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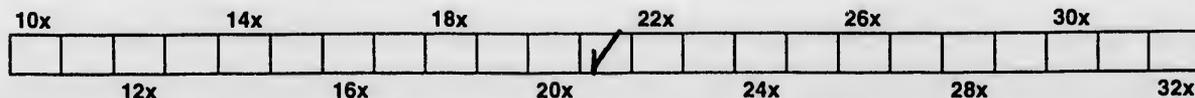
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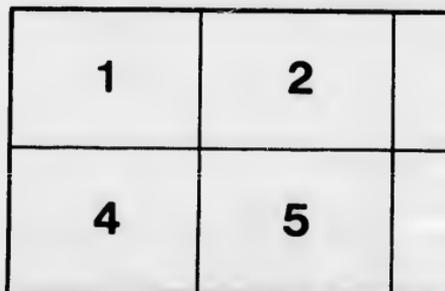
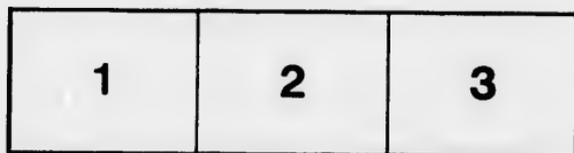
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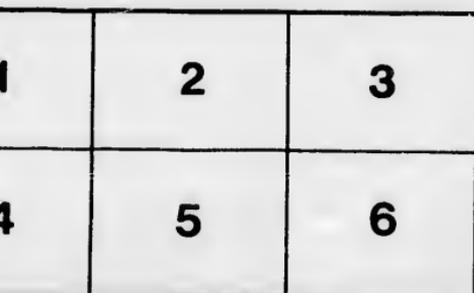
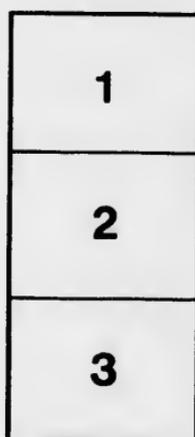
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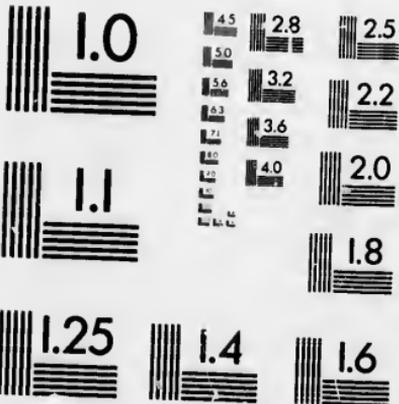
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THE  
NOMADES OF THE WEST;

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."

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# ELLEN CLAYTON;

OR,

## THE NOMADES OF THE WEST.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### RESUSCITATION—THE MOHAWKS.

THE first sensations of returning life, experienced by Conrad, were a loud ringing of bells, together with a painful prickling in his limbs. Then he distinguished words spoken in a strange language, yet not altogether unfamiliar to his ear, for he thought he had heard such before, though where, or at what time, he could not remember.

He drew a long breath, which gave him acute pain, but it relieved him of an intolerable oppression, and opening his eyes, he found several Indian faces bending over him, strongly illuminated by the light of a flambeau held aloft; and that he was wrapped in blankets, and lying under a bark-shed, in front

VOL. II.

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of which there was a large fire. These particulars, he noticed at a glance, and, with a vacant stare, inquired :

“Where am I?”

“In the keeping of the Maquas,” replied a middle-aged man in tolerable English, with a pleasant smile upon his visage ; “does the *Pale-hair* want for anything? He has but to speak ; the Mohawks are the friends of the *Yengies*.”\*

Conrad put his hand to his forehead in perplexity, then, all at once, he sprang up with a wild cry, caught the Indian by the arm, and asked in a low, broken voice :

“What of the maiden ; did she perish?”

“Not so,” was the reply ; “we gathered her, like a plucked lily, from the sand ; but after a little, life returned, and we were glad. Ever since then, has she been weeping among the women, coaxing, continually, the Great Spirit to save her friend. Young stranger, the roots of her life were less loosed than yours by the tempest of the waters.”

“My God, I thank thee!” murmured Conrad, with solemnity, as he sunk once more upon his couch, and permitted his kind assistants to cover him up from the chill night-air, through which occasional flakes of snow still fell, adding to the

\* English.

white deposit that covered every object, save those in the immediate neighbourhood of the camp-fire.

Conrad felt extremely weak, and somewhat bruised, therefore he was obliged to stay where he was, though his first impulse was to go to Ellen; finding, however, that he could not stand without support, he desisted from the attempt, with the promise that they would immediately acquaint the maiden with his restoration, and anxiety to know in what state she was, after the terrible ordeal through which they had passed. Shortly after, he heard a light tread, and felt a kiss upon his cheek, while, at the same time, a silvery voice pronounced his name; who could it be but Ellen? She knelt down beside him, and put away the wet hair from his face, and called him in the tenderest accents, "her dear preserver," and when Conrad beheld her, and found that, though very pale, there was little trace of suffering in the sweet countenance that bent over him, he gave thanks silently unto God, and felt what a precious boon was life now, when he could bask in the kindly radiance of those eyes.

In that glance, the first in which their eyes met since they closed in temporary death, as the wild waves snatched them from the wreck, there was a something which told them their destinies were one; that through good and evil, they were thenceforth to bear a two-fold life of feeling, mysterious, subduing

and intense, which would exercise a sovereign influence upon their future lot, and identify them with each other. It woke a thrill of rapture, not unmixed with a sense deep and solemn, beyond words, which their hearts could not define. Yet so pure and guileless were their thoughts, that they looked into each other's eyes, as into a translucent well, where the spirit watched from its profound, to communicate a genial lore, and flash back sympathy for sympathy.

Their very being seemed to meet and blend in that look, without scruple or shame.

"Dear friend, how fareth it with thee?" asked Ellen, almost in a whisper, as she withdrew her eyes from that speechless, but intelligible commune.

"Very happily, Ellen, for you are saved."

"And were it not for thee, that had not been," rejoined the maiden, with strong emotion, covering her face with her hands; "thou wast my support in that dreadful hour, and next to God, I owe my life unto thee, dear friend. Ah, Conrad! what misery was mine, when I awoke from that awful dream, and they could not reply to my questionings concerning thee! My heart was breaking, when a gracious-looking Indian came and told me, in my own tongue, that thou wert alive, but very feeble, and only a few steps from where I lay; then I could not rest, so the women gave me raiment, and I have

come unto thee, to be thy little nurse ; which is my office of right, being a woman," added she smilingly, "and we are wont to insist on these points, thou knowest, and wilt not be offended ; besides," and Ellen's face grew anxious, "I feel more contented when I am with thee, my dear protector ; for, though the women have been most kind, yet they are very wild-looking, and scarcely seem to know anything of what I say. Let me stay with thee until thou art well again ; thou art my only friend."

"Need you ask it of me, Ellen ? It is pleasant to put oneself under such care. I am sure, with your aid, I shall soon be strong again, and then I promise to be your champion, in real earnest. As for our hosts, you need have no fear of them ; they are our staunch allies, the Mohawks, and we could not have fallen into better hands on this wild coast. Alas ! Ellen, what has become of the rest of the ship's people ; have none else been recovered ?"

"None ! none ! Speak not of it, Conrad ; it is too dreadful," she replied, with a shudder, burying her head in the folds of a blanket, as if to shut out the fearful vision the allusion recalled ; and, for some time, neither spoke.

Reposing side by side upon their couch of fir, the two friends passed the night, hand clasped in hand, with the innocence of those orphan children in the

beautiful old story ; who, less fortunate than they, found none to shelter them in the wild, save the robins, that did their best, good birds, and covered them with leaves.

There were, indeed, none of those on board that luckless vessel, except the two, frailest and most helpless of them all, left to tell the horrors of that fatal storm. The coast, for miles, presented an almost unbroken wall of rock than which, to be dashed against, it were far better to founder at once, deep as sea-lead ever sounded. There was one small opening in the cliff, however, worn by some fierce torrent, ages since, through which a minute rivulet then wound its way to the main, skirted by a bank of sand.

This was nearly opposite the reef on which the ship struck ; and it so chanced, that Conrad and Ellen, linked in that last embrace, and whirled along on the crest of the wave, were carried in that direction ; and as the billow broke, with a crash, against the precipices, on either side of the gully, it deposited its living burden, like some precious freight, upon the soft sand-beach within, and beyond the reach of the recurring breaker.

Fortunately, a band of Mohawks had encamped there ; and put on the alert by the appearance of the ship's lights, and her guns of distress, the men were watching along the strand with flambeaux of

the bark, when this took place, so that they discovered, immediately, the singular object ejected by the surf, and unwinding, with some force, the arms of each, they bore the two inanimate bodies to their cabins, where, with the application of dry garments and warmth, first Ellen, and a short time afterwards, Conrad revived to thank them for their care.

Conrad, as we have seen, experienced a greater shock than his companion, whose body he had protected with his own, though all unconsciously, against the rude buffetings to which they were exposed. He was compelled, therefore, to remain an invalid for the present, under the gentle ministrations of his fair attendant; meanwhile, the day broke, and shortly after, the storm began to subside. Scouts were sent out to reconnoitre, who soon returned, saying that there was no living thing to be seen upon the shores in the vicinity, but many dead bodies and fragments of wreck; and, moreover, that the rest of the fleet had set sail, and the vessels were already far down the coast, being, no doubt, too anxious to resume their belated voyage to make much inquiry into the fate of their associates.

Upon the second day, after giving burial to such of the victims of the storm as were thrown upon the coast adjacent, the Indians broke up their encampment, and departed westward, accompanied by

the two youthful strangers, whom they had received as a trust from the waves.

Conrad, now quite recovered, marched boldly on by the side of Ellen, who, whenever she felt fatigued, or the way became too rough for her, was carried in a litter, made for the purpose, and supported by two of the band. The snow had now entirely disappeared from the ground again, and the mildness of the weather indicated that brief but delightful season, which, though ever uncertain both in its arrival and duration, is so fondly looked for and so gladly welcomed in that northern land; gentle harbinger, as it is, of the stern winter that treads so closely upon its heels. The Indian's summer seemed already to be filling the half-stripped groves with its breath, and floating over the neighbouring hills in a soft haze. No breeze lifted the tinted leaves that strewed the forest where the hard wood grew, or murmured among the dark branches of the pines; the mellow sun-light poured cheerfully, but with a subdued lustre, upon the foliage, the tree-trunks, and the mossy ground.

"How very beautiful and still everything seems!" observed Ellen; "and how lovingly the sunshine lights up the sombre nooks of the woods. I cannot tell thee how happy this makes me feel, when I think that we were very near losing it all. Ah, Conrad! that was an awful time!"

"Forget it, Ellen; it has passed away with the storm, which you see has blown the leaves entirely from the trees. Had we not been face to face with death, we might not have owned such a charm in the woodlands around us. Confess, Ellen, is it not a glorious thing to live?"

"It is! it is!" replied she, with enthusiasm, clasping her hands together. "I feel it stronger within me at this moment than I ever did before; and yet there were times when I would have given it up for the quiet grave. Sorrow and sunshine suit not one another, and a troubled spirit hideth itself from the cheerful light of heaven."

A shade stole over Ellen's features as she spoke, but she cast it off with an effort, and added:

"Ah! yes, indeed, I do feel what a precious and blessed thing life is. Look at that rogue of a squirrel on the branch of yonder tree; see, as he skips along, how often he pauses to watch us with his merry, black eye. What a saucy, quick little fellow it is, and how happy he appears to be. Now I would very much like to know what he takes us for."

And the maiden's laugh rang like a silver bell through the glade.

"Nothing very flattering to our vanity, I should imagine," replied Conrad; "for at the sound of your voice he has flown, as at the whizzing of an

arrow. Cruel Ellen, hast thou no conscience? Not content with finding him happy, thou hast made him miserable."

"Why this is rank heresy," she muttered, with feigned displeasure at the ungallant speech, striking her companion several blows with a branch of cedar which she held in her hand. "Have I not, indeed, thou faithless and discourteous knight? I am almost tempted, for thy irreverence, to forbid thee my presence for seven long years, that thou mightest do penance in the way related in the old chronicles. Alas! it is quite plain to be seen that there is no more chivalry, and that the gentlemen are grown too froward to pay befitting homage to the ladies fair."

"Now, brightest and most virtuous of maidens," replied Conrad, with mock humility of tone, "I crave thy pardon humbly for my grievous fault, and promise thee full homage and fealty, as long as it may please thee to encourage thy poor knight, who is little skilled in courtly fashions, but beareth somewhat of chivalry in his heart, notwithstanding; for he would do anything to make his dear lady happy."

And at the conclusion of this address, Conrad, with more of impulse than ceremony, caught the hand of Ellen, and pressed it to his lips. The action, slight as it was, called a blush to her cheek,

and made her turn her face away, while she said, half reprovingly,

“There now, sir knight, thou art forgiven; but take heed and be not too bold for the future. There now, go, we entreat thee, and leave thy lady to her own reflections for a little while.”

Thus enjoined, Conrad was obliged to obey; though he left the maiden's side with reluctance, and joined the leader of the party—the Indian previously alluded to, who usually stepped in front of his men as they marched along in a silent line, charged with their packs and arms, though without much circumspection; for they were traversing a wild tract where there was very little chance of their meeting an enemy. Conrad marked the proud, intelligent countenances of these men, and the care with which they were equipped, each being dressed and armed in precisely the same manner, and carrying in addition to his smaller weapons, a long gun of English make, which was handled with dexterity and thrown, while on the march, into the hollow of the arm. On every occasion that required an exercise of craft, they acted with the precision and readiness of men thoroughly schooled in the methods of Indian warfare, and possessed of entire confidence in themselves. Throughout the whole band there reigned the most complete unanimity and singleness of purpose; rigid disci-

pline, of more than Spartan severity, had rendered them, fiery warriors as they were, as tractable and efficient as the best European troops, so that they were moved, with the ease and celerity of a single individual, at their captain's will.

This party of Mohawks was now on its way back from the confines of the Micmac territory, to its village beyond Lake Champlain, without having met with its usual success, as there were no signs of the enemy to be seen in his accustomed haunts ; a fact that was fully explained by what Conrad notified to the principal Brave, namely, the general attack upon L'Acadie by the English admiral—of which the Mohawks had not yet heard, and which had, doubtless, withdrawn the Micmacs from their north-western frontier.

The captain of the band, a distinguished warrior, whose name was Otarcha, then entered into conversation with his guest, as he walked immediately behind him, and inquired concerning the operations of the fleet, the destination of which was previously known to him ; expressing at the same time considerable surprise at its speedy return, and great curiosity to learn what had taken place ; a curiosity which a characteristic sense of politeness and self-dignity had caused him hitherto to restrain.

It would be vain to attempt to paint the utter amazement and indignation that took possession of

the Indian as Conrad related, with as much brevity as possible, the ungenial tale of disaster and ultimate defeat, of which he was the bearer. He forgot for a moment his native stoicism in the excess of his disappointment, and uttering a sharp cry of vexation, he raised his tomahawk, and drove it furiously into the trunk of a tree beside him, and came to a sudden halt. The men gathered up round the leader, wondering at the cause of the unusual sound, but the latter would vouchsafe no explanation then, and merely said, in a peremptory manner :

“ Let us halt here, *Braves*. Otarcha is sick, and cannot travel further to-day ; by his father’s grave, he is a sick man.”

Offering no remark, the warriors set about preparing the bivouac, during which the leader remained standing with his arms folded and his back against a tree, entirely absorbed in the gloom of his thoughts.

As soon as the arrangements were completed, he beckoned a warrior, and desired him to call the band together, and when all were assembled before him, he looked up and said with intense bitterness and irony, and in the most measured accents :

“ Go, *Braves*, and cover your faces with black paint ; the Yengies have been worsted by the spawn of Onanthio. The great war-canoes ye saw and

believed to be returning triumphant from Canada, could not stand before Frontenac, that brave old man, for he drove them from his castle walls ! so speaks the youth who came to us in the storm. Go, *Braves*, and paint yourselves black, that ye may be humble-minded with shame. The Scunk has defeated the Dog !”

This address was received by the band with a universal expression of mortification and anger, that showed how surely they had counted upon the success of the British in the long-talked of attack on Canada ; and the tenour of their observations, though unflattering to their allies, sufficiently proved the regret with which they heard of its failure.

“ How they will boast over their victory now !” remarked a gaunt warrior, knitting his brows and pressing his lips firmly together : “ The curs will become as noisy as jays ; it is long since they have gained such a battle.”

“ Ay, very long,” was the brief reply.

“ Would I had been there !” shouted a hot young *Brave*, brandishing his hatchet and grinding his teeth, as he transfixed an ideal foe with his eye : “ would I had been there ; by the blessed shades, I could have shown these pale-faces how a Maqua fights !”

" True ! true !" replied several ; " The Bears\* never give way. They fight until the last drop of blood runs out, and then they die !"

" Had the allied Agonnonseonne† hovered in a thunder-cloud around Quebec in that time," said Otarcha, " then would the Long-knives‡ have been swallowed up from the face of the ground, and the Maquas might have built their villages in Canada, from henceforth, as in the ancient time. Go, paint black, O, Braves ! The face of the Great Spirit is turned away from us ! Otarcha's heart is without joy !"

\* Mohawk, Maqua, and Mengwe signify a bear in different Indian languages. The Mohawks were thus often styled—The tribe of the Bear.

† The original name of the Five Nations.

‡ French.

## CHAPTER II.

NOTOKEEL'S TROUBLES—THE MOHAWK TOWN—CONRAD IN A  
DILEMMA.

NOTWITHSTANDING their diminished confidence in the puissance of their friends, the English, the Indians made no change in the treatment of their guests. Ellen experienced every attention and kindness that circumstances would permit from the females accompanying the party, among whom she was more especially thrown ; particularly when they rested from the fatigues of the march. And she soon learned to adapt herself to the habits of her simple companions, and to take pleasure in their society ; for she found, that however rude the garb, and untutored the manner, there beat within their bosoms still, the tender and faithful woman's heart ; and that there was no natural vulgarity about them,

such as is seen among the peasantry of a civilized country; to which they were assimilated in point of condition, though subject to a life of greater privation and more harassing toil. Upon the whole, Ellen suffered less inconvenience than might be supposed from the entire want of those resources and luxuries to which she was used.

It is wonderful, after all, how few are the real essentials of existence; and the English maiden not only discovered, that much of what she had considered indispensable to comfort, might be easily discarded; but that, by breathing continually the pure air, and taking repeated exercise, her frame was invigorated, and her spirits rendered more elastic and cheerful than they had been for a very long period. Conrad remarked the change, and told her that her cheek had more of the rose than the lily in its hue, now, while her eyes sparkled to such a degree that he could not look at them; whereupon, she chid him laughingly, and told him that she did not believe a word of what he said, as he was only wickedly making merry at her expence—knowing very well that there were no means of arriving at the truth; for she had nothing but a bowl of water to make her toilet in, and that gave back a very unsatisfactory reflection, “and so unflattering in short,” added Ellen, “that

I fear I should behold my image, in such a mirror, a very long time before I became enough enamoured of it to pine away into a daffodil, as Narcissus did."

But although her maiden modesty veiled from herself the attractions with which nature had arrayed her, they were sufficiently apparent to her fellow travellers to make her an object of general admiration and regard.

She did look very beautiful and bright, amidst so many dusky faces ; a surpassing creation of grace, gentleness, and glowing life, such as never before was seen by elf or dryade in that forest track.

And oftimes the young warriors would glance towards the litter in which she was, and remark to each other, as they attained a glimpse of her features, "how very fair was the Yengie girl. Her countenance gave a sort of light, like the morning star. She might be compared to one of those perfect beings seen only by young warriors, when they dream of love ; and they could tell, by her face, that her heart was very good."

There was one of the party who appeared, however, to be more deeply impressed by the presence of the gentle stranger. This was an elderly squaw, of an exterior more prepossessing than is often met with in those of her age ; indeed there were traces still of beauty of no ordinary description, faintly

discernible in her aquiline lineaments—worn and darkened as they were by exposure and time.

This female, a relative of the Captain, Otareha, had, from the first, assumed the peculiar charge of Ellen, and was ever at hand to administer to her slightest wish; sitting patiently, a short distance from where she was, and gazing at her as though completely fascinated with her loveliness. Many times during the night also the Indian woman would steal to Ellen's couch, and listen awhile to her soft, low breathing, when, as if satisfied, she would lie down in her place again.

The object of such tender solicitude, truly thankful for the attention shown her, and pleased with the unobtrusive manners of the squaw, endeavoured to repay her with a smile of kindness, and by the use of such expressions of gratitude and esteem as were intelligible to the one to whom they were addressed; for Notokeel, as she was called, spoke English very imperfectly, though she was more familiar with the French language, in which Ellen had made great progress during her captivity, and was thus enabled to converse more easily with her.

On one occasion Ellen noticed Notokeel, as she sat at a little distance, gazing intently at her, and beckoned her to draw near, when she asked her kindly, why she kept aloof and remained so long

without speaking, and if she were afraid she would be offended by her presence ? Whereupon the Indian woman replied, in a soft, plaintive voice :—

“ Notokeel is old and ugly, and therefore unfit to be looked at too closely by the fair Lily of the Waters. She is young and fresh like a morning flower, while Notokeel is withered and dry. But Notokeel dreams with her eyes open, and so she finds it very pleasant to behold the daughter of the Yengies, and to think of the time when she was also fair and joy-giving as the summer. It warms her heart, and makes it swell big again ; for it had become shrunken up by much travail and bitter thinking—yes, shrunken up like a leaf that is dry !”

“ Ah, my good friend,” said Ellen, “ this beauty which thou sayest I possess gives me but little concern. I have been taught to consider it of slight worth compared to that inward grace which remains when the other has faded away.”

“ They have told thee a lie,” returned the squaw, quickly, while a flash of anger shone in her dark eyes. “ They are always telling us women lying tales.”

“ I tell thee, Notokeel was fair and sunny-eyed. She made the young warriors mad with love, though she was proud and cruel at heart ; but what did

that avail? Nothing! As long as her cheek was smooth, her hair glossy, and her gait nimble, Notokeel's life was a long summer's day.

"Look at Notokeel, now! The Great Spirit has softened her disposition, for she has shed many tears; but age took away her beauty, and she is forgotten.

"Take good care of thine, fair Lily of the waters, that it may not vanish too quickly away; for I tell thee, a woman is nothing without it. I have lived long and endured much, and seen many strange things; but I never yet saw a comely maiden obliged to cut wood for her fire, when there were young *Braves* by, or the hunters bring presents to an old squaw's wigwam!"

Ellen did not venture to dispute the opinions of her companion, and endeavoured to lead her from a subject which seemed to move her so, by asking, if she were entirely alone?

"Even so;" was the reply, "but in that good time when I was fair and blithsome, there came one who was as a soft fire to my heart, and we were wed. But, as I told thee, I was proud, and thought I could do as I pleased with him whom I loved: so I wilfully deserted him. And when I returned, after a time, with thoughts of pity for what I had done, alas! he was gone, and with him my young child—my boy-babe; gone, for ever gone! Then

the grey came into Notokeel's hair and the sunbeam dwelt no more about her brow. How many snows have fallen since then. How changed is Notokeel. How different every thing around her !

"It matters not ; she follows her kinsman on the war-path ; she has no fear, only she wishes for something to love. She feels empty at the heart."

"And did he never return with the child ?" inquired Ellen, much interested by the story of the Indian woman.

"Never," was the brief reply, as the latter, after stooping to tie the lacing of her mocassin, hurried quickly away.

Day after day they travelled on, through entangled woods and over rugged hills, by secret paths known only to the Mohawks, who had repeatedly used them in their excursions to the sea coast. As they drew near the Canadian settlements, they became more vigilant and cautious in their movements ; for they were now surrounded on every side by the most deadly enemies, and the slightest indiscretion might lead to the destruction of the entire band ; should any party of Micmacs, Abenakes, or Hurons, discover their trail and attack them unawares.

But though several times an alarm note was given along the line, and Ellen trembled with dismay as she beheld her conductors prepare for im-

mediate strife, yet these all proved to be groundless, and they crossed without molestation the sterile tract of country which lies south-eastward of Quebec, and pursued the elevated range of the Alleghanies, through the wild recesses of which they wound their steady course; now skirting some towering ridge, now plunging into the gloom of some deep defile, and now emerging from the portal of some rocky pass; giving exit beyond the mountain chain that towers, like a wall of defence, along the southern frontier of Canada.

And though the Indian's summer had, in its turn, departed, and flurries of snow occurred from time to time, while the air grew bleak and frosty, especially at night; still, Ellen, well wrapped in furs and with Conrad by her side to cheer and assist her, cared little for the hardships to which she was subjected, and which became insignificant when compared with those she endured at the time of her abduction.

As for Conrad, he was increasing daily in strength and stature, and catching something of the free and resolute air of an Indian warrior, as he strode along by the litter of Ellen, while, at the same time, a conscious pride and sense of innate power gave him a look of assurance that suited well the character of his face, impressed, as it was, with intelligence and a noble beauty.

He felt that he was approaching manhood, and that he had a duty to perform ; for he had made in secret a solemn vow to befriend and guard the unprotected girl who had confided herself to him with the trustfulness of a sister in the hour of peril. He determined never to leave Ellen until she was claimed by one better entitled than himself to afford her the protection she required ; and this was all conceived without one thought of passion or any ulterior motive to sully the generous resolve.

It was a first offering of his youthful heart, where all was fresh, and earnest and unalloyed ; it might be deemed imprudent, romantic, unfeasible—what you will ; but the young and gifted are very unconventional, and the world's cold moderation kills enthusiasm and the great impulses that seem angel-winged for good, in youth's golden morn. Wisdom comes with age ; but it is the offspring of an age of iron !

At length, after many days of constant traveling, they reached the shores of Lake Champlain, which they crossed by the aid of canoes, previously concealed, and continued their route until they fell in with the head branch of the Hudson ; and as he forded its shallow stream, each warrior uttered a shout of gratulation. They were now in

the country of the Five Nations, and within two days' journey of their homes.

It was in the afternoon of a clear autumn day, that in reaching an eminence, the party first caught sight of its point of destination; a thickly-built and extensive village, lying at the edge of a beautiful lake, that wound with a sheen of polished steel, away among some wooded hills.

With joyful exclamations, the Indians descended the height, and quickened their pace as they approached the village, which was entirely surrounded by a triple line of palisades; and at the gate they met a group, already gathered to give them welcome—being apprised by their signal cries, of the return of a war-party. Amidst the bustle and excitement consequent upon their arrival at this crowded resort of the tribe to which they belonged, the leader, Otareha, Notokeel and the two strangers, turned aside towards a commodious lodge, formed of logs, well-united and roofed with bark—which, with several of a similar description, made a broad avenue leading to a large open square, situate in the centre of the place.

Here Ellen was received by the wife of her host, and furnished with a small chamber, by herself, which was speedily put to rights and made as

suitable to the tastes of the English maiden as the means of Notokeel would permit, who intreated permission to wait upon the former as long as she remained among them, which Ellen, grateful for the kindness already shown her, very readily granted ; for she saw that, by so doing, she would be conferring less a task than a favour. In this rude but secure asylum it was, that the orphan offered up her thanks to that Being who had so wonderfully preserved her through her many trials, and brought her long and arduous journey to a close.

Meanwhile Conrad, having seen his fair companion well provided for, strolled abroad among the throngs of people that filled the streets and lanes of the place, which resounded with the hum and clamour of a great thoroughfare teeming with a restless multitude, to the sense of Conrad ; so startling was the impression made by the appearance of a crowd upon one just arrived from a journey in the solitary wilds.

The Indian town, bourg, or castle, as it was by turns styled, had lately received a large addition to its numbers by the arrival of several bands, both of its own population, and such as belonged to the neighbouring villages of the Nation, and its confederates, who had closed their operations

against the French plantations, for the season, and were returning to winter quarters, upon the falling of the snow.

The presence of these warriors, therefore, interrupted the daily routine, and gave an air of gay activity and excitement unusual to the place. The fighting men, relieved from the duties of an arduous campaign, hung up their weapons; and relaxing from the rigid discipline of the war-path prepared to enjoy, to the full, the truce which Nature offered to a life of almost continual hostility.

Conrad noticed, as he passed along, many a family group seated in the open air, before the doors of the different lodges. Here was the father, laughing gaily as he played with his children, or beguiling the time by conversing with his mild-eyed squaw,—smoking his pipe, meanwhile, with a luxuriant indolence pleasant to contemplate. There were a couple of inveterate gamblers, seated on the ground, and tossing the bone dice with rapid alternations, amid the plaudits of a circle of noisy lookers-on. And there again was to be seen a young soldier, fighting his battles over again, for the edification of an attentive audience; among which, many a soft-faced woman might be distinguished, who cast a glance of bright approval at the speaker, from time to time; while

an elder stood by, wrapped in the folds of a blanket, and looking like some stern old Greek—as he listened with an air of dignified reserve, and a grave smile. In a corner, somewhat retired from the front of the street, a number of children were engaged in a mimic skirmish, in which they displayed a knowledge of tactics remarkable at their age, together with that audacious daring and obstinacy for which their sires were celebrated. Armed with wooden clubs and shields, and forming sides, they charged upon each other with the most savage impetuosity, nor did they desist from the struggle until the most of them were stretched, bruised and breathless upon the ground,—and several had found a fresh source of amusement in striving to staunch, by the most ludicrous means, the copious streams of blood flowing from their noses.

At length, they agreed to join their forces and proceed to that all-important ceremony after battle—the burning of the prisoners. No one seemed willing, however, to offer himself as a representative of the new character, and for a moment, the urchins were at a loss for a victim, when one of them, chancing to observe Conrad—who stood looking at their sport, at a little distance, pointed him out to his companions; whereupon the whole body,

with a simultaneous screech, surrounded him, and with many a laugh and whoop of boisterous glee, commenced dragging him by the arms and clothes, towards the stake which was already prepared.

Conrad, amused at the incident, and desirous of amusing them, permitted his wily persecutors to bind his limbs to the post with wattles, and heap dry boughs about his feet; and even to shoot at him with their blunt arrows—enjoying the fun almost as much as the children themselves; when, to his amazement, he saw one of them—a malicious-looking boy, of an age beyond that of the rest—stealthily introduce a brand of fire among the brush-wood, which immediately began to crackle and send a thin wreath of smoke up into his face.

In one moment, the young imp had turned play into earnest; while, delighted at the novelty of the treat, the sight of fire, and the incipient *Braves* leaped and shouted with frantic delight around the victim, who, fully alive to the peril in which he stood, wrenched violently at his fastenings, but without being able to effect his liberation. It was a horrible moment, the soles of his shoes were already scorched by the heat of the flames, which were creeping with a fierce hiss towards his legs. He called for help, but his cries were drowned by those

of his tormentors ; one minute more, and it would have been too late to save him, when uttering a scream of terror, the whole troop scampered off, as, with a light bound, an Indian reached the spot, and kicked away the burning heap with a hearty laugh ; while at the same time he cut the wattles from the limbs of Conrad, and set him free.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### A MOHAWK "BRAVE"—AN UNEXPECTED MEETING AND A RESCUE.

CONRAD gazed at his liberator with undisguised interest and admiration; he had never yet beheld so perfect a model of manly beauty among the natives. Tall, erect, and most elegantly proportioned, his form might have challenged comparison with the Ideals of ancient sculpture; while upon his face there rested a benign and lofty expression that accorded well with its boldly marked but graceful outline.

He was uncovered to the waist, from whence a kilt-like garment of blue-cloth, richly ornamented, hung in folds to the knee; and round his neck he wore a collar of figured wampum to which was fastened a small tortoise, cut out of dark stone;

his leggins and mocassins were trimmed with stained hair in the newest Mohawk style ; and on his small round head was a tuft of scarlet feathers. In age he did not seem to be more than eighteen ; but there were marks of scars on his arm and breast, which showed that he had been in action, and a playful fire in his hazel eyes that gave evidence of a quick and enthusiastic spirit ; at least, this was Conrad's impression, who thought at the time, that there could not be a more noble and gracious looking figure than the one before him. West, the painter, may have been reminded of such, when, on beholding the Apollo of the Vatican, he exclaimed : " My God ! a young Mohawk warrior ! "

" My brother was in the hands of the small people ; they are young, but all the same, as wicked as musk-rats, and they shall be whipped for their bad behaviour. They would have brought disgrace upon the Maquas, who never do any harm to their guests." The Indian spoke in a clear, musical voice, and in the English language, with a manner, by turns, playful and grave.

" Many thanks for your timely aid, brother ; " replied Conrad ; " the boys may not have thought they were doing what was wrong, and there was only one to blame after all ; therefore, I pray

you to speak no more about it. I am a guest, as you say, and should have been more circumspect than to put myself in their power."

"Good!" was the rejoinder. "They will have better sport to-morrow; do you know why?"

"No," replied Conrad.

"Look there," said the Indian, with a sombre expression upon his face, and a subdued accent; pointing to the centre of the square, near one corner of which they stood, "what see you planted in the midst yonder?"

"I see a stout post and a pile, as of faggots hard by."

"Good!" he added, "before to-morrow's sun climbs to the top of the sky, a prisoner will die there; that will be no child's play, brother."

With this melancholy announcement, the Indian departed, and Conrad retraced his way thoughtfully to the lodge of Otareha.

The morning broke calm and cloudless over the Mohawk village, and, ere long, a murmur of many voices within the palisades denoted that its population was astir and making ready for the ceremony which was to take place that day. As the appointed hour drew nigh, the narrow streets and lanes were filled with knots of Indians, in festive attire of various description; but there was not one among them who failed to make some

pretension to the graceful or picturesque in his appearance. There could be seen the hunting frock of deerskin, dressed of a pure white, and embroidered with coloured quills of the porcupine; the loose and tipped short gown of the women, covered almost entirely with ribbons and embroidery of the most brilliant hues; and the conical hood, plumed with drooping feathers, and covered with fine bead-work on the edge and flaps, which rested on the shoulders. There also were the naked bust, the paint-distorted visage, the horned head-dress, and the red blanket; the latter folded like a mantle around the swarthy and upright frame, leaving one arm and shoulder bare.

From time to time, as they issued from the surrounding cabins, many hurried on with lively gestures, and joyful expectation pictured on their faces, towards the place of sacrifice. Women with their infants, frolicsome children, bashful girls, grey-haired men and wild young *Braves*; all went on with the eagerness of the ancient Spartans, to feast their eyes on human agony.

"Place there! Place!" shouted a tall Indian, bearing aloft a staff decorated with feathers, war trophies, and the tails of animals, a badge of office well-known to the crowd, which fell back from the middle of the main thoroughfare, and gave passage to the grand chief, who, escorted by a

picked guard of fifty warriors, fully armed, marched directly up to the point to which everybody seemed to tend.

Who could stay at home, when a man and an enemy was to be put to the torture? Not they indeed; for they had laid wagers upon his looks, his powers of endurance, his warrior courage. One had said that he never yet knew a Milicete to die like a man; another, that he was no Milicete, but a pure Abenake, and that he would pass away from them without a groan. Some believed that he was no warrior after all, and only a canoe-builder that stopped in the village, and never went upon a war-path; while others, again were convinced that he was an old fighter—a regular fire-eater, and would yield them a famous pastime. Now, amidst so many conflicting opinions, who did not wish to obtain ocular testimony of the truth? Not one! Therefore they all went to see the captive die.

Conrad stood alone by the threshold of the lodge, for Ellen was confined to her room with a slight headache, and the rest of the inmates, with the exception of Notokeel, who stayed to attend upon her young mistress, were gone to the show. He stood long, observing the gay parties that passed, on their way to the square, until there seemed to be no soul left about the outskirts, save a couple of sentinels, who lounged patiently by the main

entrance to the town, which was closed. He could also distinguish a portion of the throng that filled the central space, as, agitated by some new impulse, it fluctuated to and fro, and then gathered up into a dense mass towards the middle again ; while, ever and anon, a low, half-muffled sound reached his ear from the distant multitude.

“The poor prisoner is there now,” thought Conrad ; “they are beginning to apply the torture ; they are wringing his life away, nerve by nerve ;” and the boy covered his face to shut out the dreadful picture ; but, in vain. It still pursued him—turn whichever way he would ; so that, at last, as a means of escape from imaginary horrors, and in obedience to an irresistible attraction, he was compelled to follow in the track of the rest, and in a few minutes, found himself among the promiscuous crowd.

With difficulty, he made his way through the zone of painted Indians, ranged in close lines around the open space ; but some of the guards, recognizing him, told the others to let him pass, and in this way he penetrated to the front rows, which were composed of women and children, seated so as not to obstruct the view of those in the rear. All eyes were turned towards the middle of the area, where several men, half naked, and fantastically painted, were busily engaged ; some

fastening the victim securely to the stake, and others selecting faggots and instruments of torture, to heat in an adjoining fire.

Having completed their arrangements, the executioners drew back from the prisoner and left him exposed to view. Merciful powers! could his eyes deceive him? in the face of the doomed one Conrad recognized the honest, imperturbable lineaments of his first Indian friend—the good Salexis.

He held his breath for an instant, until he was assured of the fact; then, with a wild cry, and a bound that carried him clear of the circle, he rushed towards the prisoner and threw himself, as a shield, upon his breast.

This interruption caused a strong sensation in the assembly, and those near laid immediate hands on Conrad, and endeavoured to drag him from his hold. But he resisted manfully, and clung with tenacity to his friend, who, nevertheless, strove to calm his agitation and convince him of the futility of his interference, when his fate was a national decree.

“The Great Spirit bless thee!” he added. “The sight of thee is my last joy. Now thou wilt bear witness how Salexis died.”

But Conrad heard not the words. He retained his grasp bravely, and resisted every effort of the executioners to separate them. All aflame with

violent emotion, he had no thought of his danger ; he saw nothing but that his friend was about to die, and he was determined to save him or perish.

All this took place in less time than it can be described ; and already a sullen murmur of wrath and discontent had succeeded to the first tokens of astonishment at the unforeseen delay in the execution, when a loud, peremptory voice rang like a trumpet over the square, and at the sound, every other was hushed in the vast assembly ; while the officiating Indians fell back, and left the two friends visible to all.

“ Now,” said the same voice, with a sharp brevity that pierced, like the ring of metal, to the brain of Conrad, “ now let us hear what the child has to say, and why a pale-face dares to disturb the rites of the Maquas. Speak ! we are in haste ; the time wanes !”

Conrad understood not a word of this, as it was spoken in the Mohawk language ; but he knew that it must be a command for him to explain his conduct : and subduing his agitation with a mighty effort, he unwound his arms from Salexis, and then observed, for the first time, that directly in front stood a chief, surrounded by a numerous band of armed warriors, and somewhat advanced from the edge of the ring of natives : he it was that had just spoken.

This was a very stern, hard-featured old man, with a grizzly cyebrow and a jaw of iron, who looked as if he had been conceived by Nature in some savage mood, and sculptured out of bronze.

Without hesitation, Conrad advanced towards him, and said with a firm and anxious voice :

“ Hear me, O Chief ! The God of us all knows that I speak the truth. This man, ye would slay, was my preserver in a very evil hour. I was a captive, and doomed to death ; the very knife was going to strike, when, at his own peril, he rushed in, and saved me. And who, think ye, it was that he thus resisted in his cruel intention ? A *medicine man* and soererer, of terrible power, whom every body feared ! Not content with this, he afterwards cherished me like a brother, until I lost him suddenly, and never have I seen him from that time until now, when I find him bound, and about to die. Now, O Chief, for the sake of merey, and that a good action may be requited, grant me his life—the life of this good man ! Should these words not move you ; for alas ! I am weak and you are strong, I ask, I implore it in the name of the Great Nation, with whom you are leagued, and to which I belong.”

“ What says the pale boy ? ” demanded the choleric old Sachem, to whom this speech was not

quite intelligible, measuring the speaker with his keen and chilling eye, "quick! somebody. What says he about mercy, and good deeds; is there no one here who understands his talk? It falls like blunt arrows on my ears."

A warrior, who spoke English, stood forth, and interpreted it, word for word.

"Pish!" was the impatient reply, uttered with a gesture of supreme contempt. "We are not women, to be enticed with soft words. Let the Yengies mind their own affairs, and not trouble the Maquas. What does it signify, if those be their friends, who are enemies of the Agonnonseonne?" It is enough; proceed with the torture. The prisoner dies."

"He is impatient to begin his death-song," said Salexis, in his native tongue, with a strong voice, and a look of proud defiance at his foes, "let the 'Bears' sharpen their senses, and learn from a warrior of the sunrise, how to comport themselves at stake."

Conrad's heart sunk in hopeless despair; no motive on earth seemed strong enough to change the purpose of that inexorable old man, when a young Indian, the same that had given him such timely succour on the evening previous, stepped quickly out of the crowd, and confronted the chief.

There was in his manner an indescribable mixture of mild deference, and serious dignity, which drew the attention of every one, as he said :

“ This is not well, my father. Shall the Pale-face beg a paltry favour of the Maqua, and be refused? Shall a man desire to save the one to whom he owes his life, and find none to speak in his behalf, or lend him his arm to snatch away that friend from the death that stands before him? The Great Spirit forbid! And thou, my father! and ye, brave Maquas! ye are warriors, and can well afford to spare a single enemy. Ye are men, and know that it is good to be generous, as well as brave!”

A low sound of applause, from the assembled multitude, hailed this appeal of the young Indian, and proved how powerfully he had touched the national sympathies, by his simple and chivalrous argument. But again the harsh and penetrating accents of the chief were heard, commanding silence; and with a sudden locking of the teeth, which threw his angular jaw sharply forward and depressed the corners of his mouth, he fixed his frigid eye upon the youth before him, while an instantaneous spasm played among the muscles of his cheeks, and betrayed the storm that was gathering. The old Sachem stood thus for some moments, in terrible silence, and then, with measured slowness.

J. W. Palmer  
January 21. 58

of articulation, hissing the words between his teeth, he folded his arms in his mantle, and said :

“ Young man, dost thou set at naught the judgment of Ka-ná-ro-kos, the chief ?”

“ The son of Kanárokos speaks that which his heart tells him is right,” replied the other, whose lofty and composed demeanor changed not beneath the penetrating scowl of the parent, while the temper of the latter, lashed into fury by his words, like an impetuous torrent, burst through all opposition.

“ Rebellious dog !” he thundered forth ; “ learn to be silent and obey when the elders command !” and with sudden action he drew a tomahawk from his belt and swung it flashing above the head of his son ; yet still he quailed not, that noble boy ! but met the fierce regard of his father with a calm and invincible candour. In the very act of striking, it withheld his arm.

A change came over the spirit of the aged Sachem, he lets the deadly weapon drop to the ground ; he passes his sinewy hand over his face ; he appears to muse.

“ Go, my son,” said he, with a low and softened accent, “ I forgive thee for thy dead mother’s sake. She looks at me from your eyes. The prisoner is yours.” Then elevating his voice that all might hear, he added : “ To your lodges, Maquas ; there

will be no burning to-day ;” and accompanied by his retinue, he immediately departed from the circle, which was then broken up, as the people began to disperse with loud shouts and violent gesticulations, crowding along the various avenues that led to their homes, discussing, with considerable warmth, the scenes they had just witnessed.

“That was a well-favoured youth with the sunny hair,” observed a girl, with a plaintive smile, “how well he pleaded for the captive’s life ; I know not what he said, but his voice was sweet, and it made me tremble with joy. I would have given much to understand his words ; didst thou ?”

“No,” replied the one questioned, a boastful young warrior, fresh from his first war-path. “No ; but what does it matter ? *He* never took a scalp, and has a face like a woman ?”

“Yet seemed it to me as good as that of the gentle Manitou, who watches an infant’s slumbers,” rejoined the other.

“Ah-huyah !” ejaculated a blear-eyed and ragged Indian, plunging unsteadily along, and exhibiting in his visage that dull brutality occasioned by an over indulgence in those strong drinks which, with a potency more destructive than war or foreign disease, were already sapping the strength of the Indian nations, and selecting victims from the best and bravest among them.—“Who talks of the

accursed Yengie? Crush him! He spoiled the fun. See here. I was pledged one fathom of wampum against five that the Abenake would not sing his death-song without flinching. I said he would be sure to squeak like a rat at the first touch of the fire, and now we can never know which was in the right; by the ghost of a Maqua, it is too bad!" and he ground his teeth with passion as he jostled his way through the crowd.

"Did not Sewantus-walie bear himself manlike when he stood up before his father?" observed another. "I would not have had his axe hanging over me, no, not for my weight in wampum, and I have seen battles! There was a pattern for *Braves!*"

"True, true," replied a busy, fidgety little man, the scandal-monger and *quid-nunc* of the place, who buzzed like a bee, from group to group, extracting what he could from each, and leaving every where behind him the slow poison of doubt and discontent, "true, it was a famous sight, indeed; but there was a man to have been put to the torture, my friends, and plenty of fire and noise and haranguing. Now it seems we have had nothing of the sort, and the prisoner has got off, by some means or other. This is not as it was in the old times;—the Mohawks have grown to be women, and faint at the sight of blood."

"Shame on thee, thou fangless fool!" retorted Otarcha, who was close by. "Hadst thou seen more of it thou wouldst not babble thus. That tongue of thine wags too loosely, and will get thee into trouble if you do not tie it fast."

"It shall be torn up by the roots! It shall be given to the dogs!" howled the staggering debauchee.

## CHAPTER IV.

AN INTRODUCTION—SALEXIS RELATES HIS ADVENTURES.

IN the mean time the young Indian had severed the bonds of Salexis, and taking him by the hand, led him towards where Conrad stood, in a frank and graceful manner, saying,—

“Brother, behold thy friend. Receive him from the hands of Sewantus-walie ; let there be peace between us.”

“The God whom we both worship will bless you for this,” said Conrad, with warm emotion, as he shook the other’s hand ; “I will never forget this day.”

“The Maquas are a great people,” observed Salexis, emphatically. “Thou hast taught me, O *Brave*, why it is they are so famous among nations. They have big hearts !”

This was spoken in French, and had to be interpreted to the Mohawk by Conrad ere he could reply.

"There is room enough in them for justice and grand thoughts to take root, if the sun of peace would but shine for awhile. Men may grow renowned, but they can never prosper by continual war. At times I have thought it would be better for us to bury the hatchet and return to corn-planting, as in the ancient time; but the nations around are as hungry as wolves for each other's blood, and were the Bears to fall asleep they would soon be devoured in their dens."

"He speaks the truth," observed Salexis; "the Redman must live with arms in his hands. He has no time to think of rejoicings or the gathering in of harvests. He dies as he was born—a hunter and a warrior."

'Tis a hard destiny, thought Conrad, as thus conversing the trio went on towards the dwelling of Otareha, which they entered.

There the emancipated captive was cordially welcomed, and was invited to partake of food, which was immediately set before him. After this the calumet circulated round, and Salexis became a free participant in the attentions and privileges accorded to a national guest.

They were seated around a bright fire, which was lighted upon the hearth, for the day was cold, when Ellen came forth from her chamber and joined the group, looking so fresh and smiling that she appeared like a bright vision from some other world to those who now saw her, for the first time. The young Mohawk gave a slight start, and uttered an involuntary exclamation of wonder; the truest homage that could be offered to loveliness by an Indian, whose constant study is never to manifest surprise.

Conrad, with unusual animation of manner, made room for Ellen, upon the bench beside him; and after assuring himself that she was quite well again, he drew her notice towards his companions, and pronounced their names. With a sweet smile Ellen offered her hand freely to Salexis, who showed his white teeth in a grin when he observed how small and fair it was, contrasted with his own.

It may have been the result, either of a natural reserve or a feeling of diffidence and respect, but the young Mohawk did not, in turn, put forth his hand, for he greeted the maiden with a slight inclination of the head merely, while the latter, abashed and struck by his appearance, made him a reverence and seated herself by Conrad.

A pause succeeded,—such as often occurs when

strangers meet together. It was broken by Sewantus-walie, who arose and drew his robe around him, saying,

"Peace unto you, brethren. Sewantus will see you again before long;" after which, with a grave inflection to Ellen, he left the lodge.

"Who is that?" inquired Ellen; as soon as the sound of retreating footsteps had ceased, upon the frozen ground outside.

"Even what he says," replied Conrad; "Sewantus-walie, the son of the great chief who rules here; now confess, Ellen, is he not a noble-looking *Brave*?"

"He is indeed," returned she: "were he as well-favoured in his disposition, one might incline to the belief, which some have held, that we are not much better than those whom we call savages, after all. In our cities it would be hard to find a more shapely figure of a man?"

"And yet, I am certain, that he is as noble as he looks," rejoined Conrad, warmly; "for had it not been for him, Ellen, my friend Salexis, who is sitting there, would now be numbered with the dead."

Then he related what had taken place that morning, which filled Ellen with lively emotions, and exalted the young Indian to a higher place in her opinion, than the most profuse praises alone

could possibly have done. There was a degree of romantic self-devotion, about the whole proceeding, that won upon her young imagination—keenly alive to everything lofty and heroic. She could also draw in her mind a distinction between the parts each had played, on the occasion in question. That of Conrad was, as she would have expected, generous and brave; but the Indian's bore the stamp of superior magnanimity, as it was purely disinterested, and seriously endangered the position he held among his people. An utter stranger to any stronger motive than the mere love of doing a good action, he had dared the popular prejudice and opposed its strong current, single-handed, in defiance of all considerations. Nevertheless, Ellen drew no unfavourable comparison; but if she felt a stronger pride and assurance in her protector and brother—as she sometimes styled Conrad—she believed her warmest approval due to his high-spirited and handsome auxiliary.

“Now,” said Conrad, placing his hand with frank familiarity upon the shoulder of Salexis, and speaking in French, with feeling, “thou hast a story to tell us, my good old friend! When I look at thee, and think of all that has passed since we two sat together upon that lonely island in the St. John, and in how strange a manner I lost and found thee; when I think of these, my friend,

my breath grows difficult and I am troubled. Now then. Now let us hear what happened unto thee, good Salexis; Ellen and myself will listen to what thou hast to tell."

The one addressed laid down his pipe, composed his features, threw his head slightly back and commenced his narrative.

"The ways of Him above are perplexing and difficult to trace; like those of waters underground. I saw a child astray, frightened at the tempest; a few moons rolled away, and lo! the child became a man and confronted *Braves!* I saw two friends take different roads, and after much winding and toil the paths met together, and wonderful to say, one snatched the other from death, and the heart of the elder was filled with joy; not so much for the life preserved to him, but because the brave and faithful youth he saw before him was a growth not unworthy of that little child."

Salexis paused awhile, at this touching allusion to the change that had taken place in his former *protégé*, which the latter alone could comprehend, and then continued, addressing himself more immediately to the object of his preliminary remark.

"Thou rememberest the torn canoe, and the storm; and how nearly we were being crushed by the falling tree? Well, in the calm night,

when the wind had died away, I lay awake thinking of these things and wondering if some wicked Manitou were not plotting against us, when I heard, as I thought, my sister's voice calling to me from the further shore. Now, for some time I doubted, thinking it might be a new snare of the evil ones; but still the voice kept calling sorrowfully, Salexis! Salexis! so that at last I was sure it must be my sister's; and getting up from thy side, I took my weapons, and forded the channel by the pale light of the moon, and stepped upon the main land. But the voice issued from the depth of the woods, so I went on towards it, through the darkness, struggling amidst under-brush and thick growing trees—but without being able to approach it; for, as I advanced, it ever seemed the same distance from me. Then my mind misgave me, and I resolved to seek no more the weird voice, and prepared to go back.

“Now, as I crossed an open place I saw a grey wolf skulking near, for a stream of moon-light came down into the forest there, and revealed him to me as he stood watching while I passed; so I fixed an arrow to my bow, and took aim. But the thought of unhallowed things haunted me and made my arm unsteady; for the shaft only pierced the ear of the beast, and hung

trailing by its side. Now mark what the wolf did. He seized it fiercely with his paw and strove to pluck it out, when the skin of the head came entirely off, and discovered a man's face, rolling two big eyes of fire; then my heart grew strong, and with a whoop, I rushed upon mine enemy, who rose up like a man to meet me—with a human growl. He went down like a child before me, and in a close hug we struggled together a long time among the leaves in the gloom—I and the man-wolf, a very long time, for thou seest, I did not want to kill him, and strove only to bind his arms. But he was a meagre, supple sort of creature, and by means of the long hair upon him, he slipped through my fingers like an eel. Nevertheless, I think I would have mastered him, after all, but suddenly the grasp of many hands wrenched us asunder, and, Ugh! ere we could collect our senses, we were lying together bound hand and foot, amidst a number of strange people who made the woods ring like a gathering of owls, with loud laughter and triumphant cries.

"Then one lit a torch, and I saw their faces, and lo! I discovered that I was in the hands of the Maquas, and that he with whom I had been struggling was Bizon-ko-kok-has!

"The Medicine Owl had followed on our traces, boy, and stopped our course with his wily spells.

He thought also to have beguiled me away from thee with a lying voice ; but, for once, his cunning deceived him ; he was baffled by a simple warrior. Did I not tell thee that the sorcerer was in the wind ?

“ Well, it seems that a party of Maquas, camping hard by, heard my cry when I sprung upon my unknown enemy, and, creeping silently upon us in the darkness, made us prisoners. Then we followed these powerful men, who were on a forray against Canada, it might be for more than a moon, when Bizon-ko-kok-has made his escape—how, I cannot tell ; I only know that, from that time, I expected each day to be put to death. But this gave me little concern ; a warrior is taught to regard that last fight as his chiefest glory. His strong pride can conquer pain, and carry him across the whirlpools to the country of dreams. The keen spirit that wills within him can look down, as from a rock, upon those who make war against it, and laugh them to scorn. The last struggle is not so terrible to a true *Brave*. He prepares himself, from his youth, to sing his death-song to his tortures with a steady brow.

“ No, no,—what grieved me sorely was thinking of thee, boy ; that made my heart heavy many times. I often wondered what thou wouldst do alone, and how astonished thou wouldst be to find

Salexis had deserted thee. Couldst thou have believed it, boy?"

"Never," replied Conrad, with fervour. "In the darkest period of that grievous time, I never once accused thee of leaving me of thine own accord, and felt sure that there was some secret in the matter, which, whenever we met, thou wouldst explain. I never wronged thee, my friend; I knew thee too well for that, thou mayest be sure."

"The last film is cleared away from the sight of Salexis by thy good words. The sky is bright to him now, without a speck or a cloud," rejoined the Indian, while a glow of satisfaction shone like a sun-beam in his usually unimpassioned countenance.

"Little did he think when, after reaching this castle, and being kept a prisoner until the chief captains were returned from war, they brought him out to be a sport for the Maquas, who wished to know of what stuff was an Abenake warrior—little did he dream at that time, that the fair-haired Yengie boy, whom he preserved from the Medicine Owl, would appear before that proud old Sachemmore, and act upon the purpose of his enemies like the rain upon fire.

"The cunning of a man is a childish thing to

the Master above. He only is wise. He says nothing, but he works surprisingly for good."

Here Salexis ceased speaking, and Conrad, in his turn, related what had happened to him since they parted, of which the reader is already aware. This seemed to engross the whole attention of the listener, who, at times, leaned forward with eager interest to catch the words, particularly in those parts relating to the siege, the *voyageur*, and the shipwreck."

"The Crooked-knife did well," he observed, when Conrad finished his story; "I once smoked with him when he made a talk to my people, which is now thirty months ago and six. When he comes again I will take him fast hold by the hand and say, rest in my wigwam, brother; you are an honest man." Then, with a glance at Ellen, Salexis, after a little, drew Conrad aside, and lowering his voice that none else might hear, said, "This maiden is akin to thee in race and ways, and very pleasant to the eye. She has need of thy comfort and protection, boy; for I think she is too delicate a flower to thrive among the forest people. Take her home."

"Thou art right, good Salexis," was the reply; "five days from hence we leave with a party on its way home, which will take us a few leagues

of *Orange*\*, where we are sure to meet with friends."

"Good," replied Salexis, replenishing his pipe as the young people moved away together, and stood conversing by the threshold, while he followed them with his eyes. We cannot pretend to guess what were his thoughts at that precise moment; but as he beheld the two, so youthful and full of grace, and so contented with one another, some agreeable dream appeared to be unfolded in the Indian's mind; for he nodded to himself, once or twice, as if in approval of the suggestions of his fancy, and while he puffed forth a wreath of snowy smoke, his imperturbable features relaxed in a complacent smile.

\* Albany.

## CHAPTER V.

## AN UNWELCOME RECOGNITION.

ONE evening, subsequent to the period just referred to, an Indian woman sat alone, in a small wigwam, situated apart from the more substantial and commodious tenements, and but a few paces from the stockades separating the town from the waters of the lake, the bright ripples of which washed almost up to the foot of the stout pickets of cedar, and contrasted pleasantly with a fringe of evergreens that half filled the intervening space in front of the conical structure, above-mentioned.

The woman was engaged in sewing minute beads, in a fanciful pattern, upon a pair of mocassins; small and beautifully formed in the fashion of the

Mohawks. She plied her needle quickly, but, from time to time, she would pause and rest her cheek upon her hand, as if in thought, while the expression of her face denoted that her cogitations, whatever they were, had a tendency to make her sad. Yet this was only while she stopped working, for as soon as she resumed her embroidery, she went on again with a very plaintive air, which she sang in a low voice, that it would have done any one's heart good to hear; it was so soft and tender in its tones. Notokeel, for it was she, was dressed in her very best and looked pretty, in spite of her years. Why should Notokeel be sad?

Her long hair, in which the grey could not be detected without a close inspection, was gathered in a bunch behind, where it was fastened with a bow of bright new riband. Her short loose gown was of figured calico, frilled and embroidered at the wrists and collar, and confined with bracelets of wampum, and several large quoit-shaped brooches of massive silver. Leggings of scarlet cloth, trimmed with a rich border of riband, worked in minute points and waving lines—a very *chef-d'œuvre* of skill—completed the costume; and a heavy necklace of money-wampum hung low upon her bosom. Her hands, though somewhat dark and hard, were as small and delicately formed as a lady's, and upon the fingers were a number of silver rings, which shone with a

pale lustre as she kept them in continual motion ; while brilliant drops of glass danced and sparkled at her ears in rivalry of her bright eyes ;—why was Notokeel sad ?

The time flew by unheeded, while thus engaged, and already the daylight was upon the wane, when the piece of blanket, at the door of the wigwam, was put aside without noise, and crawling stealthily in, came a gaunt and enormous wolf. It appeared before her entire, ere the woman was conscious of the singular intrusion. Now, had she been of a different colour, she would have immediately shrieked out with fright, no doubt ; but, some how or other, the forest women do not manifest their fears in that way, and, besides, Notokeel's apprehensions were somewhat allayed by the actions of the strange visitor ; for, seating himself opposite to her upon his extremity, he drew his hind legs under him, in a fashion more congenial to an Indian than a quadruped, and then, putting one of his fore paws into a pocket in his skin, he produced a pipe ; scooped up a live coal into it from the fire ; gave a curious shrug, to place it in his mouth ; jerked back the skin of his head, as if it were a hood, and disclosed the haggard, repulsive lineaments of the sorcerer—Bi-zon-ko-kok-has.

Then it was that Notokeel shrunk back with terror, and gave utterance to a low cry, as she gazed

with staring eyes at the visage before her. As soon as she had recovered sufficient self-possession to speak, she demanded, in a tremulous voice, "Have the years come back again, or does Notokeel only dream that the one whom she once called son, is now in her wigwam?"

"No live thing can walk back into the past," was the reply; "let it rest. Bi-zon-ko-kok-has has returned to his mother; for he said, 'I will go back to Notokeel, and we two will travel together in the same road and be a help to each other; is it not good?'" And the speaker bent down, in a beseeching attitude, and looked wistfully into the face of her to whom he addressed this indirect appeal.

"I know not; how can a poor woman tell?" returned Notokeel, with an air of doubt; resting her cheek upon her hand, and speaking as though she mused aloud. "There was a gathering of *Braves*, for a prisoner was to be put to the torture; and yet he did not die. A squaw came there and begged his life, that he might be to her for a son in place of one that she lost; and they listened to her, and she saved him from the torments of fire, and took him to her home—treating him with kindness and making his whatever belonged to her. They talked cheerfully together, those two, by the home-fire, in the morning and evening of many days, during

many moons ; and they were as mother and child to one another. Now, who was that man ?

Notokeel kept her eyes fixed intently upon the fire, as she put the question, and closed her lips awaiting a reply.

“ He was a young Abenake of repute, though no fighter of battles,” returned the conjurer, who spoke the Mohawk language with fluency and emphasis. “ They called him the Medicine Owl, because of his skill and cunning in things hidden from other men. The Squaw was good unto him. He had a grateful heart.”

“ Very well,” continued Notokeel ; “ that poor, solitary woman, trusted in a stranger’s faith. She adopted him for her own, and told him of her secret sorrow, and how it gnawed ever, like a wood-ant, at her heart, and choked it up with dry dust, and made her sad. She taught him the speech and ways of her people. She hardly asked him to cut a stick, or to catch a fish for the wigwam. These things she was contented to do for his comfort sake, so that he might eat and sleep without care ; indeed, his mother often went without, that he might satisfy his hunger, and bore her emptiness without murmuring, to make him content. Now, what did this man do ? We shall soon see. His adopted mother fell sick, and could

neither help him nor herself any further; she was well nigh dying with most grievous pangs. Then, when she required a little care, he turned his back, and left her without a word; and that was the last of him she ever saw. Now, who could trust again that bad-hearted man?"

A second time, Notokeel put a question; but it was with a vehement movement of the head, expressive of angry disapprobation, and a voice inarticulate and harsh with emotion; rocking herself, meanwhile, to and fro when she came again to a pause.

The listener winced under this accusation, which, heavy though it was, he knew to be true to the letter, and, therefore, he did not attempt either to deny it or offer anything in extenuation of his conduct on the occasion referred to, and with this intent, avoided a direct reply.

"The deeds of the past are with the dead in their graves, Notokeel; who can recall them, or make them tell their secrets? Therefore, let them rest. I was wayward and wilful, and haunted by the Manitous, so that I know I did often wrong in those days; but now I have grown older, you see, and become wiser in many things, and can work for my mother, who will have only to stay quietly in the lodge when her son is abroad. He is a famous Medicine Man now, and should the vil-

lages not yield him food enough for his charms and his foreknowledge of things that will come to pass, then he can set his traps and catch provision, like other men. Now I know well, my mother will open her heart to me, and find me a corner in her wigwam ; for, like her, I am of a fretting disposition, and have travelled very far to see her face once more."

Alas ! for woman's better judgment ; how rarely is it beyond the control of those warm impulses, which, having their origin in everything that is tender and compassionate, so often serve but to mislead and make her the dupe of the designing ! Notokeel's long-hoarded indignation at the selfish conduct of one who, in conformity with an Indian practice often resorted to, she had adopted and rescued from the stake ; her belief in his faithlessness and want of feeling, her firm resolve to reject every overture to a reconciliation ; all melted away before the words of the wily conjurer, whose insinuating tones, even more than the language itself, implying, as they did, urgent entreaty and sincere repentance for his former delinquency, crept like a rill into her heart, and filled it until it overflowed with pity towards the offender. Notokeel, with all her faults, was not one to bear malice, or persist long in the refusal of any favour that it was in her power to bestow.

The cloud cleared off gradually from her face, and she came forth, as it were, from her reserve. It was with a softened expression that she now addressed her companion.

"A long journey, didst thou say? Yes, now I believe thou speakest the very truth, for thou hast a weary look, and art hungry perhaps. Notokeel is not hard-hearted; here is food, my son."

As she spoke, she drew forth a vessel, containing several large pieces of maize-bread, and placed it before Bi-zon-l-o-kok-has, whose eyes twinkled at the sight. Pocketing his pipe, he joyfully accepted the invitation to regale himself, and fell immediately to work, saying, "The sun has risen twice since any thing has entered his mouth, except smoke and air, and they are not very nourishing to a man. The Manitous be good unto thee, mother! I have come a long path to eat in thy wigwam."

The rapidity with which he made the food disappear would have proved the length of his fast, if his attenuated and half-dried appearance failed to justify the assertion; while he proceeded to relate, without any allusion to the events immediately preceding it, the simple fact that he had been taken prisoner a second time by the Mohawks, from whom he had contrived to escape, through the help of a friendly Manitou, at least, so he wished the credulous Notokeel to believe. But the truth

was, with his usual cunning, he had managed, while his captors slept, to elude the observation of the sentinel, and apply some stray coals from the bivouac fire to the withes by which he was pinioned. By this means he recovered the free use of his limbs, at the expense of a few slight burns, and eventually succeeded, with their assistance, in effecting a noiseless retreat from the spot; without leaving a single trace to enable his exasperated enemies to follow in his pursuit.

Moreover, having by chance learned that the party was from the same castle where he had once sojourned, and where Notokeel dwelt, who he found, upon inquiry, to be still there, he had conceived a strong desire to visit her again; and with that intent followed upon the trail of the Mohawks until it led him to the vicinity of her abode, where, for his better security, he drew aside, and in the night-time took possession of a canoe at the shore, to aid him in reconnoitering the stronghold without the risk of being discovered. He told also how several attempts to enter by the single gate that gave admittance into the town were thwarted by the unceasing vigilance of the guards kept constantly there; and he was obliged to have recourse to other measures to gain his point. Landing at night, directly opposite to where he remembered Notokeel's residence to have been, with great labour, and after

repeated efforts, he succeeded in loosening three pickets from the lines of defence, and thus secured a secret passage into the town.

But here he found himself at fault, for the lodge stood no longer in its place, which was occupied by a small and empty wigwam, and he had remained many hours in the cedar thicket, ere the arrival of her he sought, which he profited by, as soon as the twilight permitted him to leave his hiding place.

## CHAPTER VI.

## A PLOT AND AN ABDUCTION.

“Now,” added Bizon-ko-kok-has, in conclusion drawing a long and grateful respiration after his genial repast, and filling his short pipe—by way of a desert; “everything is settled, just as before.” The words were spoken deliberately, as he was quite sure that his easy companion had, by this time, entirely restored him to her favour, and he began to assume that imposing confidence of manner which originally had obtained him such a powerful influence over her—when his slightest wish was a law. “Thou seest how it is, mother,” he resumed; “should thy countrymen find me here, they will surely put me to death, and thy claim would not avail, a second time, to save me;

besides which, I am troubled with perplexing fancies, by turns, that will not let me stop very long in one place—therefore I can neither rest nor live here. So there is no help for it; thou must come with me to another country; it does not matter which, no, not a jot! I am a Great Medicine, terrible and strong, that can walk among the nations and have honour. I am no warrior (as thou knowest) and yet I can conquer the bravest. My words are keen as the balls of the pale-faces, they pierce through flesh and bone—even to the marrow. With a look and a wave of my arm, I can make a whole people tremble, like sick men. I have talked to fierce spectral things that infest the solitary places. I have drunk up their wisdom. It burns within me like the fire-water of the stranger. I am a walking fear. Who can stand before Bizon-ko-kok-has, the dreamer of dreams? Come, Notokeel," he added, "this very night, now, the canoe is beneath the palisades, and ere the snow rests, we will be safe beyond the hunting grounds of the linked nations."

At this proposal, the countenance of the woman became again overcast, and its former expression of anxiety returned; she shook her head dissentingly, and replied with some degree of embarrassment, "No, no; it is not possible, I

cannot leave my people ; at least, not now ! not now !”

“ Why not ?” abruptly demanded the conjuror ; with an air of wonder and mortification.

*Natcheel* hesitated still, and *Bizon-ko-kok-has* repeated his demand.

“ If she cannot do what is asked of her, my mother has reasons. The ears of her son are wide open ; she can speak.”

“ I will, surely,” said she at length, shading her eyes with her hand ; “ but look not so at me, or I cannot find words. What I say is true, and it is not my fault if the nature in me is weak and easily beguiled ; the Great Spirit at first made me so, and it cannot be otherwise for all our striving. Yet the thing that drew it toward itself was very good, I thought so many times,—I still think so. I cannot be wrong ; you shall see. We were far from this, away between the frost and sunrise, near the borders of the *Mic-mac* country from whence we journeyed, when in a great storm, there came to us a pale-faced girl from out of the salt-water waves. Now, I beheld her lying among the weeds, cold and motionless, like them, and without breath, but more beautiful than I can ever tell thee ; and seeing how the snow-flakes remained without melting upon her young face, it made me sorry ;

and I thought of those who loved her, and of their sorrow, and that none of her companions would ever drop a friendly tear or weave burial garlands by her grave; and straightway I felt a gush, like the bursting forth of a spring in my bosom, and a wild passion seized upon me. Stooping down, I gathered up that pale maiden in my arms, and for a time, it did seem to me as if my own baby dear were lying dead within them; so terrible was the grief it wrought in me, the sight of that drowned stranger!

“It might have been the will of the good Manitou alone, or it might have been that there was a strong medicine in my sorrow, to break that stony trance, but I heard a faint sound coming out of her lips—a little longer, and her breast heaved, the colour came to her cheeks, her eyes opened, she spoke,—she was alive. Then through the day and through the night, of all my people, I saw most of the beautiful Lily of the Waters—as we called her—and I loved her the best. I could not shut my eyes or ears, there was no help for it; I was become her slave; and often as we journeyed, at the sound of her voice, my heart would melt away with kindness for her. She is here, at this time, and I cannot remain long absent from her without pain, neither can I sleep without dreaming of the fair Yengie,—she is my sole joy. Now

shall be able to live when she is gone? Alas! the second sunrise from now, will see her depart for the country of the Palefaces; the time slides by, there is no peace for Notokeel. Alas! alas! how can I go, my son, how can I tear myself away from her whom I love? If thou wilt cure me of this sickness, then, perhaps, it may be as thou desirest, but, as it is, thou seest I cannot go."

Now Notokeel's tale made a powerful impression upon her listener, though he chose to preserve a careless and composed mien throughout the whole, which subsided gradually into cold abstraction, when the disclosure was ended; but soon again, a gleam of subtle intelligence shone in his eyes, and the lines of his grim visage were brought into lively play.

"My mother is lucky to-day," said he; "I have discovered a medicine that will make her glad; does she hear?"

"Speak," was the quick response, as Notokeel looked up at the conjurer, with a contracted brow.

"We will steal away this pale maiden, and take her with us, so that my mother will have her always beside her, like her own child, her whom she loves; is it not good?"

Notokeel opened her eyes to their fullest extent, with an amazement so utter, that she met, for a full

half-minute, without winking, the sinister glance of Bizon-ko-kok-has. Presently, she wiped away her tears; she compressed her lips firmly; she knit her brows; she moved restlessly upon her seat; she was evidently turning over in her thoughts the proposition of the guileful one before her. Poor Notokeel! a child of impulse rather than principle, how could she resist the strong temptation? All her troubles were dissolved into thin air, as she brooded upon it, while, in perspective, an alluring picture of enjoyment presented itself to her in a future, whose happiness would be insured by the companionship of the beautiful stranger, who had so won upon her affections. She reflected little on the wrong she was about to commit, the terrible evil such a proceeding would be sure to entail upon Ellen; or if she was withheld by any such considerations, they were easily got rid of in a sincere resolve to devote herself entirely to her charge, and thus regain any favour she might lose by the course she was about to pursue.

The maternal instinct, dormant within Notokeel for so many years, aroused into activity by the presence of Ellen, had assumed entire dominion over her thoughts, and now urged her, with the blind ardour of an animal instinct, to overlook every impediment, and accept with eagerness the plan proposed.

They should not take her from Notokeel. No one had a right to rob her of what she loved. How she hated them! And above all, that fair-haired boy, who appeared to bask in her smiles, and kept her half the time away from Notokeel. But now she would baffle them, and the prize would be hers alone—entirely hers.

All this, she reviewed separately, and distinctly, in her mind, during a brief pause—so rapid is thought—before she uttered a single word in reply to her expectant companion. Having arrived at a final conclusion, she said softly:

“It is good, my son, and it will make me very happy, if it can be managed; but our people are sharp-eyed, and numerous as midges hereabout. One thing thou must promise me; to beware lest the maiden receive hurt. I will not that, by any scheming, she should come to harm; she is my own beautiful Water Lily, and no one must touch her too roughly.”

“I will be careful mother. Now, bethink thee, is there no way of beguiling this stranger without the palisades, some time after sundown? then could I creep upon her, of a sudden, and stop her mouth; and we could paddle away, down the lake, with her, making less noise than an owl, when he flits through the shade:—what sayest thou?”

“That it might serve to blind the Abenakes,

perhaps, but it would only prove a jest to the Maquas. Thinkest thou," she added, "that the maiden could leave the gate without drawing upon her the eyes of the sentinels, and would they ever lose sight of her, or be satisfied, until she entered in at the threshold of Otareha again? No, no, as I live, that will certainly not do; but look! See here," and Notokeel held up to view, one of the mocassins she was making, "well, this is for the foot of the Pale-face, and, with its mate, will be ready by to-morrow, long before the sun drops behind the trees; now listen. Thou hast found me in the same place, where, in old times, thou wast wont to call me mother; but it was not then covered in from the rains, by a mean roofage of poles and bark. A stout lodge stood here, built by my father, long before I was born, but after my sickness left me, one day it caught fire, and was consumed, and then I took shelter under the cabin of my kinsman, Otareha. Nevertheless, I still remembered the spot where my baby first saw the day, and with my own hands, put up this little camp, where I love to sit by myself, in the summer days, and whenever I feel sad, for the sake of those old times, and because it does me good, like the water of that spring, where the blessed spirits keep watch. Now I can say to the girl, Notokeel has a

present for thee, fair Lily, but she has also a boon to beg; she would ask leave for once to lace her moccasins by the hearth, where her parents dwelt; for it is an Indian proverb that whosoever does so for a stranger, by his own fire-side, will be lucky in his affairs. Then will she straightway consent, I know, for she is very docile and good, and ready to do anything to please; and when she comes, it will be about the time that the bats begin to open their eyes. Then, hiding thyself close at hand, thou canst easily surprise, and bear her tenderly through the hole in the palisade, and away from the neighbourhood. I am only a woman, but I have followed my kinsman upon the war-path; therefore, should there be some sense in what I say; is it not good?"

"Good and powerful as if the cunning Winasosis herself spoke in thy words," replied Bizon-kok-has, with a gesture of wild extravagance and a hideous grin, more befitting the mirth of the animal whose covering he wore, than that of a rational being.

"He! ho!" he ejaculated, as concealing his head once more beneath the skin hood, he peered sharply out at Notokeel, through the eye-holes of his wolfish mask; "He! ho! Make ready, mother, pack up thy goods and squaw fancies; we will

show the Ongue-honwe\* a manoeuvre they cannot see into, for all their boasting! To-morrow evening, when the sun is an arm's length below the hill, I will be here and ready; so be thou."

Saying which, Bizon-ko-kok-has resumed his original attitude, and crept *en quadrupède* out of the wigwam, muttering as he threaded his way through the thicket in the darkness, towards the breach in the defences: "The charm works speedily and well; now will the Medicine Owl of the sunrise travel in a new path, and laugh at those who thought to hold him prisoner;—the eyeless moles!"

Nothing occurred to prevent the preliminaries thus decided upon from being carried into effect. Notokeel completed her work early in the afternoon of the following day, and obtained the consent of Ellen to her fanciful, but seemingly innocent desire, upon which the success of the plot depended. After this, she transferred, at different times, her slender stock of clothes and utensils to the place where she had met the conjurer, who, at the appointed hour, did not fail to make his appearance in his shaggy envelope, which insured him in some degree from detection; should he chance to be observed by any of the inhabitants,

\* This was the name which the Five Nations sometimes gave themselves, and signified—a people surpassing all others.

who would naturally take him for one of the medicine-men or jugglers belonging to the place. Bizon-ko-kok-has speedily deposited the pack which he received from Notokeel, in the canoe, previously drawn carefully up within a clump of alders that overhung the lake immediately below, and returned to the wigwam, in one corner of which he gathered up his long limbs in an easy attitude, and was entirely concealed from view, by means of a large deerskin which his associate threw over him, preparatory to the arrival of her expected visiter.

The final disposition had not been made many minutes, when the sound of voices was heard in the vicinity, and soon that of Ellen could be distinguished, as she answered some inquiry of Conrad, who escorted her thus far, and now left her at her request to be alone; Notokeel, foreseeing such a contingency, having guarded against it by alleging that the efficacy of her visit would be much lessened, if not altogether destroyed, by the presence of a third party.

Without any apprehension of danger, or the slightest doubt in the integrity of her attendant and professed friend, the poor girl fell helplessly into the trap laid for her, and entering the place of rendezvous with a smile of innocent confidence, seated herself down upon the fir branches, by the side of Notokeel.

"Welcome to Notokcel's hearth, my Water-lily! Many snows have come and gone since one so good as thou sat beside it; ay, or so beloved! Now look," added her host; "here have I been striving to make something worthy a Yengie maiden, but what does it avail? an Indian woman is not as handy as the pale-faces, only she wishes her friend to take these poor things, that they may be for a memory, when she is among her own people, of one who looked upon her many days, and liked her well."

As she spoke, Notokeel produced a handkerchief, and unfolding it, exhibited to view a pair of mocassins, richly ornamented, which she presented to Ellen, with as much ease and refinement of manner as if she had accustomed herself, all her life, to acts of courtesy; and the latter, pleased no less with the taste displayed in the workmanship, than with the generous partiality towards herself, to which they bore testimony, slipped off her shoes, and permitted Notokeel to replace them with her gift, and fasten the mocassins by their lacings, around her small ankles, in the manner of her tribe.

"Now will good fortune be sure to come down to Notokcel," said the woman, when the ceremony was completed. "See, now, how well they shape

themselves to those little tender feet of thine, my child. Once, perhaps, I could have boasted of my own; but time and much travelling have spoiled them for beauty, and they are now as broad and tough upon the soles as those of a bear. And so thou goest to-morrow, my Lily of the waters; then what will Notokeel do?"

"Alas! my kind friend," replied Ellen, with a dejected air; "I go, indeed, but whither I scarcely know; for in the country to which I belong, I am without a home; I only hope that among my own people I may find hearts as generous and honest, as those I have met with in the Wilderness. If, as thou believeth, kindness to a stranger will insure a blessing, then blest, in every truth, wilt thou be, Notokeel, for all thy goodness unto me."

"When you pray to the Great Spirit above, you will remember Notokeel."

"Thy name shall go with mine unto Him, and we will share alike in His bounty," was the reply: "it is the only return I can make thee for thy faithful love. God will surely reward thee for it, my friend."

Ellen's voice was low and tremulous, as she concluded, while a large tear slid over her cheek, and shone like a bright gem, for an instant, in the fire light, ere it fell.

Now each tone and look of the girl was a dagger

to the heart of the one addressed, and filled her with lively agitation. Her conscience became suddenly alarmed, and, for the first time, the true heinousness of her contemplated treachery was made fully apparent unto her, with the fearful train of consequences it would inflict upon one so young and delicately nurtured, and so fair as her by her side. Should she deliver such a creature up to the dubious guardianship of him whom she feared far more than she could ever esteem—the intractable Bizon-ko-kok-has? Oh, never! never! foolish she might be, but she was not bad. There was still time to save Ellen from the clutch of her terrible guest; she would try. She felt herself grow strong with the sudden resolve to face every risk and extricate her beloved charge.

As these thoughts passed rapidly in her mind, Notokeel threw a quick glance towards the corner from whence she apprehended danger, to be assured that her actions were unobserved by any but Ellen, and then, with a sudden and vehement gesture, signified to the latter the necessity of immediate flight. Alas! quick as she was in comprehending and seeking to profit by the friendly intimation, Ellen was less so than Bizon-ko-kok-has—who, unknowingly, had been closely watching both the females from an opening in the

skin ; and no sooner had the alarmed maiden with a wild impulse sprung from her seat to escape, than she was seized in a vice-like grasp, enveloped in the deer-skin, and carried to the entrance of the wigwam, where a shawl was speedily bound over her mouth, to prevent her from crying out and giving alarm to the neighbourhood. Ellen, however, made no effort of the kind, for she was half senseless with fright at the appearance of her uncouth assailant,—who seemed to have issued forth from the very ground itself, to make her his prey, and now kept glaring fiercely upon her from his monster eyes ; making, meanwhile, menacing signs to Notokeel, who, excluded from all means of escape, and entirely discomfited by the failure of her attempt, shrunk speechless and trembling upon the fir boughs.

“Come on, squaw, and take heed,” hissed the conjurer, in accents of warning and command, as he gathered up his victim in his bony arms and motioned Notokeel to go before him out of the door ; “shouldst thou make a noise, or turn from the path, thou wilt find that my knife is sharp too, as well as my eyes !”

The Indian woman obeyed, without a murmur or thought of opposition, and the three issued into the open air, where everything was now obscured by the rapidly increasing darkness, and no sound

could be heard save the low moaning of the wind through the palisades; stepping quickly on, a few seconds brought them to the opening in the latter, by which an easy passage was obtained to the shore of the lake, beyond the confines of the village.

The crafty conjurer did not omit, however, notwithstanding his haste, to replace after him the pickets he had taken such pains to put aside: then making Notokeel enter the canoe which awaited below, he deposited therein his living burden, grasped a paddle, pushed gently off upon the lake and propelled the craft rapidly but with caution, along the shore, under cover of the bushes on its margin. When he had doubled a projecting point, which screened him from the observation of the sentinels posted at the entrance of the village, he uttered a low exclamation of triumph, and lending himself more freely to his task, made the canoe shoot swiftly over the surface, right in the teeth of a swift breeze that blew from the direction of the discharge.

## CHAPTER VII.

SALEXIS MAKES A DISCOVERY—HIS COGITATIONS THEREON—  
A HEART BOWED DOWN.

NEED we attempt to describe the deep anxiety, the protracted hope, the immeasurable anguish, which in turn, took complete possession of Conrad, as the night wore on and Ellen made not her appearance, and when upon revisiting the place near which he had left her, only a few hours before, neither she nor Notokeel could be found; and lastly, when all inquiry elsewhere impelled to the conclusion that neither of the missing ones had been seen after that period. Why should we seek to pourtray his wild sorrow and utter abandonment of purpose, as day after day passed on, and party after party, sent out to reconnoitre,

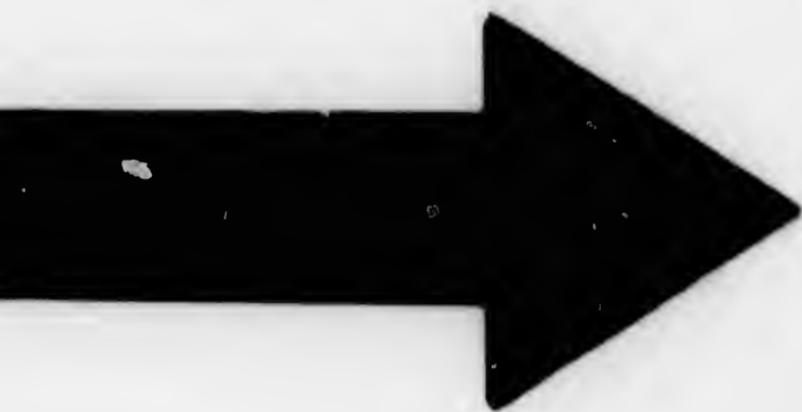
brought no tidings of his gentle companion; for they returned after a fruitless search, persuaded that no traces of the fugitives existed in the vicinity of the *bourg*.

The reader's imagination alone, can do ample justice to the picture, therefore we need not dwell upon it; the policy of the pen is sometimes less to illustrate than to suggest,—in this instance we prefer the latter.

The surprise caused by the mysterious disappearance of the young stranger and her attendant was very great throughout the Indian village, and gave rise to various surmises as to the manner in which it had occurred; none, however, approached in the slightest degree towards the truth. The prevalent opinion was that they had been spirited away, bodily, by some malicious demon; such, as was believed to prowl by night about the haunts of Indians, to seize upon the unwary, who were carried off, heaven knows where, and either devoured or enslaved.

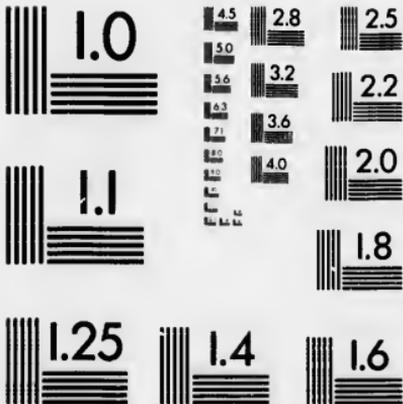
“’Tis an ill wind that blows nobody good,” saith the proverb, and its truth was made manifest on this occasion. Totems and charms against spectres and evil influences came into immediate requisition, and every man, woman, and child was provided forthwith with one of these sovereign specifics, by





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the Medicine-Men of the tribe, who found themselves elevated into unusual importance by the event, and suddenly enriched with the wampum and beaver skins that poured in upon them, in exchange for bits of bone, feathers, and birds' claws. These were consecrated and rendered efficacious by some species of mummery connected with a superstition which, like that of the age, sought to people the earth with natures more malignant than it really contained—and deprived life of a portion of its enjoyment by girding it with a chain of terror.

There were two exceptions to this general belief of the natives. Sewantus-walie was superior to it, and Salexis had good reason, shortly, to attribute the abduction to a less equivocal source.

The latter, with characteristic patience, and actuated by a lingering suspicion, proceeded to make, for a third time, the circuit of the enclosed town; intently scrutinizing every bush, shrub, and inch of ground in the vicinity of the defences. In this manner he arrived at the clump of alders where the Abenake conjurer had embarked, when, in the thickest part, he noticed a slight displacement of the grass that grew to the water's edge, as if by the prow of a canoe. Following up this indication, and

crouching close beside it, he observed a broken twig hanging from a projecting branch at some distance towards the bank. Salaxis then bent down still lower, until he could bring this object to bear in a straight line upon a point of the stockade. Assured of his mark, he then marched directly towards it, and soon detected at the spot in question, indubitable proofs of the recent presence of either a man or a wild beast; to all appearance, the latter, for the soil was scratched up and imprinted with marks of claws. Moreover, on the rough pickets, he noticed several whitish hairs, and in a splinter there hung a flock, it might be, from some shaggy animal. This Salaxis seized upon with a guttural "Ugh," of quick intelligence; when down came the heavy post bringing with it a second, directly upon our good friend, who fell backwards with them, and had a tough scramble among the bushes into which he crushed, ere he could extricate himself from the superincumbent weight and resume his perpendicular again. This he did with a broad grin and several distinct nods, as in assent to some suggestion that now occurred to his mind.

He secured the tuft of hair, forthwith, removed the same number of pickets in the second and third rows of stockades, without evincing surprise at the readiness with which he did so,

passed into the enclosure, and found himself close to the wigwam which Ellen had been seen to enter last, on the evening of her disappearance. This he now visited, and kneeling down, soon detected a few of the same whitish hairs adhering to the boughs upon its floor. This was sufficient to prove to him that whatever had made its way secretly through the defences, had been there; a conclusion satisfactory, inasmuch as it implied a direct human agency in the late transaction; for he was too well acquainted with the devices of his craft to be misled by the hirsute traces just mentioned.

Nevertheless, this very accompaniment was the cause of a new perplexity to the Indian, for therewith were associated suspicions which he could in no wise reconcile with the occurrence in question. Salexis pondered and cogitated, and puzzled his brains to no effect; he was evidently in a dilemma—or as the Americans would term it—"a fix." There was but one alternative: yet it was seldom known to fail an Indian who has resource to it in difficulty, and Salexis adopted it.

Seating himself gravely in the very place where Ellen had been surprised, and taking his smoking apparatus from his pouch, he filled his pipe, struck fire with his knife-blade and a flint, into a piece of spunk, lighted it well, placed the morsel of

hair directly before him, folded his arms, and proceeded to hold a council with his reflections.

While thus engaged, in face and limb, Salexis showed no more life or intelligence than a block of wood, and the only means of ascertaining what was passing in his mind would have been by paying close attention to the manner in which he allowed the smoke to escape from the corner of his mouth.

At first he emitted it in dense and regular clouds, with a certain interval between each,—then he puffed it out quickly and with vehemence. Now he would come to an abrupt halt, and press his lips firmly together,—shutting up the passage, like the sudden closure of a steam-valve,—and no more smoke was forthcoming. Then again would recommence the slow, measured and full volume; evidently showing that the smoker had just overcome a knotty obstacle in his mental process, and was now travelling along once more with steadiness and deliberation.

Salexis did not complete his purpose with his pipe, however; for when it was exhausted, he took up the trophy, upon which his eyes had been fixed throughout, and regarded it narrowly for some time; then putting it up with an expletive of dissatisfaction and impatience, unusual with him, he dashed his fist violently against his

forehead, as if to smarten up his wits, drew the corners of his mouth more rigidly downward, and ground his teeth with vexation.

The contingency was almost too much for him, but when once fairly roused, he was as obstinate as a she-bear, and would not let any amount of difficulty intimidate or turn him from his course ; so he hugged his legs up under him pertinaciously, refilled his pipe, deepened his outward stolidity ; and concentrating his faculties more thoroughly upon the subject, once again became absorbed in his meditations.

The solution of the problem was not destined, however, to reward the labours of Salexis, at that time, and the smoking was brought to a close without producing the tranquillizing effect which generally accompanies the proceeding.

There was an evident mystery in the affair which he could not fathom ; a strong suspicion awakened in his mind that only involved him in deeper perplexity the more he dwelt upon it. Therefore he was fain, in the end, to let the matter rest, for the present, in the hope that further light would be thrown upon it, in the course of the scrutiny which he well knew would take place, upon the first bruit of the intelligence he now had to communicate.

The astounding discovery, that soon became known in every lodge of the Indian town, produced a tremendous sensation among the inhabitants. The scales of superstition, with which they had been blinded, fell immediately from their eyes, at this palpable evidence of an hostile attempt against the security of their stronghold; and they were forced to yield to the unflattering conviction that their defences had been penetrated, and two of their number abstracted with impunity from under their very noses.

This was particularly galling to a people, like the Mohawks, who, accustomed to indulge in the proud belief of their superiority over all other aboriginal nations, and jealous of any attempt to lessen their high reputation for vigilance and military success—feared lest the present incident might tend, in some measure, to weaken the prestige of their name, and induce others to undertake similar schemes of reprisal,—against which it would be extremely difficult to guard.

A numerous crowd gathered around the breach in the stockade, and fierce threats and exclamations of amazement at the audacity of the act were reiterated on every side. Like a hive invaded by a blow from an unseen hand, the whole community was up in arms and swarming about the outraged

quarter with wild notes of anger and alarm; like the bees also, each Mohawk possessed a weapon of offence, and longed to use it on an enemy.

Soon after, the great war-drum was heard sounding from the council house near the square, to call the fighting men together; the honour of the nation required that strenuous exertions should be made to effect the recovery of the lost females, and visit with their most summary vengeance the author of the mischief. Accordingly, the chiefs and principal warriors met together; prompt measures were at once adopted, and strong parties organized and equipped for instant service, and supplied with provision for a long march, so as to scour the surrounding woods to a considerable distance, should it be found necessary.

The place resounded with the hum of active preparation until the sun went down, at which time many of the *Braves* retired to rest, as they were to set out early on the following morning.

Now Salexis mentioned not a syllable about the additional signs he had discovered, for he knew very well that he himself could alone make use of them in identifying the individual to whom they referred. The riddle was half solved already, and it merely needed a further corroboration of his suspicions, in a certain direction, to satisfy his mind

entirely upon the subject ; and with this intent, he determined to put a question to his host, Otareha, that very evening.

It was not easy for him to do this without an interpreter, for, besides his own dialect, he could only speak the Canadian French, in which his communications were made with his quondam foes. Yet he had managed, with the assistance of Conrad, to pick up a little English, though imperfectly, and he was compelled to resort to it in the present instance, not wishing that a third pair of ears should hear what he said. Watching his opportunity, therefore, when none but his host was present, he strolled up to him, and said casually :

“ Friend Otarcha, 'spose me axem you leetle ting ; you ever see one man, me callem Bizon-ko-kok-has ; he Abenake Injin. You ever know dat man ? ”

The one addressed looked at his questioner as if perplexed with his incoherency, and 'ere he ventured a reply, asked in the same language, which he spoke tolerably well :

“ Do you mean, brother, him who make his escape from the war-party what brought you in here ? ”

“ Sartin, he dat one Injin man,” returned Salexis with alacrity.

“ Then I will know him pretty well,” was the

rejoinder. "He was save long ago from the burning by my poor Notokeel, who is gone astray. She wanted a son, you see, and so took him; but he was a lazy toad. He ran away after a bit, and nobody hear of him since until now. I always hate him 'cause he had a forked tongue!"

Salexis asked no more questions, he was sure of his ground now, every particular previously shrouded in obscurity and doubt now appeared to grow into distinctness, and bear the impress of truth; he therefore laid by in careful reserve the sum of his observations, until an opportunity offered in which to use them as a clue to the retreat of the English maiden.

By the first light of dawn the bands assembled, and departed upon their errand, each taking separate routes from the place of rendezvous without the stockade. That in which Conrad, Salexis, and Sewantus-walie were included, embarked in canoes, with a view of exploring the country adjacent to the lake and river into which it discharged.

With what altered feelings did our hero issue forth from those gates which he had entered so joyfully but a few days before! As the Israelite in his wanderings looked forward with rapture to the moment of his reaching the promised land,

so had he anticipated his arrival at this friendly asylum, during the long toilsome journey through the wilderness, where, hourly subjected to the vicissitudes of the season, and the danger of meeting with a barbarous adversary, no opportunity was afforded for rest to the foot, or tranquillity to the mind.

How ardently had he longed, more for his companion's sake than his own to reach the termination of such an anxious period. Once within the enclosed *bourg*, and under the protection of the powerful Mohawks, how had his old associations of country warmed within him, when he thought that all difficulties were now past, and that in a few days he would be once more with his people, from whom he had been so ruthlessly separated. Then also he could restore to her own land her in whom he had grown so deeply interested; who, in fact, was insensibly become to him as a second home of kindred association and endearing trust. Without being conscious of it at the time, Ellen had enwoven herself with his every thought, and he awoke from his pleasant dream to the conviction that all the affection once engrossed by his dear parents was now centered entirely in her—the light of his solitary world, the dove of his havenless career, that, like the bird of

old, had brought hope to his tempest-driven ark, with the promise of land.

Then had the blow fallen; crushing his pleasing fancies and scattering his bright anticipations in the dust; even when he supposed them most secure. What had happened unto her? Where had she been carried to? Who could have conceived and put in practice so cruel, and to all appearance, so profitless a design, and what fate was in reserve for his dear, good Ellen? were questions with which he tortured his mind through the hours of the two sleepless nights that succeeded her mysterious disappearance.

Now it was that he became impressed with the true character of his feelings for the friendless girl; now, when perhaps she was lost to him for ever, he awoke to a complete consciousness of the necessity to his happiness which her presence could alone supply, and felt that he loved her not merely with the frankness of a boyish attachment, but that there mingled with that love the depth and absorbing energy of a more matured passion.

The thought of her enwrapped him like a garment, which he could not put by; her image stood before each avenue of the sense, shutting out all other objects; or, if he saw them, they appeared but dimly through the aërial medium that floated

between. There was a burning, ceaseless whisper, haunting his soul with the name of Ellen, that filled him with one idea day and night, and like a despairing appeal, urged him to the rescue, and prohibited all repose.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## MOHAWKS AT FAULT—A GREAT RESOLVE.

DURING all this, the son of the great chief, Sewantuwali, preserved a remarkable coldness of demeanour which it appeared difficult to account for when we recall his previous enthusiasm, and readiness to sympathize with the strangers. Yet however open to such an accusation in point of manner, his conduct furnished no exception, in the main, to the general manifestation that took place upon the occasion alluded to. But he abstained from all reference to the event, otherwise than to obtain such information as a view of the locality where it had happened, could not in itself supply ; and after that time never again mentioned the name of the English girl, who, as the reader will remember, he had seen but once,

and then for a few moments only. Still his apathy could not have been real, else the close attention with which he listened to every suggestion that escaped the chief *Braves*, connected with the discovery of the missing parties, and the extreme care with which he made his arrangements before setting out in their quest, were at singular variance with such a want of feeling.

Those who knew the young Indian best, however, would have rejected a supposition of his indifference to be inferred from his manner and speech. Had any such been so inclined, they might have detected an effort of concealment in the latter, which showed that no ordinary struggle was going on within, and that they were used as a mere mask to baffle observation. Lofty, chivalrous, and susceptible of the liveliest impressions, it was not in the nature of Sewantus-wali to remain unmoved, when the dullest spirit in the community was excited into keenness, and fired with unwonted interest for the common weal, and when the coldest stoic of them all was restless with agitation. Then why should he have deemed it necessary to repress its utterance so entirely? We cannot say; some powerful motive was at bottom, no doubt, which, were it known, might have justified his reserve.

Of one thing, however, his associates were well

assured;—from this time forth, his laugh was less hearty and ready than it had previously been, and he became subject to fits of abstraction, which left a shade upon his brow it had not originally worn. The maidens remarked most the change in the young warrior, and more than one would sigh as he passed with a brief recognition, wondering what had happened to make him so proud and so stranger-like towards them ; and so much more grave than he was wont to be.

The morning upon which the parties began their march was cold, gusty, and lowering; and a shower of snow having fallen during the night, the ground was covered with it, to the depth of some inches, which tended to increase the cheerless and wintry character of the scene.

Conrad was just about to step into the canoe, which, under the conduct of Salexis, awaited him at the shore—from whence the others had already parted, and were buffeting the agitated waters—when Sewantus-wali appeared by his side, without previous intimation, and taking him by the hand, in his friendly and composed way, said briefly, “ We will travel together, brother.”

He then took his place with the rest in the craft, which was soon dancing and balancing on the waves that covered the sheet of water before them, in a

maze of moving lines, and dashed with a fierce hiss against it now under the influence of a bleak wind.

"Draw the *capôt* closer across thy breast, *mon ami*; the air is winter-like this morning," said Salexis to Conrad, observing that the latter was exposing himself to the blast, while he plied his paddle with the others.

"I feel it not," was the low reply; "the winter is in my heart, Salexis."

"Nevertheless," returned the other, in his peculiar vein, with a smile of encouragement to his young friend, "the fresh buds will come forth and the flowers, therefore be of good cheer. The summer will be sure to come to thy heart again and make it green!"

"You see how it is, brother," observed Sewantus-wali; "the clouds are thick overhead now, but they will soon clear away and leave the sky bright as before. You have a good hope left to make you strong. Those only without *that* have cause to be troubled. For such men there is but one way to act,—they must *harden their hearts to stone*, and so pass honourably along the track in which they travel."

The warrior spoke with the conviction of one who had proved, by experience, the efficacy of the stern philosophy his words supplied; and yet he was

evidently too young to have been the victim of a necessity so repugnant to a nature generous and noble as his own. The observations, however, made a deep impression upon Conrad, and were remembered long afterwards, in painful association with the speaker, when they were found to possess a significance and application which he was entirely ignorant of at the time.

The canoes, separating into two brigades, proceeded in opposite directions, after leaving the point of embarkation, with the intention of making the complete circuit of the lake, after which they were to meet together at the outlet, and examine the shore on either side of this channel, which terminated in the main river of the Onondagas.

The division to which Conrad belonged, skirting the southern shore, dispatched a messenger to give the alarm to the Oneidas, their confederates, whose chief castle was situated on a stream that ran into the lake, not far from the establishment of the Mohawks.

It would be useless to follow them in the prolonged search which was prosecuted for several days without intermission, even as far as Lake Ontario, or Cataracui, as it was then called, into which their course at length conducted them. It is sufficient to state that every exertion failed to detect any signs of the fugitives in that direction; and

although several camping places appeared along the shores, none of them bore evidence of recent use, and were supposed to have been left by a band of Onondagas, belonging to the council village of that nation, seated at a second lake on the same river, that was known to have passed upward about a month before.

If any still entertained an opinion that the route they pursued was the same which the enemy had taken in his retreat, it was in consequence of the discovery of a small bark box of curious workmanship, containing scraps of ribbon and materials for sewing, such as Indian women use, upon a rocky point jutting out into the great lake at the river's mouth, where it appeared to have been accidentally dropped but a short time previously; for its ornamented surface was quite dry, and unstained by exposure to the weather, which had recently become unsettled. Then the intention was to extend their exploration further along the coasts of that inland sea; but they were soon warned to desist from so hazardous a course by the daily accumulation of ice upon its borders, and the tempestuous character of the season, and ultimately were obliged to return homeward, dispirited and worn out with disappointment and fatigue.

Nothing further transpired to encourage the

belief that the secret of Ellen's fate would eventually be known. Day after day, some party came in, sullen and exasperated by a sense of failure, and each brought but one reply to the distracted Conrad. "We have not seen a mocassin track since the snow fell that was not our own," said they, "though we travelled in a grand round, so that no one could have crossed the forest without cutting it somewhere and leaving marks. The women and those who stole them away—if they be men indeed, and not spirits, as we begin to think—must have departed by the water-path alone."

Every one was disposed, after mature reflection, to admit this view of the case, in default of any evidence to the contrary; and although, upon producing the utensil alluded to, it was found impossible to identify it as having belonged to Notokeel, for there were several of a description exactly similar then in the place, there was little difficulty in deciding as to its fashion and manufacture, which were purely Mohawk; and this fact in itself sufficed to establish an hypothesis, where all else was idle speculation unsupported by any argument or testimony admissible to an Indian's mind.

The hard, cold winter set in. The streams were chained up in its grasp; the wind moaned through the leafless forest; the snow lay thick upon the

ground. There was a strange paralysis of life in the earth; everything upon its face possessed the stony aspect of a corpse, telling in silent language of the awful eloquence of death; of that solemn trance, in the presence of which we feel inclined to admonish the very heart that it beat not too loudly, and disturb the breathless slumber—

“The calm and immortal beauty, the deep and unending repose.”

Hope faded from its first glow in Conrad's heart, as the time wore on without bringing any tidings of his beloved; but he did not cease, on that account, his efforts in her behalf. He was a changed being from what he was, and had acquired new objects and new views; things hitherto uncared for now became his constant study, and what he had once considered as useless and unworthy of attention now claimed his strongest interest, and excited a vehement desire to make it subservient to his purposes.

He acquainted himself with the language common to the cantons of the Five Nations, and accompanied several hunting parties during the winter, in their excursions to the neighbouring mountains, to gain an insight into forest practices and inure himself to hardship, being determined,

by conforming to the Indian mode in every particular, to assimilate himself to the rude, hardy condition of those with whom he proposed thenceforth to associate; for he had abandoned all wish to return to his country.

What inducement did it hold out superior to that which retained him where he was, though so short a distance from its confines? He had neither a home, friends, nor prospects awaiting him there; and all he could expect, at the furthest, was a careless reception from such as owned no immediate interest in his welfare, and were divided by party feeling and prejudices of sect to a degree unprecedented in the history of the colony; whereas, among the natives, he was ever welcomed with honest frankness and hospitality, and, now that he had become somewhat habituated to their manners, and conversant with their peculiar policy, he began to look upon a residence in the woods with much less repugnance than he had hitherto done.

But his principal inducement to adopt it, for the present, was, the chance it afforded of obtaining some clue to the retreat of Ellen, and being the means of leading to her final rescue from captivity, or whatever condition she chanced to be in, if she were still alive; as, from the absence of all proofs to the contrary, he was ever disposed to believe.

This, of itself, was sufficient to check any intention he might have had, to proceed on to the British frontier, and made him resolve to leave no means untried, and allow no personal considerations to interfere with what he deemed a sacred duty—to accomplish her liberation. Indeed, so jealous was he of any opposing interest which might chance to spring up, that he forbore sending intelligence of his safety, to those whom he had known, at Albany; which might have easily been done, as the usual water communication between the latter place and Canada led directly through the country of the Mohawks—choosing rather that they should believe he had perished at the massacre at Schenectady, than that he should be persuaded, through their remonstrances, to abandon his enterprise and exchange the simple lot of the aborigine for the tempting luxuries of civilization.

During the winter, and accompanied by his two Indian friends, he visited the neighbouring tribes and made strict inquiry in every village, relative to the purpose in view, but without success; and every nook and portion of the territory belonging to the Indian confederacy, to the furthest limit of the Seneca country, on the shores of Lake Erie, was imprinted with the mark of his snow-shoes, following the others in a close, interminable trail.

Often the wild deer, in their winter lairs, started

with sudden alarm, as they sniffed up a scent that gave warning of the proximity of man, but, even while they hesitated to leave the beaten yard and plunge away into the deep and crusted snow, the offensive impression was wafted out of the keen air—the foresters had passed on. The ravenous wolf, in quest of the former, bent his lean body, like a bow, with bristling hair and a snarl of angry apprehension, as he was brought to a stand by the broad line drawn on the frozen surface between him and his prey: had it been a wall of stone higher than his leap it could not have withheld him more thoroughly. The monster crossed not that suspicious line, and slinked off in a new direction; his craving maw, palsied by a sight, which, for the time, drove the taste of venison entirely away.

The solitary trapper, visiting his line of snares, often came unexpectedly upon a tramped path, intersecting his beat, and counting quickly in his mind, “one, two, three,” as he examined the indications, wondered who the strangers were, and upon what errand they had traversed his secluded range: and when he returned to his cave-like resting place, he found the three already there waiting for him. Yet they made no stay; they smoked a friendly pipe and asked a few questions, or spent the night in his wigwam, perchance; but no sooner was it broad light in the woods again, than their feet were

in the snowshoe-lacings, treading the silent glades, and the eye that followed their lessening forms soon beheld them disappear—leaving no token of their brief visit, save two fresh tracks from the forest to the trapper's doorway.

The youthful traveller, thrilled with sensations such as he had never yet experienced, when, in the course of his wanderings, he saw, even as the first European, Father Hennepin, the incomparable Niagara. As in the immediate presence of the Eternal, the travellers bowed down in humble reverence, before the grand cadence of waters—where splendour, sublimity, and power, all that creates rapture and awe in the soul, are seated, as on a throne, encompassed with clouds and thunder. The Indians muttered, in a subdued voice, the word O-ni-aw-ga-rah!\* and stood in rigid attitudes of silent adoration; Conrad poured out his emotions in a spontaneous prayer, with his knees to the quivering rock and his hands grasping the soil. When he departed from that forest sanctuary and pursued his weary way, he felt himself refreshed and glowing with new ardour to prosecute his design; for the echo which the voice of the cataract left in his ear seemed to breathe a promise of success, in answer to his appeal; so with strong assurance,

\* The aboriginal name, which means—The thunder of water.

he pushed on his toilsome exploration, but without avail.

When the snow melted, Conrad, true to his purpose, again set out with Salexis alone, and spent a year among the tribes of the Abenake and their allies, and traversed a wide tract of country; but although he saw many prisoners, and heard of more that had been taken during the recent border warfare, none, either from sight or description, proved to be those of whom he was in quest.

Salexis never failed to add, to the usual inquiry, one concerning Bizon-ko-kok-has; but he allowed not his companion to believe that it bore any relation to the first, for he had sufficient acuteness and delicacy, to see that it would only add to the poignancy of the sorrow Conrad already felt, for the loss of Ellen, did he know in whose power he had reason to conclude she was: and the former supposed the question arose merely from a natural desire, on the part of Salexis, to learn what had become of one who had so strangely crossed his path since the time of his escape from the outlying Mohawks.

But on this point, also, no intelligence was forthcoming, for they found that the conjurer had not been seen in any of his usual haunts subsequently to that period.

With no brightening prospect to cheer him on,

or any probability of his being a single step further advanced to requite his labours in the cause in which he was engaged—Conrad obeyed the inward voice that still whispered to him an unforgotten name, and retraced his steps to the country of the Iroquois, with the faithful Saalexis; who would not part from him to whom he was bound by gratitude, and personal attachment, and to whom he was furthermore impelled to offer his services, from a feeling of interest in the result. The simple-minded hunter had, consequently, divided among his relatives what little property he possessed, being chiefly that left in charge of the missionary at Madawaska, which he had since reclaimed—and bidding his people a solemn farewell, he departed with Conrad, with the determination of devoting himself, thenceforth, entirely to the purpose of his friend.

## CHAPTER IX.

## SIGNS OF THE TRAIL.

ONCE more, the wanderers drew nigh to the gate of the Mohawk village, in the quiet stillness of an autumn evening, ere the leaves had fallen. Everything seemed unchanged, as though they had only left it the day before, and the smoke from the lodges streamed up into the blue air, with a lazy motion, suggesting pleasant pictures of domestic life, with its cheerful intercourse, and serene enjoyments, to those coming in from a long forest track.

The scene, and the time operated powerfully upon the sensitive Conrad, and awakened emotions, which he strove in vain to subdue; his melancholy heart became suddenly surcharged, and telling his companion that he would follow after him, he sat

down by the shore of the lake, and gave free vent to tears.

There are times when Memory, with her despotic hand, selects her materials from the dark moiety of our experience. Then do we read, as in a chronicle, the sad record of our past lives, telling on each page of some thwarted expectation, some bitter lament, some cankering regret. They pass before us, in forlorn review, those spectres of long-cherished fallacies, soft illusive dreams which, like dissolving views, faded gradually out, into hard sterility, in "the light of common day." Thus was it then with Conrad, and blessed were his tears; for in the dreary catalogue was nothing vile or self-reproaching to arm reflection with a keener pang. He felt sorrow, and deep despondency, it is true, but no remorse; the barb of an accusing conscience rankled not there.

Again the old household fancies were busy with him; again he laid his parents in the grave. The woe of his short existence was summed up, and compressed in that one reverie; and among all its forms and phases, mingled the image of her whose reign was like those ideal dreams, joy-inspiring, and brief, whose advent had been to him as unexpected as her disappearance was inexplicable; constituting his latest, and most enduring sorrow. The

mild aspect of Nature, in that most hallowed hour, was replete with sympathies, and recollections of departed things, which he could not resist, so, yielding to the impulse, the homeless one threw himself on her maternal breast, and wept long and passionately, in the sickness of hope deferred.

An Indian sauntered along, with folded arms, and thoughtful brow, in the shade of the trees that fringed the verge of the forest, by the quiet lake ; his form was very noble, and his bearing, as he moved silently on, denoted the easy grace peculiar to the natural man. Plunged in deep distraction, he scarcely noticed any object in his course, but kept his eyes fixed intently upon the ground ; all at once, however, pausing abruptly, he looked up to the sky, with a painful and imploring expression, while his lips moved as in prayer. Were the act devotional, the communion it implied was brief ; for in a moment, he resumed his former position, and then discovered Conrad a few paces in front, and seated with his back half-turned towards him. The Indian gave a slight start, as he recognised the fair-haired youth, and composing his features, until all traces of feeling were obliterated, he advanced quickly towards the new-comer, and reached his side before his proximity was suspected.

A shadow appeared to flit before Conrad, and put

to fight his brooding fancies, and then, looking up, he beheld Sewantus-wali ; for he it was who stood regarding him with a placid and benign smile.

"My brother is welcome to the Mohawk country," said the latter, in his sententious way, "we have been looking for him many days. His place is unoccupied at the lodge-fire."

"Thanks, good Sewantus," returned Conrad, who, by this time had adopted the mode of address usual to the natives ; presenting his hand to his former and esteemed comrade, who shook it with the hearty frankness of a European. "Glad am I to see you once more ; 'tis the only pleasure remaining to your brother now, for he has had a weary and unprofitable task of it, since he parted from hence. There does not shine a single light over head to give him comfort in these days !"

"Then he brings no good tidings from the sunrise," rejoined the Indian ; looking with strong interest into the face of Conrad, to discover if his conclusion were just."

"I have no tidings of any kind, not a single token on which to rest any further chance of recovering the one I seek. We travelled far summer and winter, and visited strange villages, and asked questions of all, but to no purpose. Now," added Conrad, turning his head away, and speaking in broken accents ; "now does my mind misgive

me, at last; *she* must surely be dead, else something would have been heard of her, ere this time."

"The Lily of the Waters is not dead;" said the other, in a low emphatic voice, and with a look of assurance that struck his listener with surprise.

"How is this?" he quickly demanded; "do you know aught about her; speak at once. I am in agony, Sewantus."

"Peace be with you, my brother," was the calm reply; "my heart speaks in my words. They are true, and not spoken by a tongue that is forked; listen to them:—

"It may be about a moon since that many of our chief men went to a meeting by the side of the great Onondaga council-fire, and Sewantus went with them. There came also deputies from the Nations, to smoke the calumet with the Agonnonseonne; and so I spoke to a Showano; one of a conquered people who hunt under the evening sun. Now this man had travelled in a crooked path, and talked with the Nations by the frost, even beyond the big lakes of fresh water that lie there. And he told me that lately there had tarried, among the Pottowattomies, a solitary kind of man, who had with him two women, one of which was young and softly fashioned, and of the skin-colour of the Palefaces. The Showano said, moreover, that this man was accounted as a man without a tribe, whose

memory had gone astray. He travelled from village to village, in the course of the sun, and departed as he came, no one could tell whither; and this was all he knew. Now, when I heard this story, my heart leaped with joy on your account. I said to myself—for very certain the trail of the thief is found out at last. I would have gone upon it straight, if the affairs of my people had not kept me back. So I thought it best to wait until you returned from the sunrise, that we might set off together. The way is long, my brother, and difficult, and full of danger. It is good to call one's senses together before we go upon a trail without a track. An unlucky *Brave* loses honour; that is all."

"God bless you, Sewantus, you have brought me to life again!" exclaimed Conrad, starting to his feet at once, every nerve thrilling with excitement at the cheering news. "Let us lose no time in commencing the pursuit. It must be them indeed, as you say. We will go together, with Salexis; would that we had lingered less among the Eastern tribes, then perhaps we might have reached the captives, and rescued them before now!"

"My brother could have done it, for certain, suppose he had wings," observed Sewantus, quietly; "but not being like a bird, his mocassins will have

to print the moss for some moons, I think, before he can come to that far country I spoke about. The island\* upon which the red people dwell is very large. I never heard of a man who could look you in the face and say that he had stood on its edge and discovered where the sun went to when it sits."

"Can it be so distant where we have to go?" inquired Conrad, somewhat cooled in his enthusiasm by these words, and turning anxiously towards his companion—

"Listen," was the reply. "My father, one time, went a long journey towards the evening. He was curious to find out every thing that is, you see—not being entirely grown to a man—and I have heard him tell what he saw, and what he did, in that time.

"He spoke of Nations, many and strong, who dwelt under wigwams of painted skins, and never went to sleep without their hands upon the war club and the spear. Likewise he remembered plains of a surprising size, upon which you could march for a whole moon without meeting with a tree or a man; and where the stars rose up and flew over, and dropped down again, without seeing water.

\* It is a remarkable fact, that America is believed to be an island by several Indian tribes.

“He said also that grass grew there, as in the clearings of white people, and that the *eneuh-en*, which is a creature larger than a moose, and wild to look at, having long hair,—was as thick as pigeons in the berry season,—upon those plains, where they covered the whole ground in herds so numerous that the Great Spirit only could count them; and them the people hunted and fed upon, who stopped there.

“Now, you see, I believe what my father says; therefore the path before us is long.”

Conrad was not inclined to be much disheartened by this account of the difficulties in reserve for him, somewhat vague and exaggerated, it must be confessed, but strictly in accordance with the belief then prevalent with the natives, of the illimitable extent of those vast western regions into which, with a few recent exceptions, even the enterprising Europeans had not yet penetrated to any considerable degree. He was devoured with eagerness to act upon the new impulse he had received; for it seemed to him as though fate began to relax from her frown, and smile auspiciously upon his labours. Already, in fancy, his gentle and fay-like Ellen was restored to his side, beaming with grace and happiness, and repaying him for his solicitude with a look of love.

In such a mood who could weigh, with calm deliberation, the chances and liabilities of the scheme

now proposed; or listen to the cold suggestions of prudence? Surely not Conrad, who had so seldom, of late, known any pleasurable feeling. It was very hard for him to brook delay; and although advised by his associates to take a good rest before making a fresh demand upon his strength, he would only consent, after long persuasion and remonstrance to remain inactive for a few days, during which the necessary preparations for a long journey were carefully made; then, strong of frame, and inured to bear without injury privation and fatigue, and elated with fresh buoyancy of spirits, he took his departure—with his two trusty friends—for that *terra incognita* which, in the figurative phraseology of the Indians, was known by the general designation of “the land of the setting sun.” He had sworn never to forsake the friendless Ellen, and he kept his word!

## CHAPTER X.

## THE SCENE CHANGES.

Six years had passed away since the events now recorded, and those who bade good speed to the departing travellers, absorbed their own cares, and beguiled by new impressions, began to divest themselves of any further concern about the absent ones; or if at times a thought was given to the three friends who had left them on so uncertain an errand, it was only to wonder at their long delay, and what had befallen them in the interim; and when a transient feeling shaped itself in words, and the name of the young Mohawk *Brave* was repeated around the evening fire, or allusion was made to the fair-haired Yengie and his Abenake friend, the wise ones would shake their heads

mysteriously, and remark: "That their trail was very long, and that there were dangers in the path, and it might be they would return no more." Then, doubtless, there would arise regret for a moment, in some more gentle heart, for the loss of those young faces, and the honest warrior who was above fear; but for a moment only.

Each had his present life, his hopes, his instincts to enjoy; why should they be o'ercast by a recollection that brought regret? To think was a wearying thing, and nothing could recal the past, or bring back departed friends, therefore it was useless to repine. So they floated on, with the current, and contracted other friendships, until at length the very features of the absent were gradually obliterated from the minds of the inhabitants of the Indian village, or only recalled occasionally, in the fleeting passage of a dream.

Thus, for all our striving with heart and arm, do we pass away, too surely, from the memory of the living world.

Six years! what an iota of time, and yet, what a cycle in a single life! A throb of that great wave that wafts us on to the illimitable strand. In the vast lapse of centuries, but as a single grain to the sphere, and yet affording scope enough for "all human kind" to prove the failure of their little plan, the insufficiency of life, the inward

pining for the *beyond*; the certainty of that dread blow, which at the appointed time shall sweep them down.

Six years; with its mutations, its sunshine and storm, its flowers and harvests—its withered leaves.

The old sank deeper still in their dreamy decline, babbling of those better times, "the days when they were young," and half unconscious, in their mental twilight, of the significant tokens of decay. The grandchild, spurred by his impressions, sprang up with a shout, affirming that the times were glorious, and, but for one thing, he would be content. The years were slow in passing, he thought, and he longed for the stature and independence of a man.

Still, with the same even pace, the round world rolled on through the void, and its swarming myriads still, as ever, filled the land with strife, and died betimes; and the song of the mother-world was their requiem as it rolled on.

There were two circles drawn upon it, by the finger of God, in the beginning, who sealed them with eternal ice, and said: "Let there be peace within." And these are the two extremities of the north and south, where life is not, and here, on all the broad circumference alone, the angels found an unpolluted realm, and folded their wings

in reverence before the sanctuaries of the power that upholds all things on the whirling sphere. Intrude not on those solitudes, presumptuous man : thy foot is upon holy ground !

The sun shone brightly over the landscape, which was of a character not uncommon to the region where we would transport the imagination of the reader ; though it was one seldom or ever met with elsewhere, except at similar altitudes, in other parts of the globe, as the steppes of Asia or the pampas of South America.

A beautiful valley covered with soft grass and enamelled with brilliant flowers, lay spread out, like a gorgeous carpet, to an extent of several miles, and shut in, apparently, by an almost unbroken wall of precipices on every side but one. This tract of verdure was sprinkled with groves of cotton-wood and box-elder, indicating the course of a stream that ran winding through its centre, and found its exit by a narrow chasm in the mural cliff towards the south-east.

At the entrance of the valley, situated a little to the left of the water-course, and where the rocky barrier, (which in some places arose to the height of one hundred and fifty feet), blended insensibly with the soil—the land rose with a gentle ascent, from the level of the lower bottom ; and in the midst, and almost equidistant from the boundary

of precipice, on either side, a mound of earth, of a conical form, and covered with wild sage, and other shrubs, indigenous to the climate, reared itself above every other object in its vicinity, as if to overlook the secluded haunt at its foot and dispute the passage of the grand portal in which it stood. The top of the mound was flat and bare, and upon it was a pile of stones.

It was a quiet place; the sunbeams glittered softly on the grass and flowers, and the breeze was laden with their fragrance, as it lingered there; and ever and anon, some roving insect would dart past with a joyous hum, bent upon enjoyment, and anxious to make the most of the hour.

Yet even here there had been, at no distant time, strife, and agony, and death; for at the base of the isolated hill, half veiled by clumps of sage and grass, are seen occasionally fragments of human skeletons protruding in glistening whiteness, from the herbage where they had been left by the wolves, that had disjoined and picked them clean.

And should you examine the ground closely, you may discover many hoof-prints, dashed deeply in the soft alluvion, and perchance, a broken arrow, with its stone-head half-buried

therein, telling of some struggle that took place: not long ago, in this now solitary glen.

Let us ascend the step side of the mound that divides in two, the inclined plain leading to the fertile level beneath, and visit the cairn upon its summit. It consists of a few stones placed there, evidently by the hand of man, and with great care; being intended, no doubt, to commemorate a victory at the expense of those mouldering bones below; or piled, perchance, by the victors, in honour of their companions who fell in the fray, and lay buried there. In very sooth, you might ride far, and not find a more befitting place for the fallen brave. Sublime and vast was the spectacle that presented itself to view from the top of this eminence, which might be termed the watch tower of the valley.

On all sides, behold, a wide indefinite expanse of prairie, without a rock or tree to break its uniformity, and spreading like a boundless sea of verdure from the horizon to the very edge of the steeps that encompassed the vale, which was scooped out, like a deep trench in the level plain. An expanse, boundless, save by the sky, except to the west and north, where, above a tract of gentle undulations and a dark belt of hills, a chain of mountains hung, ridge over ridge, and peak after

peak, higher than the clouds and piercing the serene sky with their snowy crests, which appeared vague and ghost-like in the glare of noon-day.

This stupendous fabric reared its aerial pinnacles in every form that fancy could suggest or the eye of a painter desire, but being afar and refracted by the sun's rays, it seemed remarkably unreal, and like an assemblage of clouds upon the verge of the horizon; and yet, when the evening luminary sunk behind the mighty barrier, it projected from its loftiest peak a great shadow, that reached beyond the valley and veiled its flowery lawns in twilight, long ere the rest of the landscape was involved in gloom.

It was the spine of the North American continent; that colossal wall which divides the waters flowing east and west into the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

The wind rushed in a torrent over the wide plains, and whistled shrilly among the stones on the solitary hill: but in the bottom below, the foliage trembled only with a playful breeze under the shelter of the boundary cliffs; and from the top of the mound is observed a feature in the prospect, not visible at the foot of the hill.

Beyond the first grove of cotton-wood, to the furthest limit of the alluvial lands, traceable by the

eye, was one dense mass of buffalo, covering the meadows on each side of the river, in innumerable swarms, almost to the foot of the precipices, and grazing quietly upon the fat pasturage the bottoms supplied. The living throng darkened the whole surface of the ground, but, save by an occasional low murmur that mingled with the air, no sound betrayed the vicinity of such a multitude when screened by the intermediate grove.

A spur of rock, from the border of the upper prairie projected, in one place, out into the valley ; and upon this was gathered a troop of hungry wolves, that peered with fierce eyes over the steep, at the feeding herd, and licked their yearning jaws in fond anticipation of a repast, whilst they took strange counsel together with the intent of inveigling the unconscious buffalo into their toils.

Suddenly these gaunt marauders start with alarm ; their quick instinct warns them of an enemy, and with a keen glance backward over the open plain, they slink off to their hiding places in the rocks.

The grand prairie is no longer a lifeless waste ; a single horseman scours over it with the speed of the desert wind, his robe fluttering, his body inclined forward, while the hoofs of his charger

seem to paw the air, so quickly and buoyantly they spring from the short grass in its antelope-like career.

Skirting the edge of the cliffs in a wide curve, until he reached the spot where they subsided in the plain, the horseman directed his course towards the mound before-mentioned, and descending the inclined plain at full speed, arrived at its base. Here he checked his steed, leaped to the ground, and stepping scrupulously between the scattered bones, ascended the hill, followed by the docile quadruped until he reached the level space and the pile of stones, when, taking from his belt a fresh scalp, he laid it gravely thereon and stood musingly beside it, leaning on a spear.

He was a fair sample of the red cavalier of the Far West in his fantastic war array; tall and well-proportioned, and of a proud and martial bearing. His face was strongly aquiline and rigid, expressing sternness and resolution, not unmixed with scorn. This uncommon severity, moreover, lost nothing from the gleam of two small eyes, piercing as those of a hawk, but at the same time cold and inscrutable, like armed men prepared for opposition, to whom confidence gives repose.

His body was uncovered to the waist, around which was a centre cloth of the fine skin of the mountain sheep, carefully dressed and ornamented

with a border of died quills of the porcupine, and painted figures of men and animals, rudely drawn. Below this he wore tight leggins of antelope skin, similarly adorned, and edged with a long fringe of black hair, taken from his enemies in battle, which swept the ground at the heels of his embroidered mocassins. Around his neck was hung that favourite ornament of a prairie hunter, a collar garnished with the talons of the grizzly bear, interwoven with the fur of the stoat, or North American ermine, and over one shoulder was thrown a long cloak or mantle, formed of the skin of a young buffalo, dressed with the hair on, and embellished on the inner side with painted representations of his exploits in war. But the most conspicuous part of his costume was a magnificent head-dress of eagle's feathers, extending from the crown of his head, where it was fastened between two small buffalo horns, beautifully polished, backward almost to the feet, in a long, fan-like plume. His arms consisted of a panther-skin quiver of arrows, slung by a band that passed over the shoulder and across the breast, and was likewise adorned with scalplocks and quills. Beside it was a short bow, made of bone, in several pieces, and strengthened on the back with tough sinews, of which the string was also fabricated in three twisted plies. On his left arm, by an embroidered loop, hung a small shield

of buffalo hide, hardened by smoking, and rendered stiff with glue, until it would turn off the point of an arrow, and baffle the strongest lance-thrust, though delivered in full career. This weapon of defence was edged with antelope hoofs, and fringed with coloured hair. At the wrist of the warrior was fastened a bull-hide whip, and he bore in his hand a slender lance, upwards of ten feet in length from end to end, the shaft of which was of tough ash, and the blade of volcanic flint, sharp as a razor on the edges. This weapon was tufted with eagles' quills at certain places along the shaft, which gave it the appearance of being winged.

We must not fail to mention also the medicine-pouch of ermine bedecked with woodpeckers' beaks and hairs from the white buffalo, which hung on his breast, and contained his totem or charm, and a pair of carved ear-rings of pearl shell, from the coast of the western sea. The outfit, besides, comprised a knife of copper, in an embroidered sheath, and a war-club of wood, armed with spikes of bone, that dangled by a thong from the shoulder of his horse. The body of the latter was half concealed by a showy caparison, bedizened in like manner with quill work and hair, while a crest of war-cagle's feathers interwoven with the mane, and the care bestowed upon its condition, sufficiently attested the pride and partiality of its master. But

this paraphernalia, gay as it seemed at a glance, had borne the brunt of many a rough skirmish and bison chase, and in several places showed stains of hard service and recent travel.

The Indian's face, moreover, was covered with a black pigment, the ensign of grief; and as he stood, gazing fixedly upon the monumental pile, the sternness of his features relaxed, and gave place to an expression of softness, while, at the same time, the proud lip grew tremulous, and the sharp eye became dim.

Some powerful emotion had mastered the soul of the savage, apathetic and impervious as he seemed. He was a stoic, both by nature and intention, yet the barrier of his strong pride was swept down in an instant by the sorrow that oppressed him then, and impelled by a feeling of tenderness, he cast his right arm affectionately round the neck of his horse, while the latter, as if conscious of the appeal, stretched its neck forward, and rubbed its nose gently against his shoulder. The Indian acknowledged the mute caress by calling it by its soft, familiar name, and buried his face in the hair of its flowing mane.

The weakness soon passed off however, and the warrior, raising himself up from his leaning posture, addressed the creature in low and kindly tones, while his features resumed their original

hardness of outline as he patted its glistening side. All of a sudden the horse pricked up its ears and started with a fretful snort, and, guided by its eye, the Indian noticed for the first time the herds of buffalo that covered the extensive bottoms of the valley beneath; he came not there to hunt that day.

What attracted his immediate attention, however, and had alarmed his sagacious steed, was the circumstance that this immense mass was then in rapid motion, impelled by some unseen cause towards the entrance of the valley; for the rearward ranks, closing furiously upon those in front, were causing a general commotion in the herd, which thoroughly aroused, was pressing and thundering down in the direction of the mound, to make its escape into the open prairie beyond.

## CHAPTER XI.

OLD FRIENDS IN A NEW DRESS—A PRAIRIE "BRAVE" TELLS  
HOW HIS SCALP WAS LOST AND WON.

THE first impulse of the Indian was to vault on his horse, the second to fly, the third, impressed in scorn on his lineaments, to remain and brave the emergency.

The elements of his stubborn nature were awakened at the thought of peril; he was in no humour just then to yield an inch, or turn his back upon a foe; so he secured his seat on horseback, drew up behind the cairn, unslung his bow, and plucked several arrows from his sheaf.

It was a curious and exciting spectacle to behold the dark host as it rolled onward like a billowy sea towards the pass, shaking the ground with its tread,

and making the air resound with bellowings and shrill cries.

Hemmed in within the narrow limits of the valley, the bisons dashed madly upon each other, and with tails erect, went crashing through every obstacle in their way. The river and groves were filled with their dusky bodies, which speedily covered each available foot of soil between the steeps, to the entrance of the valley, where the fierce tide divided on reaching the foot of the mound, and rushed up the slope, in two streams, to the vast plateau above, where the shaggy troops dispersed and became hidden in a cloud of dust.

The scene of wild confusion that took place, during the passage of the herd at this point, baffles all description, for urged by the irresistible pressure of countless numbers behind, the bisons were driven, with terrific force, against the insulated hill that stood directly in their path. There, they rolled, and struggled, and plunged among the scattered bones, overwhelmed by the succeeding files. And thus the wild multitude swept past, with a roar, and a rattling of horns, as the bulis fought and gored one another, and threw the soft vegetable loam high into the air.

At length, the greater portion of the herd had made its way to the upper level, and the remainder were following swiftly, but less densely, in the same

track, when there issued beyond the grove of cotton-wood, four horsemen, intermingled with the retreating buffaloes; and in close pursuit of such as they had singled out for their prey.

One, mounted, on a noble steed, rode by the side of a cow, balancing to and fro, as he galloped, a long spear, which, at every favourable opportunity, he darted into the chest of the bison, covering it with blood, while the other hunters discharged arrow after arrow at their selected mark, without missing a shot.

The foremost of the band, when within a short distance of the mound, directed a fatal lunge with his spear, which brought the game to a sudden halt; its vitals were pierced; it fell over, struggled an instant, and was dead. By this time, also, the others had secured each his prize, and dismounting from their horses, they commenced the work of cutting up the carcasses with a readiness, and celerity, that announced a thorough acquaintance with prairie craft. This operation ended, and the choice parts, the skin, hump, and tongue packed up for carriage, the hunters began to look about them, and notice the remarkable appearance of the ravine, in which they were, having been too busily occupied to do so before. Then it was that one of them, chancing to look up at the singular hill, directly in front, discovered, with an excla-

mation, the solitary horseman upon its summit, who, erect and motionless, might have been mistaken for a statue, in any other place, so little did either man or steed seem to be concerned by what was taking place below.

The strangers beheld, with no little wonder, this silent witness of their proceedings, and made the signs which signified—friendship, and Dakota, in the gesture-language of the prairies.\* Upon this, the other deigned to leave his elevated perch, and descending the steep face of the hill, on his sure-footed charger, he advanced directly towards the hunters. One of these, a young and handsome man, with a fair complexion, slight beard, and light, curling hair, stepped forth to meet him. He was dressed in a tunic of fine deer-skin, with a Canadian sash wound turbanwise round his head, from which its fringed ends hung gracefully down.

\* The numerous tribes that occupy the great central regions of North America, speaking, as they do, so many different dialects, which render an intercourse with one another difficult, if not impossible, have adopted a sort of telegraphic method which, consisting chiefly of signals made by certain positions and movements of the hand, supplies, to a limited extent, the purposes of an oral language, whenever they chance to meet in the course of their wanderings. The sign for Dakota is made by passing the hand across the throat; a gesture especially significant of the phrase, which means—Throat-cutter.

"We are friends to the Daheota," said he, in the language of the great family of the people, properly so called, though better known by the name of *Sioux*, as the French termed them; "our hearts are wide open to every one who speaks at that council fire. It is not good to be strangers upon the prairie."

"My brother is right," was the ready reply of the Indian, in the same language; and, putting aside his weapons, he leaped from his horse with a familiar though not undignified action, adding: "It is not good, as he says, to be strangers when the heart is friendly. Men are not bears to be solitary. The heart of Tatunga is dark; but there is no war in it now."

"My brother is troubled in his spirit," remarked another of the party, a noble looking young Indian, in the simple costume of the plains, with a face and form like that of an antique statue; "why does he wear the black paint on his face, or travel with it in this solitary place?"

"Why do my brothers wear masks upon theirs?" demanded the other, in return, with a quick glance at two of the party; "I never saw the friends of the Daheotas yet, with hair upon their chins."

At this sally, another individual who had a beard, a tall, black haired hunter, past the middle age, and of a frank and ruddy aspect, gave a ringing

yell that sent the strange warrior backward with a bound, and made him seize his bow with an instinctive clutch. But he recovered from his momentary suspicion, as soon as he was given to understand that what he took for a signal of hostility, was only caused by merriment at his observation, as those to whom it applied belonged to a great and powerful race of white people that lived towards the sunrise, and had hair upon their faces.

The stranger then said : That he believed them ; but that none could be greater or stronger than the Dahcotas, who were the bravest of nations. As for the Scarred-Arms and Upsacoras, they were dogs. He had heard something, too, of white bearded men, but they were far towards the summer—meaning the south ; he never knew there were any such people by the sunrise. But he had been told many times, of a belt of tribes in those parts, terrible for war, and a scourge to the Shawans ; that the most famous of these was the Mengwe, or Bears. He would go far, he said, to look at one of those *Braves*.

Here an Indian, the last of the hunters, an honest vizaged veteran, who had not yet spoken, came forward, and placing his hand familiarly upon the shoulder of the young native that bore no faint resemblance to the Grecian Apollo, remarked quietly,

to the speaker: "Thou dost not need to go any further for that, son of the Daheota. Behold one of that people."

The strange Indian gazed with evident interest at the figure of the one to whom his attention was thus forcibly directed, and who did, in truth, present a flattering specimen of the martial race, the renown of which had penetrated to this remote region, where, as yet, the name of the Saxon or Norman was an unimportant sound.

The Daheota, for such he was, threw aside his reserve, forthwith, and was soon upon a footing of friendly intimacy with his new acquaintance; a consummation promoted, in no slight degree, by a present of tobacco from the eldest of the party—the tall bearded man, before spoken of, who made him accept a supply of the darling weed, which was worth its weight in gold in that mountain land.

Kindling a fire, the hunters were soon engaged in cooking some precious morsels taken from the buffalo they had slain, while the Daheota looked quietly on, puffing with vast satisfaction great clouds of smoke from a red calumet belonging to one of the party.

When the food was ready, they invited him to partake of it with them; but he declined, saying, that he was making a fast to the Great Spirit that

day ; upon which they did not urge him further, but fell to, without delay, like men who had travelled far in the prairie wind, and were only lately arrived in the buffalo range.

“My brother finds that pipe stuff to his liking ; is it not so ?” inquired Couteau-croche—for we hope that the reader has been able to recognize all our old friends ere this.

“It is very good,” returned the other. “It makes Tatunga’s heart bound like a bird in his side. It dissolves away his sorrow.”

“Then my brother may tell why he wears the black paint, and why he fasts, and what the stones yonder signify. Our ears are very patient, but overwatching makes weary the toughest *Brave*.”

“Listen,” was the abrupt reply, as the Dahcota, roused at the hint, sprang from the ground with a leap, and stood before them in the attitude of the warrior when about to recount a feat of arms. He made an imperious gesture with his hand, and his eyes flashed as he spoke.

“Listen, strangers. The Dahcota loves war. He thirsts for the blood of his enemies. He scalps them in his dreams. He leaves nothing but their bones to bleach in the screaming hurricanes of the plains !

“Three moons since, the Dahcotas travelled and struck upon a trail which led them into this valley,

where they found a war-band of the accursed Scarred Arms,\* our mortal foes. What did we do then? We strung our buffalo bows, and sent a shower of arrows whistling among them, which made them drop, many of them like hollow pines in a storm. Then shouting the war-cry of our nation, we grasped our clubs and rushed in.

"They fought well too, for Scarred Arms, with their spears and maces; at length my brother, who did battle at my side, was swept down by a blow and fell down from his medicine-dog,† crushed before me.

"I flew to his aid. I raised my mace against his enemy—the wily serpent! He twisted out of its reach, and by the red right hand of my father's father! before I could withdraw it again, I was lying at my brother's side—I, Tatunga—struck dead also, as he believed, by the knots of his war club!

"Well. I awoke, as I thought, in the blessed plains above; but I was a fool, for I was only by the sage tufts of the valley, and a star was out and the moon, but no live thing near me; no, not one.

"I knew not where I was, until I touched with

\* Probably the Chyennes and Gros Ventres of the present day, who are accustomed to mark themselves with several transversal scars on the left arm.

† Horse.

my fingers the face of my brother, and then the recollection of the battle came back to me, and how he was struck down. He will also awake, I said; but he never did.

“My face was stiff with clotted blood. My teeth chattered with cold. My skull was like a lump of ice with the brains within. I put my hand to my head. What did I find there? Nothing. I had lost my scalp and was alive. I, Tatunga!

“It was very wonderful, but the thought of that made me hot, hot, until what was ice seemed fire, and my eyes jumped in their sockets like swamp-lights, and I crawled by their blaze among the dead bodies, all the time in a burning dream: all the night long.

“My memory came once again, and, lo! I was in my own lodge. Then they told me that upon their return the day after the fight, from the trail of the routed Scarred Arms, they found me raving among the dead warriors, with the greedy chunka monets,\* those lean travelling dogs, looking on, impatient for the feast to begin.

“Then, gathering up their *Braves*, they buried them on the bluff here, by the battle-ground, and heaped over them a pile of stones, to preserve them

\* Wolves.

from the beasts of the wild. The enemy they left where they fell, among the herbs of the valley, Look! they are rotting there still, bone by bone; but who shall tell a Scarred Arm by his bones?"

Here the speaker, with a look of irony, pointed to the scattered fragments which, scarcely visible as they were, among the tufts of grass, had not attracted the notice of the rest though in their immediate vicinity. Now, however, they made an eager, but silent examination of the mournful relics, and then gravely resumed their seats by the fire, when the Daheota went on,

"Now the flesh wound healed up again, but Tatunga was in pain. The *Braves* laughed at him, as a man without reputation who had lost his scalp. Therefore he prayed to Wakonda—the Master of life—for strength; and said to himself that he would never rest until he had won it back.

"And journeying by the country of the Scarred Arms, he met a man; he remembered him well. It was him who had killed his brother in the fight and stolen away his honour. So he levelled his spear, and cried his war-cry, and rushed on.

"But the man said unto him. Why should *Braves* fight when they are tired? Let us rest under the shade, and when we are refreshed we will

do battle upon the prairie.' And Tatunga was well pleased, and said, 'be it so.'

"Tying their medicine-dogs to a tree, therefore, the two men sat down together by a fountain shaded from the noon,—the two men that were enemies.

"Now a thought came into Tatunga's head, and he spoke.

"'Son of the Scarred Arm,' said he, 'this will decide the matter,' and taking up a small pebble from the well, he covered it with his palms. 'Whoever wins this game shall have power over the other, to scalp or to kill. If you have the good luck on your side, take my head also, you have already the hair.'

"And he agreed, and they played the game of the hand,\* head against scalp, and the Great Spirit was good to Tatunga, and he won.

"Then drawing his knife, he told the other to kneel down, and he cut the scalp clean from his

\* This is a favourite pastime among the western tribes, and consists in enclosing a small stone between the hands, and parting them suddenly, when the object is to determine in which palm the stone remains: such is the infatuation of some players, that they will stake successively horse, arms, clothing, and, in fact, every article of property they possess, upon the result of the game: though it must not be supposed that it is often resorted to in matters of life and death, or substituted for a trial by battle, as herein stated.

crown, and took back his own, which hung as a trophy at his belt, and the Scarred Arm said no word.

“Then Tatunga staunched the blood, and gave him provision for the way, and set him upon his village trail.

“Now when those two men parted, they shook hands, and Tatunga said :—‘Thou art a brave man, mine enemy, a man of honour. When we meet again, we will play another game ; and it shall be head against head.’ And he replied, ‘It shall !’”

The narrator of this singular adventure tinged so deeply as it was with a spirit of barbaric chivalry, peculiar to the West, made use of every variety of gesture, and intonation, to enforce his meaning, and impress it upon his hearers.

It was, throughout, an expressive piece of acting, in which might be traced successively the intoxication of the fight, the arresting blow, the awakening from temporary death : the deliverance and humiliation that supervened, together with the final triumph, and chivalrous farewell.

Now, however, his face resumed a portion of the sad expression that softened his natural sternness so completely, as he stood by the burial-pile, nor was there a vestige either of pride or triumph remaining in his voice, while he added :

"Tatunga tarried not then. His work was not yet done. He had never seen his brother's grave, but he did not forget him.

"They had played together as children, and fought against the enemies of the Dahcota together as men.

"He could look upon it now without shame. So he kept a fast, and came unto this place, and laid the scalp of the Scarred Arm on the grave of him he slew.

"But Tatunga hid his own, here, in his medicine-bag;" and the speaker pointed to the ornamental amulet-case that was suspended on his breast. "It will be a strong medicine to him, he believes, to bring him success in hunting.

"This is why Tatunga paints himself black, and eats nothing. This is the meaning of the stones. Look, strangers! Who can say like Tatunga, I have lost, and worn my scalp, and am a living man?"

As he spoke, the Dahcota unfastened the horned plume that covered his head, and bent down, when they saw that the crown was entirely denuded of hair, and that its place was usurped by an oblong, and angry-looking scar.

## CHAPTER XII.

ILLUSTRATES THE PROVERB—MANY A SLIP 'TWINX CUP AND  
LIP.

HAVING discussed their meal, the hunters mounted their horses, which carried in addition each a load of fresh buffalo meat, and proceeded on their course westward, accompanied by the Dahcota, who gave them an invitation to his village, situated, as he said, at a distance of two days' journey from the valley, which, as it offered no derangement to their plans, they concluded to avail themselves of.

Accordingly, after traversing an undulating country, under the guidance of Tatunga, they reached at night-fall a river flowing from some boiling springs, in a beautiful dell, shut in by high

table lands, which sloped abruptly, covered with oaks and pines, and overhung by a grand mountain, whose snowy summits pierced the western sky and reflected the rays of the luminary, long after they were withdrawn from the plains.

Here they picketed their horses, and lit a fire within a short distance of the Medicine Fountains, which, as Tatunga informed them, was the name they bore among the neighbouring tribes, who held them in especial veneration, and often came there to make offerings to the Great Spirit, as He had consecrated the spot by a peculiar manifestation of His power. The appearance of the surrounding trees gave ample testimony of this, for they were thickly clothed with various articles of Indian manufacture, such as bows, shields, head-dresses, and painted robes.

While our travellers are enjoying a sweet repose, under the guardianship of the divinity that dwelt by the sacred waters, let us take a backward glance at the career of Conrad and his associates, since we took leave of them, up to the period when they again made their appearance, which, in the progress of events, as before stated, was a lapse of six years.

Passing through the country of the Senecas, at the commencement of their journey, the heroic little band embarked upon Lake Erie, and coasting the

southern shore to its extremity, turned northward, and ascended the river that discharges itself therein, until they arrived at the French fort and settlement of Detroit, which had been established but a few years before at the outlet of Lake St. Clair.

Here, through the assistance of Salexis, who represented himself as an Abenake, the commander received them in a friendly manner, little suspecting that he was harbouring foes, in the associates of one of a nation well known as the oldest, and most faithful ally of the French colonists. This innocent *ruse* afforded them what they needed most, a few days' respite from fatigue, when they continued their voyage up the St. Clair into the broad expanse of Lake Huron, over which they held their course with the paddle for many days, encountering a severe storm, and the more alarming visitation of a war-party of Wyandots: who, espying them from the shore of Point aux Barques, at the entrance of Saginaw Bay, pursued them for many hours in a fleet of large canoes.

Here again, the nationality of Salexis stood them in eminent need, and the fierce warriors shook them each warmly by the hand, at the sound of the Abenake dialect which some of them could speak, though slightly.

But they were more *au fait* in Franco-Canadian,

and chose it to express a hearty welcome to the *voyageurs*, upon their visit to this ancient domain of the tribe to which they belonged.

Notwithstanding this favourable disposition, however, Conrad felt vastly relieved, when, after a short parley, they took leave of them, and continued on across the lake, for the purpose, as they informed them, of chastising a refractory village of Ottawas, in the north-east, somewhere beyond Lake Ontario. He had been in a state of constant tremor during their stay, lest they should suspect who Sewantuwalie really was: for he was assured that were any evil spirit to whisper the truth in their ears, they would tear them from limb to limb, and perhaps sacrifice them all to appease their sudden wrath, and prove their hatred of the race whose blood he bore—and which, more than any of the united nations of the terrible Iroquois, had been instrumental in enfeebling their power, as a people, and driving them from their ancient possession.

But fortune smiled upon the solitary bark, and it went gently on over the grand inland sea, and entered the straits of Michilimackinac, where they recruited themselves for a few days at the island of that name, and then, with a fair wind, trimmed their blanket-sail, and passing rapidly by the Isles du Castor, steered south up the expanse of Michigan,

which, fourteen years before had been furrowed by the keel of "Le Griffon," under the command of the adventurous La Salle : the first ship that ever navigated those glorious lakes.

Moving onward without pause, or deviation, from their course, in calm and breeze, and baffling currents, the frail canoe bore its freight securely amid the solitude of woods and waters, unmolested and unnoticed by the natives, and arrived, in due time, at the termination of its voyage, the extremity of the lake, near where the city of Chicago now stands.

There the wanderers rested from their arduous toils, and partook of the hospitality of a band of Miamis, a tribe belonging to the grand family of the Algonquins, that were encamped upon the shore. With these Indians, Conrad found several of a neighbouring people, the Pottowattomies, who occupied the undulating table-lands, bordering on the territory of the Illinees, and Ioways, to the south and west. From these individuals, he obtained such intelligence as caused him to forget at once the perils and fatigues he had undergone, and redoubled his impatience at any delay, in prosecuting the purpose upon which he was bent. His lively enthusiasm imparted itself also to his companions, so that they avowed their willingness to

accede to his wishes at once, when he proposed for them to accompany the Pottowattomies, who were about to return home.

Accordingly, at the time specified, the three friends shouldered their packs, and armed, and equipped, for the emergency, followed in the track of their new allies, and placed their feet, for the first time on the prairie soil, with their faces to the unknown West.

The story told to Sewantus-walie by the Showano at the Onondaga council-fire, a distance of more than a thousand miles away, was confirmed in the most explicit manner by those with whom Conrad now travelled. There had, indeed, been a captive in their village since the last snow, who answered to the description of Ellen; but they had left home shortly after upon a hating excursion to the country of the Manominies, lying northward on the borders of Michigan, where they had been detained until then, and therefore were unable to tell whether or not she were still there.

How Conrad thrilled at every item of intelligence elicited relative to her who had existed for two years so entirely in his thoughts. He apprehended no difficulties with such zeal and determination as he was prepared to show, as soon as occasion would require him to strike for the prize; and supported as he was by such trusty associates.

There was no bold practice, or cunning stratagem of Indian warfare, that he had not made himself acquainted with, and revolved in his mind, over and over again, in anticipation of the moment when, with their assistance, he should extricate his Ellen from the rude hands into which she had fallen.

Invigorated by this prospect, as well as by his own sense of daily-increasing strength and competency to perform his part with credit in the strange career in which he had been thrown, Conrad regained his natural cheerfulness, and bounded with fresh elasticity in the track which he fondly believed was leading him, step by step, nearer to the lost girl.

He was amid strange scenes also, and day by day some fresh object greeted his eyes, or excited his inquiry. A new phase of life was opened before him, in the appearance and manners of the inhabitants of these remote glades and rolling plains, where the deer roamed in troops under the oaken canopy of the park-like groves, and the rich and picturesque openings appeared as if intended purposely for the growth of flowers and the abode of a sylvan people. It was a virgin world where, as yet, with the exception of a few Jesuits and traders, the restless European had not penetrated, or rendered his arts essential, either to the preservation or happiness of life.

Conrad, however, was destined soon to receive a terrible blow to his expectations, which plunged him in a despondency deeper than he had felt during any of his previous trials, disheartening as they proved. Upon their arrival at the Pottowatomie village they learned that the object of their inquiry had gone, some months before, to a distant hamlet of the Nation towards the West, whither it pleased her vagrant master to bend his steps after a brief stay in the place where they now were. Here was, indeed, a cruel frustration of all their hopeful designs; in one moment they were blighted and swept into oblivion. Each now saw that there was a long and laborious task before him. Instead of being near the accomplishment of the undertaking, as had been believed, its real difficulty and peril were only now fully revealed to them, without even the remote prospect of a fortunate issue to encourage them in the course they were pursuing. As to Conrad, his mind was made up for the worst that might befall, life and home were nothing to him without Ellen; it only remained for his confederates to choose whether they would continue on with him or return.

When this alternative was submitted in plain terms to Salexis and Sewantus-walie they made no immediate reply, and upon its being repeated, gave

our hero to understand, each in his simple and expressive way, that where he went, there would they also go ; that they had not measured before hand the extent they were to travel, or their friendship for him, neither had they come so far on an honourable path to desert it now. The Mohawk seemed even to be hurt at a suggestion that tallied so little with his sentiments, and implied a doubt of his sympathy with him who made it : and, drawing himself up before him, with melancholy reserve, he presented his naked breast, saying, in mournful accents, " Strike to the heart ! I can bear that better than my brother's words. If he be not tired of his friendship, Sewantus will follow in his steps."

To be brief, they continued on together, arrived at the point to which they were referred, found once more that the bird had flown, and traced her progress successively, from village to village, until they approached the confines of the Ioway hunting grounds, when they were obliged to desist from any further pursuit, at that time, in consequence of the sudden irruption of large bands of Illinees upon the Pottowattomic frontier, which entirely cut off all communication westward, and laid waste, with the ruthless concomitants of Indian war, several villages of the latter ; driving back the scattered

hunters upon the main establishment of the Nation.

These acts of aggression, caused by some slight, called the whole Pottowattomic Nation to arms; and in a short space of time the country between the head waters of the Wabash and Mississippi, was traversed and intersected in every direction by parties of armed warriors, panting for revenge, and resounded with the war cries of the contending factions.

However averse he might be to engage in a quarrel between Nations to whom he was almost equally a stranger, Conrad was not of a temper to refuse to participate in the struggle of those whose hospitality he enjoyed; and the spirit of his followers seemed to catch a sympathetic glow from the preparations they beheld, and to bound responsive to the first shout of war. To Conrad, also, the bustle and excitement consequent upon these events were a means of blunting the poignancy of his regrets, and sustaining his mind in the course it had originally chosen.

Now it was that Conrad had an opportunity of witnessing the system of warfare practiced by this portion of the great American race. Every thing about these people filled him with the strongest interest. Their costumes and weapons, embellished with fanciful ornaments, and curiously wrought

with implements of native copper and stone ; their proud carriage and mild dignity of demeanor, their simple and friendly manners : and above all, their stoical indifference to suffering, and their inviolable integrity. They had not been inoculated with the meanness and trickery of civilization, or learned to oppose fraud with fraud.

Aided by their allies, the Miamis and Manominies, the Pottowattomies repelled the advances of their hostile neighbours, and, in turn, ravaged their country to its remotest border in despite of an obstinate resistance, and brought the Illinees to terms. During these transactions, Conrad bore himself manfully, and shared in several engagements : as was attested by some scars upon his limbs, which he carried as a memorial of the battle field, that entitled him to the distinction of a *Brave*, at each council and gathering of the warlike nations with whom he sojourned. While his comrades in arms fought by his side with the wild zest of their race for strife and martial renown.

At length the war was brought to a close. The bands returned to their accustomed haunts, and hung up their bows and shields, while, for a time, nothing was to be heard but shouts of congratulation, interspersed with lamentings for the slain, tales of the war-path, and public rejoicings for the triumph they had obtained.

Then it was that Conrad began to experience a return of his old longing, and thought of pushing onward with his grand design, as the road was once more open after a lapse of nearly three years when, to his delight, his old friend, Couteau-croche, made his appearance and gave a new complexion to his affairs.

The *voyageur* was one of a party of Canadian free-traders, lately arrived at Lake Michigan, and engaged in carrying on a traffic with the natives for the furs in which the country abounded: and he was no little astonished at recognizing his former *protégé* in the weather-stained and vigorous young ranger whom he stumbled upon by the merest accident, in those wilds.

How they smoked and discoursed of old reminiscences; how they laughed at incidents that had occurred when they were last together, need not be told. The hours flew merrily by that evening at the lodge fire, animated as the social circle was by the cheerful countenance and infectious hilarity of the light-hearted Canadian.

The result of all this was, that after listening to an unreserved detail of his subsequent career, and rallying him slyly upon his newly acquired relish for forest pursuits, Couteau-croche expressed his determination, then and there, to share in the

enterprise of his young friend ; an avowal that inspired the rest with no little satisfaction, as they were now enabled to regard, with a greater degree of confidence, the idea of penetrating into the strange country that lay before them.

Couteau-eroche congratulated himself in no moderate degree upon securing a share in the life of wild vicissitude and enterprise which he foresaw would be embraced by the plan of Conrad ; and, besides, familiar as he was with many remote and wildly separated tribes of the northern Continent, he had never penetrated so far to the north-west, as their course would lead them, and felt desirous of visiting nations whose prowess and skill had excited his admiration ; as instanced in a few individuals who had found their way, at times, to the council fires of the tribes he had visited with the coadjutors of La Salle. Making over his stock of peltries to the charge of his fellow-traders, and reserving, for purposes of his own, a small selection of trinkets and such articles of European manufacture as were most acceptable to the natives—in a short time he expressed himself ready for the route ; and, without further delay, Conrad took leave of his hosts, the Pottowattomies, and crossed the branches of the Illinois and Mississippi, to the territory of the Ioways—a brave and noble people that hunted upon

great plains, almost devoid of trees, and well stocked with herds of bison and deer.

With these children of the prairie, who occupied lodges made of skins, stretched over a light framework of poles—the party remained for several months, during which they visited many villages, and met with a variety of adventure, but without making any definite progress in their main project. It seemed as though the person in possession of Ellen,—if it were really she whom they had tracked with so much pains, by many an intricate road;—were apprized in some mysterious manner of their design; for often when they thought themselves close at the heels of the fugitives, and all but certain of putting their hands upon them, they arrived at the spot only to find it vacant, and the occupants flown. Then, for a time, no further intelligence could be obtained of the captive, or any trace of her passage discovered to throw them, once more, on the track.

But though he was sometimes almost upon the point of giving up the pursuit in despair, he was often encouraged by meeting with evidences of Ellen's presence, among those with whom he mingled, in the course of his inquiries.

The simple natives would point out to him the retired nook where the pale-faced captive had been

used to kneel every morning and evening, in prayer; repeating meanwhile the many good things she had told them concerning the Great Spirit, and of his love to his children, especially to such as did no harm to one another and forgave wrongs; and concerning the wonderful countries that were towards the rising sun, from whence she came. In these ministrings of a good and earnest nature, Conrad could not fail to recognize his gentle companion.

They spoke also of her beauty and innocence, and the meekness of her ways, and how much they all loved her, and were grieved at her abrupt departure: which they could only attribute to the singular disposition of her master, who was subject to wild fancies, that caused him to wander, without a settled plan, from country to country. They believed that he talked too much with the Manitous, and became like a man astray in the world, with terrible power to charm the rain, and prophecy future events: as they could testify by numerous instances which had come under their own observation, and which gained him considerable celebrity in that way.

The pale maiden was also considered *great medicine*; indeed, some went so far as to say, that her master derived all his power through her, and that he would not stay long in one place for fear some

one might coax her away from his mother's lodge ; as a female, holding that relation to the professor of magic, formed part of his travelling household.

This at length became a favourite occupation of Conrad's : for it brought him into direct commu-  
 as it were, with the absent one, to revive her image in these temporary haunts, and contemplate her in each phase of her blameless and beneficent existence among the people of the wilderness, whose memory, tenacious of the smallest particular in respect to *her*, enabled him to gratify to the full this imaginative and lover-like fancy.

Thus one summer opened upon the travellers at the western boundary of the Ioway range. They were now about to enter upon that vast spread of table-land that stretches between the waters of the Mississippi and the south-western branches of the Missouri, and beyond them to the base of the Rocky Mountains—being occupied almost exclusively by the numerous divisions of the great Sioux, or Dahcota family,\* who wore their hair long.

Having, with some difficulty, procured a horse to carry their provisions,—for the useful animal was very scarce and valuable in that country, to which

\* Among these were the Minda-warcarton, Burnt Thighs, Pineshou, Minecocias, Piankshaws, Black Feet, Broken Arrows, and Assinnaboins ; or rather such as were so designated at a later period.

it was brought from the far south-west but a few years before,—Conrad and his companions continued their explorations, exposed at times to incredible hardships while traversing the sterile and arid wastes that so often harass the wanderer on the great western prairies.

For days their food consisted purely of rosebuds, roots, and berries, from which they obtained a scanty nourishment in the absence of all game. But there were times when even this source failed, and they were fain to trudge, day after day, without a morsel or a drop of water with which to supply their natural wants, aggravated to an inordinate degree by the intense heat and the difficulties of a course diversified by rugged defiles, dried up water-channels, fields of the prickly pear and other cacti, and hilly deserts of sand.

Soon after this, however, they were fortunate enough to provide themselves with horses of the Spanish breed, which were found to be numerous among the Sioux, who caught them from the wild herds that had already begun to extend over the adjacent prairie from the pasture plains of Mexico. This acquisition afforded them the greatest relief imaginable, and gave a new charm to their subsequent journeyings.

Now it was that Conrad observed the Indian in his full barbaric pomp, and elevated to a pitch of

independence and martial pride, which he had not noticed beyond the purlieus of the Five Nations. He could have easily supported himself among the warlike tribes of Asia, of which he had read while a boy, as he passed from band to band of these bold hunters of the bison and the grizzly bear. There was also a kind of chivalrous heroism and urbanity about them with which he was forcibly struck; while their thoughtful deliberations and friendly intercourse with one another; their strong sense of religion, interwoven with each act of their daily lives; their national festivals, and feats of horsemanship, which the most skilful Arab would find it difficult to equal, still more surpass—never failed to exact his attention and yield him pleasure.

Indeed the splendour of their appearance when decked in plumed embroidery, armed with spears, and bison shields, and mounted on their half-tamed steeds, likewise adorned with feather trappings—was beyond measure imposing. Conrad loved especially to see them at their war parades, charging along in dark squadrons over the plain, with hair and robes streaming in the wind; making the ground shake with the tramp of their wild horses, and shouting their battle cries.

With these cavaliers, Conrad and his associates went through a course of severe exercise to acquire a knowledge of horsemanship: an art which, as ma

he supposed, was almost unknown to them all. But before many months were flown, however, through perseverance and natural adroitness, they were sufficiently inducted into its mysteries to hunt buffalo with the Dahcota warriors, and display considerable expertness with the lance and bow, while launched in full career, after the manner of the prairies.

The adventurers remained three winters the guests of the hospitable Sioux, during which they made themselves familiar with the practices and language peculiar to these regions. The apprenticeship commenced among the Pottowattomies and Ioways was now complete.

At this time a fresh rumour put Conrad once more in motion; and, crossing the Missouri, he learned from an Indian trader, who belonged to a tribe of the Dahcota, the village of which was at the foot of the Shining Mountains,\* that the medicine man and his white captive were there.

For a long period all traces of the maiden had been lost, therefore the fresh indication was hailed with especial satisfaction. There could be but little chance of the object of their pursuit escaping them this time, they thought; and buoyed up by the expectation of arriving at length at the term of

\* The Rocky Mountains were so called, from the appearance of their snow summits.

their arduous career, they turned their horses' heads towards the south-west, and journeying for several days over a lifeless desert of stones and sand, where they were nearly famished, they entered the fertile precincts of the bison range; and here it was, that while pursuing the chase in the pleasant valley already described, within view of the mountains, they made the acquaintance of the solitary Daheota, which formed the subject of the preceding chapter, whence we will again resume the main thread of the narrative.

## CHAPTER XIII.

AN AFFECTING INCIDENT—A BRIEF RE-UNION AND A LONG  
FAREWELL.

THE travellers awoke, refreshed from their slumbers, by the Medicine Fountains ; and, after adding each some small offering to the trees that shadowed them, pursued their way over an undulating tract interspersed with thick beds of cacti and pine-fringed ravines, through which thread-like streams wound their impetuous course from the adjacent mountains, overhung, in many places, by gloomy precipices, or bordered by flower-enamelled lawns, that were often divided off into retreats of most enticing loveliness, and shut in from the wind by rocks and cotton-wood groves.

About noon, after traversing a range of pine-clad

hills which now loomed darkly behind them, in the north-east, they were following up one of these verdant strips of alluvion among the rugged uplands, through which it formed an easy and agreeable passage—when the attention of the party was suddenly arrested by the neighing of a horse at a short distance to the right of the trail.

Ever on the alert, in a land where they were as likely to fall in with an enemy as a friend, each was ready for action in a moment, and rode cautiously towards the sound, apprehensive of an ambuscade. No lurking foe presented himself, however, and penetrating with some difficulty through a thick grove and coppice of box-elder, they discovered three horses fastened to a picket, and in a miserable condition.

Beyond these appeared the conical coverings of two skin lodges, beautifully painted, in the highest style of Indian art. Upon dismounting, they found one to be empty, while the other contained a single tenant only, an elderly squaw, wrapped in a buffalo robe, and unable to move or speak from extreme weakness, brought on, as appeared afterwards, by sickness and starvation.

Partly divining her condition, they kindled a fire with speed, produced a remnant of their last meal of bison hump and wild turnip, boiled it into a gela-

tinous soup with the water of the neighbouring stream, and poured it, by spoonsfull, down the woman's throat, until she gained sufficient strength to swallow it of her own accord.

By this means, the wasted creature was enabled, at the end of a few hours, to answer the questions that were put to her without much difficulty; though her voice was very feeble, and hollow and unnatural in its tones. Altogether she presented a spectacle of helplessness and emaciation, piteous to behold.

Now, in a reply to an inquiry of the Daheota warrior, Sewantus' quick ear caught the accents of his native tongue, and drawing nearer, to his astonishment he found that the squaw was speaking in the Mohawk language, instead of the scarcely coherent Sioux she had previously used, and, gazing more closely into her face, he recognized, in its pinched and haggard lineaments, the once comely and long lost Notokeel!

The abrupt ejaculation which this discovery drew from the Indian, brought the rest quickly around, and caused the sufferer to open her eyes. She knew him directly, for, with a wild start, and trembling violently, she uttered his name.

This incident created a powerful sensation among the group, and Conrad pressed forward

eagerly to greet the companion of his beloved ; but with a look of distress and terror, Notokeel turned away her head, and refused to give any answer to his hurried questioning about the English girl, whose disappearance was so closely connected with her own. Nor did she feel inclined to be very communicative with Sewantus, and all that could be extracted from her on the subject was, that she had fallen ill, on the journey from the Dahcota village, and been left in that place to starve by the man who had stolen her away. That he and the white girl had departed, whence she knew not, nor cared ; "for she was sick and weary," she said, "and only waited for the Great Spirit to shew her the way to the blessed land, being ready to begin her journey." When appealed to, relative to the horses, she would not vouchsafe any explanation concerning them ; at least, none that was deemed sufficient to account for their being left behind, together with several domestic utensils and valuable fur robes, which were scattered about the interior of the lodges.

"Let her rest, comrades," observed Couteau-croche ; "the squaw is weak and fatigued with our questionings, just now. Let her rest awhile, and then she will be more inclined to tell us all about this matter."

What was it that gave immediate animation to

the frame of Notokeel? Could there be a healing property in the tones of the *voyageur*?

They exercised, in every truth, a wonderful influence upon her, for, exhausted and feeble as she was, she raised herself up with a vigorous effort while he spoke, and stared fixedly at him with a wistful, nameless expression that sent a thrill to his soul. Then, in a tone of soft entreaty, each syllable as distinct as though she breathed it aloud, she whispered:

“Speak again to Notokeel. Is she already among the spirits, or does she only dream? Speak again, *Brave*; I thought I heard a long silent voice in your words.”

“Thy eyes cheat thee, good woman. It is not possible thou shouldst know my voice.”

“It is his!” screamed Notokeel, with a gleam of wild delight depicted on her features, which lost something of their pallid hue under the impulse of the strange emotion that possessed her, heightened as it was by an object that had just caught her eye.

It may be remembered, that Coutcau-eroehc bore upon his breast the figure of a snow shoe, tattooed in blue lines on the skin, by the hand of his sire, when he was a child. Now, it happened that the warmth of the weather had caused him to throw back the front of his hunting frock, so that the

curious symbol was exposed to view. To this, Notokeel now pointed with her finger, as she seized in the other hand the arm of the *voyageur* and demanded, almost fiercely :

“Tell me ! What does that mark mean ?”

“The story is long,” was the reply ; “but what matters it to thee ? I was marked so by one who is gone ; it might be, as a token, to know me for his child in case I went astray, which did not happen.”

“His name !” shrieked the woman, with impatience ; bending eagerly forward.

“La-raquette-qui-vole.”

“La-raquette-qui-vole !” replied Notokeel with slow emphasis, lingering fondly upon each soft syllable, as if there were a delicious music in the sound : while a happy smile broke over her face lately so contracted and care-worn.

“La-raquette-qui-vole !” and the poor creature relaxed her grasp, and sank back in a swoon.

They regarded each other in amazement at the strange effect which the presence of the Canadian occasioned upon her whom he had never seen before. What mysterious association was there connected with his father’s favourite *soubriquet*, that could move one thus reduced, to an overpowering frenzy of feeling ? Could it be but the casual delirium of a brain, unstrung and agitated by the

presence of strangers, together with the distracting queries which their anxiety had urged them to press somewhat inconsiderately upon her ? It was a reasonable conjecture, and without seeking any further solution of the riddle, they strove to call back the suspended faculties of the sufferer, which was soon accomplished, though she remained very feeble and in a state of lethargy ; for her previous emotion had exhausted what little strength she possessed, and left her listless and impassive.

Towards evening, her mood changed, after shedding an abundance of tears, which seemed to give relief and unseal the fountain of her sympathies again ; as, soon after this, she beckoned Couteau-croche to her side.

Notokeel examined, with a mild and mournful expression, every feature of his countenance, and terminating the scrutiny, at length, with manifest satisfaction, she withdrew her look, muttering, as if to herself :

“ The same clear eyes, and the same cheerful brightness, with something of the look of an Indian *Brave*, beyond what he had—my pale-faced husband.”

“ Of whom does the sick squaw speak ? asked the listener, whose curiosity was aroused.

“ Of thy own father — La-raquette-qui-vole,” was the low reply.

"*Tonnerre de Dieu!* What is it you tell me?"

"The truth."

"Then I am—"

"Notokeel's son—her lost baby-boy!" faltered the mother, in a deep and thrilling whisper, and instantly relapsed into insensibility.

This discovery made an extraordinary impression upon the whole party; but the *voyageur* was affected in the most powerful manner by an acknowledgment that so immediately concerned himself. He had no reason to doubt the sincerity of the Mohawk squaw, and while he felt a strange yearning in his heart, towards his new found parent, he could not divest himself of the idea that an especial providence was concerned in bringing about this meeting for some good purpose which would be made manifest in the end. It has been stated, in a former chapter, that he had never been able to learn who his mother was: and his single relative died while he was still too young to overcome his natural awe, and combat his father's reserve on a subject which gave him evident pain, and was tacitly forbidden between them.

When Notokeel was restored sufficiently to converse with him, Coutcau-croche motioned the rest to leave the lodge, and, kneeling down by her side, he took her hand and said gravely:

"Notokeel, in the name of God, tell me what

thou canst of this matter ; my mind is perplexed terribly by what I have heard. In the name of God, I say, tell me all !”

“ Hush,” replied she, with a look of superstitious terror ; “ the Great Spirit is near us now. Call not upon him too loud, lest he be angry. Why should not Notokeel speak fairly to her child, before she goes home ? She has not seen him of late — this poor mother ! The small leaf has shot up and become a tree, strong and tall, and big enough to give Notokeel shelter ; only it is too late now, and she must go home. Kiss me, my child.”

The stout-hearted *voyageur*, struggling with his emotions, stooped with brimming eyes to fulfil his mother’s request, and pressed his lips to her cold forehead ; but she gathered her feeble arms closely around him, in a loving embrace, and imprinted wild kisses on his cheeks, eyes, and lips.

It was an affecting union—that of the squaw and her son. She had spent her whole life in solitude, dreaming of him—her lost babe ; while he was destined never to know the sweetness of a mother’s caress, or the tenderness of her solicitude and love, save when too young to appreciate it to the full, or too far advanced in years to render it indispensable to his well-being. Still, perhaps, it might have proved a source of happiness to both, greater than

they had ever experienced—that new found tie of spirit-searching sympathies, had it been permitted to remain long undissolved.

After a pause, *Notokeel*, still holding the hand of the *voyageur*, spoke as follows :

“ Now will thy mother speak out, for her heart is at rest. Give ear unto what she is going to say. Thou needest not tell me why thy father was named *La-raquette-qui-vole*, for I have heard him speak many times of his chase with the *Oneidas*, and how he outran their fleetest *Braves*, and I saw him mark thee on thy baby breast with the figure of a snow-shoe ; because it obtained him honour.

“ He was a souple *Brave*, brisk-spoken, and full of gladness, except when any thing vexed him, and then he would look sick-hearted, and the light would die out of his countenance, until it became bleak as the winter moon, when a cloud passes between it and you.

“ We were at peace with the people of *Onanthio* when the young pale-face came to our village and saw *Notokeel*, and they liked each other. So it came to pass that he took the *Maqua* maiden to his lodge—and she loved him well.

“ One day *Notokeel* awoke, and, lo ! the good *Manitou* had laid a young child on her bosom, soft and gentle, like a little bird, and her heart trembled

with delight, and was not big enough to contain all the love she felt for it, because it was so mighty. And Notokeel nourished it until it grew strong and playful, and bold as the fledging of an eagle—her precious boy!

“But she was very proud of her face, which was comely in that time, and a pleasant sight to the young Maquas; so her pale-faced husband became jealous, and spoke hard words, that she could not bury in the ground for all her striving. She would punish him, she thought, and she left his lodge and went to another’s—only seemingly, mind you—for she loved him well.

“Then, after a little, Notokeel returned. Poor foolish squaw! She found no fire kindled on her hearthstone. The pale-faced *Brave*, her husband, was proud too, and had departed, they said, taking with him the man-child that was his own; and Notokeel waited long, hopefully—ay, very long, because of her great love—but she has waited until now!

“Many snows melted after that, and the war-path led again to the country of Onanthio. Prisoners were brought in, from time to time, and Notokeel learned that he whom she had called husband was in the ground; but she did not weep then, —she had no tears left—her eyes were become dry.

The tears were in her heart, and there they remained—  
—evermore—evermore!

“Nobody ever said to Notokeel—thy son lives: I will show thee the path. Go unto him, and be at peace! Nobody ever came unto her with that message. So she lived in darkness, always, until now.

“Of a sudden, she heard a voice. It went through her with a sharp keenness: it brought back her early days.

“She believed then that La-raque, qui-vole stood before her, but she was feeble-minded, for it was his son she beheld, who was come back to speak to his mother; for she could not die without seeing her child once more:—that was good.

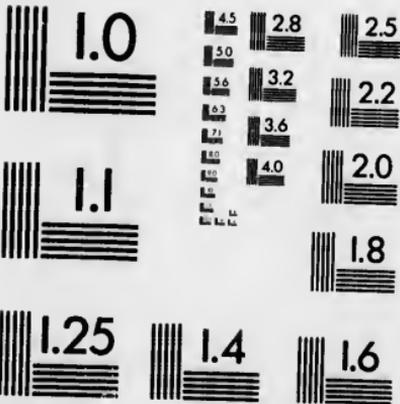
“It is like a dream now; the time when she held him by his little hand. But Notokeel always believed that these two would meet at last—therefore she prayed. Behold now how the Great Spirit has brought it to pass!”

This was what the Indian woman told her recently restored son, who forgot, in those moments, that he had been a lonely wanderer for so many years. The instinct which binds the offspring to its parent can never be entirely subdued. It may lie dormant, or become diverted from its course, or impoverished by vicious association, but when the occasion arrives, it is ready to burst forth again like



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some pure flower, at nature's irresistible command.

Couteau-croche was subjected to this mysterious regeneration as he listened to his mother's tale : and by the force of the new impression, his intermediate life seemed to be swept away—annihilated—as though it had not been. In fancy, he was but a simple child again, among the forest paths, and she who guided his tottering steps was a mother very dearly loved.

It was only a reflex of that which to Notokeel was as a dream ; the opening of some latent germ of memory his manhood had long put by.

We need not detail what further took place between them. It was a blissful commune, fraught with consolation and happiness to both, and abundant in material to feed the solitary musings of one through all his after-life.

Of one thing we may be sure ; that the honest ranger made it his care to dissipate from his parent's thoughts, whatever she might have entertained of his neglect in not seeking her before ; a feeling which, if it ever existed, could not survive the solemn declaration, that his father had left him in total ignorance of his origin.

It was already dark, and the white peaks of the mountains were invisible beyond the hills that shut in the narrow ravine, where they were en-

camped, when Couteau-croche joined his comrades, in the second lodge, who remarked that his eyes were swollen and red. They made no allusion, however, to what had transpired, except by asking how his mother then was; and when he answered that she seemed much exhausted, and had gone to sleep, he saw that Conrad was burning with impatience, and therefore added—

“She would like to see her countryman Sewantus-walie to-morrow, she said: when she will be able, she hopes, to say that which concerns us all to hear; till then we must needs rest.”

“Good,” observed the Dahcota, who had been put in possession of a general outline of their history and purpose; “my brother is right. The squaw is worn out with much fasting. Sleep is a powerful medicine. When the sun shines again, she will put us on the track of the wolf who stole away this white fawn.”

No one offered a dissent, and Conrad, with a sigh, wrapped himself in his buffalo robe, and sought in forgetfulness relief from the pangs of protracted uncertainty, when, to all appearance, he was upon the very eve of tasting the value of his exertions, and ascertaining the hue of that future which fate held in reserve for him.

The ray of the low morning sun had not yet found

its way over the intervening cliffs, into the secluded dell, when the young Mohawk, at a sign from the *voyageur*, entered the lodge where Notokeel lay.

The invalid was free from pain, and more composed than when he last saw her ; but he noticed a great change in her eyes and features, which, inexperienced though he was in such cases, he regarded as an unfavourable sign. There was a glassy clearness and brilliancy about the former, unlike life, while the latter were overspread with a shade of pallid gray, and an expression of anxiety unnoticed the evening before.

Notokeel received her countryman with a faint smile, and spoke to him affectionately in their native tongue.

The interview was long, and the revelations of the sufferer were often interrupted by weakness and agitation. She related to him every thing that had occurred to her since her flight from the village, admitting the part she had played in the abduction of the English maiden, and her constant and harrowing remorse for the guilty act ; but withholding the name of the tempter, which, she said, she was bound never to disclose.

With this reservation, her confession was full and minute, in every particular, and sufficiently clear up to the period of her arrival at that spot, when the

account became tinged with so much that was improbable and marvellous, that, although it was related with an evident conviction of its truth, her hearer was inclined to think that it bore reference rather to the hallucinations of a disordered intellect, consequent upon her illness, than to any circumstance which had actually occurred.

But Notokeel persisted in the truth of what she affirmed, and repeated the same story without deviating from its main particulars, upon the close cross-questioning of Sewantus, of whom she then took a solemn leave; desiring him to "take her name back with him to the village without a spot upon it, and to all who knew her her good love; and to say to the yellow-haired Yengie that the Lily of the Waters saw him always in her dreams, and that, if he found her again, she would speak to him of Notokeel, her friend."

Then she asked for her son, and the two remained alone together until the day was half completed, when Notokeel died.

They buried her that same day, towards its close, in a secluded spot at the foot of the crags, where you might catch, through the arching branches, a glimpse of the bright water, and the sward and alder thickets, through which it wound its way along the narrow valley, and the cliffs beyond.

The grave was dug with hunting knives, deep in

the soft alluvion, and filled in, first with earth, and then with stones, to secure it from the wolves. Over this was heaped an earthen mound, covered with sods of flowering turf, put together with care; and thus, a few hours after the mother of Couteau-croche closed her eyes, the wild flowers were growing on her grave.

Poor Notokeel, thy life was a long lament; fain would we believe that its errors were atoned for by the anguish and self-abasement they brought to thy woman's heart, whose first fault had led to so gloomy an after portion. Amid thy failings we would not class the crowning weakness which impelled thee to love "not wisely" perhaps, but only "too well."

## CHAPTER XIV.

AN INEXPLICABLE ACCOUNT CORROBORATED BY A VERY  
SINGULAR DISCOVERY.

WHEN the last friendly office had been performed, and the remains, wrapped in furs, were consigned to the earth, Couteau-croche knelt thereby, and offered up a prayer, brief, but sincere, for the repose of the soul of her, the author of his being, whom he had found only to have so speedily snatched from him again, craving that the God of the white and red man would, in His good time, unite them once more, and for ever, in the land above.

Brushing away some traces of tears from his rugged cheeks, he then joined his companions, and was prepared to take a part in the discussion, relative to their future proceedings.

It appeared, from the statement which Sewantus

now submitted to them, as he had received it from the lips of the dying woman, that throughout all her wanderings, Ellen had sustained her firm trust in a power which protected her from injury, and would ultimately restore her to freedom. And that, either awed by her gentleness and piety, or from some personal motive, known only to herself, the individual who claimed her as his property had treated her with a degree of consideration and respect, which caused her to feel less severely the change in her condition, with the exposure and fatigue it entailed upon her, during her roamings over the western wilderness, consisting, as they did, of desultory journeys from village to village at the caprice of her master, who acquired celebrity and wealth among the various tribes in his capacity of medicine-man, or *jongleur*, and travelled with an ample outfit of horses and lodges, one of each being appropriated to the sole use of his fair captive. That her female companion had done all that she possibly could to alleviate the condition of one so unused to the life she was doomed to lead. That, at length, by dint of time, and familiarity with scenes and habits to which she was originally a stranger, Ellen recovered her cheerfulness, and appeared to be reconciled to her lot, and even to thrive into a fuller life, as it were, in the air of the great prairies.

But it was otherwise with Notokeel, who began to pine inwardly, and waste away, with some unknown malady, for which her master, notwithstanding his pretended skill, could find no cure. And when, after a residence shorter than usual at the Dahcota village, the mania of change again induced their master to strike his lodges, and he had re-erected them for a few days at this spot, on her account, the Indian woman felt, for the first time, a strong conviction that she was near her end.

But this did not grieve her much, she said, only the thought of leaving Ellen was as a sharp arrow in her side; for the latter was constantly with her during her decline, and sought by unwearied exertions to soothe and comfort the invalid, to requit, in some degree, the strong affection her companion had ever manifested towards her, which endeared the English maiden still more to the heart of the ailing squaw. And now came that part of the story which appeared so dubious and incomprehensible to the young warrior; we will give it in Notokeel's words:

"It so happened that I lay languishing thus one evening, six days back from now. The master was absent, running buffalo for food, and the Lily in her own lodge, when I heard the hollow stroke of hoofs upon the ground, and the grass under my

head shook with a troubled motion. All at once, I beheld, through the opening of the lodge, a strange horseman alight at the side of that where the Lily of the Waters was, and I was afraid. I could not cry out, for I was too weak, and the speech would not come to my mouth when I wanted it. I was struck dumb at what I saw.

“It was a warrior, more glorious than ever I believed there could be, whose whole body was covered with such yellow and white stuff as the pale-faces love, which shone like the sun in brightness, so that you could not look at him without winking; and on his head he wore a covering, shaped like the head of a cat-a-mount with open jaws. This sparkled with all colours of precious stones, green, purple, blue, and blood-red. Over this, was a long, green plume, more beautiful than that fashioned of war-eagles’ feathers, many times. His feet and legs were covered with skin, adorned with squaw-work in the yellow, shining stuff, and beads of the colour of the moon; and I noticed a broad plate, like a great sun, in the midst of the shield he bore. Nor was this all. On his shoulders, hung a robe finer and more desirable than a Yengie blanket of the best stroud, ay many times, with colours in it of the glossy brightness of a humming bird’s breast; and, in his hand, he carried a lance with a long

blade of red copper, that glowed like a flame of fire.

"Thus this strange and beautiful thing vanished in the door-way of the Lily's lodge.

"I trembled, and could not move from where I was, but I soon heard the maiden talking calmly with the stranger, and grew content.

"They talked long; at last the Lily of the Waters came to me prepared, as for a journey, and kissed me, weeping many tears, saying that she must leave me now, and that I had been good to her, and the Great Spirit would surely make me strong again.

"Then the strange *Brave* put her on her own horse, and leaped into his saddle, and they rode away.

"I think he was of some Manitou people, that stranger, for I never saw his like before, and there was no wickedness in his heart towards the Lily, I am sure; for his countenance was goodly and grave. But I was sorry, because of the going away of her I loved. I said to myself, *Notokeel* will never behold her any more.

"After a little, my master returned. He was cross, and hungry, having seen no game. He asked me where the pale-faced girl was, and I trembled before him. I told what my eyes had beheld.

"Then, grinding his teeth, he cursed the Mani-

tous, leaped straitway upon his horse again, and sped away, away, like a mad elk, upon their trail.

“After that time, I starved day after day, and night after night, with no live creature near me, but the horses that were starving, too, for want of food, and the medicine-wolf,\* for I heard him whine in the silence of the night, and at the sound, the scared horses set up a cry.

“I could not move about to dig up roots, or look for berries, and so I famished wearily until men came and gave me food, and when I returned to my memory, I found that I was among friends.”

Such was the purport of what Notokeel told her countryman, though the latter abstained from mentioning that portion of her narrative which reflected so severely upon herself, in connection with the capture of Ellen, as he did not see what benefit would accrue from it, and was well aware of the pain it would inflict both upon Couteau-croche and

\* The cayoute, or small prairie wolf; a little timid animal, held in superstitious veneration on account of its supposed faculty of giving notice of coming events by its curious gestures and lengthened whines, when under the influence of hunger, it is observed scenting about in the neighbourhood of hunters, for the remnants of their meals. It is regarded as the messenger of the Great Spirit, by which his wishes are made known to his red children, who are careful never to molest or offer it injury.

Conrad. Therefore he judged it better to let it remain a secret with himself, and thus screen the memory of his kinswoman from unnecessary reproach. He made solely one observation upon the whole matter, namely, that it was somewhat strange Notokeel should have been so loath to make known the name of him who stole her from the village; to which Salexis replied with a peculiar smile:

"It does not matter, you see, very surely: it does not matter."

The reflections and suppositions which this account gave rise to, as may be inferred, were as various as the minds of those to whom it was addressed.

The Indians, trained to regard everything extraordinary or difficult to explain, as the work of superhuman intelligences; who heard a spirit's accents in the noise of torrents, the soft murmur of the foliage, or the roar of the storm, and peopled the woods with subordinate divinities, as various as those of ancient Greece and Scandinavia; were very much disposed to question the mundane character of the individual who now seemed to control the destiny of the maiden; if the description of Notokeel were not a gross exaggeration, and, indeed, the whole story but a mere fiction, based upon the sandy foundation of a dream, which, in her

then state, might easily be mistaken for a sensible reality. But in that case, where was the captive, and what could have induced her master to abandon the sick woman, and leave behind him an amount of property which would not be considered unworthy of ownership by the wealthiest Dakota *Brave*? This Tatunga avowed: adding, at the same time, in reply to an inquiry of Conrad, that he had never seen or heard of a people whose warriors dressed in anything but the skins of wild animals, trimmed with scalp hair and feathers, or in cloth woven from the vegetable down: and he had crossed over the Shining Mountains to the nations beyond, and that he believed the bright warrior had come down from the sun, for they would find none like him on those plains.

Couteau-croche was entirely at fault; with all his shrewdness this was a matter beyond the reach of his comprehension. The superstition of the Franco-Canadian engrafted upon his Indian education, had not left him much liberty of judgment in cases where the line between the natural and spiritual was not distinctly drawn. And his understanding, strong and fertile as it was in ordinary circumstances of difficulty or peril, was thrown from its balance by the violent agitation that had lately shaken him; so that, unable to bring his usual acuteness to bear upon the present emergency,

his only comment to the answer of Tatunga was a silent shrug: a paternal bequest, which, proclaiming as it did the nationality of La-raquette-qui-vole, he was never known to make use of, except when peculiarly distressed.

In this dilemma, our hero, although by no means free from a certain tinge of superstition, was the only one who preserved a consciousness of the sole available course by which to test the truth of the visionary tale they had heard. The means were simple and well known, yet bewildered by their extravagant fancies, they had entirely overlooked them on the present occasion.

Calling his Mohawk friend to his side, he said to him:

"Sewantus can read the ground-writing better than his white brother. He will tell him what it says about those who must have passed over it lately, if Notokeel told the truth, and was not cheated by a dream; as I am almost persuaded she was."

"Right, brother," was the quick reply; "Sewantus was but a dullard; you speak like a true *Brave*. The earth is the redman's book; and he must read it if he would be wise."

Ere he ceased to speak he had tightened his girdle, seized his bow, and commenced a search

for the tracks of those whose departing steps, according to his squaw's words, led up the grassy intervalle of the valley.

The group watched him for some time, as he moved among the clumps of wild sage and reeds, observing that he paused occasionally and stooped down to regard the ground more attentively as he advanced, until he was hidden from view by a turn of the defile, which was rendered partially indistinct already by the haze of approaching twilight.

Some space of time had now elapsed, when a shrill and peculiar cry rang from a distance through the still air, and caught the ears of the party by the camp fire.

"Hush-à!" exclaimed the Dahcota, with an abrupt aspirate, springing to his feet, and examining his bone bow. "The Mengwe is shouting his war cry; there are enemies in the path. Let us go!"

"We do not need," answered Couteau-croche; "it is the signal the *Braves* of the Iroquois use when they are successful. I know the call well. Sewantus is telling us that he has made a discovery; did he want our aid he could say so. Hark! It is as I thought; he will be back directly; there is his return cry."

The ranger was correct, for soon after a second

signal was heard, and the one he alluded to stepped noiselessly into the circle, and without speaking, laid down in their midst an object which made every individual start up from his buffalo robe with a simultaneous impulse, and a cry of wild amazement.

There, before their eyes, lay the shield of the mysterious stranger, the gallant cavalier, glittering with rich emblazonry of featherwork, jewels, and gold!

"The daughter of the Maquas did not lie," said Sewantus. "This was dropped upon the trail."

All previous speculations and doubts were overthrown at once by this event, which at the same time checked the disposition to resort to the supernatural, and brought the whole affair in a more tangible shape before them.

The beautiful and costly implement of defence was passed round from hand to hand, and submitted to a close scrutiny, amid a running comment upon its design, mechanism, and strength, together with the fineness and rarity of the materials of which it was composed.

Tatunga admitted that it was a wonderful thing to look at, but, for his part, he would rather trust to his own smoked buffalo-skin buckler to screen him from the lance thrusts and arrows of the 'Scarred arms.'

However true this might be, it was eminently worthy of admiration ; attesting as it did, more than any work of art Conrad had yet seen among the nomadic races, the skill and luxurious refinement of its makers. That so much elegance of design, and knowledge of working the precious metals, could only be the result of considerable progress in science and the social arts, he was thoroughly convinced ; and as we infer the ability of the ancients, by inspecting a vase or a statue, Conrad was suddenly informed of a polished and ingenious people, whose very existence appeared to be unknown, but whose character, in default of more ample evidence, might be ably represented by that little shield.

It was made of a framework of fine, polished reeds, covered on the outside with varnished leather, quilted with an elastic substance that raised it upwards from the periphery, in a line slightly curved, to the thickness of about two inches at the centre, which was ornamented with a large plate of the purest gold, wrought into the resemblance of a blazing sun, bordered by a double row of valuable pearls, and surrounded with rays. This central device was encircled with a zone of silver stars upon the black leather of the ground work, and the whole was embraced by a rich border of golden leaves and flowers in high relief, which formed the

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circumference of the shield: and from its outer edge projected a fringe of fine cotton, enwrought in a curious manner with hair and feathers of different colours, to form a brilliant and highly ornamental pattern; this attachment, especially, engaged the notice of Conrad, as it was a species of manufacture which he had never seen before, and admirable no less from its delicacy and effect than the rest of the workmanship for its style and careful finishing. Altogether it was a miracle of inventive art, and remarkably light considering its thickness and materials, for it weighed far less than the hide targets used by the Sioux.

Such was this elegant appurtenance to the panoply of the unknown cavalier, who had forestalled their design, and constituted himself the champion of the captive Ellen,—which, no doubt, had been dropped accidentally by the way, in the vicinity of the spot whence he conducted his fair companion, and where it was found by Sewantus, dangling by its arm-bands from a branch of an alder, in which it had caught as it fell. This was within a few feet of a trail, dented deeply in the black mould and recent in appearance, consisting of several prints of horses' hoofs, in a double line, pointing to the West. And at wide intervals, among and upon these, ran another line of tracks

of a single horse, like a series of dots traced at furious speed; for they were dashed deeply into the ground, and through the cacti and thick shrubs that crossed the track which the Mohawk had followed up, from the camping ground to the point where the grand discovery took place, which was in a narrow pass, rugged and difficult for horses, and where they had slipped in their passage.

Sewantus was satisfied. That infallible directory—"the red-man's book," as he termed it, had not failed him here. It brought before his mind's eye a wild and glowing vision; that of the captive and her unknown guardian in full flight, and pursued by the enraged conjurer with the savage speed of revenge.

The death-chase passed away like a mirage from the brain of the Indian, and yet he stood in a deep reverie, gazing vacantly upon the track. Then he looked up into the sky with an imploring and melancholy expression, suggestive of prayer, while a quivering emotion passed over his features, such as we have noticed once already, when, some years since, we met him by the lake shore, taking that evening stroll which would have been solitary but for his reflections.

A moment, and he was himself again, and the wide desert was around him, and by his side the

wonderful shield. With quick impetuosity he caught it up, uttered his signal cries, and darted fleetly back along the trail.

Long and earnest was the conference held that night upon the all-engrossing subject which had now assumed an aspect so remarkable, and which bid fair to tax their resources to the utmost, ere they could probe its hidden meaning, or determine whether it could be really looked upon as favourable to their great design. The purpose of this, upon mature reflection, both Conrad, Couteau-croche, and the Mohawk, were inclined to believe it might eventually subserve, if the flattering sketch of Ellen's friend, as drawn by Notokeel, were correct. This, as the impression was made when under the influence of terror—at the startling apparition of the stranger, was by no means improbable: indeed it seemed worthy of particular credit, on that very account alone.

In that case, Ellen was safe, provided the pursuer had failed to track her successfully, or fallen by her protector's arm: the latter surmise being strengthened into probability by his prolonged absence.

The difficulty was to find a clue to the new retreat of the maiden—a difficulty enhanced by the unusual character and mysterious origin of her deliverer.

Tatunga's suggestion was finally adopted, as pointing out the best course of procedure for them to follow.

"There is but one man in these plains able to make us see clear in this business," said the Dahcota. "We call him The Horns-of-the-Moon. An old chief is he,—a very old—who has journeyed far, and looked upon many nations. The pale-haired warrior can talk to him, if he will. He is in the village of the Medicine-bows,\* whither we go."

With this intent, they struck the lodges, packed everything upon the spare horses, and following the direction of the trail, up the ravine, issued out upon a track of broken and hill-skirted prairie, as the morning sun looked up over the eastern border of the wild.

For many leagues they traced the route of the fugitives, until it became indistinct and finally escaped the nicest glance, in a hard and stony soil, in which it terminated and was lost. At this point, the conjurer must have been sadly puzzled to continue the chase, and had need of his deepest arts to enable him to succeed—as the Indians affirmed—in spying out the vague thread of the trail, and the direction it subsequently pursued.

\* This was the name given to that subdivision of the Dahcota nation to which the speaker belonged.

The main chain of the mountains, which had receded during the first part of the day, after noon again began to approach the travellers, who were crossing a series of undulating sweeps, diversified with frequent crags, and intersected by ravines which led to secluded vallons amidst the neighbouring hills. Along these coursed many a foaming torrent formed by the thick vapours and the melting glaciers which they beheld, thousands of feet above them, bathing in sunlight, and walling in the prospect on the right, above the intermediate ridges and verdant slopes. These, in some places, were interspersed with huge clumps of absinth and wild sage, and a variety of shrubs, peculiar to that elevated and moister region,—and in others, clothed, from base to summit, with dark forests of pine.

And as they rode leisurely along, they fell in with a party of horsemen who debouched slowly from a gorge among the hills, in a long, straggling file—with one bearing a calumet in the van.

These were Sioux traders, returning from their annual journey to the northward, as far as the country of the Ojibeways, on the borders of that vast inland sea, Lake Superior,—the last and greatest of the Canadian chain. From thence they brought native copper, smelted into short bars, with which their horses were laden, in the form

of huge sacks of buffalo hide, slung pannier-fashion on either side of the saddle.

They had also visited, as they said, the sacred pipe-stone quarry,—a celebrated place, situated between the head waters of the Missouri and Mississippi, and held in universal reverence,—where they had obtained a supply of the red stone so much used, even to this day, for the fabrication of calumets among the Western tribes.

These men had been several months away from home, and therefore they greeted Tatunga with eagerness, and plied him with numerous inquiries about their families and friends; while they enlivened the rest of the journey, by relating the adventures they had met with in the course of their arduous undertaking.

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## CHAPTER XV.

THE MEDICINE BOWS—COUTEAU-CROCHE PROVES THE POWER  
OF THE WHITE MAN TO MAKE THUNDER.

CONRAD observed, with considerable interest, these hardy traders who, though engaged in an occupation entirely pacific, were well-armed and capable of repelling aggression, to which they were frequently subjected from hostile and predatory bands in the course of their travels. They offered a novel feature of Indian life which he had not yet beheld, and, as a class, were more unreserved in their address than the proud and dominating warriors, who were chary of speech, and held trade in contempt.

Learning that they were dealers in metal; Conrad straightway bethought him of the shield.

But after a careful examination of it, and a lengthy consultation among themselves—the elder of the troop, a sort of spokesman and leader, returned it to him, saying, that they knew the sort of substance with which it was embellished very well, for they had often seen it shining in grains and scales in the beds of the mountain streams, but rarely, and in small quantities only. One individual remembered to have seen once, a nose-ornament of the same strange metal—the virtue of which was never to become crusted over and corroded like copper, by exposure. But the trinket in question, was very rudely fashioned, and none of them had ever beheld so much of it before, or knew of a people able to work it in so skilful a manner. In fine, they gave it as their joint opinion, that the buckler was worth, they could not undertake to say, how many robes and Medicine-dogs, and must be intended only for some grand war chief's use.

We are inclined to think that our hero was not in a frame of mind, just then, to be satisfied with this professional view of the subject, for he flung the object in discussion down against the pommel of his saddle, to which it was attached, with an air of impatience and chagrin, and a degree of violence that comported little with the exalted estimate of its value.

Shortly after they encountered a couple of bison bulls that were grazing in a hollow of the rolling plain, and to these Tatunga gave immediate chase, and soon succeeded in running them both down, by piercing them in the vitals with his arrows; and by the time that the rest came up to him, he had already completed the work of butchering, when the meat was stowed upon one of the pack-horses, and the party continued on towards its destination, which it was now drawing nigh.

"What do you intend to do with all that meat?" inquired Couteau-croche of the hunter who rode beside him. "I thought we had sufficient and to spare, for our wants, already?"

"Good!" was the reply, "but for what has Satunga ridden so far, and for what has he fasted, if not for the love he bore the Whirling Cloud. And shall his wife and little ones call Tatunga uncle, and be left to starve? Not so. Tatunga is a panther upon the path—deadly and strong. He is scalpless; but a true *Brave*. He knows what is right; shall it not be done?"

And without awaiting either comment or reply he gave his horse the rein, with a shout, and darted off at full speed, in advance of the troop, until his centaur-like figure was concealed in a cloud of dust.

"He goes to let the chiefs know there are visitors coming," observed one of the traders to Couteau-croche; "we will soon see them ride out to give us welcome; then my brother will surely say he beholds *Braves*. He will travel far, I reckon, before he meets with better riders or better hunters than the *Medicine-bows*."

The partiality of the speaker, for his native tribe, was not destined to excite expectations that were not strictly fulfilled, for, in a little time, the strangers beheld a large body of cavalry approaching them from the front, which, when within an arrow's flight of their advanced files, divided into squadrons and commenced performing various evolutions, with a quickness and precision truly astonishing, such as wheeling, charging, and deploying, in endless succession, every movement being regulated by the piercing sound of a whistle. Then the whole mass, suddenly dividing, bore down upon the skirts of the little party, in two long strings: and as each cavalier passed, at a gallop, he uttered his war-cry, disappeared under cover of his horse's body, leaving nothing visible but a leg and arm, and saluted them with a blunt arrow, in mimic hostility, from under the creature's neck—with a readiness and agility almost incredible. After this feat, the long files of warriors, crossing in the rear, exchanged sides and passed

again up to the front of the strangers; while, as they swept along, each horseman stooped from the saddle, and recovered his shafts, by picking them up from the ground.

Conrade witnessed this exhibition with wonder and enthusiastic delight. His pulse bounded—his spirit seemed to mount into the air with elasticity at the exciting scene; and as he noticed the disciplined movements of these gallant soldiers, in their warlike and picturesque array, he doubted whether the ancient Parthia ever produced a more dexterous and imposing cavalry.

At last they drew up in a close column abreast, slung their bows at their backs and waited to receive the new-comers, with their shields and lances in a serried line. Tatunga now came forward and gave them a welcome in the name of the Grand War-Chief, who awaited to testify more fully to the friendly sentiments of the tribe towards their visitors, in the palaver-lodge of the village, whither he had sent a noted captain with a band of chosen *Braves* to conduct them without delay. The returning traders likewise received a hearty and public gratulation, on the part of their countrymen, and accompanied by the dashing cortège, the travellers advanced under the immediate auspices of the leader, a

vigorous and lively-faced little man, beyond the prime, who rejoiced in the name of The Two Sculls ; a very doleful sobriquet for so sociable a personage as he proved himself to be, by entering into conversation with his new acquaintances, and chatting with infinite good-humour and little of that conventional stiffness, considered essential to the dignity of a distinguished war-captain, such as he said he was. He mentioned it, however, merely as a fact complimentary to themselves, and without the smallest token of personal vanity in the confession. And while his restless retinue of wild young *Braves* scoured over the plain, on each side—uttering shrill cries, and brandishing their arms—making a striking picture with their eagle-plumes, and long flowing-hair ; the leader presented a marked contrast both in his demeanour and dress. He remained composedly in the line, talking to Conrad, and the only ornaments about his person were a whistle of polished bone, slung from his neck by a leather thong—a significant mark of his rank, as a war-leader—and a copious supply of hair-fringe to his leggins and horse-gear.

But his whole equipment was in perfect condition, and the charger he bestrode—a graceful sinewy animal, was black as jet and shone like

satin in the sunlight—while the superiority of its points bespoke a breed of choicer blood than the common nursling of the prairies.

Like his companions he wore his hair very long, and this peculiarity of the tribe to which he belonged, will easily account for the mortification that Tatunga experienced, apart from a sense of wounded honour—at being forced to remain the marked exception to the usual fashion of his compeers.

As for the jovial old chief, he was intended more for use than show; which he hinted, in a close whisper, half-comic and half apologetic, to Conrad, when he detected his glance scrutinizing his plain veteran-like exterior.

Emerging from a bold spur that projected far into the plain, the cavalcade reached the precincts of the village, which occupied the centre of a green *plateau*, situated in the very lap of the mountains that surrounded it in a majestic curve, and towered like a vast cathedral pile, crested with snowy pinnacles, far into upper air.

Crossing some plantations of maize and melons, intermingled with thickets of chestnut, the foreigners found themselves in a curious neighbourhood.

At one glance could be seen upwards of a thousand skin lodges, dressed almost white, and em-

blazoned in a style highly decorative and compensating by the disposition of the colours, for an occasional rudeness in the design. Between these were picketed numerous horses, some fully caparisoned and pawing the ground with impatience, and others munching quietly faggots of corn leaves and cotton tree bark, given to them by attendants, who consisted chiefly of young Indians and women. Here were a number of skins and great hides stretched on square frames and set to dry in the air ; there, were to be observed a similar number spread on the ground, and undergoing the process of cleansing and dressing, by being soaked in bran-liquor and rubbed with yellow clay.

At each door was a family group, and every open space contained some portion of the population, variously engaged ; while now and then, over the heads of the others, and flitting between the tent-like habitations, could be obtained a glimpse of a mounted Indian in his floating plumes, threading the labyrinth of lanes and making his steed to caracole and dash along in the exuberance of his feelings, and perhaps with a desire to attract observation.

It was, altogether, a scene of splendour, vivacity and romance, which once beheld could never be forgotten. The richly ornamented garbs, the profusion of weapons, the bright colours, the shouts of

merriment and congratulation, heard on every side, as the traders were recognized and their friends came crowding around; the sharp note of command that brought the escort into close order, as they passed through the encampment: the occasional sound of sweet, irregular music, produced from the Indian flute, and, at times, drowned by the boomings of a harsh drum, together with the continual movement of the living throng—made a deep impression upon our travellers; though, as may be supposed, they were, by this time, somewhat familiar with the characteristics of social life among the prairie tribes.

Seldom had they fallen in with so powerful a subdivision of the Dahcotas, and never yet witnessed so gorgeous and chivalric a display as that before them.

Dismounting at the entrance of a great pavilion-shaped lodge, superbly painted and decorated, near which, by a war-staff hung with trophies, several high mettled horses were chafing in the hold of armed attendants belonging to the retinue of the principal chief; the guests were ushered into the interior where were assembled the heads and principal members of the community.

It was a large dome of skin, capable of containing several hundred persons, and hung around with shields, arrow-cases, and furry skins—the trophies

of war and the chase. At the extremity, on an elevated platform of hard clay, stood the Grand War Chief, Black Eagle; a noble looking potentate, full seven feet high, with a collar of ermine and bear's claws, and a tippet of the shaggy skin of the white bear, richly fringed. He wore, likewise, on his head, a lofty tiara of war-eagles' feathers, and held in his hand a long tufted spear: while, tall as he was, his hair trailed upon the ground. On the right of this Nimrod of the West, who, from his vast size and sovereign-like demeanour, seemed well fitted to preside over the destiny of a warrior race, against a block of wood there sat a no less conspicuous personage.

This was an Indian of more than a hundred years of age, but, palsied and hoary, almost as the skin of the white buffalo upon which he reposed, and robbed of what little stature his natural proportions could still claim, by the vicinity of the vigorous giant, who, from time to time, glanced down, protectingly, upon him. His hair was thin and of a glistening white, his eyes closed, his skin of a warm reddish bronze; as though the glow of the many sunsets he had lived to see had stained it with a kindred hue. His dress was a long loose shirt of the finest antelope skin, painted carefully with illustrations of the chief events of his life. Beside him

lay his peace pipe, notched on its stem with the number of winters he had passed, and on his lap was the sacred mystery-bag, or talisman of the Medicine-bows, which was regarded as the ancestral standard, whose possession was a guarantee of the national success.

It could easily be seen that he was the idol and patriarch of the clan—that feeble centenarian, from the distinguished charge conferred upon him, and the deferential tone in which they addressed and styled him—father.

This was the chief Tatunga had spoken of, under the cognomen of “the Horns of the Moon,” whose experience Conrad was anxious to consult, touching their recent discovery.

Upon their entrance, the Grand Chief made a signal, when several attendants spread buffalo robes on the floor for Conrad and his associates, together with the returned traders who, for the nonce, were received with the same honours accorded to the strangers; though, *par courtoisie*, the preference was given to the latter.

The great feathered calumet was then lighted and passed around, from each to each, in the usual manner, after which, in a few expressive words, Black Eagle bade them welcome to the lodges and hospitality of the tribe.

To which Conrad replied by stating the pleasure

it would give himself and friends to make the acquaintance of so brave and renowned a people whose relations—the Dahcotas that hunted nearer to the rising sun—they had already visited on their way thither. Then he alluded to the object of his journey, and particularly to the immediate purpose of his appearance there, and the finding of the unknown shield which he then produced and exhibited to the assembly.

Upon this a low buzz and a movement of curiosity arose in the crowd, which was instantly repressed by a monosyllabic command from Black Eagle, and a gesture of his arm.

The slight sensation, like a gush of wind, seemed to ruffle the current of the sage's thoughts, and endue with sudden life the torpidity of age; for he demanded, in a low, tremulous voice:

“Are my children mustering for the hunt, or do they hurl from mouth to mouth the bitter words? I heard a sound, as of Buffalo herds, when they scent the Dahcota in the wind. Is it so?”

“My father is very old,” replied Black Eagle. “His years are almost too much weight for him to bear.

“Let him rest. We are patient, and can wait for him to speak, if he be not strong enough.—Because he is of a great age and wiser than his children.

“There are strangers in the council lodge. They

have come to take advice of the father of the Medicine-bows. The voice of the time that was."

The old man listened attentively, and raising himself, with an effort, from his stooping posture, he opened his eyes and took a survey of the assembled crowd. Then he asked :

"What wouldst thou? The Horns of the Moon is old, as you say; but he must speak when he can. In a little, and his children will be by themselves. The Horns of the Moon must soon go up to his fathers. What wouldst thou?"

The shield was placed before his eyes by the chief, who drew his attention towards it by remarking,

"The Horns of the Moon is wise and has travelled among the nations. Can he tell his children what people make such bucklers as this to defend themselves with in battle? It is a matter beyond their understanding."

The old Indian regarded the attractive object with an interest that quickly increased into recognition, as a smile broke faintly over his impassive features, and lit up his horny eye.

"Copper-knife," he murmured, as though giving unconscious utterance to some reminiscence of early life awakened by the sight, "Copper-knife had a spirit that would not be content among his brethren. He strung his bow afresh, and filled his

arrow-case, and travelled leftward of the setting sun. He travelled many days, and bound fresh mocassins on his feet many times. In those years, there were no Medicine-dogs on the plains ; no, my children, not a single one. But what did Copper-knife care ? He was young, and supple as an antelope in the path. The Great Spirit had made him strong !

“So he reached a country where there were horned frogs, and water-lizards, large enough to swallow a man. Here he found a people who spoke, as it might be, the sound of his mother’s tongue when he speaks and the words are sent back to him from the hills. From this, he came to find out they were cousins to the Shoshonees, one of the branches of a great tree that had broken off, and gone left of the sunrise more than a thousand moons before. And he was glad, because the mother of Copper-knife was a Shoshonee.

“Now, beyond the hunting-grounds of this nation, there lived a people numerous and mighty, who owned a great country of plains and mountains, some of which spouted fire. These men had swept everything before them until they were masters of the land across a part of the big island on which we live ; they were called the Anahukas, and built lodges of stone.

"But after a time, a hairy people came up out of the sea upon Medicine-dogs, and drove the Anahukas back. They were terrible fighters, and none could stand before them. So they took possession of their great villages, and made them slaves. Those who remained, losing all heart, went with their friends, the Otomies, towards the sunrising, and wandered down upon the Comanche country, and seeing that, those men, the cousins of the Shoshonees, took up the hatchet, and beat them back.

"This, my children, was the tradition they told Copper-knife, of how the Medicine-dogs first came into this island, and why they went to war in that time."

Here the aged Indian ceased to speak, and seemed to be gradually sinking back into his former apathy, when the Grand Chief recalled his attention by saying :

"My father is wiser than his grandchildren, and has seen nations, and warriors on the path ; where was it he first saw a shield like the one before him ?"

"Copper-knife was a warrior, and leaped along the fighting-trail with his half-cousins, the Comanches ; that was brave !" resumed the patriarch, warming up into spontaneous energy, like a struck

flint, at the allusion to warriors, and the martial exploits of his youth.

“Who says that the tribes of the great Daheota are not brave?”

“Wakon-tunga gave them the high plains from the Ojibwas to these mountains, upon which you may look in the summer moon, and see snow. And he said to them, he, the master—be strong, and keep for evermore what I have marked out for your hunting-grounds, and stocked with buffalo, and other game.

“But when Copper-knife beheld the soldiers of Anahuka, he knew then that the Great Spirit had made others brave also, and men of might and cunning. They wore, some of them, clothes made of vegetable down, and some also that looked like woven sunbeams, and ornaments of stone. But these stones were brilliant, and many coloured, and some flashed, like sparks of fire, and some like woman’s eyes.

“They fought like evil spirits, but they called themselves, ‘children of the sun,’ and did not scalp those whom they slew, but strove, cunningly, to take their enemies alive to sacrifice them upon great altars of stone, which they built, not to one god, but to many.

"The Comanches lost many *Braves* on that war-path, and the Anahukas, a chieftain of renown.

"It was Copper-knife whose arrow made him die. It found its cunning way through his thick breast-covering of metal, more dazzling than the copper of the Ojibwas, and through flesh, rib and heart.

"Copper-knife saw him fall, and took his shield away from the place of battle as a trophy of what he had done, and flew like a hawk, on the backward trail with the worsted warriors.

"Now, my children, it was a shield as like as two stars to that before the eyes of The Horns of the Moon, who was called Copper-knife in that time."

"Can the father of the Medicine-bows tell what became of the nation that warred with the Comanches?" eagerly inquired Conrad, addressing himself to the old man, while he looked at Black-Eagle.

"Who can tell?" was the reply. "They sent a wampum belt to the great Wyandots of the sunrise, begging for help; but the path between them was very long, even for a bird to fly over, and not be weary. Perhaps they were all conquered at last by the hairy men of the sea. For, as the years began

to number many notches on my pipe-stem, the Medicine-dogs spread over all the plains, and the red men learned to ride and hunt upon them.

“The Horns of the Moon cannot believe what he has not seen, and his memory is of former days.

“Beware of lies, my children. They told me that those hairy men, of whom I spoke, made use of the thunder to destroy their enemies. Now, a wise man knows, that only to one thing alive has Wakon-tunga given the power to make thunder, and that it is hatched under a little bird’s wing.”\*

Here Couteau-croche stepped forth, carbine in hand : in all his wanderings, he had clung to this favourite weapon, though he used it but rarely of late, being careful of his ammunition.

“If my father will give me leave,” said he, “I will show him what the stranger can do in that way. He need only walk outside to witness for himself that, with this medicine-iron, I can make both

\* Such is the belief of the Sioux, who term the place in which this phenomenon is produced, “The nest of the thunder.” There is a difference of opinion in regard to the size of this wonderful bird ; some supposing it to be as small as a humming bird, while others assert that it is larger than an eagle.

thunder and lightning to kill, just like those hairy men, of whom I have heard before: since they are born of a great race of white people, to another family of which I partly belong. Then will my father believe it to be no lie."

This proposition was received with no little surprise, and incredulity by the assembly, and again a murmur of voices began to be heard in the council-lodge.

The old Indian made an effort to rise, in which he was immediately aided by Black Eagle; and supported on either side, he moved slowly through the throng towards the door, followed by the guests, principal chiefs, and *Braves*—the latter exchanging, among themselves, many a derisive smile, and whispered sarcasm, pointed at the bearded stranger who had presumptuously undertaken a task beyond the power of their greatest medicine-men, and which they were convinced would turn out a failure.

"Now," said Couteau-croche, when all were assembled, handling his charged weapon with an air of easy confidence, and a sense of his superiority to that unsophisticated crowd; "let Black-Eagle choose the staunchest *Brave* among his *Braves*, and let him take the toughest buckler he can find, and mount his horse, and hold it out upon his spear, at the

distance of half an arrow's flight. Then will he see the thunder pass through it from this hollow iron when The Horns of the Moon sounds the war-whistle three times.

This was soon done. For, called upon by the great chief, Two-sculls stationed himself at the required point, with a target elevated on the point of his lance. All were hushed and breathless with expectation when the first whistle sounded, and Couteau-eroche, with a sharp click, cocked his mysterious implement. At the second, he raised it to his shoulder, and at the shrill note of the third, aimed quickly and fired.

Never were such terror and confusion seen in that village before. A large proportion fell flat upon their faces as if dead. The sternest veterans who had never known what fear was, felt it then, and were utterly unmanned by this first experience of a power, which, in after times, they were fated to know only too well.

The aged guardian of the Medicine-bag was prostrated in a swoon at the shock ; while even the iron-soul of Black-Eagle shook, and his check grew pale.

To add to the confusion, several horses broke loose from their pickets, and rushed in frantic terror through the encampment, uttering horrible cries,

and trampling down men, women, and children in their passage; while those in hand became unmanageable, and employed the utmost skill of their riders to prevent themselves from being unhorsed upon the ground.

Nor was the wonder lessened when Two-sculls, having mastered his fractious charger and his own agitation, exhibited the shield—perforated in its centre with a small round hole—to the trembling and dumb-founded Indians, who, from that moment, sat down the two bearded foreigners, and particularly Couteau-croche, as great medicine-men, to whom nothing was impossible.

They were therefore treated with an extraordinary degree of attention and respect; a homage seldom withheld where there is belief in a power to injure, and self-interest suggests the policy of conciliation.

The Horns of the Moon was carried off to his lodge, where, being tended with anxious solicitude, he soon recovered sufficiently to bear ocular evidence of the effects of the white-man's thunder, which was found to have perforated, not only a well proven buckler, but the top skins of every lodge that stood in the line of fire.

He therefore sent straightway a messenger to the *voyageur*, avowing his entire satisfaction as to the

miracle itself ; but urging him, strongly, not to use the thunder any more ; " for it was a medicine too powerful for the hands of man, and some day might work contrarywise, and do to him as it done to the buffalo shield."

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## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE PEARL-TRADER—THE INDIAN GIRL.

CONRAD sat in front of the lodge appropriated to the use of the guests, pondering gloomily upon the unsuccessful issue of his interview with the Indian sage, on whom he had depended for a solution of the enigma which brought him again to a stand.

Disheartening indeed was it to have the prize for which he had laboured so long and arduously, ever snatched mysteriously away. To what far land would he be obliged to turn his steps now, in furtherance of an aim to which he had devoted his whole life and energies? Should he act upon the vague suggestions excited by what the old

Indian told him concerning the Anahukas, with whom he was compelled to identify the owner of the golden shield, who had, it seems, so quickly won the confidence of the fair captive? But he also asked himself, what right had he to suppose she would approve of any measures taken for her recovery, now that she had placed herself voluntarily under the protection of another? Was he authorized in following her, even thus far, by any marked preference on her part towards her one-time companion?

Did he not exaggerate the simple expression of her esteem into the semblance of a warmer sentiment? He seemed now to have suddenly awakened from a sleep, in which he had wandered miserably. He saw that his heart had foolishly deceived him into a long and unprofitable career, of which he suspected selfish gratification formed the true stimulus and aim.

He was humbled, mortified, degraded in his own esteem; his heart forsook him, and he now felt hopeless indeed!

Poor Conrad—we would not be sure that with all this, there was not mingled a strong twinge of jealousy at the interference of the unknown cavalier, and his power of persuasion with Ellen; but this would only have added to the pangs he

suffered. And those who have sobered into sudden reality, after a honeyed dream of years, will readily admit that our hero had reason to be supremely wretched on this occasion.

In short, he was so engrossed with his unhappiness, that, as his eyes coursed unconsciously over the rich tracery of the shield which, while he gazed upon it, seemed to harden and cool his heart—as if, like the fabled ægis, it could petrify into stone—he took no notice of a horseman who paused in passing, and honoured him with a deliberate and most peculiar stare.

“My brother is aweary with the crookedness of the trail, I see very well. Come! let him be cheerful. I can behold a little star far off, ever so little, now; but it will grow to a big sun, by and by. Come with me.”

“Where to?” inquired Conrad of Sewantus, for he it was who spoke;—some time after the curious stranger had gone past.

“To the traders’ lodge, and bring the shield.”

With this hurried explanation he followed his faithful friend, who, on more than one occasion already had proved a harbinger of good tidings.

Within a tent of somewhat unusual dimensions, the circumference of which was divided into numerous stalls, filled with bales of peltries, rare

furs, copper bars, hatchets, lance heads, and a variety of other stores, Conrad found a knot of traders collected round a personage to whom they were paying a marked deference, while occupied in soliciting his attention to their several wares.

This was a man of a light, cinnamon-coloured complexion, and a countenance that combined shrewdness and gravity in a remarkable degree; suggesting the idea of one who thought deeply, and was not easily led into an indiscretion. His cheeks and chin were fringed with a slight beard and moustache, which distinguished him particularly from those with whom he was.

His dress was also peculiar, though simple, and consisted of a long tunic of light blue cotton, with a black figured border, gathered at the waist by a broad girdle of several rich colours; long boots of brown leather, stamped with a fanciful design, and reaching to his knee, and a sort of turban of crimson cotton, wound symmetrically round his head, and hanging to the shoulder in tasselled ends, beneath which appeared his black hair, of a moderate length and very glossy.

There was an oriental repose about the stranger that struck Conrad, and a *suave* expression in his intelligent face which bespoke a refinement greater than that of his companions, whose lan-

guage he uttered with an accent peculiar and foreign.

This person no sooner caught a glimpse of Conrad, than cutting short the conversation with a terse remark, he made a secret sign for him to follow, and left the lodge.

Crossing the village together in silence, the two came to some lodges, apart from the rest, where they found several men in turbans, tunics and sashes of a similar description, who were engaged in grooming a number of beautiful horses, apparently just arrived from a journey.

Desiring two of these to be led up, the stranger gave a whispered injunction to an attendant, vaulted into the saddle, and nodded slightly to Conrad for him to follow his example, observing, as he did so,—

“The evening is fine, brother, suppose we ride.”

Leaving the village and cultivated fields behind, the two horsemen rode out into the plain, until they came to a tall, obelisk-like rock, on the top of which was a solitary pinion tree, when the stranger drew up and broke silence, and the following colloquy took place :

“Now we can speak without other eyes and

ears than our own being put to sentinel's duty. Let us be brief: I have seen your friend."

"Well?"

"You are a white skin."

"I am."

"In search of her who went with the owner of that shield."

"Admitted. Can you put me upon her trail?"

"I know not. There are things more difficult possible."

"You speak ambiguously. Whence come you?"

"I cannot tell."

"Your name?"

"They call me the Pearl-trader in these plains."

"Then what business has brought us together," added Conrad, somewhat impatiently: "the shadows of the mountains are spreading beyond us, and the snow-peaks already begin to redden."

"The pale Path-seeker is just," was the calm reply, as Conrad's companion raised his hand and looked at him intently, with one eye half closed—a habit common to him, when earnestly

engaged, that gave him an air particularly knowing, collected and impenetrable. "Moments are fine pearls, not to be squandered away like the patrimony of a fool; therefore will he pay attention to my words, if he be wise.

"He who speaks, has seen a face, not of the fashion of these plains, but something like yonder snow-cliff, white and red by turns, and shining with a light more glorious than the sacred fire.

"It was that of a woman: more he may not say.

"Now what he will do is this. He will endeavour to bring tidings that may be pleasant to the Pale traveller, because of his purpose, which is good, and for that the blood in his cheeks and the wave of his hair is the same as hers, and the light in his countenance; but on one condition."

"Name it!" demanded Conrad eagerly.

"The Pearl-trader must carry home that shield"

His first impulse was to comply with the stranger's terms at once, and deliver up to him the article just named, when the thought struck him, that all this was merely a pretext to obtain possession of a bauble which had attracted the

admiration of the other traders, and that, urged by cupidity, he was seeking to obtain his purpose by means of a cunningly planned deception. This restrained Conrad, who cautiously observed :—

“ I am a stranger, and unacquainted with the customs hereabout, but I have seen something of bartering among the red-people. Bring me the tidings you spoke of, or show some proof that the one you saw is the same as her I seek, and the buckler is yours.”

The trader smiled at the suspicion thus implied, but showed no sign of resentment ; only, he took from his breast a sort of scroll, folded map-wise, and with a crayon made some rapid and free touches upon one of its parchment-like divisions, which he held up before Conrad's eyes.

If the Medicine-bows were astounded at the explosive properties of gunpowder, the young German was thunderstruck after a different fashion, by the specimen of native skill now exhibited to him. There, in all the vraisemblance and life-like vigour of a faithful portrait, were sketched out the lineaments of Ellen—a master-piece of design !

The lover uttered a cry of joy, seized the

precious drawing, and inspired with full assurance of the integrity of the draughtsman, yielded him immediate possession of the shield, saying:—

“Forgive me, brother, if I mistrusted thee at first. Here is a pledge, indeed, that neither of us have been deceived. Restore the shield to its owner, with all speed, since you know him, and clear up this difficulty, whatever it be. Or why not speak freely now, and save needless delay?”

“The young soldier’s blood is hot and restive as that of a wild horse,” replied the trader; whose unmoved composure formed a marked contrast to the agitation of Conrad. “By and by, it will moderate and become cooled in the snow of years. Although I will meet him again, here, on the evening of the fourth day from now; ’tis a day of luck, and I may do him a service.

“If my head be stingy of its knowledge, young stranger, it is because, at the bottom of this business, there lies a secret which, were it told unwisely, would shake the foundations of these mountains, like a clap of thunder. Peace, brother.”

Here the conversation terminated, and turning

their horses' heads, they rode back silently to the village, where Conrad took leave of his sententious and inexplicable companion.

From inquiries subsequently made, relative to the individual with whom he had become so strangely associated, and who departed from the village, early on the following morning, Conrad found that his whole history was wrapped in an impenetrable mystery. Of his nation, plans, proceedings, nothing was really known ; if exception be given to the bare fact of his periodical visits to the Medicine-bows, with the ostensible object of barter, which was no sooner satisfied, than his face turned once more towards the West, and he disappeared among the entangling defiles of the adjoining hills, on his way, as was supposed, to some ultramontane nation, with whom they had never held any general or more direct intercourse.

That they must be a highly-ingenious and superior people, was sufficiently manifest from the specimens of rare workmanship which, by means of the strange trader, became distributed among the villagers. These were principally ear-rings and necklaces of mother-of-pearl, from the coast of the Western sea,—beautifully cut

and engraved, and a variety of clothes woven of the cotton-plant, and coloured with the richest dyes.

This was a fabric unknown to the wandering bands, eastward of the Rocky mountains, and filled the thoughts, waking and dreaming, of each *Dahcota belle*, who was fated to know no peace until she became the happy possessor of a garment of the foreign material.

There was also another branch of trade carried on by his means, from which the Indians derived unbounded satisfaction. At certain periods, he would arrive among them, accompanied by a few horses of a breed far superior to those caught wild, on the prairie; and which the principal chiefs and *Braves* were eager to purchase at any price.

For these productions, the trader received in exchange, copper, brass, and pipe-stone, buffalo-ropes, rare furs, and feathers, but all of the finest description only—which were carefully packed upon horses' backs by his attendants, four of whom, silent and resolute-looking men, usually accompanied him.

Being a mild and intelligent man, scrupulously just in his dealings and very liberal, his presence was hailed with joy by his customers,

who reserved for him the place of honour in each lodge, and at any council or festival which happened during his stay.

But there was an habitual reserve and a natural taciturnity about him that repelled undue freedom, and thwarted every attempt to ascertain his place of residence; this, in the end, left him in unmolested possession of what he was so determined to conceal.

Thus, up to the period when Conrad became acquainted with him, two years since the establishment of the band at that place, he was a welcome and privileged guest; yet, at the same time, in all but externals, as entirely a stranger as upon the first occasion of his entrance into the populous encampment; some time after it arose, one spring-day—like the creation of enchantment—dotting the lawns with its painted cones, between the wings of the mountains.

Prompted by an inquisitive humour, some young men had been induced, on one occasion, to track the homeward course of the unknown; but, after following him secretly for some distance, amid the sinuosities of the hills, they got perplexed and found their way back with great difficulty and loss of temper,

only to incur the ridicule of their companions. This failure caused the general curiosity to subside, as we have said, and led them to conclude that the trader was acquainted with an intricate pass, through the mountain-barrier, which conducted directly to his country, and which, for reasons of his own, he was anxious to keep a secret from the eastern tribes.

There were not wanting a few, however, who believed they could discern a character of diablerie in the matter, and consigned the Pearl-trader and his wares with emphatic brevity to the powers of evil; for, as they affirmed, they saw him in their dreams, performing his weird spells, and fabricating horses and jewellery, with the aid of the accursed spirits—between the ribs of the mountains. But this doctrine found little favour with the majority, as its principal advocates chanced to be those who were disappointed in obtaining the coveted and showy ornaments, that were the boast of their rivals.

Such was the substance of what Conrad elicited, concerning the person in whom he was now so strongly interested, possessing, as he evidently did, the power of communicating with Ellen's protector: and through whose agency

he hoped to penetrate to her place of refuge.

That evening there were sounds of music and rejoicing in the lodge of Tatunga, the brother of the Whirling-cloud, in honour of the triumph he had won over the enemy who had taken his scalp.

There sat the staid widow and her fatherless flock, under the roof-skin of their stern protector,—and there sat also two strange guests, who smoked their pipes with becoming dignity, and listened to some simple music with ravished ears. These were Salexis and Sewantus-walie.

Some of the children attended to the boiling of a large, bark kettle of green corn—by means of stones, which were heated in the fire outside, and dropped hissing into the vessel; and between whiles they listened attentively, and with an air of fascination, to the sweet tones produced by a young girl, from a flute of deer-skin, upon which she was playing.

This was a tall and slender maiden, beautifully formed, with large, lustrous, and dreamy eyes, a clear skin, of a pale russet hue, and limbs like a wild gazelle. Her black hair, parted on her fore

head with a red crease, was brought in two long plaits upon her breast, beside which it fell in rich bands on each side of her neck, where the rays of the fire played hide-and-seek among its glossy folds.

Her form was symmetry itself, and its swelling contour could be easily detected beneath the loose garment of striped cotton that covered, but did not conceal it: for, as though proud of the charms it was intended to hide, it clung wilfully, whenever it could, to the curving outlines, choosing rather to betray its trust than rob the fair possessor of her claims to regard.

Nor can it be said that the beautiful musician was an object of slight interest to any one in that domestic circle, as she sat, breathing forth with exquisite delicacy, and expression, a wild, irregular air from her rudely-fashioned instrument, while her eyes were lit up with a rapture which showed susceptibility to the deeper emotions, and that her whole soul was in the strain.

"I thank you very much, sister," said Salexis, as the girl finished playing, and put the flute aside with an air of naïve modesty, and confusion. "We have travelled somewhat, but never in a red man's lodge have we heard so good music before.

"There is a medicine in it, I think, for as I listened, I vanished back into a child again, a child among the pines, and rushing waters of my own land—that was strange!"

"Hee-lah-dee knows how to charm a warrior after the hunting, brother," observed Tatunga, with affability, and the gratified pride of a patron. "She is the flower of the Medicine-bows; he will not find among them many like Hee-lah-dee."

"Her music is like a mystery fountain to a thirsty man," said Sewantus-walie, "it only makes one long the more for it, the more one drinks it in. She should be called the gourd of sound; my ears are still athirst."

This was in complimentary allusion to her name, which signified "the Pure Fountain."

The maiden glanced up at the speaker timidly from under her long lashes, but dropped her eyes immediately again, while her cheeks, forehead, and throat became suffused with a richer hue than was natural to them.

"Hee-lah-dee can sing, too, as well as play," suggested the subdued widow of the Whirling-Cloud, coming to her relief with womanly tact; "the stranger has not heard her voice. It will make him glad."

This was a signal for numerous solicitations on all sides to obtain a song from Hee-lah-dee, in which the children joined; and one little urchin, with a round and roguish face, flinging himself carelessly into her lap, looked up with a coaxing earnestness in her face, and asked for the "Corn-song," which he said she had promised him. So that the maiden was fain to accede to the general wish, and placing her hand in a playful caress over the eyes of the child, was about to commence, when Tatunga interrupted the movement by suggesting, that it would be better to eat the corn first, and sing about it afterwards: a proposition warmly seconded by the elder children, who proclaimed that it was "cooked ready, now!" when, without further delay, the golden ears were extracted from the steaming vessel, dished in wooden bowls, and served round, smoking, to each member of the party.

No one took a mouthful, however, before Tatunga made the usual offering to the Great Spirit, by burning in the fire the largest ear, and waiting patiently until it was consumed. After this thanksgiving, the feast commenced, which received additional zest from an abundant supply of buffalo-marrow, the butter of the prairies, and a second course of *pomme - blanche*

pudding, flavoured with buffalo-berries, together with boiled rice, mixed with the desiccated paste of the wild cherry.

When the various utensils at length disappeared, and pipes were once more in requisition, Sewantus-walie reminded the fair minstrel of her promise ; and the latter, without further hesitation, began the following chant, in a clear voice, with an intonation indescribably impressive, and wild :

#### SONG OF THE CORN.

“O, the green corn ! the green corn !

“The women have plucked it from the fields, it is ripe and ready for the banquet.

“They have torn off its soft green hair.

“I heard a voice say—come to the festival. And the chiefs and war-braves, and the mystery-man painted with white clay ; and the little children came to the corn-dancing.

“For it is good to sing praises to the One who giveth corn !

“Our fathers did so, and our grandfathers ; were they not wise ?

“The moons of the year are many, but there is only One that brings green corn.”

“O, the green corn ! the green corn !

“I saw it when it was a little seed, and we planted it in the ground ; and after many days, behold ! it shot up in graceful leaves, and became a fruitful ear.

"Therefore must we offer up thanksgiving and burnt offerings, because of gratitude to Him who makes the sun to shine, and the corn to grow and to mature.

"Rice grows in the watery places, in the valleys grapes, roots on the high plains.

"The plains are covered with tracks of buffalo and deer.

"The whole earth is a banquet to the birds.

"What are the bow and lance, the war-mace, and the shield to the Master of Life—the Food Provider?"

"O, the green corn! the green corn!

"Let there be praise and rejoicing in this harvest time, for the Great Spirit loveth not sadness.

"I looked at the morning, and the noonday, and the eve, and they were joyful with a living joy.

"In the snow-season I felt lonely for the green things that were dead; but a voice said—they only slumber—and it was so.

"It is good to hunt, and to go to war, and to do reverence by fasting.

"But it is better still to sing songs of gladness, and to feast cheerfully in the time of harvest.

"Of all moons in the year, I love best the moon of the corn gathering.

"O, the green corn! the green corn!"

The Indian girl concluded the last line of this simple recitative with a lingering cadence of passionate and inspiring melody, that elicited a burst of applause: and the young Mohawk, loosening

from his wrist a bracelet of purple wampum, presented it with much courtesy to the songstress, who permitted him to attach it to her round arm, which seemed to glow and thrill with excitement, while her check flushed, and her cotton garment rose and fell in quick succession like the swell of the sea, with the agitation of her efforts.

This, perhaps, was the reason Hec-lah-dee could not find words wherewith to thank him, for she strove very hard to do so ; but, if that were the case, she made ample amends for the omission, by directing many a furtive glance at the handsome stranger, whenever her instinct told her that he was looking another way. And the children, young rogues as they were, remarked that their favourite paid less attention to them than she was wont, and quickly divining the cause, commenced already to hate the unconscious giver of the bracelet.

The maiden herself could claim no relationship, save that of kindness, to those with whom she lived ; and her history was one that furnished a striking example of the disaster incidental to the predatory races of the plains.

The brother of Tatunga, many years before, being on his return from a mission to the Konzas, a nation then situated near the Council

Bluffs of the Missouri, came to a place upon the prairie where an encampment had lately been; for there were to be seen numerous lodge-poles, fragments of skin coverings, and various implements of domestic use; but scattered about, broken, and half consumed.

Yet a more mournful sight than these soon met his eye; the mutilated bodies of men, women, and babes, lying stark and stiff upon the moss, amidst the wreck-strewn abodes.

The Whirling-cloud beheld this spectacle with a sad heart, wondering what people it was that had been thus cut off from the land, and who their enemies were; when all at once the end of a scorched buffalo robe was softly raised, and the head of a beautiful little girl peeped out timidly at the stranger, who seized her kindly in his arms, and bore her away from the scene of slaughter which she alone survived, and brought her up as his own child.

At the time of the catastrophe that had swept her kindred from the earth at a single blow, she was too young to retain a very vivid impression of what she had seen: and by the time she was able to converse, in the language of her new protectors, her answers gave but a vague clue to her

origin, and the nature of the circumstances under which she was discovered.

The amount of her knowledge was, that her name was Hec-lah-dee, which meant, "the pure fountain;" that she loved her mother very much, and that wicked men came one night and put them all to death; all but her, for she hid herself until they departed, when the sun rose, and shortly after some one came and took her away.

She grew and unfolded into womanhood among strangers, therefore—this transplanted flower—without a suspicion of her lineage, or a remembrance of her mother-tongue, beyond the euphonious name which had clung to her from the first, because it sounded agreeably to the ears of her Dahcota friends, who soon learned to love the winning girl, to whom they had given an asylum, as much as they admired her for her personal attractions. She was, in fact, the pride and idol of the family of the Whirling-cloud, whose death had thrown her as a pensioner upon the bounty of his brother; a terrible mortification to Hec-lah-dee, who was by nature high spirited and noble, and impatient of incurring an obligation which she could not repay.

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certainly take the fair *protégée* to his lodge at last ; but neither of the parties chiefly concerned appeared to anticipate such an issue ; and though, abstractly it might be considered a very natural supposition, to closer observers it was a very improbable one. For Hee-lah-dec laughed and sang, and warbled upon her deer skin flute, and Tatunga pursued his field avocations with the *Braves*, as though neither knew or cared a jot if the other existed. Could love be there ?

## CHAPTER XVII.

A SECRET ENTERPRISE—THE MOUNTAIN PASS AND THE  
HAUNTED CAVE.

THE sun was sinking westward over the frozen peaks, and throwing deep shadows on the grassy plains from the barrier that stood so grandly on its confines, with its steeps and ridges glowing in the yellow light, and its gorges filled, as it were, with an aërial gloom, through which it could not penetrate.

The soft breath of evening was fragrant with aromatic odours from the plains, and tempered to a delicious coolness by the currents wafted from the glaciers. There was about the scene a character of sublimity and repose peculiar to the time, and inseparable from a landscape of such

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vast and simple materials, the outlines of which comprised, on one side, an illimitable prairie, and on the other, an almost unlimited maze of mountains, whose summits seemed to melt away and mingle with the heavens.

The great soul of nature in an essence appeared to pervade it, and to rest upon the broad area as on a couch. And had you been there at that most meditative hour, your spirit would have humbled itself even to oppression in the awe of the universal hush that was in the earth and air, and you might have deemed it not a fantasy that you stood within the precincts of a temple, and before a presence in which it was a duty and a luxury to pray.

These sentiments obtained at least an echo in the heart of Conrad as he waited by the isolated rock, and gazed with an exalted sense of the glory of the divine architect upon the solitude over which the sun then threw its parting ray. It was the first time he had been abroad since his conference with the stranger at that spot—the appointed rendezvous for their next meeting, the time of which was now arrived.

The orb of day fell behind the mountains, and the whole plain was cast into shadow; still no living object appeared upon its wide expanse, and

Conrad began to feel overburdened with the intense stillness and solitude around, and a vague sense of uneasiness stole over him. "If he deceive me," he thought, with a pang; but the suspicion was shortlived, for at the instant, a dot was descried at the extremity of a collateral branch of the mountain chain that ran curving into the plain. It was in rapid motion, for as he watched it, the distance between it and the cape widened perceptibly. A stray buffalo or deer, perhaps; no, for it advances rapidly, in a direct line, towards the rock; it increases in dimensions; now it takes the outline of a horseman at full speed; another moment, and Conrad with joy is enabled to recognise the figure and crimson turban of his stately emissary, who soon drew up his foam-flecked steed within a few paces of the spot where he awaited him.

"The pale Path-seeker is at his post," was his salutation. "Has he been tarrying long?"

"No," replied Conrad. "The mountain tops are only commencing to grow red. The Pearl-trader has kept his word."

"And succeeded."

"Speak! What have you done? Is the trail recovered?"

"It was never lost," was the enigmatical reply

of the unknown, who, with a propitious smile, immediately added: "Be of good cheer, brother. I am come to guide you where you wish to go. Let us rest to-night in the village. To-morrow we can depart before the sun rising. Are you content?"

"More than you can believe, my friend. I have not heard such welcome words for many a day as those you have just spoken; but still, one question,"—he hesitated.

"I am listening."

"Do we go alone?"

"That has already been decided."

"In what manner?" demanded Conrad, with surprise.

"This. The white traveller can choose from his companions one upon whom he can depend for fidelity and caution; this one alone can accompany him where the Pearl-trader leads the way."

Conrad mused for some moments, during which he turned over this proposition in his mind, and at length said—

"It is well."

And the matter being thus arranged to the extreme satisfaction of one at least of the parties, they rode off together in the direction of the

village discussing minor details ; and by mutual consent, separated at the outskirts of the encampment, when each betook himself to the quarter in which his lodge was situated, as it was not deemed prudent to be seen together oftener than they could help while within its inquisitive confines.

That evening Conrad consulted his friends, and made his final arrangements, pursuant to the instructions he had received.

Sewantus-walic was the one whom he selected to be his companion, a proposal readily agreed to on the part of the former, and approved by Couteau-eroche and Salexis, who designed to profit by the interval, in making a hunting excursion to the neighbouring hills, which abounded in several species of game entirely unknown to them, which they were impatient to attack, being roused by the stories told by the Medicine-bows, who wore about them the spoils obtained in their personal encounters with the savage denizens of those alpine recesses, with as much pride as the trophies won in battle from their human antagonists.

Conrad in this proceeding was guided by his secret predilection for the young Mohawk, whose age and tone of mind approached nearer to his

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own, and who was better able to sympathize with him in every respect, than his elder associates.

During their years of companionship they had learned to know each other well, and become closely knit by a congeniality of feeling, and that participation in adventure which is conducive to such strong friendship between man and man. Conrad beheld in Sewantus all that he imagined him to be, when struck with his exterior at their first meeting in the Mohawk town ; and believing him to be by nature superior to himself in many respects, and inferior in none—except in the mere hue of his skin, if that were a national exception—he felt a certain pride in claiming him as an equal and familiar friend, one with whom he could converse of those winged desires and beautiful recollections which made the frame-work of his inner life ; that spiritual being which broods within us—like the *imago* in the worm—a thing apart from the common experience in every individual breast, that we hug to ourselves as a treasure of which nothing can despoil us,—neither the world's cupidity nor misfortune's frown.

With this pure son of the forest, noble in lineage as in instinct,—who trod the soil with the assured step of a freeman and the dignity

of a nature that had never lost its original bias for the generous and great, or become stunted into the hackneyed insipidity of convention—Conrad felt himself under no restraint, so he made him the confidant of his hopes and dreams; and consoled himself thus, under his long bereavement, by reiterating to his patient ears, the history and excellencies of his lost Ellen, together with endless speculations concerning her, and the probabilities of her recovery.

At early dawn the two friends saddled their horses, armed themselves with care, and leaving their comrades to excuse their unceremonious departure to the chiefs, shook them warmly by the hand, with a mutual prayer for each other's welfare until they all met again; and took their way quietly through the irregular lanes of the slumbering village, without exciting observation, as none but themselves were abroad at that early hour.

By preconcerted plan, they were joined by the Pearl-trader at the solitary bluff, and putting their horses to a brisk trot, they doubled the jutting promontory that divided the bay-like plain from the grand prairie, to the south-west, and skirting the base of the high-grounds bor-

dering the mountains beyond, were fully launched upon their hopeful but mysterious adventure.

The morning vapours, rarified by the sun's first rays, were already beginning to ascend, and gather in fantastic wreaths upon the escarpments and summits of the mountains: when the guide, upon searching a particular bluff, turned abruptly westward into a dark defile that ran within the bosom of the hills. Their course was now marked by frequent irregularities, caused by the capricious windings of the ravines, and the inaccessible steeps and broken masses of rock that keep continually facing them, as they penetrated deeper into the fastnesses of that wild chaos, where the tread of their horses reverberated in startling echoes, among caverns and precipices, threatening, each moment, to bring down an avalanche of earth and stones upon their heads.

The herbage soon became scanty and stunted, and the austere foliage of the pines that bristled upon the ridges, only added to the sombre character of the scenery. Here they beheld, hundreds of feet above them, and standing at the edge of some dizzy ledge, the ahsahta, or big-horn; that strange animal with the body

of a deer and the head of a sheep, surmounted by enormous horns, with which it breaks the impetus of its downward leaps from crag to crag, by striking first upon their curves. This wary creature would peer down inquisitively at the horsemen, from its elevated perch, without moving a limb ; or seized by a sudden panic, bound away, with astonishing agility, to some less accessible peak, far out of the track of the intruder.

The guide seldom spoke except in warning, as they skirted some frightful chasm by a narrow shelve which, projecting from the mountain side, gave barely a footing for the horses, and where a false step would have hurled them upon the jagged fragments, at an indefinite depth below. But he kept on without hesitation or pause, threading, by landmarks known only to himself, the labyrinthine courses of the various torrents that channeled the face of the upper range with deep, intersecting furrows ; which, in some places, were almost impracticable on account of the huge blocks of stone, that seemed to have been torn by a mighty convulsion, from the neighbouring cliffs, and piled within them in shapeless heaps, to bar the passage from man.

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These savage features were softened down into transient beauty by the occasional intervention of a fertile plain, or some beautiful lake set, like a jewel, in the recesses and overhung by beetling cliffs of granite and the more elevated snow range,—whose solemn and icy spires were reflected in grim fidelity within its depths.

By dint of incessant exertion, and surmounting in succession, ridge after ridge, the travellers accomplished the ascent, and arrived at a point within the region of perpetual snow: where above them appeared, in all their naked severity, the pinnacles of the grand peaks, cutting sharply against the blue sky, and looking, in their solitude, like the wan ghosts of mountains, that sent a chill to the blood with their frozen vastness and repose.

Here the guide stopped, and took off his turban with an air of reverence, saying:—

“The stranger must not cross this place without doing homage to the Invisible. The Cause of Causes.”

“Where are we now?” demanded Conrad.

“Upon the crest of the world!” replied the guide. While in illustration, he pointed with

both his arms downwards, in a direction East and West.

Never in all their visions of glory did the two wanderers conceive a prospect as stupendous and sublime as that they now beheld. It would have repaid a week of toil—one look from that mountain-summit ?

Beneath, and on three sides, from the point where they stood, the eye embraced an extent of country that appeared immeasurable, from its vastness and the imposing arrangement of its parts—each being spread out with its minutest detail, conspicuous, as in a map: for so pure and transparent was the atmosphere of those elevated regions, that an object not larger than a buffalo or elk, could be plainly distinguished at a distance of twenty miles—sometimes suspended in the air, by refraction.

There, beside and before them, were snowy peaks and rock-crowned ridges, and the waving outlines of lateral spurs, falling away in lessening profile, with a variety of shapes and hues—caverned into dark gorges, enclasping smiling valleys, and severed by rugged defiles. Amid these fastnesses, wild and impervious as they

seemed, wound many a rill and torrent, now lost, and now plunging in a glistening cascade through the air, from some steep in its passage to the plains, into which the last heavings of the landscape melted and spread out, leagues upon leagues away—like the subsidence of a sea.

Over this wide space the sunshine gleaned and floated in an ether of pale gold which disclosed at intervals again, the track of the mountain waters: now united and forming estuaries, that glided on composedly through the prairie-bottoms, by many a shadowing bluff and narrow pass, until they were lost in the hazy perspective, or amid the defiles of a mountain chain which could be descried, with its blue ridges, fringing the horizon.

They were standing upon the summit of the North American continent, and from its mighty spine beheld the secret origin and infancy of the streams that fertilize the vast countries through which they flow into the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Here the earth, convulsed, threw off her robes and lay with rib and member bleaching in the winds and snow-drifts of eternal winter; a huge skeleton, frigid, gaunt and barren.—

There sweet summer held her reign, and scattered blessings and abundance over the wide table lands that stretched to the foot of the dividing barrier.

Conrad and his companion were struck dumb by the overpowering grandeur of the spectacle, and for some moments they gave it the entire homage of their souls.

"Behold!" said the guide, drawing attention to a broad river that curved south-westward from the mountain ravines through which it rushed in a thread of foam to the lower level, where it wound away and was lost.—

"Behold, strangers! You are the first of the people of the far sunrise, who ever looked upon the fountain-head of that stream!"

"I am like a man amazed!" observed Sewantus; "I see many waters running both ways when I look before and behind. That one must lead through a country close to the evening sun. I did believe the world ended with these mountains—I was a fool!"

"The world is large," replied the guide.

"And where does yonder river empty itself at last?" asked Conrad.

"Into the Gulf of Pearls."

"Is it from thence are brought the beau-

tiful shells which you sell to the Medicine-bows?"

"Even so," was the reply. "It is an arm of a great ocean into which the sun drops when it sets."

After breathing their horses, and feeding them on corn-leaves, the three travellers commenced the descent, being glad to get once again within shelter of the cliffs, from the icy gusts that roared around the snow-summits in their rear; and following the course of a narrow fissure-like defile, they crossed and recrossed several times the tortuous branches of the stream, before-mentioned, which has since received the appellation of the Colorado of the West.

Once more, they were struggling among cliffs, fragments of rock, and ragged water-channels, rent in the granite hills: where the plunge of some fierce cataract gave animation to the solitude, and reverberated with a sound, like thunder, among the precipices. And by close of day, emerging from the wilder gorges, they dismounted in a secluded vallon, green and flat, and watered by a lake-like expansion of a mountain rivulet, formed by a colony of beavers that had erected a dam across its path, and overflowed

the grassy plat—a mere shred as it was, in that wilderness of sterile hills.

Here the guide led them to a cave, hollowed in the side of the rock, and partially open to the sky, where they found a supply of food, and buffalo-skins: for it was the usual resort of the trader in his journeys to and fro. It now offered a commodious lodging-place to the weary travellers, and they took possession of it at once: for the night had already set in.

Their strange conductor did not dispose himself to rest at the same time as themselves, however; and ere Conrad closed his eyes, he observed him to produce, by some inexplicable means, a blaze of ruddy light, and kneel before it in devotion, until it flickered, and expired. To the European, he resembled one of the magicians of the East, engaged in some mischievous necromancy as, with his astute face and striking costume, he bent over the flame. Could he, in very truth, be holding commune with the genii of those wild mountains, and were the floating rumours regarding him, not after all, the offspring of ignorant prejudice as he had supposed them to be? Conrad was startled at the suggestion, but his weariness proved greater than his alarm,

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and soon consigned him to the dominion of sleep.

He woke with a start, and a consciousness that his slumbers had been disturbed in an unusual manner, though by what, he could not possibly imagine.

Now, in the middle of the vaulted chamber was a small basin of water collected in a hollow, formed by the constant drippings of the roof overhead, which, as already stated, was somewhat imperfect: probably from the same cause—the infiltration of moisture from the cliff above.

It was broad daylight, and Conrad's face, as he lay, was turned towards this reservoir, which shone, like a mirror of quicksilver, in the external light, when in it he saw reflected, with terrible distinctness, a man's face, glaring at him with a savage eagerness, and malignancy, that curdled the blood in his veins.

He could not speak or move for a time, while the eyes of the phantom fixed themselves upon his own, and a grim smile contracted its lineaments with a sudden spasm. As soon as Conrad could shake off the paralysis that seized him at this apparition, he sprang up from his couch upon the stone-floor, with a wild cry, and rushed

to the side of the enchanted basin ; but the face had disappeared !

The others, awaking in alarm, demanded the cause of the uproar when, ere Conrad could reply, a shrill, tremulous sound from without echoed through the cavern ; such as a horse will utter when under the influence of terror.

Seizing their arms, they sallied forth, but without being enabled to detect anything unusual, though the horses were much excited, and had torn up their pickets and retreated, trembling violently, to that part of the dell the furthest removed from the cave.

The guide, however, was disposed to treat the matter very lightly : at least so thought Conrad, when he related what he had seen upon being startled from slumber, as he now supposed, by the warning cries of the horses.

He accounted for the incident in the following manner :

The mountains in which they were, he said, solitary as they appeared to be, were not really so, being inhabited by a strange race of people, diminutive and harmless, who fed upon roots, dried ants, and such small animals as they were able to ensnare by the simplest methods,

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and without much pains. These people lived in caves among the rocks and burrows dug in the ground; and clothed themselves in skins, chiefly of the sage-rabbit.

They were timid to a degree: flying from the approach of the traveller with the speed of the mountain-sheep, to their secret haunts, where few had the temerity to follow them; while there was but little about them to excite the cupidity of the nations of the plains, for they were like the animals in their mode of living, and miserably poor. Thus, he informed them, they were seldom to be seen, except by stealth, and always in the most inaccessible parts of the hills. On one occasion, he believed, that he himself was in their neighbourhood; for he observed streams of smoke issuing from a lonely dell among the cliffs, and heard their voices calling to one another. But he never wished to molest them, and so passed on: for, as he repeated, they were a poor inoffensive people worthy of pity for their destitute condition.

"Now," added the trader, addressing Conrad, "I believe one of these folk, being secreted in this vicinity, could not resist the curiosity to take a peep at the strangers while they slept, and

so climbed up to the opening in the roof, when the horses caught a sight of his wild figure, and gave the alarm. It must have been the face of one of the "Pigmies of the rocks," which my brother saw in the pool while he was looking down at him from the hole above."

This was a most rational explanation, it is true, nevertheless, it had greater weight with Sewantus than his friend.

The face lately beheld was associated too closely with the darkest recollection of his life, and too correctly portrayed upon the watery mirror to render such a solution of the phenomenon conclusive. Added to which, his mind was too much excited then to take a deliberate view of the subject, or to admit the possibility of his being deceived by a coincidence merely; for in the spectral countenance he recognized the repulsive features of his cruel taskmaster and enemy, Bizon-ko-kok-has, the Abenake sorcerer!

Never dreaming of his identity with the captor of Ellen, Conrad strove in vain to account for his presence, were it not that he possessed the power of transporting himself thither by his secret spells, or of revealing himself to him as a phantom. The early dread with which the

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maniac had inspired him, was never entirely obliterated; what peace of mind then could he enjoy, while under an impression that either in the flesh or the spirit, that malignant shape was dogging his footsteps, and hovering secretly around him?

Occupied with these thoughts, which threw a gloom upon every object in his way, our hero followed in silence the route chosen by his companions, that soon led them out upon the slopes of the grass covered plains. They had accomplished the passage of the Rocky Mountains.

Keeping along the foot of the great escarpments, and pursuing a southerly course, they traversed an open prairie which divided from the main chain an isolated group of hills that towered up in front of the travellers, covered to the verge of its snow crests with forests of cedar, pinion, and the several varieties of the pine.

Skirting this for some time, the guide, to Conrad's surprise, turned abruptly into a narrow ravine conducting into the heart of the sierra, and they soon found themselves again ascending between precipitous steeps and over elevated ranges, but which were far less broken and sterile than those they had lately left—and

moving in a direction contrary to that of the preceding day, for the sun shone directly in their faces.

It was near noon when the guide called a halt, and dismounted from his horse.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GRAND SECRET IS DIVULGED.

THEY were now close to a sheer wall of rock that stretched as far as the eye could discern, on each side, and formed a belt upwards of a thousand feet in altitude, that no human effort could cross. Up to this led the narrow defile they had pursued, and here it terminated; while through its middle ran a rapid torrent, bubbling and sparkling among the obstructions in its course; and this issued from a remarkable opening, higher than a horseman's head, which it had worn seemingly, by its own action, through the hard material of the rock.

"Now," said the Pearl-trader, with a solemn

and stern voice, holding up his arm;—"children of the far sunrise, swear by the Invisible, the holy Cause of Causes, that neither of you will ever reveal to man what I am about to show you—not to your dying day!"

"I swear," replied Conrad, "in the name of the Christian's God, if it so please thee;—why, I know not."

"And you," rejoined the trader, turning to Sewantus; "your skin and lineaments are different, but, if I judge aright, your heart is full of faith; hast thou too a God?"

"The son of Kanarakos is of a people who keep promises," was the proud reply. "They believe as their fathers believed, and call upon the Great Spirit when they pray."

"Then swear likewise, after thy fashion, to do this thing."

The Indian took his bow in his left hand, and drawing an arrow from his quiver with the right, pointed with it to the sky, to the ground, and to his breast; and then kissed the bow. This ceremony, the most sacred and binding with an Indian, was an emphatic adjuration; importing that if he failed in what was required of him, the Master of Heaven and Earth might pierce him to the heart with his own weapons.

"Enough!" said the trader. "I believe you both to be trustworthy, else the sun would not have shone on us three here, to-day."

As he spoke these words, he stepped a few paces aside, and drew forth, from a fissure in the rock, a conch-shell and three torches of resinous-pine. These latter he ignited by the aid of some mixture which he carried about him, and in a manner similar to that already witnessed in the cave. Putting one of these into the hands of each of his companions, the guide rode out midway into the torrent, bent forward within the archway from whence it issued, and blew a peculiar blast upon the conch: which echoed in wild peals through the tunnel and among the neighbouring cliffs, and died away in a faint shriek, far in the bowel of the mountain.

The effect was such as caused the two foreigners to tremble as they sat, with wonder and superstitious dread. The water which before had foamed and curled upon his horse's breast, was sinking rapidly!—it reached only up to the fetlocks now. Wily enchanter! was he drawing them into his unhallowed toils, and about to deliver them as up victims to his confederates? "Not so," thought they.

"Follow!" shouted the guide, waving his

torch as he entered the rocky archway; "The path leads through the stone."

But neither advanced or moved from where they stood, the silent witnesses of the miracle wrought by the sound of the horn; and the intimation was repeated in vain.

"We cannot do that which may be unlawful," said Conrad, gravely. "Thy power savours of what is forbidden in the Christian's creed. Heaven defend us from thy treachery—sinful man!"

"He is a servant of the bad Manitous," muttered Sewantus, in warning. "He can turn us into stone as we stand, man and horse,—at a word!"

"Follow in the path!" shouted the leader, for the third time, with imperturbable composure: taking no notice of the accusations.

"Where will it take us?" demanded Conrad, ironically.

"To the pale-faced virgin," was the quiet reply.

"Then for thy sake will I face this deadly peril,—for thy sole sake, Ellen!"

And forming this resolution in his heart, the young man clenched the reins firmly, and made his horse plunge, with a bound, into the bed of

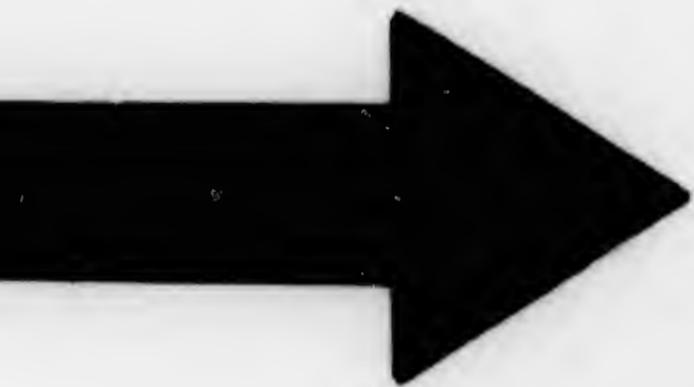
the torrent; the water of which was now stationary at the depth of a few inches only.

Sewantus was not the man to forsake a friend in extremity; and ere they well knew what they were about, the two were following in the track of the stranger, and already far in the interior of the mountain: groping their way through the long gallery, by the light of the smoking torches, and making its wall resound with the plash and clink of their horses' hoofs over the submerged floor.

After pursuing their course thus for some time in a gradual ascent, the guide turned off into a second tunnel-like gallery to the left, the sides and bottom of which were dry and smooth. This had a steeper inclination than the first; having served, apparently, as an ancient water-channel at a higher level. Here they were soon brought to a stand; for the passage terminated in a massive door of metal, knobbed and ribbed, and covered with green corrode from the humidity of the vault. The guide gave three stout blows upon it.

He had no sooner done so, than an opening appeared, through which poured a beam of brilliant light, and a voice challenged in a language unknown to the strangers, but not to their con-





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ductor, who sent back a ready reply. The tones sounded gruff and unnatural, and rang along the subterrene in fiendish discord:—the jeering laughter, it might be, of the malicious earth-demons, within whose sepulchral realm the two friends fully believed themselves to be.

Slowly, and with a creak, that pierced to the marrow of the bones, the door rolled back and disclosed to their dazzled eyes—no hideous spectacle or device of the wizard Gnomes—but the familiar light of day, which glistened on the arms of a guard of soldiers, in tunics of white cotton, and with pikes and targets, drawn up in array on each side of the portal; while stood to receive them a mounted cavalier, with plumed helmet, mantle, shield, and lance—almost the counterpart of him Notokcel had described, as the friend of the captive Ellen.

Conrad and Sewantus followed their conductor, who was ushered through the open ranks with the deepest respect, by the chief of the band, and rode on in advance conversing with him in the same strange accents they had already heard; and at every step their wonder increased at what they saw.

They found themselves within the purlieu of a valley, only a few miles in extent, and completely

enclosed on every side by vertical cliffs, above which towered, in endless irregularity, the more elevated ridges and snow-summits of the mountain.

Beneath, gleaming like an emerald in its zone of rock, appeared a magnificent plain, teeming with cultivation, and interspersed with groves. But the interest of the strangers was soon engrossed by a more remarkable feature.

A beautiful lake wound through the centre of the vale, with wooded promontory and shadowy bay, stretching far into the distance, and intersected, as it were, by belts of forest and meadows, that swept to its verge. In the midst of this sheet of water was a group of small islets, covered with foliage, above which several golden pinnacles shot up and glittered, like tongues of flame, in the sunshine; and by the opposite shore, to the left, half hidden by intermediate groves, were visible the edifices of a city, in all the splendour of white, vermilion, and gold, and reflected with its pyramids and towers, like a mirage in the lake. Nor was this all; for, in every direction, through the screen of woods, hamlets and clusters of habitations, with an occasional tower, all of a dazzling white, caught the eye—and contrasted pleasingly with the verdure.

The two friends could scarcely believe that this lovely picture was not a cheat of the eye, wrought by enchantment to deceive them: and expected, each moment, that the stately city—the lake, with its isles and groves—would vanish into empty air, and leave in their place only the rude sterility of the defiles they had so lately travelled.

No effort of romance could surpass the magnificence of the scene before them.

High over the great rampart that barred this wondrous retreat, seemingly, from the external world, the clouds and gauze-like mists were floating in long wreaths, as on the surface of an upper-lake, while through them pierced the white cones of the glaciers—the rocks of that aerial sea—which surmounted all, and crowned the whole amphitheatre with a serriced phœnix.

No sound of life arose from the distant city or the surrounding fields. Every thing was motionless; even to the water in the centre, which filled a narrow river that ran meandering along towards them, and terminated abruptly, at a dyke of stone close by, near the face of the mountain-wall at the subterraneous entrance of the valley.

But when, by a glance, more rapid than words,

they had made these observations, a sudden change occurred; a ringing sound, as of struck metal, vibrated through the air from behind, and at the signal a number of men appeared upon the dyke, and drew back, by means of cordage, a sliding gate in its middle, when out rushed a flood from the river above, into a deep hollow, whence it disappeared, almost immediately, in a chasm of the mountain to which it led: thus sealing up once more the passage of the secret gallery, and offering an easy explanation of the manner in which the supply of the torrent had been retained.

This natural solution of a phenomenon that had so disconcerted them, went very far in restoring the confidence of our adventurers: who now noticed for the first time, the portal from which they had just issued.

The door was of bronze covered with devices, like arabesques, in compartments, and surrounded by a massive frame-work set in a facing of black-marble, which projected in a porch from the rock, and was ribbed and over-run with an elaborate scroll-pattern.

On either side, in alto-relievo, appeared a colossal form, chiselled on the flat surface of the mountain, with its head to the entrance.

One was an image of the great Mastodon, the elephant of ancient America; a huge skeleton, perfect in every bone, with long tusks curving upwards, and massive claws: the other, that of an unknown quadruped, with its tusks turning down. Over and between these, was the figure of a great sun, with a periphery of waving rays, that shone with the lustre of gold.

"The Pearl-trader can tell us if we be in the blessed hunting-grounds," observed Sewantuwalie; as they took their way along a broad, well-beaten road, leading in the direction of the city. "A warrior must have time to prepare himself. It is not meet for him so to enter into the presence of his fathers."

"The child of the sunrise is in the vale of Lahunzel where the living abide," was the reply. "It is not very large, but it is blest."

"And yourself: are you in sooth, a mere dealer in earrings and cotton fabrics, as they said you were?" asked Conrad incredulously.

"Among the Dahcotas, it is even so; here, in my native land, I am better known. They call me Tazincó—the Shrewd."

"A good name!" rejoined the questioner: who thought, nevertheless, that it would be quite as appropriate with the affix of — the Taciturn,

instead; so little could they extract from their uncommunicative companion.

And now, as they advanced along the lake, by which the road ran, fringed on each side by an almost continuous grove of aged and umbrageous trees that gave a grateful shelter from the sun, the various objects that greeted them proclaimed their approach to a large and prosperous resort. There were broad fields of maize, ripe and ready to be gathered in; large plantations of cotton, tobacco, and the *cactus cocinifer*, or cochineal-fig, on which that curious insect is reared; together with an abundant growth of the maguey, or American aloe, with its erect, flowering stem and crown of leaves. In various places were seen patches of wild-rice, running into the shallows of the lake. Orchards laden with fruit, and gardens of flowers of every form and hue, charming the eye and intoxicating the senses with their fragrance; while, in the pasture-lands and scattered through the groves, the strangers saw herds of domesticated buffaloes, in aspect unlike their fierce progenitors of the prairies: flocks of feeding turkeys, of the superb, wild-breed; and, now and then, a group of beautiful horses enjoying the luxury of repose, under the

shade of some cool clump that diversified the level borders of the lake.

Besides this were noticed signs of a numerous population : for from the orchards and harvest-fields came shouts and laughter, and half hidden in the trees appeared frequent habitations, some of wood, thatched with aloe-leaves, and some of stone coated with lime.

And by glimpses, over the water were beheld the walls of a distant hamlet in some miniature bay, while to and fro, on the surface of the lake, moved several piraguas, or canoes of wood, propelled by the paddle, and loaded with fruit and flowers ; or filled with gaily dressed people, belonging to the neighbouring city.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### LAHUNZEL.

THE progress of the travellers was a series of surprises from the time of their admittance into this unknown haunt; each pace of their horses seemed but to give birth to some fresh enchantment greater than the last.

Here, in a recess by the road-side, under a canopy of leaves, was a fountain of sculptured marble, ornamented by a statue, around the brow of which was wound a chaplet of fresh flowers; and before it stood a group of graccful maidens, in gowns of flowered cotton, falling from the waist,—who, gathering up the water in varnished jars, and suddenly arrested in

the act, threw back the raven hair on their naked shoulders and gazed, with utter amazement depicted in their brown eyes, at Conrad and his friend.

There, across the lake, was espied a lofty, pyramidal structure, white as the drifted snow, and terminated by a long façade with towers, from which arose a cloud of smoke; as from the peaks of a volcano.

Then they would be traversing the street of a quiet village the habitations of which were half-buried in shrubbery, vines and variegated flowers. The inhabitants also, in broad girdles of maguey cloth, and turban-like head-dresses, paused in their work, and made a salutation of respect to Tazinco, by touching each, the earth with his hand and placing it upon his head, as the travellers passed; to which the trader responded by a paternal gesture, or a few kindly-toned words.

Now, again, the way led through an arcade of closely-hedged trees, whose interwoven branches excluded the sun's rays, and made a sort of twilight under the roofage of leaves.

Of a sudden, Tazinco drew his horse aside, and made a signal for the others to follow his example; when, round a turn of the highway,

came a band of soldiers, in white quilted tunics, trimmed with red embroidery, with targets and copper javelins, such as those at the secret portal,—whom they were going to relieve,—and at their head there rode a chief, whose armour glittered with jewels and gold; and who wore on his shoulders a mantle of feather-work, of the most gorgeous hues, and in his fantastic helm, a long green plume.

This cavalier saluted Tazinco respectfully, and replied to his questions, as he passed, with the promptness and brevity of an inferior: glancing meanwhile, with evident astonishment, at the strangely apparelled guests who had just been admitted into the guarded territory of his brethren; but without evincing distrust.

And now, with a sweep, the road traversed a wooded promontory, and brought them into full view of the city, which covered a broad peninsula with dwellings,—interspersed with gardens, pyramids and palaces profusely sculptured and decorated with gilding, vermilion and white.

What a picture of glowing splendour was then unfolded to them! The wildest vision in Amadis de Gaul could not compete with it in

romance ; the lamp of Aladdin never conjured up, with the aid of the obedient genii, a more costly creation.

The waters of the lake washed to the foot of the sloping quays of marble, and was carried through long, straight canals, into the interior of the city, until the eye could not follow their course any further along the broad thorough-fares up which they ran ; while upon them and along the terraced shores were gliding innumerable canoes, fancifully shaped and containing a lively multitude in diversified costumes. The streets, likewise, were thronged with busy crowds ; and even the tops of the houses, which were flat and turreted, contained groups of people. And high above all, appeared the pyramidal structures, before-mentioned, with their sides covered with painted sculpture, and having upon their summits, temples and towers, from the latter of which, with one exception, arose a stream of smoke, thin and fleecy as a morning cloud.

In the midst of all was a similar elevation that overlooked the whole city, from its upper terrace, and upon this was erected a lofty white fane, plain and unadorned to the roof, which

was painted blue, and spangled with gold stars. This was the only tower from whence no smoke came.

Conrad and Sewantus uttered a cry of amazement when this grand pageant first revealed itself to them. And even the impassive guide seemed to catch a little of their emotion; for his countenance lighted up as he paused before the stately spectacle, and witnessed its effect upon the foreigners.

"Answer me, brothers," said he, with an accent of pride; "is there a sight more glorious in the far sunrise than that before ye; tell me the very truth?"

"None! none! by my word of honour!" exclaimed Conrad, with enthusiasm; "if it be real and not a falsehood of the eye; as I do almost believe!"

"The child of the Maquas is a plain warrior," remarked Sewantus. "He never devised such images in his dreams, as those he beholds. The stranger guide is a Great Medicine. It is a castle of the Manitous!"

"Ha! ha!" chuckled Tazineo, forgetting his ordinary gravity at the whimsical notion. "Life is, certainly, a thing of dreams; but my friends will not find this a picture in the clouds, which

the wind scatters. Do they not hear the hum that rises from the multitude, and the wash of water at their horses' feet, from the dipping of so many paddles? It is the city of the three tribes, under Unicum, their King!"

At that instant a sonorous clangour rolled from the pyramid of the star-roofed tower; swelling in waves of sound, far and wide over the city, lake and groves; and the smoking pinnacles on every side gave forth a simultaneous jet of flame. The moving assemblage was arrested at the peal, and with one accord each individual bowed reverently down.

Tazinco, also, turned his horse to the East, and bent his head to the creature's neck, until the sound died away: when, cautioning them to ride closely at his side, he continued on, and passing along a narrow neck of land, the three entered an archway,—over which the triple emblems of the portal were repeated,—and emerged from it into the mysterious city of Lahunzel.

As they rode through the principal streets, the broad side-walks of which were covered with pavement, and the centre pierced by a spacious canal,—they attracted the gaze of curious crowds with their foreign exterior. Nor could they

repress a feeling of intimidation, never yet experienced during their wanderings, at the conviction of their utter helplessness in this mountain-girded city, and among the many thousands that now environed them.

But everywhere the throng gave way before the well-known figure of Tazinco, and the two friends could detect no hostile expression in the mild and serious faces that were turned, successively, towards them.

Conrad, wrought up to a pitch of violent excitement, and bewildered with what he saw,—scarcely noticed, in detail, the costumes of the motley crowd. But Sewantus-walie, with the pertinacity of an Indian and a Mohawk, let nothing escape his eye.

He observed that there were several classes: for some wore only a broad, coloured girdle,—while others, besides tunics, sandals and rolled head-dresses, had square mantles of cotton richly figured and bordered, depending from their shoulders; and others again were dressed in the same manner as Tazinco.

Now and then, moreover, appeared a military-looking figure in a plumed cap, shaped in the form of some animal's head, with grinning jaws, and sparkling with gold, silver, and precious

gems: while a mantle of superb featherwork was thrown carelessly over a close doublet, furnished in some instances with an embossed breast-plate, and in others covered entirely with thin scales, or a fine chainwork of gold.

These persons were generally mounted, and often accompanied by a numerous retinue. But there was not one of them, that on passing, failed to make a reverence to Tazinco, which the latter took as a matter of course, as though he were accustomed to receive homage.

Meanwhile, they traversed the breadth of the city, passing by many grand edifices covered with sculpture, and over several bridges that arched the canals, until they reached a colossal statue of the skeleton mammoth. This they passed under, when they found themselves in a new and more elegant quarter of the city than they had yet beheld, and in a short time arrived at a grand gateway opening upon an extensive square, surrounded by a massive wall and a row of piazzas constructed of stone, and closed in with a lattice of bronze. These were bordered by a canal that entered through a triangular arch in the wall.

Here the travellers dismounted, and leaving their horses in the charge of attendants, whom they found there, crossed the open space, which

was covered with cement, hard and smooth as polished marble, and reached a second gateway, where an armed guard gave them admittance into another court, or quadrangle: bounded on three sides by ranges of elegant buildings, furnished with porticos along their front, and embellished with ornaments of a unique kind. Several fountains here threw up sparkling jets of water along the pavement of checkered marble, and diffused an agreeable coolness around: while the ear was soothed by the silvery murmurs they emitted as they fell plashing into the reservoirs.

But beyond this, and completing the quadrangle, was a broad and lofty elevation, divided into three terraces of white marble, one above the other, the last of which gave support to a *façade* of column-flanked piers that occupied nearly its entire length, and contained each, in *alto-relievo*, the figure of a robed warrior, or king, armed, and decorated with plumes. These, together with the sculptured cornice above, were painted in the most brilliant colours, such as vermilion, blue, yellow, green, and reddish brown. Nor was this all: for suspended by some invisible framework from the roof of the palace, as such it was, to the edge of the upper terrace, over the whole front stretched an awning of white cotton,

embellished with coloured tracery, which excluded the sun and rain, while, at the same time, it admitted a sufficiency of light through its semi-transparent texture, and added greatly to the effect of the whole pile, each portion of which was in strict harmony with the general plan.

This, for originality and splendour, might vie with the happiest examples of Egyptian art, and even the most elaborate arabesques and emblazonry of the middle ages: to which it bore a certain resemblance. It was a noble and imposing display, as distinct as the two continents from the European style of the seventeenth century, yet not on that account less worthy of admiration—as the young German believed.

Tazinco now informed them that they were within the precincts of the royal abode; and, ascending the terraces, he beckoned to one of a number of richly dressed nobles who were scattered about the pavilion platform. Sending this person in advance, to give notice of his arrival, the guide then led his companions into a triangular-arched corridor that seemed to run along the front of the building, within the piers, and was crowded with the different officers and menials of the court.

After some delay, the noble in waiting returned

and ushered the two into an inner court of smaller dimensions, canopied and richly adorned with stuccoes and statuary: where they found themselves in the presence of the sovereign of the valley.

King Unicum was seated on a moveable throne of gold and silver curiously interwoven, one with the other, and adorned with precious stones; among which were cornelians, amethysts, and emeralds of an unusual size. His feet rested upon a stool, carved out of fossil ivory and shaped like a tortoise with two heads, the eyes of which were diamonds. Over his head, and attached to the back of the throne, was a canopy of brilliant plumes that radiated from a jewelled centre, like a star.

In singular opposition, however, to these accessories of royalty, the person of the monarch was almost devoid of ornament; but his white tunic was of the finest silk—a rare and costly article in Lahunzel, and his flowing mantle of the richest featherwork; with that delicacy of shading and lustrous freshness in the tints, peculiar to the breast of the humming bird, or a butterfly's wing.

His sandals were bound with gold, and the

leather thongs that fastened them to his ancles, were embossed with pearls. Around his neck he wore a gold collar containing pearls of an enormous size, and upon his head was a jewelled fillet, with an aigrette of white feathers.

Uicum was a man past the middle age, mild, calm, and reflective; and his character was written on his countenance which, though impressed with thought, had nothing of severity in its lines.

Like those over whom he ruled, his complexion was some shades lighter than that of the inhabitants of the prairies, and unlike the last, he wore a slight moustache and beard, which, with his flowing hair, were of a light grey, and gave him a venerable and majestic appearance.

On each side of the King were ranged a number of caciques, or nobles, in gallant array, with plumes, bracelets, and ear-ornaments flashing with jewelry: and several sallow-faced priests in long black robes covered with mystical devices, and with their dark hair hanging dishevelled over their shoulders, as if in marked indifference to the pomp of the courtiers.

As Tazincó entered with the strangers, some of the nobles in attendance swung golden

censers, which gave forth clouds of fragrant incense of the gum copal, that spread under the painted canopy in a thin haze.

Tazinco went forward and made the usual reverence, after which he stood in silence at the edge of the palm-leaf mat that covered the pavement by the throne, awaiting permission to speak.

But Unicum immediately addressed him, and an earnest conversation followed, during which the former kept his eyes fixed intently upon Conrad and his friend.

Tazinco then led them each forward by the hand, and the King, rising graciously, conducted them to seats of honour on either side of the throne.

But here Sewantus, for the first time, amid the scenes through which he had lately passed, felt somewhat embarrassed. He had probably never seen either a chair or a stool in all his lifetime before, and felt a strong disinclination to the carved and gilded affair before him; so he settled the matter at last, by seating himself in his usual manner, cross-legged upon the floor.

"Welcome, good friends, to our habitations," said the King, addressing his guests in the Dah-

cota language ; " it is long, very long, since the stranger sat by the side of Unicum, or feasted at his banquet ; peace be unto thee !"

" We have feasted our eyes already with his greatness, and learned to love him for the happiness of his people," replied Conrad, inclining somewhat to that complimentary style which, in all time, has been considered appropriate with royalty.

" My son must not judge too hastily by the outward aspect," rejoined Unicum with a smile. " And yet, if the Ruler of the world be good to Lahunzel, should its chosen leader be less ?" he demanded, turning affably to Scwantus, whose simple and manly figure seemed to engross no slight portion of his attention.

" No," answered the Mohawk, else were he not worthy to lead men."

" Boldly spoken, and truly," observed Unicum, in surprise, regarding the Indian warrior with a sort of respectful admiration, while a shade of gentle gravity settled on his features as he added, " Would, O, my son ! that every king had a counsellor like thee ; then, there might be many Lahunzels ! Speak, Tazinco, the Shrewd. Are my reflections just ?"

" My father is just," replied the Pearl-trader,

who remained still before his sovereign, conspicuous from the throng, and with the easy air of one who stood pre-eminent in his master's favour; "my father is often just. The man of the sunrise, who sits beside him, is of a strong nature, and immoveable as these mountains from his trust; I have marked him well."

"There, you behold, good Tazinco has drawn your picture with his tongue, more quickly than he could do it with his fingers; and that is something, even for him to do. Yet," continued Unicum, glancing merrily at the trader, "as I live, I will make him chant an ode, than which, I know, he would sooner die: should it appear that he has been playing the gossip with thee on thy journey hither; what is the decree?"

"He neither sings nor dies," replied Sewantus; "for if what came out of his mouth were food for sparrows then would they starve. He may not do for a merry-making; but for a secret war-path, or a matter of council, I never saw his like. He keeps his teeth shut, and goes straight on!"

Now, during all this time, Conrad's heart was beating tumultuously in his breast with impatience, and expectation. Was he really within

the same walls that contained his beloved, and were all his exertions in her behalf to be crowned with success now?

Under what strange auspices should he find her in this abode of splendour, and amid a luxury of life surpassing everything he had ever beheld, or could have supposed to exist in the heart of those remote wilds?

There was such an air of romance, and fantastic beauty about what he saw, such a profusion of gold, silver, and the most costly gems, glittering in the costumes and paraphernalia around: that he was like one in a state of delirium, and could scarcely preserve his composure, or prevent the eagerness which devoured him from bursting forth as he sat during the conversation just detailed; and impelled, finally, by an involuntary impulse, he stood up before Unicum, and said:

“Forgive me, O king; but I came not into thy territory on the errand of an idler. I have been upon a long and weary search, and if I judge rightly, the one of whom I am in quest has found shelter here.”

Conrad spoke with glowing cheek and a warmth that made his chest swell, and gave an unwonted lustre to his eye. He was a gallant-

looking youth in his semi-Indian dress, with his brown beard and copious *chevelure* of light, curling hair; and as he stood there, the representative of an unknown race, his remarkable beauty and fairness of hue created a powerful impression in the dark-skinned circle.

The King, too, gazed long and silently upon him; marking, with an emotion he could not conceal, the rich blood that mantled under the translucent skin, the broad and erect brow, the azure orbs, the flowing locks—each lineament, in short, that denoted his Teutonic origin; and with an earnest scrutiny that evinced a stronger interest than mere curiosity in his foreign guest.

“The virgin of the sunrise is here;” he replied, in a low, serious voice. “In a little and thou shalt see her once again. Ye are of one lineage, in very truth; the light of morning beams from thy countenance as from hers.”

So saying, Unicum arose, and taking Conrad by the hand, presented him to his court, in the following mysterious terms:

“Priests, Caciques, and Nobles of the ancient tribes; that which our fathers looked for during many cycles, in vain, has come to pass in these days. Behold, the brother of the white-skinned

virgin ! God has conducted him to this secret land, therefore let him be cherished as a sacred guest.

“ Surely these must be the children of Quetzalcoatl, the Good, whom he foretold would one day return to claim the inheritance of their father. They are fashioned in the very likeness of the beneficial teacher, who departed to the rising sun, and their faces are white and more glorious than the faces of the robbers of Malantzin, in the picture language of the Aztecs ; or that of him who was misnamed Tonatiuh—the Scorching-sun !

“ Give homage to the descendants of the Feathered Serpent—the divinity of the air !”

Those to whom this singular address was alone intelligible, immediately complied ; and Conrad, to his astonishment, found himself an object of veneration to the gay throng that bent before him with an obeisance greater than the good King himself exacted from his subjects.

Ere he could speculate upon the cause, however, Unicum called one of those present, a noble looking personage, and delivered Conrad into his charge with a whispered injunction ; bidding his guest, at the same time, to be of good cheer until

he saw him again. Our hero, then, with a lightened spirit, followed after his new conductor, who left the court of reception, and held his course rapidly along a lateral corridor of the palace.

END OF VOL. II.

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