh, why do I stay?—Because, ere the snow rests,

* Butterfly.

a second life fills the woods with a balmy heat, and a renewed gladness :—so will I kindle a new fire in my heart with the soul of the stranger, and it will warm me, like the breath of the second summer, and make me vigorous as a young moose, and very powerful, with many secrets and many charms.”

The sorcerer ceased, and brandishing his knife, advanced upon the helpless captive to execute his horrible design, when he was suddenly arrested by the appearance of Salexis, who, at that moment, came forward from his concealment. But it was not the intrusion of a well-known warrior, simply, that caused an expression of amazement and terror to portray itself upon the visage of the other; for, excited into incipient madness by the violence of his emotions, his diseased imagination associated the intruder with the form of the demon, Manetou, who, as he supposed, had deprived him of his soul, and, filled with sudden frenzy at the apparition, he let the knife fall, and with a howl of wild insanity, fled into the woods, as though, like the huntsman of the German poet, he were pursued by the phantom of a gigantic hand, that strove to grasp him by the nape.

Salexis stayed not to seek a cause for the extraordinary effect he had produced, but well-pleased at being enabled to avoid a personal encounter with

the Medicine-man, he quickly cut the withes that bound the youthful prisoner to the tree, and catching up his garments from the ground, helped him to arise. "Suivez-moi," he exclaimed, in brief admonition, as he turned off directly in the track he had pursued, casting back, however, from time to time, a glance towards the young stranger, to assure himself that he was following closely at his heels. The latter, half unconscious of his good fortune, and sudden liberation from a cruel death, threw a glance of perplexed inquiry at his unknown friend, then, with a gleam of quick intelligence, that burst like a flood of sunshine upon his features, when he heard the words above-mentioned, he bounded after his conductor with an elasticity which would scarcely have been expected, in one who seemed to have suffered so much, and was of so delicate an organization. But the way was long, and ere they reached the spot where the hunter had left the dead beaver, the boy's strength failed him; for it had been aroused by an impulse of self-preservation alone, and as this subsided, his limbs refused their support, seeing which, the Indian carried him bodily, until he recovered sufficiently to enable him to proceed. And thus, sometimes cheered and supported by his companion's side, and sometimes resting supinely in his arms, he managed, at length, to reach the banks of the

Metawaquam ; but the shades of night had settled thickly in the forest, when the two debouched upon a small meadow of wild grass that bordered the stream, and entered the temporary wigwam erected there.

Salexis prepared a couch of skin, upon which the boy stretched himself, and was soon rapt in a sweet slumber, from which he was awakened, after the lapse of a few hours, by his kind host, who invited him to share in his repast of boiled corn, and the flesh of the musquash ; and from the evident relish with which the young stranger partook of the latter, we may conclude that, like the famous discoverer of Canada, Jacques Cartier, he considered it "*bons à merveille à manger.*"

And as he beheld the boy enjoying his simple fare, the hunter smiled, and seemed to take unwearied pleasure in feasting his eyes with the marvellous beauty of the form he had rescued from the knife of the sorcerer ; and though the boy spoke not, he read in the look of his blue eyes that which surpassed words, and more than repaid him for his generosity. And when the boy was once more sound asleep on the skins, he bethought him of his wounded hand, and making a poultice of boiled roots, he applied it to the swollen parts. Then looking out several times into the night, as if haunted by some vague fear of the baffled

conjuror, he prepared his small stock of goods for an early departure on the morrow, extinguished his fire, wrapped himself in a blanket, and laid down likewise to repose.

CHAPTER III.

DIGRESSIVE—THE WINTER WAR-PATH.

ERE we proceed further with our story, we propose to take a glance at the condition of affairs among the European colonies in the New World, which had tended indirectly, it is true, to give rise to the instance of individual suffering, related in the preceding chapter. This refers us to a period, memorable in the annals of the early settlements in North America, for the evils in which they were involved, by the prosecution of the war that broke out between the English and French, in the year 1689. A war, distinguished by the spirit of ruthless hostility which animated the subjects of the two rival crowns, and the extraordinary efforts made by both parties to root out the establishments each had formed, with so much difficulty, in a land which they pretended to benefit by a religion and a

civilization previously unknown. Urged by fanaticism, and a principle of sordid appropriation, the strange spectacle was presented of two christian races engaged in mutually laying waste and destroying, without mercy or remorse, and with a refinement of barbarity which equalled, if it did not exceed, that of the untutored savages they sought to convert. Indeed, we can scarcely credit the revelations of history, which prove, but too plainly, the dominant spirit of the period, so contracted in its views, and so pernicious in its operation—living, as we do, in an age distinguished for its philanthropy, and the wiser policy of forbearance. Yet one might have thought that a common participation in the vicissitudes of a settler's lot, would have led to a reciprocity of kindness and sympathy, irrespective of origin ; and better were it for the colonists if, in departing from the Old World, they had left behind that thirst of conquest, and those national animosities, which entail such misery upon the human race, and, in every age, have proved an obstacle to civilization.

The records of these infant settlements furnish us with an unbroken series of struggles, from their first commencement up to the final overthrow of the French power in America: sometimes with each other, but oftener with the proud and war-

like nations that surrounded them, and let no occasion pass without striking a blow at the invaders of their territory, whose growing strength and unscrupulous rapacity they had such reason to dread. And thence arose many scenes of devastation and carnage, whose harrowing details would turn the reader pale.

Canada, or New France, as it was then called, from the time Champlain commenced a permanent lodgment upon its soil, in 1608, seventy-three years after Jacques Cartier first sailed up its magnificent estuary, to the period at which our narrative commences, had been particularly retarded in its advancement by the causes alluded to, and was never in so prosperous a condition as the neighbouring provinces of New England, the people of which applied themselves steadily to husbandry, and the extension of their commerce. The French, on the contrary were, for the most part, engaged in the trade of furs, which induced them to undertake long and hazardous voyages into the interior, and engendered a love of wandering and adventure, inimical to agricultural pursuits. Yet, however injurious this proved to the true interests of the colony, we cannot restrain a feeling of admiration, when we read of the frequent expeditions engaged in by a few individuals, under such unpropitious auspices, with the twofold object of traffic and

discovery, and which claim, at least, the merit of having been the means of making known the vast resources of the country they had adopted, and of establishing bonds of alliance with the various nations that inhabited its recesses.

The enthusiastic zeal and indomitable resolution that shone so conspicuously in the followers of the great Columbus, and prompted them to such brilliant achievements in the conquest of the southern portion of America, appeared to be ingrafted in the character of the early Canadians, and to have stimulated their daring enterprises, at its opposite extremity. Trusting chiefly to an implicit confidence in themselves, they plunged into the depths of the forest, and pursued their route, without hesitation, among strange and warlike hordes, who beheld with amazement the first appearance of the whites in their domain. In this manner was explored the whole of that wide region, stretching from the shores of Hudson's Bay to the confines of Mexico ; and the principal promoters, and often the actual conductors of these enterprises, were the Jesuits, who, with their accustomed ardour, laboured in promulgating the doctrines of Christianity among the Aborigines, and in acquiring a knowledge of the country at large. Cross in hand, and animated by the spirit of self-sacrifice, they traversed broad tracts of the

wilderness, exposed to the severest privations, and often suffering martyrdom itself, at the hands of the savage. Thus was traced the course of those extensive streams forming the main arteries in the natural scheme of irrigation that fertilises the eastern division of North America.

But these exploits, however praiseworthy in themselves, tended but little to develop the capabilities of the infant colony, which, at the period in question, had fallen into a state of dejection, that threatened total ruin, if strong efforts were not made to restore it to its former condition of comparative prosperity. Its trade, for the time, was entirely extinguished, and every attempt to till the ground rendered abortive by the constant proximity of the Iroquois, or Five Nations, who, rejecting the overtures of alliance made on the part of the government, commenced afresh their incursions upon its borders, and hovering about the settlements in small parties, cut off all stragglers, laid waste the plantations, and obliged the inhabitants to confine themselves to their forts and villages; while all communication between the different parts of the colony was entirely suspended, or preserved only at extreme hazard. The population also had much diminished, from sickness and continual warfare, and was thoroughly disheartened with its vicissitudes. This picture, moreover, acquired an additional gloom

from the recent descent of the enemy upon the island of Montreal at La Chine, where a force of twelve hundred Indians, in the dead of night, had burnt and laid waste in every direction, putting the inhabitants to the torture, and obliging the survivors to fly for refuge within the palisades of the town, to the very gates of which they were pursued by the triumphant natives. At this crisis, the Count de Frontenac arrived from France, to take charge of the government. This personage, then in his sixty-ninth year, had presided over the affairs of the colony on a former occasion, when he had proved himself to be of an able, resolute character, experienced in warfare, and, what was of equal importance, expert in gaining the good-will of the Indians. He is said to have possessed a mind gifted with strong penetration and sagacity, fertile in resource, and enriched by study; but at the same time, tinctured by ambition and impatient of control, which rendered him as overbearing towards those in authority, with whom he was associated, as he was affable and generous to his inferiors. There must also have been infused in his disposition something of that iron inflexibility and exemption from the softer emotions—whenever his interests enjoined it, which we find so strongly marked in the history of those who, impelled by inordinate ambition, have so often swept like a pestilence over the earth, if we may

judge from the frequent cruelties he permitted his Indians to exercise upon prisoners taken in battle, who, on several occasions, were given up to them for the purpose of being tortured to death, in the most dreadful manner; a proceeding which will ever remain a stain upon his memory; for it was such as no policy could justify, and every principle of humanity condemns. The Count de Frontenac, immediately upon his arrival, commenced negotiating with the powerful tribes in his neighbourhood, and left no means untried to gain over the great Indian confederacy of the Five Nations to the French interests; but being disappointed in this, he consoled himself, and raised the drooping spirits of his people by fitting out several expeditions against the British settlements in the province of New York, while the Indians of Acadia were likewise engaged in ravaging the adjoining plantations of New England, to the extent of one hundred and fifty miles.

One of these parties, destined for the attack of Albany, we purpose accompanying upon its long and arduous journey, during the winter of 1690, for a purpose which accords little with the feelings of the present day, but which was fully justified by the barbarous practices of the French colonists, in the reign of Louis XIV.

This force consisted of one hundred and fifty Canadians, or Bush lopers, as they were termed;

men bred up in the fur-trade and accustomed to the woods, and fifty Indians from the Mohawk village of Caughnewaga.* It was commanded by MM. d'Aillebout de Mantel and Lemoine de St. Hélène, and accompanied by several French gentlemen, who served as volunteers, among which was Lemoine d'Iberville, who had obtained celebrity by his capture of two English men-of-war at Hudson's Bay, in the previous year, and who was afterwards better known as the founder of Louisiana. After fitting out at Montreal, the party crossed the St. Lawrence on the ice, at the coldest period of the year, the middle of January, which had set in with a severity unusual even in that northern climate; and, taking up the line of march, struck directly across the Prairie de la Madeleine, the wide expanse of which was covered with a deep layer of snow, hardened into a crust by the wind that swept over it and glistening with a brilliancy, painful to the eyes, in the rays of a cloudless sky. It was a novel sight to behold these hardy adventurers commencing their long

* This village, situated a few miles above Montreal, at the Sault de St. Louis, near the confluence of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence, was inhabited by those of the Iroquois who had gone over to the French, and become Christians, and who, from their habit of reciting *paters* when asking alms in the streets of Montreal, were termed "Praying Mohawks."

march at that unfriendly season, affording, as it did, a picture highly characteristic of the country and the times.

The forms of the men, for the most part lithe and symmetrical, were enveloped in *capôts*, or overcoats, made of blanket, dressed moose skin, or the spotted fur of the seal. These were winged and fringed in a variety of modes, according to the taste of the wearer, and furnished, moreover, with a *capuce*, or hood, that could be drawn over the fur cap, as an additional protection from the wind and snow. Broad belts were strapped about their waists by buckles of brass or silver, and to these were attached a tomahawk and knife, a bullet pouch and the well-known purse in which the hunter carries his flint and steel, with other small necessities of his craft. Some spread over this girdle a woollen sash of several bright colours, beaded and fringed at the ends; while the entire party wore mocassins booted to the hips, and mittens covered with the skin of the cariboo.

The equipment of each man included a fusee, a powder-horn, and a pair of snow-shoes, and he carried at his back a blanket folded in the Indian fashion, containing provisions, and secured by a tump-line, or *collier*, which was passed in front, over the shoulders and across the breast.

Attached to the party were a number of dogs of

the Labrador kind, large, strong, and sagacious creatures. These drew after them loaded *tobaugans*, or Indian sledges, that ran lightly over the surface of the snow; while in the rear, labouring and floundering along the half-beaten track, were several long-haired horses, heavily laden, but of a breed remarkable for its qualities of hardiness and docility; these accompanied the expedition a short way on its route, only.

Thus, in wild and not unpicturesque array, the warlike band moved on over the plains, while now and then, a witty remark would elicit a shout of merriment from the light-hearted Canadians, or the enthusiasm of the Indians, aroused by the thought of strife, would vent itself in a fierce war-whoop, which rang with a metallic sharpness in the dry atmosphere, the keenness of which acted as a stimulus, making the blood bound to the cheeks, and giving a tension to the whole frame conducive to cheerfulness and activity. As they advanced, they entered the thick woods, and with an expert Indian guide at the front, wound in a seemingly interminable line through the hills; stepping in single file, each in the track of his predecessor, and making the snow creak with the pressure of their snow-shoes. A general silence was now maintained, scarcely interrupted even by an occasional order, for it was passed on from

one to the other in a low voice; and but for the casual descent of an avalanche of snow from the branches of some fir, shaken by a ranger in his passage, there was nothing to betray the vicinity of the band to one from whom it was screened by the foliage. Thus they went on, day after day, over the pathless snow, looking like a procession of cowed monks engaged in some desperate crusade.

Once only, during the day, they halted, cooked a meal and despatched it with speed. Then, without loitering, the men resumed their places, and were soon tramping onward again, with that long stride and loose swing of the body peculiar to the practised traveller on snow-shoes.

When the waning light foretold the close of the short winter day, the word was given to "camp." Then, throwing off their packs, they set cheerfully to work to prepare a resting place, by shovelling away the snow with their snow-shoes.

In this manner, circular excavations were made to the ground, and walled round with an embankment of snow. A fire being then lighted in the middle, and a layer of the fine branches of the fir strewed over the frozen surface, a commodious bivouac was formed.

In such nest-like cavities they reposed their weary limbs after the day's fag, in parties of

twenty, and after supper lit their pipes, chatted, and sang lively songs; or repaired their moccasins and snow-shoes, damaged by hard usage. And by these watch-fires many deeds of border strife were told by those who had been actors therein, which, though replete with suffering and cruelty, were received with evident delight by the ruffian crew engaged on a similar errand; after which—strange inconsistency—each fierce brave, with the vilest passions rioting in his breast, knelt down facing the rampart of snow, and prayed to God for mercy and protection during the night!

Then, making reverentially the sign of the cross, and wrapping his blanket tightly around him, he stretched himself upon the bed of boughs, with his feet to the fire and his head to the embankment which sheltered the bivouac from the wind.

Thus were passed the long, intense nights of that terrible season. The sleepers were unroofed, save by an occasional branch heavily laden with snow, and intervening between them and the sky, which sparkled with its myriad stars, that, by some singular anomaly, appeared to grow brighter the colder it became. Throughout the encampment, consisting of many similar lodging places, sentinels were posted and relieved at stated intervals during the night. This was a necessary precaution, to guard against surprise from any band of outlying Iroquois

that chanced to strike upon their trail. No enemy appeared, however, to molest their repose, and the slight interruptions that occurred only served to keep the watchers on the *qui vive*; such as the intrusion of a wolf, or loup cervier attracted by the smell of provision; or the frequent sound of the trees bursting in the frost, with a report like a pistol, which broke with a startling sharpness upon the ear—now close at hand, and now far away in the glades of the forest. Sometimes, on awakening, they found themselves half buried in snow, which had fallen during the night; and often while on the route, the flakes would gather so fast upon the surface that the travelling became very laborious and soon impossible. Then, obliged to halt, from sheer exhaustion, fires were lighted, and blankets stretched over poles, stuck slantingly in the frozen mass. Crouching under these temporary sheds they awaited the cessation of the storm, which was announced by the roaring of the wind among the pines, or the naked branches of the hardwood groves through which their course lay. When all was still, once more, the march was resumed, though with excessive toil:—each being obliged to take in rotation the head of the detachment, which imposed the task of breaking a track for the rest, in the loose and newly-fallen snow.

Some days after the departure of the expedition, a council of war was held, at which a difference of opinion arose that threatened to prove a serious obstacle to its success, and cast a gloom over the spirits of the soldiers which subsequent events were little calculated to remove.

No definite orders had been given relative to the destination of the band, and the leaders being free to act at discretion, as circumstances might suggest, proposed to march at once against Albany, then a place of importance, as regards size and capabilities of defence. This, the chief of the Mohawks strenuously denounced as a measure of downright madness, with such a limited force. But the French still persisted in their views with a degree of assurance that their recent exploits did not certainly justify; and some expressions having escaped in the heat of debate, which roused the pride of the Indian, he arose with contemptuous dignity and strode from the assembly, demanding "how long it was since they had found so much courage?" a rebuke that caused the cheek of more than one confederate to tingle with shame and ill-concealed vexation, and put an abrupt termination to the conference.

It was not, therefore, until the band had arrived at a place where two routes branched off, one leading to Albany, and the other to Schenectady, or

Colear, as it was often called by the French, that it was concluded to proceed to the attack of the latter. And now commenced a series of hardships that well nigh caused the total failure of the expedition; for a thaw, which is generally looked for at that season, set in suddenly, and for some days they could not stir a step from their bivouacks, and were reduced to abject wretchedness by the torrents of rain that poured down upon them, night and day, and drenched them to the skin, at the same time saturating the snow with water in which they sunk to the knees, if a foot were placed upon the treacherous surface. When the return of the frost enabled them to move on, their plight was scarcely bettered, for they were obliged to cross long tracts of swamp and low ground, covered with pools of water, collected by the late rains, the ice upon which was not of sufficient thickness to sustain their weight, increased by the heavy packs they carried; consequently it gave way at every step, plunging them up to the waist in mire and water, which congealed by the cold, as soon as the dripping garments were exposed to the air, encasing them, as it were, in frozen armour. The sharp edges of the ice also, cut through the leather of their mocassins, which occasioned terrible suffering; and as they dragged on their weary limbs, mangled, half-naked and

nearly frozen, over these frightful morasses, they left a mark of blood upon the trail.

Thus it was, that by making extraordinary exertions, and submitting to almost incredible misery, after a journey of twenty-two days, they reached within a few leagues of their destination; but in so worn and destitute a condition, that they had come to the resolve of delivering themselves up to the first British party they should meet, as a rescue from torment and starvation. The Indians, however, would not be discouraged, but held on with invincible determination, though reduced to gaunt and grim looking spectres, indeed, by the vicissitudes of the winter march, and endeavoured both by taunt and encouragement, to keep up the flagging spirits of the less hardy Frenchmen. But it is very doubtful if they would have persevered in their original design, had they not met, a few miles from Schenectady, some Indian women journeying to a distant village of the Iroquois, with whom the Praying Mohawks of the war-party conversed, and obtained such information as restored the general confidence, and gave a new impulse to their plans.

A small party of Indians, with an experienced Canadian, were dispatched to explore the neighbourhood. These, mingling freely with the enemy, were enabled to scrutinize thoroughly every portion

of the devoted hamlet, without meeting with opposition from the unsuspecting settlers, who mistook them for friendly Mohawks, belonging to an adjoining village of the tribe.

The report of the scouts was so favourable, that it was resolved to commence the assault that very night, when the hour of darkness would facilitate a clandestine approach to the habitations, and deliver the inmates a surer prey to their merciless animosity. In an instant every man, new strung with ardour, forgot his toils, and busied himself in preparation for the coming struggle.

Leaving this fierce soldiery engrossed with its sinister intention, let us conduct the reader into the quiet streets of the little village, and show it to him, as it then stood, upon that never-to-be-forgotten Saturday of its history—the 8th of February, 1690.

ELLEN CLAYTON ; OR,

CHAPTER IV.

THE FRONTIER VILLAGE—A DOMESTIC SCENE.

SCHENECTADY, at that time, was a well-ordered and thriving place, consisting of about eighty houses and a church, arranged in the form of a long square ; the whole being enclosed with a strong palisade, having a gate at either extremity. Through one of these ran the high road leading to Albany, while the other gave access to the fields that stretched along the rich tract in its neighbourhood, and were skirted by the thick growth of the forest ; and through these ran a winter road, communicating with a few more isolated farms, situated some miles away, in the very bosom of the surrounding woods.

It was said, by Indian tradition, to have been a favourite resort of the ancient Mohawks, and occupied a beautiful position on the southern bank of

the river that bears their name, not far from its junction with the Hudson; being distant sixteen miles from the town of Albany, the capital of the province, which was situated upon the latter. Between these two frontier marts of civilization and traffic with the natives, extended a barren tract of sandy soil, covered in places with a growth of stunted pines, and considered worthless in respect to cultivation. It was, therefore, allowed to remain in its original state, and this had given birth to the name of Schenectady, which, though slightly corrupted, signifies in the dialect of the Iroquois, *beyond the pine plains*. In the opposite direction, however, were to be seen the fertile lands bordering the Mohawk, at the true commencement of the beautiful valley, through which it courses, ere it is swallowed up and lost in the flood of its mightier neighbour. In many places, the sunny slopes had been shorn of their groves, by the axe of the sturdy pioneer, and contrasted, not unpleasantly, with the various shades of the forest that bordered, in irregular promontories of grey or darkest green, these snow-covered patches of clearing, which gave an enlivening aspect to the wintry landscape.

The village itself, with its cluster of habitations, its needle-pointed church spire, half concealed by the white smoke that issued in streams from

the numerous chimneys around, possessed an air of calm security and substantial comfort, attractive to the eye of those who, after encountering the snow-drifts that whirled in the blasts of the plains, or facing for some hours the atmosphere of a January day, drew nigh its hospitable gates at that convivial season. Excited by the prospect of friendly meeting and genial entertainment, the traveller cheered his team into quicker motion, and rang a merry chime on his sleigh bells, as he skimmed along its well-beaten thoroughfare, admiring as he passed the snug and close built habitations of Dutch fashion that bordered the main streets, with their capacious barns and outhouses, their trim inclosures, interspersed with numerous stacks of hay, clumps of graceful elms, and groups of well-fed cattle. There, too, was the notable inn where one Ichabod Lovett offered, for a lawful compensation, to supply the needed refreshment to man and beast ; being, notwithstanding, a staunch Jacobite, who gloried in his adherence to the cause of the abdicated James II, and in a huge sign-board which swung, like a banner of defiance, from a stout post in front of his door, exhibiting the portrait of the ex-monarch, robed and crowned, to the admiration of the beholders. This was the usual resort of such as favoured the principles of the landlord,

while those of more constitutional predilections, frequented a hostel not far distant and recently opened, over the entrance of which shone the gorgeously tinted image of King William III, *à cheval*, the work of a native artist, patronised by the loyal admirers of that prince of "pious and immortal memory."

Thus it would appear, that even in this remote hamlet, had penetrated that spirit of discord which arose with the revolution in Great Britain, and caused such a division in the nation, throughout the reign of William and Mary. Nowhere, however, within the enclosing stockade, was there a stronger evidence of that serenity and solid comfort which pervaded the place, than in a mansion of somewhat superior pretensions, situated near the centre of the village. This, which from its style of building, might be termed half villa and half farm-house, was separated from the main street by a small garden, enclosed with railings painted white, and resembled those structures so common to the early Dutch settlers, which may still be seen nestled in many a quiet nook along the banks of the Hudson. It was built of small, yellow bricks from Holland, and had two projecting gables in its front, with a double pitched roof of tiles, surmounted at the points with ornamental vanes, projecting eaves, and lattice windows; the latter half

hidden from the road by the branches of a few Lombardy poplars and weeping willows, that overshadowed the space in front, and, at the present time, were covered to the minutest shoot with a glistening coat of ice by the late thaw, which, at a little distance, looked as if they had burst into a new kind of foliage, more suitable to the severity of the season, than that of which they had been stripped, by the blast of the past autumn. Behind the mansion could be seen a range of capacious barns and stables in the form of a quadrangle, which seemed well stocked with cattle, and the produce of the field, for there issued from them a constant lowing of kine and bleating of sheep, intermingled with the measured stroke of flails, that ceased only at certain periods, throughout the live-long day. And close under the peak of one of these out-buildings, was a row of holes, with a platform beneath, upon which several plump pigeons were perched, whilst others cut, with a whirring sound, through the keen air, or pecked seeds from the foot of several hay-stacks that stood hard by.

One of the apartments of the dwelling above described, was furnished with several mahogany presses of an antique pattern, and a tall Dutch clock that seemed, in the blankness of its round face, and the measured regularity of its movements,

to be an embodied type of the phlegmatic people by whom it had been constructed. In this there sat a person of portly and benevolent appearance, whose thick hair, blanched to a light gray, and slightly shrunken cheeks, proclaimed him to be passed the meridian of life, but in the enjoyment still of a sound constitution, and that cordial to our declining years—a cheerful and contented mind. He was dressed in a blue coat, broad in the skirts, furnished with capacious pockets and flaps, and garnished with large metal buttons, over a waistcoat edged with embroidery, that descended below the waist. His lower limbs were covered with short clothes, met by blue stockings at the knees, where they were fastened by large silver buckles, richly chased; a similar pair glistened upon his insteps also, where they fastened his broad-toed shoes.

There was something antique and patriarchal in the picture of the hale old man, as, reclining in a high-backed chair of carved oak, he gazed, with an air of abstraction, upon a brisk wood fire, crackling upon the hearth before him, and drew slow whiffs from a long meershaum which he held in his hand. An ancestral heirloom, of priceless value it was—that ancient pipe, with its bowl of the true *écume de mer*, mellow and browned by incessant smoking, its mouth-piece of clear amber, and its mountings of solid gold. He was leaning against a table, on

which were a few books in the German language ; and one lay open within reach of his hand, as if it had lately engaged his attention. Now, however, he seemed wrapped in deep thought, and preserved an unbroken silence, interrupted only by the periodical parting of his lips, to give exit to a fragrant cloud, which ascended in fantastic curls to the ceiling of the apartment, where it gathered and spread, until it made its escape through an open door, into a kitchen of ample dimensions, the usual gathering-place of the family.

This worthy Dutchman was of an old and reputed stock, and his father had emigrated from Rotterdam, when the renowned Wouter van Twiller was governor of the New Netherlands, as the province of New York was then termed. From him he inherited a valuable property in land and hard dollars, and the name of Gottlieb van Scheffler, of which he was in no little degree proud.

He was noted for his strict integrity, and displayed more energy of mind than is usual to his countrymen in the management of their affairs. This, together with a general amiability of character, gained him universal esteem, and no small influence in the community in which he lived.

Near the fireside was also seated one whom we have already noticed, though under very different circumstances. This was the young and interesting

stranger, who, as a captive, had excited the commiseration of the Abenake warrior, when about to be sacrificed by the half-crazed and spectre-haunted sorcerer.

At this time, however, he had not known those severe trials and bodily sufferings to which he was subsequently exposed, and was in the flower-like, morning freshness of his boyhood. Nevertheless some might have thought him wanting in that vivacity which sits so charmingly upon the face of youth, bespeaking, as it does, a nature unchilled by the realities of life; for there was a shade of sadness on his features, which at times would deepen into an expression of pain, as if evoked by the memory of some sorrow. But the presence of this token of affliction gave a gentle softness to a countenance otherwise singularly spirit-like and intellectual, which accorded well with it, and gave it a grace the more in the eyes of those who preferred a romantic order of beauty. And yet, at times, like a fair landscape over which the clouds are breaking, a beam of sunny light would seem to struggle forth from the depth of his large eyes, and light up every feature; while his lips parted, as if to give involuntary utterance to some joyous feeling suddenly awakened in his heart. But these manifestations of an ardent disposition were quickly repressed, and the spirit of melancholy

was permitted to resume its wonted reign over the thoughts and lineaments of the boy.

Conrad Wildenstein was the son of a German officer, who left his patrimony upon the Rhine to join the banner of the Prince of Orange, and who, upon the accession of the latter to the British throne, received for his services a military appointment in the colony, to which, accordingly, he had shortly after removed, with the intention of settling permanently in America, accompanied by a wife, to whom he was deeply attached, and the son before-mentioned, an only child.

But the colony at that time was embroiled by party strife, in which all classes, from the governor downwards, were involved to such a degree, that public business was neglected, and a system of wrangling and recrimination substituted in its stead.

The simple-hearted soldier, therefore, soon found himself in the midst of a web of plots and petty dissensions, woven by the two political factions, in which he could not avoid becoming entangled witho either incurring the censure of his superiors, or giving up the post he held. After some hesitation, he chose the latter, as more consistent with honour, and retired to Albany, where he had resided for some months with his family, when letters were received from his native land, stating that a large

amount of property was bequeathed to his wife by a distant relative who lately died in a foreign land, and also that a claim had been set up by a person who was said to be of nearer kin to the party deceased, and possessed of a prior right, by deeded will, to the property in question. As a suit had been instituted to enforce this counter-claim, and was already in progress through the German court of law, the presence of his wife was deemed of vital importance to her interests in the case.

The father of Conrad, immediately upon the receipt of this intelligence, proposed to accompany his wife on the voyage home, but was prevented by an attack of apoplexy. It was therefore concluded that Conrad's mother should proceed alone, and if successful in her object, rejoin them again, bringing with her the wealth which she would have acquired, for the purpose of investing it in the country they had adopted, with a view to the future benefit of their child. But there was one thing more required in addition to the proviso just mentioned, to insure the certain fulfilment of this project, namely, the power of controlling destiny—that stern, inflexible despot, who so often shipwrecks our endeavours upon life's tumultuous sea, crushing with iron and remorseless heel the egg of human enterprise, and scattering its prospects to the winds!

"*L'homme propose, mais Dieu dispose,*" says the French proverb, and never was its truth made more palpable than in this instance, for the vessel in which the lady sailed from the harbour of New York, bound for Hamburg, never reached her destination, at least, they had not heard of her having made her appearance up to that period, more than a twelvemonth after her departure; so that all hope of the survival of those who took passage thereby had subsided in the minds of most, and become merged in endless speculations relative to the nature of the catastrophe that had befallen them. But whether the storms of the Atlantic or the cruisers of the enemy had wrought that consummation, the result was equally lamentable, since it had torn a fond wife and parent from the embraces of those who knew no dearer sentiment than that which was rooted in her love. The soldier had stood with death beside him, undismayed, on many a well-fought field, and was proof against the assault of ordinary calamity; but this sudden loss of one who had been the angel of his lot, the affectionate partner of his sorrows and his joys, was more than his human heart could bear. Like a bird deprived of its mate, he mourned and drooped, day after day, until to him life became a weary blank, and the sun was blotted from the sky. This state of mental depression, with a frame already impaired

by disease, brought on a second attack of his malady, which carried him speedily to that bourne of all our tribulations—the grave.

Conrad, therefore, became an orphan, within a few months only of a period when he was in possession of the fondest of parents and the happiest of homes. Yet was he not altogether left to the capricious kindness of strangers, for the worthy Gottlieb van Scheffler was a distant connexion of his mother, and as soon as he learned the boy's double bereavement, with that kindness and decision which marked his character, he immediately insisted upon his taking up his abode under his own roof, until his more immediate relations should conclude upon his further movements. Conrad, therefore, had been domiciled with the family of his protector since the fall of the snow; no answer having as yet been obtained from abroad, neither was it probable that such would arrive, until the ensuing spring opened, and re-established a communication with the two continents, which the perils of winter navigation usually suspended at that early period.

We have said that all prospect of the missing ship being still in existence had been abandoned; yet were there not wanting some who still entertained hopes of her reappearance, and one among these trustful souls was Gottlieb van Scheffler.

For this, however, he could not give any very cogent reasons, but that did not prevent the idea from impressing itself strongly upon his mind, which could only be accounted for by the inclination of a sanguine and kindly disposition to see the bright side of everything, and the faculty, so active in some minds, of making the belief correspond with the ardent wish, without considering the many obstacles which prevent the reason from arriving at the same conclusion. Thus it was by a species of logic, peculiar to himself, he entertained an opinion that Conrad's mother was still alive — because he earnestly desired such might be the case. And he would often strive to inspire the heart of the boy with a similar faith, whenever he observed his spirits more than usually oppressed. And, at the time we first presented him to the reader, he was endeavouring to find some argument by which to enforce a similar design, as his companion seemed to suffer from a dejection deeper than he had yet beheld in him, since he brought him to his home.

At length his reflections appeared to have arrived at a termination, for taking the meerschau from his mouth, he expelled a cloud of smoke in a beautiful spiral from its corner, and said :

"Cheer up, boy, cheer up, and let me see thee as thou wert wont to be, light and happy as a bird.

There is nothing to be gained by sorrow, but worryment to the mind; and I have heard my father say, that too much heavy thinking dries up the juices of a man, and I believe it. After all, it is not an utterly hopeless case, for there is no certainty about that vessel's fate—as I have often remarked before; and, now I bethink me, there was Abraham Vanhorn—or Brom, as we used to call him, for we were boys together—who commanded a good ship that traded beyond sea, and was given up by everybody except his good wife Mina, for a lost man. She, the hopeful creature, used to expect him ever, though a twelve-month had flown since he left, on his way back from Amsterdam. And her fidelity was rewarded, for, sure enough,—and therein may be seen an especial Providence—one evening, in walked the veritable Brom himself, only that his face wore the look more of a pagan than a Christian, for it was cut and scarred in outlandish circles and scallops, as if the fairy people had been skating over it. He then told how he had been shipwrecked, picked off the sinking galiot, by a Spaniard bound to the Antilles, and sent with a boat's crew for water, to an island they happened to pass by. This was inhabited by cannibals, who pounced upon them suddenly, killed divers of his companions, and eat the rest, keeping him, as he believed,

for a like purpose. But he was wrong, for they carried him away to the mountains, tattooed him all over, and made him a warrior. Some time after this, he contrived to escape, and got on board a ship, voyaging homeward, and thus, after all his perils, he was restored to his *goede vrouw*.

"And now, boy," added the old man with religious fervour, "surely the same Almighty, who preserved that seafaring man from the waves of the great deep, and the hands of those heathen creatures, can temper the winds and waters, and the wilder hearts of men, for thy dear mother's sake. Moreover, I have made questioning among those who came over, and was on the sea about the time, and they all spoke of fair breezes and sunny skies ; so will I not believe the ship met with mishap from the elements ; and if it be that she was taken in the toils by some prowling Frenchman, the worst that can come of it will be—captivity ; but we can find the means of shortening that, with the assistance of God. Therefore," he concluded, in livelier accents, "the matter is not so doleful as you thought, boy, and, by the shade of the good St. Nicholas, ere long it will be as bright and clear as—" the worthy Van Scheffler paused for a comparison ; "as the cheeks of my Katrina," said he ; laying his heavy hand upon the shoulder of a blooming maiden, who, with a younger

sister, came in at the moment, to the relief of their worthy father, who was thus enabled to bring his discourse, as he believed, to an admirable termination.

"What say ye, girls?" he added; looking with paternal pride upon the two. And fine, merry-looking damsels they were, in their quilted caps, long stomachers and short striped petticoats of linsey woolsey, giving to view blue stockings, decorated with red clocks, and drawn tightly over their substantial but not uncomely limbs.

"What is it all about, father?" asked the elder, whom he had addressed, playing with a silver chain that fastened her scissors to her side, and gazing demurely at the clasps of her shoes.

"Tell her, Conrad; the saucy puss would have me talk until I became brief-winded, as neighbour Schoonhoven's mare, by over-working the tongue, as she did her legs."

Thus appealed to, the boy looked up with a sweet smile, and replied, "Your kind father would have me hope, always hope, Katrina; and I know 'tis wrong to be so sad and cast down, continually; so I will strive to be more cheerful in future; indeed I will."

In speaking thus, the boy endeavoured to assume a lively air, and half succeeded in the attempt; but as he approached the conclusion, he covered

his face quickly with his hands, and they knew by the bright drops which fell between his fingers, that he was in tears.

But the kind-hearted girls drew near him, and soothed his troubled spirit with their voices ; and sang a sweet old song of the Rhine, of which he was fond. Then straightway, the spell that bound his heart seemed to break asunder, and the pent-up flood poured itself forth in words ! To the ears of his sympathizing listeners, he told long stories of the past, and was never weary with repeating endless instances of the goodness of his lost parents ; of his father's soldier's spirit and singleness of heart ; and his mother's gentleness and beauty, and of the strong love they bore him ; and from this indulgence of his grief he derived more consolation than from the good-intentioned device of his respected guardian.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUSPICIOUS VISITOR AND THE NEGLECTED WARNING.

MEANWHILE, the day wore on, and dull clouds gathered in a mass, over the village ; while large, down-like flakes, the fore-runners of a heavy fall of snow, already commenced to descend in a silent shower, upon the adjoining roofs, pathways and fields.

In a little time, also, two stalwart farm-servants, in striped frocks, and thick homespun trowsers, came in from the barn, knocking the snow off their shoes against the door-step outside. These men, after demolishing a meal, installed themselves in opposite corners of the capacious fire-place, where they smoked their pipes in silence, ever and anon following with their eyes the movements of a plump serving-maid, who brushed about the kitchen, intent upon the duties of the household. The fire burned

briskly on the hearth, and threw out a cheerful light, which pervaded every nook and corner of the kitchen ; lingering lovingly upon many a choice side of bacon, and many a golden and corpulent looking pumpkin, suspended from the rafters overhead,—and glancing, coquettishly, upon innumerable strings of dried apples, hanging in festoons between them : which gave an air of peculiar comfort to the domestic scene, contrasted with that without—where the flakes of snow fell faster and thicker, as the evening wore on, and the wind began to whirl them in dense drifts, along the highway, and against the windows and doors of the building.

The grave monotony of the establishment was varied only by the low tones of the female who hummed occasionally a quaint ditty in low Dutch, while in the pauses of the storm, the ticks of the great clock in the adjoining parlour could be heard, noting the lapse of time, with steady, slow and ceaseless regularity, like the pulse in the veins.

This repose, however, was suddenly interrupted, for the kitchen door opened quietly, and in stalked an Indian, who, in broken English, asked permission to light his pipe at the fire, which was readily granted by the mistress of the place, who accompanied her assent with a smile of encouragement ;

whereupon, he advanced to the hearth, and without further ceremony, seated himself upon the well-swept tiles, with his legs drawn up under him, in the manner of the natives. Then, taking from the pouch at his belt, a short stone pipe and some tobacco, he filled the bowl, ignited it at the coals, and commenced smoking with great composure, and without saying a word. But though the general expression of his face denoted indifference and tranquillity, yet were his eyes, nevertheless, glowing with liquid flame, which shot in subtile flashes, from the depth of their sunken orbs that seemed to scintillate with increasing brilliancy, as though, like the diamond, they possessed the property of absorbing light, and were feeding themselves with the fire's rays. Neither were they allowed to remain fixed for an instant, for they rolled, to-and-fro, in an incessant scrutiny of every object within the sphere of their sinister regard.

Old Gottlieb van Scheffler, who had been a silent observer of this proceeding, from the adjacent room—the door of which was partly open—remarked, moreover, that the features of the Indian seemed worn by fatigue, while his garments presented a very sorry condition—being torn in many places, as if by the undergrowth of the forest: and prompted by sympathy for his apparent

distress, as well as by curiosity, he raised his voice, and bid him—"Good day, brother."

The individual, thus addressed, turned in the direction of the voice, and seeing the master of the establishment, he doffed his fur cap, and nodding slightly, said briefly in reply, "Good day, brother."

"You have had a toilsome hunt, I fear; yet, methinks, the deer should be easy to catch, since the late thaw. The crust must bear sorely upon the creatures' limbs, and they can't run far."

"We hunt um long time," replied the Indian.—

"You see big moose, he very strong, and snow no so deep as, may be, one moon past; sartin, brother say, me had very weary hunting."

The good Dutchman felt commiseration for the forlorn-looking being who uttered this broken statement, and beckoning Katrina to him, whispered something in her ear; whereupon, she passed into the kitchen, and communicated a message to the serving-wench, who went to a neighbouring cupboard, and taking therefrom a dish containing the remnants of the late repast, placed it before the Indian, saying—

"Brother is hungry, the master bids him eat, and be welcome. The snow will be deep ere the morning, and he has far to journey, I reckon."

A strange, and malignant scowl passed rapidly over the face of the Indian, at these words, and turning his head away from the tempting viands, he rose up from the hearth, stretched himself to his full height, and said, with the same composure that governed his every action,—

“Me not hungry ; plenty moose-meat on Tobaugan—soon come night ; so I go home.” Then turning, without salutation, he left the house, as noiselessly as he had entered, leaving the inmates in a state of much perplexity, by the strangeness of his appearance and demeanour ; as it was not usual for the natives to refuse the hospitality of the villagers—such being considered as equivalent to an open declaration of hostility, in the Indian code.

All of a sudden, one of the stout yeomen, whose name was Hans, roused himself from his phlegmatic reverie by the corner of the fire-place, and depositing his pipe, carefully, upon a beam by its side, came forward to the door of the next room, and delivered himself of the following important particulars :—

“I crave pardon, master, but I had almost clean forgot to deliver a message from Captain Glen, who I saw at his house across the river, this morning, where I went in search of my brother who, they told me, had taken service there—but

there was no truth in the story after all ; however, as I was saying, the Captain bid me give you warning, that there were signs of French Ingins discovered near the settlement of late, and he much fears there is evil working, somewhere ; and he thinks it will be well for the people to keep close to the stoccadoes : or, if so be they go into the bush, to take their arms with them, in case they should chance upon some of the skulkers from Canada, who used to be so mischief-minded in the last war."

"Ha !" was the quickly ejaculation of his master, starting at this alarming intimation, and speaking with severity ; "ye might well remember a charge of such moment ; but not to give it so tardy a deliverance. Faith, perhaps, it is a matter of life and death to us all, and ye sat dozing there, as if 'twere all one when ye wagged that sluggish tongue of thine ; shame seize thee, Hans ! And yet," he half soliloquized, cooling gradually from the unusual excitement the intelligence had awakened, "and yet, it is hardly to be believed, the wild creatures would take so long a journey at such a time, for the sake of some straggling settler's scalp. God protect them and us ! Still, it looks bad, and with such an one as they have now in Canada, we may well be watchful. I know him of old, a restless and indefatigable

man of war; greedy of fame, and frequent in enterprise, and old age has not taken the edge off his faculties, or cooled his soldier's spirit, if report speak truly. Prythee, Hans, what gave rise to these misgivings? Speak out, man;—'tis a business that won't admit of trifling, I tell thee."

Hans, strongly impressed by the serious tones of his master, proceeded at once to detail what he knew concerning a rumour which had already obtained circulation through the hamlet; though it was treated, by most of the inhabitants, with an incredulity that prevented them from deriving any benefit from what, had it been properly looked into, might have operated as a shield against the sword that hung suspended over them by a single hair.

From Hans' statement, it appeared that one of Captain Glen's men having gone into the woods beyond the clearings, on the previous afternoon, in search of horn-beam, after making a wide curve up the valley, came suddenly upon a beaten trail, broad and regular, like that of a Maquas, on a war-path. This he followed to where the party had evidently halted; for the snow was trodden hard, by the gathering of many snow-shoes, around several places, in which fires had been kindled. He was about to proceed still further, on these suspicious traces, but the approach of night warned

him to return home. He left not, however, until he had satisfied himself of two particulars ; that the unknown party was of considerable strength, and that it had passed only a few hours before, for although there had been a slight fall of snow, in the forenoon of that day, he could count the cords of the snow-shoe nettings, the prints were so fresh in the trail.

"Moreover," added Hans, who had gained his information from the individual himself ; "and this Corlis holds to be the best proof of the quality of the outlying company. Close to one of the burnt logs of the cooking-place, he picked up what he calls a *gorget*, only used, as he says, by these image-serving heathens, the French Ingins ; and, seeing that he was a captive long amongst them, he ought to know. Nevertheless, thinking ye would like to see it, master, I asked him for it, and here it is."

Hans, suiting the action to the concluding words, of what for him, was an unusually lengthy discourse, drew forth from a pocket in his trousers, and handed to his master, a curious ornament. This was in shape not unlike a human ear, and slightly curved, being formed from the shell of the conch, of a pinkish white, and having upon its surface the figure of a cross deeply engraved. It was a kind of trinket, often seen among the

Indians, who wore it as a pendant to their necklaces. But it was never thus embellished with the emblem of Christianity, except by those who, like the Praying Mohawks, had been converted to the Roman Catholic faith, to every symbol of which, as may be conceived, the rigid Protestants of the English provinces and their Indian allies, were strenuously opposed.

Gottlieb shook his head, as he examined this article; calculated as it was to create strong suspicion of the proximity of an enemy, which, coupled with the then defenceless state of the village, could not fail to make him feel anxious and apprehensive. Neither were these feelings in any degree diminished by the remarks of Hans, who recalled his attention to the bearing of their recent visitor, by asking "if he did not take note of something wondrous cautious-like and outlandish about him? Indeed, master," he added, "there was a look altogether foreign about the critter, and I never saw him among the friendly Mohawks who visit us betimes; and didst thou mark him doff his cap, when ye spoke to him? which is a thing I never saw done by an honest Maqua; for they are as proud as born princes, and never humble themselves before a Christian man. Furthermore, did he not refuse to eat beneath thy roof, and does not that betoken malice? for an Ingin's nature won't let him

accept bounty of such as he regards with an evil eye ; therefore, depend upon it, master, there was war in that man's heart against thee and thine.

"I ruminated upon this, as I sat by the fire, and beheld the sly ways about the crafty fox ; and no sooner was he gone, than, straightway, like a bullet, the recollection of the Captain's message shot through my head, and bade me speak ; in time, I hope, to prevent trouble, if that be what it means, which St. Nicholas and the Lord forfend !"

"I trust so, indeed, Hans," replied the old man, "but yet, though I see ample reasons for caution, nevertheless, there is no good in breeding a needless alarm. To-morrow or, seeing it will be the sabbath, and therefore little fitted for such discussion, on the following day I will see that the affair be sifted to the bottom, and, perhaps, it will turn out to be a mistake after all."

When left to his own reflections, however, the worthy gentleman could not divest himself of the unpleasant sensations that had been awakened in his mind. Should their old and merciless foes of Canada harbour any designs against the village, what was there to prevent them from ravaging it to the fullest extent of their hostile inclination ? In what manner were they insured against the consequences of a sudden assault ? The gates unclosed and unguarded ; the garrison, small as it was, in-

fectured by the factious principles that prevailed everywhere in the colony, and rendered inert and almost useless for the purpose for which it was intended, by the negligence of the officer in command; the villagers themselves, lulled into a fatal sense of security, by the rigours of the season, which, they believed, precluded the possibility of interruption from so distant an enemy; these propositions arrayed themselves in such appalling form before the mental eye of the worthy magistrate, for such he was, and the images they conjured up, were so terrible to his imagination, that he was several times on the point of going immediately to the commandant, to urge the propriety of placing guards at the several approaches, to insure the village from molestation during the night. But when he laid down the meerschau with this intent, the storm seemed to rage with greater violence outside, and he could not see into the road, for the snow-drifts that swept along on the blast, and swirled up in dense clouds into the lead-coloured sky. So he was fain to relinquish his purpose; endeavouring, at the same time, to smile away his apprehensions, yet without meeting with the success he could have desired; for, as he sat and listened to the domestic sound of the kettle boiling upon the hearth, there seemed to issue from its steaming spout, two tiny and spirit

voices, which strove, with rival arguments, to influence his conduct. One voice cried, in shrill accents, unto him: "Gottlieb van Scheffler! Gottlieb van Scheffler! take up thy trusty staff and call unto thee thy stout servants, Hans and Ludwig, and go forth into the winter storm; for its touch is less rude, and its fury less pitiless than that of the savage foe; and the safety of all thou holdest most dear is dependant upon thy single effort alone. Put not off until the future a necessary work: the present we can command, but none can foresee to-morrow." But the other whispered with a low, drowsy murmur, in his ear:

"Go not forth into the dreary tempest, Gottlieb; thou art old, and thy limbs are not weather-proof to the chilling winds. Enjoy to-night the comfort of thine own fireside, and after the sabbath prayers ye can the more readily give your intended warning, for all, from far and near, will then be gathered together. So rest thee in peace, and vex not thyself with misshapen suppositions and sombrous chimeras, which have no foundation but in thine own brain."

Alas! the good Dutchman, as probably you would have done had you been in his place, candid reader, listened favourably to the procrastinating voice, and rejected the counsel of the other, which

he little knew was that of his guardian angel. But, as a last appeal, the spirit turned his eyes towards the book that lay open upon the table by his side—a volume of that father of German poetry, Martin Opitz, entitled “Consolations during the misfortunes of war,” and there he read: “Idleness breeds security, and a period of too great security breeds slavery.” But the demon of procrastination was still singing in his ear its drone-like and deceitful song; and, in despair, the good genius of that happy abode, hiding her tearful face, departed from its threshold for ever.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MIDNIGHT MASSACRE—A PICTURE REVERSED.

In the meantime, the party of invaders presented a singular contrast to the picture we have described, exposed as they were to the pelting storm, and pinched with hunger, their provision being exhausted.

The preliminaries were arranged, and at the order to advance, each man sprang with alacrity from his resting-place, and fell into the line, hugging his fusée closely under his *capôt* to keep it dry. Thus again they were striding on through the deep drifts, which in some places were piled in miniature ridges by the eddying wind. And as they filed past in the gloom, each snow-filled tree loomed like a sheeted spectre. It seemed as if the very forest had sent forth its shadowy hosts to aid the innocent, and turn them back.

It was near midnight when the band issued from the forest, and came at length upon the cleared borders of the Mohawk, beyond which stood the devoted village; but no lights issued from the windows of its thickly-built habitations, or if any still were burning at that late hour, their rays were obscured by the falling flakes that swept in a dense cloud over the plain of the river, and rendered it impossible for them to distinguish any object beyond their immediate neighbourhood.

Crossing the ice, the force divided, and each party pushed on to its position of attack. The first, commanded by Mantel, marched directly to the adjoining gate, which was found, as their scouts had said, open and unguarded, while the second, under D'Iberville, passed on to the left, with the intention of reaching the opposite entrance, as pre-arranged, but not being able to find it, from ignorance of the ground, and the difficulty of making their way in such a blinding storm, they were obliged to return and seek an entrance by the same way as their companions; and the re-united force penetrated unchallenged to the heart of the slumbering hamlet. There, receiving a whispered order, it subdivided into numerous parties, which dispersed themselves through the silent streets, in readiness, at a given signal, to begin the assault. The chief himself led a party against a blockhouse,

slightly fortified, and garrisoned by a small detachment, buried in sleep to a man, and little dreaming of the storm about to burst upon the unguarded walls.

Several hours had now elapsed, and the evening's occupation, generally protracted at the close of the week, was terminated in the household of Gottlieb van Scheffler. The usual family devotions had been also performed, and, for a moment, the domestic group might be seen gathered round the hearth, ere its members separated for the night.

The wind moaned ominously in the chimney, and in the lulls of the tempest were heard the shouts of some revellers, floundering homewards through the drifts, after a carouse of their favourite resort, mingled with the barking of dogs, startled at the uproarious sounds, seldom heard at that late hour in the well-ordered village. At length, with cordial salutation, each departed to rest, and Conrad, taking a light, wended his way to a small chamber, off the sitting-room, appropriated to his use, and lighted by a window that looked into the farm-yard in the rear.

He did not undress himself, however, but proceeded to examine his relics, consisting of several small articles which had belonged to his parents, and which he esteemed as the most precious treasure

in the world. Among these was a miniature likeness of his mother in a locket, that his father had worn during their betrothment, when absent on a campaign.

The boy could not resist the desire which seized upon him the moment he beheld it, so he gratified it by taking it out of its case, and contemplated with fondness the image of the beautiful and gentle face that had so often beamed affectionately upon him; and as he gazed, the tears gathered in his eyes, while he asked himself, if indeed he should ever behold again her whose lineaments were there imperfectly portrayed? Was he never to hear those lips re-utter the accents of endearment, or of what, to him, was wisdom without par? It was agony to think that this could be but as a memory to him now—ay, agony so acute, that, at the moment, he could have willingly died! Yet he warred not in his spirit against God's decree, nor gave himself up to the suggestions of passion, but he was moved with an intense desire to be with those he loved. And while Conrad pondered thus, the clock struck the hour of midnight.

To the imagination of the listener, every stroke was a knell.

The sounds had not ceased to vibrate through the chambers of the house, when, for a moment, Conrad's heart stopped its beating, and the blood

grew cold in his veins, for from every quarter of the village, ringing high above the wind, suddenly there burst forth a shrill and savage yell, followed by a confused din, as the enemy, with a simultaneous war-cry, rushed upon the doors of the different dwellings, breaking them down with axes wherever they were found barred.

The door of Gottlieb van Scheffler's abode was of stout oak, so that, though vigorously assaulted, it sustained for some time the shower of blows dealt upon it by those outside; and the inmates were thus enabled to place themselves upon their guard, and prepare, in some wise, for defence against the marauders, who had startled them from their midnight repose. The venerable Gottlieb sprang from his bed, with a pang of anguish, as that piercing whoop proclaimed to him the realization of his fears, and hastily throwing on his clothes, he seized a trusty sword that hung near by, and rushed into the kitchen, followed by his men, who had also risen and armed themselves with the first weapon they could obtain. And after them came some of the female members of the family, half dressed, and distracted by sudden terror. The old man strove to offer them what comfort he could, but his efforts were of little avail amid such an uproar as was heard in every direction without, while the axes ceased not their work

upon the great door; and amidst their din could be distinguished the shouts and execrations of the attacking party, exasperated to fury by the obstinacy of its resistance. At length, with redoubled strokes, the oaken planks were splintered asunder, and the whole frame, wrenched from its fastenings, fell inward with a crash, while over it bounded the enemy, with a cry of triumphant rage, half filling the spacious apartment, and driving back the three desperate men who stood in their way, determined to yield the homestead but with their lives.

The leader of the hostile band fell, severely wounded, by the stalwart arm of the brave Gottlieb, who dealt about him with the fury of a lion at bay, well seconded by Hans and Ludwig, who wielded with the strength of giants their heavy chopping-axes and kept the assailants back. Yet, overmatched by numbers as they were, opposition could only protract the fatal struggle; and so, ere long, the good Gottlieb lay upon his floor, pierced with many wounds. He had fought stoutly to the last in defence of those he loved, and uttering with his last breath a prayer for his children, he closed his lips for ever. The others, viewing the fate of their beloved master, which was hailed with a whoop by the foe, retreated towards the door leading into the parlor before-mentioned; but, ere it was gained,

Ludwig fell, pierced dead by a shot fired through one of the front windows, and the survivor, Hans, seeing the uselessness of further opposition, and urged by an instinctive love of life and freedom, sprang through the door, and across the adjoining chamber, where Conrad stood, half stupified with horror, and grasping the boy by the arm as he passed, he dragged him into the bed-room, where he made good his retreat by fastening the door.

Meanwhile, the fierce crew of French and Indians spread themselves about the building, and entering the dormitories above stairs, discovered the poor girls beneath the clothes of their beds, in which they had taken refuge from the dreadful scene below. Neither tears nor entreaties were of any avail then, and they were brutally torn from their concealment, and slaughtered without mercy.

Hans having placed the door between him and his pursuers, in one instant had formed a plan of escape; for his faculties were roused into activity by the conflict, and no vestige of his ordinary phlegm remained. Quickly throwing back the casement of the window that opened to the rear of the house, and telling Conrad to leap for his life, he waited until the boy was landed safely in the snow beneath, and sprang down to his side. Making their way across the yard, which was filled by deep

drifts, they reached the stables opposite; their hearts meanwhile pierced by loud and frequent shrieks, that issued from the upper part of the building, and told but too plainly the fate of the defenceless beings who lodged there. Hans, without delay, seized one of the farm-horses, and forcing it boldly outside the stable door, placed Conrad thereon, and vaulted up before him, still retaining the axe with which he was armed, to aid him in his escape. But the horse, alarmed by the general uproar, and by the unseasonable interruption of its repose, reared up and snorted, throwing Conrad from his back into the snow, and ere his companion could assist him to remount, a shout from the open window proclaimed that the door of the bedroom was forced. In another instant, one of the assailants darted swiftly from the casement, and threw himself before the animal. Relinquishing then all hopes of saving the boy, and in eminent peril himself, Hans thought only of making good his retreat. He struck the horse violently with the helve of his axe, and as the animal leaped forward, he swung it round with the full strength of his arm, and brought it down upon the bare head of the Indian who tried to intercept his flight. The steel clove through bone and brain, sheer to the shoulders, and the

man sank, without a cry, beneath the hoofs of the horse, while Hans, mad with excitement, and uttering a fierce yell, leaped the barrier between the yard and highway. He plunged for a brief space through a bank of snow that half buried his horse, gained the more beaten track in the centre of the road, and flew along with desperate speed in the direction most favourable to his escape. But the main street through which he coursed was occupied by numerous straggling parties of the enemy, engaged in rifling and setting fire to the dwellings adjoining, so that he was fain to run the gauntlet through these marauders, and it was by a sort of miracle that he came out alive, for, as he dashed past, many a blow was aimed at him and his horse, and many a tomahawk whirled within a few inches of his body. But the cloud of snow which he threw around him, as he tore along, obscured the eyes of the foe, and gave security to his flight, though neither man nor beast escaped altogether unscathed, for, as he left the last of his opponents behind, a random ball struck him in the leg, severely shattering the limb, while the faithful animal he rode had received some knife wounds in the haunches, though not deep enough to interrupt the rapidity of its motions, for it held on unflinchingly, and in a few moments reached the stockades,

and bore its rider, with a nervous bound, through the open gateway on the road leading to Albany, the only asylum of refuge remaining to the fugitive from the ravaged village.

Conrad, stunned by the fall, lay for some time where he was thrown, but with returning consciousness, he sought shelter in one of the out-buildings hard by, and made his way into an upper loft, where he hid himself behind some hay.

All resistance had now ceased, and no sound of a familiar voice was heard in the pillaged mansion. But instead of such, there issued from it loud yells and bursts of revelry in a foreign language; and he beheld, through a chink in the barn, the hostile party busily engaged in sacking the different rooms of their valuables, and making free with what they found in the well-stocked larder. And some piled on enormous fires, and sat around the hearths, carousing, their faces begrimed with blood, which gave them a hideous aspect, in the glare of the flame; while its fitful ray gleamed, at times, upon several mysterious-looking objects on the floor, in the most obscure part of the rooms where they were; and the boy's hair rose from his head, as he traced in them some resemblance to the human outline. And were those strange shapes, so motionless, amidst a band

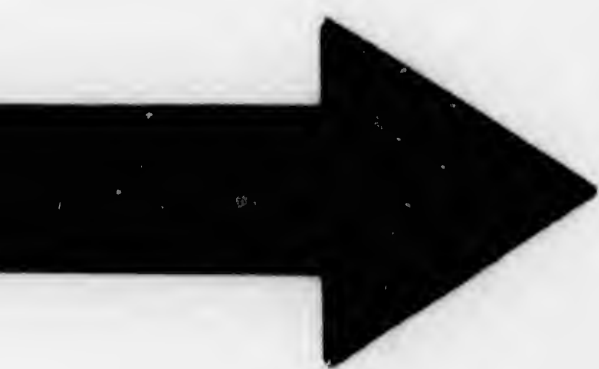
of frenzied savages, the corpses of his murdered friends? Conrad could not believe the harrowing testimony of his eyes, and strove to turn them from the fearful spectacle, yet still they fixed, in horrible fascination, on the groups about the fires; some eating and drinking with the eagerness of famished beasts, others dancing and howling in frantic mirth, while a number, composed chiefly of Canadian French, made a prudent use of the time, by collecting the most important part of the booty, and making it up into packages convenient for transport. All these movements the boy followed with half-stupified feelings; as if, what he beheld, were but the distorted images of some fever-excited dream; nor could he imagine whence their domestic peace had been so remorselessly invaded; until he remembered the conversation between his protector and Hans, as previously detailed—which gave him some clue to the origin, though his conception of the purpose of so unprovoked an assault, was sufficiently vague.

The boy's whole soul was absorbed by the awful acts perpetrated in his vicinity; for the village was now intensely illuminated by the flames that burst out in every direction, from the dwellings which, with few exceptions, were in the entire possession of the enemy. And many instances

of atrocity and human suffering, unheard of till then, even in the revolting annals of border warfare, revealed themselves to his eyes. In some places were beheld knots of villagers, standing knee-deep in the snow, and defending themselves against a host of enemies, with the mad energy of despair; but these were gradually thinned off, until the last fell a victim to the hatchet or knife; then the disfigured bodies were trampled upon by the assailants, who turned away to search for further victims. And from the doors of many houses were dragged forth the wretched inmates, half-clothed, and trembling with terror, and without regard to sex or age, they were coldly butchered, scalped, and cast naked upon the highway. Also, dreadful to relate, women and infants were thrown, living, into the flames, and mingled their ashes with those of the tenement they had occupied. And amid this scene of carnage and devastation were several stalled cattle, that sped about through the streets and enclosures, frantic with terror; and numbers were wantonly stabbed as the fierce borderers approached them, in their passage to and fro, while the air was filled with shrieks and roars, which produced the most horrible discord imaginable.

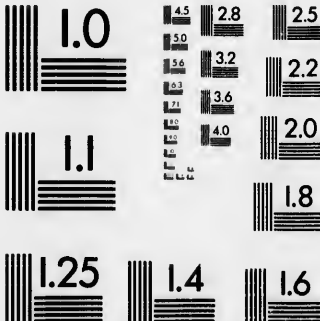
It is a wise and merciful ordination, that feeling should destroy itself by its own intensity;





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enabling us to endure, without injury, what else would be sufficient to crush out intellect, if not life itself. Thus it was that Conrad beheld, with an unconsciousness and half-apathy, what never failed to make him shiver, whenever, in after years, he recalled the visions of that night. But he was soon obliged to confine his attention to his immediate neighbourhood, where the band that held the family mansion, having banqueted and plundered to their hearts' content, fired it in several places and departed, leaving it a prey to the flames, with its walls defiled, its furniture a wreck, and its inmates murdered. Strongly illuminated as the interior was, Conrad could distinguish the familiar objects of what had been to him as a second home; at least, such as escaped the hands of the spoiler. There, over the mantle-piece of tiles, in the small parlour still hung the full-length portrait of the renowned Governor Stuyvesant—familiarly termed Peter the Headstrong—in his antique Dutch garb, though the work of the artist was half defaced, and torn from the frame. But the good old Gottlieb van Scheffler, who would have grieved most at this indignity, was now no more, so it mattered little; and here and there, over the floors, were still lying those mutilated forms, so replete with symmetry and vigour, and the warm energies of life, but a

few hours before; the boy could not bear to scrutinize too closely the mournful remains of those he had loved.

The old clock stood also in its accustomed corner, though its case was shattered, and the glass broken. Nevertheless, the dial was uninjured, and, strange to relate, and this was remembered long after by Conrad, its hands still pointed to the hour of midnight—that hour pregnant with so much woe to the people of Schenectady—for, as though forewarned of what was about to happen in its little world, it registered the last point of time, or claimed some secret sympathy with the hearts of those whose whole lives were chronicled by its throbs; as soon as it had completed, in solemn strokes, the fatal number, it stopped its action for ever!

Meanwhile, throughout the place, the noise and confusion of the strife still raged, though the storming party met everywhere with ultimate success, which, in a few instances only, was protracted by resistance. The block-house was carried by Mantel, after some hard fighting with the garrison inside, and every one found there perished; for wherever the slightest opposition was made, the inhabitants were put to the sword.

"Ils n'avaient pas voulu croire," says an author, "qu'il fût possible aux Canadiens chargés

de leurs vivres et de leurs armes, de faire plusieurs centaines de milles au travers des bois et des marais au milieu des glaces et des neiges. Incrédulité qui leur coûta cher !” What, then, could have exceeded the amazement and dismay of this frontier settlement when, startled from sleep by the well-known war-whoop of the enemy, the inhabitants beheld pouring in upon them, a host of armed foes, grim and rugged with long exposure, and burning with revenge ? Well indeed might these men, fiery-eyed and covered with frost, have appeared like appalling phantoms in the deserted streets !

The whole village, as we have said, was soon in possession of the invaders, and presented a vast theatre of ruin and carnage. No mercy was shown during the assault, for a feeling of retaliation prompted the Canadians to a general massacre, and the mother’s prayer, the maiden’s tears, the infant’s moan, and the wild intreaties of manhood for life, were alike unheeded, and wrought no impression upon beings transformed into tigers by the delirium of the hour.

The scalping-knife played freely, and those revolting acts were repeated, which gave such atrocity to the massacre at La Chine. But, on this occasion, the perpetrators were men bred up to the usages of civilized life, and schooled in the tenets

of Christianity! It is humiliating, indeed, to think how easily man can forsake his refinement, and, with a stride, go back to barbarism. It was only after the violence of their animosity had been appeased by the shedding of blood, and the destruction of everything upon which they could lay their hands, that the lives of the miserable survivors were spared. Sixty-three persons had perished, either by the knife or bullet, while some expired in the agonies of the most cruel torture that savage ingenuity could devise, or fiendish inhumanity practice upon a defenceless foe. And over the wastes of snow, even to the belt of forest, were scattered the glowing cinders of the burning village, which lighted up the murky sky, with a deep-red glare that was reflected brightly on the surface of the river and fields. When the lurid glow grew faint in the morning ray, two habitations alone remained within the palisades; one owing its preservation to some acts of kindness shown by its owner to Canadians who had been prisoners among the Indians in the vicinity; the other, in consequence of its sheltering that wounded leader who had headed the party in the attack upon the mansion of Gottlieb van Scheffler. With these exceptions, the only vestiges remaining of the pleasant Schenectady, were several blackened chim-

neys, of forlorn appearance, looking like monuments of disaster amid the desolation that surrounded them ; while, over all, descended in a silent shower, the heavy flakes of snow. Nature was already veiling the tokens of the mournful tragedy with her robe.

CHAPTER VII.

A CAPTURE AND AN ESCAPE.

CONRAD, in the meantime, observed that the fire was gradually encroaching upon his place of concealment, and that the boards against which he leaned were becoming charred with the heat. At length the range of barns caught, and almost instantly burst into full blaze, from the inflammable nature of their contents. This drew a shout from several of the enemy, who were still about the premises, on the watch for any stragglers that might have escaped from the adjoining cabins, and taken refuge in the out-buildings. Several half-clad individuals were soon driven out by the heat, and as they emerged from their hiding-places, they were immediately seized and bound. Conrad remained until he became almost suffocated by the smoke, and half roasted by the

furnace-like flames, in trying to make his escape at the back of the shed, but was at length compelled to desist from his efforts in that direction, and thinking any fate preferable to being burnt alive, he slipped out through an open space below the door in front, and crouched down behind a ridge of snow, that ran with a sweep around the corner of the building; but the quick eye of an Indian detected his movements, and before he was aware that he had been seen, he felt himself seized in a powerful grasp, while a voice that seemed not altogether strange to him, hissed in his ear, "The white rabbit think 'm cunning, very much, but Injin know how to make him come out of his hole; now let him be quiet, much better, and fill him mouth with snow, for s'pose him speak, him die."

Conrad turned a fearful look upon the speaker, and recognised the Indian who had lit his pipe, and rejected the entertainment proffered him in the kitchen of his patron. Feeling his utter helplessness, and the danger of exciting the anger of his captor, the boy was induced to comply with the injunction, and preserved an unbroken silence, while he submitted to have his arms bound, and to be conducted wherever it pleased him whose prisoner he had now become. And well for him it was that he did so, for though grievously buffeted

by several of the enemy, who gathered around, jeering and reviling him, he was saved from serious injury by his unresisting demeanour, and finally rescued from their hands, by his conductor, who assumed entire control over him.

Led by this person, the boy passed through many a group of blood-stained and wild-looking men; and several times an axe was lifted, and a gun pointed at him with deadly intent; but the weapons were thrust impatiently aside, by his master, who, at the same time, spoke to those around, in the Indian language, with strong utterance and rapid gesticulation. So they left him unmolested, and were the more inclined thereto, from the sheer fatigue of killing. Passing on amidst smoking ruins and over the bodies of men and cattle, strewn promiscuously along the highway, and already half buried in snow, the two came to where a strong light shone upon an open space in the middle of the village: this proceeded from the church in its centre, which was now wrapped in a sheet of livid flame, to the point of its vane-crowned spire.

Here Conrad was permitted to join a number of captives, huddled together beneath a large sycamore, and in a woful plight, from the severe usage they had received. These poor creatures turned looks of sympathy towards the boy, as he added

himself to their party, and seemed to take a mournful pleasure in detailing to him the extent of their losses, and the melancholy prospect of suffering and captivity now before them. Nevertheless, it was strange to observe what comfort they appeared to derive from the idea that their lives were spared, though the whirlwind of aggression had swept away kindred, home and friends; but had some of them known fully for what misery they were reserved, they might have preferred lying also stark and frozen in their winding-sheet of snow. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and is so essential an element of our being, that there is scarcely a position, however gloomy, upon which it does not shed its cheering ray, or an affliction that is not alleviated by its consolatory suggestions. And thus it was, that these distressed people endeavoured to support their drooping spirits by conversing together, and soothing their minds with the faint chance of liberation. There was something grateful to them also in the sound of their own voices; it banished thought, and enabled them the better to pass the weary hours—for that eventful night seemed as if it would never come to a close.

In the immediate vicinity of the tree was collected the main body of the Canadians, swelled, from time to time, by those who came in from

different parts of the village. The chiefs, however, neglected not to place sentinels at the different avenues of approach, to guard against a surprise, in case any party of the enemy should attempt to dislodge them during the night.

They now made ample amends for the privations of the route. Large fires were kindled, and at them, sheep and oxen were roasted whole; but many of the men would not wait until the meat was cooked, for they cut off large pieces with their knives, and eat it half raw. And about these fires, the conquerors danced and sang, and shouted, in wild whoops of triumph, that went, like sharp arrows, to the hearts of the poor captives,—making them shrink with consternation: for lashed into strong excitement by some momentary impulse, from time to time, one of their adversaries would approach with brandished weapon, and seizing the nearest by the hair, draw the sharp edge of the steel across the brow, until the blood burst forth—in rude mimicry of the operation of scalping—and the victim of such heartless merriment was almost dead with fright, when he would release him, and rejoin his companions, laughing aloud, and displaying, in the vigour of his antics, the enjoyment he derived from the sport.

Meanwhile, as before, over and around them

still descended, in a silent shower, the heavy flakes of snow.

Nature had not yet veiled the tokens of the mournful tragedy with her robe.

Day broke at length, through the dense veil of clouds—the dreary, melancholy day. The wan morning looked as cheerless as the prospect it revealed. Where at the setting sun stood a flourishing village, there was now to be seen only a few charred rafters and chimneys, bands of begrimed ruffians, bivouacked upon the snow, with horses picketed beside them, and a group of shivering prisoners bound under the sycamore tree.

That ray, however, feeble and wintry as it was, awakened a thrill of gladness in the breast of many a fainting fugitive from the scene of carnage; for along the route to Albany hurried several persons who had escaped from the beleaguering force, and were striving their utmost to reach the neighbouring town, though exposed, with but little clothing, to the cold, the driving storm, and the snow-drifts, through which they forced their way. Some on horseback and some on foot—the sturdy borderer, with his wife behind him, ready to drop with weariness; her limbs bare and frozen. The mother and babe, with little else to cover their shivering forms, than what they had on when, awakened by the war-cry of the enemy, she had

sprung from her bed, caught up her offspring, and taken hurriedly to flight. The little child, its cries drowned in the roar of the tempest, and nearly smothered at times, in the banks of snow through which it was dragged by some more powerful person, who, impelled by his own instinct of self-preservation saw not that its feet were cut and bloody, and its limbs tottering with fatigue. And thus they fled, urged into continued effort by the dread of pursuit; for in every blast that howled through the branches of the pines, they believed they heard the whoop of the foe, and felt the edge of the knife circling around their heads.

Far in advance of these stragglers, alone, in the darkness, rode a single horseman, who never, for an instant, checked his steed, the coat of which was encased in a sheet of frozen sweat, intermingled with particles of the snow, that flew, in blinding clouds, around, as it dashed along the unbroken track, sinking often to the knee. The rider used neither saddle nor bridle, but grasped with both hands the flowing mane; releasing one, however, from time to time, to inflict hard blows with his fist, upon the shoulders and side of the animal.

Then he would seize the mane again, which appeared to serve him as a support, for he was frequently upon the point of falling from his seat;

but, by a violent effort, he regained his balance and pressed again his horse to its utmost speed. The hair streamed wildly from his head, which was uncovered, and the features of his face were fixed in a rigid expression, denoting pain and stern extremity, while his body, bent forward, left the breast of his shirt open to the sleet that drove with arrowy sharpness against his skin. He might have been mistaken—had any met him on the road, in such a night—for one of those phantoms peculiar to the imagination of the Dutch settlers—launched in frenzied career, and wafted on the wings of the storm.

'Twas the wounded Hans who rode thus desperately, heedless alike of the cold and the tempest, and the sufferings of his horse, over the pathless and snow-drifted plains. Once only, his set teeth parted, in brief exclamation, as, upon gaining an eminence, he descried beneath him, the shores of the Hudson, faintly sketched out in the dull morning light, and, at a short distance from where he was, the lofty ramparts of Fort Orange, and the snow-covered roofs of Albany, embosomed amid the groves, and pouring forth, from its numerous chimneys, streams of fleecy smoke, that hung in a cloud, over the widely-built town. Just at that moment, the sombre mass that covered the sky, parted in twain, and a beam of golden sunshine fell upon

the landscape, making it glow with that wondrous brilliancy, only to be seen during winter, in a northern clime; and upon the air, no longer agitated by the storm, there came the sound of the Sabbath bell, calling the people to prayers.

Hans gave a ghastly smile, as he became acutely sensible to the charm of this picture of calm and unsuspecting security, and contrasted it in his mind, with that he had left behind; but he was cheered by the warmth and radiance of the sunbeams, and stimulated to further exertion by the prospect of speedy relief, though he was as feeble as an infant, from the agony of his wound. In a few minutes he reached the stable-ades, and plunged through the gateway which had just been unclosed, and with a final effort, pushed the exhausted steed into the midst of a group of soldiers, who had observed his approach.

Hans succeeded in relating, in few and broken words, the dreadful tale, of which he was the bearer, and then fell swooning from his horse, into the arms of the bystanders.

The destruction of Schenectady caused the utmost alarm to the inhabitants of Albany, and the account first given, obtained full confirmation,—accompanied by the most heart-rending details, upon the arrival of the fugitives, who came dropping in, hour after

hour, in a truly pitiable condition ; many being so badly frozen, that they lost their limbs, while others never recovered from the effects of their exposure ; surviving only, to experience in their last moments, those comforts of which they had been deprived, and to pour into the ear of sympathizing friends, the sad narrative of their sufferings.

As usual, in similar cases of disaster, consequent upon a night attack, the darkness and confusion had served to exaggerate the number of their adversaries, in the eyes of those who escaped. The people of Albany therefore, were seized with fear lest the enemy, emboldened by recent success, and in force sufficient for the emergency, should venture to attack the capital itself. Speedy measures were taken to resist the threatened invasion, by arming the batteries, erecting barricades, and calling in the militia from the neighbourhood ; while, at the same time, alarm-guns were fired to give warning to the numerous straggling settlements in the country around.

But that which was of paramount importance to them, at the moment, they neglected to do : namely, to send intelligence of what had happened, to the Mohawk village, only seventeen miles distant.

In consequence of the badness of the travelling, however, or the universal panic that prevailed, this

was not effected until two days had elapsed, when, without delay, one hundred picked warriors threw themselves, like bloodhounds, upon the trail of the retiring Canadians.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BACKWARD TRAIL—THE PRISONERS' RELEASE—A FOREST GRAVE.

It was not until noon of the day following the night, whose direful catastrophe we have described, that the invading force prepared to depart from the scene of the massacre.

At that hour, the band assembled, and gathering together, from the ruined cabins and rude camping places, the packs of booty selected from the spoils, bound them upon the backs of the strongest horses they could find, and obliged the prisoners, likewise, to draw after them tobagans, similarly loaded. They then gave three parting whoops, that rang like a death-shriek over the waste, and marshalled by their leaders, in a long file, took up the line of march back to Canada. We must not forget to mention, however, that ere they left, some prisoners were liberated at the solicitation of that

Captain Glen, whose name has been already mentioned in a former page, and whose prayer for the restoration of his captured relatives was granted, in consideration of his humanity to French prisoners, on several previous occasions.

Many Indians also, belonging to the neighbouring bourg, and found within the pallisades of Schenectady, were permitted to return home; the Mohawks of Caughnawaga not being willing to injure their countrymen, neither were the Canadians desirous of drawing upon themselves the vengeance of the dreaded Iroquois, in addition to that of the English colonists, the close vicinity of whom, made them anxious to leave a spot, bearing such damning testimony against them. Indeed the dread of pursuit increased, hour after hour, tracking their retiring footsteps like the shades of their late victims, and conjuring up in their minds, such a scene of guilty terror, that the march soon assumed rather the character of a disastrous flight, than that of a war-party returning in triumph home. But such was not unfrequent in a border foray, where success was insured by stratagem rather than numerical force, and a wide region had to be traversed, ere security could be obtained from the vengeance of an injured foe.

The hurry and confusion of the band became each day more apparent in its movements, while

pursuing its devious way over the snow, then hardened in the track made in approaching the English frontier.

It was now near the middle of February—called by the Indians, “the Moon of the crusted Snow;” when the rays of the sun first begin to act upon the glistening surface, and cause it to crisp into a glassy sheet of enamel, in the sharp nights of the season. Thus for some days, the wretched prisoners escaped much of the hardship to which they were afterwards exposed; as few among them were provided with snow-shoes, or indeed, sufficient clothing for the occasion, and they were thankful for being enabled, without much physical suffering, to follow their brutal masters over the hard snow, dragging their trains after them, without sinking in. This was an infinite relief, indeed, and saved them many a savage blow and curse, showered liberally upon any one, who from fatigue or sullenness, failed to preserve the place allotted him in the line.

The Canadians could not move, however, as quickly as they desired, being retarded by the laden horses, to which the snow-crust did not afford sufficient support, and the necessity of carrying their wounded officer, Montigni. What added greatly to their uneasiness, also, was an unaccountable oversight they had committed,

namely, that amid the general scramble for plunder at the sacking of the village, none had thought of making provision for their subsistence on the way back. Strange to say, while revelling in abundance, they were preparing for themselves the contingency of subsequent starvation. This fatal error, discovered only when irretrievable, was but little calculated to give them assurance, when about to face once more the privations and toils they had already experienced, and cast a gloom upon many a visage lately jocund with mirth and overweening triumph; and it was with many a *sacré* and grimace, expressive of repugnance to the act, to which the gnawings of hunger alone compelled them, that they sat down to feed upon the flesh of one of their horses, only the second morning after the massacre.

But where all this time was the young and bereaved Conrad, whom we left among the prisoners? The boy was seated upon a horse laden with that share of the pillage which his master claimed, while the Indian stalked by its side on snow-shoes, urging it on by heavy blows whenever it seemed desirous of resting from the labour of ploughing through the track.

Conrad's youth stood him in good need in the present instance, as it incapacitated him from drawing a burden, and inclined even his captor, un-

scrupulous as he seemed, to use him tenderly, and save him the misery of travelling on foot, which would have been insupportable to one so softly bred, and so unused to violent exertion. And in other respects, he suffered less than might have been supposed, for the constant occupation which the novelty of everything around gave to his mind, together with the repeated necessity of making an effort, were of essential benefit to him at the time, as they prevented him from brooding upon events still recent, and tended to liberate his faculties from the thralldom with which they were enchained, upon that night of horrors, the mere recollection of which wrought like madness on his brain.

And so it happened that he got on tolerably well for the first few days, though pinched at times by hunger, his master not allowing him sufficient for his wants, slight as they were, and being yet loath to partake of the ungenial fare which the less dainty foresters now greedily devoured.

One thing caused him some distress ; this was his being separated from the rest of the captives, each of whom was constrained to follow in advance of the person who exercised the privilege of ownership over him, and accompanied him to his bivouac at night, where he slept as he best could, with his arms bound behind him, to prevent the possibility of escape ; while among the group around the fire,

where Conrad was accustomed to pass the, to him, wearisome hours allotted to the general repose, there chanced to be no prisoner save himself. Once, however, by some change of arrangement, a Canadian and a female captive were added to the party to which he belonged, and the comfort the boy derived from the presence of a fellow-sufferer, was enhanced by a previous acquaintanceship with the individual in question, for he recognised in the travel-worn and attenuated being who greeted him with a look, in which intelligence and sympathy were strangely mingled, as she took her place by the fire, the sister of the stout Hans, who had been frequently at the house where her brother was employed. But so changed had she become by excessive hardship, from the well-conditioned and joyous maiden he remembered, that, but for the glance from those large, liquid eyes, which were filled with an expression of melancholy that brought tears to his own, he would not have known the wretched shape before him.

The exhausted girl threw herself prostrate upon the scanty branches strewed upon the snow, and remained motionless there, while the materials of a miserable supper were being prepared; and when her master shook her roughly, and placed a portion of the loathsome food at her side, she appeared to awake, as from a swoon, and raising herself with difficulty,

turned towards the dish of bark containing her share. When her eyes beheld, however, of what it was composed, she put it away with an averted face, while a visible shudder crept over her.

Conrad observing this, and deeply moved, gathered together some scraps of bread from a portion of a loaf his master had given him the previous day, and, unseen by the others, put them into the hand of his fellow captive. The kindness evinced by the act was felt, but its aim was unsuccessful, for the poor girl thanked him with her eyes, yet shook her head despairingly. They dared not speak, all communication being strictly forbidden between the prisoners, but she put her hand upon her chest to let him know that she felt pain there, and had no desire for food, and then strove to impart warmth to her emaciated limbs by creeping closer to the fire.

At length, after the lapse of a few hours, the silence was unbroken around the watch-fires, all eyes being closed in sleep, save those of the sentinels, and, it might be, of many a care-worn captive, whose thoughts were too busy to permit the approach of that good angel whose cordial imparts strength to the weary, and forgetfulness to the sorrowful of heart. The boy lay wrapped in a blanket beside the blazing fire, yet he trembled with the cold, for the night air seemed as if filled

with arrowy needles of frost that penetrated his scanty covering, and pierced him to the bones. The death-like chill drove away all inclination to sleep, though, at the same time, it left a sensation of fatigue, painfully oppressive.

He gazed upon the stars that scintillated with diamond-like lustre in the keen atmosphere, between the sombre branches of the trees; but they made him feel yet colder, and he turned his eyes away, and strove to draw nearer to the burning brands.

Moving with this intent, he chanced to touch the person near him, from whom there proceeded a half-suppressed groan, when he discovered it to be the sister of Hans, whose master, having taken his turn of duty as sentinel, had left vacant the place he occupied, which chanced to be the only space that separated the prisoners from each other. Conrad was rejoiced at this, being in hopes of finding some means of communicating with his neighbour, and he was the more inclined to venture upon the attempt, when he observed that the guard seemed inclined to doze, as he sat, with his carbine across his knees, a few yards apart from the circle of sleepers around the fire. In a short time, his head, drooping forward by imperceptible degrees, reached his lap, where it rested supinely, while the depth of

the slumber that had obtained the mastery over his watchfulness was betrayed by a snore.

Thus secured from detection, Conrad touched the shoulder of the girl with his hand, and inquired in a whisper:

"Art thou awake, Martha?"

But no answer came from the recumbent form beside him, and after a pause, he asked again, very softly:

"Martha, Martha, wilt thou speak to me?"

"Forbear, Master Conrad, in the name of the Lord!" said the girl, in faint and broken accents, "lest worse evil befall thee; forgettest thou that the heathens are around us? The angels soften them to merey!"

"No, Martha, but they are asleep, with thy master also, who keepeth the watch; so do speak to me a few words, for I feel very lonely and sad of heart; and thee—how fareth it with thyself? You looked weary and disconsolate, and my heart bled for thy sake when we came here. Would I could deliver thee from these wicked men!"

"Bless thee for the wish, master, for I am in sore extremity, and never felt I before, as I now feel. There is a gnawing pain within me, and my brain burns, though the rest of my body is like ice. Oh God! how cold it is!"

"Ah, yes, Martha! I cannot sleep—it pierces me so keenly."

"Young master," resumed the girl, after a little while, "I am glad of this occasion, for something tells me my prayer will be heard—and I have been praying earnestly for death ever since I lay me down, as a relief from woes too great to be borne—I feel that I shall never leave the place where we now are." Here the speaker broke off abruptly, being seized with a sudden spasm which shook her like an ague, and made her groan with pain. Her intellect also appeared to be affected during the attack; for after it subsided, she asked the boy what voices those were singing among the trees, and why he urged her to change her faith; for she said he had. But Conrad disavowed all utterance of such a proposal, and told her that he had not said or seen anything since she last spoke, and therefore concluded that she must have been dreaming. She said then that she supposed she had, though that was strange too, for she had been racked by dreadful pangs, but felt better now—only, her very heart seemed turning to ice, and if she had but another blanket, to put around her, what a blessing it would be. Thereupon Conrad arose silently; and unknown to the poor sufferer, cast over her the only covering he possessed, with the determination of passing the rest of the night

by the fire. He was soon repaid for the sacrifice, by finding that his companion ceased to tremble, and appeared more tranquil than before. After a little she called to him faintly, and he inclined his ear close to her lips, to catch their imperfect accents, when she said :

"Tell me. In that dreadful night when the foeman fell upon our village, and dealt unsparingly with their cruel swords, where was Hans, my brother? did he too share the fate that they told me befel the household of Gottlieb van Schefler?"

Then Conrad related to her all that the reader already knows, consoling her with the belief that her brother had made good his retreat from the invaded hamlet, as he was well mounted and of resolute courage.

"Heaven grant it, and shield thee from harm, my brave Hans!" muttered the captive, clasping her hands in the fervour of her sister-prayer; and as she continued, her sentences were at times interrupted by heavy sobs, which seemed wrung from the very depth of her wounded heart, and her voice sounding mournfully and low.

"Would that we had never left the Fatherland, to endure these perils! The wilderness is no place for a Christian to die in—the kindness of men's hearts is dried up by war, and the naturals

are wild and of cruel ways—and leagued against the stranger." Here again the speaker paused; then, with a wild look, she gazed around her, and said, beseechingly:

"Master Conrad, do not leave me."

"No, dear Martha;—behold I am by thee still."

"Then let me hear thy voice betimes; for it cheers me like music—the language of my native land."

"In that case, if it so pleaseth thee, and be not wearisome, I would like to repeat some verses my dear mother once taught me. They are very solemn, and perchance, may soothe thee."

And the girl replied, "Do, my good, kind friend."

Whereupon, the boy recited the following lines, from Jean Aszman, the expression of which, to the listener, was invested with a peculiar sublimity and holiness, for they were delivered in her own language—the grand spirit-moving language of Germany.

"In the silent hour of Night, when all sleep,
how watchful is mine eye. I think of the rapid
flight of Time, that carries our short existence
away.

"O my soul, trust not in any hour! Thou
knowest not when life is broken; thou journeyest

by the short road of Time towards the long Eternity!

"The length of a day is fixed by the course of the sun; but who can measure that long day, which is without an eve?

"The year ceases when the twelve months have elapsed. When shall that year arrive—the last of all?

"The size of the earth is known, and the depth of the ocean; but who can describe that which has neither beginning nor end?

"My soul, put not faith in the fool who should promise thee a long life. The road of this life is short, it leads to the immeasurable eternity."

"Ah!" said the girl, as the speaker ceased, "that consoles me—that immeasurable eternity. What a poor thing this human life is, after all—that we should cling to it with such a yearning—compared with that beyond. And now, while there is yet time, let me ask of thee one more favour. Promise me, if deliverance be vouchsafed thee from this strait, and something assures me that it will, for there is that in thy face which is not akin to sorrow or slavery; promise me, when ye

meet again my brother Hans, that thou wilt bear to him his sister's blessing, and her last words. Say that she loved him very dearly—and died with a hopeful spirit, but let him not know of this misery and suffering, or of the dreariness of this—her dying pillow. 'Twould but grievously afflict his brotherly heart—which was ever tender as a woman's towards me. Bid him, for me, to be honest and true, and of good faith—and so, God will bless him till we meet again. Wilt thou do this for me, good friend?"

And the boy replied fervently, and with emotion, "I will."

"Now," said she, "give me thy hand, and as thou hast been kind to me, so may ye never, never want for it through life, and in your last hour. Stoop low, that I may kiss thy cheek, for I feel a gentle sleep stealing upon me, and the night wanes."

He bent down, and took the girl's hand, which was clammy and cold, and let her press her lips against his cheek, bidding her a tender good night—he could not say farewell, but he wept bitterly.

He was unwilling to believe that she was so near her end, as she herself imagined, though the solemnity with which she spoke, impressed him with awe, and filled him with a vague sense of

apprehension on her account; so that he had not the heart to suggest hope to the sufferer,—world-wearied and reconciled to death as she seemed. Indeed, it appeared to him as if such would be but a blessed and merciful relief; for the stern tyrant lost half his accustomed terror, when viewed in the character of a deliverer from captivity and physical suffering.

Thinking thus, and sobbing quietly, he leaned his head upon his knees, around which his arms were wound, and all unconsciously, fell into a lethargic slumber, from which he was aroused by the borderers, bestirring themselves about the bivouacs; as the daylight was breaking in the forest.

The whole encampment was soon in a bustle, and while some added fuel to the smouldering fires, or the purpose of cooking breakfast, others gathered up their skins and blankets and packed them tightly preparatory to starting; yet all this time the female captive remained without motion, where she had passed the night. At length, her master, enraged at this apparent apathy, shook her roughly, and commanded her to arise, but she obeyed not the summons, which so exasperated him, that he dealt her a fierce kick, as she lay, to accelerate her movements. Still no sound escaped the sleeper, and no motion was visible in the wrappings that

concealed her. What could this mean? The astonished Canadian drew back the blanket from her face. Jesu! the girl was dead!

It was wonderful to note how those rude men were moved by the pathos of that one death—glutted as they were with massacre, and rendered sympathetic by privation. With a softened expression on their countenances, and speaking in a subdued tone, they eat their morning meal, and immediately afterwards set about hollowing a shallow grave with their axes, from the frozen soil, beneath the ashes of the fire; when the remains of the girl, bound up in a blanket and lifted with care, were placed within it and covered over with earth, boughs, and a few stones. Then one of them made a rude cross out of a young sapling, stuck it at the head of the grave, and muttered over it a brief prayer in French—during the recital of which, the rest stood around with uncovered heads; thus was completed the burial rite in the wilderness on that winter morning.

Conrad was the last to leave the low mound that hid, for ever from human eye, one towards whom he had been strongly attracted by a feeling of sympathy and compassion, enhanced by the similarity of their lot, and whom he now lamented as his last friend. The tears rolled in quick succession down his cheeks, and his sobs were audible

to the men, who respected his grief, for they offered him no molestation while preparing for the march.

When the band was ready to proceed, however, his Indian master touched him on the shoulder, and said to him in the French language, and in a kinder tone than he had yet addressed the boy :

“ Weep not, young stranger. The happy hunting grounds, where my fathers dwell, are very large and beautiful, there is room enough there too, look you, for the daughter of the Pale-faces.”

CHAPTER IX.

RETALIATION—A CALM—THE FATE OF CONRAD IS DECIDED
BY THE FORTUNE OF A GAME OF HAZARD WHICH THROWS
HIM INTO STRANGE COMPANY.

DAY after day, they journed on, pinched with hunger, and haunted by the dread of pursuit. The prisoners, nearly forty in number, were at length so exhausted, that they could scarcely drag their weary and lacerated limbs along the track, and the loaded tobougans which they had drawn after them, up to that period, were obliged to be abandoned by their reluctant captors; while all this time, they subsisted entirely upon the flesh of their horses, which dwindled down in number from fifty to six, ere they reached the valley of the St. Lawrence. Previous to this, however, a dread of famine induced them to separate into two parties; that in which Conrad was included, pursuing an

easterly course, by which it escaped the mischance that befell their comrades. For scarcely had the force been divided, when that portion, destined for Montreal, was overtaken by the party of Mohawks, which united to some English from Albany, had been sent to harass their retreat. These fell upon them with fury, killing and capturing a considerable number, and recovering most of the plunder, transported with such infinite pains from the ruins of Schenectady.

The young captive, whose fortunes we propose following, experienced a kinder treatment than he had anticipated from the Indian—Saguyasatla by name—whose property he was become. He had not looked for human feelings in those whom he was taught to regard as beings intractable by nature, and delighting in bloodshed.

He had yet to know the traits that shine out so brightly in the Indian character from the gloom often cast upon it by those storms of passion incident to an impetuous nature, loathing restraint, and which invest it with so benign a radiance, when viewed with an impartial eye, and unchilled by hostility or aggression.

Still he could not avoid a share of the hardships, from which none were exempt, and being unused to such extremes, his sufferings were proportionably great. The animal upon which he rode, was at

length, in its turn, sacrificed at the urgent calls of hunger, and he was then obliged to trudge along on foot, weak as he was, with his garments hanging in shreds about him, and in a half famished condition. Indeed, it is doubtful whether he would have survived many days longer the vicissitudes of this terrible march, if they had not fallen in with an encampment of Abenake Indians, with whom they stayed some time to recruit their strength, and celebrate their recent exploits. The scalps were counted, stretched, and ornamented, as decorations for the dress of the warriors, while their Canadian allies never grew wearied with recounting the particulars of the action in which they had been engaged.

For several days there was constant singing and dancing in the Indian lodges, in honour of the triumph obtained over the enemy, during which, the prisoners were exposed to the most insulting and cruel treatment; with the exception of Conrad, who, strange to say, seemed from the commencement, to acquire some nameless influence over the minds of the wild beings in whose power he was, though unconscious of it himself; for both young and old, haughty braves, soft-faced women, and bright-eyed, wicked-looking children, would in turn approach the place where he sat, in the corner of one of the wigwams, and after gazing long and

wonderingly at him, turn away, whispering to each other that he was "wa-wa-si-no"—a holy being.

They appeared to be awe-struck and subdued by the spirit-like delicacy of his features, and the peculiar quality of his beauty, depending as it did, so much upon the colour of his eyes and hair, a rarity to a dark-skinned race,—deepened the effect it produced upon the simple natives. The Indian maidens loved to supply his every want, and vied with each other for the privilege of sitting by his side, and at nightfall, some of these black-eyed nymphs would make him a soft couch of furs upon which he slept sweetly until dawn. This respite, however, from the evils incident to captivity, did not last beyond the melting of the snows, when, having completed the tedious process of manufacturing sugar from the sap of the maple tree, in which all were actively engaged, for some days before the general thaw, the Indian family struck their camps, and prepared to journey eastward; but before they sat out, our young friend was fated to undergo a change of masters, and the cause was as follows :

Saguyasatla was much addicted to gambling, and passed most of his leisure hours in playing those games of hazard of which his people are so passionately fond. On the night previous to their departure, he was similarly occupied, and stimulated

by *eau-de-vie*, purchased from a trader, as well as by his success, for he had won everything his opponent possessed, even to the *capôt* upon his back; he rose up in a boastful manner, and challenged the bystanders to match him, if they dared. This defiance did not remain unaccepted, for a tall, gaunt-looking individual came forward, and offered to play with him, though he appeared poorly clothed, and had nothing to stake against the wealth of the other, save a necklace of wampum, which hung, in thick strings, upon his breast, and a plain hunting knife at his side.

Now, when the master of Conrad beheld this person, his eye became troubled, and his assurance visibly diminished; for he knew him to be a noted priest or Powow, one believed to possess the powers of sorcery, and held in peculiar dread by the tribe to which he belonged, among whose scattered villages he was known by the name of Bi-zon-kok-has, or the Medicine Owl. He was loath to attempt a trial of skill with one who would seize the opportunity, as a fair field for the exercise of his arts, at his expense. But as he had been the first to propose, he was too proud to withdraw, and accordingly, each sat down to the game; while the idlers gathered around, their interest strongly excited by the prospect of a sharp contest, and with a lively concern in the fortunes of the respective players.

At first, the fickle goddess seemed inclined to favour still the side of Saguyasatla; for at the second throw of the bone dice, which were tossed from a wooden platter, by striking its bottom suddenly upon the ground, the number of sides marked black, and remaining uppermost when they fell, proclaimed him the winner, and his antagonist quietly untied his wampum necklace and handed it over to his adversary; whereupon, Conrad's master, rendered over confident by repeated good luck, boldly offered to stake the whole of his effects against the sole remaining article of value the other now possessed; which was accordingly drawn from its sheath and deposited beside the players. Meanwhile the general excitement increased, and much betting took place among the lookers-on, upon the result of the game, the progress of which could be gathered from the exclamations that burst in rapid succession from the crowd.

"Hold, Saguyasatla; throw not until I ask my Manitou to give thee aid. Waligik-ao-agmak! (there is good in him!)" cried an Abenake warrior, with one hand upon the shoulder of him he addressed, while the other was raised in invocation.

"Faites place là!" shouted a bearded bush-
loper, forcing his way with some difficulty through

the throng. "Reculez-vous, mais n'arrêtez pas Douze livres de suere d'érable contre l'Agnier!"

"The Wanooch * talks very big," retorted the other. "I bet him two new stroud-blankets the Maqua wins."

"C'est bon! c'est bon! Jetez les os, done! Wgh! cowah! pazekw,—nis,—iaw, (one, two, four). Long life to the Caughnawaga brave! his medicine is very strong!"

"Prenez-garde là! reculez davantage!"

"Room for the Owl of the Sunrise tribes!" yelled another, as the individual, so styled, took the wooden dish in his two hands, preparatory to a throw. "He is a powerful dreamer. His eye flames up like a shooting star—like the Chibai-skwetta †—the fire-ghost that dances in the streams!" While the Coureur de Bois added, "Jouez done, Bizon-ko-kok-has, et vous gagnerez, pour le sûr!" And a sudden silence fell upon the wild circle, the persons composing which, stretched out their necks to the fullest extent, and leaned eagerly forward to obtain a glimpse of the conjurer, who with grave deliberation, jerked the dice aloft.

No sooner had they fallen, than the number indicated was announced aloud in triumph, by those who advocated his part, thus:

* Frenchman.

† Ignis fatuus.

"Voilà un bon coup ! cinq de noir ! No, eque-doz. I see six." "Six ; c'est vrai ! He has it. Vive le Jongleur !"

"Hoo-hoo-ya ! Coc-ha ! The Medicine Owl is very strong. Who can stand before him ? He has won everything from the Maqua, and left him naked as a little papoose."

"You speak the truth ; he has only left him his scalp. He has taken all besides !"

"Not all yet !" replied the master of Conrad, irritated, but not discomfited by the heavy loss he had sustained ; which comprised everything of value he possessed appertaining to the equipment of a warrior ; "the Pow-wow tells the spirits to turn the bones, and so he has won ; but Saguyasatla cares not ; he is a warrior, and scorns fear ; so he will play still, for he is not empty handed yet, and will stake his prisoner, the Yengie boy, against what he lost. If the Abenake wins, let him take him too. Saguyasatla will find many more upon the war-path, he is not greedy."

This proposition was received with loud applause by the bystanders, and acceded to by his opponent, while the betters were stimulated afresh, and grew more venturesome in their offers.

"Ten fathoms of wampum to five, that the Pow-wow wins !"

"Good !" responded another, of grave aspect ;

"who can tell the thing which has not been? It is possible he fail, even at the last hour."

"By the shade of my father!" cried a fiery young brave, gesticulating as he spoke, "if he loose, I will burn my *totem*;* for then will it be weaker than water!"

The speaker, however, was not reduced to this extremity, for the tables had turned decidedly against the master of Conrad, and the game was quickly declared in favour of the Medicine Owl; upon which the former—now reduced to poverty—sprang up from the ground in despair, and was about to break out of the circle, when his vanquisher shouted to him to remain. The other turned back, when the conjurer, standing erect, and throwing his skeleton-like figure into an haughty attitude, said:

"Son of the Maqua—Bizon-ko-kok-has—has no need of thy goods, nor can any one say he ever robbed a stranger in his wigwam. The boy he will keep, and the necklace that belongs to him of old, all else he gives back with a free hand. When the Medicine Owl wants anything, he asks it of the children of the Abenake: can they refuse him? He is no warrior, only a dreamer of dreams."

* Amulet.

At the conclusion of this address, loud plaudits and cries of astonishment arose on every side, and gratified the speaker's pride as he moved slowly away, after having, with a kind of ostentatious generosity, not unfrequent with him, thus restored all that he had won, reserving only, for reasons of his own, the youthful captive, whose possessor he had become by the success of his last throw. Conrad, therefore, was immediately transferred to his charge, and slept that night in the wigwam of the sorcerer.

Early on the following morning the band was on the move towards the St. Lawrence, upon reaching which, several canoes were abstracted from the hiding-place, or *cache*, where they had been concealed since the previous autumn, and launched into the swollen flood, now entirely free from ice, and rolling, with a mighty impulse, on its course, to discharge the surplus moisture of the forests into that grand reservoir of waters—the Northern Atlantic. For several days they descended the broad estuary, stopping for a short period at a considerable village of their people, situated upon its banks, where they were joined by many others, and continued their journey towards the fortress of Quebec, the head-quarters of their allies, the French, and the grand mart of

the Indian trade, where the natives were wont to exchange the furry produce of their hunting grounds for the rare and useful manufactures of the Old World.

Ere the party reached its destination, however, its numbers gradually diminished, several going off in different directions as inclination prompted, or interest enjoined, and among these were the Conjuror and his captive.

The former, while in the presence of his tribe, conducted himself with strict propriety, and showed a certain degree of kindness to Conrad, who was, nevertheless, somewhat alarmed at times by strange fits of waywardness and reserve, which began to be manifested in his demeanour, though at long intervals only. But no sooner had he left those with whom he had lived for some time previously, than the usual effects of solitude upon an unsound intellect, appeared in the frequency of his gloomy periods, and the increased moroseness of his disposition.

He now began to play the tyrant with his captive, treating him as a slave, and making him perform the rudest drudgery, regardless of his want of strength, and refusing him sufficient nourishment for the wants of his slender frame—not yet recovered from the shock of the winter

journey, and unaccustomed to the roughness of the woods.

The moody savage travelled on, along the southern shore of the river, seemingly without a definite object; one day striking back among the hills, and, on the following evening, encamping upon the margin of the stream; while all this time they subsisted upon roots—and even the bark of trees, when such were not to be obtained—and the smaller animals which the Conjuror entrapped with nooses of hair, pulled from the head of his follower. But it must not be thought that this strange being wandered at random through the forest; for his mind, for a long period, had been impressed with a belief that he was deprived of his soul by one of those evil spirits believed, by the Indians, to steal upon such as happen to sleep within their haunts, for the purpose of robbing them of this essence of immortality, when they sicken gradually and lose their reason, if the loss is not supplied by the soul of another, which is made to pass by the aid of magic, when liberated by the sacrificial knife. This it was that induced him to retain the captive, when giving back the rest of his winnings in the game we have described, and governed his subsequent movements, as he was in search of a fitting spot in which to cele-

brate the hideous rite intended to confer such important benefits upon himself, by the sacrifice of Conrad.

In ignorance of the fate for which he was reserved, the boy followed closely, during these harassing marches, being wrought into desperate exertion by a growing apprehension of his moody conductor, who stalked on, a gaunt, spectral shape, in the shade of the trees, absorbed in the reveries of his disordered fancy, and, like Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," holding him captive with his glittering eye, which now began to flash with the fire of madness, and strike terror into the beholder, already enfeebled with hunger and incessant fatigue.

At length the moment arrived which was to put an end to his sufferings, for the Conjurer, having found a suitable place, cleared away the underwood, lit a fire, and proceeded to array himself in his best clothes, which he had hitherto carried in a box at his back, made to do duty either as a trunk or drum, as occasion required.

He then proceeded, in spite of a desperate resistance, to strip the upper garments from his victim, whom he bound to a tree, when lo! beneath his vestment appeared the miniature of his mother, which he had saved and hoarded, with the greatest

care since his escape from the window of his bed-room on the night of the attack. This was no sooner beheld than it was seized and torn from the string to which it was fastened by the Indian, who gazed in wonder upon the fair lineaments it gave to view, and then placed it carefully in his pouch of skin, muttering to himself, meanwhile :

"The whiteman's totem is pretty strong, but it cannot save the pale-haired boy from the spells of Bizon-ko-kok-has. This medicine is like the fire-waters of the Awanooch;* it braces like a taught bow, and fills the heart with courage and sunny-dreams—yea with sunny-dreams! Surely the spirit of the fire-water is a powerful Manitou, a Manitou greater than the lightning, or the leaping thunder; for he vanquishes the stoutest brave!"

Thus he went on, talking to himself, until he had completed his arrangements, when he began immediately a wild invocation to his favourite spirits, previous to the contemplated design which was prevented only by the appearance of the worthy Salexis—as the reader already knows—who rescued Conrad from the hands of the maniac-sorcerer, and carried him to his temporary abode upon the banks of the Metawaquam, where we left them sleeping peacefully, in the first part of this narrative.

* Frenchman.

CHAPTER X.

A PROPITIOUS DAWN—REACTION—A STRANGE CONSOLATION
AND A STRANGER STORY.

WHEN Conrad opened his eyes, he found his liberator bending over him with a smiling aspect, who inquired kindly, how he felt after his night's rest; and when he replied that he was much refreshed and quite ready to go with him wherever he chose, the other rejoined, "Good, very good," and sat about transporting his moveables to a birch canoe, of most symmetrical proportions, that floated as lightly as a feather by the river side.

In a few minutes they had embarked, and were on their way down the stream; the sharp and buoyant fabric shooting like a fish through the water, propelled by the broad paddle which dipped and rose in measured movement, with the sinewy arms of Salexis. It was a pleasing sensation—that

of gliding without effort, as it were, on so clear a tide and in an atmosphere untroubled by a sigh, and cool and fragrant, with the breath of early morn. The boy began to inhale, with a rapture long unknown, the pure aroma of the wild; though his thoughts would often recur, with bitterness, to the loss of the portrait of his mother, which he had preserved with so much pains throughout all his trials. There was nothing of her remaining to him now, save that of which none could rob him—the memory of her sweet face. There, down deep in his heart of hearts, it was smiling still upon him—telling him to be not cast down; and, after a time, this conception exerted a powerful influence over him, and with the thoughts of her ideal presence, he was wonderfully consoled.

Half reclining upon a bundle of skins, he gazed with a curious eye upon the varied hues of the foliage skirting the river, and reflected with vivid accuracy in its pellucid depths, lulled, meanwhile, by the gentle rocking of the canoe, caused by the energy of its impulsion. And so he fell into a dreamy mood, which though not untinged with melancholy, was yet not sad.

It was the first time since his capture that he could be said to experience an entire freedom from apprehension, for, unlike those with whom he

had lately sojourned, there was that in the appearance and demeanour of his present companion, which inspired him with confidence; and such only, who have known extreme misery, can imagine the delicious feelings which began to possess him and dissipate the heavy gloom that had hung around him so long, rendering torpid every faculty of enjoyment. His very blood seemed to derive fresh vitality from the impulse of hope, and to flow in a warmer current through his veins, excited by the stimulus of reaction; and as the springs of his joyous nature obtained freer play, and he threw off the incubus of his sorrow—the holy and virgin beauty of the wilderness laid its spell upon his soul.

In the meantime, some conversation had taken place between the two, for Salaxis spoke French tolerably well, and Conrad had learned that language from his mother, and he had, moreover, been accustomed to hear it often spoken during his childhood on the banks of the Rhine; and though he found some difficulty, at times, in comprehending the patois of his conductor, yet his captivity had, in a manner, familiarized him to the accent of the natives, so that, upon the whole, they got on very well together. But the Indian was evidently not much of a talker, for when he had made a few inquiries relative to the boy's history, and answered the more lengthy questionings of the latter, he

relapsed into his usual silence ; while he plied his paddle without ceasing, and the bark moved rapidly along the waters.

At length they shot into a broader stream into which the Metawaquam ran at an acute angle, and which Salexis said came from some lakes northward of the setting sun, and would lead them to a larger water, whence, by another branch, they could reach his village on the Penobscot, to which he was journeying. As they descended, the water became shallow in places, obliging the Indian often to step out and draw the canoe after him ; which floated, without touching, over the sand-bars when relieved of his weight ; and several times, canoe and freight were carried across short portages, to avoid dangerous rapids obstructing the navigation ; so that it was not until the evening had far advanced, that they emerged from the mouth of the tributary, and shot into the strong current of the Waloostook, better known since as the St. John ; which, broken in many places by huge boulders, that lifted their rough heads above the surface, rolled its dark flood in solitary grandeur between bristling groves of pine that bordered it on either side.

Following its course for about a league, they landed upon the northern shore, where the canoe was unloaded and carried into the adjoining thicket,

after being carefully examined, to see if it had received any damage during the day. Then Salexis gathered some drift-wood from the shore and struck a light, which soon grew into a cheerful fire, and enabled him to broil some beaver-meat, which was speedily disposed of, as neither had tasted food since the morning; such being the usual custom among the natives, particularly when travelling. The Indian afterwards lit a short pipe of dark stone, beautifully carved, and telling Conrad simply to follow, made his way through the willow-bushes fringing the beach, and over an acclivity covered with fir, until he arrived at a certain spot where he stood still awhile, holding back the thick branches and bending forward, as if in observation, of something their displacement gave to view.

Satisfied with his scrutiny, at length he turned to Conrad and made a sign for him to draw near. The boy obeyed with a thrill of timidity as he marked the grave expression of his companion. There was little apparent cause for alarm, nevertheless, for as he looked through a vista of cedar boughs, he saw that they stood upon the verge of one of those small morasses, or cariboo bogs, which are often found to break, with their bare and mossy plain, the luxuriant growth of the forest, and are the favourite retreat of the deer, whose numerous

hoof-tracks may be seen imprinted deeply in their oozy bed. Conrad beheld nothing in this to create surprise, for, while wandering with the conjuror, he had several times come upon similar spots, and once, unexpectedly, approached so close to a moose that chanced to be grazing in one of them, that he was bespattered with the mud flung from its hoofs as the surprised monster dashed, with a snort, into the covert as he passed. There was, however, not even such a presence to give interest to the small circle of barren swamp before him, and after scanning it with his eyes, he turned to the Indian, inquiringly, and whispered :

"I see nothing, Salexis."

"Nothing, boy ? The child of the hatchet-makers* must use eye-water to make him see clearly. Look again, and tell me what those are gleaming so pale among the reeds ; there, where the evening mist is gathering in a little cloud ?"

Conrad looked, as desired, and immediately answered :

"Oh ! now I do see things, like branches bleached white, scattered about the swamp—some half-buried in the moss and rushes ; but I cannot tell what they are."

* The Europeans were sometimes so termed by the natives ; the hatchet having formed, in the first instance, the grand object of barter with the strangers.

"They are bones," said the Indian, solemnly.

"Bones ! surely no men have died here ?" and Conrad shuddered, as a vision of strife and slaughter passed before him, at the words.

"Oh, no ! The red men rest like their fathers, near the villages, in graves of cedar-wood, and wrapped in the fur of the beaver."

"Then, whence came these mournful things ? for I now see many more that I did not notice at first ; let us go away from this dismal place !"

And while he spoke, the boy clung closer to the Indian's side, and grasped the border of his tunic. But his fancies were quickly dispelled by his friend, who replied,

"Fear not, my child, they are only the bones of the deer that come, in the proper season, to shed their horns in this place, and sometimes, also, to lie down and die, when they have become too old to travel any more. It is their burial-ground, and therefore, held sacred by the Indian. Neither is it good to pass by without doing reverence to its Manitou. Know, that since anything was, a spirit of terrible power has kept watch over these relics, taking count of the number as they are given to his charge, and guarding them from the touch of anything bad, that he may deliver up his trust faithfully to the Master of Life at the last day. So our fathers have said, by whose light we journey."

"Come back, now," he added, as he turned away, and the branches, released from his grasp, sprang back into their place, and shut out the view. "We have tarried already too long; for the watcher is a jealous spirit, and may be roused to anger. I tell thee, boy, I would not touch one of those bones—no, not for Onanthio's* crown, which they tell me is a very precious thing."

With this Salexis retraced his way slowly to the river, and neither spoke again until they were seated once more beside the fire. Then Conrad, whose interest was strongly excited, begged Salexis to tell him something more about the place where they had been; whereupon the latter, having replenished his pipe, assumed an air of dignity, and spoke as follows:

The Legend of the Demon Deer.

"No one has ever counted the tribes of the earth or the stars—yet more numerous than the red men, or those shining people of the sky, are the invisible shapes that dwell everywhere around, above and beneath; in the air, in the woods, in the waters; on the mountain tops and under the hollow ground. They fan the summer air with their

* The sovereign of France, as likewise the Governor-General of Canada, were so styled by their Indian allies.

wings, and warm breezes murmur among the leaves. They paint the small flowers where they spring in the shady paths, and trace bright fantasies with the sunbeams upon the torrents and the clouds. They delight very much in innocent and gentle natures, for they make the maiden's cheek bloom with their soft kisses, and seal up the infants thoughts in pleasant dreams. Yet some there are of these immortal creatures, who, like men, take pleasure in evil. These prepare the tempest and blight the Indian's corn, and frighten the game from the hunter's track, and do many cruel things to such as provoke their anger. Ugh ! they are near us even now, boy, these unhallowed workers of sin, though we see them not : and it may be, their very breath is blowing against our faces, and that they are staring at us with their malignant eyes. I have often thought so, for sometimes I have been seized with a chill, as some shadowy thing appeared to flit by, and it has made my skin creep, and frozen up the courage of my heart, and I have felt afraid—I, that am a warrior ! Ah ! they are surely unholy, for they war with one another fiercely, even as the sons of men ; and the ancients say that the lights in the northern sky are but the flashing of their spears armed with lightning, to scathe, when

their deep ranks close. But the Great Master is just; therefore, in the trail of the bad spirits he sends others to heal, and nourish, and console; but over such as are of a like nature he permits them to have power. Should a man be very perverse, unjust, or irreverent, you may be sure no good spirit watches over him, and so the weird Manitous make him their slave. It is good for everything alive to bow before the Master, and to pray to him for help; for it is a hard matter to live, and there are mighty powers brooding over the things that be; and we travel, as it might be, through a foreign country, following a war-path with our eyes covered, and cannot tell the moment we may be struck down. To-day we glow and wax hungry, like a small flame; to-morrow, lo! like a puff of smoke, we pass away!"

Here the speaker, in manner of illustration, took the pipe from his lips, and let a thick cloud issue thereout, which, expanding as it ascended, slowly and imperceptibly dissolved away into the calm air; then he proceeded with his story,

"In the olden time, there lived a man among the Malicetejek who hunted hereabout, called Matoba, a daring and headstrong brave, that feared neither man nor devil, and scoffed at those who prayed. And it so happened that, journeying with some

hunters, he came one day to the place where we have been, which even then was the same as it is now; only there stood in the midst a great red pine, tall and strong. You might behold it from afar, spreading out its boughs, which never waved in the wind, hard as it might blow, for the spirit who watched over the memorials dwelt in its shade, and he had power over the storm, so that it grew still before him.

"Now the companions of Matoba cared not to remain for any time near that haunted place. But he jeered at them, saying that they were only women and fools; as for him, he dared the watcher to do his worst, and to prove his words, he darted in among the reeds, and dragging the bones and horns out of the swampy ground, where they lay half buried, he flung them aloft, and danced upon them, shouting and laughing the whole time in a reckless way. Not content with that, he struck fire with two sulphur stones, and threw a lighted torch into the pine-tree, which was instantly in a blaze to its very top, burning with a rushing sound. Then all at once was heard a shriek, and the noise of wings flitting through the smoke; and the companions of Matoba trembled, for they thought it to be the spirit of the place departing in wrath. He told them it was only a drowsy owl that he had scared from its slumber in the tree. But they would not

believe him, and hurried away as fast as they could, regardless of his mocking jests; nor did they shorten their pace until they had got some leagues away from the burial swamp.

"Now it happened that they had been unlucky in their hunting, not having fallen in with any game for some days, and so were well nigh starved for want of food. But next morning, when he woke from his sleep, Matoba saw a fine stag gazing at him, within half a bow-shot, and straightway, with a joyful heart, he told his companions to look; but they could see nothing, and said he must open his eyes wider, for he was still dreaming. Whereupon Matoba, with an oath, seized his bow, and sent an arrow clean through and through the deer; but the beast moved not, and kept still regarding him steadily, with its big, melancholy eyes. Quicker than the lightning, Matoba shot another shaft, and still another, until his quiver was empty, but without avail, while the rest sat smoking quietly beside him, thinking that he had surely gone mad.

"Then Matoba, with a whoop, clutched his tomahawk, and sprung out upon the deer. But when he thought to have struck it, ugh-hoo! it bounded behind him, and when he turned, it turned also, keeping ever at the back of its enemy. Then, for the first time in his life, Matoba believed that there were spirits, and with the sickness of a

mighty fear, the sweat oozed out of him, and his teeth chattered; and slinking back among the hunters, like a beaten dog, he looked over his shoulder, and asked them if they still saw nothing. 'Yes,' they replied, 'we see a very wonderful thing indeed—a brave, who is neither a fool nor a woman, overcome by fear!'

"But this rebuke, or the laugh that went with it, had no effect then upon Matoba, though, at any other time, he would have washed out the insult with blood. He started up, as one crazed, his eyes glaring, and the hair bristling upon his scalp, and uttering a dreadful cry, fled into the woods; yet ever, as he looked behind him, he beheld the deer following close at his heels, and staring fixedly at him with its cold, melancholy eyes; and so he travelled, from that day, with a spectre for a companion. It lay down by him at night, and when the daybreak came, it was still at his back, chilling him with its dead stare. Once a thought came to him, and taking a canoe, he paddled swiftly out upon a broad water, thinking in that way to cheat the weird thing that haunted him, and when he had spent his strength with paddling, he paused and looked back. Ugh-hoo! the stag swam close behind among the bubbles that hissed in his trail, making no noise, though it dashed the foam above its branching antlers, as it moved

steadily along. Then Matoba fell, as one dead, and strove no more against his destiny, for he knew himself to be a lost man.

"For many years he wandered thus, shunned by all and sorrowful to behold; for there was nothing left of his former self, and no one could believe that he had once been a strong and haughty warrior.

"When he passed through a village, the old people pointed him out to the children, as Matoba, the Accursed, who had once wronged the guardian spirit of the dead, and so, for a punishment, had been stricken with a waking dream. At length a cunning Pow-wow said, that if he caught a young stag, when the leaves were fallen, and breathed into its nostrils, ere he slew it, and then laid it by moonlight at the foot of the haunted tree, it would deliver him from the weird horror that walked behind him.

"So Matoba did as he was told, and the roots of the blasted pine were watered with the blood of a deer that had not reached its prime, while the spectre looked on and smiled from the shadow of the wood; so thought Matoba, who was instantly overpowered with sleep, and sank by the side of the slaughtered deer, at the foot of the tree. And in a dream he saw a wonderful sight, for it seemed to him that the whole swamp was covered with deer,

marching with a serious motion round and round the pine-tree, upon one of the limbs of which, there sat an old man smoking a pipe. A very old man he was, for he was covered, entirely, with grey hair; and upon his head there grew an enormous pair of antlers, the branches of which you could not count—they were so many. And as the animals marched round in a circle, every now and then, one of them would step out and bow, leaving its horns upon the moss; and for every pair, so dropped, the old man would take the pipe out of his mouth, and make, with his thumb-nail, a notch in its stem.

“How long the ceremony lasted, Matoba could not tell, but at length the reckoning was complete, and the last stag had shed its horns; whereupon, the old man ceased to smoke, and knocked out the ashes from his pipe, against the branch upon which he sat.

“As this happened to be directly above Matoba some of them fell into his eyes, and smarted him so, that he awoke, when he found that the sun was shining high over the trees.

“He tried to arise—but could not stand upright upon his legs. He looked at his hands, ugh-hoo! they were shod with hoofs of bone; his arms, they were covered with hair. He stretched his neck out over a pool of water; what did he behold? An

antlered head! He looked back, but this time there was no spectre behind him. Bones of my fathers! he had been transformed into a deer; and he must have slept very long, indeed—for the trunk of the pine was barkless and hollow throughout, and bleached a ghastly grey by the rains of many winters.

“Suddenly a gloom crept over the sunshine, and a growl, like thunder, shook the leaves and the ground, and a voice said, ‘Regard, O Matoba! that withered tree. There the good watcher dwelt peacefully, many a year; until thou, in thy wicked wilfulness, didst destroy it, and disturb the hallowed remains he was put to guard. Think not, therefore, to escape the just punishment of thy crime, and in the image of these innocent creatures thou hast wronged, learn to be humble-hearted and obedient to the one who made thee and them—the Great Master of Life.

“‘When another tree grows up to replace this rotten stem, come back from thy wanderings, and ask pardon of the watcher—who will sit, as of old, in its shade; then, and then only, will I give thee rest.’

“So, from that day, has Matoba wandered, like a thing astray, lamenting his lot. I have heard the hunters of the Milicete say, that, betimes, they have come across him in lonesome places, and the

way they know it to be him is, that neither arrow nor ball can prevail against him, for they drop from his side as if they had struck a rock and are powerless to do him hurt. They say that he travels alone, and looks lean and down-hearted with fatigue. Poor Matoba! Many a weary tramp has he had over these hills, and many more will he doubtless have, before he is forgiven; for there are no signs yet of a fresh pine-trec, though every bit of the other has long since crumbled away.

"Why should a man be vain-glorious? He cannot make the seed grow, or ripen the grain, neither can he give life to the little fly he crushes with his palm—he can only kill! He sickens without a cause, and shivers in the northern blast. He hides from the fury of the tempest that lays the cedars low. He has not even courage to do that which he knows to be right, though he calls himself a warrior."

"Ah! my child, it is good for a wise man to walk humbly, and with an open aspect, that he may not be ashamed to look the Great Spirit in the face when he speaks to him above, questioning him of his deeds."

When Salexis had thus finished his story, it was quite dark, and being fatigued, the wayfarers stretched themselves out beneath the canoc, upturned above them, as a shelter from the heavy

dews which had already condensed in thick globules upon the surrounding foliage; and here they slept soundly until morning. Though it was some time ere Conrad could close his eyes, for he kept gazing steadfastly at the stars that shone upon him, like so many burning eyes, and listening to the hooting of an owl which, ever and anon, burst forth with a wild effect, from the opposite shore. The strange tale he had heard gave full occupation to his thoughts, and when, at length, he went to sleep, his dreams were haunted by many an uncouth shape it invoked, among which, dancing deer, horned old men, and above all, the spectre-smitten Matoba, held a conspicuous place. At one time, he even thought that he was himself the transformed hunter, and doomed to ascend a high mountain, which task he never could accomplish; for, although he strove very hard, he made no progress, yet why it was so, he could not, by any means, discover.

The sun was up some hours before they left the bivouac; for the wounded hand of Salcxis had swollen much during the night and gave him great pain, which extended up the arm as far as the shoulder, threatening to interfere seriously with the prosecution of their journey. He therefore left Conrad, in search of certain herbs in the woods adjoining, and was absent for some time, having a

difficulty in finding what he wanted. He then made a fomentation and applied it to his hand which reduced both the swelling and pain, when the Indian's cheerfulness returned, and launching their bark, they followed once more the downward course of the river.

CHAPTER XI.

A REMINISCENCE AND A STORM—SALEXIS PERILS HIS LIFE
A SECOND TIME TO SAVE CONRAD—A DILEMMA.

It was some years since, while on his way to the Forks of the St. John, that the writer beheld, for the first time, and under peculiar circumstances, the scene he is about to describe.

It was the month of October, and the crimson leaves were all shaken from the hard wood trees, while several inches of snow lay upon the ground, for the winter sat in unusually early, and frightened the Indian summer from the land.

The prospect was dreary to a degree. The river, swollen with autumnal rains, rushed in a succession

of rapids, swiftly and gloomily along, its black flood covered with ragged masses of ice that had formed in the still places during the night, and were now borne impetuously along, crushing and crackling against each other, and the solid barrier that lined the shores. Above these, towered an unbroken hedge of pines, dark and grim, with, here and there, a gnarled cedar, screening the great boles with foliage of a brighter green, while limb and twig—even to the cone-covered tops of the pines—bent, and trembled, and lashed to and fro, in the blast that swept bleak and squally from the north.

In the midst of the current and drift ice, and in the teeth of the freezing wind, strove three canoes, forcing, by slow degrees, their difficult way, their sides coated with icicles, and worn almost through by grinding against the sharp sheet ice obstructing the passage. The hands of the men—hardy *voyageurs* of the Hudson Bay Company—were raw and bleeding, from their incessant labour, for the spray congealed so fast on the setting-poles used in propelling the canoes, that they tore the flesh like a rasp, and they kept turning them constantly, to let the frozen part thaw, by playing through the water, which was warmer than the air. And often, in ascending

some long rapid, one of the men, thoroughly exhausted would throw down his pole, and catch, like a drowning person, at a projecting snag, shouting to his comrades to stop and take breath awhile, "*pour l'amour de Dieu !*" for that he could do no more.

And, as a climax to this *tableau* of rude grandeur, and vast conflicting forces, whose severity was unredeemed by a single softening trait, high overhead, in circling gyrations, soared an eagle—its sombre plumage speckled with grey—seemingly beyond the influence of the wind, for it floated steadily in the aerial space, and followed the canoes for some time, with scarcely an apparent effort; though in direct opposition to its course, as if curious to learn who were bold enough to penetrate, at such a season, into the heart of its domain.

At length, as the short day drew towards its close, and the wind died away, the *voyageurs* shot their barks into still water, and soon entered upon a broad expansion of the river, the surface of which, clear and unimpeded, was radiant with the hues of evening that streamed in a flood of glory over the western forest, presenting a contrast so striking to the stern monotony of the course they had been pursuing, that, when they beheld it, they gave a shout of joy: and, in truth, the

light of heaven seldom lingered over a sweeter landscape.

The estuary which at this place spreads out into a lake, gives room for a number of low, wooded islands to nestle themselves upon the waters, and cover almost the entire space, from shore to shore, with vegetation. The stream itself, parted into numerous channels, is half concealed by the many windings it is forced to make between the insulated meadows, and is only offered to casual view as you approach. Then it is seen, crowded with reflected images of elms in every variety, that bend in all directions over it, as if in admiration of their beauty, which even the breath of winter cannot utterly destroy; for, as the *voyageurs* beheld them, shorn of leaves, their very nudity seemed picturesque, so graceful was their tapering stems, and curving, plume-like branches.

Leftward, as you ascend, the land appears to sink, for a view is obtained of an open, wooded tract, bounded by some distant ridges, which, at the time of which we speak, were mantled in a purple haze, while, over the whole scene of alluvial profusion and fairy grace, the bland air hung breathless, and suffused with a carmine tint—as soft and immaculate as the rose—which it communicated to the still water, until they

blended and were as one. It seemed consecrated to peace—that lonely, unappropriated spot—offering an inviting sojourn to those enamoured of solitude, where the weary heart might still its throbs in the hush of the green shade, taking counsel of Nature's oracle—one that never lies !

Long may it remain unpolluted by the presence of the coarse-minded ! The crafty squatter would disfigure its sylvan glades, and drive the wood-nymphs from their retreats, to reap the harvest of its wild meadows, only with a view, perhaps, of furthering some scheme of fraud. Yet the modern utilitarian would laugh at such a fantasy, and be inclined to view the affair in a very abstract and business-like manner.

To his speculative imagination, the miniature archipelago would present a series of admirable stepping-stones, by which to traverse the St. John with a bridge formed of materials hewn from the growth at hand, in connection with a line of railroad from the American sea-board to the St. Lawrence ; so that every feature of the prospect may, ere long, be entirely changed, and, in place thereof, an uncouth wooden construction be seen, stretching, from side to side—a monster rope-walk upon stilts—and giving transit to a panting and screaming engine, that tears along like a fiend,

with its train of cars, and a freight of calculating dispeptics, who discuss trade, politics, religion and what not, the under-current of their thoughts, meanwhile, circulating in measured round, within that charmed circumference—a dollar.

Forgive this digression, dear reader, for I find that, wiled into a discursive ramble by the force of reminiscence, I had well nigh forgotten thee altogether.

Trust thyself once more to my guidance, therefore, and let me waft thee in the car of fancy, back on the track of above a century and a half, to where we left Salexis and his charge, wending their way down the devious channel of the St. John.

In a few hours they also opened upon the prospect just described, coming in an opposite direction however: but upon them it burst in all its summer freshness, and the trees drooped their long branches even to the water's edge, with the weight of leaves, while winding up the stems, and hanging in garlands, from tree to tree, were to be seen the vines of the wild grape, which, from some unexplained cause, has disappeared since the Norman beheld it, festooning the shores, when he first explored the northern streams. The sun sparkled upon the waters, which in places appeared to eddy and dance in the light, and a few soft

clouds, reposing in the blue, threw into masses of shade many a rich clump and retiring cove, increasing the effect of the coup-d'œil presented by the fairy isles.

Conrad exclaimed in rapture at the sight, and scanned with eager eye the outlines of every half-hidden nook and emerald lawn he passed, as the canoe glided onward towards one of the narrow channels that wound between the islands. In imagination, he was already rambling under the leafy arcades, and among the mazy recesses, watching the coy Dryads and Undines he was sure must harbour there; and he longed for a tiny bark, in which to paddle about, like Salexis, and visit all the islands, and be happy as the day was long. The boy's reverie was brought to an abrupt close, however, for as the Indian endeavoured to pick his way among some shallows in the crooked passage, as well as his crippled condition would allow, the canoe struck upon a stone with sufficient force to tear away a small piece of the bark, and through the opening thus made, the water poured in a full stream. There was no help for it now; they could not possibly proceed further until the damage was repaired. So they landed upon the nearest island, and, with the boy's assistance, Salexis cut some poles and formed a sort of shed frame, which he covered with skins, and having

turned up the canoe to dry, he applied fresh remedies to his wound, and somewhat enfeebled with the pain it occasioned, threw himself gloomily down under the temporary shelter thus obtained.

The weather soon gave indications of a change, as the evening advanced, and the clouds gathering overhead, began to send down rain, which fell in large drops, that pattered like shot among the leaves. This, ere long, became a heavy shower, which grew less steady towards night-fall; but the thunder rolled with increasing volume through the vault, and ever and anon, between the peals, a fiery tongue would dart, like a sting, athwart the gloom, and vanish rapidly again, making the growing darkness more obscure by the intensity of its blaze, which seemed to scorch the air—it felt so hot to the face and smelt so sulphurous. Then, when all nature appeared to be paralyzed, in that utter silence would come a gust of wind, rending the water into shreds of foam, and roaring through the trees, which bowed like feathers before it, with the loss of many a wreath and limb sacrificed in its course. But the wind only whirled them scornfully about, and rushed on—when again all would become still, and you might hear, once more, the low patter of the rain.

“’Tis a terrible storm,” said Conrad; “I hope

we are in no peril here, but we are very close to the trees, and I have often heard that it is best to be away from them when it thunders. Oh, what a blinding flash!" he almost screamed, as a bluish stream of fire played, for an instant, in the air before them, and shattered a large elm, close to the shed, followed immediately by a clap of thunder which seemed to rend the very heavens apart, and by a deluge of warm rain.

"Said I not truly? See, the tree is split from root to top, as it were a reed. Let us go, Sulexis; better get drenched than killed, which we surely will if we remain here."

The hunter, however, did not appear to share the apprehension of his companion, for he merely raised his head from the grass, upon which he lay, and replied: "Fear not, child, God is stronger than the thunder."

The words went like a reproof to the heart of Conrad for his want of faith; and he blushed to be reminded of his dereliction, by one ignorant of the doctrines of Christianity; at the same time, he was much puzzled in making out the true character of his preserver, blending, as it did, so much singular superstition with the promptings of a creed, all-sufficient, apparently, to make him a virtuous man. He began to think that the red men had been sadly maligned by their enemies, and were, after all, a good and noble

people. It was the conclusion of one who was little else than a child in experience, as in years—yet, for all that, he may not have been wrong.

At length the clouds separated, and rolled away with their fierce electric train, and as the dark curtain drew off from the sky, the stars came out, while the moon, near the end of her second quarter, emerged from the woods, and hung like a globe of red fire above the groves. But there was no cessation of the wind; on the contrary, it seemed to gather increased force as the hours wore on; for a splintering sound, succeeded by a crash, was heard at times in the forest, as some tree, unable to resist its force, fell thundering to the ground.

The Indian uttered an emphatic "Ugh!" as these noises grew more frequent, and gave further token of his uneasiness by sitting upright and looking, with a piercing scowl, out upon the foam-flecked surface of the river.

Scarcely had he done so, when a gust, whirling along with it a cloud of leaves and spray, bore full upon the spot where they were; and before Conrad was conscious of his danger, Salexis, with a cry of warning, dragged him quickly away, as a tree was uprooted and hurled, with fearful impetus, across the roof of skins; while, at the same time, several others in the vicinity shared a similar fate,

and measured their lengths upon the sward, making the island tremble with the shock.

"Hoo-ugh!" exclaimed the Indian, in a lengthened guttural, exhaling his breath slowly, and giving relief to his contracted chest, as his iron muscles relaxed. "I knew the sorcerer was in the wind, though we have baffled him this time. Bones of my fathers, he is strong!"

"What sorcerer? Of whom do you speak?" shouted Conrad, though his shrill voice was scarcely audible in the tempest.

"Of him who would have killed thee, boy," answered the other. "He it is who hath poisoned the beaver bite, and sent this storm upon our trail to prevent thy escape. See how nearly he had done the deed.

Conrad looked, and there, directly upon his bed of boughs and fur, lay the trunk of the fallen tree; and turning to express his gratitude to him who had thus become, a second time, his preserver, he saw by the moonlight, that the skin of his face was torn by the descending branches; proving that his life had been jeopardized for his sake, and that the escape of both was narrow and miraculous indeed.

It was the final effort of the storm, that devastating blast; for soon after it became so calm, that you would never have supposed the gentle and

beauty-haunted scene, had known so rude a guest, and the silvery rays reposed, with a soft lustre, upon the water and foliage.

Salaxis, with some labour, succeeded in extricating their scanty camp furniture from the clutches of the fallen Dryad, and soon set up a second covering, under which, they once more composed themselves to rest. But before he slept, Conrad gave silent utterance to a prayer of gratitude for his preservation, nor did he forget to invoke a blessing upon the head of his Indian friend. Moreover, he sought especial aid against the evil powers of the wilderness, in whose existence he more than half believed, in common with the credulity of the day, and his imagination was already prepared for any supernatural extravagance, by the highly-wrought tales of Germany.

Refreshed by devotion, the boy then bid Salaxis, good night, and closed his eyes.

The songs of birds, caroling in the neighbouring groves, awoke him, when he found that he had overslept himself by some hours; for the sun was shining high above the tree-tops, upon the island-meadow, which was strewn with many a branch and uprooted trunk—memorials of the late storm. With an elastic spring, he rose from his couch and found that he was alone in the shed. This gave

him no uneasiness, as he supposed his companion to be somewhere in the vicinity, and that he would soon return.

A long space having elapsed, however, without bringing any signs of the hunter, Conrad became troubled, and shouted his name aloud, until he was out of breath, hoping for some reply; but in vain, for he heard only the echo of his own voice, which rang briefly through the adjacent woods and subsided into stillness again.

Amazed, terrified, at he knew not what; filled with a vague foreboding; yet scarcely sensible of the horror of his situation, should it prove just; confused with the multitude of dire imaginings, that took an absolute possession of him, making his brain reel; Conrad lost for a short time all power of deliberate thought. When at length, reason was partially restored, he returned to the place where he had slept, and examined it closely. Everything was still there, just where it had been placed the night before. The package of peltries, the steel traps, the store of dried venison, the various implements of his craft; the very deer-skin robe in which the Indian wrapped himself, while he slept, with its folds still lying, as it was thrown, when he had cast it off; all, even to the damaged canoe, were still there. No—not all! The bow

and quiver, with the other weapons of the warrior, were no longer in their accustomed places, and when the boy discovered this, he threw himself in despair upon the grass, and burst into tears.

No further doubt, indeed, could be now entertained upon the matter; it was plainly evident that Salexis had arrayed himself and departed. When he had pondered long, and wrought himself into a frenzy of terror with the bare thought of being left alone, he started up and shrieked again the name of the absent one; making the welkin ring with his passion-strained accents, "Salexis! Salexis!" But it only aroused, a second time, the mocking echo; and language has but feeble strength, indeed, to paint his intense disappointment, when, with every nerve stretched to catch the faintest response, that derisive voice sent sharply back the tremulous appeal.

It seemed to him as if one of those malicious natures, of whom he had been told, was jeering at his wretchedness. And then he pondered again, and before he was conscious of it, made the circuit of the island and rambled over it, in all directions—which he could easily do, as it was of small dimensions—in hopes of discovering some clue to the mystery, but without success; and even

surprised him, still continuing the useless exploration. Then he was forced to give it up, and go back to the lonely shed. Alas ! how desolate it seemed ; and casting himself, in utter exhaustion upon the boughs, he remained for hours without motion, locked in a sort of trance, a prey to the most acute sensations, and half-crazed with the conviction that he was—abandoned !

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CHAPTER XII.

LOST! LOST!—THE MOOSE AND HIS SAVAGE RIDER, AND
HOW THE FORMER TRIUMPHED IN THE END—A WELCOME
VOICE.

MAN, with few exceptions, is a being as incapable of living without society, as without food or air. Deprive him entirely of it, and he wastes away into the decrepitude of age, his finer faculties a wreck, and his ardent aspirations flown. The delicate mechanism of the intellect requires to be kept constantly in play, else it is apt to get out of order and become irregular in its action, resembling

"A flame unfed, which runs to waste
With its own sickerling, or a sword laid by
Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously."

And this essential, social principle appears to

operate, in greater force, where the sun's more potent beam imparts increased fire to the fancy, and activity to the impulses. Thus we find the inhabitants of a southern climate, more disposed to unrestricted intercourse, than the colder and less excitable people of the north ; and the former would be very apt to die with ennui, were they obliged to content themselves with those formal and wearisome réunions, and chance meetings by the way, which make up, what we call—society ; and to consider life, in such a garb, as a very “flat, stale, and unprofitable” affair.

There are some, however, who would seem unfitted by constitutional defect, to hold familiar intercourse with the mass, who shrink with antipathy, from the popular resorts, and the jarring clamour of the crowd ; sickening amid populous cities, for seclusion and a congenial associate. Or who, curdled into misanthropy, cherish their bitter fancies, and seek self-isolation as an antidote to the ills of life and the unworthiness of man.

And some there are, and these are of no particular country, whose high-toned sensibilities are misplaced in this theatre of toil ; a marvel and a model to beings of a coarser mould. To them, life, which seems so bright and joyous, is but a burthen and a chain ; clogging their spirit with a mysterious trouble from whence there is no escape but

the grave. And yet, these are the master-spirits, the *comers from afar*, to conquer with the glaive of thought, and obtain dominion over their kind. Enchanters, whose wand waves but to embody fresh creations, making beauty spring from chaos, and giving vitality to the clod. Poets, whose thrilling eloquence will go down to the remotest limit of time, to startle and inform unborn generations, and find a response in the latest human heart that owns a sympathy or a passion; and yet, strange to say, impotent as the worm to fill one little cell that remains ever vacant in their own breasts. But among the many modes in which solitude manifests itself, there is none so dark, and stern, and terrible, while it lasts, as that which makes a prey of those who chance to lose themselves in the trackless forests of the West.

The bewildered one wanders, day after day, in many instances without method, and as if intoxicated by the perplexing nature of his situation, which renders him as imbecile and helpless as a child, where there is such need of all the faculties to devise a plan of escape. Like a ship deserted by those who alone were able to direct its course, and drifting at random on the "vasty deep," he reels along, heedless of obstacle, observing nothing, rambling in a great circle, yet believing ever, that he is making a progress, where, he knows not. Torn,

bleeding, exhausted, yet scarcely sensible of physical suffering, he is impelled singly by the hope of escaping from the soul-crushing sense of knowing that he is alone. To those who retain the full use of their powers when placed in a similar predicament, every leaf that falls, or tree that creaks, or bough that waves, is pregnant with especial meaning, reminding of the fierce things that lurk in the gloomy coverts around, and the constant presence of an awful, overbrooding influence, of which they feel more afraid than of a probable death by starvation, the tooth of the wild beast, or the knife of the savage ; though they might scarce own it to themselves.

These remarks, of course, only apply to the emigrant, or such as have dwelt chiefly in settled districts ; for, to those bred up in the forests of the interior, they present the familiar features and alluring characteristics of a home.

Such then was the position of Conrad ; rendered more dreadful still, in consequence of his youth and inexperience. Like another Crusoe, he was the sole occupant of an island, but he wanted both the manhood and resources of the famous hermit, to enable him to protract his existence beyond a certain period, or make an escape ultimately, from his insulated prison, without assistance. Like Robinson, also, he started with astonishment upon

beholding, during his wanderings, a foot-print in the sand ; but the sudden hope it inspired soon faded, as he recollected that it was made by Salexis, when stepping from the leaky canoe. The night was the severest time of trial, however, for when surrounding objects became indistinct, his excited fancy peopled the void with spectral images, which kept him in a state of terror amounting to veritable agony at times, as some animal would utter its cry, now at a distance, and now close at hand, while taking its mighty prow, or a breeze swept with a low "hush !" through the trees. Oh, how powerless he was, how profound his desolation ! He lay, quivering like a leaf, and saw the slow stars go down the sky, and the moon soar up and pass the zenith, through the long night watches, and yield at length her sceptre to the dawn. He never closed his eyes even for a moment ; the lids seemed as if they could not know weariness again.

Another day dragged its slow length along, bringing no alleviation save the light and warmth it diffused, and when the shadows began to lengthen out, once more, towards the east, his last lingering hope expired ; for he had nourished a fond expectation all along, that Salexis would return. He could not reconcile an idea of desertion with what he already knew of the Indian's character, and when he recalled all that had passed between

them, he could not select a single word or act that would lead to such a conclusion, or that savoured of aught but kindness and good-will towards him; so that he was entirely at a loss to account for this apparent incongruity. But at length, as has been said, the final blow was given to the belief, faint as it was, which still hovered about his heart, and he ceased to bear up any longer against the inexorable fate that wrapped him in its coils.

Of food he stood in no immediate want, as there was a quantity of smoke-dried venison in the camp; and this, unpalatable as it was, with a pure draught from the river, sufficed to support nature. Once rendered desperate and half-distracted by his confinement upon so circumscribed a spot, he attempted to ford the channel to the mainland. But the current proved deeper and stronger than he supposed, and he came very near being carried away by it altogether, so that he was glad to return to the island again, drenched and exhausted by an attempt which he did not venture to renew.

The second night passed, and still he slept not, but became delirious and parched with fever, during the paroxysms of which he lost all consciousness of his misery.

He was far away among familiar scenes, and

happy faces beamed upon him, and he heard rich laughter, and girlish voices that went thrilling to the heart, like the carol of a wild-bird. Again he sat by the bright fire-side of Gottlieb van Scheffler, and listened to the sleet against the windows, and the methodical beating of the clock, as upon that memorable evening, and there came no subsequent vision to mar the tranquillity of that blissful abode. It was an opiate given by that kindest of nurses—Nature—to beguile the brain from its trouble, and give relief to the frame that had not known rest for eight and forty hours.

An incident took place upon the following morning which somewhat varied the dreary monotony of his existence, and served to withdraw his thoughts from their all-engrossing theme. In the hazy dawn he heard a slight noise, and distinguished a movement among some willows on the opposite shore. The next moment, the head and antlers of a moose were visible among the leaves, and after a wary glance up and down the river, the animal stalked to the water's edge and waded into the middle of the channel, where it plunged its mouffle beneath the surface, and took a luxurious draught. After it had fully satiated its thirst, it knelt deliberately down upon the sandy bottom, and let the crystal element break and bubble over its back, leaving nothing of its bulk to be seen but the head and bran-

ching horns; the latter covered with the velvet fur that shields them while they are yet tender and filled with the vital juices, and rubs off as soon as they have acquired their full growth and enamel. The moose seemed to enjoy its bath, for it remained long; and when it emerged again, shook and stretched itself with an air of lazy nonchalance amusing to behold. Its uncouth members had not yet disappeared in the thicket, however, when a screech was heard, and a wolverine darted from the branches of a tree, and lit directly upon its back, where it fastened itself with its claws, and drove its teeth deep into the nape of the neck. The moose gave a shrill snort at the sudden assault of its terrible enemy, and furious with pain, rushed back towards the river, rending everything in its course.

It bounded with long leaps through the water, dashing it into spray; it lashed backwards with its horns, and flung its head forward, in the vain endeavour to shake off its fatal load. But the malignant and weasel-like animal kept its hold, and dug its fangs deeper into the flesh of its victim; for the stream at no place in the vicinity was deep enough to reach the belly of the moose, and it wanted the sagacity to lie down and suffocate the foul parasite, which it could easily have done. It was a scene fraught with wild excitement,—the gigantic and

powerful monster, writhing with agony, and striving madly to rid itself of its opponent. A few rapid plunges, and it reached the island into the thickest grove of which it darted, and was lost to sight; but Conrad could still trace it by the sound of snapping branches, and the quivering of the ground, as it thundered desperately on. Ere long, however, it again appeared with its rider; the blood streaming from its shoulder, the breath panting from its nostrils, the terror gleaming in its eye. It crossed the grassy meadow, paused suddenly, shook with a brief spasm; uttered a cry, gathered up its forces, and struck off obliquely with accelerated speed. Over a low bank leaned a twisted cedar, with its branches drooping towards the soil. It was directly in the track of the moose, and it brushed the trunk with its gory side as it swept blindly past, the brave cedar, "with its fifty arms so strong!" One of them caught the head of the carnivore and tore it gasping from its hold, when it fell upon the moss—with its skull fractured—writhed, stretched out, and became still. So instantaneously had this taken place, that the moose was not at once aware of its liberation; when, however, it felt no longer the gnawing at its neck, and the grip of the ghastly claws, it looked back, and discovered its tormentor lying supinely upon the ground, by the friendly tree. The sight seemed to fire it with ungovernable rage, it flew to

the spot, it gnashed its teeth, and stood tossing its horns with a proud gesture, over its stricken enemy.

In that moment it became a terrific and sublime picture. Its upper lip, drawn back, disclosed the glistening teeth, half covered with foam; its back, arched like a bow, was raised to its full height, as it stood stiffly drawn up upon its legs, while the long hair on its neck rose erect, a dark and bristling ridge, and its side was spotted with crimson gore, which flowed thick and fast from the severed arteries. There was, moreover, a red glare in the eyes, which seemed starting from its head, as it devoured with angry regard the object at its feet. For a brief space it remained thus, and then struck with its fore legs at the wolverine. Quick, and with a deadly force, the hoofs descended in repeated blows, until there was nothing left but a shapeless mass of the creature that had injured it, and called into full activity its terrible passion. After thus gratifying its revenge, the wounded moose sought once more the neighbouring river, laved its blood-stained body in the water, and then recrossing to the mainland, disappeared in the thicket beyond.

Conrad, as may be supposed, was greatly astonished at what he had witnessed, nor could he help a feeling of satisfaction at the result, for the

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Jan 18 1856

from New France
insidious attack of the ferocious wolverine upon the noble and inoffensive deer had filled him with detestation, and enlisted his sympathies in behalf of the latter. It operated wonderfully upon him also—that episode of the wild—for while he was yet ruminating upon it, a delicious sensation of drowsiness stole over him, and he fell asleep upon his bed of leaves.

He must have slept long, for when he awoke he found the moon shining overhead, and the river shrouded in the mists of night; so, after eating a little of his provision, for he felt hungry, he lay down again, and at the close of a series of most incongruous dreams, he thought he heard a strange voice singing, and so strong was the impression, that it awoke him with a start. Was it really a dream? It could not be so, for the sounds he had heard still rang along the winding shores of the river, just becoming visible through the fog of morning. He could even distinguish the words of the singer, whoever it was, as with lively and indescribable wildness of inflection, he chanted one of those *refrains* common among the fur-traders of New France at that period, and which are still retained, with little variation, by the canoe-men of Canada. The sounds approached rapidly, and swelled out at intervals into a loud chorus of many

voices, until Conrad could plainly make out the following :

CHANSON DU VOYAGEUR.

Where the dark green shadows lie
On the streams of the wild north west
Where the white gull soareth high
O'er the Huron's heaving breast,
 We ply the oar and spread the sail,
 We bear the pack and tramp the trail.

Where the savage darts his lance
To the heart of the bison bold ;
Where the wild steed's joyous prance
Is heard on the boundless wold,
 We ply, &c.

Our home is the silent glade,
O'ercoped by the starry sky :
Our love is the nut brown maid,
Who speaks with her soft black eye.
 We ply, &c.

As free as the torrent's dash,
As glad as the bounding deer,
As bright as a meteor's flash
Is the voyageur's career.
 We ply, &c.

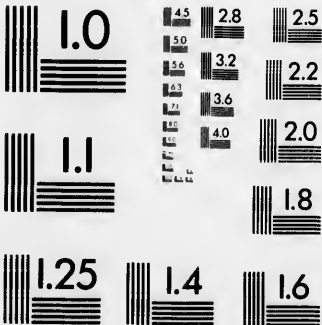
The solitary tones of the voice that led the strain
had merged again in the sonorous swell of the

burthen at the termination of the last verse, when a large canoe came in sight, as it shot beyond a wooded point, paddled by several men in semi-Indian costumes, who dipped their blades quickly, but in perfect time with the measure they sang, as they approached the island, directed by the steersman, into the same channel Salexis had previously chosen.



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CHAPTER XIII.

FOUND—THE VOYAGEURS—A REVEL—DEPARTURE.

THE boy could scarcely believe that his eyes did not deceive him, so sudden and unexpected was the appearance of the strangers. With an impulse of wild joy, he ran down to the shore, and began shouting with all his might, to attract their attention. At an abrupt exclamation of the guide, the men ceased their song, and stopped the canoe's way, listening intently. Another cry from the shore, and every eye observes Conrad, and each throat sends back an answering halloo. A few strokes of the paddles, and they are wafted to the spot where he stands. The foremost of the crew steps upon the land, and looks with a face full of inquiry at the forlorn youth before him; but the latter sees him

not ; his ears are strangely dull to that sweetest of all music to the lost—the voice of man ; he has no word of welcome, no thought, no sensation ; he has fainted in the stranger's arms ; he was saved—poor Conrad !

Above the boy, as he lay in a deep swoon, occasioned by strong revulsion of feeling in so delicate a frame, there bent a person of somewhat remarkable appearance.

His form, tall and erect, united the massiveness of the European with the wiry leanness of the native American. His chest was full, broad, and bronzed by exposure, his limbs long and flexible, the lower pair being somewhat bowed, which made him turn in his toes. His complexion was dark and ruddy, his nose aquiline, his eyes hazel and vivacious, and his mouth well arched and firm.

Upon the whole, it was a face possessed of strong individuality, one that you would not easily forget, it was so animated and frank, and yet so resolute and devil-may-care in its expression. It could look, upon occasion, sufficiently reserved and stern, nevertheless, and then it would remind you of the visage of a lion, it was so impressed with wild grandeur and tranquil power. Moreover, this resemblance was favoured by a copious chevelure, black and slightly waved, which floated around it to the shoulders of the *voyageur*, and blended im-

perceptibly with a thick beard of the same raven hue.

His hunting-coat of dressed skin was thrown off while paddling, and he now appeared in a loose shirt of flowered calico, open at the throat and breast, and falling to the knees. This was drawn in at the waist by a girdle of shell wampum, fastened with a massive silver clasp, and garnished with the long knife and pouch of a forester. He wore besides the usual leggins and mocassins, and on his head was a broad-brimmed hat, manufactured out of birch bark, and encircled by a row of lozenge-shaped air-holes.

Such was the exterior of one, who had acquired no little renown among the roving and adventurous *coureurs des bois*, to which class of fur traders he belonged, having been initiated into the mysteries of that calling at a very early age. Indeed, his instruction might be said to have commenced with his first knowledge of terrestrial things, forming his whole education, in fact, for he had never been submitted to the discipline of the scholastic birch, or forced to perplex his youthful brain with alphabetical signs. Neither was he at all singular, in this respect ; for with far greater advantages than he had ever possessed, the French colonists of that day were not remarkable for their proficiency in "book learning ;" and knew better how to swing

an axe, trap a bear, dance a minuet, and sing a paddle-song,—than either to read a homily or indite a missive correctly.

This was of little moment, however, to the bold ranger, whose life was spent in the wilderness, where the voice of the white man was an unfamiliar sound, and his acquisitions a useless burden.

Cast among the great solitudes of the New World, he had been tutored by instinct and necessity into what he was, a man full of resource, active, energetic, and strong: with a wild love of freedom and a warm and faithful heart.

His father had come over sea with Champlain, whom he accompanied in his several excursions into the interior, and once fell into the hands of the hostile Oneidas who, it being winter, hunted their prisoner on snow-shoes, for a frolic, by placing him in advance and making him run for his life. Strange to say, the white man distanced his pursuers, nevertheless, and escaped with a living scalp to the settlements.

This exploit gained him the sobriquet of La Raquette-qui-vole, or Flying Snow-shoe; and, in commemoration thereof, he had tattooed the figure of a snow-shoe on the chest of his son, where, expanding with his growth, it still shone conspicuously, and led to a frequent recital of the achievement to which it referred.

The scion was worthy of the parent stem, and when but a child, evinced uncommon courage and vigour. For being left one day in camp alone, a hungry wolf had ventured to attack him, when, nothing intimidated, he seized a crooked knife, and with this cutting implement, which serves so many useful purposes among the Indians, he slit the monster's throat from ear to ear, and when his sire returned, the sturdy boy had already skinned it, and was seated quietly, endeavouring to manufacture an am-kwaun, or Indian spoon, of its shoulder-blade. From that time forth, he bore the cognomen of Couteau-croche, which became famous as a *nom de guerre* among the neighbouring tribes.

It was strongly suspected that he bore a tinge of the aborigine in his veins, but this was neither admitted nor denied, on the part of the father, who would give no information relative to the mother of his child; so that the latter grew up without penetrating the enigma of his origin, though there was enough in his appearance to warrant the impeachment alluded to—if such it might be deemed.

But, in truth, Couteau-croche gave himself little trouble upon the subject. As he observed to his associates, "What mattered it about the complexion of his mother, when he was made like the rest of them, with two arms and legs, and, *pardieu* !

not bad ones neither—and was as independent as the proudest seigneur in the land ! for he could leap, fight, follow a trail, and handle a paddle, with the best bush-loper that cracked a carbine in the French territory."

His first remembrance was a feeling of terrible *ennui* and loneliness while in a village, to which his father periodically returned, and the delightful change, when the latter carried him astride on his back to the woods. Once established in a rude cabin in the glades, the boy thrived like a shrub replanted in its native soil, and in due course, obtained celebrity as a ranger, a trader, and a boor companion. And when La-Raquette-qui-vole became a cripple from rheumatism, in his old age, he was carried likewise from place to place, on the stalwart shoulders of his son ; "for," said Couteau-croche, the *bon homme* could not get his breath in the clearings ; and you know, one good turn deserves another."

Subsequently, he had travelled far and wide, and made himself acquainted with almost every nation between Hudson's Bay and the frontiers of Mexico, in quest of furs, and in connection with the party of the Cavalier de la Sale, who, some years before, had descended the Mississippi to its outlet. Thus, at one time or other, he had smoked with the northern tribes, fought with the Iroquois, and

held a talk with various people bordering on Lake Superior and Michigan. He had hunted buffalo with the Illinois, sojourned with the Mobiles and exchanged greetings with the famous Natchez—the Guebres of the West.

As he spoke several Indian dialects and was shrewd and trustworthy, he had been often entrusted by the Government upon missions of importance, to the councils of the neighbouring tribes; which, with the simple aid of a frank address and the whiff of a calumet, he often brought to a successful issue, where the subtleties of the most polished diplomaey might have failed.

Couteau-eroche, in fine, was an intensity of the generation that grew up at that warlike period, in the plantations of Canada. His failings were less the result of propensity than position. He was an economist in the woods and a roistering spendthrift in the settlements; yet he would give all he possessed to a needy friend; and, in his demeanour generally, was discreet and reserved—qualities not remarkable in his countrymen.

At the present time he was the bearer of a secret dispatch from the Governor-general to the Commander of Fort Hagimsaek*, a solitary post on the St. John, about eighteen leagues from the coast,

* Since corrupted into Gemseg.

and the only rallying point then established in Acadia, westward of La Baie Française, or the Bay of Funday, as it is now called.

Such was the individual who now stood by the insensible Conrad, with his hands crossed over the handle of a paddle and his chin resting thereon.

The rest of the party was composed of robust men, similarly clothed, and inured to the vicissitudes of a ranger's life, with dark toil-impressed faces, and elastic limbs, who were trained to bear a burden, use a paddle, or aim a fusee, as circumstances required. One of these bent over the boy, and sprinkled water on his face, from a bark pan.

Conrad, revived at length by the refreshing drops, opened his eyes.

"See! he is to his senses, again. That will do, Jean," said the chief. "Now stand back, and let him arise; *boh*," he added, as Conrad sat up and passed his hand over his brow. "Now tell me who thou art and where are thy companions." And Couteau-croche smiled encouragingly at the boy, as he ceased speaking and awaited his reply.

"I am alone," said Conrad.

"*Grand Dieu!* alone? that can scarce be, surely," rejoined the chief; when he added, quickly, "Felix, run to the canoe and bring swiftly the loaf and moose haunch we left this morning; as I live, the child is famished!"

But Conrad told him that he was in no want of food, and then proceeded to relate the story of his captivity and subsequent desertion in that remote place ; being interrupted many times by ejaculations of sympathy and astonishment from his auditors, while he narrated in simple phraseology, his sufferings and perils, and concluded with a harrowing account of the agony he had experienced while alone upon the island, which he fully believed was destined to be his grave, when they came and rescued him.

Couteau-croche preserved an unbroken silence, throughout ; and even after the boy ceased speaking, he remained in the same posture, as if ruminating intently upon what he had heard, and at length said, deliberately, and with emphasis :

“ I cannot see through this matter. The Indian nature is as cunning and crooked as a beaver’s trail, when there be need, that I will allow ; but I have now tramped the woods for well nigh forty years, in the snow and in the leaf, and I never knew or heard of a red skin’s doing an act like that, and least of all an Abenack, than whom there is none braver and more honest-minded. *Nom de Dieu !* I won’t believe it : there must be some mystery here, or I am no judge of woodcraft.”

Couteau-croche, as he delivered this opinion, drew himself up to his full height, and threw back

his head with a quick action, as if to challenge contradiction; while the rest responded in brief, but somewhat contradictory phraseology, nevertheless.

"Tis true."

"'Tis a plain fact."

"An impossibility—by the mass."

"So say I, and contrary to all reason, that he should leave the lad of his own will—*le pauvre garçon!*"

"I tell you what it is, young stranger," resumed the chief; "they might kill, scalp, and make soup of ye, if they happen to be so minded, as betimes, when they are rampant with passion, the uneasy devils; but if once they smile or say a kind word to thee, they would no more do thee an injury, or leave thee to perish in such a desert as this, than they would fast for Christ's love, without being signed; or barter away the grave-clothes of their kinsfolk, which is about the last thing that a natural ever did do. But cheer up," he added, preparing to move, "and show us where the traps are, of which ye speak; for the time speeds, and we have a long route before us, and a difficult, mayhap, ere night-fall."

The contents of the slight shed were soon gathered up and stowed in a monoodah, or Indian bag, which had been used for that purpose by

Salexis—and the peltry made up into a package convenient for transport. Shouldering these, the *voyageurs* retraced their way to the shore, accompanied by Conrad, when they noticed, for the first time, the numerous moose tracks that were printed in the soft alluvion of the island, and then Conrad related the strange struggle he had witnessed the day before. No sooner did they hear it than, seized by a unanimous and irresistible impulse, they threw down their burdens, and started off to the spot pointed out as that where the final catastrophe had taken place.

There they commenced screeching and leaping in a perfect ecstacy of delight, holding up by one claw the mangled wolverine, and making the groves ring with incessant peals of laughter, between which, such remarks as the following might be heard :

“Oh, the brave original! The long-shanked trumpeter!”

“He has taken his scalp!”

“The cursed *sangsue*!”

“The sneaking vermin!”

“*Tonnerre*! look at his jaw!”

“And his back!”

“And his legs!”

“He-yah! Ho, ho!”

“There is not a whole bone left!”

"He has made hominony of him!"

"'Tis a smashed caterpillar!"

"A shrivelled pelt!"

"A fricasseed devil!"

"*Dieu des dieux!*"

Then one of the men cried out suddenly,

"A carcajou! a carcajou! a dance! a dance!"

To which proposition they all assented, and calling upon Jean, the youngest of the party, to "plant a post," which phrase he seemed to understand, he ran quickly and brought a spear from the canoe, and sticking the trampled wolverine upon the point thereof, he placed it upright by forcing the other end in the ground.

Couteau-croche, who entered fully into the extravagant mirth of his associates, then drew his hunting knife from its sheath, and seating himself cross-legged beside the staff, commenced beating its handle upon the blade of a paddle, in regular time, to an uncouth Indian chant, the syllables of which, he uttered with an abrupt, guttural energy that gave it a singular wildness of expression. At the same time, the others moved in a circle round him, performing a slow monotonous tramp to this barbarous music, and beating their mocassined feet quickly upon the ground, now with hands joined, and now disunited and stooping forward

with elbows pressed to their sides and mouths retracted in a grin; while, at certain intervals, they jerked from their throats a few sudden and strongly articulated sounds; the leader, meanwhile, continuing without pause, his rude accompaniment and scarcely less rude chant.

"Hoo-yahoo-ya hut! you-you-wah!
Hoo-yahoo-ya hut! you-you-way!"

and the dancers struck up with their periodical

"High-yahcush! high-yah!"

At length, at a given signal from Couteau-croche they went down upon all-fours and gave, simultaneously, a prolonged cry, which terminated the ceremony.

Having thus given a free vent to the ebullition of mirth which had possessed them, they resumed their ordinary demeanour, reloaded the canoe, with the addition of the property of Salaxis, sat Conrad snugly thereon, lighted their pipes and departed. And as they opened out from the intricate channels among the islands, upon a broad sheet of water, they struck up again one of their wild

paddle songs, and exhilarated by the cheerful sound, and the speed at which they moved, for they paddled quickly, sending the water curling in their rear—the boy looked back once more, and, as the sun's early ray broke upon the lonely archipelago, he bade it a glad farewell.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GREAT RAPID—A SNAKE STORY.

It was after mid-day that the *voyageurs* approached a well-known and dangerous rapid, and stopped paddling when they beheld the rock-strewn defile of foaming waves, through which they were about to pick their way. The river here seemed to have cut its way directly through a ridge of rock, and rushed in a torrent down an inclined plain, amidst innumerable granite boulders and ragged ledges, around which the strong flood curved and foamed as it passed, lashing the fir-crowned steeps, and bounding and whirling from side to side with a roar that shook the hills, whose shadow rested frowningly upon it. The scene was strange and savage in the extreme. The rocks, the precipices,

the wooded summits, were but of one hue. Twilight seemed to brood eternally upon and beneath them, and the very water itself, except where it was streaked with foam, presented the same blackness of shade. The extent of the rapid could not be ascertained from any one position, for the river made a double bend in its transit to a lower level; but it was known to be very nearly two miles in length; a fact, of itself sufficient to make it a terror to the inexperienced canoe man: while many a tale of mishap and disaster connected therewith, had contributed to its evil reputation. Like that coast spoken of by the renowned Sinbad, its shores were covered with sad memorials of those who had suffered damage there, on former occasions; and many a broken paddle and severed tump-line, and, occasionally, the bleached skeleton of a canoe gave full attestation to the narratives of wreck and misfortune which it furnished to the wayfarer on the Upper St. John.

Couteau-croche, however, evinced no uneasiness, though he knew the safety of the frail craft depended almost solely upon him, as he was acting in the quality of steersman, sitting in the after part. He only turned up his sleeves further to give more freedom to his arms, and telling his men to grip their paddles well and use them steadily, he gave a strong sweep with his own, which sent the

ageurs appeared rapid, and rock-strewn as they were seemed to be of rock, lined plain, and ragged curved and lined steep, beside with a low rested strange and precipices,

canoe, with a dart like a salmon, into the midst of the rolling tide, where it was soon leaping and bouncing among the waves, shooting with the celerity of a needle between the black masses that showed themselves every where above the spray, and threatened, each instant, to split it into fragments and engulf its living freight. But the bark held on gallantly in its zigzag course, rescued from the dangers that environed it, by the quick eye and powerful arm of the guide.

Suddenly the voice of Couteau-croche was heard above the roar of the flood, crying, "Hold!" as the prow turned full upon a boulder, against which the water broke in a yeasting hill, and seemed about to dash upon it; and the bowman lifted up his blade to ward off the impending blow.

"Tenez; sacré! tenez! Let her go, Chaudron. It runs deeper by the rock there;" and when only a few inches intervened between them, the beak was sheered swiftly from the obstacle, and the canoe, rising upon the swell, shot unscathed by. At another place, the sharp points of stone projected as thickly as chevaux de frise, above the surface, and it required all the skill of the steersman to avoid being transfixcd upon their edges; but his efforts were crowned with success, and they reached the foot of the rapid, without having once touched any thing harder than the back of the unruly waves,

which expended their force upon the sides of the canoe, without doing greater mischief than half drenching its occupants with spray.

"*Tonnerre !*" exclaimed the bowman, an old *voyageur*, called Chaudron-rouge, wiping the moisture from his face and head, as they paused in an eddy, out of sight of the wild gorge from which they had emerged.

"*Tonnerre du ciel !* what an ugly hole. By the virgin, I never expected to come out of it alive. Hark ! how it howls away there among the hills, like—"

"A tormented soul," added a second, completing the sentence.

"Thou art right, Pelo, 'tis a veritable *enfer*—a hell of waters," said Jean, cooling his hot palms in the stream.

"It is a powerful jumper, I will allow, and uncommon cranky," remarked Couteau-croche, cutting off a lump of twisted leaf-tobacco, and depositing it in his jaw ; "and, moreover, as crooked and deceitful as a *couleuvre*. Didn't it play me a pretty trick once, and will I ever forget it ? No, by the mass, not while I carry a living scalp : that was a time, indeed, my *braves !*"

This excited curiosity, and all united in urging the speaker to relate the circumstance ; but Couteau-

croche declined gratifying them at that time, saying, however, that he would reserve it for the evening's bivouac. They pushed on, therefore, passing the mouth of a tributary on the right, which the guide pointed out to Conrad as the proposed route of Salexis to his native village on the Penobscot, which latter river was but a short way from its head waters and the boy gazed with melancholy interest at the lonely estuary that poured its tribute into the wider watercourse they were pursuing, wondering meanwhile, where the honest hunter was at that moment, and if he would ever again furrow its bright pathway, or encamp by its forest shores.

Onward they went, while the river grew broader and stronger ever as they advanced, sometimes parted by islands, sometimes obstructed by sand banks, and at others again lashed into angry violence by rocky and perplexing shallows ;—presenting no unmeet emblem of life's varied career,—with its calm and tempest, its light and shade, its baffled progress and capricious turnings ; and in the inexorable destiny that impelled it onward ever onward, without pause and without return.

At length, in the cool of the evening, the *voyageurs* arrived at some islands by the embouchure of another tributary, on their left, and laying down their paddles, they encamped on a green island that lay

directly at the meeting of the waters, and concealed the mouth of the lesser stream from the eye of those passing in the main channel.

"Thou beautiful St. François!" apostrophized Couteau-croche, as he sat with folded arms smoking a short stone pipe, and gazing upon the glassy flood that rested without a ripple between the shores, the luxurious growth of which hung motionless over it, in the breathless twilight:—

"Always the same. Always swelling to the brim, like a full tankard, craving to overflow. Many a tooladie and golden trout have I wiled up from thy secret nooks, and many a cusk likewise, and horned barbot that barks like a dog."

"Hast thou been far up its course then," inquired Jean, who with Conrad reclined beside him.

"That have I, lad," said Couteau-croche, "and a crooked and a wearisome it is, after you get beyond the still water that stretches for a space above the brave lakes which lie in its path, like beads upon a string. Nevertheless, it is the Paradise of fishes, and I have known them so tame, in certain parts, that they would swarm like chickens around the canoe, and munch bread from your hand; and when they could not get that, they would e'en commence nibbling at your very fingers—'tis true, by the mass!"

"I remember first passing that way to Canada,

when I was not much bigger than a racoon, with La Raquette and a Souriquoise ; and so little water was there then, in its upper course, that we had to sheathe our bark with split cedar, to keep it from being torn to rags on the hills of stony rapids in its bed. Over these they dragged both it and me until they panted like hunters on a Cariboo chase, and the eyes were almost torn out of me by the alder thickets through which we forced our way. And winding as a worm track, it was, with scarce room enough, at times, to give us a passage. You may depend I was glad enough when the *bon homme* stopped at length, and said that he would go no further. Then, carrying the canoe, they struck into an old Indian path, and following it for about four leagues reached the St. Lawrence, which we crossed on a visit to the tribes of the Seguenay."

"Yet are there," continued the guide, "as I said before, some lakes upon it, as fair and glorious as ever my eyes beheld ; and that is no vain word, seeing that I have scored a few since I was strong enough to use a paddle. And one of them lies beyond the trees there, not further from where we are than could be reached with a trim bark and a stalwart arm in an hour or so ; and if we had the time it would be worth the trouble, as a sight is to be seen there which you might reckon a miracle, I ween ; for so I considered it when loitering nigh,

the Souriquoise first told me the old legend concerning it,—which, if thou wilt listen, thou and Conrad, who I see is opening his big eyes at what I say,—*pardieu!* how blue they are,—I say then, if thou wilt attend, both of ye, I will c'en tell it, for it is brief.

“You must know then, that in the old times, long before the Normans sailed over the sea to this western land, there dwelt hereabout a tribe of hunters, who were first cousins to the Terratines, and brave warriors besides, though they had nothing but hatchets of stone, and arrows tipped with flint and bone. They had fields also, where they grew tobacco, gourds and corn; and when these failed them, and they could catch no game, why then they had only to eat roots and bark, like beavers in winter, which they didn't mind, for they had strong stomachs, and thought it bad taste to be fat; so, ye sec, it was no matter.

“But there was one thing that they could not stomach so easily, and that caused uneasiness to the whole tribe. This was no other than an enormous serpent who had taken up his abode in the aforesaid lake, and lay *perdu* there for any canoe which happened to come within his reach, when he would snap up its crew, one by one, and swallow them, like so many toads, clothes and all; though there was little of the latter to trouble him, and that was

of skin, so it did not give him an indigestion, I imagine.

"Well, several had fallen victims to the maw of this child of the Old Enemy, and they had perplexed themselves to no purpose, striving to invent a plan to get rid of the monster; for a grand gathering took place of all the Pow-wows and medicine-men in the country, who after fasting, dancing and charming until they were tired, confessed that they were not strong enough to prevail against the serpent;—when, by himself, and out of the heart of the woods, there came an old, cunning-looking sorcerer whom no one had ever seen before, and he said to them: 'Rest in peace, my children, and I will deliver ye from this plague.' And, sure enough, when the next sun arose, they found that he was in earnest, and had already commenced work; for there, in the midst of the lake, were planted two red pine trees, stout and tall, with all their branches on them, sticking above the top of the water. Nor was this all, for between them stood the sorcerer, in a big canoe, dug out of a cedar tree, and fastened by its ends with ropes of bass wood to the two pine trees. This kept it steady, while he fished for the serpent with a bait cut out of his own thigh.

He fished long, and he fished late, but the

wily thing would not be tempted by the delicate morsel, though it bobbed within a foot of its nose. At length, after the third day, it could stand it no longer, and with a greedy snap seized the tit-bit, and before it could say, '*excusez-moi*,' it was leaping and slashing away, like mad, in the bottom of the canoe. But the old chap was too much for him, and he was soon fastened down by the tail—because you see his strength lay mostly there—and after he had fixed a sharp stick between his jaws, to keep him from biting, he skinned him alive in the name of the holy Evangelists. No, he didn't though, for he had never heard of them, but he would if he had, so it's all the same. But he skinned him, at any rate, as you would an eel, which was only proper, seeing that he had no scalp, and had done a deal of damage to the red-skins in his day; and then the old man let him go, for he hadn't the power to kill him—so he said.—But, *qu'importe?* from that day he never dared to show his teeth in the waters of Pohenagamook; that being the ancient name of the river, before it was baptised by the Jesuit fathers, who could make nothing of the heathenish word, and so changed it to St. François. Now wasn't that a famous plan to capture and scandalize the audacious reptile?" asked Couteau-croche, as he concluded his story.

"Is that all true?" demanded Jean, without heeding the question of the other, and looking with an air of eager interest in his face.

"True! Why not?" quickly replied the guide; a sly expression of fun twinkling in his eye, as he looked askant at the questioner. "The trees which the scoreerer planted are still to be seen standing in the lake, with their heads above water, but with neither bark nor branch upon them. Thou canst even see and feel the deep grooves made by the old man's cords, shouldst thou be bold enough to go near them, which many will not do, being fully persuaded that the devil's magic alone could have put them there. Though there have not been wanting some, 'tis true, who have turned the whole matter into a jest, saying that the pines had been slid into the lake by a freshet, and creased round the stem by the spring ice, as it floated past; but I don't believe a word of it; not I. My father never doubted it, nor any red-skin that I ever knew, and I can't see what good can come of altering the story; 'tis a very good one, I'm sure. Is it not, Conrad?"

"Famous!" replied the latter, with an animated gesture, while he asked:

"What did the old man do with the skin of the serpent?"

"By the mass! I never thought of asking,"

replied Couteau-croche, with an air of perplexity rubbing his forehead for a suggestion. "Now I shouldn't wonder in the least if he made it into leggins, for it was large enough, and he would have only to cut it into lengths and clap them on, as there would be no stitching required. What a funny old fellow he would be, with his *culottes de serpent*;" and Couteau-croche indulged in a quiet chuckle at the conceit, as he arose, adding:

"Now then, to supper, comrades, for my hunger is as keen as a steel trap, and I scarce think I would object to a piece of the same bait that caught the snake, were there nothing better where-withal to take off its edge."

The three then moved off to where the rest were busily engaged in setting forth the materials of a supper, consisting of a smoking piece of moose meat, boiled beans, and bread sweetened with maple honey. This was speedily demolished by the hardy canoemen, whose appetites were stimulated by fasting and incessant exercise during the day.

"Well and good," said Chaudron-rouge, with a long drawn respiration, after the utensils had been cleared away, and the individuals of the party threw themselves at full length upon the moss.

"Well and good; and now for the story about the big rapid, which Couteau-croche promised to tell.

Give ear, my *braves*; I warrant ye it will prove worth listening to."

"Good!" exclaimed the others, in a breath, settling themselves into attitudes of easy attention, as the individual thus called upon replenished his pipe, and commenced as follows:

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CHAPTER XV.

THE VOYAGEUR'S STORY.

"IT is now some years since, for, ye see, it was not long after my grand voyage to the Mississippi with the Cavalier de la Sale, that happened what I am about to relate. I was somewhat younger then, as ye may suppose, and a more graceless bush-loper was seldom to be seen in the settlements of New France. *Pardieu!* There was none to equal me in the dance or frolic with those bewitching devils—the women, at a village merry-making; and as for drinking, I never could tell where all the *eau-de-vie* went to, for had my whole inside been turned into a vast stomach, I doubt if it would have held all that I swallowed, whenever the fit was on, and Satan nudged my elbow; but this was

in old times, you must know; wisdom cometh with the beard, and the roistering scapegrace is a bit steadier now. By the mass, I say it not boastfully—but because it's true."

"Well then, fancy myself and two Red-skins in a birch, *en route*, to join the Baron Casteins; who, we heard, was somewhere on the sea-coast, with his Abenakes, fitting out a forray against those ransacking heretics, the English, who may the saints confound! We had not much baggage to take care of, having only just left Quebec, and those vermin, the Jew-traffickers, seldom let a bushman escape their clutches, be he white or be he red, in the colour of his skin—as long as he has an *écu* to spend or a shirt to cover his nakedness withal, the wily blood-suckers! We had, therefore, little besides our weapons with us in the canoe, except a keg of whisky between the three, to enliven the way as we went along, and, *pardieu!* ye could not find a merrier set of dogs if ye tried upon a long summer's day. And by sheer dint of drinking—for a morsel scarce crossed our teeth, from the time we left the St. Lawrence,—we came at length to the edge of the rapid ye passed to-day.

"Now, as it was very warm weather, and we felt somewhat feverish with what we had taken out of the keg, the night before, we determined to have a bathe before we shot the rapid. And therefore

running the canoe into a convenient place, and lifting its beak upon a flat stone, to keep it from moving, we peeled off our garments as we sat, and took to diving and sporting, like musk-rats, in the water along side ; which was considerably swollen by a spell of rain.

"We had not been long at that play, when one of the Indians gave a yell, as if he had seen a Maqua, and pointed towards the rapid. A thousand thunders ! what did we behold ? There, already dancing on the ripples, like a cariole on a *tas* of *cahots*, was our canoc, that had been lifted by a sudden swell and drifted into the middle of stream. There she was, I say, the faithless jade, with our arms, clothes, and everything that we possessed in the world ; and above all, our darling keg of whisky, cutting and plunging through it, with a saucy cock of her tail that seemed to say, ' catch me, my bullies, if you can ? ' While we stood with rueful countenances, staring at each other, with nothing upon us but our natural skins, which the accursed mosquitoes and black flies were already beginning to torment, in a buzzing cloud. 'Twas but a moment we beheld her, then, like a flash, she disappeared.

"Uttering wild cries, and regardless of the sharp stones that cut our feet terribly, we rushed upon a point of rock that hid the view, and there dis-

covered, once more, our canoe struggling in the rapid, but far below the spot where we stood, and already half-filled with water, as the waves broke freely over her. We knew it would be so,—an instant afterwards, she struck with a crash, upon a ledge, that stove one end clean out of her, and then swinging broadside to the torrent, she jammed fast between two rocks, and disappeared beneath the water, which curled in a ripple of foam over the place.

“I believe, after all, however, the sight which caused us most grief, was to see our keg, which when the birch struck, flew up into the air, and fell smack upon the ledge, exploding like a grenade, and spilling the contents.

“At that moment thou couldst have knocked us down with a feather. Our strength was gone.

“But there was brief time allowed us for lamentation over our misfortune, for, like a legion of incarnate fiends, the *sangsues* of the wilderness were upon us, stabbing and boring into our flesh until they set us almost raving mad,—stark as we were. The infernal broods seemed to have entered into a compact with each other to make the most of the rare occasion. *Dieu des dieux!* when I think of it. There were the *maringouins*, the *mouche-noir*, the *brulot*, and *frappe d'abord*, performing their war-dance around us; wetting their

stings and crazing our ears with the din of their diabolical music—a veritable *sabbat des chats*, by the mass! So there was nothing for it, but to rush back into the water, where we remained, while one of us, by turns, strove hard to make a fire with two sticks, which took us the best part of a day to accomplish.”

“It must have been a difficult job, in truth; and how didst thou set about it,” inquired Jean.

“In this manner,” answered Couteau-croche; “we took a piece of soft wood, in which we made a small socket, with a stone, and holding it between the knees, inserted therein a stick of harder wood, and whirled it round briskly, like a drill, between the hands. This device is well enough when thou canst get the proper stuff, which should be very dry, but there was nothing, but damp drift wood at hand, and so a wearisome task we had of it, ere a spark was obtained.

“Ha, ha! I think I see one of us poor devils now, working away for dear life, with a myriad of *mouchérons* gambolling around him, and every now and then giving a hop and a yell, as one would pierce him in a tender place; while the two others set in the water, like frogs—with only their heads visible—laughing and grinning until their jaws ached, at the droll sight.

"Well, at length we lit a fire, and made torches of cedar bark, the smoke of which kept our tormenters away, and forthwith held a council, to consider what was best to be done in such a desperate state of affairs. Having arranged proceedings, we each selected the sharpest and hardest flint we could find, and stripping the bark off of some cedars, we plaited the inner rind into long ropes, in the manner of a tump line, and afterwards went in search of a moose path, leading down to the river; which having soon found, we made running nooses of the ropes and suspended them from the trees over the path; then we laid in wait for the creatures that we knew would come down to drink, in the cool of the evening, when we hoped to ensnare them.

"But, alas! we caught none; for though they failed not to get their necks in the ropes, *pardieu!* they snapped them as ye would a hair, and so we crawled back, moodily, to the fire, cursing our ill-luck and sorely pinched with hunger, until at length we fairly grumbled ourselves to sleep.

"Next day we gathered some berries and wild grapes, which served somewhat to keep our hunger down, and sat to work again, like beavers to make stronger ropes; and this time with better success, for we had not been long at our post, when we noosed a bull and three cows, and though the first

got off clear, the lines held the others bravely, and springing upon them, we finished them quickly by knocking in their heads with stones.

"Perhaps we did not feast that night upon roasted and boiled, rib, steak and moufle. *Dieu des dieux!* They were flayed and cut up in no time. Flints are not bad knives, after all; particularly when they are sharp and thou hast no better; remember that, Conrad."

"But how didst thou make a shift to boil the meat," inquired the latter: "was there a kettle left behind when the canoe floated away?"

"No, by my faith, lad; and by that question I see that thou art not yet skilled in the ways of the woods, for all that thou hast gone through. We made a dish of birch bark, which was a simple matter, as we had only to shape a piece square, double it in at the two ends and fasten them with cedar withes, and behold! it was complete. Into this we put the meat, leaving a space in the middle, and after filling it up with water, we threw in hot stones, from time to time, until the whole was boiled."

"As I live," exclaimed the boy. "I would never have thought of that."

"Well, that was all very good, as ye will allow," continued Couteau-croche, "but we were all this time as naked as the day we were born, and as

red as boiled lobsters with sunburn and fly bites ; so we greased ourselves with moose fat, and sat about making shirts, leggings, and moccasins for ourselves of the skins, which were completed in a day, as we worked hard, using the sinews of the moose for thread, and sewing with needles made of bone. And when I had rigged myself out thus, I made a cap of birch bark, and clapping it on my head, felt myself to be a man again."

"*Bon ! bien bon !*" said Jean with a gesture of admiration, "and what didst thou after that, *mon ami ?*"

"Why, we spread our moose-nets again, and caught many more ; and while one of us cut up the meat and smoked it over a hole, in which we put fire, and kept it half-stified with a cover of bark, the rest gathered willow-rods and bound them together, in the form of a canoe-frame, and afterwards stretched over them double skins which were sewn strongly, edge to edge, and made water-tight by putting fir gum, and charcoäl, on the seams."

"And what didst thou then ?" asked one of the *voyageurs*, whose name was Felix ; rising on his elbows with increasing interest, as the narrator proceeded, and looking intently at him.

"We carried our canoe to the river, and having found that it floated miraculously well, we loaded it with the store of smoked provisions, and with

three cheers, proceeded once more upon our voyage."

"Thou couldn't not," said Chaudron-rouge, quietly and with conviction, knocking the ashes out of his pipe and placing it in the folds of his girdle.

"And why not, pray?" demanded the guide, with an astonished look at this cool contradiction from his associate.

"Thou hadst no paddles!"

"Ah, by the mass! I had forgotten that. Right, comrade, we could not have made them easily, of a truth; but that gave us no care, for we knew we could find what would answer us, among the old wrecks which strewed the rocks in the neighbourhood. And so we did; choosing the best of the lot, and not bad paddles they proved to be, after all, for by means thereof, we managed to reach Meducktack Fort in a few days, as fat, waggish, and saucy, as though our monoodah were filled with piasters and golden Louis, instead of but a few pinches of killeginico* and a solitary pipe."

"Didst thou find that also?" asked the critical and unimaginative, Chaudron-rouge.

"We made it," was the reply.

"By the Virgin! I will never be astonished any more," said Felix, with an emphatic shrug.

* A mixture of tobacco and certain barks; or, simply, the latter, rubbed fine, and used for smoking.

"We found a piece of soft calumet-stone in a rapid," continued Couteau-croche, "and worked away at it with our flints, until we had wrought it into a passable bowl, then we fitted it into a stem of cherry that was hollow in the heart, and when it was complete, we filled it with shumac and red-willow bark, cut up fine—and smoked it by turns, in a brotherly manner ; so now thou knowest all."

"*Tonnerre du ciel !*" exclaimed Chaudron-rouge, slowly rising as the speaker ceased, and shoving his hard hands under his sash, with an air of decision.

"I always thought that I was somewhat cunning and knowledgable, for an outlier and a *coureur de bois* ; but after that, I may go and hoe corn in the clearings. I might have got as far as the clothes and the canoe, mayhap, upon a pinch ; but the pipe ! No, I could not have done it. That would have baffled me, out-and-out. Confess, comrades, was it not a marvellously well-conducted scheme, throughout ?"

"And with nothing but a piece of flint to begin with," observed Jean, "that was the foundation stone of the whole affair."

"Oh, that was nothing," said Couteau-croche, with a self-deprecating gesture, "I once knew an Osage woman who could make a fish-net of her

hair, string wampum with her lips and tongue, catch beavers with her teeth, and skin them with her thumb-nail."

After a refreshing rest, next morning the travellers pursued their way. The weather was fine, the river sparkled in the sun or broke into lines of shade, as the breeze played over it. The numerous islands they passed, looked in their wild luxuriance like plumed leviathans dozing on the bright expanse,—the dark forest spread away on every side, with many a noble sweep and rugged precipice, and shadowy dell.

About noon, they were attracted by the lowing of a cow, and soon opened upon a cleared tract on the left bank, where they beheld several log huts and wigwams scattered between the cultivated patches, among which the low belfry of a chapel was conspicuous above a clump of trees.

Conrad hailed with delight these signs of husbandry and civilization to which he had been so long a stranger, and asked the guide what place it was.

"Madawescook, in the Milicite country," he replied ; " a famous trading resort for the red-skins, hereaway, and the discharge, moreover, of a great lake, whence there is a carrying path to Canada :—" adding sharply, " steady there, Chaudron ! Have a care, Felix ! *Doucement !* Slant her in shore

tenderly—so ! The current runs swift and shallow here.”

Following these directions, the men ran the canoe gradually in towards the beach, and let it drift to the landing place of the village ; where it was soon unloaded and turned bottom upward among a number of birchen craft and French pirogues—hollowed from trees and painted fantastically—which were lying there.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE SECRET COURIER, AND THE NEWS HE BROUGHT.

It was evening, and the fire was lighted in the hut of Oba, the principal chief, where the *voyageurs* were lodged. It was a commodious dwelling, formed of round logs and roofed with bark, with a clay floor, separate dormitories, a loft above, and a hearth in the centre, all in the Indian style.

Now Couteau-croche was well known to the Milicites generally, and to their Sachem in particular, and therefore they grew somewhat convivial, while seated cross-legged upon their skin mats discussing stories of war and the chase, and the contents of a gourd bottle from which there

emanated a most inspiring smell,—when they were alarmed by the barking of dogs outside.

Suddenly the blanket which hung before the entrance was pushed aside, and in walked two strangers, one an Indian, the other an Acadian, as the French settlers on the sea coasts to the eastward, were then called.

As soon as the leading personage stood fully within the fire-light, he drew himself up with easy dignity, and turning to the host, said in the harmonious language of the Miamaes, "I am thy friend."

"Yea, of a truth thou art my friend," was the soft reply in the same tongue, as Oba made room for the new comers, at his side. Upon these brief and customary salutations, the two seated themselves at once in the places assigned them, and drew a few whiffs from the pipe handed to them in succession, from the lips of their host ; this being a sacred pledge of friendship and hospitality never neglected on similar occasions, and rarely, if ever, violated.

During this proceeding, no one spoke, or allowed a single glance of curiosity to interrupt the gravity of their deportment, until the inauguration was completed, when the strange Indian, receiving the pipe from his companion, handed it back gracefully to his host, saying :—

"Thy tobaceo is good, brother. It opens my heart to speak, like a friendly voice after long travel."

"My brothers have journeyed far," replied Oba; "they are weary. Sleep will soon refresh them. My cabin is very large."

Indeed, to all appearance, there was sufficient reason for the remark, as the garments of the newly-arrived were wet, and rent in several places, and there was a degree of lassitude in their attitudes as they sat, which denoted recent toil.

"Good," rejoined the other; "we are, as thou sayest, somewhat wearied, for the path behind is sorer than the path before, and both are long; and thou knowest that he who bears the wampum, lingers not to listen to the song of birds, or dream away the heat of noon. He carries a voice, and goes straight on."

The interest of Couteau-croche was aroused by these last words, and too impatient to await the deliberate communications of the speaker, and knowing, besides, the scrupulous reserve of an Indian envoy before strangers, he turned to the Acadian who accompanied him, and said in French, now used for the first time since their arrival:

"Have you come far since daylight, comrade?"

The one addressed no sooner heard the accents

of his language, than, as if charmed into immediate volubility by the sound, he hastened to reply :

"Yes, *pardieu* ! and a precious fag we have had of it. We started a couple of hours before sunrise yesterday, more than two leagues below Tobique, and this whole blessed day have we plied our poles in a leaky birch, which had to be bailed betimes, until the hands are fairly skinned, and the arms almost wrenched off us with the miserable work. Nor is this all, for we came nigh getting an upset in the white-rapid below the Big Falls, which snapped my setting-pole like a pipe-stem. I am scarce used to it, ye see, for I came from a country where there is no roaring fiend of a river like this to go up and down—be it accursed ! The flood is still on the rise, so you must have had rain in the upper country, I'm thinking."

"'Tis possible," replied Coutreau-croche ; "but come you not from beyond the place where you departed this morning ?"

"I come from two different places," replied the Acadian. "Firstly, from the salt water, and secondly, from Fort Hagimsack."

"And what news is there from La Baie Française ?"

"More than thou wottest of, I'll warrant, else

thou wouldst not be where thou now art, when there's work to be done. But in the first place, tell me if a messenger from the Governor-in-chief has been seen hereabouts, as doubtless ye be from Canada, and would know if such were on the route of late?"

"He speaks unto thee," was the reply.

"Ha! *vraiment!*" exclaimed the other, with a start, opening his eyes to their fullest extent, and directing an inquisitive regard at the person of the confidential emissary who had so unexpectedly announced himself, and to whom he had begun to apply the familiar *thou*. Satisfied at length with his scrutiny, he added: "Then I have business of great moment with you, which it were well to get through before sleeping. My task ends here."

Then drawing close to the side of the guide, the Acadian whispered a few words in his ear, upon which the former arose, followed by the speaker, and they passed out of the wigwam together.

Drawing aside, out of earshot, among the trees, the stranger, after gazing sharply around amid the darkness, demanded a certain sign from Couteau-croche, which he readily gave, and his identity being thus proved to the satisfaction of the Acadian, the latter drew from some receptacle about his dress a seal-skin pouch, and taking there-

from a stout packet, corded and sealed, delivered it confidentially into the hands of the *voyageur*, saying :

"There, you have it into your keeping now, and God speed both it and you to the rightful destination, for thereupon a mighty interest depends. Furthermore, in case of mishap to the missive, Governor Villibon, from whom it comes, charged me to give you, in brief, the substance of the writing within.

"Know then, that the English have been scouring the coasts of late, with a squadron under Phipps, their admiral, and at this time there is not a bourgade in all Acadia which has not been ransacked by those villain invaders ; and as if that were not bad enough, at their heels came a horde of godless pirates, who pillaged Port Royal, and delivered up to be hanged, roasted alive, and otherwise maltreated those that the first left untouched—may the foul fiend have them ! Neither stopped they here ; for on his return from his native country, shortly afterwards, the Chevalier himself fell into their nets, and only escaped by a miracle ; leaving his ship, loaded with subsidies, in their hands."

"*Dieu des dieux !*" exclaimed Couteau-croche, clenching his fists. "Here is a score to be settled. This will raise a ruction hot and strong, along the borders again !"

"Listen," interrupted the Acadian; "there is more to come. Some days after this happened, a fisherman came to the river's mouth from seaward, who affirms that one morning when the fog cleared, he found himself among a crowd of craft in full sail, thirty in all, counting the great and the little. That being hailed by the leader, a frigate of forty guns, he went aboard, and was put face to face with Admiral Phipps himself, who questioned him as to the bearings and distances of the land. Furthermore, knowing some English, he was enabled to make out from the discourse of the officers among themselves, that they were bound for the St. Lawrence and Quebec, saying, boastfully, that they would soon be masters of all New France.

"Thereupon the Commander wrote in haste, and dispatched me with Adela, a Micmac, and a man of note among his people, saying, 'Speed as thou wouldst avert ruin from thy countrymen; speed without fail or delay; and shouldst thou not meet by the way an accredited messenger from the Governor-in-chief, go thou on even to Quebec, and deliver this dispatch into the Count Frontenac's own hands; but, nevertheless, if thou seest the agent whom I am expecting, prove him by the secret sign, and exchange packets with him, and return.

"But fail not to impress him with the necessity of speed, and tell him that upon it depends the very life of the French dominion, northward the Alleghanies; for if it be not delivered within the Castle at Quebec, before many days, the enemy will have cast anchor, without a warning, beneath its walls. Now give me what you have, and to-morrow will find me going down stream again to Hagimsack. As for the Micmac, he has business of his own with the Hurons, and will continue on with you, if agreeable:—that is all."

"Whew ! whew !" ejaculated Couteau-croche, when the other had finished, handing over to him the document required, and stowing away, in a secret pocket, the important one which replaced it, while he added, "This is indeed a weighty matter. The war spirit is again abroad. By the mass ! even as ye spoke, I could feel it creeping over me, like the fire of *eau-de-vie*. You have the paper writing, give it to Villibon, and tell him my name is Couteau-croche. I need say no more ; he knows me well."

"Now then for the cut home, on the back trail. Whoop ! Hurrah for Canada ! May Saint Jean Baptiste take good care of its green fields until I send my voice over them in a gathering cry ! I had met thee sooner, comrade ; but I was delayed

here, since noon, on business with the traders. Would it were daylight; *tonnerre!* I have grown sick of the darkness."

"Ha! ha!" chuckled the Acadian with bitterness, as he observed the enthusiasm and restlessness of his fellow colonist, "thou art hot for the fight, comrade; hadst thou seen as much of what war brings as I have, thou would'st have less stomach for it, I wot. Alas! It has brought only weeping and bewailing unto L'Acadie; sweeping from time to time, as it has, like God's angel, through that luckless land, ever since De Monts first sailed into La Baie Française. The ways of the Lord are hard to understand, comrade. We came over sea, as our sires said, to seek for a quiet abode, and the curse of Europe has followed us in the shape of war!"

"True," replied Couteau-croche; "but somehow, it strikes me that we went the wrong way to work. Instead of doing justice, that justice might be done us, as the priest says, we commenced by seizing upon the rights of the Redskins, who, after all, are the true owners of the ground, and when they, simple ones, with a civil tongue ventured to speak their minds, we planted forts and defied them."

"I tell thee what, *mon ami*," added he, placing his hand on the shoulder of the one he addressed,

"we brought over one thing too many with us from the old world. Ambition ; trouble was sure to follow."

"Perhaps so," answered the Acadian, with reflection.

"I know it," rejoined Couteau-croche. "I have often talked with the Redmen about the early times, and they tell no lies. Their memories are more faithful than the books of the towns, and, mark ye, they have a certain opinion of their own dignity, and of the injuries done them by their brothers—the Wanooch, as they style us. By the mass ! I tell thee, that when they would speak thus, and there was no reason to gainsay what they said, I have blushed and felt cowed, like a caught thief before them."

Here the conference ended, and they both returned to the lodge, where they found the Micmac holding forth, with the gusto of a practised orator, upon the signs of the times ; for the eventful tidings that had been received, were no sooner spread among the members of the community, than they drew together an eager crowd of French and Indians within the dwelling of the chief, to listen to the discourse of the wampum bearer, who belonged to a distinguished and friendly tribe inhabiting the peninsula of Acadia.

The incidents briefly alluded to, though forming

the chief topic of the foregoing conversation, were the first intimation of the design of the British, now fully matured, of striking a determined blow at the progress of their restless neighbours.

Annoyed by the recent ravages of the French and their allies, in their numerous incursions upon the exposed frontier, and stimulated by rumours of fresh invasion, the colonies had assumed at length an attitude of aggression, and called together a meeting of deputies at New York, in the month of May, 1690, to devise means for carrying out a plan of general attack upon the French possessions.

It was there resolved, with the assistance of the Imperial Government, to raise and equip a strong force, and make a simultaneous movement against Canada by land and sea, before the close of the season.

Accordingly, a body of trained provincials and Indians, under the command of General Winthrop, marched towards the enemy's territory, with the intention of entering it by the way of Lake Champlain, upon the borders of which it was encamped, in readiness to act as soon as required; while, at the same time, a naval armament under Sir William Phipps, proceeded against the fortified posts of Acadia. Port Royal, Chedabouctou, and Isle Percé, in succession, were taken and sacked, and the two

latter burnt to the ground; so that these struggling plantations, the oldest of those established by European enterprise in North America, and which, since the treaty of Breda in the year 1667, had enjoyed comparative tranquillity, were once more laid in ruins, and converted into haunts of wretchedness and desolation.

Returning in triumph to Boston, Admiral Phipps completed his arrangements, and with a fleet of thirty-five vessels, having on board, beside the usual complement, a reinforcement of two thousand provincials—set sail for Quebec, before which fortress it made its appearance very unexpectedly; as in the course of our narrative will be seen.

The prospect of immediate hostility acted like an intoxicating charm upon the Indian settlement, and in less than half an hour the whole place re-echoed to the startling whoops which rang through the still night air; while runners were dispatched to camps in the vicinity, with the news, that "the Pale-faces of the sunset had taken up the hatchet, and were on the war-path to Canada, numerous as flies in autumn."

The spirit of their wild nature was fairly roused, and ere the following noon many a hunter had sharpened his knife, in anticipation of the part he was about to play, for as soon as the preliminaries could be arranged, Oba, the chief, raised a war

party to proceed to Canada in aid of their allies the French, and in the following manner.

Having invited the principal fighting men to a feast of dogs, pursuant to immemorial usage on such occasions, as they believed the flesh of that animal excited courage,—he took, afterwards, a severed head, and scorching the lips in the fire until the teeth became bare, stuck the grinning object upon a staff, and with this in his hand and painted to the waist, in the fashion of those who devote themselves to war, he began a chant, improvised and irregular, but full of impassioned energy, while round him gathered a ring of excited natives, listening to the wild appeal which offered each attrait of argument and expression that could win them over to his design. Then, in the midst of some oratorical flourish, he thrust the dog's head towards a noted warrior, who received it at once, in signification of his readiness to join the war-party. The latter then took the place of the chief, caught up the chant and presented the symbol to another warrior, and thus, in turn, it went round the circle until a sufficient number was enlisted, when they equipped themselves, without delay, and departed the day after, singing "the travelling song," on the road to Canada. This, however, was on the second day after the arrival of the Acadian, with the express, and, in the interim, Conrad, Couteau-croche, and

the Miemac, had crossed Lake Tamisquata, and were already more than two-thirds of the way over the portage from thence to the St. Lawrence. But before he left, the *voyageur* did not fail to deposit the articles belonging to the missing Salexis with the Jesuit missionary, who resided at the village—that they might be delivered over to such as could justly lay claim to them, in default of their owner's reappearance.

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CHAPTER XVII.

DESCRIPTIVE AND DIGRESSIVE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the rapid and regular pace at which they travelled, Conrad was enabled to follow close at their heels. He was becoming somewhat inured to the rough habits of his associates, and could undergo considerable fatigue. After all, this forced march was nothing to the winter retreat, or even to those soul-wearying rambles to which he had been subjected, for weeks at a time, during his captivity with the Medicine-man.

He discovered a far deeper source of regret in the change of destination, occasioned by the recent tidings which, in a moment, had crushed the pleasing prospect, his hopes of a speedy restoration to his friends had caused him to entertain; for his

present conductor, besides treating him with every kindness, gave him to understand that he did not consider him in the light of a prisoner, or like one taken in border strife, and subject to ransom, and that at the first opportunity he would pass him into the British territory.

But the struggle now about to take place would interfere most materially with this plan, and threatened to preclude all possibility of his obtaining a safe transit to his own country for some time to come. Indeed, there were times when he almost despaired of ever being able to return home, as he asked himself, who would think of him amid the clash of arms, the multitudinous cares that agitate men's minds, engrossed with their personal concerns, and harassed by the presence of the invader? He felt very sure that his individual interests were too insignificant to claim attention at such a crisis, and must be totally swallowed up and lost in the march of the great events now in progress, which, for ought he knew, might make an entire change in the prospects of the colonists of the New World.

But the boy would strive manfully against these gloomy thoughts, nevertheless, and was brought at last to confide himself entirely to the disposal of a providence that had, until then, guided him safely through a thousand perils, and placed him under the trusty care of the honest and influential Coutreau.

croche, who did all that lay in his power to lessen the irksomeness of his lot, and evinced a solicitude in his welfare which failed not to win his gratitude and esteem.

Thus, as he went on, hour after hour, in the irregular track, the guide would frequently inquire if he were of good heart, and when necessary, would help to lace his mocassins, or half fill them with soft moss, that by treading upon the elastic cushion thus formed, he might feel less the inequalities of the ground ; and, whenever he observed the boy to flag, he would cheer him on with a word of encouragement, or shorten the day's journey by relating to him strange stories of the nations and marvellous things he had beheld in the remote regions of the west.

At last, upon the summit of a lofty hill, the travellers paused, and wiped the moisture that stood in thick drops upon their brows, and Couteau-croche, flinging one hand carelessly out, rested the other on the shoulders of Conrad, and said, "*regardez.*"

The boy uttered an exclamation of rapture as, looking in the direction assigned, he beheld a broad and imposing view spread out before him ; en-framed, as it were, by the heavy foliage of the wooded height from whence it first became visible. From

where he stood, the land began to decline in undulating slopes, covered every where with splendid groves of fir and larch, together with the several varieties of hard wood ; presenting, collectively, so many different shades of green and irregular groupings of vegetation, as to form one of the richest and most enchanting foregrounds imaginable. Beyond this stretched a vast plain, spread out for leagues on either side—a grand savanna, with waving grass and feathery clumps, and isle-like knolls, to the edge of the great St. Lawrence, the waves of which shone with a pale azure hue beyond the level plain ; and on its further shore, many miles away, rested, like a vapoury phantasm, a long array of mountains piled in a series of waving lines, ridge upon ridge, until they blended with the horizon—the atmosphere of which drew over them a faint purple veil that might have reminded an Italian of his own clime.

Those distant heights designated the course and embouchure of that most remarkable of rivers—the dark-rolling, mountain-girded, Saguenay, with its beetling steeps of 1,500 feet of perpendicular rock, its solemn gloom and scarcely fathomable depth ; and above all, its stupendous capes—stupendous and awe-inspiring as their names—Trinity and Eternity !

Over the grand area, the sun shone and the clouds threw broad masses of shadow, here and there, on the grass and waves.

This glorious spectacle had a powerful effect upon Conrad, and caused him to muse deeply as he pursued once more the track of his companions down the wooded slopes leading to the plains. It appeared as though he had all at once obtained a new sense of the greatness and beneficence of God. His heart swelled too with the thought that he stood nearest in the scale of creation to that supreme being, and that there was a purpose in the life of man beyond that of the brutes which perish. The immortal creature within him was beginning to awake as from some long sleep o'erfraught with dreams. The germs of lofty capabilities, quickened by his trials, were unfolding in his mind, filling it with thoughts vague but profound, from which he learned that there was something required of him by his Maker, but what he could not tell. Yet the inward voices that spoke to him though solemn were very sweet, and they poured a flood of light over his soul, in which it seemed to bathe and take delight, as a bird refreshing itself in some receptacle of gold.

Quebec in 1690, with its bold promontory, its spacious basin, its wooded shores, its amphitheatre of shadow hills.

The primeval groves upon the summit of the rocky headland had not yet been shorn to provide space for the increasing growth of the town established, as by a caprice of the fancy, in that inaccessible and romantic spot.

The elms under which Cartier had pitched his tent among the wigwams of Stadaconé, the name of the Indian town then occupying the place—threw a broad canopy of shade over the space now appropriated by the gardens of the Seminary, and those once attached to the castle of St. Louis, since destroyed. And at certain points, clusters of habitations appeared stretching to the verge of the precipices, in the most irregular manner possible, all attempt at uniformity being totally out of the question, in consequence of the inequalities of the ground. And considerably elevated above the rest, and embowered, as it were, in foliage, shone the roofs of the several ecclesiastical edifices, the principal of which were the Jesuits' Monastery, the Convent of the Recollects, and the Cathedral, with its lofty spire.

The most conspicuous object, however, was the castle above alluded to, which was built by Champlain, in 1624. This rose in gloomy grandeur from the very edge of the perpendicular cliff, like an eagle's acerie, overlooking every other object ; and from its summit the banner of France waved its

folds in the wind, proclaiming to all the sovereignty of the great monarch whose representative dwelt within its walls.

To the northward, moreover, and at the opposite extremity of the town, beneath the steeps, and on the banks of the beautiful St. Charles, could be descried the palace of Intendant Royal, built like a pavilion, and surrounded with a shrubbery and garden, that reached to the water's edge. And on the outskirts were visible numerous encampments of natives, and straggling cabins and plantations half concealed by foliage, and scattered over the wide plains that stretched, with a gradual ascent, to the foot of the range of mountains which terminated the prospect towards the north, and ran with a grand sweep in the rear of the St. Lawrence, but parallel with its course below the town.

Looking back again towards the rock, the observer, already cognisant of the localities, would notice a bristling line of palisades, extending from the Pavilion of the Intendant, along the brow of the precipices, to the furthest extremity of Cape Diamond; and enclasping thus the whole front facing the harbour within its compass, with the exception of the Chateau, which, fortified with its three batteries, and commanding every other position, constituted the most conspicuous feature in this

line of defence, of which it was the *point d'appui* and crown.

In addition to this, there was a second chain of works constructed along the quays, beneath the promontory, which protected, in like manner, the narrow strip of soil at its foot. This formed by the debris of the cliffs, which it separated from the river, gave barely room sufficient for a row of habitations that stood with their backs almost touching the rock, in stubborn indifference to the avalanches of earth and stones continually thundering upon their roofs from above, and warning their inmates to seek a more secure *locale*.

This isolated range of buildings was denominated the Basse Ville, in contradistinction to that above; with which a communication was obtained up the face of the rock, through a sort of fissure, left by nature as if for the purpose. Within this there ran an irregular, steep and winding road, enfiladed with cannon, and terminating in a gateway, through which, as at the present day, access was had to the heart of the fortified capital.

Thus, although by no means presenting so formidable an appearance at that time, as it has since acquired, this chosen seat of French dominion and enterprise in the new world, was well calculated to arrest, in no ordinary degree, the attention of a stranger.

At the period to which we refer, there was no embattled girdle of stone walls, bristling with cannon, enclosing the whole area of the promontory with an impervious barrier, three miles in circumference, and united to a citadel based upon its extreme and most elevated point, three hundred and fifty feet above the river, as may now be seen; yet the extraordinary and almost unrivalled grandeur of its position alone, made Quebec an object of extreme interest, which could borrow little from art to heighten the illusion it supplied to those who beheld, for the first time, that far-famed fortress and key of the French possessions in the West.

And it did indeed assume a character, unique as it was imposing, when, from the middle of the harbour, you cast a glance at its huge outline and the splendid panorama of forest, mountain and river, spread out for many a league around the rock, which, like a frowning giant, stood armed in the midst, as if to guard it from intrusion.

The St. Lawrence, almost entirely closed by the bold and luxuriant Island of Orleans, swells out above into a grand basin, until confined again by the projection of the isle-like headland—it flows into it by a channel, seemingly cut out of rock, between the precipitous shores of Cape Diamond and Point Levi; which may then have been com-

pared to a vast gateway, yielding admittance into those boundless and partially explored regions, the very thought of which filled the imagination with visions of romance, and which were destined thereafter to become the true Eldorado, and promised land of the thousands who have penetrated by that northern passage, to the fertile savannas of the West.

Neither was there wanting, even at that early date, a certain degree of historical interest to add to the celebrity of the place. Here in the St. Charles, whose confluence with the St. Lawrence formed a deep indent where the bright flood extended, northward of the promontory ; here, under the shadow of the rock, the stout Cartier had spent the winter succeeding his arrival, and manfully resisted a host of enemies and the attacks of a dreadful disease, shut up in his frail ships, one of which, for want of a sufficient crew, he was obliged to abandon.

How deeply interesting would prove an ample narrative of the sufferings of that adventurous band while exposed, in an age eminently superstitious, to the unknown rigours of a hyperborean clime, and harassed by chimerical alarms suggested by the novelty of their situation. What emotions must have filled the breasts of those rugged *voya-*

geurs, when freed from their shackles of ice by the breath of returning spring, they trimmed their sails anew and departed, to carry to France the glorious tidings of the discovery of Canada !

Here it was that, in the year 1629, the famous Champlain was compelled by famine to yield up the fortress to the brothers, Louis and Thomas Kertk, when New France owned the sovereignty of Great Britain until the treaty of St. Germain en Laye in 1632.

Here, until a late period, the cry "*aux armes*" resounding through the streets, and the sudden beating of the *générale* would warn the inhabitants of the proximity of an enemy, and call them together to repel some prowling party of the Iroquois, whose redoubted warriors lit their fires upon the Island of Orleans, within sight of the town, and many years before had struck a terrible blow at the remnant of the dismembered Hurons that had taken refuge there ; and who, moreover, did not hesitate at times, with characteristic audacity, to approach to the very stockades of the capital itself.

From time immemorial this mighty mass was regarded as a place of strength, and human blood had flowed around its natural ramparts in many a feud between the ancient inhabitants of the groves.

But it was yet to receive a deeper consecration through the sacrifice of Wolfe and Montcalm, which has since converted it into an altar of patriotism and military honour; we would not believe that these are now a mere enthusiast's dream, when standing by the mutilated stone that marks the spot where the hostile ranks closed and the British leader fell !

Men of England, look not coldly upon the interests of that land for the possession of which your fathers fought and bled. Quench not irretrievably the flame of loyalty which burns in many an earnest heart, loath to contract those new ties which the progress of an irresistible destiny would seem to favour, at the sacrifice of affection for the fatherland. The blood of the greatest and wisest nation since the days of the Romans, flows in the veins of the Anglo-American, unadulterated by the air of another hemisphere, and stimulated into vigorous action by a necessity for continual exertion, combined with an entire liberty of thought which calls into play every resource of the physical and intellectual man.

The sturdy and intelligent race that treads the virgin soil of Canada can surely claim equality, at the very least, with the denizens of Older Europe; cramped as they are for want of room, and encr-

vated by an ultra-civilisation that wrongs nature, and has almost taken the sceptre from her hand to put it into that of art.

The British colonist enjoys a peculiar exemption from those prejudices, which, for so many ages, have retarded progress, and are successively being overcome by the convictions of a more enlightened era.

There is a voice in the woods and mountains of a great solitude, that elevates the soul and fortifies it with courage in the time of need. The great torrents, and inland seas of that noble country have schooled the generation, nurtured by their side, into a strong conception of freedom, and the right to be justly dealt with, at the hands of those with whom it is connected by the double alliance of kindred and predilection.

A pernicious, temporizing policy has of late caused such wounds as may not be healed up very easily, we fear. The upright colonist has seen an unprincipled faction permitted to ride triumphant over those whose intentions are honest, and whose loyalty is proven.

Let us hope, that, ere long something of the chivalrous generosity of other days, will pervade the councils of the state, and rouse the stalwart spirit of the Briton to scourge this ignominy from

the land ; if encouragement be due at all, it surely is to those true-hearted provincials who are avowedly proud of the great people from whence they derive their character, their language, and their laws,—and who are as able, as they are willing, to preserve unto their beloved sovereign, the colony their sires won.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

AUX ARMES !

AN unusual bustle and display was observable in the streets of Quebec one October morning. Men were hurrying on with an absorbed and anxious expression in their faces. Mounted officers rode speedily through the thoroughfares to the different points of the fortified lines, and on every side there arose a din of hasty preparation and a hum of eager voices, giving utterance to the varied emotions elicited by unwonted agitation in a crowded mart. And from time to time was also heard the measured, tramp of armed men, marching to their appointed stations within the palisades, or in the districts beyond.

The usual employments of the citizens were

suspended, and those among them who were not enrolled in the militia, had collected in knots at the corners and places of resort, and were discussing, with animated gestures, the startling intelligence just received, of an approaching invasion, which sufficiently explained the extraordinary activity that prevailed.

"Is it the fact," inquired one of a group similarly engaged on one side of the Place d'Armes, facing the Chateau St. Louis, "that upon the arrival of the Indian agent, last evening, with the news of the departure of the Bostonais fleet, a despatch was sent off express to His Excellency, the Governor-General?"

"It is," replied an important looking personage in the suite of the Intendant, with condescending communicativeness, "that is, I am inclined to think so, having good authority, you understand; and no doubt it will speed the return of Monsieur le Comte, especially as the rumour is that the enemy has disappeared from the borders of Lake St. Sacrement, and there is no further apprehension of danger from that quarter."

"The virgin be praised!" ejaculated a sallow-faced little man with a sanctimonious twang, "may she keep the foot of the heretic from the soil of his sacred Majesty."

"General Frontenac will take his measures with

skill, no doubt; I would he were here, nevertheless, nor shall I be easy in my mind until he is safe again within the castle. In good sooth, the times are ominous, my friends, and we need God's help to shield us from the devices of the fiend. Depend upon it, he it is who is urging on those stubborn colonists to the overthrow of the true believer."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed a Seigneur who joined the group in full costume, with a morocco portfolio under his arm, having just had an interview with the military commander for the time, during the absence of Governor Frontenac. "What fearest thou, man? Those who fought under Marshal Turenne and the Condé, are not to be caught napping, you may be sure. This is no time to waste in idle forebodings. Let us baffle opposition by meeting it like men; and hark ye, take my advice and shoulder a fusée, instead of brooding upon imaginary disaster. I will soon find you a place in the ranks. I go now to muster the Beaufort battalion, empowered by Major Provot, whom I have just seen at the Castle." Then turning to the rest, he added, "Cheer up, my friends, there is plenty of the true mettle yet in New France, and Admiral Phipps will find us on the alert, and ready for him; come when he may."

At this moment, the figure of a well-known Indian appeared issuing from the portal of the chateau.

"Look !" cried the sallow-complexioned man, who did not relish much the suggestion of his superior, and wished to turn attention from the subject. "There goes that dark-visaged Huron ; see what a proud way he has, and how disdainfully he stalks along, with his arms folded and his eyes cast down. I would lay a wager now, that the evil-minded savage is already calculating his share of scalps in the coming struggle. He fills me with a sort of horror when I see him ; would that all such vermin were hunted from the land !"

"Cease, thou prattler !" said the Seigneur, knitting his brows, and regarding the speaker with sternness. "You neither know the man nor the race to which he belongs, else you would be less censorious and unmindful of what we owe those vermin, as you call them. There is not a nobler spirit upon the soil of Canada, than that within the breast of Adario, the Huron chief."

"That's a true word," remarked another of the party. "I shall not forget one scene. It was a drunken quarrel, and a countryman of Adario was wounded—mortally, as they supposed at the time,

by a headstrong *voyageur*, who took refuge among the crowd in the market place, fearful of pursuit—for several Hurons were witnesses of the blow. But Le Rat, as we call him, with the impetuosity of a bison, dashed right through the people, and seizing hold of the offender, presented his knife at his heart. At that juncture, the man's sister arrived and fell on her knees before Le Rat, beseeching him to spare his life. The chief looked first at the woman, then at the *voyageur*, and without saying a word, let him depart.

"I never saw a man look so like a king as the Grand Huron did, when he sheathed his weapon and walked quietly away."

"Gallant heart! Gallant heart!" exclaimed the Seigneur with emotion, as, lifting his hat courteously, to the respectful salutation of the rest, he passed quickly on, while those who remained, were soon obliged to move also from the spot; for that part of the square was suddenly occupied by a corps of artillery, dragging several heavy guns along towards the batteries overlooking the river.

It was indeed true, though mentioned as a rumour only, in the first part of the foregoing conversation, that the force of General Winthrop had abandoned its position upon the south-western

frontiers of Canada ; for, while encamped, awaiting the arrival of Admiral Phipps in the *St. Lawrence*, to assume the offensive—an epidemic appeared in its ranks, and quickly spread among the Indians of the Five Nations, accompanying the expedition. So that, weakened by a considerable loss and disheartened by the desertion of their allies, who fled, panic-stricken, from the neighbourhood of the disease, the British leader was reluctantly obliged to give up all hopes of conquest, and withdraw towards Albany, where his troops were finally disbanded.

Relieved from the anxiety occasioned by the close vicinity of an enemy, which required his presence in Montreal, where he had collected all the disposable militia and Indians within reach, to obstruct the passage of the invading army, Count Frontenac began to think of returning to Quebec, and sent back to their homes the armed peasantry who had made their appearance promptly at the threatened point upon the first note of alarm ; for he believed now that there was little chance of further molestation during the season which was already drawing towards its close, and would effectually prevent any extensive operations on the part of the English, particularly by sea. This opinion, moreover, was fully confirmed by information already received, that

Admiral Phipps had been detained up to a late period, in completing the destruction of the settlements in Acadia, and had afterwards returned to Boston, as he thought, with the intention of deferring his attempt upon Canada, until the following year.

His surprise may therefore be imagined when he received, by express, a letter from the capital, saying, that the British fleet had left Boston, and soon after a second, stating that it had already been observed off the Capes of the St. Lawrence; closely followed by a third, with the alarming intelligence that the ships were rapidly ascending the river, and expected daily to make their appearance before the town.

The whole soul of the resolute old warrior was instantly roused. He countermanded his orders, took immediate measures to meet the emergency, dispatched all the troops that could be dispensed with above, by forced marches, on the route to Quebec, and descended the river himself, in a frail vessel, at the eminent hazard of his life.

This temerity was justified by the urgency of the occasion; for when he reached his destination, the enemy was already at the fort of the Island of Orleans!

But, in the mean time, the *Major de Place* had not been idle, and the Governor-general, upon his arrival, found the fortress in a good state of defence

and secured from the danger of surprise ; while the surrounding *habitants*, with their usual alacrity, had seized their arms and gathered in to its aid.

Batteries were placed, cannon planted at the weaker points, stoccades erected, barriers formed of heavy timber, and hogsheds and sacks filled with earth, thrown across the several entrances to the town ; which, at that time, were not furnished with embattled gateways. In addition to these, the passage between the upper and lower town was intersected by a barricade of a similar description, and a triple intrenchment garnished with chevaux-de-frize.

By the first light of dawn, upon the 16th of October, 1690, the British fleet was deseried from the heights of Cap aux Diamans, and caused a violent sensation in the fortress, as the garrison beheld sail after sail issue in to view from the wooded extremities of Orleans and Point Levi, which interrupted the view of the river below. By ten o'clock the entire array, to the number of thirty vessels, had entered the harbour and cast anchor before the town.

Shortly afterwards, Sir William Phipps dispatched an officer with a flag of truce, to demand a parley with the French Governor. This person, having submitted to be blind-folded, was conducted towards the chateau by a circuitous route, over

barricades and through outworks resounding with the noise of men and arms, to impress him with an idea of the capabilities of defence which the place possessed, and which, no doubt, succeeded in undeceiving him with regard to its supposed weakness and paucity of protectors; such having been, it seems, the prevailing belief among the British up to that period.

When, therefore, the bandage was withdrawn from the eyes of the envoy, and he found himself in the presence of the renowned Frontenac, and surrounded by a host of officers in full costume—and beheld upon every face a reigning expression of confidence and determination, the evident embarrassment with which, it is said, he delivered the extraordinary message of Admiral Phipps, can be easily accounted for.

This was to the effect, that their Britannic Majesties, in consequence of the ravages and cruelties committed by the French and their allies against their subjects, had been forced to take up arms for the purpose of obtaining possession of Canada, to secure the future safety of their neighbouring plantations; and, therefore, he demanded an immediate and unconditional surrender.

At the conclusion of this address, which touched upon several other matters in a manner sufficient, heaven knows, to provoke a less impatient

adversary, the officer drew forth a watch which he handed to Count Frontenac, saying, that it was then ten o'clock, and that he would only wait until eleven for his reply.

As might have been anticipated, this fool-hardy summons was received with a loud burst of indignation by the assembly ; enraged, less by the proposal than by the peremptory and discourteous terms in which it was conveyed. M. de Varennes, with martial impetuosity, cried aloud, that the bearer of so insulting a message should be treated as the envoy of a pirate in arms against his legitimate sovereign—Louis XIV. not having recognised, as yet, the right of the Prince of Orange to the throne of Great Britain—and who had violated his terms of capitulation with the garrison of Port Royal, the governor of which, M. de Manneval, he had retained a prisoner, contrary to his word of honour, and the acknowledged Laws of Nations.

The Governor General replied in a similar tone, and rejected, with contempt, the proposal of his antagonist, and when the envoy demanded an answer in writing, he said to him, in a voice of thunder, "Go tell you master that I will send him an answer from the mouth of my cannon, and teach him not to summons thus a man like me, to surrender!"

Accordingly, no sooner had the herald returned

to his fleet, than the batteries of the lower tower opened their fire and were replied to by the vessel of the Admiral, and those in the immediate vicinity. But, strange to say, two days were allowed to elapse without any further effort being made, on the part of the besiegers, to gain possession of the place; which gave time to the besieged to complete their arrangements and acquire additional assurance in themselves, and the strength of their almost impregnable position.

On the 18th, however, the shallows were observed approaching towards the river St. Charles, filled with soldiers, who, to the number of 1300, were landed, under Major Walley, upon the low ground lying between Beauport and the town, with a view of carrying the heights in that direction.

Here they were immediately attacked by a corps of *tirailleurs* and Indians that hung with untiring pertinacity upon their skirts, and proved a formidable obstacle to a progress rendered sufficiently difficult by the unfavourable nature of the ground, which, intersected with thickets, morasses, and occasional rocks, impeded the efforts to advance; while, at the same time, these afforded every facility to the assailed, who, familiar with the locality, could turn every impediment into a means of defence, and dispute the ground, foot by foot, with a vastly inferior force.

Harassed on every side by a deadly fusillade from each bush, rock, and tree, and entangled amid impracticable swamps, where they were obliged to keep close together, for fear of falling into an ambush, and consequently presented a broad mark to the enemy's aim, the English were at length obliged to give way, with considerable loss, and beat a retreat, without having accomplished the passage of the St Charles, which still separated them from the stockades of Quebec.

In the mean time, Admiral Phipps, without awaiting the result of the attempt by land, as originally intended, formed a line of battle with his largest vessels before the town, and commenced a general bombardment. This was replied to with equal spirit by the different batteries, and the firing was kept up with determined vigour until nightfall, when both besiegers and besieged were fain to suspend hostilities until the ensuing dawn. They were then resumed, and the cannonade was continued until noon, when the Admiral's ships drew off from the fire, having suffered heavy loss in men, and serious damage in hull and rigging. The rest soon followed, in a crippled condition, and ceased to molest those walls of rock, upon which all their efforts had failed to produce the smallest impression. This premature conduct of the British Admiral was viewed with astonishment by the troops from

the shores of Beaufort; and when the ships retired in a dismantled state, from before the steeps—whose crests were veiled from their sight by the lurid smoke of the cannon that thundered above, they became disheartened, and lost all hope of ultimate success.

Nevertheless, there was no effort wanting, on their part, to retrieve the error of their Admiral; and having received a reinforcement of artillery during the night, they again advanced at daybreak, on the 20th, in good order, throwing out skirmishers upon their front and flanks, with the intent of forcing the passage of the St. Charles. But meeting with a band of volunteers, under MM. de Longueuil and St. Hélène, who disputed the road with their guns charged with three balls each, the deadly fire they experienced obliged them to take refuge in a wood, where they made a stand and compelled the Canadians to retire, with the loss of St. Hélène, one of their most distinguished leaders. But no important advantage was gained, for General Frontenac, with three battalions of regulars, held the opposite bank of the St. Charles, and night overtook them ere they had ceased to struggle with their opponents, while the passage of the river remained unachieved.

On the following day, the English once more advanced with several pieces of artillery, to breach

the works ; but, as before, they were soon engaged with detachments of troops and militia, which checked their progress ; and, favoured by the nature of the ground, inveigled them into several ambuscades. The obstinacy of the British, however, caused their adversaries to give way at length, and take shelter under the batteries of the town ; but at nightfall, the former, in their turn, retreated towards their camp—at first in good order but afterwards in confusion—and abandoning all hope of support from the naval force, and worn out and dispirited by the severity and ill-success of their exertions, a council of war was held, when it was determined to embark without delay. This was done, with considerable precipitation, in a dark and stormy night ; leaving guns and ammunition behind them, together with six hundred of their number lying dead in the marshes of Beauport.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONRAD IN THE BELEAGURED FORTRESS—A DARING EXPLOIT
—THE BOY LEAVES WITH THE BRITISH FLEET, AND FORMS
AN AGREEABLE ACQUAINTANCE.

BUT where was our friend Conrad all this time? for we have forgotten him altogether, amid the marshalling of arms and subsequent struggle for supremacy upon this important, but at that time remote, portion of the American continent.

Quietly installed in a room in the second story of a building in the Upper Town—where he had been lodged by Couteau-croche, immediately upon his arrival—the boy became a close observer of the events that were in hourly progress around the beleagured stronghold; while his personal liberty was insured to him by his assumed connection with the *voyageur*, who passed him off for the son of one

of his comrades, and by this means rescued him from the miseries of incarceration, to which he would have been subjected under the denomination of a prisoner of war.

He was left to himself during the greater portion of each day, as Couteau-croche took an active part in what was going on, and only showed himself at nightfall, begrimed with gunpowder, and exhausted by fatigue, so that he had ample leisure to survey the exciting spectacle that unfolded itself in all its beauty and grandeur beneath him, like some gorgeous picture of romance which the fancy calls into existence—as fleeting as it is unreal.

But it was no mocking mirage of the imagination upon which he gazed, from the lofty perch above the Sault aux Matelots. The magnificent sail-speckled basin, the bold promontories, the wooded shores resplendent in their autumnal foliage; the grand and solemn mountains that seemed to enclasp the entire panorama with a chain, and gather up the mists and clouds that floated over the valley of the St. Lawrence,—were solemn and tangible realities which engrossed his untiring interest; for each hour—"from morn till dewy eve"—brought with it some new phase of effect, in colour or *chiar oscuro*, that gave the scene an appearance of continual novelty to his eye.

With a warm thrill of hope and enthusiasm, he

saw the British fleet emerge from the extremity of Point Levi, and move in majestic array, up the harbour, with every sail set, and every pennon displayed; and he longed for some faculty by which he could transport himself on board of one of those graceful ships, and take shelter beneath the shadow of her canvass wings.

Then came the beating to arms, the parley, and the tremendous outburst from the batteries on the quays, by which the Canadians gave vent to their indignation at the audacious message of the invader. This was so sudden, that Conrad thought some awful phenomenon must have occurred; for the foundations of the building in which he was, shook as by an earthquake, and the river, ramparts, and town were enveloped in a cloud of smoke and fire; while a din, greater than he had ever heard before, and which seemed to rend the very rocks asunder, rolled thundering up from the base of the precipices and reverberated in mournful peals through the distant mountains; and when at length the smoke cleared away, and left the prospect unobscured, he saw that the flag hung no longer at the poop of the British Admiral; for it had been shot away from the halyards, and was now floating prone upon the tide.

He looked again. Could it be possible? Yes,

his eyes did not play him false ; a man was swimming out from one of the batteries below toward the stricken flag. He is observed from the fleet and a sharp fire of small arms is directed upon him ; yet still he keeps on fearlessly, amidst a shower of balls, and grasps with his hand the precious trophy. A loud cheer resounds from the French redoubts, and the general firing is for the time suspended, to witness the issue of the daring attempt.

A wreath of smoke intercepts the view, and envelops as in a mantle of protection, the gallant swimmer ; it lifts, Conrad caught his breath—there is no object seen above the waves. Yes, there again is a head and shoulders ploughing their swift passage along, beyond the range of the English marksmen. By St. George ! he has reached the strand ; and, with the prize wrapped around him, is springing into the gateway of the stockade, opened to receive him ; while a shout of triumph rings from every part of the lines and the cannonade is again resumed. Who could this individual be—Conrad wondered ?

Some time afterwards his notice was attracted by a noise, as of some one entering below ; and suddenly the door of the chamber was burst open, and in rushed Couteau-croche, wild as a maniac, with nothing on him save his shirt and leggins ; the

former twisted round his loins, and both dripping with water.

After cutting a fantastic caper and giving an Indian yell, he proceeded to shake out the folds of a large banner, which was gathered in a wet mass under his arm. This he spread at length upon the floor, and displayed to the amazed Conrad the well-known colours and blazonry of the English flag. The guide then commenced a triumphant dance around the warlike emblem, with many a whoop and antic, expressive of frenzied joy, until at length, he sunk exhausted upon a stool; and then, for the first time, regarding his protégé, he observed that he was distressed by the exhibition. This caused an immediate reaction in the feelings of the honest *voyageur*; and cursing himself inwardly at his stupidity, he caught up the flag and threw it into a cupboard close by, with a gesture of impatience, saying—

“By the mass! I did not do it boastingly, boy; but without heed or recollecting who was near. There, there,—cheer up, *mon ami*; after all, 'tis only the fortune of war, and we will say nothing more about it.”

And he made no allusion afterwards in the presence of Conrad, to an exploit which gained him great celebrity among his countrymen, and drew a flattering testimonial from the authorities.

Then came the debarkation of troops, the rapid evolutions, the hot skirmishing among the groves of Beauport; the rattling volleys of musketry, intermingled with wild whoops and shouts, and the confusion of the retreating ranks. Then, once again, this picture of fierce activity and strife would be entirely hidden in a veil of sulphureous smoke, which poured in dense volumes around the heights facing the river, as the guns of the fortress replied to the fire of the enemy's vessels, now anchored in front of the town, at a depth of from one hundred to three hundred and fifty feet beneath its rock-based ramparts.

Fortunately for the citizens, the aim of the besiegers was very imperfect, so that few missiles did any injury to the town; but during the course of the day, when the cannonade was most severe, several shells and balls flew hissing over the place where Conrad was, and one spent ball, describing a great curve in its descent, buried itself with fearful force in the wall of a building adjoining. The boy, stinnulated as he had been at the commencement of the strife, grew sick at last of the constant repetition, the noise and confusion that prevailed; and he turned away with loathing from a scene of discord, where naught could be distinguished but a dense cloud filled with fiery tongues, and crowds of fierce-looking soldiery

working the guns upon the different batteries; while, from time to time, bodies of men, disfigured and savage from the conflict, would pass in the street below, some bearing the wounded, and others conducting the mangled remains of their companions to their respective homes. At length, the ships drew off towards the Island of Orleans, and all further hostilities were confined to the neighbourhood of the St. Charles.

One morning Couteau-croche, who had gone out early, returned in haste with the intelligence that the English troops had gone on board during the night, and that the fleet was on the eve of departing, several of the vessels having already begun to descend the river.

"Now," continued he, "I know that thou pinest ever for thy home, Conrad, and wouldst give the cost of Saint Louis, if thou hadst it, to be able to go back with these craft; confess it thou needest not, for I have seen it by thy restlessness and thy yearning looks riverward ever since these English hove in sight; and it is but natural. Not a word now," he added, as Conrad was about to speak. "There is little time for speech at present, and no need, *mon ami*; but get thyself ready forthwith, and we'll see what can be done. There is a cartel agreed upon for an exchange of prisoners, and a

shallop with a white flag awaits at the quay below, ready to sail with such as are lucky enough to get their freedom by it. Quick, boy! quick! else we may scarcely be in time, and thou mayest not find so good a chance again for many a long day."

It need scarcely be told that in a few minutes Conrad was prepared, and accompanied by his stalwart friend, on his way to the gate, at the head of the steep defile leading to the lower town.

Obtaining issue by a small sally-port, they scrambled hastily over the barricades, and such defensive works as had been recently placed across the thoroughfare, which made it somewhat difficult to descend to the base of the rock, where they soon found the vessel of which they were in quest. There had been little time to spare, however, for the shallop, having received her freight, was just upon the eve of setting off from the quay, when Couteau-croche, forcing his way through the guard of soldiers stationed there, and drawing Conrad after him, lifted the latter up in his arms like an infant, and deposited him amid a crowd of liberated captives upon the deck of the vessel.

Then seeking out the officer in command, he took him aside, and explained to him, in few words, the circumstances connected with the capture and

the quay below,
y enough to get
quick ! else we
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subsequent history of the boy, together with an urgent entreaty that good care should be taken of him until he arrived in Boston, and was placed in the way of reaching his friends. The *voyageur* spoke with vehement warmth in behalf of Conrad, as though he were his own child ; and so entirely was he engrossed with the subject, that he forgot that he to whom he was making his earnest appeal was a stranger and an enemy.

But the British officer appeared to enter fully into his feelings ; for he assented readily to his wishes, and told him in his own language, that his young friend should have both safe conduct and the best treatment he could offer, as long as he remained under his care. Thus satisfied, the good-hearted *voyageur* turned again towards Conrad, for already the fastenings were cast off, and the shallop leaving the quay, and grasping his hand strongly, with a tremulous voice he muttered :

"Adieu, my boy. Remember Couteau-croche, and may God protect thee !"

"That will I, my preserver and friend, thou mayest be sure," was the fervent response, and the next moment the *voyageur* had leaped ashore.

Conrad gazed wistfully at his tall and stately figure, conspicuous in its Indian garb among the uniforms of the soldiery, until distance destroyed

all individuality, and blended the whole in one uniform mass, as the vessel was wafted by the strong current down the harbour. Then Conrad found himself, with a suddenness he could scarcely comprehend, upon his return to that country from which he had believed himself doomed to remain exiled, if not for ever, at the very least for a much longer period than that now terminating his brief sojourn within the walls of Quebec. What a plaything in the hands of circumstances is man ! We know not, indeed, what a single day may bring forth. That morning Conrad had arisen, dejected, weary, and without a prospect of liberation ; that evening he saw the sun cast its last rays in a flood of gold upon the waves of the St. Lawrence, far below the fortress-town, and linger upon the sails of the numerous craft composing the fleet, to one of the largest of which he had been transferred. Life itself seemed to catch a portion of that heaven-descending-glory ; for the returning captives felt renewed energy and gladness spring within their long-suffering hearts, and attune their every sense to rapture, as they gazed upon that setting sun, and bounded onward in lively freedom, with the impetus of a steady breeze.

Thus ended a project, ill-managed and unfortunate in its very commencement; for the army that was to have laid siege to Montreal, and co-operated with the naval forces, was dispersed, as already stated, ere the arrival of the latter at Quebec. And when there, the object of the expedition was, in the first instance, endangered by unnecessary delay, and rendered nugatory by subsequent precipitation and want of concert in the leaders; so that, with a cost of £40,000 to New England, it threw a shade upon the national renown which it needed the brilliant laurels, gathered long afterwards upon the same field, entirely to dispel.

The defeat of Admiral Phipps was more than compensated for by the victory of the immortal Wolfe in 1759.

The struggle, however, was not yet complete. There was another enemy, more potent and inexorable than man, watching the movements of the baffled fleet and opposed to its return—an enemy which it was powerless, indeed, to evade.

The stern tyrant of those northern shores was already marshalling his forces, to burst with tempestuous wrath upon the land delivered up, for so many dreary months, to his control. Winter sat scowling upon the neighbouring hills, and no one could tell at what moment he might hurl

his icy bolts and sweep the callow plains with his glaive.

And yet the scene upon which Conrad looked, the morning after his departure, was so soft and peaceful, and the air against his cheek felt so bland, that it invoked no harsh thought or apprehension of the desolate season upon the verge of which the footsteps of Time already trod. The groves and hill-sides around were resplendent with autumnal hues, the mountains covered with a thin and sluggish haze ; Nature appeared to repose in state after the maturity of her labours, keeping carnival in a garb of painted leaves.

Hark ! There was a sound, as of rushing wind, a portentous movement in the air ;—the withered leaves are whirled in a thick shower through the glades and on the river, and again all is still.

Was that an echo of the moaning gust reflected from the convex sails aloft, or a human sigh ? Conrad turned to discover, and found a young girl leaning against the bulwark near him.

She was younger than himself, and very delicate-looking, and by the profile presented to his view as she gazed intently out upon the waves, he saw also that she was exceedingly beautiful. It was strange, but when Conrad observed this sweet vision, he trembled violently, and clung for support to the rigging of the vessel : some chord which

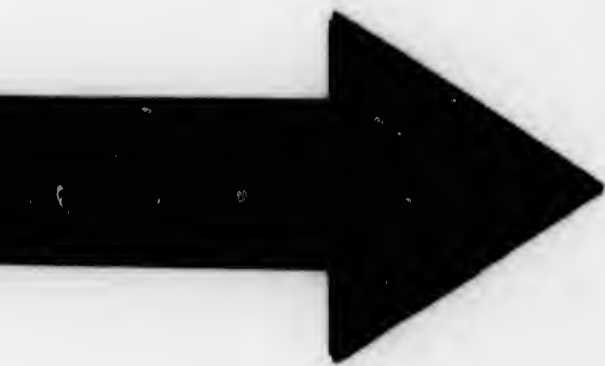
had never yet been awakened within him, was suddenly struck, and vibrated aloud. At that instant, he became conscious of sensations, of the very existence of which he had hitherto undreamt, and they filled him with a thrill of inexpressible delight, together with a vague fear. Some magnetic sympathy was called into swift action; the beam of a new star had penetrated into the inner chambers of his soul.

Neither appeared to have been aware of the presence of the other, until then, for the girl gave a slight start, when on looking round, she perceived the youth within a few paces of her, and the warm colour mounted to her cheek and forehead, as she lowered her eyes; after directing towards him a regard so full of innocent surprise and bright intelligence, that it went with the force of spoken language to the heart of Conrad, who inquired gently in English:

"Did you speak?"

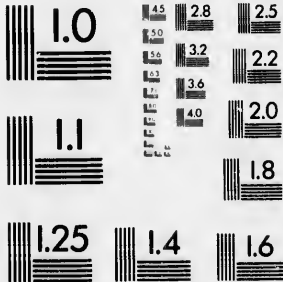
"No, friend," replied the maiden, in the same tongue; still keeping her eyes veiled under their long, dark lashes, as she spoke, and to all appearance, intent upon the scrutiny of a gun-carriage, which, splintered by a shot and lumbered with tackle, stood at her side. "It was only an idea that troubled me, but it is gone now."





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The voice in which these words were uttered was so musical, that it had a marvellous charm for the listener, who had been for many months a stranger to the accents of his adopted land; while there was a certain plaintiveness in the intonation, which excited a still deeper interest, as he asked:

"And what could bring trouble to the thoughts of one so young and so fair?"

The maiden turned upon him her large black eyes, with a look so mild, and yet so reproachful, that Conrad felt abashed and angry with himself for having caused offence by his remark; and he hastened to say, though with embarrassment:

"Forgive me; but my heart spoke. I would not make you sad, nor offend you, knowingly. God knows I would not; so you will forgive me."

"Friend," she replied, "'tis very easy to pardon where there is no malice. And I have not wanted practice in that Christian duty since I left"—she would have said, "home," but she did not complete the sentence: "Peace be between us, but take good care thou sinnest not again; else we may not be friends;" and the girl, as she ceased speaking, threw towards the one she addressed, a furtive glance, half-playful and half-admonitory,

while at the same time, her countenance wore an earnest expression which filled Conrad with sympathy and involuntary respect.

"Fear not, lady; it is long since the homeless wanderer has looked upon a face so gentle as thine, and your speech is unto me full of dear memories, which it would grieve me very much to lose."

"And hast thou too been in captivity?" asked the girl with feeling, bending slightly forward and looking ingenuously into his face.

"Yes, in very truth, I can say that I have endured what you would be grieved to hear: but why speak of *my* woes; surely you have not also suffered slavery? That cannot be!"

"I have drunk captivity to the dregs," replied she, gravely, holding out her hand to Conrad with simple grace. "The wretched should comfort one another, as I have read they did in the times of old. Thou wilt be my friend, and I will put trust in thee. I am almost alone here, thou seest, notwithstanding that there are many of my country on board, inasmuch as they are rude, discoursing continually of war and violence—things unseemly to a maiden's ear; and what women there be, appear to me very ungente; therefore let us be friends."

Conrad with alacrity took the proffered hand, and gave a free expression to his delight at this frank proposal on the part of one who seemed formed to excite his sympathies; and the ice being thus broken, they conversed together without reserve, and quite forgetful of the lapse of time; for, when an unusual bustle awoke them from the pleasant *tête-à-tête*, they were surprised to find that the last rays of evening were fading in the west, and that the vessel had cast anchor for the night amongst the rest of the fleet. Yet still they remained on deck, indulging in a full revival of feelings long repressed, which welled up from their unworn hearts, pure and sparkling to their lips. They had suffered so much, and had been so long exiled from home and genial association, that they seemed to view each other more as old friends, than as the mere acquaintance of a day; so like young birds, emancipated from confinement, they found abundant enjoyment in giving mutual utterance to their impressions, and in making a bosom confidant to share in the interests of their peculiar world. They remained seated, side by side, sometimes conversing, and sometimes in silent reverie, until there was no light visible, but that of the battle lanterns of the different vessels, whose dull glimmer feebly penetrated the

pitchy darkness that filled, as with a palpable matter, the space between the clouds and the waves.

In this communion of two truthful spirits there was much to elevate and much to put to shame the specious philosophy of the world. The sentiments of their sinless age, unwarped by selfishness or habit, which of itself "is strong almost as life," gave a wisdom to their words that might have wrought in many a sceptic mind, belief of the existence of virtue and the wealth of the natural heart.

They spoke of their past lives,—the joys and sorrows they had experienced; their bitter trials, and the cruel things they had beheld. They alluded also to that solemn realm where angels dwelt, and where there was neither sorrow nor wrong. and this brought them, by the extremes of comparison, to the contemplation of their own vague prospects, and gave rise to so many anxious and conflicting thoughts, that each remained silent and abstracted for a time, and when Ellen—for that was the name by which she told Conrad to call her—lifted her head, as one of the seamen, with' a lantern, passed by, her companion observed that her cheek was wet with tears.

The information relative to the history of the beautiful and friendless stranger, thus accidentally thrown in his way, gathered from the many conversations that took place between them, we will here give, in a connected form.

CHAPTER XX.

ELLEN'S HISTORY.

HER parents accompanied William Penn to the New World, and settled upon the borders of the Delaware, in the fertile district, which flourished so rapidly under the administration of that great and good man. Here Ellen, the youngest of three children, was bred up in the tenets of the Society of Friends — that remarkable community of Christians, whose practices, of all others, were most consistent with the doctrines it upheld; for in the land of refuge to thwarted sectarianism, the Quaker was the only one who extended to his Indian brother, a hand of impartial friendship, and smoked with him upon equal terms, under the

covenant elm of their mutual benefactor—Chas, as the natives termed him.*

After some years of happiness and prosperity, a change took place in the circumstances of the colonist, which obliged him to dispose of his lands, and seek a second home among the wilds of New England, where he hoped in time, to retrieve his former position and overcome the difficulties with which he was burdened. What these were, Ellen could not tell, and in fact, she was too young to comprehend them, perhaps, had they been detailed to her; but there was enough to show that his reduced condition was attributable to heavy pecuniary liabilities in which he had become involved.

William Clayton was a member of an ancient English family, and had lived in the enjoyment of every luxury and refinement peculiar to the class to which he belonged. From the time of his removal from Pennsylvania, however, all things were altered with the unfortunate family; and they found themselves suddenly reduced to a level with the roughest emigrant who had to earn his

* In allusion to Penn's famous treaty with the Indians, Voltaire pithily observes,—“C'est le seul traité entre ces peuples et les Chrétiens qui n'ait point été juré et qui n'ait point été rompu.”—*Œuvres*, Vol. LIV, 415.

bread with the labour of his hands. Still, they stood it well at first—those whom nature and education had unfitted for a peasant's lot; but loss succeeded loss,—cattle died, crops failed, and Ellen's mother declined in health; and when the ruined man soon afterwards laid his partner in the grave, he seemed to have received the final blow; for his energies relaxed from that hour, and they said his heart was broken.

Ellen wept when she related how desolate their poor home was, after that mournful period, and how her father would walk hour after hour, through the fields, or sit by the hearth, without speaking a word to any one, and looking all the time so stern—so stern.

Some months later, one autumn night, just as they were about going to bed, a dreadful cry rang over the settlement, and ere long, a step was heard and a neighbour thundered at the door, as he passed, crying—that the Indians were in the clearings!

Ellen's father aroused himself, like a man who had been sleeping, when he heard those words, and telling his children not to be alarmed, he took down his musket from the chimney—a trusty piece and ready—and went out to reconnoitre: but in one instant, he returned again and barred the door. There was barely time, for scarcely was it

secured, when the whoop of the enemy was heard; they had surrounded the house, in their usual stealthy manner, thinking to take it by surprise.

Then came blows and random shots aimed at the door; but it was of strong materials and resisted. Their fire was more successful. From the sleeve of the father's coat a small stream of blood fell, drop by drop, upon the floor, while the limb itself, hung motionless at his side; his arm was broken by a bullet, but he made no sign to show that he suffered. What he did do, was to beckon unto his son—a stout lad, senior to Ellen—to come to him, and drawing the plug from a loop-hole, pierced near the door, he put the muzzle of his musket through—took aim and fired. A fierce cry told that it had taken effect, while the settler moved away to another part of the cabin and charged again; the boy assisting him meanwhile, by holding the gun and giving him the powder and ball, as required. In this way he managed to keep up a steady fire at those outside, opening before each shot, a fresh loop-hole—as the log-walls were well furnished in that respect. And wherever he heard a noise, he unmasked a foe, and seldom missed his mark!

But now an ominous silence succeeded to the yells of the Indians. Could they have departed? Ellen thought so; but when she made the remark,

tremblingly, her father looked at her and smiled—she never could forget that smile! and she hid her face again in her sister's bosom and wept.

A rustling sound broke the stillness, and increased gradually into a crackling roar. What could it mean? Alas, they soon knew! Thin streams of smoke began to enter through the crevices of the logs and fill the interior;—the cabin was fired! Then Ellen's father shouted, with a voice that sent a pang to the hearts of the children, it was so keen and wild:

"Frank, quick lad, bring here the axe! We must not be smothered like rats in a hulk!"

The boy brought the axe to his father, who handed him his gun, and asked him if he thought he could use it.

"I will try," he replied.

Then the father told him to follow close behind, and kissing his girls, each, he bid them keep fast hold of his skirts, and put their trust in God. Whereupon, he undid the fastenings of the door, and rushed out with his children into the midst of the Indians.

He worked well with his single arm, for two of his opponents fell beneath the blows of his crushing weapon, and Frank disabled a third with a shot from his gun; but the band closed around the

little group, and tore the children from the parent, who was overpowered.

Ellen could not dwell further on this part of her narrative ; but her listener was given to understand that she herself was the only one spared, and that the rest were cruelly butchered on the spot. From this period, the survivor lost all recollection of what ensued. Fright and horror had such an effect upon her, that her intellect became unsettled. Yet she was painfully conscious of terrible and increased fatigue, and her tender feet were wounded by the roughness of the paths, and dreadfully sore. As for the past, it was a blank ; one sole impulse engrossed her mind—a wish for evening, that she might have rest ; and visions wildly fantastic, but very beautiful, would often float before her, and beguile her from her sufferings. Poor Ellen believed that an angel had watched over her then, and filled her mind with these pleasant dreams, to comfort her in her trials. Such may have been the cause, we will believe ; for if innocence and helplessness ever engaged the solicitude of those philanthropists of the skies, Ellen might well have claimed their guardianship throughout that miserable journey.

One morning she was awakened by the song of birds, which filled with the sweetest melody the

place where she was; and starting, as from a reverie, she found herself lying wrapped in skins, within a rude hut, where there were many wild figures flitting to and fro. At length they went out, and she was left alone. With great difficulty, for she felt very feeble, she crept to a window, and discovered that she was in an Indian village, and that the ground was covered with snow, upon which flocks of birds with scarlet plumage were playing and carolling. Ellen's recollection then returned to her, and she knew why she was there, and what had occurred. She wept, and was moved with an awful sense of bereavement, yet she sat long, watching those birds; they were so cheerful in that winter time, and so very beautiful; they sang so sweetly, and called so lovingly to one another. Then, like an icy coldness, came upon her the full memory of the past, and with a shiver, she crept back to her rude couch again.

Not long after this, a French lady being at the village, took a strong fancy to the beautiful captive, and purchased her from her Indian master, and took her to Montreal. This change Ellen considered a great boon at the time; for, although her captors had treated her with uniform kindness, and even seemed to be attached to her, she found it very hard to accustom herself to their wild ways. But often afterwards would she have given worlds

to be again among her unexacting hosts ; amidst all her privations while with them, she had, at least, enjoyed an entire liberty of conscience in matters of religion.

It was otherwise, now, however, for her new mistress was imbued with those visionary doctrines which, under the name of Quietism, were the spiritual epidemic of the period, especially in New France, where it assumed the character of a religious frenzy, as detrimental to the interests of the colony as that which, in the commencement, had caused the erection of vast ecclesiastical establishments in the wilderness, and excited a violent crusade against the theology of the natives.

With a view to her final adoption, therefore, this person soon commenced a series of assaults upon the faith of the young captive ; but meeting with a more determined opposition than she had foreseen in the process of conversion, she desisted in pious horror at what she termed "the fiendish perversity of the heretic," and transferred Ellen to the charge of the Superior of the Hotel-Dieu at Quebec, with the hope that the discipline of the most rigid conventual institution in the colony, would effect a speedy change in the disposition of the little unbeliever.

Once entombed within those gloomy walls, which shut out, at the same time, the light of heaven and

the sympathies of earth, Ellen was submitted to a course of proselytism as wearisome as it was repulsive. From morning till night she was beset by the nuns, who made her repeat after them prayers in an unknown tongue, while they rattled over their own exercises with a rapidity and an accent that made the language of the ancient Romans sound like an unmeaning gibberish to her ears.

At length, finding a mild persuasion unavailing, they resorted to severity, and then it was that Ellen began to prove the true misery of her situation, and prayed for death to deliver her from the persecution she underwent.

Long fasts, penance of a painful nature, the ordinary resources of bigotry and superstition, were employed in turn, to reduce the unruly one to obedience, and crush that proud will which, in its quiet resistance, defied their efforts, and laughed them to scorn. There was a secret force in poor Ellen that sustained her still, and would not let her become a soulless slave.

At length the ordeal was brought to a climax; pictures representing the most exerceiating tortures, the work of a fanatical artist, who conceived that heaven had commissioned him to paint a hell upon canvass, haunted the girl's eyes wherever she turned them in her narrow cell. And in the depth of

night some *religieuse*, disguised as a phantom, would threaten her with the most awful denunciations, in case she persisted in rejecting the councils of the Superior.

Worn down by the repetition of such terrors, Ellen became in the end incapable of opposition, and indifferent to every thing. Again her mind began to wander, and grow peopled with those old hallucinations. Then she was once more among the associates of her childhood, at play under the weeping willows that shaded the cottage by the Delaware. Her fevered fancy had wafted her back to the ark of domestic love, and she was happy ; who would have sought to dispel so merciful a dream ?

Fortunately, soon after this period, the nephew of her mistress, an officer in the government employ, under whose care she left Montreal, called at the convent, to inquire after the beautiful foreigner he had placed there.

He was so shocked at Ellen's appearance, and at her half frantic appeal to him for protection, that he not only remonstrated with the principal, but demanded her instant liberation. This being refused, he laid the whole matter before the Governor-General, who, already piqued at the growing intolerance of the ecclesiastical power, gave a peremptory order for her removal.

Accordingly Ellen found herself suddenly restored to the world, and as she dragged her tottering limbs after her liberator, and breathed the fresh air of heaven while ascending the wooded hill between the Hotel-Dieu and the Jesuit's College, the sensations of newly-acquired freedom were so transporting, that she forgot entirely her destitute condition, and that she was still homeless and a captive.

Domesticated in the family of a widow, at the expense of her generous patron, she soon recovered her health and good looks, and was patiently waiting the issue of an application for her exchange, when the arrival of the British at Quebec put a termination to a captivity of nearly two years.

Ellen was fair to look upon as she stood upon that deck, habited in the close-fitting, corded bodice, and *jupe* of a Canadian *paysanne*; her sunny face beaming with animation, and tinted with a bloom, as soft as that upon the petals of a wild rose.

Her hair and eyes, with their long fringing lashes, were of a deep black; the former worn plain over the forehead, but wandering in a maze of glossy curls to the shoulders, beneath a capacious straw-hat, which, like a parasol, threw the upper part of her person into shade.

Her face was a perfect oval, and inexpressibly charming. This seemed, however, less the result

of great delicacy of feature, than a something of serenity, and goodness, imparted from the spirit within, and superior to mere form; which made, what the poet calls,

“The music of her face.”

In figure, she was slender as a sylph, but admirably proportioned. And though not tall for her age, she appeared so, from her length of waist, a peculiarity which gives distinction to the form of woman by the elegance it confers.

Such was she who now stood beside Conrad, sent, like some bright seraph, to fill the void in his breast.

The boy beheld her, in her dawn-like beauty, with a glow of pride, and growing self-assurance in his quality of protector of one placed, by a singular concurrence of events, in a similar position to himself.

They were each homeless and, to all intents, kinless; with none in the wide world to depend upon, but God and themselves, and from their own guilelessness and high-toned sensibility, condemned to solitude of heart.

Was it a wonder then that they should be drawn

together in closer familiarity, day by day, that they should make, as it were, a mutual league against the future, and ample amends for the past, by linking their hearts together in a child-like love? Surely not.

CHAPTER XXI.

A BRIEF COLLOQUY AND A STORM—DISASTER—OBLIVION.

ONE day, when the wind blew with unusual force, and the sky was covered with a uniform mantle of dull and stormy-looking clouds, which cast a gloom upon every thing below, the friends stood as they generally did—alone, gazing upon the white-crested waves, through which the ship cut its way, careering from time to time with a sudden plunge, and then rising up, as if on wings, as a stronger blast from the north-east would reach them, after traversing the vast plain of waters, in that direction; for they had now passed the mountain chain, and the islands of the St. Lawrence, and their approach to the open sea was indicated by a wider field of vision, and a mightier roll of the

billows that moved sternly along, or broke in a foaming surge against the bow of the vessel, every plank and timber of which appeared to quiver with the shock.

"Let me put the mantle closer around you, Ellen," said Conrad, adjusting on her shoulders, as he spoke, the folds of a cloak provided with a hood, and trimmed with fur, which had escaped from its fastening at the neck; "the wind is keen and winter-like to-day, and the sea looks wild."

"There, then, friend Conrad," replied the maiden, "thou hast thy wish, which is kind; but, in truth, I do not feel cold; there is something in the air and waves to-day that makes my heart beat quicker than usual. Dost thou know, they seem to me to be saying, all the time—we are free! we are free!"

"And have you no fear of the perils of the deep, Ellen?" inquired her companion; looking curiously into her face, which was serenity itself, though lit up by a bright glow.

"Oh, yes; often it troubles me until I feel ashamed. But this is only when I lay tossing in my berth below. Here, where I can look at the sea, I have no fear of it. I feel even stronger, strange to say, at the sight; and I think of what the Bible says—in the beginning, the spirit of the Lord moved upon the waters.'"

"It is glorious, indeed," said Conrad, with enthusiasm, "such a spectacle as this; and I can fancy why so many choose to become sea-rovers and navigators rather than remain upon the land. Of one thing I am quite certain, that nobody could live upon the waves and feel as I do now, and consent to be a slave."

As he spoke, the boy's eye flashed, and he drew himself up proudly.

"I often thought," resumed Ellen, after a pause, "how strange it was to shut oneself up in a dreary prison, like that where I was, without taking enjoyment of any sort, and where one is brought to look upon natural things with a churlish eye. Such a life must be both wearisome and sinful, it seemeth to me."

"Sinful it must be, Ellen; for else why do birds sing and flowers grow? Why is the world so beautiful, and the sunshine so gay, if it were not intended that we should enjoy life, in an innocent way, and be friendly hearted one with another?"

"So would I often say to them," she replied, "when they tried hard to win me to be such as they were.—Verily, and how is this, my friends? Thou wouldst have me believe the good earth to be a wicked and worthless place; now that may not be, for I have known many happy years since I have been alive, and beheld much good among those with

whom I was bred. It doth appear to me more agreeable to God, that we should mingle cheerfully together, and assist each other in times of need. But, alas! they were full of stern opinions and called me a simple, wilful child. Now, the first I knew I was, but not the other: for I did not oppose them wilfully, doing only what I thought right.

"Nevertheless, I do not blame them, those poor recluses, since they only did as they were taught to consider proper. May God bless them. Their lot is sad."

The dinner bell put an end to their discourse and they went below; while each moment the wind waxed stronger, and the hoarse voice of the boat-swain was soon heard calling the crew up to shorten sail. Hardly was this accomplished, and the ship rendered easier in its motions, under less press of canvass, when, borne down upon the gale, came a furious storm of hail and snow, which entirely obscured their course, and covered deck and rigging with a thick icy mass that rendered all manœuvring difficult, if not impossible; so that they were obliged to stand on towards the southern shore till within a few fathoms water, when they cast anchor, trusting entirely to the strength of the cables for protection during the storm which it was now evident they were about to encounter.

At the same time alarm guns were fired, to give notice of their position, and avoid being run down by the rest of the fleet then scattered in every direction on the river, above and below. These were soon answered and repeated, until each vessel, in a similar manner, had come to an anchor, within a safe distance of the shore.

But louder grew the roar of the wind and waves, and the sleet drove thicker against the deck and through the rigging; while those who watched above came down into the cabins, from time to time, looking as if they had been emersed in a solution of alum, for their clothes were encrusted with crystals of ice, and whenever they rubbed they produced a sound like sheet iron—they were so stiff and crisp.

In the meantime, the night fell, and the storm rose higher and higher, and an old mariner was heard to say, that he wished they were beyond the gulf and clear of soundings; for that the winter was upon them, tooth and nail, and there would be the devil to pay before long.

Hark! Was that a gun, or the boom of a wave breaking on the rocky shore? Another, and a third! there can be no doubt now whence proceeds the sounds; one of the fleet has gone ashore and is firing for assistance. God give them aid! for he

alone can save them now ! The tempest rages with redoubled fury, as if in scorn of man's impotence to resist its strength ; and in the momentary lulls the listeners hear no more those signals of distress ; whate'er had befallen their friends, they knew that the crisis was past.

What means that sudden bound, as of a courser breaking from his tether ; has the ship burst her bonds ? Good angels forbid !

The strands of the hempen cable at the bow, unable to withstand the torrent of wind, had snapped asunder, and dragging the stern anchor after her, the ship was driving like a desperate thing, head on to the coast. What wild confusion there was then, what reckless haste, baffling its own intent, what strong energy grappling with the danger ; what abject fear ! The horrible darkness and the dim of the tempest lent a deeper hue to the picture which terror drew around them, and produced in many that entire paralysis of mind which men are apt to shew when exposed to sudden and inevitable peril. The sea around was a caldron of foam ; the air a sharp and chill blackness that cut the skin like a knife, and almost swept the ^{air} from the head. The shore before them a wall of rock against which they could now see the breakers splitting with a flash of light and a terrific roar.

See

The ship strikes ; a tremendous shock ! another ! the main mast has gone, tearing away the foretop mast and lee bulwark in its descent. The sea is making a clean breach over the hull, lying broad side, and motionless as a rock to the storm now. It comes like a lion to devour its prey !

In that frightful moment, some, with frenzy, leaped into the boiling vortex, and disappeared with a shriek ; others lashed themselves to the stranded hull, preferring to share its fate than to trust themselves to the forlorn chance of being cast alive upon the rocks, in such a tempestuous sea : while others again caught hold of a spar, and allowed themselves to be borne away on the top of the billows that whirled them, with the speed of straws in a mountain torrent, towards the shore.

At that dreadful moment, each thought solely of himself ; but the two orphans were as one.

Conrad stood, with one arm clasped round the balustrade, in front of the poop, which gave a partial shelter from the storm, and with his other, supporting the form of Ellen. What their thoughts were, at that time, God alone could tell ; for they spoke not, nor could they distinguish each other's faces in the darkness. Conrad only felt his companion's heart fluttering, like that of an alarmed bird, against his side, and he drew her closer to him, and wound his

arm more firmly around his support. At length a mountainous billow overtakes the ill-fated ship, and she is parted into halves by the blow, and both portions are now sinking into the foaming gulf. Conrad put his lips close to his companion's ear, and cried :

“ Shall we stay together, Ellen, dear ? ”

The girl made no reply in words ; but she put her arms about his neck, and laid her cheek against his. Then Conrad cast around her his other arm, and thus embraced, they were swept away on the surge of a great wave that rolled past, as the fragments of the ship disappeared.

END OF VOL. I.

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